

# 2015

## Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan





**2015 Madera County Coordinated Public  
Transit Human Services Transportation  
Plan**

**Prepared by the  
Madera County Transportation Commission  
2001 Howard Road  
Madera, CA 93637  
(559)675-0721**

**July 22, 2015**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
PURPOSE .....	1
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION .....	2
STUDY PROCESS .....	4
CHAPTER 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS .....	6
CURRENT LAND USE .....	6
POPULATION TRENDS.....	6
INCOME AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.....	7
TRANSIT DEPENDENT POPULATIONS.....	7
EMPLOYMENT.....	9
COMMUTE PATTERNS .....	10
CHAPTER 3 TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS .....	12
EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION .....	12
SOCIAL SERVICE TRANSPORTATION .....	13
PRIVATE PROVIDERS .....	14
PASSENGER RAIL/SUPPORT FACILITIES.....	14
OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS .....	15
CHAPTER 3 TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ASSESMENT .....	16
EXISTING COORDINATION OF SERVICES .....	16
POTENTIAL COORDINATION OPPORTUNITIES.....	16
MAJOR BARRIERS TO COORDINATION.....	16
DUPLICATION OF SERVICES .....	17
GAPS IN SERVICE .....	18
UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS .....	18
CHAPTER 5 COORDINATION STRATEGIES .....	19
EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	19
COORDINATION STRATEGIES .....	20

## LIST OF TABLES

2-1 MADERA COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS.....	7
2-2 MADERA COUNTY MAJOR EMPLOYERS.....	10
3-1 SOCIAL SERVICE TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS IN MADERA COUNTY.....	14

## LIST OF FIGURES

2-1 DISADVANTAGED PERSONS IN MADERA COUNTY.....	6
2-2 ELDERLY PERSONS IN MADERA COUNTY .....	8
2-3 PERSONS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL .....	8
2-1 VEHICLES PER HOUSEHOLD .....	9
2-2 MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN MADERA COUNTY .....	10

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## PURPOSE

Madera County is located in California's San Joaquin Central Valley. Encompassing 2,147 square miles, the County is situated in the geographic center of the State of California along State Route (SR) 99, approximately 18 miles north of Fresno. The County has an average altitude of 265 feet ranging from 180 to 13,000 feet above sea level. The San Joaquin River forms the south and west boundaries with Fresno County. To the north, the Fresno River forms a portion of the boundary with Merced County. Mariposa County forms the remainder of the northern boundary. The crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains forms the eastern boundary with Mono County. Generally, the County can be divided into three broad geographic regions – the Valley area on the west; the foothills between Madera Canal and the 3,500 foot elevation contour; and the mountains from the 3,500 foot contour to the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Madera County is served by a variety of human service organizations, senior center, private transportation companies and one public transit operator. Transit funding is limited at both the state and federal level. Therefore, it is important for these small organizations to coordinate transportation services in order to maximize mobility for residents and eliminate duplication of services.

The primary focus of this project is to develop and refine existing implementable strategies that increase mobility for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes through public and stakeholder input for the period of 2015 to 2020. The strategies update the current Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan and involve the public transit operator's private transportation providers, non-profit transportation providers or tribal transportation providers.

### ***Federal Grant Eligibility***

MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century), signed into law on July 6, 2012, is the nation's key surface transportation program, replacing SAFETEA-LU (the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users). With the passage of SAFETEA-LU, agencies receiving funding from any of the three Federal Transit Administration (FTA) human-services transportation programs, Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC; Section 5316), and New Freedom (Section 5317), must certify that the projects to be funded have been selected in the context of a locally developed, coordinated public transit/human-services transportation plan. Under MAP-21, such projects still must meet that requirement in order to be funded. The structure of programs under MAP-21, however, is different. While JARC no longer exists as a separate program, funding for JARC types of activities is available under FTA's urban and rural formula programs (Section 5311). Another change is that the New Freedom program was merged with the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program as the Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310). This updated plan will adhere to FTA Madera County Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan, 2014 guidance, to ensure that local programs and services in Madera County remain eligible for funding under FTA Section 5310 and 5311.

Federal regulations set forth basic guidelines for developing a Coordinated Plan. These requirements are listed in FTA circular 9070.1F, and include:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit)
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery
- Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified Guidelines allow for the depth of the plan to be based on available resources.

## POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION

### *Public Transit Funding Sources*

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administers a variety of public transit grant programs across the nation. The latest legislation for funding federal surface transportation programs is MAP-21, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, signed into law on July 6, 2012. Funding surface transportation programs at over \$105 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2013 and 2014, MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005 (which was extended ten times). MAP-21 is intended to create a streamlined and performance-based surface transportation program building on many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies established in 1991. Below is a description of the various grant programs, some of which are new, and some of which have been consolidated or changed from previous programs.

#### FTA Section 5311 Rural Area Formula Grants

This program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to support public transportation in rural areas, defined as areas with fewer than 50,000 residents. Funding is based on a formula that uses land area, population, and transit service. The program remains largely unchanged with a few notable exceptions:

- Job access and reverse commute (JARC) activities eligible: Activities eligible under the former JARC program, which provided services to low-income individuals to access jobs, are now eligible under the Rural Area Formula program (5311). In addition, the formula now includes the number of low-income individuals as a factor. There is no floor or ceiling on the amount of funds that can be spent on job access and reverse commute activities. JARC projects must be derived from a Coordinated Plan.
- Tribal Program: The Tribal program now consists of a \$25 million formula program and a \$5 million discretionary grant program. Formula factors include vehicle revenue miles and the number of low-income individuals residing on tribal lands.
- Other Programs: The set-aside for States for administration, planning, and technical assistance is reduced from 15 to 10 percent. The cost of the unsubsidized portion of privately provided intercity bus service that connects feeder service is now eligible as in-kind local match.

For the FTA 5311 program, a 16.43 percent local match is required for capital programs and a 47.77 percent match for operating expenditures. The bulk of the funds are apportioned directly to rural counties based on population levels. The remaining funds are distributed by Caltrans on a discretionary basis and are typically used for capital purposes.

### FTA Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

This program provides formula funding to increase the mobility of seniors and persons with disabilities. Funds are apportioned based on each State's share of the targeted populations and are now apportioned to both non-urbanized (for all areas with population under 200,000) and large urbanized areas (over 200,000). The former New Freedom program (5317) is folded into this program. The New Freedom program provided grants for services for individuals with disabilities that went above and beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Activities eligible under New Freedom are now eligible under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program.

Projects selected for funding must be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan. At least 55 percent of program funds must be spent on the types of capital projects eligible under the former section 5310 -- public transportation projects planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. The remaining 45 percent may be used for: public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA; public transportation projects that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on complementary paratransit; or, alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities. Using these funds for operating expenses requires a 50 percent local match while using these funds for capital expenses (including acquisition of public transportation services) requires a 20 percent local match.

### Toll Credit Funds in Lieu of Non-Federal Match Funds

Federal-aid highway and transit projects typically require the project sponsors to provide a certain amount of non-federal funds as match to the federal funds, as described above. Through the use of "Transportation Development Credits" (sometimes referred to as toll revenue credits), the non-federal share match requirement in California can be met by applying an equal amount of Transportation Development Credit and therefore allow a project to be funded with up to 100% federal funds for federally participating costs.

Caltrans has been granted permission by the FTA to utilize Toll Credits and in the past has made credits available for FTA Section 5310, 5311, 5316, and 5317 programs. At this time it is unclear whether or not Toll Credits will be made available as local match for FTA 5310 projects for the next funding cycle.

### Transportation Development Act Local Transportation Fund Program

A mainstay of funding for transit programs in California is provided by the Transportation Development Act (TDA). The major portion of TDA funds are provided through the Local Transportation Fund (LTF). These funds are generated by a 1/4 cent statewide sales tax, returned to the county of origin. The returned funds must be spent for the following purposes:

- Two percent may be provided for bicycle facilities per TDA statues. (Article 4 and 4.5)
- 
- Up to five percent may be claimed by a CTSA for its operating costs, purchasing vehicles or purchase of communications and data processing equipment. (Article 4.5)
- The remaining funds must be spent for transit and paratransit purposes, unless a finding is made by the Transportation Commission that no unmet transit needs exist that can be reasonably met. (Article 4 or 8)



- If a finding of no unmet needs reasonable to meet is made, remaining funds can be spent on roadway construction and maintenance purposes. (Article 8)

### State Transit Assistance (STA) Funds

In addition to LTF funding, the TDA includes a State Transit Assistance (STA) funding mechanism which is derived from the statewide sales tax on diesel fuel. Statute requires that 50% of STA funds be allocated according to population and 50% be allocated according to operator revenues from the prior fiscal year.

### ***Other Human Service Agency Funding Sources***

There are a variety of federal and state grant programs for social service agencies. Each one has specific eligible uses. Common social service funding sources which can be used for transportation purposes are listed below.

#### Older Americans Act (1965)

The Older Americans Act (OAA) address senior's access to health care and their general well begin. The Act established the federal Administration on Aging which is charged with the duty of implementing a range of assistance programs aimed at seniors, especially those at risk of losing their independence. Providing access to nutrition, medical and other essential services are all goals of the Act. There is no specific portion of the funding dedicated to transportation; however, funding can be used for transportation under Title II (Support and Access Services, Title IV (Grants to American Indian Tribes), and the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) program.

#### Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal is California's health care program for children and adults with limited income and resources. Medi-Cal will pay transportation expenses for NEMT trips for individuals who require wheelchair van, ambulance, litter van or simply a high level of care. However, the transportation provider must be licensed by Medi-Cal.

## **STUDY PROCESS**

### ***Coordinated Plan Oversight Committee***

MCTC understands the importance of input and consensus and utilizes a collaborative process to create Coordinated Plan document. Throughout development of this Plan, MCTC sought the opinion and feedback of interested parties, including local transit agencies, various social agencies, tribal governments, non-profit organizations, other stakeholders, and the general public. In-depth stakeholder interviews were conducted with 12 individuals representing seven organizations. The focus of the interviews was on understanding awareness and perception of transit services among these individuals, and exploring their views on transportation needs and gaps among their constituents.

MCTC utilized public outreach feedback and comments pertaining to public transit service collected over the last five years from such activities as the Unmet Transit Needs process, Regional Transportation Plan

and Sustainable Communities Strategy planning, Blueprint Planning as well as feedback and comments received during the development of this plan.

The stakeholders were invited to become members of the Coordinated Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC) and were involved in development of the Coordinated Plan. Over the course of there (3) meetings, MCTC gained insight into their transportation issues and needs.

On February 23, a kick-off meeting was conducted with the Coordinated Plan Oversight Committee (Local Transit Agencies staff, Madera County Transportation Commission staff, members of the public and other representatives of human service agencies). The overall focus of the coordinated planning effort was refined. Participants were provided with an overview of the process. An inventory of public transportation and human services available in Madera County was prepared. A

On March 26, another CPOC meeting was conducted. Representatives from 15 agencies were in attendance. A robust discussion of identified needs and potential strategies to alleviate said needs commenced. Results of these discussions set a basis for the needs assessment and to formulate coordinated strategies. During this meeting the group reviewed and ranked the draft coordinated strategies.

A regular meeting of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC) was Held April 2<sup>nd</sup>. This meeting was attended by members of the CPOC as well. The contents of the Coordinated Plan were vetted through this group during this meeting.

A follow up SSTAC was held on April 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss Unmet Transit Needs Comments and to discuss final steps of the Coordinated Plan.

### ***Surveys of Transportation Disadvantages Populations and other public outreach activities:***

#### ***Spring Extravaganza - public event***

In March, MCTC staff attended a public event hosted by Madera Community College, "Spring Extravaganza". MCTC staff has collected and over 400 student transportation activity surveys, the preliminary results of the surveys were presented to the Coordinated Plan Oversight Committee during the needs analysis portion of the plan development.

#### ***April 22 - Unmet Needs Transit Hearing***

On April 22, MCTC conducted annual Public Unmet Transit Needs Hearing to obtain input on current Unmet Transit needs. The comments were presented to both the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee and the Coordinated Plan Oversight Committee during the needs analysis portion of the plan development.

## Chapter 2 Existing Conditions

The existing setting forms the basis for transportation demand anticipated to grow as the community's population and employment base expands. This demand will provide the impetus and direction for both the public and private sectors to cooperatively develop effective transportation options.

### CURRENT LAND USES

Generally, the Madera County can be divided into three broad geographic regions – the valley area on the west; the foothills between Madera Canal and the 3,500 foot elevation contour; and the mountains from the 3,500 foot contour to the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The Valley area is generally flat and ranges in elevation from 45 to 1,000 feet. This area contains approximately two-thirds of the County's population and includes the cities of Chowchilla and Madera, as well as the unincorporated communities of Fairmead, Madera Ranchos, and Bonadelle Ranchos. A well-developed agricultural economic base characterizes this area. The foothill area contains the remaining one-third of the County population residing in the unincorporated communities of Oakhurst, Ahwahnee, North Fork, Coarsegold, Raymond and Yosemite Lakes Park. The agricultural base in this area is primarily grazing. Much of the area's employment base is involved in the tourist-related services with a significant commuter component going to Fresno, Madera and other valley employment and service centers. The mountain area is essentially uninhabited with most of the land located in the Sierra National Forest, Yosemite National Park, Devils Postpile National Monument, and the Ansel Adams and John Muir Wilderness Areas. Historically, the national forest area has supported a strong lumber-based economy; however, this has been seriously curtailed by recent environmental actions.

### POPULATION TRENDS

As shown in Table 2-1, Madera County's 2000 population was 123,109. The County's population rose from 41,519 in 1970 to 123,109 in 2000. In 2000, the unincorporated county area comprised 56% of the County population compared to 35% for the City of Madera, and 9% for the City of Chowchilla.

**TABLE 2-1  
MADERA COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS 1970 to 2000**

Location	1970		1980		1990		2000	
	Pop	% of Total Pop	Pop	% of Total Pop	Pop	% of Total Pop	Pop	% of Total Pop
City of Madera	16,044	39%	21,732	34%	29,281	33%	43,207	35%
City of Chowchilla*	4,349	10%	5,122	8%	5,930	7%	11,129	9%
Unincorporated Area	21,126	51%	36,262	58%	52,879	60%	68,775	56%
<b>Total County</b>	<b>41,519</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>63,116</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>88,090</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>123,109</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* 2000 includes population from two women's prisons.

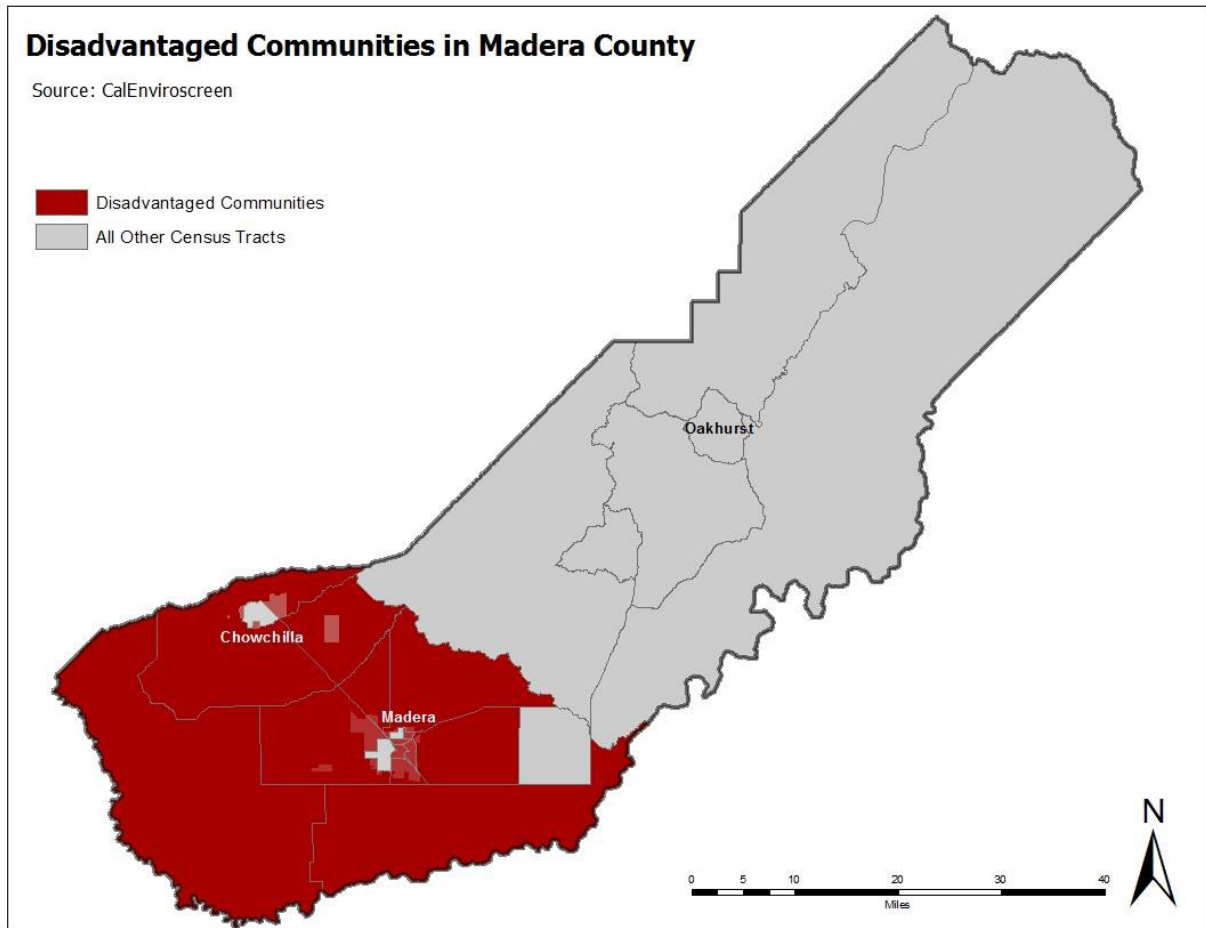
Source: U.S. Census

In 2007, 31.2% of Madera County's population was under 20 years old, 58.6% between 20 and 65 years, and 10.2% over 65 years of age or older. In terms of racial breakdown, 50.2% of the population was Hispanic, 40.8% white (not Hispanic or Latino), 3.8% African-American, 4.5% American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut, and 2.1% Asian or Pacific Islander. Madera County's year 2000 population of 123,109 is projected to reach 281,300 in 2020.

## INCOME AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Lower income levels generally indicate a high degree of transit dependency or the lack of alternative transportation options. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the median household income in Madera County was \$44,655 in 2005. The median income of the Madera, CA Urbanized Area was \$43,439 (in 2007 dollars) with more than 15 percent of the urbanized area's population living below the poverty level. 18.6 percent of children ages 0 to 18 in the Madera urbanized area live below the poverty level.

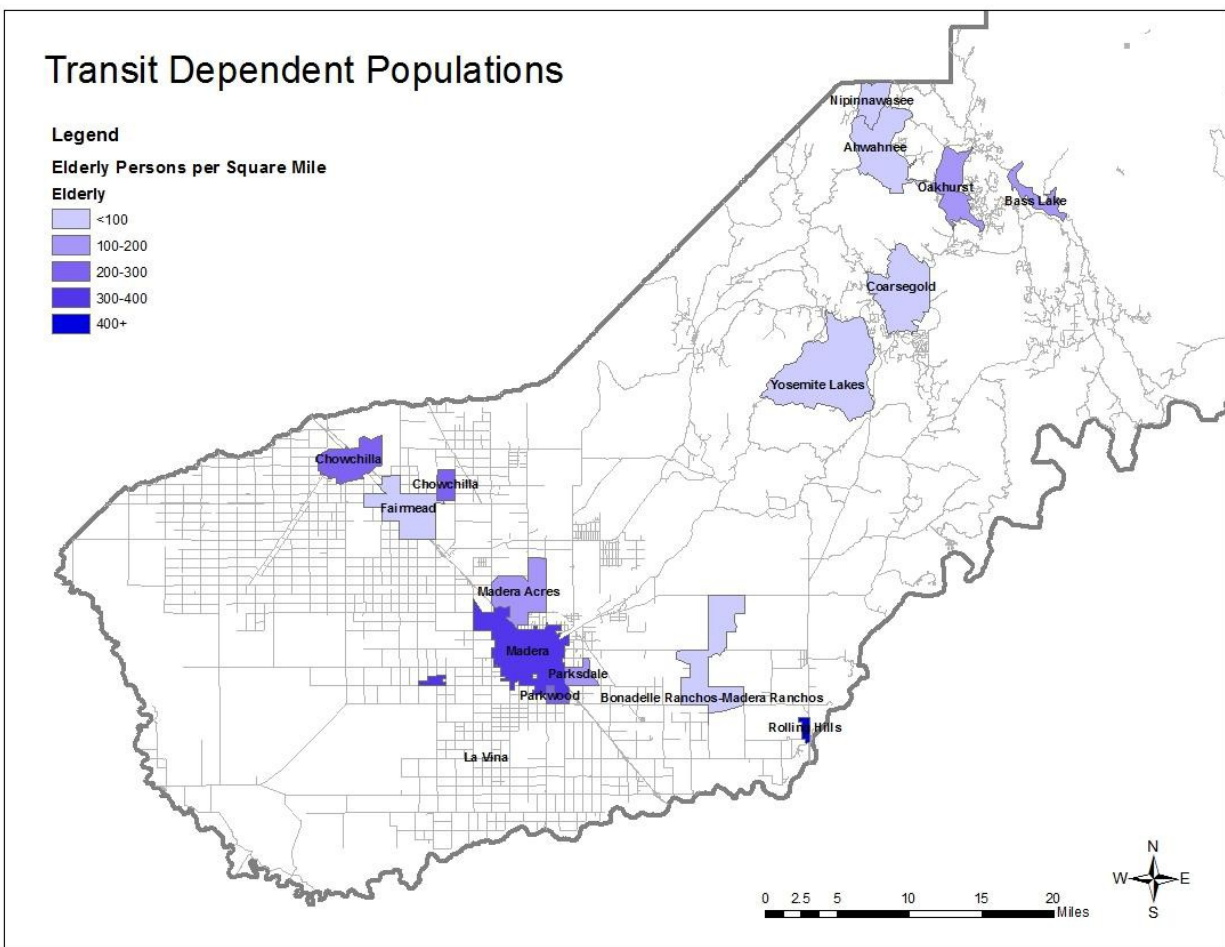
Figure 2-1



## TRANSIT DEPENDENT POPULATIONS

Madera County has made notable progress in addressing many public transit needs throughout the Region. MCTC's "Unmet Transit Needs" process has determined that transit services within the Madera County are meeting the reasonable transit needs of the public. These transit systems provide vital transportation services while reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips, improving air quality, and Madera County's projected population growth over the next 26 years, combined with the number of transit-dependent residents, rising fuel costs, and changing demographics and travel patterns, undoubtedly will impact the demand for transit services. While public transit will continue to play an important role in the mobility of those who are dependent on transit as a lifeline service and increasingly for those residents seeking transportation options, delivery of transit services must be reliable, convenient, and cost-effective.

Figure 2-2



The latest study reflect a total of \$238.4 million in planned transit improvements over the 26-year timeframe of the Plan. This is a 121% increase over transit funding shown in the 2011 RTP (\$107.8 million). Of this total, \$61.4 million or 26% of transit expenditures is projected for transit enhancements above and beyond current operating and fleet costs projected through 2040. These cost projections assume implementation of the “Hybrid Scenario,” continuation at a minimum of current levels of transit services for all systems in the County, and initiation of enhanced transit service in core growth areas. These areas are identified through population and household growth derived from the MCTC transportation model enhancing the overall quality of life for residents throughout the County.

Figure 2-3

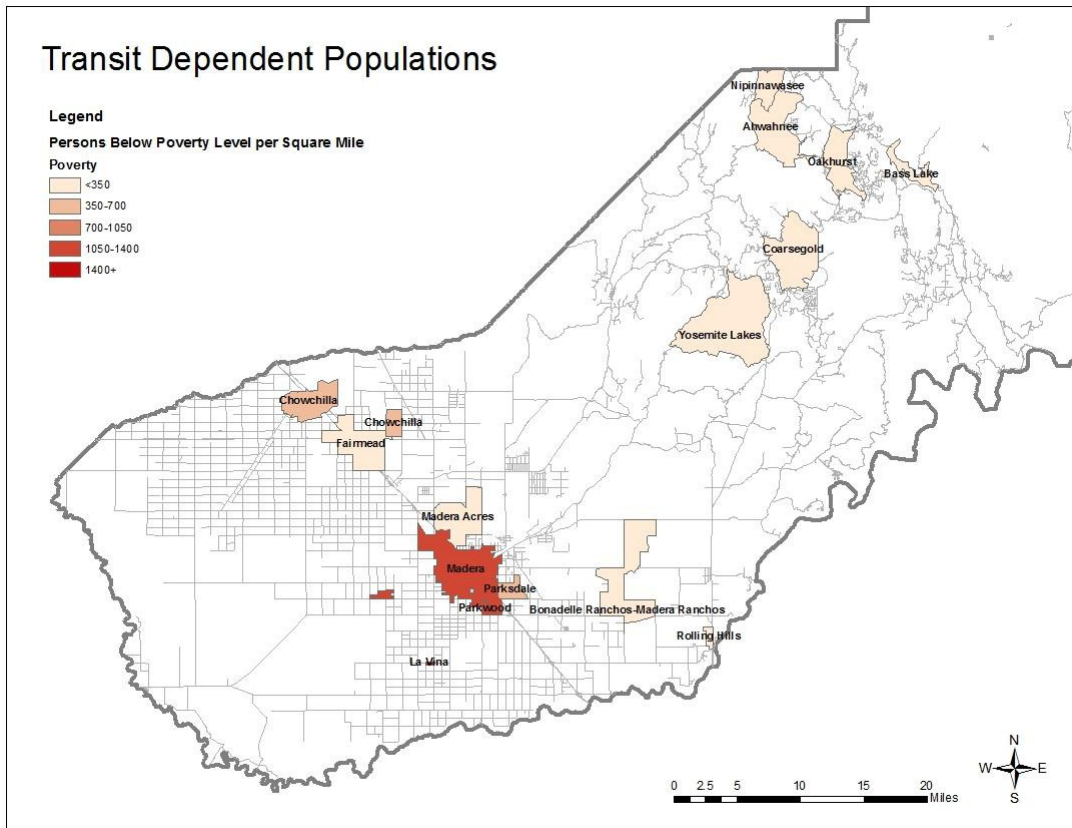
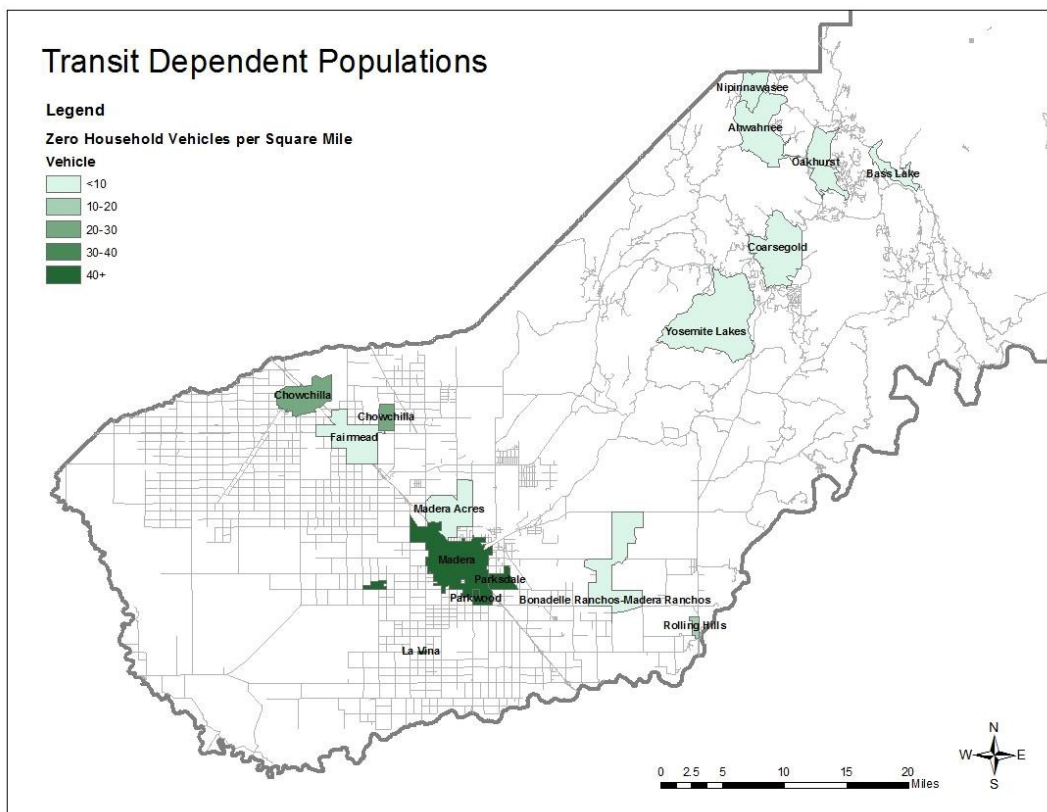


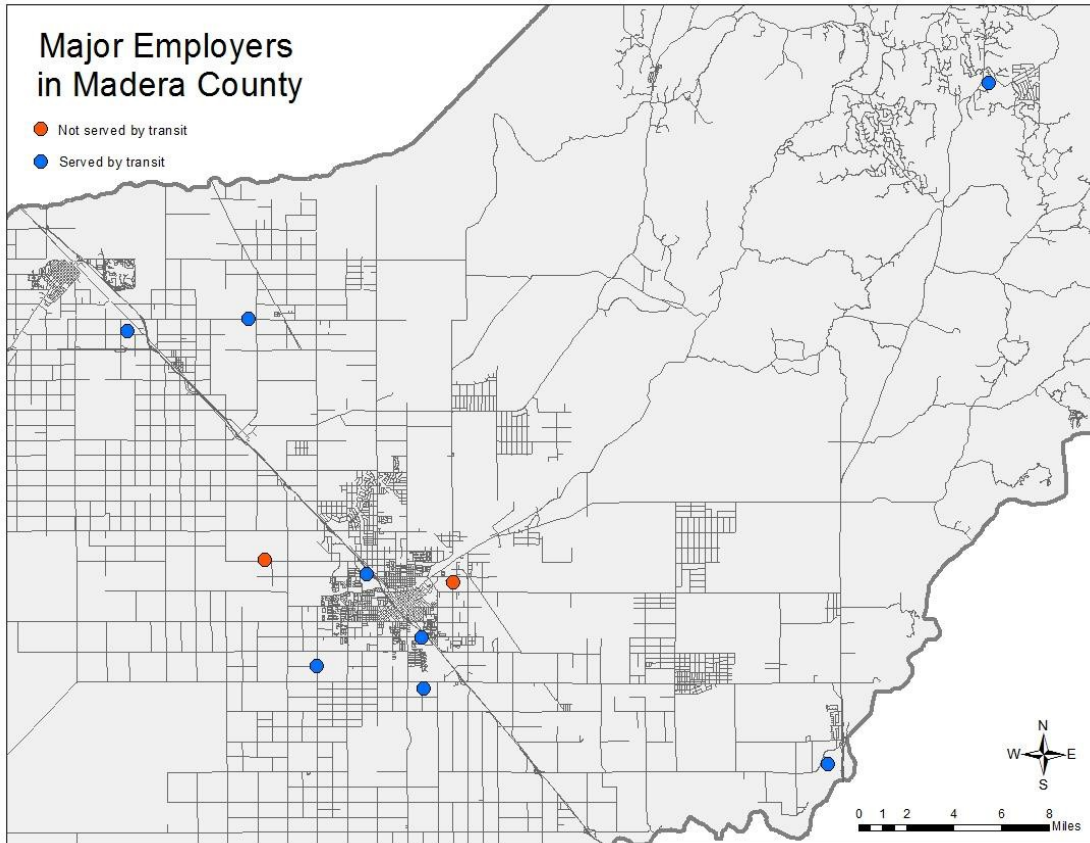
Figure 2-4



## EMPLOYMENT

In 2008, Madera County's agricultural employment comprised 23.8% of jobs and nonagricultural employment 77.3%. Madera County's unemployment rate is 9.4%.

**Figure 2-5**



**TABLE 2-2  
MADERA COUNTY MAJOR EMPLOYERS**

Employer	# of Employees	Location	Served by Transit	Transit Service
Valley Children's Hospital	1000-4999	South East Madera County	Yes	MCC
Chukchansi Gold Resort	1000-4999	Coarsegold	Yes	MCC
Valley State Prison for Women	1000-4999	Chowchilla	Yes	CATX
Madera Community Hospital	500-999	City of Madera	Yes	DAR, MAX, MCC
Mission Bell Winery	500-999	City of Madera	Yes	DAR, MCC
Ardagh Glass	250-499	City of Madera	Yes	MCC
BAC	250-499	City of Madera	No	-
Baltimore Aircoil Co	250-499	City of Madera	No	-
Certain Teed Corp	250-499	City of Chowchilla	Yes	CATX
Lamanuzzi & Pantaleo Cold Stge	250-499	City of Madera	Yes	MCC
San Joaquin Wine Co Inc	250-499	City of Madera	No	-
Walmart	250-499	City of Madera	Yes	DAR, MAX

Source: California Employment Development Department 2013

## COMMUTE PATTERS

In Madera County, the vast majority of workers commute in a single occupancy vehicle. The 2009-2013 American Communities Survey estimates approximately 76.5% drove alone, 13.3% carpooled, 0.2% took transit, 1.9% walked, 1.9% used another mode (taxi, motorcycle, bicycle), and 6.1% worked from home.

Data from the 2011 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics indicates that many workers commute long distances in and out of Madera County. Of the 38,159 people who are employed in Madera County, 19,801 live outside Madera County. Of the 42,581 workers who live in Madera County, 24,223 are employed outside Madera County. Only 19,358 workers are both employed in and live in Madera County.



## Chapter 3 Transportation Providers

### EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transit in Madera County includes Madera Area Express fixed route and Dial-A-Ride, Madera County Connection, Eastern Madera County Senior Bus, Escort Program, Chowchilla Area Transit Express, CatLinx, specialized social service transportation services, Greyhound, and taxi service. Public transportation is provided by fixed-route and demand-response transit systems, as described below.

#### *City of Madera*

##### Madera Area Express

The City of Madera and its environs are served by a number of public and private transportation providers. The City operates the **Madera Area Express (MAX)** fixed-route system and **Dial-A-Ride (DAR)**, a general public demand-responsive system. Both services are operated under contract with First Transit. The fixed-route system is operated weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Service operates primarily within the City limits, as shown in Figure 2-5. The system transports over 145,000 riders annually.



##### Dial-A-Ride

Dial-A-Ride is a general public system primarily serving the elderly and disabled. The service operates weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sundays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The system operates within the Madera urban area covering a five-mile radius from the downtown area, as depicted on Figure 2-5, and transports 37,000 riders annually. This service is funded jointly by the City and County.

#### *City of Chowchilla*

##### Chowchilla Area Transit Express

The City of Chowchilla operates **Chowchilla Area Transit Express (CATX)**, a general public, demand-responsive service. CATX service was initiated in 1995 and incorporated the senior bus program. Service is offered weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The County of Madera funds CATX service for unincorporated portions of the service area. As shown in Figure 2-6, the CATX service area encompasses the City and contiguous unincorporated areas, including Fairmead. Service is provided with two vehicles on weekdays and transports 14,000 riders annually.



##### CatLinx

**CatLinx** inter-city fixed-route service from the City of Chowchilla to the City of Merced was initiated as a pilot service in November 2012. This service provides three roundtrips on weekdays—one in the morning, one in the early afternoon and another in the late afternoon and transports 2000 riders annually.

## ***County of Madera***

### Madera County Connection

The County of Madera operates three transit services, **Madera County Connection (MCC)**, a general public, intercity fixed-route system; the Eastern Madera County Senior Bus, a demand-response service for seniors and disabled; and the Escort Program, a demand-response service providing medical trips. The MCC was initiated in 2001 and provides general public, inter-city fixed-route service. As shown in Figure 2-7, MCC provides access to the communities of Madera, Chowchilla, Fairmead, La Vina, Ripperdan, Eastin Arcola, Madera Ranchos, Yosemite Lakes Park, Coarsegold, Oakhurst, and North Fork. The service operates five days a week from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and transports 25,000 riders annually. The Senior Bus serves the communities of Oakhurst, Coarsegold, Bass Lake and Ahwahnee and transports 4,500 riders annually. The Escort Program provides trips to Madera, Fresno, and Clovis and carries 400 riders annually.



### Eastern Madera County Senior Citizen Bus

Madera County has been providing transportation to Eastern Madera County since 1983. The Senior Citizen Bus serves residents of Oakhurst, Bass Lake, Coarsegold, and Ahwahnee. The purpose of the bus is to provide transportation to medical appointments, senior centers for activities and nutrition programs, shopping and to various businesses in Eastern Madera County for seniors 60 years and older and disabled individuals. The service operates Tuesdays and Thursdays. The bus is wheelchair equipped.

### Eastern Madera County Escort Program

The Eastern Madera County Escort Program serves residents Oakhurst, Bass Lake, Coarsegold, Raymond, North Fork and Ahwahnee. The Eastern Madera County Escort Program utilizes a van vehicle to transport individuals to medical-related appointments in Madera, Fresno and Clovis.

### CalVans

CalVans is a ridesharing program with safe, affordable vans that allow employees to drive they can themselves and others to work, while once agricultural farmworker vanpool program, the service has grown beyond the agricultural industry to include general labor and student vanpooling. CalVans is sponsored by the California Vanpool Authority and currently serves the Counties of Madera, Fresno, Kings, Kern, Merced, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Tulare, Imperial and Ventura.

## **SOCIAL SERVICE TRANSPORTATION**

Five key social service agencies provide transportation in Madera County (reference Table 3-1). These agencies largely provide service to their clients and to specific sites.

**TABLE 3-1  
Social Service Transportation Providers in Madera County**

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY	TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED
Heartland Opportunity Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand-response service</li> <li>• Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.</li> <li>• Serves disabled persons over 18 years old</li> </ul>
Community Action Partnership of Madera County – Head Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed-route transportation to schools</li> <li>• Weekdays from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.</li> <li>• Serves Head Start students</li> </ul>
Pacific Family Health, Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand-response service</li> <li>• Monday thru Saturday from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m.</li> <li>• Serves dialysis patients</li> </ul>
Madera County Behavioral Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service as needed to and from the Madera Counseling Center in the greater Chowchilla, Madera, and Oakhurst communities</li> <li>• Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.</li> <li>• Counseling Center clients</li> </ul>
American Cancer Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer driver program using private vehicles</li> <li>• Serves ambulatory cancer patients</li> </ul>

**PRIVATE PROVIDERS**

Several private carriers provide inter-city services, including Greyhound and Madera Cab Company. Greyhound operates seven days a week from the City of Madera’s Downtown Intermodal Center on North “E” Street. Madera Cab Company provides service in Madera County seven days a week, 24 hours a day. In addition to those private transit services listed above, other private medical transit services are available within the County.

**PASSENGER RAIL/SUPPORT FACILITIES**

Madera County is served by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and the Union Pacific (UP) Railroads. Amtrak operates seven days a week with fourteen (14) daily stops in Madera along the BNSF Railroad alignment. The station is located on Avenue 15½ and Road 29. The nearest stop to the north is Merced and to the south, Fresno. Amtrak services are provided on the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe tracks located east of Madera. The *San Joaquin*



Amtrak route provides passenger rail service to Oakland and Bakersfield four times a day and Sacramento twice a day. Amtrak also provides thruway bus service from various rail stations along the San Joaquin route to cities that are not accessible by rail, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Jose. An Amtrak station opened in November 2010 and is located on Road 26 north of Madera.

## **OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS**

**Central Valley Regional Center** serves as an advocate for persons with developmental disabilities. It identifies specific client and family needs and establishes a person-centered plan and provides the most effective client services through utilization of community resources. It also assists the community in the prevention and early identification of developmental disabilities.

## *Chapter 4 Transportation Needs Assessment*

Federal guidelines related to coordinated transit planning require an assessment of transportation needs for residents with disabilities, older adults, and low-income individuals. The needs assessment for Madera County was developed from input obtained through the review of existing services and needs and coordination with Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee, composed of transit and human service agencies staff, as well as residents with disabilities and older adults.

### **EXISTING COORDINATION OF SERVICES**

Coordination efforts are underway and continuing in Madera County. A number of major public transit milestones have been reached in Madera County changing the way in which transit services are delivered in the region.

Significant fixed-route and demand-responsive service changes in the City of Madera and its environs have resulted from in-depth assessments of transit needs. These studies have resulted in comprehensive planning analyses and notable service improvements.

In addition to assisting passengers with trip planning and other services, the MAX and Dial-A-Ride Manager are in close contact with a wide variety of human service agencies. Specifically, MAX has coordinated with different human service agencies and other regional entities in the area in the following ways:

- Coordinates with riders and agencies to offer timed transfer connections
- Coordinates with the Community Agencies to provide transportation to/from the day program from consumers' homes.
- Social Agencies refer clients to local transit services.
- Multiple agencies purchase MAX, Dial-A-Ride, CATX and MCC bus passes for their clients.

### **POTENTIAL COORDINATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Social agencies have some type of a vehicle available to transport passengers to medical appointments or other needs. In most cases these vehicles cannot be shared with other agencies. However, CATX indicated that their drivers work part time and could be used by other agencies in order to work extra hours. Although this might require some type of special contract arrangement, it is a possibility worth of exploring.

Human service agencies also express an interest in having regular meetings with public transit operators to discuss transportation issues. Meetings could provide an excellent format for coordination and help in better understanding each other's needs.

### **MAJOR BARRIERS TO COORDINATION**

Despite good intentions, there are multiple factors which limit the various transportation providers' ability to coordinate resources and trips. Major barriers to coordination were discussed at the Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee Workshop:

- Multiple human service agencies have small vehicles available to transport passengers to appointments or other critical needs. Typically, vehicle insurance or agency/county rules prohibit the use of these vehicles by other agencies. The use of these vehicles for client transportation purposes is also limited by staff time available. During the survey process, multiple agencies stated that they would provide more transportation if there were dedicated staff to do so.
- The existing MAX, CATX and MCC bus schedules are a barrier for some clients who require transportation to/from afterschool activities or out of county appointments in one day. With the current level of funding, it is not feasible for those services to increase the number of roundtrips. Therefore, many residents find the current bus schedule to be a barrier to using public transit.
- Although small, the fare for using public transit services can dissuade travel by seniors living on a fixed income.
- Some human service agencies are aware of the grant opportunities available to purchase vehicles for the purpose of transporting elderly and disabled clients. However, the regulations and reporting requirements attached to FTA funding vehicles and the lack of staff time to apply for a grant is a barrier to coordinating transportation. The greatest barrier to coordination for many smaller counties is lack of funding. There is simply not enough money available to meet all transportation needs for the target population, particularly in light of the dispersed development pattern and long travel distance in Madera County. As such, the various human service agencies piece meal together trips for the most critical needs.

## DUPLICATION OF SERVICES

The primary goal of coordination is to maximize limited transportation resources by eliminating duplication of the same type of transportation services. Examples of duplication of services may include:

- Multiple agency vans providing transportation along the same route at the same time
- Multiple volunteer driver programs which, if combined, could maximize the use of volunteers as well as administrative staff time
- Vehicles which lay idle for a good portion of the week
- Multiple contracts for vehicle maintenance. Through economies of scale, several agencies could potentially obtain a lower rate for maintenance
- Eligibility requirements for program services sometimes result in duplication of services. For example, grant funding for senior services may only be used to transport seniors even if the van stops near a “non-senior” activity center.

There is not significant duplication of services in Madera County. For the most part, human service agencies refer transit dependent clients to MAX, CATX, MCC and Dial-A-Ride when possible, and only provide transportation to/from destinations outside the public transit service area and hours. A potential duplication of services is the lack of coordination for vehicle maintenance. Per the human agency surveys, most agencies operate normal passenger vehicles which are brought to a local mechanic for maintenance as required. There appears to currently be no vehicle maintenance coordination. Perhaps the purchase of a shared vehicle for multiple agencies through FTA grant funding could eliminate the need for the use of some of the agency vehicles and staff time.

## GAPS IN SERVICE

The gaps in service identified as part of this coordinated planning study are the same as those which have been identified as part of transit planning efforts over the past five years. As with all smaller counties with rural areas, Madera County is plagued with the problem of how to connect transit dependent residents living in remote outlying areas to services in the larger communities. Whether it is due to a lower cost of living or a higher quality of life, there will always be a part of the transit dependent population who live far from the goods and services they require. Unfortunately, it is not anticipated that the level of public transit funding will increase to a point where local transit services can provide more frequent and convenient public transit service to and from all of these areas. Below is a discussion of specific transportation needs for the target population in Madera County.

## UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS

The Transportation Development Act requires that the RTPA establish an appropriate citizen participation process including at least one public hearing represented by the SSTAC to hear the transit needs of the transit disadvantaged population. The following outlines some of the unmet needs for older adults, low income and individuals with disabilities which have been discussed at recent unmet needs hearings.

- Need for transportation to/from outlying areas, such as Madera Community College, to enable students to attend school
- Improve connection between cities Chowchilla and Madera and Madera Children Hospital to close gaps in service and improve connectivity to other routes including Eastern Madera County
- Additional Runs to Madera Children's Hospital, in order to reduce wait time for long hours between runs and increase connectivity to other routes
- Expand Dial-A-Ride to Eastern Madera County residents.
- Service to Madera Ranchos
- Add extra run on Wednesday (MAX)
- Service to community of Raymond
- Request weekend and evening service to allow transit dependent residents to schedule weekend appointments, to go shopping and get to events
- Evening Service, to increase service availability for workers with non-traditional hours and for after-school activities
- Volunteer Driver Program, as an alternative method of expanding transportation service for seniors and disabled
- Improve connections between MAX MCC and CATX Transit in order to reduce wait time for long hours between runs and increase connectivity to other routes
- Improve connectivity for Eastern Madera County residents

## *Chapter 5 Coordinated Strategies*

The final step in the coordinated planning process is to develop strategies to address the gaps in service and transportation needs identified in the previous chapters. The following coordinated strategies are based on the original coordinated strategies set forth in the 2007 Coordinated Plan, updated based on public input and current conditions to ensure that they meet current transportation needs for low income, older adults, and residents with disabilities. These strategies were developed in close coordination with the SSTAC, human service agencies, local transit providers, and community members.

These coordinated strategies are intended to provide general guidance to a local transit providers as well as to human service agencies and other local officials. The primary goal of this document is to provide background information and demonstrate the need for transportation services that can be used for the purpose of securing grant funding and ensuring that it will be well used to address the specific needs of the region. Detailed cost or ridership estimates are not provided, as it is intended these specifics will be finalized at a later stage in the development of transportation services. The coordinated strategies are intentionally broad, in order to allow for flexibility for implementation, as needs and funding sources may change over time. These strategies are designed to maximize current community financial and other resources as well as potential outside funding sources.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Prior to prioritizing the coordinated strategies, each strategy was evaluated by the Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee and the SSTAC according to evaluation criteria developed through the previous coordinated planning effort. Three separate evaluation criteria were set forth and strategies were ranked in the following priority categories, according to how well each one met the evaluation criteria:

- High Priority — Meets all or most of the criteria
- Medium Priority — Meets some of the criteria
- Low Priority — Meets few or none of the criteria

#### *CRITERIA 1: COORDINATION*

How would the strategy build upon existing services? The strategy should:

- Avoid duplication and promote coordination of services and programs
- Allow for and encourage participation of local human service and transportation stakeholders

#### *CRITERIA 2: MEETS DOCUMENTED NEED*

How well does the strategy address transportation gaps or barriers identified through the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan? The strategy should:

- Provide service in a geographic area with limited transportation options
- Serve a geographic area where the greatest number of people need a service
- Improve the mobility of clientele subject to state and federal funding sources (i.e., low income, elderly, persons with disabilities)
- Provide a level of service not currently provided with existing resources
- Preserve and protect existing services



### *CRITERIA 3: FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTATION*

How likely is the strategy to be successfully implemented? The strategy should:

- Be eligible for MAP-21 or other grant funding
  - Result in efficient use of available resources
  - Have a potential project sponsor or individual champion with the operational capacity to carry out the strategy
- Have the potential to be sustained beyond the grant period

### **COORDINATED STRATEGIES (listed in priority order)**

#### *Strategy #1 – Continue to make warranted expansions to service, infrastructure and transit fleet capacity*

As documented in Chapter 3, Madera County has fixed route transportation services as well as human service transportation, pointing to the importance of maintaining and expanding these services where feasible. It is very important to retain and support the service levels that already exist in Madera County. This is a first priority. Many individuals currently rely on both public transportation and human service transportation to meet their mobility needs. Regular replacement and strategic expansion of vehicles for transportation programs for the elderly and disabled through the FTA 5310 program has been an important priority. It is very important that the Madera Region score high in both the Statewide Rural and Urbanized Area FTA 5310 call for projects.

With the release on June 6, 2014 of new Section 5310 program guidance (FTA C 9070.1G), there are substantive changes in project eligibility and in the processes for application for Section 5310 funding. Funds can be provided for capital or for operating projects that support overall program purpose. The new regulatory guidance provides grant funding for capital and operating projects that address one of four areas:

- Public transportation projects for seniors and persons with disabilities where public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate or unavailable.
- Public transportation projects that go beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements
- Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed route and decrease reliance on complimentary paratransit
- Alternative transportation projects that assist seniors and persons with disabilities

Eligible entities continue to be private non-profit organizations or are state or local governmental entities that are approved to coordinated services for seniors and persons with disabilities or who can certify that there are no non-profit organizations that are readily available to provide transportation. Other entities, such as private taxi operators or commercial transportation providers can be subrecipients responsible for the delivery of services.

#### *Strategy #2 - Enhance coordination between existing transportation providers offering intra-regional and interregional trips.*

Enhanced coordination between local transportation providers to help connect riders and offer them more efficient mobility choices. It is important to define changes that can make transit in the Madera Region a more viable alternative to the auto by reducing transit travel times, improving linkages to major trip generations and improving overall productivity, cost effectiveness and sustainability of transit.

To better serve the public and make the existing routes more attractive to riders there must be improvement of coordination between transit providers. One of the proposed solutions is to implement a policy notifying all transit managers about any schedule changes, which could impact the connection with the other services. This is fairly cost effective, but can help to improve overall system functionality and efficiency.

Local operators and transportation providers are encouraged to collaborate on new scheduling decisions. This strategy is already being put to use in Madera County. In the summer of 2015 a new service connecting Fresno to Yosemite Valley will begin making runs along the SR 41 corridor. The MCC manager and the manager of the new SR 41 service will collaborate to explore any feasible schedule changes which may improve connectivity of services.

*Strategy #3 – Develop comprehensive outreach material pertaining to accessing available transportation resources in Madera County across various mediums. (Transportation pocket guide, web portal, Google transit, etc.)*

Unlike traveling in a private vehicle, use of public services requires a significant amount of understanding, planning and coordination by the rider. This includes understanding of what transportation services are available, when they operate and how to access them; planning to arrange appointments and destinations around services that are available; coordination of various systems - demand and response and fixed route.

These can be significant challenges for providing transportation to disadvantaged individuals - a population characterized by limited literacy, high level of limited English proficiency and the associated problems for service agency personnel, lack of familiarity with public transit can make understanding and utilizing a diverse set of transportation difficult. An individual seeking to navigate the array of transportation services available in Madera county needs to consult an array of information resources: MAX, CATX, MCC, Dial-A-Ride and other social transit agencies. Currently information about local transit services is available only online on the MCTC website. Printed route guides and system maps are available for MAX, CATX and MCC. Bus stops are signed, but no additional information is provided at the stop. Nowhere is there a single resource that will help disadvantage residents or social service worker working with an individual seeking ways to utilize public transit, understand the transportation services in Madera County for the trip they needs to make.

To bridge the information gap the Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee recommends:

- to integrate Madera County Services into Google Maps,
- to develop Ridesharing Internet and Mobile Apps
- to develop and distribute a printed, bilingual passenger information guides for all public services,
- to provide of route/schedule information at the bus stop, particularly for low-frequency routs,
- to develop an Online Web Portal that will provide access to comprehensive information about local transportation options and programs.
- to leverage existing community outreach channels to provide the information. This could be done through:
  - ✓ Presentations to local community groups and agencies in their areas.
  - ✓ Working with local groups to identify interest in and/or concerns about new programs.
  - ✓ Promoting new and existing services by distributing flyers and schedules.

- ✓ Providing some local mobility management functions through the provision of information about transportation options and how to access transportation.
- ✓ Bringing attention to the relevance of transportation to other community needs (e.g. health, education, etc.) which cannot be met without transportation.

*Strategy #4 – Formalize a mobility management function to better connect persons with transportation services they need. (Centralized, go to outlet for transportation answers)*

The CPAC points to the need to have human contact in order to close some of the information gaps for hard to reach populations. This strategy recognizes that many individuals need to be reached with trusted messengers that work in the community. Some of these individuals often do not have access to the internet or a cell phone. The transportation coaches are meant to provide information on mobility choices to low-income, mono-lingual, illiterate and disabled populations. The Transportation Coaches could be connected to communities in several different ways. The concept is to add value to the existing network of community outreach and information provided by front line social service agency personnel who work directly with the transportation disadvantaged. The first possible avenue would be for the existing promotoras to also take on a transportation function in their daily community outreach to low income populations. The second potential for transportation coaches is for existing social service agency counselors to provide transportation coach services as part of their ongoing duties. Ongoing training and support would be provided. In this model, for example, the Department of Social Services may provide training for several existing staff to provide more in depth transportation information to clients. The Countywide Mobility Manager would manage and coordinate the local Mobility Managers with the transportation coach function.

This Local Mobility Manager would:

- Conduct outreach through presentations to local community groups and agencies in their areas
- Use the Fresno County Find-a-Ride portal to assist individuals in trip-planning
- Work with local groups to identify interest in and/or concerns about new programs
- Promote new and existing services by distributing flyers and schedules, promoting new services, and providing transit orientation to educate community members on their transit options and how to use these
- Conduct local information-gathering, through periodic on-board surveys, needs-identification with local groups, and service quality monitoring
- Provide some local mobility management functions through the provision of information about transportation options and how to access transportation
- Bring attention to the relevance of transportation to other community needs (e.g. health, education, etc.) this cannot be met without transportation

*Strategy #5 – Promote sharing or reusing of available resources among transportation providers. (Vehicles, staff)*

Sharing or reusing available resources, such as vehicles or staff between transportation providers is low-cost transportation alternative that can improve transit connectivity in Madera County. The stakeholders pointed to this strategy as a possibility to exchange drivers. The MCC Manager stated that his drivers

work less than 40 hours per week and they would like to earn an extra income. This strategy would allow them to work remaining hours for a social service provider, like a Community Action Partnership, who expressed a interest in such possibility. There need to be more research done on how to draft a financial agreement between organizations, since one represents non-profit, while other serves as a public transit provider, Despite this obstacles this strategy is defiantly worth of exploring.

*Strategy #6 – Expand the role the Madera County Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC) plays in analysis of transportation issue in Madera County. (Higher frequency of meetings, increased involvement in analysis of public transportation issues)*

The primary purpose of this strategy is to strengthen the role of SSTAC. The new role of this group would be to foster and sustain the mobility partnership between human service transportation providers in Madera County. It is requested the SSTAC meet quarterly at a minimum in conjunction with the CPAC group. This strategy was proposed to the SSTAC at their April 30, 2015 meeting and met with an agreeable reception from the group.

*Strategy #7 – Focus on improving access to job training sites, higher education and work sites that employ low income workers.*

There has repeatedly been the request for additional transit service to help accessing a job training sites and higher education campuses. Examples of this include requests for higher frequency of service to the Madera Community College. There is currently one fixed route serving this location, despite the campus being located 12 miles from the City, students mostly rely on cars to attend school. In March of this year, MCTC attended a Spring Extravaganza event and surveyed nearly 100 of students at the Madera Community College campus. It was discovered that a large group of students expressed their interest in using a bus system, if such an opportunity would exist. Currently this area is only served by a Dial-A-Ride service, which can't be access by everyone due to system limitations.

Exploring additional opportunities to increase CalVans participation has been proposed as an additional means to meet the goals of this strategy. The CPAC believes fostering a stronger relationship between job site employers or job training facilitators and CalVans could bridge the gap providing reliable access to more remote destinations not commonly served by traditional fixed route or demand response systems. The CalVans Executive Director participated at the A March 26 CPAC meeting and informed the stakeholder group of ideas which may assist in progressing this strategy.

*Strategy #8 – Ensure social service transportation needs are incorporated into a regional intelligent transportation system report.*

As technology changes there is a greater need to utilize more efficient and cost effective equipment and strategies in order to improve services. Local transportation providers have been able to benefit from ITS communication investments on busses and the CPAC recognizes the need to continue to utilize Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) where applicable by incorporating new technologies into the transit planning process. Madera County works in conjunction with the other seven San Joaquin valley counties on an ITS infrastructure plan. MCTC encourages a update to this plan or the development of an independent Madera County ITS Infrastructure Plan in the future with identified ITS investments detailed within.

*Strategy #9 – Promote transportation training/coaching of various Social Service agencies' staff. (Understanding of all available transportation resources, public outreach coaching, using transit schedules, awareness of ongoing or new funding opportunities)*

The primary purpose of this strategy is to improve awareness about local transit services between a social service agencies and local public agencies staff, so they can better assist the public.

Currently social service agency personnel are somewhat familiar with the fixed route services but don't necessarily have the informational tools to help clients with trip planning. The social service agencies should be a critical link between the transportation providers and the transportation disadvantaged populations. However, they appear to lack the knowledge and informational tools necessary to serve this role. During the Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) meetings, social service agencies expressed openness to procedures that they would participate in to keep better informed regarding available transportation services and funding opportunities. The Madera County Transportation Commission proposed to host quarterly meetings for this group, which could play an important role in education of the above stakeholders about the array of mobility services and available funding opportunities. Those meetings could also provide a forum for a discussion between a social and government agencies and local transit providers staff, on any current transit related needs.