



## **ITEM 3**

### **SOCIAL SERVICE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

#### **MINUTES**

#### **DATE**

**Tuesday, February 4, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council was held Tuesday, February 4, 2025, and was called to order by Chair Frank Simonis, at 12:03 pm.

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Frank Simonis, Chair, Potential Transit User Who Has a Disability – appeared via Zoom  
Bertha Vega, Vice Chair, Local Social Service Provider for Persons of Limited Means  
Lynda Schafhauser, Potential Transit User Who is 60 Years of Age or Older  
Monty Cox, Social Service Transportation Provider for Older Adults  
Nancy Ramirez, Social Service Provider for Persons with Disabilities  
Cynthia Ortegon, Potential Transit User Who Has a Disability  
Olga Garcia, Local Social Service Provider for Older Adults

#### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Vincent Parker, Social Service Transportation Provider for Persons with Disabilities  
Franklina Bogan, Potential Transit User Who is 60 Years of Age or Older  
Mattie Mendez, Local Social Service Provider for Older Adults

#### **MCTC STAFF PRESENT:**

Natalia Austin, Senior Regional Planner  
Evelyn Espinosa, Senior Regional Planner  
Jeff Findley, Principal Regional Planner  
Troy McNeil, Deputy Director/Fiscal Supervisor

#### **VISITORS PRESENT:**

Deborah Martinez, Director of Social Services for Madera County, Public Guardian  
Xochitl Villasenor, City of Madera, Transit Program Manager

\*appeared after roll call

## **1. Roll Call**

At 12:03 pm, Chair Frank Simonis called the meeting to order and instructed that roll call for attendance be taken. It was determined that a quorum was present.

## **2. Public Comment**

None.

## **3. Approve Minutes of November 5, 2024, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Meeting**

Monty Cox moved to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2024, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council Meeting.

Seconded by Lynda Schafhauser

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Ayes: Frank Simonis, Nancy Ramirez, Lynda Schafhauser, Monty Cox, Olga Garcia, Bertha Vega, Cynthia Ortegon**

**Noes: None**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **4. Local Transit Agency Updates**

Xochitl Villaseñor, Transit Manager for Madera Metro, provided the Council with an update on transit services in the city of Madera. Bus stops have been upgraded with new signage and ID numbers, and solar-powered lights are being installed to improve visibility. The team is continuing work on a shelter project, which involves relocating shelters from deactivated stops to active or new locations. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for a microtransit feasibility study has been issued, with responses due by the end of February. Another RFP is being prepared for a new transit operator, as the current contract with MV Transportation expires in June. The City of Madera recently completed the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review and is addressing its findings. The Transit Advisory Board held a meeting last week, and efforts are underway to strengthen the City's social media presence to share updates and promote ridership.

The City of Chowchilla is looking for a new part-time driver and is trying to keep up with the influx of student riders.

Monty Cox, Transit Manager for Madera County Connection, briefed the Council on transit services in the county's unincorporated areas. For FY 2024–2025, the identified unmet transit need that was reasonable to meet was to enhance lighting and provide schedule information at bus stops. In response, the County has installed four new shelters equipped with lighting. However, progress has been slowed due to the lack of sidewalks and necessary infrastructure in some areas. New shelter locations include the Oakhurst Thrift Store, Oakhurst Denny's, and both sides of Avenue 12 at Road 36. With over 30 bus stops

countywide, schedules and solar lighting have been installed at most, including at Eastin Arcola, Casa De La Viña, and the La Viña Market. The County has expanded its fleet with the purchase of three new gas-powered buses, three electric buses, and one 10-passenger van, which will support the medical escort service. A new operations contract has been initiated with MV Transportation, and the County has transitioned to using its own maintenance crews for vehicle upkeep. During the meeting, new marketing materials were presented and distributed to Council members. Additionally, the Almond Yard project is moving forward, with plans to go out to bid for the installation of electric vehicle chargers, a solar canopy, and a bus wash system. The County is also looking to increase outreach efforts and provide bus information to the public.

## **5. Unmet Transit Needs FY 2025-2026**

Natalia Austin, MCTC Senior Regional Planner, provided information on the kickoff of the unmet transit needs process for FY 2025-2026. The required public hearing will be on April 23, 2025. Several workshops will be held throughout the county to provide an opportunity for residents to learn about the unmet transit needs process and to get assistance filling out comment forms. At the in-person workshops, residents can also provide input on the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.

## **6. Announcements**

SSTAC member, Lynda Schafhauser, provided information on a poetry competition, *Poetry Out Loud*, and a presentation on *Water: Our Valley's Life Blood*, at the Madera County Arts Council. Lynda also commented about the difficulties faced by older adults and individuals with disabilities in getting their pets to the veterinarian, as current public transportation policies do not allow animals on board (except for service animals).

## **7. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Frank Simonis at 1:00 PM.