



Meeting of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council

LOCATION

Madera County Transportation Commission
Board Room
2001 Howard Road, Suite 201
Madera, California 93637

SPECIAL NOTICE: Precautions to address COVID-19 (a.k.a the “Coronavirus”) will apply to this meeting. See below Special Notice for additional details.

DATE

May 16, 2022

TIME

1:30 PM

SOCIAL SERVICE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Frank Simonis, Chair	Potential Transit User Who Is Disabled
Fern Facchino	Potential Transit User 60 Years or Older
Rosalind Esqueda	Representative of a Transit Provider
Ellen Moy	Representative of a Transit Provider
Anabel Miranda	Local Social Service Provider for Persons of Limited Means
Vincent Parker	Representative of the Local Social Service Provider for Disabled
Michelle Hernandez	Representative of the Local Social Service Providers for Seniors
Alycia Falley	Representative of the Local Social Service Providers for Disabled
Olga Olivia Saucedo-Garcia	Representative of the Local Social Service Provider for Seniors

Representatives or individuals with disabilities should contact MCTC at (559) 675-0721 at least three (3) business days in advance of the meeting to request auxiliary aids or other accommodations necessary to participate in the public meeting.

Important Notice Regarding COVID 19

The meeting of May 16, 2022 will take place remotely in accordance with Government Code Section 54953(e) et seq. (AB 361), and Resolution No. 21-15 Amendment No. 6, as adopted by the Madera County Transportation Commission Policy Board on April 20, 2022. The Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) Board Room will be closed, and the SSTAC Members and staff will be participating in this meeting via GoToMeeting. In the interest of maintaining appropriate social distancing measures, members of the public may participate in the meeting electronically and shall have the right to observe and offer public comment during the meeting.

You are strongly encouraged to participate by joining the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/MaderaCTC/sstac-meeting-46>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States: United States: [+1 \(408\) 650-3123](tel:+14086503123)

Access Code: 500-078-517

If you wish to make a comment on a specific agenda item during the meeting, please use the “Raise Hand” feature in GoToMeeting and you will be called on by the chair during the meeting. If you are participating via telephone only, you can submit your comments via email to publiccomment@maderactc.org or by calling 559-675-0721 ext. 7. Comments will be shared with the SSTAC and placed into the record at the meeting. Every effort will be made to read comments received during the meeting into the record, but some comments may not be read due to time limitations. Comments received after an agenda item will be made part of the record if received prior to the end of the meeting.

Regarding any disruption that prevents the SSTAC from broadcasting the meeting to members of the public, then (1) if public access can be restored quickly, the meeting will resume in five (5) minutes to allow re-connection of all members of the SSTAC and members of the public; or (2) if service cannot be restored quickly, the meeting shall stop, no further action shall be taken on the remaining agenda items and notice of the continued meeting will be provided.

AGENDA

At least 72 hours prior to each regular MCTC Social Services Transportation Advisory Council meeting, a complete agenda packet is available for review on the MCTC website at <http://www.maderactc.org> or at the MCTC office, 2001 Howard Road, Suite 201, Madera, California 93637. All public records relating to an open session item and copies of staff reports or other written documentation relating to items of business referred to on the agenda are on file at MCTC. Persons with questions concerning agenda items may call MCTC at (559) 675-0721 to make an inquiry regarding the nature of items described in the agenda.

INTERPRETING SERVICES

Interpreting services are not provided at MCTC's public meeting unless requested at least three (3) business days in advance. Please contact MCTC at (559) 675-0721 during regular business hours to request interpreting services.

Servicios de interprete no son ofrecidos en las juntas públicas de MCTC al menos de que se soliciten con tres (3) días de anticipación. Para solicitar éstos servicios por favor contacte a Evelyn Espinosa at (559) 675-0721 x 5 durante horas de oficina.

MEETING CONDUCT

If this meeting is willfully interrupted or disrupted by one or more persons rendering orderly conduct of the meeting unfeasible, the Chair may order the removal of individuals who are willfully disrupting the meeting. Such individuals may be arrested. If order cannot be restored by such removal, the members of the Board may direct that the meeting room be cleared (except for representatives of the press or other news media not participating in the disturbance), and the session may continue.

RECORD OF THE MEETING

SSTAC meetings are recorded. Copies of recordings are available upon request, or recordings may be listened to at the MCTC offices by appointment.

Agenda

Item	Description	Enclosure	Action
1.	Call to order		
2.	Public Comment		
3.	Approve Minutes of the May 9, 2022 SSTAC Meeting	Yes	Action
4.	Unmet Transit Needs Comment Analysis-Continued Unmet Transit Needs Definition Unmet Transit Needs Matrix Leadership Counsel Comment Letter	Yes	Action
5.	Appoint SSTAC representative to attend MCTC's June Board Meeting	Yes	Action
6.	Discuss Future Meetings 2022-2023 Tentative Quarterly Schedule	Yes	Discussion
7.	Miscellaneous	No	Discussion
8.	Adjournment		

Social Service Transportation Advisory Council

MINUTES

DATE

Monday, May 9, 2022

The regular meeting of the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council held Friday, May 9, 2022 via GoToMeeting and was called to order by Chair, Frank Simonis, at 2:37 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Frank Simonis, Chair, Potential Transit User Who Is Disabled
Ellen Moy, Representative of a Transit Provider, Madera County
Rosalind Esqueda, Representative of a Transit Provider
Anabel Miranda, Representative of a Local Social Service Provider for Persons of Limited Means
Michelle Hernandez, Representative of the Local Social Service Provider for Seniors
Alycia Falley, Representative of the Local Social Service Provider for Disabled
Vincent Parker, Representative of the Local Social Service Provider for Disabled

STAFF PRESENT:

Dylan Stone, Madera County Transportation Commission
Troy McNeil, Madera County Transportation Commission
Evelyn Espinosa, Madera County Transportation Commission
Nicholas Dybas, Madera County Transportation Commission
Sandy Ebersole, Madera County Transportation Commission
Jeff Findley, Madera County Transportation Commission

VISITORS PRESENT:

David Huff, City of Madera
Monty Cox, Madera County
Robin Roman, City of Chowchilla

I: Call to Order

Meeting started at 2:37 PM.

II: Public Comment

No public comment received.

III: Approve Minutes of the April 1, 2022 SSTAC Meeting

Approved.

IV. Unmet Transit Needs Comment Analysis

The comments' analysis was partially completed. Due to time constraints, the rest of the comments will be completed in a follow up meeting.

V. Appoint SSTAC representative to attend MCTC's May Board Meeting

Item postponed for next meeting.

VI. Discuss Future Meetings

Item postponed for next meeting.

VII. Miscellaneous

Item postponed for next meeting.

VIII: Adjournment

**THE SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT
4:12 PM**

Unmet Transit Needs Definition

The Madera County Transportation Commission adopted the following definitions for its Unmet Transit Needs process:

- A. UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS: An unmet transit need is an expressed or identified need that is not currently being met through existing public transportation services. An unmet transit need also is a need required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- B. REASONABLE TO MEET: The term “reasonable to meet” shall apply to public or specialized transportation services that meet the following minimum criteria:
1. Feasibility
 - The proposed service can be provided with available Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding and/or other funding sources (per State law, the lack of available resources shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet per PUC § 99401.5 (c).
 - Sufficient ridership potential exists for new, expanded, or revised transit services.
 - The proposed transit service will be safe and comply with local, State and federal law.
 2. Community Acceptance
 - The proposed transit service has community support from the general public, community groups, and/or community leaders.
 3. Benefit to Population
 - The proposed transit service serves a significant number of residents where it is needed and would benefit the general public and/or senior and disabled persons as a whole.
 4. Cost-Effective
 - The proposed transit service will not affect the ability of the overall system of the implementing agency or agencies to meet applicable transit system performance objectives or the State TDA farebox ratio requirement after any exemption(s) period(s) if the service is eligible for an exemption(s) per CCR 6633.2.
 - The proposed transit service, if implemented or funded, would not cause the responsible operator to incur expenditures in excess of the maximum amount of LTF, STA, FTA funds, and fare revenues and local support.
 5. Consistent with Intent of Existing Transit Service(s)
 - Once established, the proposed transit service will not abuse or obscure the intent of existing transit service(s).
 - The proposed transit need should be in conformance with the goals included in the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, and consistent with the intent of the goals of the adopted Short Range Transit Plan.

Analysis of Comments Received During the FY 22/23 Unmet Transit Needs Process

Comment #	Agency Affiliation	Transit Service/Jurisdiction	Public Comments	Is it an "Unmet Transit Need" An unmet transit need is an expressed or identified need that is not currently being met through existing public transportation services. An unmet transit need also is a need required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	If identified as an "Unmet Transit Need", is it "Reasonable to Meet"					NOTES
					FEASIBLE	COMMUNITY ACCEPTANCE	BENEFIT TO THE POPULATION	COST-EFFECTIVE	CONSISTENT WITH INTENT OF EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICE(S)	
Workshops										
1	County	MCC/La Vina	6 PM bus route reinstatement							
2	County	MCC/La Vina	Bus Service on Monday							
3	County	MCC/La Vina	More Dial A ride eligibility							
4	City of Madera	Metro	Maps at the bus shelters to show where people are at and the direction/connections.							
5	City of Madera	Metro	The buses need better signaling. Community members have used the bus and being dropped off at the stop they didn't want to wait for a connection bus. It was not clearly understood that the bus would not directly drop them off.							
6	City of Madera	Metro	Shelters and seats needed.							
7	City of Madera	Metro	More frequency for METRO. Hospital route takes too long, now 2 hours instead of 30 minutes.							
8	City of Madera	Metro	Walmart Stop							
9	City of Madera	Metro	Bus taking too long cause delays, so community members lose their doctors appointments and have to re-schedule doctor's appointments.							
10	City of Madera	Metro	Bus stop condition: No bus shelter to wait for bus or seat.							
11	County	MCC	More La Vina bus stops.							
12	City of Madera	Metro	Tulare St does not have bus stops.							
13	City of Madera	Metro	Cleveland, there are bus stops bus stops but more needed and shelters needed.							

14	City of Madera	Metro	Yosemite, Adell St., Cleveland, behind Monroe St., RD 29, Rd 28, 13, 15, 14 no bus stops or shelter.							
15	City of Madera	Metro, MCC	More direct routes. It takes too long. More buses.							
16	County	MCC	Almost total lack of public transportation. There is an inability to reach services (School, adult school) for students. Service to reach the College. YARTS used to give service, but the County did not believe in it.							
Comment Cards										
17	City of Madera	Metro	More buses for whoever doesn't have a car by Abby St.							
18	City of Madera	Metro, DAR	My main concern about the bus stop are the following: as a resident, I'm not considered part of the city because I reside on Posey Ave/28 ¼ Rd. Now I do have 2 bus stops near by now but they are a walking distance. Unfortunately, during rainy seasons there isn't much protections against the rain. Although I no longer commute using public transport I do see other resident standing near the bus stop to seek shelter from rain or sun. also, hours of waiting time are so off schedule although I know they try their best it was a struggle for myself to go out to school on time because of waiting time or constant stops.							
19	City of Madera	Metro, DAR	I live on Posey Ave, crossing rd is 28 ¼ in Madera the only bus stop close to me is on Tozer near Cotton Creek Apartment, in the bus would pass every 15-30 min on time and as scheduled I would be able to got to work but due to Covid I have not been able to catch the bus because to got o work it would end up not coming until 30 more minutes after and ended up walking and me being pregnant. Also tried dial-a-ride they tell me to schedule an appointment which it would not benefit me because I need it right away.							
20	City of Madera	Metro, DAR	Fresus Way and Olive Avenue More transit							
	City of Madera		More streetlights							
	County	MCC	More public transit in La Vina area							

21	County		Improve streets Sidewalks for La Vina school More streetlights							
22	City of Madera	Metro, DAR	Wilson St and Davis St More bus stops More bus shelters Improve public transit							
	City of Madera		Improve the streets, there are tons of potholes More streetlights, the streets are very dark							
23	City of Madera	Metro, DAR	Ellis Street More bus stops Public transit							
	City of Madera		Improve Ellis St. A stop sign							
24	City of Madera	Metro, DAR	Lake St and 5 St. Improve public transit Bus stop							
	City of Madera		More sidewalks for walking							
25	City of Madera	Metro, DAR	Cleveland Ave and Owens St. Bus drivers are not polite, please improve.							
	City of Madera		There is too much garbage from homeless people							
26	County	MCC	Improve public transit More stops							
27	County	MCC	Improve public transit							
	County		Improve La Vina school More streetlights							
28	County	MCC	Improve public transit (it charges a lot)							
	County		More Street lights in La Vina St., Uvas Ave., Paraiso St., Ave 9.							
	County		More sidewalks for students.							
	County		Bike lanes							
29	County	MCC, DAR	More Street lights, it is dark at night More sidewalks, there aren't any							
30	County	MCC	Improve public transit.							
31	County		More bike lanes so children can use their bicycles. More patrolling around La Vina streets.							

32	County		Potholes in Yosemite Trash around Riverside							
33	County		Potholes around Tulare St Wessmith Way, speeding							
34	County		Road 28 and 13 ½ Ave Sidewalks for children to go to school Stop signs Street lights because it is very dark Fix the streets							
35	County		Fix potholes, there are too many. More traffic lights around 18 ½ for children safety.							
36	City of Madera		Lives by Lake St. He would like more information if it would be possible to add more stop signs.							
37	County		More streetlights and street improvements because it is hard to cross the streets. Rd 28 ½ and 13 ¼.							
38	City of Madera		Put a stop sign between the street by the Pan American Park. There are always accidents happening, it is dangerous especially it being close to where children are present.							
39	City of Madera		Merced St and Fresno St, Green Way Stop signs Lighting is very dim							
40	City of Madera		Katherine St More streetlights and stop signs. There are many accidents in this area.							
41	City of Madera		I would like to get more stop signs by Sherwood St and Lake St. There is a lot of accidents on that Road. Thank you.							
42	City of Madera		Improvements to Tulare St. More stop signs More sidewalks							
43	City of Madera		Improve E. Yosemite Ave. Fix streets. More stop signs for children's safety around MLK, Sierra Vista, and Millview School.							
44	County		I would like that streets: 13 ¼ and Rd. 29 be fixed. And more stops signs and traffic lights							
45	City of Madera		Fix Gateway, SR 145, there are too many potholes							
46	City of Madera		Fix E. Yosemite Ave. Lots of potholes.							

47	County		La Vina streets: Ave 9, 8 ½, 8. Rd 24, 23 are in bad conditions.							
48	City of Madera		I would like more street lighting. Fix roads.							
49	County		Fix potholes on 17 ½. The potholes affect car tires.							
50	City of Madera		More lighting around Davis St. it is very dark. Fix streets there are many potholes.							
51	City of Madera		Improve streets. Fix road potholes. Improve pedestrian infrastructure. More recreation areas.							
52	City of Madera		I would like to see more stop signs on SR 145 because there are many accidents there.							
53	County		I would like 28 ½ and 13 ¼ to be fixed. There are many potholes and add more stop signs.							
54	City of Madera		E Yosemite is very dark at night, it needs more streetlights.							
55	City of Madera		More Street lights on E. Yosemite Ave.							
56	City of Madera		I live by B St and A St. For children's safety when going to school: Streets are in bad conditions, they need fixing. It is very dark at night, more streetlights.							
57	City of Madera		More Street lights and fix those that do not work. Get more patrols day and night. Azalea Ave, Road 29, fix parks, clean the streets							
58	City of Madera		Lilly St and Sunrise Ave Traffic light for children's safety for school (Virginia). Add speed bumps on Sunrise Avenue and Lilly St. Speed signs for cars, so they reduce speed Public transit							
59	City of Madera		E. Yosemite Ave.							
60	City of Madera		Streets around schools for children's safety.							
61	City of Madera		N Lake and Sherwood St. add stop sign							
62	City of Madera		Austin and Martin St. Repair Streets More Street lights because they are dark Sidewalks for House entrances							

63	City of Madera		I live by Millview school, I would like more stop signs, thanks.							
64	City of Madera		N. L St. I would like pavement where I live because I live by an alley. Thank you.							
65	City of Madera		Washington Ave and Washington, or Crossing St. Sidewalks Fix the streets, the potholes for cars							
66	City of Madera		Cross St and Lily St, Magnolia St, Washington St. Sidewalks Fix Streets More streetlights Stop signs							
67	City of Madera		I live by Sherwood Way and Lake St. there are too many accidents Stop signs to prevent car accidents and it is dangerous for children in the park.							
68	County		Improve streets Ave 12 and 10							
69	City of Madera		Sonora Street and Cleveland Ave Fix streets and potholes Add speed bumps because cars speed on the streets More safety for school children							
70	Chowchilla		Improve streets More speed bumps cars speed a lot							
71	City of Madera		Sunrise and Lilly St. More police officers More speed bumps, cars speeding More speed signs							
72	County		Rd 29 ½ and Ave 8 More speed bumps: cars speed Fix streets More signs for children's safety							
73	County		Rd 29 ½ and Ave 8 Speed bumps, cars speed on the streets and it is dangerous for students.							
74	County		Rd 29 ½ and Ave 8 Eastin Arcola Fix streets for students safety Add speed bumps, there are races on the streets.							

75	County		Fix streets: Ave 9, Rd 24, Ave 8, 8 ½, Rd 25 More stop signs Add speed bumps on Ave 9 because cars race down the street							
76	County		Add speed bumps on Ave 9 because cars race down the street							
76	County		Drainage problems when it rains on Paraiso St. Fix streets: Road 24, 23, Ave 7, 8, 8 ½, 7 More streetlights, very dark streets, it helps safety.							
Comments from Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability Counsel Letter 2022-23										
	City of Madera	METRO	A. Transit users in the City of Madera report up to one hour wait times for buses on occasion, and expressed the need for routes in the City of Madera to run more frequently.							
	ALL	ALL	B. Residents and transit users report a need to expand rate assistance programs to provide free rides to people who are unable to pay their bus fare but who have transit needs nonetheless. This need was raised during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many transit users have experienced additional financial hardships.							
	County		C. Residents and transit users report a need for street lighting in La Vina, Fairmead, and Madera County to ensure transit users' first and last miles are safely lit.							
	City of Madera		D. Residents and transit users continue to elevate the need for wastebaskets at bus stops in the City of Madera.							

	County	<p>E. Residents and transit users in unincorporated communities have identified streets that need repavement and clean mobility infrastructure like sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lighting in order to facilitate their first and last miles, and thus, their use of public transit.</p> <p>A few examples that were elevated in our conversations were sidewalks and street lighting along Avenue 9 and within the subdivision of homes located in La Vina, and road repavement to Rd 26 in Madera Acres, Rd 29 in Parksdale, and Valerie Avenue in Madera Acres. One of the reasons it is critical that communities have sidewalks to connect residents to bus stops is to ensure ADA accessibility for transit users who use wheelchairs.</p>							
	County	<p>F. Residents from Fairmead and Madera County report the need for speed reduction infrastructure near schools for the safety of children. For instance, residents in Fairmead have been asking Madera County and MCTC for speed bumps or other similar speed reduction infrastructure in front of Fairmead Elementary school on Ave. 22 3/4.</p>							
	All	<p>G. Resident and transit users report the need for electronic bus signs on buses and at bus stops. At bus stops, an electronic sign should indicate the estimated time of arrival of the bus and its destination along its current route, and electronic signs on the buses should confirm the direction in which the bus is traveling along its route with its final destination. Residents report that this will greatly improve the user-friendliness of public transit in Madera County and encourage ridership.</p>							

	County	MCC	H. Residents and transit users in La Vina continue to elevate the need for more frequent routes between La Vina and the City of Madera. Currently, the bus only runs on Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving transit-dependent persons with no other means of transportation without access to basic amenities (including healthcare, food, and other emergency services) most days of the week.							
	County	MCC	I. Residents and transit users in Fairmead have elevated the need to continue working towards installation of a second bus stop in Fairmead. As we understand it, the status of this project is pending collaboration between the Fresno EOC and Madera County Public Works. We ask that MCTC direct these agencies to continue their work on this project as soon as possible in collaboration with Fairmead residents, and oversee progress to ensure this project stays on track and remains coordinated with the planning efforts for the Fairmead Library & Community Center.							
	City of Madera		J. Indigenous residents and transit users in Madera County have elevated they want more bus stops, specifically in Parksdale and Cesar Chavez Elementary school areas and more frequent bus stops.							
	County	MCC	K. Indigenous residents and transit users in Madera County have elevated the need for stop signs on Avenue 13 and Avenue 14 ½.							
Comments from Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability Counsel Letter Previous Years										
	County	MCC	The Chowchilla-Fairmead-Madera schedule must be extended to the weekends to afford transit users improved access to this essential route							
	County	MCC	The schedule must be updated to include more frequent routes, both Northbound to Chowchilla and Southbound to Madera;							

	County	MCC	A second stop must be added on the Northern side of Fairmead around the vicinity of Avenue 23 to ensure that this curcial transit service is accessible to residents throughout the entire community. Provided that the only existing stop in Fairmead is located at Galilee Missionary Baptist Church on Avenue 22 1/2 near Fairmead Blvd, riders who live on the other side of the community are not able to easily access the route.							
	County	MCC	Increased frequency of routes for Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-La Vina Transit. Extend to rest of the week including weekends and							
	County	MCC	Additional routes during the day.							
	City of Madera	Metro	Improvements to the MAX and "Dial-a-Ride" Systems in the City of Madera aimed at creating more equitable and user-friendly transit services: Re-opening of the Walmart stop;							
	City of Madera	Metro	Installation of trash cans on MAX buses							
	City of Madera	Metro	Thirty-minute incremented bus service on all MAX routes;							
	City of Madera	Metro	Improvements to the "Dial-a-Ride" Dispatch system							
	City of Madera	Metro	Extended MAX service operation on weekends;							
	All	Metro, MCC	Equip bus stops and buses with route-related signage							
	All	All	Apply for grant funding to secure free rides for students							
	MCTC		Pursuit of regional funding for an electric rural rideshare program							
	All	All	Mandated discrimination prevention and accessibility training for all Madera County Transit Staff							



April 20, 2022
Madera County Transportation Commission
2001 Howard Rd, Ste 201
Madera, CA 93637

Submitted electronically via email to: publiccomment@maderactc.org

Re: Comments on Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County

Dear Commissioners Palmer, Wheeler, Frazier, Gallegos, Poythress, and Rodriguez

I am writing regarding the unmet transit needs hearing process. Our organization continues to hear from residents in Fairmead, La Viña, the City of Madera, and other communities in Madera County whose transit needs remain unmet by this agency, despite our participation in this process for the past several years. In this letter, we are re-submitting the list of unmet transit needs that residents have elevated for the past three years now, which have not been addressed. We also argue that those needs fit within the confines of the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC)'s unmet needs transit definition. This necessarily means that MCTC is obligated to address them. Attached alongside this letter, I have also resubmitted our comment letters from the last three years' unmet transit needs survey process regarding unmet transit needs and comments regarding this process that we have elevated in previous years. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this important public process and ask that the feedback we have received from community members on the ground be incorporated so that all Madera County residents have access to reliable, equitable, and affordable public transportation.

I. Unmet Transit Needs

In conversations with residents and partner organizations from the City of Madera, indigenous communities in Madera County, La Vina, and Fairmead in the past few months, community leaders and transit users have highlighted the following unmet transit needs:

- A. Transit users in the City of Madera report up to one hour wait times for buses on occasion, and expressed the need for routes in the City of Madera to run more frequently.
- B. Residents and transit users report a need to expand rate assistance programs to provide free rides to people who are unable to pay their bus fare but who have transit needs nonetheless. This need was raised during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many transit users have experienced additional financial hardships.



- C. Residents and transit users report a need for street lighting in La Vina, Fairmead, and Madera County to ensure transit users' first and last miles are safely lit.
- D. Residents and transit users continue to elevate the need for wastebaskets at bus stops in the City of Madera.
- E. Residents and transit users in unincorporated communities have identified streets that need repavement and clean mobility infrastructure like sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lighting in order to facilitate their first and last miles, and thus, their use of public transit. A few examples that were elevated in our conversations were sidewalks and street lighting along Avenue 9 and within the subdivision of homes located in La Vina, and road repavement to Rd 26 in Madera Acres, Rd 29 in Parksdale, and Valerie Avenue in Madera Acres. One of the reasons it is critical that communities have sidewalks to connect residents to bus stops is to ensure ADA accessibility for transit users who use wheelchairs.
- F. Residents from Fairmead and Madera County report the need for speed reduction infrastructure near schools for the safety of children. For instance, residents in Fairmead have been asking Madera County and MCTC for speed bumps or other similar speed reduction infrastructure in front of Fairmead Elementary school on Ave. 22 3/4.
- G. Resident and transit users report the need for electronic bus signs on buses and at bus stops. At bus stops, an electronic sign should indicate the estimated time of arrival of the bus and its destination along its current route, and electronic signs on the buses should confirm the direction in which the bus is traveling along its route with its final destination. Residents report that this will greatly improve the user-friendliness of public transit in Madera County and encourage ridership.
- H. Residents and transit users in La Vina continue to elevate the need for more frequent routes between La Vina and the City of Madera. Currently, the bus only runs on Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving transit-dependent persons with no other means of transportation without access to basic amenities (including healthcare, food, and other emergency services) most days of the week.
- I. Residents and transit users in Fairmead have elevated the need to continue working towards installation of a second bus stop in Fairmead. As we understand it, the status of this project is pending collaboration between the Fresno EOC and Madera County Public Works. We ask that MCTC direct these agencies to continue their work on this project as soon as possible in collaboration with Fairmead residents, and oversee progress to ensure



this project stays on track and remains coordinated with the planning efforts for the Fairmead Library & Community Center.

- J. Indigenous¹ residents and transit users in Madera County have elevated they want more bus stops, specifically in Parksdale and Cesar Chavez Elementary school areas and more frequent bus stops.
- K. Indigenous residents and transit users in Madera County have elevated the need for stop signs on Avenue 13 and Avenue 14 ½.

II. The unmet needs listed above fall within the unmet needs definition adopted by MCTC.

MCTC’s adopted definition for Unmet Transit Needs reads, “[a]n unmet transit need is an expressed or identified need that is not currently being met through existing public transportation services. An unmet transit need also is a need required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).”² The needs listed above fit within the confines of this definition for the reasons listed below:

- 1. “Expressed or identified needs”

For the past three years, Madera County residents expressed their desire to see transportation improvements in their communities. Those same residents have also identified specific needs in their communities.³ For example, the priorities have been expressed and identified by residents during the Regional Transportation Project and Sustainable Community Strategy workshops, the Measure T steering Committee, and the board of supervisors meeting.

¹ Gaspar Rivera-Salgado and Luis Escala Rabadán, *Festivals, Oaxacan Immigrant Communities and Cultural Spaces Between Mexico and the United States: The Guelagueltas in California*, University of Southern California and the Mexican research institute El Colegio de la Frontera, <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/151/15160667002/html/> (California is home to about 350,000 Indigenous Oaxacans, who are primarily concentrated in the Central Valley and the southern portion of the state, a study conducted in 2016).

² Madera County Transportation Commission, *Unmet Transit needs Workshop 3.29.22-2.pdf*, Madera County, (March 29, 2022), <https://www.maderactc.org/bc-transportation/page/unmet-transit-needs>

³ See discussion *supra* Part I



Furthermore, each of the necessary transit improvements listed above are in fact unmet *needs* because, according to the feedback of transit-dependent residents, public transit is extremely difficult if not nearly impossible to use in each of these communities due to the lack of first and last-mile infrastructure, the infrequency of routes, the scarcity of bus stops in communities, and the lack of appropriate signage for bus routes.⁴

2. “That [are] not currently being met through existing public transportation services”

The previous priorities are attached and, as you can see, the needs of residents in Fairmead, La Vina, the City of Madera, and other communities throughout Madera County have not been addressed by previous unmet transit needs processes. As such, these needs are not currently being addressed through existing transportation services. Thus, meeting the requirement for the updated unmet transit needs definition.

3. “Required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

As mentioned above, in several disadvantaged communities, many common roads do not have sidewalks, which creates uniquely dangerous obstacles for residents with disabilities.⁵ For example, a resident in La Vina who uses a wheelchair has mentioned being nearly hit by vehicles almost every time she tries to make an essential trip because, without sidewalks, she is forced into the road.

4. Conclusion

The needs expressed above meet fall within MCTC’s definition of unmet transit needs. Therefore, MCTC is required to address those needs.

III. Request for Additional Information

Lastly, our organization requests a breakdown of transportation funding (whether from general fund dollars, local tax revenue, grant funding, or any other source of revenue) and expenditures on transportation and transit-related projects during the past two years in Madera County, the City of Madera, and the City of Chowchilla. This will be helpful in order for us to better understand the transportation and transit projects MCTC & other relevant agencies in Madera County have prioritized with the funding that has been available in the last few years.

⁴ For instance, since the bus only runs two times a day, two days a week in La Vina, the infrequency of bus routes make transit-dependent persons absolutely unable to rely on public transit for doctor’s appointments, grocery shopping, going to work, or any other essential trip.

⁵ See discussion *supra* Part I (E)



Thank you in advance for your attention to these comments and to our request for additional information. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions.

Gratefully,

Leticia Casillas Luquin
Policy Advocate



April 21, 2021
Madera County Transportation Commission
2001 Howard Rd, Ste 201
Madera, CA 93637

Submitted electronically via email to: publiccomment@maderactc.org

Re: Comments on Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County

Dear Commissioners Rodriguez, Wheeler, Ahmed, Frazier, Gallegos, and Poythress,

I am writing regarding the unmet transit needs hearing process. Our organization continues to hear from residents in Fairmead, La Viña, the City of Madera, and other communities in Madera County whose transit needs remain unmet by this agency, despite our participation in this process for the past several years. In this letter, we will list the unmet transit needs that residents have elevated to us in the past few months and request additional information from this agency regarding use of transportation and transit funding. Attached alongside this letter, I have also resubmitted our comment letters from the last two years' unmet transit needs survey process regarding unmet transit needs and comments regarding this process that we have elevated in previous years, which remain unaddressed by MCTC.

We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this important public process and ask that the feedback we have received from community members on the ground be incorporated so that all Madera County residents have access to reliable, equitable, and affordable public transportation.

I. Unmet Transit Needs

In conversations with residents from the City of Madera, La Vina, and Fairmead in the past few months, community leaders and transit users have highlighted the following unmet transit needs:

- A. Transit users in the City of Madera report up to one hour wait times for buses on occasion, and expressed the need for routes in the City of Madera to run more frequently.
- B. Residents and transit users report a need to expand rate assistance programs to provide free rides to people who are unable to pay their bus fare but who have transit needs nonetheless. This need was raised during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many transit users have experienced additional financial hardships.
- C. Residents and transit users report a need for street lighting in La Vina and Fairmead to ensure transit users' first and last miles are safely lit.
- D. Residents and transit users continue to elevate the need for wastebaskets at bus stops in the City of Madera.



- E. Residents and transit users in unincorporated communities have identified streets that need repavement and clean mobility infrastructure like sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lighting in order to facilitate their first and last miles, and thus, their use of public transit. A few examples that were elevated in our conversations were sidewalks and street lighting along Avenue 9 and within the subdivision of homes located in La Vina, and road repavement to Rd 26 in Madera Acres, Rd 29 in Parksdale, and Valerie Avenue in Madera Acres.
- F. Resident and transit users report the need for electronic bus signs on buses and at bus stops. At bus stops, an electronic sign should indicate the estimated time of arrival of the bus and its destination along its current route, and electronic signs on the buses should confirm the direction in which the bus is travelling along its route with its final destination. Residents report that this will greatly improve the user-friendliness of public transit in Madera County and encourage ridership.
- G. Residents and transit users in La Vina continue to elevate the need for more frequent routes between La Vina and the City of Madera. Currently, the bus only runs on Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving transit-dependent persons with no other means of transportation without access to basic amenities (including healthcare, food, and other emergency services) most days of the week.
- H. Lastly, residents and transit users in Fairmead have elevated the need to continue working towards installation of a second bus stop in Fairmead. As we understand it, the status of this project is pending collaboration between the Fresno EOC and Madera County Public Works. We ask that MCTC direct these agencies to continue their work on this project as soon as possible, and oversee progress to ensure this project stays on track.

II. Request for Additional Information

Lastly, our organization requests a breakdown of transportation funding (whether from general fund dollars, local tax revenue, grant funding, or any other source of revenue) and expenditures on transportation and transit-related projects during the past two years in Madera County, the City of Madera, and the City of Chowchilla. This will be helpful in order for us to better understand the transportation and transit projects MCTC & other relevant agencies in Madera County have prioritized with the funding that has been available in the last few years.

Thank you in advance for your attention to these comments and to our request for additional information. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions.

Gratefully,

Madeline Harris
Policy Advocate



May 20, 2020
Madera County Transportation Commission
2001 Howard Rd, Ste 201
Madera, CA 93637

Submitted electronically via email to: publiccomment@maderactc.org

Re: Comments on Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County

Dear Commissioners Ahmed, Medellin, J. Rodriguez, Wheeler, M. Rodriguez, and Frazier,

I am writing to provide feedback based on our continued collaboration with residents in Fairmead, La Viña, and the City of Madera on transit needs that remain unmet by MCTC, as well as some comments regarding the substance of the unmet transit needs process itself. I have attached our comment letter from last year's unmet transit needs survey process as well as the response to comments I received from you in the mail for your reference. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this important public process and ask that the feedback we have received from community members on the ground be taken to heart and incorporated so that all Madera County residents have access to reliable, equitable, and affordable public transportation.

Regarding the process of the Unmet Transit Needs Survey, Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) must immediately alter its definition of "unmet transit needs" so that the Commission can be truly responsive to comments from the public. According to the response to comments document that we received last year after participating in the unmet transit needs process, MCTC's current definition of "unmet transit needs" "includes all essential trip requests by transit-dependent persons for which there is no other convenient means of transportation." This definition causes harm to communities lacking sufficient public transit options and to the region at large in a few ways.

I. "Persons for Which There is no Other Convenient Means of Transportation" are Not the Only People with Unmet Transit Needs in the Region

First, the definition operates on an assumption that public transit is a last resort for mobility wherever personal vehicles are not available (i.e. "transit-dependent persons *for which there is no other convenient means of transportation*"). As you know, the San Joaquin Valley is the most polluted air basin in the United States, and is consistently in violation of EPA standards for air quality. As the coronavirus pandemic has shown us, through significant improvements in air quality correlated with the vast reduction in vehicle miles traveled occurring during shelter-in-place orders, a significant amount of pollution in the San Joaquin Valley stems from emissions from vehicles. Rather than solely define unmet transit needs as gaps in access to essential services where no other option is available, MCTC should recognize *all* unmet transit needs in



order to address *all* gaps in services that have widespread community acceptance, and move forward towards creating an effective transit system that encourages ridership and reduces vehicle miles travelled in the region. This recommendation is consistent with goal number nine from the current Regional Transportation Plan which commits “to protect the environment and health of our residents by improving air quality and encouraging active transportation,” as well as goal number two which aims to “promote intermodal transportation systems that are fully accessible” (pg. 1-8, 1-9). Beyond the air quality benefits of reducing emissions from single passenger vehicles, we believe that planning transit infrastructure that is well designed based on community input surrounding *all* residents’ needs will draw in greater ridership, thus bringing in more fare revenue to the transit system for a greater return on investments in these programs.

II. Unmet Transit Needs Go Beyond “Essential Trip Requests”

Second, the definition limits MCTC’s understanding of “unmet transit needs” to “essential trip requests by transit-dependent persons.” Though “essential trip requests” was not defined in the response to comments document that we received and the definition is thus unclear, it appears to further limit the Commission’s understanding of “unmet transit needs.” Transit-dependent persons have the right to live full lives that are not solely limited to their homes and to essential services. MCTC should fully consider the public comments calling for greater access to public transit and other VMT-reducing mobility related to “non-essential” trips as a result.

III. MCTC’s Definition of Unmet Transit Needs is Too Narrow

Third, as indicated by the issues highlighted above, the current definition is unreasonably narrow. In fact, the Commission’s working definition is so narrowly crafted that it allowed MCTC to determine that none of the public comments received in last year’s Unmet Transit Needs process qualified as “unmet needs” that were “reasonable to meet.” These needs included requests for additional bus stops along existing routes, increased frequency of existing routes, improvements to the Dial-a-Ride hotline to make it more consistent, user-friendly, and language-accessible, hygiene improvements to buses, clear signage on buses and bus stops, and pursuit of additional funding to explore innovations to rural transit for unincorporated communities. All of these comments constitute clear needs related to the accessibility, reliability, and effectiveness of the region’s transit system, yet MCTC determined that “there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet in FY2019/20 within the jurisdiction of the City of Madera, County of Madera, and City of Chowchilla.”

As a result of these three issues with the working definition of “unmet transit needs,” the definition must be amended to include *all* unmet transit needs of Madera County residents that are reasonable to meet.

IV. MCTC Must Alter the Criteria for Needs that are “Reasonable to Meet”



In addition to changing the definition of “unmet transit needs,” the Commission must alter the criteria being used to determine if a need is “reasonable to meet” in the following ways in order to honor this important public process, meaningfully respond to comments, and work towards accomplishing the goals defined in the Regional Transportation Plan:

- A. The Commission must define “feasible.”
- B. The Commission must define what constitutes serving a “significant number of the population.” Furthermore, the definition of “significant number of the population” should be based on projected ridership should the unmet needs outlined in public comments be met, rather than on current ridership numbers.
- C. Regarding criteria (4) which indicates that unmet needs which are reasonable to meet must be “economical,” MCTC must publish and present updates to the public to demonstrate that the Commission is making every effort to pursue all relevant funding sources at the regional, state, and federal level that could meet the unmet needs addressed in residents’ comments in an economically feasible way.

Aside from these comments regarding the unmet transit needs process itself, I have attached comments (our letter from last year’s FY2019-20 unmet transit needs hearing) noting all of the unmet transit needs that our organization heard from residents in Fairmead, La Viña, and the City of Madera. I am submitting these comments once again for your consideration since, to our knowledge, none of these needs have been met. (That said, we acknowledge that the Fresno Economic Opportunity Commission has indicated their intent to incorporate a second bus stop in the community of Fairmead, and we look forward to continuing to partner with the community and with Fresno EOC to make that happen as soon as possible.)

Once more, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in this important public process, and please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions.

Gratefully,

Madeline Harris
Policy Advocate



April 15, 2019

Amelia Davies
Madera County Transportation Commission
2001 Howard Rd, Ste 201
Madera, CA 93637

Re: Comments on Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County

Dear Ms. Davies,

I am writing on behalf of Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability and our several community partners throughout Madera County to provide input for Madera County Transportation Commission's (MCTC) annual "unmet transit needs" survey and public comment process. These comments arise from our many conversations with residents throughout the county regarding the existing transit infrastructures established to serve them. We at Leadership Counsel are grateful for the opportunity to provide comments on this matter because we deeply value government agencies' fervent, genuine inclusion and incorporation of public input in the planning of the County's communities. Furthermore, we especially value your consideration of public input from disadvantaged communities who are least benefited by the status quo.

The following comments are a compilation of feedback from residents in Fairmead, La Viña, and the City of Madera, and they constitute our effort to assist MCTC in receiving and incorporating public input into future transit infrastructure planning.

Unmet Need: Route and schedule improvements for the Chowchilla-Fairmead-Madera Connection to ensure a dependable and user-friendly service

The existing Chowchilla-Fairmead-Madera route establishes essential connectivity between Madera and Chowchilla transit routes with one stop in the community of Fairmead. The route runs five times per day between Monday and Friday. The community of Fairmead is not home to any commercial businesses or stores, so this route presents the only opportunity for transit-dependent Fairmead residents to access food and other essential goods. For this reason, the route and schedule must be accessible and dependable.

In order to ensure that this route is user-friendly, residents in Fairmead have identified the following needs:

- (a) The Chowchilla-Fairmead-Madera schedule must be extended to the weekends to afford transit users improved access to this essential route;
- (b) The schedule must be updated to include more frequent routes, both Northbound to Chowchilla and Southbound to Madera; and
- (c) A second stop must be added on the Northern side of Fairmead around the vicinity of Avenue 23 to ensure that this crucial transit service is accessible to residents throughout the entire community. Provided that the only existing stop in Fairmead is located at Galilee Missionary Baptist Church on Avenue 22 ½ near Fairmead Blvd, riders who live on the other side of the community are not able to easily access the route.

While we recognize the challenges of providing successful transit infrastructure to rural communities with low population densities, we believe these suggested improvements would make the County's current and future investments in the Chowchilla-Fairmead-Madera bus route more worthwhile because Fairmead residents note that these improvements would increase ridership significantly. Currently, there are existing and potential transit users in the community who say they would use this service more consistently if it were more dependable and accessible.

Unmet need: Increased frequency of routes for Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-La Viña Transit

The Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-La Viña transit circuit runs twice daily on Wednesdays and Fridays only in order to connect these three communities with the transit system of the City of Madera. Currently, transit users must depart from La Viña at 9:15am and will arrive in Madera at 9:49am. They are then unable to depart from Madera en route back to La Viña until 1:00pm. On the other hand, if, for example, riders who depend on this circuit for medical appointments, which can often become extended or delayed, miss the bus back to La Viña at 1:00 pm, there are no additional returning routes until the following Wednesday or Friday.

The infrequency of this schedule results in a public transit circuit that is undependable and inaccessible for residents. Community members in La Viña note that (a) extending the circuit's schedule into the rest of the week (including weekends) and (b) implementing additional routes during the day would vastly increase ridership.

Growing and improving this particular program would not only be a worthwhile investment for encouraging ridership; rather, expansion of this circuit would also move the county closer toward its goal of "identify[ing] reliable transportation choices that support a diverse population" as outlined in the current Regional Transportation Plan (1-8).

Unmet need: Improvements to the MAX and "Dial-a-Ride" Systems in the City of Madera aimed at creating more equitable and user-friendly transit services

The following requested improvements were readily identified by transit users in the City of

Madera as concrete changes that would encourage ridership, provide more equitable services, and help the city meet its goals related to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the current Regional Transportation Plan identifies “transit enhancements” to the MAX transit system as well as “Operating Assistance” to Dial-a-Ride (DAR) as “Planned Transit Improvement” projects with funding allotments for each year beginning in 2014 until 2040 (Table 5-5). The following improvements recommended by MAX and DAR system users fall within the scope of these project descriptions.

I. Re-opening of the Walmart stop along Routes 1 and 2 in Northwest Madera

MAX riders point out that temporary closure of the Walmart bus stop at this crucial transit junction has increased barriers to public transit use, given that shoppers must cross a major thoroughfare (W Cleveland Ave) then proceed to walk an additional block to the next bus stop at the Walgreens location.

As a result, the closure makes household shopping at this location challenging and burdensome for transit users. Madera residents therefore request that the Walmart bus stop be re-installed and re-opened as soon as possible.

II. Installation of trash cans on MAX buses

MAX riders request that garbage cans be installed at the front and back of each transit vehicle in order to maintain clean and welcoming buses.

III. Thirty-minute incremented bus service on all MAX routes

While MAX riders in the City of Madera acknowledge that some of the routes have been improved such that the bus arrives at each stop every thirty minutes, they point out that some of the routes still only provide bus service once each hour. Residents who rely on public transit note that half-hour arrival increments make the service much more dependable. This is especially important in light of riders’ concerns about getting passed by bus drivers and left at their bus stops even when they are on time to their bus stops and have properly signaled for drivers to stop. While this concern is connected to transit riders’ requests that drivers undergo training (see below), it also further communicates the importance of a consistent and frequent bus schedule wherein riders do not have to wait an additional hour when missing a bus.

IV. Improvements to the “Dial-a-Ride” Dispatch System

Madera county residents and “Dial-a-Ride” (DAR) users report issues with language inaccessibility and systemic inconsistencies on the dispatch system that must be addressed. First, DAR users report that some dispatchers instruct them to reserve their ride 24 hours in advance. Other dispatchers say they must give 2 hours’ notice, and others still request ride reservations *one week* in advance. Not only do these

inconsistent timelines for advance notice make the service impractical and unusable for most riders, they also contribute to confusion.

As a result, DAR users request training for dispatch operators in addition to consistent publishing of DAR user guidelines online to ensure an accessible and consistent system that works well for all transit users.

Additionally, DAR users report being placed on long holds in order to access the Spanish language line. On occasion, these hold times last so long that DAR users become unable to access the ride they hoped to reserve. For this reason, residents urge MCTC to train DAR dispatchers in basic language accessibility practices and ensure that Spanish-speaking dispatchers are available during all hours of operation. MCTC should also ensure DAR access to a language line in the likely event that DAR users do not speak English or Spanish.

V. Extended MAX service operation on weekends

Residents continually note the need to expand bus services to Sundays on all routes in the City of Madera. Additionally, residents and transit users note that the current hours of operation on Saturday are insufficient and undependable, and request that the hours be extended on Saturdays to better parallel the hours of operation during the week.

VI. Mandated discrimination prevention and accessibility training for all Madera County Transit Staff

Residents report a need for drivers, dispatchers, and all other transit service staff to receive training in intercultural competency, accessibility for people with disabilities, and other elements of discrimination prevention training in order to ensure equitable access and improved service for folks of all nationalities, ethnicities, genders, incomes, ages, and ability levels.

VII. Equip bus stops and buses with route-related signage

MAX riders in the City of Madera voice a need for directional guidance at bus stops and on buses. For example, buses should be equipped with digitized signage indicating the bus's direction (eg: "Northbound" versus "Southbound"), as well as the next stop or final destination (eg: "Walgreens" or "Medical Center"). Riders have expressed that this will prevent new transit users from becoming lost or boarding the wrong bus, which will make MAX services more accessible and welcoming to new riders and in turn facilitate increased use of MAX transit.

VIII. Apply for grant funding to secure free rides for students

Residents request that MCTC follow in the footsteps of other jurisdictions like Ventura County which have launched pilot programs allowing students to ride public transit for free. Madera residents suggest that MCTC secure free transit access for children and adult students who depend on public transit to get to school each day. Free rides will be granted to students who show their student ID upon boarding. MCTC can utilize Low Carbon Operations Transportation Program funding to initiate such a pilot program.

Unmet need: Pursuit of regional funding for an electric rural rideshare program

MCTC can also utilize Low Carbon Operations Transportation Program funding in addition to Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds for the purpose of launching a rural rideshare pilot program with an electric fleet of vehicles. Unincorporated communities in Fresno and Merced Counties have launched such programs for the purpose of expanding rural access to transit and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through community-based and community-operated pilot programs of this nature.

Lastly, since residents and transit users across Madera County readily identified unmet needs and areas for transit improvement throughout the region during our conversations, we urge MCTC to consider conducting their own formal and thorough assessment of all existing routes and potential deficiencies in Madera County. Such an assessment would allow for staff and residents to collaborate towards a more complete and transparent understanding of transit needs beyond the limited scope of the unmet transit needs survey process.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to submit comments as part of this important public process, and will gladly serve as a resource to MCTC and the transit agencies in Madera County in seeking to address these unmet needs.

Sincerely,

Madeline Harris
Policy Advocate
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability