

Mendocino County Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan



FINAL PLAN

Prepared for Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG)

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Chapter 1. Project Overview

Introduction

This Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Mendocino County is sponsored by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and is part of a larger planning effort overseen by Caltrans on behalf of 23 counties in non-urbanized areas within the State of California. The project has been completed in two phases: the first resulted in an Existing Conditions Report, which described existing transportation services and programs, and identified service gaps and needs. The second phase of the project focused on identification of potential strategies and solutions to mitigate those service gaps, and on developing a plan to implement those strategies. The results and key findings emerging from both phases of the planning process are documented in this Coordinated Plan.

As described further in this report, federal planning requirements specify that designated recipients of certain sources of funds administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must certify that projects funded with those federal dollars are derived from a coordinated plan. Caltrans serves as the designated recipient in non-urbanized areas of California for funds subject to this plan.¹ (See Figure 1-1) These projects are intended to improve the mobility of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited incomes. This plan focuses on identifying needs specific to those population groups as well as identifying strategies to meet their needs. Caltrans is sponsoring a statewide planning effort on behalf of the rural counties for whom the funds are intended so that potential sponsors of transportation improvements may access the funds.²

Report Outline

The entire report is organized in seven chapters, as described below:

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the project, its sponsorship by Caltrans, and federal planning requirements established by the passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, commonly referred to as SAFETEA-LU. This chapter also provides a summary of other key documents related to transportation planning in Mendocino County that have helped inform this effort. In addition, it discusses federal and state roles in promoting coordination among public transit operators and human service transportation providers. It also describes the funding environment for transportation in rural California.

Chapter 2 summarizes the steps taken and the methodologies used to prepare the Coordinated Plan. It provides a description of the process, from initial contact through completion of the final plan.

Chapter 3 includes a demographic profile of Mendocino County, which was prepared using US census data as well as that available through the State of California Department of Finance. This step establishes the framework for better understanding the local characteristics of the

¹ The term “non-urbanized area” includes rural areas and urban areas under 50,000 in population not included in an urbanized area.

² Some plans in rural areas have been completed independently of this effort. Caltrans’ website lists the status of the plans at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/Coord-Plan-Res.html>

study area with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: persons with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited incomes.

Chapter 4 documents the range of public and private transportation services that already exist in the area. These services include public fixed-route and dial-a-ride (paratransit) services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies. These were identified through review of existing documents, and through local stakeholder interviews. This chapter also incorporates an inventory of social service providers that was initially prepared by Caltrans' staff, and confirmed with local program staff.

Chapter 5 consists of the needs assessment. An important step in completing this plan includes the identification of service needs or gaps as well as institutional issues that limit coordinated transportation efforts in Mendocino County. The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where—and how—service for the three population groups needs to be improved.

The needs assessment for this plan was derived through direct consultation with stakeholders identified by the project sponsors, and through a review of existing documents and plans that also provide information on existing services and the need to improve them.

Chapter 6 presents and prioritizes a range of potential service strategies as identified by local stakeholders. These strategies are intended to mitigate the gaps discussed in Chapter 5. Identification and evaluation of strategies is an important element the plan, as this step is required in order to access federal funding sources that could support their implementation.

Chapter 7 presents an implementation plan for the highly-ranked strategies. A potential project sponsor is identified, along with projected costs, potential sources of funds, and an overall assessment of how implementation of these strategies could address service gaps identified in Chapter 5.

Figure 1-1 Caltrans Coordinated Planning for California Counties

[Insert Fig1_23CountyArea.pdf]

SAFETEA-LU Planning Requirements

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed SAFETEA-LU into law, authorized the provision of \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over six years through Fiscal Year 2009, including \$52.6 billion for federal transit programs.

Starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three programs in SAFETEA-LU, including the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) are required to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) indicates that the plan should be a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.”³

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued three program circulars, effective May 1, 2007, to provide guidance on the administration of the three programs subject to this planning requirement.

These circulars can be accessed through the following websites:

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html	Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html	Job Access and Reverse Commute
http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html	New Freedom Program

This federal guidance specifies four required elements of the plan, as follows:

1. An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit);
2. An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
3. 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; and
4. Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities.

³ Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458)

Federal Coordination Efforts

Coordination can enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate cost-effective solutions with available resources. Enhanced coordination also results in joint ownership and oversight of service delivery by both human service and transportation service agencies. The requirements of SAFETEA-LU build upon previous federal initiatives intended to enhance social service transportation coordination. Among these are:

- **Presidential Executive Order:** In February 2004, President Bush signed an Executive Order establishing an Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility to focus 10 federal agencies on the coordination agenda. It may be found at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040224-9.html
- **A Framework for Action:** The Framework for Action is a self-assessment tool that states and communities can use to identify areas of success and highlight the actions still needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation. This tool has been developed through the United We Ride initiative sponsored by FTA, and can be found on FTA's website: http://www.unitedweride.gov/1_81_ENG_HTML.htm
- **Previous research:** Numerous studies and reports have documented the benefits of enhanced coordination efforts among federal programs that fund or sponsor transportation for their clients.⁴

State of California Coordination Efforts

Assembly Bill 120 (1979)

Initiatives to coordinate human service transportation programs in the State of California have been largely guided by the passage of state legislation, The Social Services Transportation Improvement Act (Assembly Bill No. 120, Chapter 1120), often referred to as AB 120, in 1979. This law, among other things, added Sections 15973 and 15975 to the California Government Code, requiring transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions to:

Develop an Action Plan for the coordination and improvement of social service transportation services.

- Designate a Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) to implement the Action Plan within the geographic area of jurisdiction of the transportation planning agency or county transportation commission. CTSA's are considered eligible applicants of TDA Article 4.5 funds.
- Identify the social service recipients to be served and funds available for use by the consolidated or coordinated services.
- Establish measures to coordinate the services with fixed route service provided by public and private transportation providers.

⁴ Examples include United States General Accounting Office (GAO) reports to Congress entitled *Transportation Disadvantaged Populations, Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation, but Obstacles Persist*, (June 2003) and *Transportation Disadvantaged Seniors—Efforts to Enhance Senior Mobility Could Benefit From Additional Guidance and Information*, (August 2004).

- Establish measures to insure that the objectives of the action plan are consistent with the legislative intent declared in Section 15951.

Senate Bill 826 (1988)

In 1988, Senate Bill 826 was introduced amending the Assembly Bill 120. It required the establishment of

- Measures for the effective coordination of specialized transportation service from one provider service area to another.

And required that

- Transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions shall every four years update the social services transportation inventory pursuant to Section 15973 and every two years shall update the action plan prepared pursuant to Section 15975 and submit these reports to the California Department of Transportation.

Assembly Bill 2647 (2002)

In 2002, Section 15975.1 was repealed which no longer required the transportation planning agencies to submit an Action plan or inventory to the California Department of transportation. The Department no longer has a role in the development of the Social Service Transportation Action Plan and will not be receiving information or reporting to the Legislature.

Role of Consolidated Transportation Service Agencies (CTSAs)

AB 120 authorized the establishment of CTSAs and recognizes them as direct claimants of TDA Article 4.5 funds. CTSAs are designated by Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) or, where RTPAs do not exist, by the Local Transportation Commission. Very little guidance exists, however, as to expectations or the roles of the CTSAs. As discussed below, TDA law requires that any rural county intending to use some of its TDA funds for streets and roads purposes establish a Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC); representatives from the CTSA are required to participate on the SSTAC.

In Mendocino County, the Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) is the designated CTSA.

Funding Public Transportation in Rural California

Transportation funding in California is complex. Federal and state formula and discretionary programs provide funds for transit and paratransit services; sales tax revenues are also used for public transit purposes. Transportation funding programs are subject to rules and regulations that dictate how they can be used and applied for (or claimed) through federal, state and regional levels of government. Additionally, some funds for social service transportation come from a variety of non-traditional transportation funding programs including both public and private sector sources.

Another complexity with federal funding programs is the local match requirements. Each federal program requires that a share of total program costs be derived from local sources, and may not be matched with other federal Department of Transportation funds. Examples of local match which may be used for the local share include: state or local appropriations; non-DOT federal funds; dedicated tax revenues; private donations; revenue from human service contracts; toll

revenue credits; private donations; revenue from advertising and concessions. Non-cash funds such as donations, volunteer services, or in-kind contributions are eligible to be counted toward the local match as long as the value of each is documented and supported.

A review of federal, state and local funding programs for public transit agencies and social service providers is presented in Figure 1-3 at the conclusion of this chapter. The figure highlights the funding programs and their purpose, how funds can be used, who is eligible to apply and other relevant information. More detailed information on funding sources commonly used by public transit agencies in rural counties are described the following section.

Funding for public transportation in rural California counties is dependent primarily on two sources of funds: TDA funds generated through State of California sales tax revenues, and Federal Section 5311 funds intended for rural areas. These two funding programs are described in this chapter. A brief overview is provided of other funding sources that are available for public transit and social service transportation. Because the funding arena is complex and varied, this section on funding is not intended to identify all potential funding sources, but rather to identify the major sources of funding for public transit and human service transportation in rural California.

The three sources of federal funds subject to this plan (FTA Section 5316, 5317 and 5310), are described below. Caltrans serves as the designated recipient for these funds intended to be used in rural and small urbanized areas of the state. As designated recipient, Caltrans is required to select projects for use of SAFETEA-LU funds through a competitive process, and to certify that projects funded are derived from the coordinated plan.

FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program

The purpose of the JARC program is to fund local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals. JARC funds are distributed to states on a formula basis, depending on that state's rate of low-income population. This approach differs from previous funding cycles, when grants were awarded purely on an "earmark" basis. JARC funds will pay for up to 50% of operating costs and 80% for capital costs. The remaining funds are required to be provided through local match sources.

Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites
- Car-share or other projects to improve access to autos
- Access to child care and training

Eligible applicants for JARC funds may include state or local governmental bodies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), RTPAs, Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Program

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the workforce and full participation in society. The New Freedom Program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

New Freedom funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services and alternatives, beyond those required by the ADA, that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. The same match requirements for JARC apply for the New Freedom Program.

Examples of eligible New Freedom Program projects include:

- Expansion of paratransit service hours or service area beyond minimal requirements
- Purchase of accessible taxi or other vehicles
- Promotion of accessible ride sharing or vanpool programs
- Administration of volunteer programs
- Building curb-cuts, providing accessible bus stops
- Travel training programs

Eligible applicants may include state or local governmental bodies, MPOs, RTPAs, LTCs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

FTA Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program

Funds for this program are allocated by a population-based formula to each state for the capital costs of providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Typically, vans or small buses are available to support nonprofit transportation providers; however, Section 5310 funding can also be used for operations if the service is contracted out. In California, a local match of 11.47% is required.

The following chart provides an estimate on the levels of JARC and New Freedom funding available for non-urbanized portions of the state from 2007 to 2009, as well as Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) funds for the entire state. As the designated recipient of these funds, Caltrans is responsible to define guidelines, develop application forms and establish selection criteria for a competitive selection process in consultation with its regional partners.

Figure 1-2 Projected State of California Funding Sources/Amounts

Designated Recipient	Fund Source	2007 \$ estimate	2008 \$ estimate	2009 \$ estimate
Caltrans	Rural JARC	1,467,032	1,573,618	1,659,360
Caltrans	Rural New Freedom	681,111	777,302	821,719
Caltrans	Elderly and Disabled Section 5310 Statewide (includes urban areas)	12,394,851	13,496,069	14,218,737

FTA Section 5311

Federal Section 5311 funds are distributed on a formula basis to rural counties throughout the country. The goals of the non-urbanized formula program are: 1) to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation; 2) to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas; 3) to encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all Federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services; 4) to assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation; and 5) to provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible.

A portion of 5311 funds is set aside for a Tribal Transit Program (TTP), which provides direct federal grants to Indian tribes to support public transportation on Indian reservations. For the period 2006 through 2009 the amount is \$45 million nationally. Awards are made directly to tribes by FTA through a competitive process. TTP was not intended to replace or reduce funds tribes receive from states under the Section 5311 program.

Fifteen percent of the Section 5311 apportionment is for the Intercity Bus Program, Section 5311(f). The Intercity Bus Program funds public transit projects that serve intercity travel needs in non-urbanized areas. Projects are awarded on a statewide competitive basis. This program funds operating and capital costs, as well as planning for service. As with most federal capital funds, the Section 5311 grant funding program provides 80% of capital costs with a 20% matching requirement. Section 5311 funds provide up to 50% of operating costs to support transit operations.

Transportation Development Act (TDA)

The California Transportation Development Act has two funding sources for each county or regional entity that are locally derived and locally administered: 1) Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and 2) State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF).

- **LTF** revenues are recurring revenues derived from ¼ cent of the retail sales tax collected statewide. The ¼ cent is distributed to each county according to the amount of tax collected in that county. In counties with a population of less than 500,000 as of the 1970 US Census, TDA funds may be allocated under Article 8 for transit services or for local streets and roads, pedestrian or bicycle projects.

Prior to approving TDA funds for purposes other than public transportation, specialized transportation, or facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, the local transportation planning agency is expected to consult with its local SSTAC and conduct an assessment of transit and determine whether there are unmet transit needs, and whether or not those needs are “reasonable to meet.” Each RTPA is required to adopt definitions of “unmet transit need” and “reasonable to meet.” Any unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet must be funded before funds can be allocated for streets and roads.

- **STAF** are revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels. STAF is allocated annually by the local transportation commissions based on each region’s apportionment. Unlike LTF which may be allocated to other purposes, STAF revenues may be used **only** for public transit or transportation services.

State Transportation Improvement Program

To receive state funding for capital improvement projects, such as new vehicles or other capital equipment, projects must be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program, or STIP. The STIP is a multi-year capital improvement program that includes projects programmed with state funds. Local agencies should work through the Mendocino Council of Governments to nominate projects for inclusion in the STIP.

Other Funding Sources

Older Americans Act (OAA)

The Older Americans Act was signed into law in 1965 amidst growing concern over seniors’ access to health care and their general well-being. The Act established the federal Administration on Aging (AoA), and charged the agency with advocating on behalf of an estimated 46 million Americans 60 or older, and implementing a range of assistance programs aimed at seniors, especially those at risk of losing their independence. Transportation is a permitted use of funds under the Act, providing needed access to nutrition and other services offered by the AoA, as well as to medical and other essential services required by an aging population. No funding is specifically designated for transportation. However, funding can be used for transportation under several sections of the OAA, including Title III (Support and Access Services), Title VI (Grants to American Indian Tribes), and the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) program.

Regional Centers

While Regional Centers are nonprofit private corporations, they were established by state legislation. They receive public funds under contract to the California Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services and support for individuals with developmental disabilities. There are 21 regional centers with more than 40 offices located throughout the state. Transportation is a critical component of Regional Centers because clients need specialized transportation services for traveling to and from sheltered workshops. It is the responsibility of each Regional Center to arrange their client’s transportation. Regional Centers are primarily funded with a combination of state General Fund tax dollars and federal Medicaid funds. The primary contractual relationship is with the State Department of Developmental Services.

Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)

The Legislature appropriated \$20 million from the Public Transportation Account in FY06-07 for grants to public agencies statewide, seeking to provide transit services specifically for farm workers. The intent of the AWTP is to provide safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transportation services, utilizing vans and buses, to agricultural workers commuting to/from worksites in rural areas statewide. The emphasis of the AWTP will be to implement vanpool operations similar to the successful Agricultural Industries Transportation Services (AITS) program ongoing in Southern San Joaquin Valley, transporting agricultural workers to regional employment sites. The California Department of Transportation administers the AWTP. It is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010.

Private Foundations

Many small agencies that target low-income populations are eligible for foundation grants. Typically, foundation grants are highly competitive and require significant research to identify foundations appropriate for transportation of the targeted populations.

Tribal Casino Transportation Programs

Tribes with casinos in some counties have indicated an interest in coordinated transportation efforts. They may have funds available to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle or to subsidize plans to transport employees to and from the worksite.

Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

Organizations such as the Rotary Club, Soroptomists, Kiwanis, and Lions often pay for special projects. For transportation, they might pay for or help contribute toward the cost of a new vehicle or a bus bench or shelter near senior citizen housing. These organizations might also pay for trip reimbursement for after school or child care.

Employers

Employers who are in need of workers are sometimes willing to underwrite transportation in order to fill their labor needs. Employers sometimes contribute to a flex route night bus, a subsidized car-sharing program or a shuttle or vanpool to their employment site.

Local (Mendocino County) Planning Documents and Relevant Research

To learn more about existing studies or reports relevant to this plan, the consulting team conducted a literature review, with key findings highlighted below. Documents reviewed include:

- Mendocino Transit Authority Short-Range Transit Development Plan, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, April 2005
- Willits Area Transit Service Implementation Plan, prepared for Mendocino Transit Authority by Odyssey & IBI Group, March 2007
- Area-wide Job Access Transportation Plan, the Transportation Committee of Mendocino Works, 1998 (Updated 2002)
- Social Services Transportation Action Plan, prepared by Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG), 2003

- Regional Transportation Plan, prepared by MCOG, 2005
- Gualala Community Action Plan, MCOG, 2007
- An Assessment of the Demand for Farm Worker Housing and Transportation in Mendocino County, prepared by the California Institute for Rural Studies, 2008
- Special Needs Project: Transportation Study Findings, prepared for the California Institute of Human Services by Haun & Associates, 2007
- Redwood Coast Community Based Transportation Strategic Plan, prepared for Caltrans by the City of Point Arena, Action Network and the Manchester Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians, 2004
- Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan, prepared for the Community Transportation Association of American by LSC Transportation Consultants, 2006

Short-Range Transit Development Plan, 2005

The purpose of a Short-Range Transit Development Plan (TDP) is to develop a five-year strategy to guide planning and funding decisions. The key objectives of a TDP are to provide a comprehensive evaluation of current services, and to develop a detailed short-range operational and fiscal plan to meet Mendocino County's mobility needs over a five-year period. The most recent TDP covered the period from FY 2005-06 to FY 2009-10. This document provides an overview of the transportation programs within the county, and recommended strategies to improve mobility and efficiency of services.

Willits Area Transit Service Implementation Plan, 2007

This report was prepared for Mendocino Transit Authority, and was intended to identify alternatives for providing transportation services within the town of Willits. The service alternatives considered included maintaining the Willits Dial-a-Ride, initiating a new fixed route, developing a flex route alternative, optimizing use of school buses, and electric jitney service. Ultimately, a new flex route service was initiated in the summer of 2007, which replaced existing dial-a-ride service.

Area-Wide Job Access Transportation Plan, 2002

This document is an update of the 1998 Regional Job Access Transportation Plan and was prepared by the Transportation Committee of Mendocino Works. It adds strategies for residents with disabilities and revises the Long-Range Financial Plan. The plan discusses policy considerations with respect to welfare-to-work as well as goals and objectives for Job Access Transportation in Mendocino County. The plan outlines the priorities for service implementation. In addition, the document describes funding opportunities for Job Access Transportation and outlines the implementation budget.

Social Services Transportation Action Plan, 2003

The Social Services Transportation Action Plan was first required when Assembly Bill 120 was passed by the California Legislature. The purpose of the legislation was to improve transportation services offered to social service agency clientele, the elderly and people with disabilities. Social Service Transportation Action Plans are required to include a description of the steps required to accomplish the coordination of social service transportation services. The plans are required to include the designation of the Consolidated Transportation Service

Agency; the identification of social service recipients and funds available for use; and measures to coordinate with existing transportation services. One of the recommendations from the study suggests that the MTA, as the CTSA, and other social service organizations investigate methods of leveraging non-emergency medical transportation funding through Medi-Cal.

Regional Transportation Plan, 2005

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) outlines the elements of Mendocino County's regional transportation priorities and is the long-term blueprint of the region's transportation system. The plan identifies and analyzes transportation needs of the region and creates a framework for project priorities. The RTP includes regional transportation goals, roadway transportation improvements, public transit service, as well as other modes such as aviation, maritime travel, and non-motorized transportation. The plan also discusses tribal transportation. The next RTP is expected to be adopted in 2010.

Gualala Community Action Plan, 2007

MCOG, with a Livable Communities Grant from Caltrans, prepared the Community Action Plan for the town of Gualala. The purpose of the plan is to create a community-based plan that outlines the needs for traffic calming, increased pedestrian and bicycle safety, parking supply and delineation, economic development, land use refinement, and provision of access to community organizations, recreation and health care. The plan outlines a range of possible improvements for the portion of Highway 1 that runs through Gualala.

An Assessment of the Demand for Farm Worker Housing and Transportation in Mendocino County, 2008

The report presents findings from an assessment of farm worker housing and transportation needs in Mendocino County. The research had two primary goals: (1) evaluate farm worker housing conditions in Mendocino County and (2) to assess the demand for a vanpool program that would provide farm workers in Mendocino County with safe and affordable transportation.

Special Needs Project: Transportation Study Findings, 2007

This study, which was sponsored by FIRST 5 Mendocino, assesses the transportation needs in the northeast inland area of Mendocino County for Special Needs Project children and their families. The report also discusses local transportation assets and resources, as well as possible options for enhancing transportation services. The study's conclusions are based on a transportation survey that solicited feedback from local leaders, policymakers, service providers, etc. Findings address unmet transportation needs in Round Valley and Brooktrails.

Redwood Coast Community Based Transportation Strategic Plan, 2004

The purpose of this Caltrans-funded study was to implement a local community planning process to document the Redwood Coast's transportation needs and to identify potential funding opportunities to address those needs. The Redwood Coast refers to the bi-county region of Southern Mendocino and Northern Sonoma counties from Elk to Stewarts Point along Highway 1.

Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan, 2006

LSC Transportation Consultants prepared the Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan for the Community Transportation Association of America on behalf of Action Network. The goal of the

project is to evaluate the transportation needs and options for the Redwood Coast area and to develop a plan to address the needs of citizens and visitors to the area. The report describes the environment in which transportation services are provided. It also includes a demographic analysis, descriptions of existing services, and an analysis of transit demand. It includes findings from a household survey conducted by the Redwood Coast Community Transportation Coalition (RCCTC). Findings from this study are included in Chapter 5 of this report.

Figure 1-3 Funding Matrix

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use Of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Federal Sources						
Transportation Funding						
Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5309 Funds (Congressional Earmark)	Capital Projects for bus and bus-related facilities.	Capital projects only	Discretionary, varies annually	Public transit operators	20% for capital projects	Obtaining a Congressional earmark is in part dependent upon the "clout" of the local delegation and the funding amount can vary tremendously.
FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program	Local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals.	Capital projects and operations	Maximum of \$200,000 per project per year	MPOs, RTPAs, Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs. Can match with other federal funds.	Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/
FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Program	Supports <i>new</i> services and alternatives, beyond ADA that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities access transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services.	Capital projects and operations	Maximum of \$125,000 per project per year.	MPOs, RTPAs, LTCs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs. Can match with other federal funds.	Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/
FTA Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program	Providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities.	Capital projects only	\$12 million in FY 2008	Nonprofit agencies, public agencies	11.47% match	Typically vans or small buses are available to support nonprofit transportation providers. Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans

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Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use Of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
FTA Section 5311	Enhance access for those living in non-urbanized areas and improve public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas.	Capital projects and operations	Formula based funding - Apportionment by area	Public agencies, local governments, tribal governments, nonprofit agencies	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs	Funds are distributed on a formula basis to rural counties throughout the country. A portion of 5311 funds (\$45 million nationally from 2006-2009) is set aside for a Tribal Transit Program, which provides direct federal grants to Indian tribes to support public transportation on Indian reservations.
FTA Section 5311(f)	Funds public transit projects that serve intercity travel needs in non-urbanized areas.	Capital projects and operations		Public agencies, local governments, tribal governments, nonprofit agencies	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs	Projects are awarded on a statewide competitive basis
Health And Human Services Funding ⁽¹⁾						
Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) (Department of Social Services)	Goals: 1. Reduce dependency, 2. Achieve self sufficiency, 3. Protect children and families, 4. Reduce institutional care by providing home/community based care, 5. Provide institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate.			Child Welfare Services, Foster Care, Deaf Access, Community Care Licensing, CDE Child Care, and Department of Developmental Services programs.	Unknown	Grant must be used for one of the goals of SSBG and cannot be used for certain purposes such as the purchase or improvement of land or payment of wages to any individual in social services. These funds are not allocated separately but are used in lieu of state general fund.
Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) (Department of Social Services)	Develop/strengthen integrated community health systems that coordinate health care services for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured, such as transportation coordination to improve access to care.		\$83 million	Public and private health care providers as well as social services, local government and other community based organizations.	Unknown	Build upon Federal programs that support entities serving low-income populations in an effort to expand and improve the quality of services for more individuals at a lower cost.

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Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use Of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) (Department of Community Services & Development)	Assist low income people in attaining the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency.			Community action agencies, low income individuals in CA (100% of Federal poverty level).	Unknown	None
Aging & Disability Resource Center Grant Program - Part of the President's New Freedom Initiative (Dept. of Aging)	Support state efforts to create "one stop" centers to help consumers learn about and access long-term supports ranging from in-home services to nursing facility care.		\$800,000 awarded to California in 2004	State of California	Unknown	None
HIV Care Formula Grants (Dept. of Health and Human Services)	Support programs designed to increase access to care and treatment for underserved populations, reduce need for costly inpatient care, reduce prenatal transmission, improve health status of people with HIV. A portion of the funds can be used for transportation.		\$2,073,296,000	State, local governments, public and nonprofit private agencies.	Unknown	None
Consolidated Health Center Program (Bureau of Primary Health Care)	Fund health centers that provide primary and preventative health care to diverse underserved populations. Health centers can use funds for center-owned vans, transit vouchers, taxi fare.			Community based organizations including faith based organizations.	Unknown	None

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Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use Of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Older Americans Act Title III B - Grants for Supportive Services & Senior Centers (Administration on Aging)	Funds are awarded by formula to State units on aging for providing supportive services to older persons, including operation of senior centers. May be used to purchase and/or operate vehicles and funding for mobility management services.	Capital projects and operations.	\$357 million	States and territories, recognized Native American tribes and Hawaiian Americans as well as non-profit organizations.	Unknown	None
Program for American Indian, Alaskan Native, & Native Hawaiian Elders (Administration on Aging)	This program supports nutrition, information and referral, multipurpose senior centers and other supportive services for American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian elders. Transportation is among the supportive services, including purchase and/or operation of vehicles and for mobility management.	Capital projects and operation	\$26 million	Recognized Native American tribes and Hawaiian Americans as well as non-profit organizations.	Unknown	None
Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (Center for Mental Health Services State Planning Branch)	Improve access to community-based health-care delivery systems for people with serious mental illnesses. Grants also allot for supportive services, including funding to operate vehicles, reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management.	Capital projects and operations.	\$430,000		Unknown	None

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Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use Of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Block Grant (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration)	Block grants provide funds for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. Transportation-related services supported by these grants may be broadly provided through reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management to recipients of prevention and treatment services.		\$1.78 billion	State of California	Unknown	States are required to expend their primary prevention services funds using six specific strategies: community-based processes, information dissemination, education, alternative activities, problem identification and referral, and environmental strategies. A seventh category, "other" strategies, can be approved on a limited basis.
Child Care & Development Fund (Administration for Children & Human Services)	Provide subsidized child care services to low income families. Not a source of direct transportation funds, but if child care providers include transportation as part of their usual services, covered by their fee, these services may be covered by voucher payments.		\$4.8 billion	States and recognized Native American Tribes	Unknown	None
Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance (Administration for Children and Families)	Promote and increase independence, productivity, inclusion and integration into the community of persons with developmental disabilities, and support national and state policy that enhances these goals. Funding provides special projects, reimbursement of transportation costs and training on transportation related issues.		\$11.5 million		Unknown	None

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Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use Of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Head Start (Administration for Children & Families)	Head Start provides grants to local public and private agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to children and families. Local Head Start programs provide transportation services for children who attend the program either directly or through contracts with transportation providers.		\$7 billion	Local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies	Unknown	The Head Start regulation requires that programs make reasonable efforts to coordinate transportation resources with other human service agencies in their communities.
TANF / CalWORKS (California work opportunity & responsibility to kids) (Department of Social Services)	Provide temporary assistance to needy families. Recipients are required to participate in activities that assist them in obtaining employment. Supportive services, such as transportation and childcare are provided to enable recipients to participate in these activities.			States and Federally recognized Native American tribes. Eligible families as defined in the TANF state plan	Unknown	TANF funds cannot be used for construction or to subsidize current operating costs. State and county funds in the CalWORKS program are used to meet the TANF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement and cannot be used to match other federal funds.
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (Department of Housing & Community Development)	Create or preserve jobs for low income and very low income persons.			Counties with less than 200,000 residents and cities of less than 50,000 residents	Unknown	Applicants cannot be participants on the US Department of HUD CDBG entitlement program.
State Sources						
Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)	Provide safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transportation services, utilizing vans and buses, to agricultural workers commuting to/from worksites in rural areas statewide.	Capital projects and operations	\$20 million in FY2006/07	Public agencies	No mandatory matching requirements	Administered by the Caltrans. Scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010.

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Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use Of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Transit System Safety, Security and Disaster Response Account	Develop disaster response transportation systems that can move people, goods, and emergency personnel and equipment in the aftermath of a disaster.	Capital projects	Varies by county	Agencies, transit operators, regional public waterborne transit agencies, intercity passenger rail systems, commuter rail systems	None	Part of Proposition 1B approved November 7, 2006.
State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF)	Public transit and paratransit services	Capital projects and operations	Varies from year to year depending on appropriation to Public Transportation Account of which 75% goes to STA.	Allocated by formula to public transit operators	None	Revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels.
State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	Major capital projects of all types, including transit.	Transit capital projects	Varies from year to year depending on appropriation to Public Transportation Account of which 25% goes to STIP.			Determined once every two years by California Transportation Commission.
Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA)	Advance the State's policy goals of providing mobility choices for all residents, reducing congestion, and protecting the environment	Transit capital projects	\$600 million statewide in FY2007-08. \$350 million proposed for 2008-09.	Transit operators and local agencies who are eligible to receive STAF funds pursuant to California Public Utility Code Section 99313	None	Bond act approved by voters as Proposition 1B on November 7, 2006
Regional/Local Sources						
Transportation Development Act (TDA) Articles 4 and 8 (1/4 cent sales tax)	Transit operating assistance and capital projects, local street and road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, pedestrian/bicycle projects	Capital projects and operations	Varies by county	Cities and counties. Allocated by population formula within each county.		Revenues are derived from 1/4 cent of the retail sales tax collected statewide, distributed according to the amount of tax collected in each county to a Local Transportation Fund in each county.

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Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use Of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Transportation Development Act (TDA) Articles 4.5	Paratransit operating assistance and capital projects	Capital projects and operations	Up to 5% of the Local Transportation Fund revenue	Cities and counties and CTSA's		
Private Sources						
Tribal Casino Transportation Programs	Coordinating transportation efforts on Indian reservations	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	Wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	Some tribes have funds available to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle or to subsidize plans to transport employees to and from the worksite.
Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations	Variety of transportation services, especially capital improvements	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	May be interested in paying for bus benches or shelters
Employers	Variety of transportation services, especially capital improvements	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	Employers sometimes are willing to underwrite transportation to support their workers getting to/from worksite.

(1) Source: Caltrans, Division of Mass Transportation

Chapter 2. Project Methodology

The four required elements of a coordinated plan, as outlined by FTA in the May 15, 2007 guidance for the JARC, New Freedom and Section 5310 programs are 1) an assessment of current transportation services, 2) an assessment of transportation needs, 3) identification of strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified transportation needs (as well as ways to improve efficiencies), and 4) implementation of priorities based on funding, feasibility, time, etc. This chapter describes the steps that were undertaken to develop these elements of Mendocino County's Coordinated Plan.

Demographic Profile

A demographic profile of Mendocino County was prepared using US census data, as well as information generated from various State of California agencies. This step establishes the framework for better understanding the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: persons with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status.

The demographic profile is incorporated in Chapter 3 of this report.

Literature Review

The consulting team conducted a literature review of recently completed—or currently underway—planning efforts relevant to this Coordinated Plan. The purpose of this literature review is to learn about other planning activities in the county and to identify major transportation issues and concerns to ensure issues of importance are incorporated in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. A summary of the literature review is outlined in Chapter 1.

Stakeholder Involvement and Public Outreach

Stakeholder involvement is an important element of this plan, and is required by SAFETEA-LU. As a first step, staff from the California Department of Transportation's Division of Mass Transportation identified Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) as the primary point of contact. The consulting team then collaborated with the local staff to identify key stakeholders to be included in the development of this plan. Stakeholder involvement was solicited primarily through a series of nine in-person and telephone interviews convened in Ukiah. The results of the interviews are described in Chapters 4 and 5. In addition, consulting team staff convened a kick-off meeting with the SSTAC in January 2008 with the goals of introducing SSTAC members to the project, and obtaining their feedback on project activities. In particular, the SSTAC and stakeholder involvement was critical in identifying unmet transportation needs, and in identifying and prioritizing potential project strategies to mitigate these needs.

Additionally, two public workshops were convened in Mendocino County in May, with the goal of soliciting comments and suggestions for potential strategies intended to mitigate the unmet transportation needs. Workshops were convened in Fort Bragg and in Ukiah, and are described in more detail in Chapter 6.

Existing Transportation Services

This step involves documenting the range of public transit and human service transportation services that already exist in the area. To ensure all existing services have been identified and accurately described, the consulting team reviewed the inventory with key stakeholders. The services in the inventory include public fixed-route and dial-a-ride (paratransit) services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies. The description and corresponding maps of existing services are presented in Chapter 4.

Needs Assessment

An important step in completing this plan is to identify service needs or gaps. The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where—and how—service for the three population groups needs to be improved. In some cases, maintaining and protecting existing services is identified as a service need.

The needs assessment for this plan was derived through direct consultation with stakeholders identified by the project sponsors, and through a review of existing documents and plans that also provide analysis of existing services and opportunities to improve them.

Identification and Evaluation of Strategies

On May 19, 2008, the consultant facilitated two public workshops in Mendocino County – one in Fort Bragg and the other in Ukiah. These locations were suggested by the local project sponsor, and represent different geographic regions of the County. The goals of the workshops were to:

- Confirm previously identified unmet transportation needs
- Identify and prioritize strategies for addressing these needs

The consultant developed an initial set of suggested service strategies intended to address the gaps, and also drafted proposed evaluation criteria to use when ranking the strategies. An interactive process directly involving workshop participants resulted in refining the list of strategies, and in prioritizing them. Chapter 6 presents the findings of that exercise.

Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies

As a final step for this planning effort, an implementation plan was developed for each of the highly-ranked strategies. Specifically, this assessment identified:

- Potential lead agency or “champion” with the institutional, operational and fiscal capacity to implement the proposed strategy
- Implementation timeframe: What are the short, medium and long-term steps needed to implement the strategy?
- Estimated Costs: The assessment considered the range of operational and capital costs needed to implement the strategy
- Potential funding sources, including potential use of SAFETEA-LU funds and possible sources of required local match.

- Where applicable, examples of best practices or model programs implemented elsewhere are presented to help guide local implementation efforts.

Highlights of the implementation plan are summarized on a matrix in order to provide a “snapshot” of the proposed implementation plan, and key elements for implementing the recommended strategies are discussed in more detail in the corresponding text of Chapter 7.

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Chapter 3. Demographic Profile

Study Area Description and Demographic Summary

Located along the north coast of California, Mendocino County is a large and geographically diverse county. The county can be broken into four distinct areas: 1) the coastal areas generally following Highway 1, 2) the Highway 101 corridor that traverses the county from south to north, 3) the mountainous area between Highway 101 and Highway 1 (including the Anderson Valley), and 4) the more remote northeast corner of the county that includes the Round Valley Indian Reservation.

Mendocino County has historically relied on the timber and fishing industries, seasonal crops and tourism to sustain the economy. However, over the past 20 years the timber and fishing industries have declined sharply while tourism, grape and wine production and organic farming have helped fill the gap.

Mendocino County is bordered by Sonoma County to the south, Glenn, Lake and Tehama Counties to the east, Humboldt and Trinity Counties to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The primary transportation corridors are Highway 101 through the middle of the county, and Highway 1 that follows the coast. State Route 128 connects Cloverdale with the coast and travels through the Anderson Valley, while Highway 20 connects the Highway 101 corridor with Lake County and points further east.

As of July 1, 2006, Mendocino County's total estimated population is 89,961.⁵ The largest city in the county, and county seat, is Ukiah, with a 2006 estimated population of 15,955. Other incorporated cities in the county include Fort Bragg (6,936), Willits (5,077) and Point Arena (501). Unincorporated communities in Mendocino County include Laytonville, Covelo, Mendocino, Brooktrails, Redwood Valley, Potter Valley, Calpella, Talmage, Boonville, Hopland and Gualala. Figures 3-8 and 3-9 at the end of this chapter include maps of Mendocino County and the location of each of these communities.

Figure 3-1 provides the total population in Mendocino County along with a "snapshot" of the three key demographic groups of greatest concern for this report: older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons in poverty. For comparative purposes, the total population and percent of the three demographic groups is also presented for California as a whole. It should be noted that these estimates are from the 2000 US Census and are slightly different from the figures available from the California Department of Finance.

⁵ California Department of Finance

Figure 3-1 Basic Population Characteristics

Area	Total Population	% of State Population	% Persons Age 65+	% Persons w/ Disability	% Below Poverty Level
United States	281,421,906	-	12.4%	19.3%	12.4%
State of California	33,871,648	-	10.6%	19.2%	14.2%
Mendocino County	86,265	0.25%	13.6%	22.9%	15.9%

Sources: 2000 US Census

Older Adults

Statewide, 10.6% of Californians are age 65 and older, which is lower than the national average of 12.4%. Mendocino County reports the rate of older adults at 13.6%, which is higher than California as a whole, but on par with the national proportion of seniors in the population.

To better understand the older adult population in Mendocino County, Figure 3-2 below presents age groups of all county residents in 2000 compared to surrounding counties. When compared to surrounding counties, Mendocino County has a moderate proportion of older adults (13.9%), making it more similar demographically to Sonoma County than its nearest neighbor Lake County.

Figure 3-2 2000 Population by Age: Mendocino and Surrounding Counties

Age	County						
	Mendocino	Lake	Sonoma	Trinity	Tehama	Colusa	Glenn
Under 15	20.6%	19.5%	20.0%	17.7%	22.2%	25.5%	21.2%
15-24	13.1%	10.4%	13.0%	10.2%	13.0%	16.4%	13.6%
25-34	11.1%	9.1%	12.6%	7.8%	10.7%	12.5%	12.9%
35-54	31.3%	29.8%	32.7%	33.1%	27.9%	26.4%	23.3%
55-64	10.3%	11.7%	8.9%	13.7%	10.2%	7.8%	11.1%
65+	13.6%	19.5%	12.8%	17.4%	15.9%	11.4%	17.9%

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, Population Projections for California and Its Counties 2000-2050, by Age, Gender and Race/Ethnicity, Sacramento, California, July 2007

As is the case nationwide, the population in Mendocino County is aging. Figure 3-3 below shows that between 2000 and 2030, the number of older adults in Mendocino County is expected to increase by 12,179, and by 2030, nearly 22% of the county’s population will be persons 65 and older.

Figure 3-3 Population Change for Persons Age 65 Years and Over, Mendocino County

Age Group	2000	2010	2020	2030	Population Change 2000-2030
Under 65	74,943	78,899	81,200	87,179	16.3%
65 and over	11,793	14,267	20,817	23,972	103.3%
% older adults	13.6%	15.3%	20.4%	21.6%	-

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, Population Projections for California and Its Counties 2000-2050, by Age, Gender and Race/Ethnicity, Sacramento, California, July 2007

Persons with Disabilities

The Census Bureau has determined that the 2000 Census overstated the number of people with disabilities, which is listed in Figure 3-1 as 22.9% of the population in Mendocino County. This overstatement occurred because of a confusing instruction in the Census questionnaire. In particular, the number of people with a “go outside the home disability” was substantially overstated as a result of a confusing skip pattern in the mail-back version of the Census long form.

The Census’s 2006 American Community Survey incorporated an improved questionnaire that eliminated the source of the overstatement. For California as a whole, the 2000 Census estimated that 19.2% of non-institutionalized people age 5 and older had a disability. The corrected estimate, based on the 2006 American Community survey, was 12.9%. Corrected results are not yet available for many rural counties or for cities within counties, but are available for Mendocino County.

Nationwide, about 15 percent of Americans age five or older reported a disability, which is higher than for California as a whole (12.9%). As with older adults, Mendocino County’s average (21.8%) is higher than the national average and significantly higher than California as a whole. While physical limitations can be correlated to an aging population, the high percent of persons with a disability in Mendocino County does not necessarily correspond to the percent of older adults.

Income Status

Based on the 2000 Census, the proportion of Mendocino County residents living at or below the federal poverty level is 15.9%, which exceeds the statewide average of 14.2%.

As shown in Figure 3-4, the two incorporated cities along the coast have the highest poverty level compared to other incorporated cities, whereas the unincorporated community of Covelo in the northeast has the county’s highest poverty rate (27.1%). Point Arena has the highest poverty level of any incorporated city, with about 1 in 4 individuals (26%) living in poverty while 1 in 5 (20.4%) people in Fort Bragg are living in poverty. Willits and Mendocino have the lowest proportion of people living in poverty (14.5% and 13.3% respectively), which is on par with the national average.

Figure 3-4 Mendocino County Poverty Level

Mendocino County	% in Poverty (2000)
Covelo CDP	27.1%
Point Arena	26.0%
Talmage CDP	23.8%
Laytonville CDP	21.9%
Fort Bragg	20.4%
Ukiah	18.1%
Unincorporated	16.6%
Willits	14.5%
Mendocino CDP	13.3%

Source: US Census 2000

No Vehicle Available

The incidence of households without a vehicle available is a good indication of where transit dependency is likely to be high. Using 2000 Census data, Figure 3-5 shows all of the incorporated cities and Census Designated Places (CDPs) in Mendocino County and the percent of renter-occupied and owner-occupied housing units that do not have a vehicle available.

Figure 3-5 Percent of Households with No Vehicle Available

Place	% No Vehicle (Owner-Occupied)	% No Vehicle (Renter-Occupied)
Covelo CDP	4.4%	12.1%
Fort Bragg	6.1%	17.5%
Laytonville CDP	7.9%	22.2%
Mendocino CDP	7.3%	12.4%
Point Arena	0.0%	15.7%
Talmage CDP	0.0%	4.1%
Ukiah	7.1%	19.7%
Willits	6.8%	21.9%

Source: US Census 2000

As shown above, the communities in Mendocino County that have the highest incidence of households without a vehicle available include Laytonville, Willits, Ukiah and Fort Bragg. Renter-occupied households have a significantly higher incidence of households with no vehicle available.

CalWorks

Another indicator of poverty is the number of persons eligible for the federal welfare program, the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). In California, this program is known as CalWorks (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids), although TANF and CalWorks have some different requirements. TANF provides assistance and work opportunities to needy families by granting states the federal funds and wide flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs. TANF is a block grant program that helps move recipients into work and turns welfare into a program of temporary assistance. CalWorks is a welfare program that gives cash aid and services to eligible needy California families. If a family has little or no cash and needs housing, food, utilities, clothing, or medical care, they may be eligible to receive immediate short-term help.

The average monthly caseload of people receiving CalWorks in Mendocino County has steadily decreased over the past decade, which is similar to the trend for the state as a whole. In 1996, the average monthly caseload for the county was 2,871. By 2006, the average monthly caseload fell to 1,539 – a 46% decline⁶.

Employment and Major Employers

Based on figures from the California Employment Development Department, there were 32,610 employees in Mendocino County in 2006. Mendocino County's unemployment rate in 2006 was 5.2%, which is on par with California as a whole (4.9%) and has fallen steadily over the past five years. The government sector employs the highest percentage of workers in Mendocino County (22.8%), followed by trade, transportation & utilities (18.2%), leisure and hospitality (13.0%) and educational and health services (11.4%). Agriculture makes up 6.7% of all jobs in the county. Figure 3-6 provides a breakdown of employment for all industries in Mendocino County.

⁶ California Department of Social Services, Administrative Division, Average Monthly Caseload FY 1995/96 to FY 2005/06.

Figure 3-6 Employment by Industry, 2006

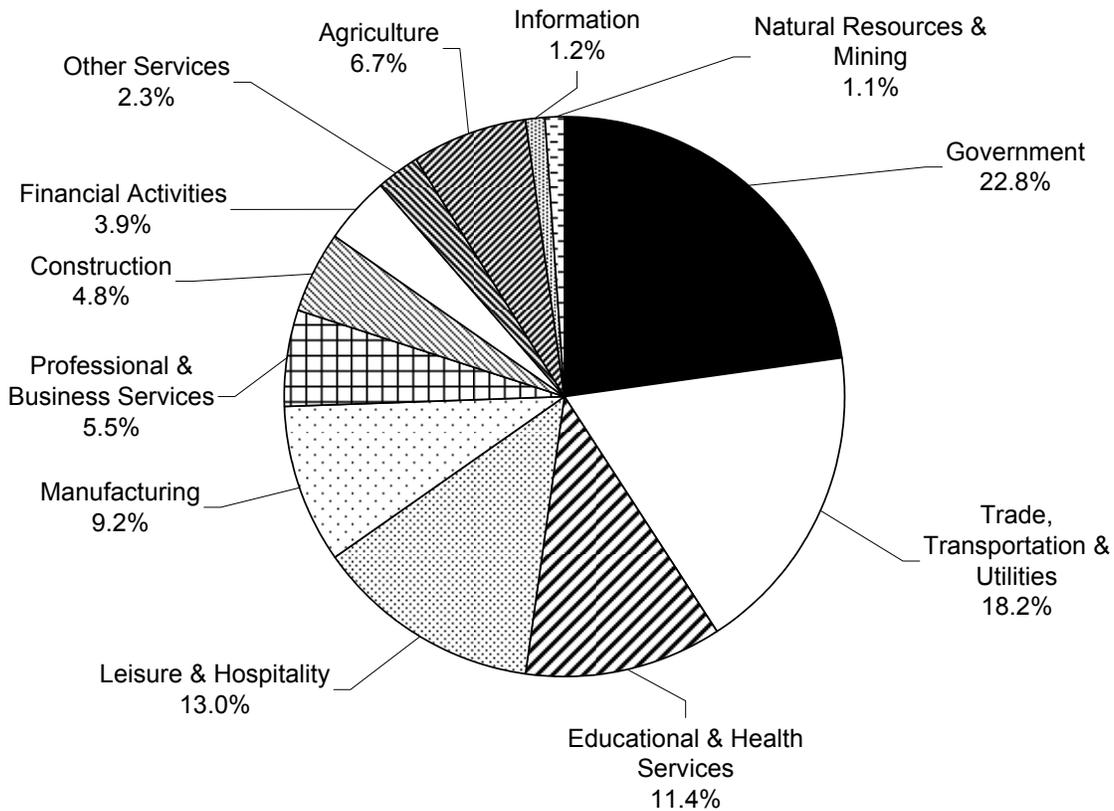


Figure 3-7 below presents the top employers in Mendocino County. While many of the larger employers are located in the county seat of Ukiah, other major employers are located in other parts of the county including Hopland, Fort Bragg, Willits and Redwood Valley.

Figure 3-7 Major Employers in Mendocino County

Employer	Location	# of Employees
City of Ukiah	Ukiah	100-249
Coyote Valley Shodakai Casino	Redwood Valley	100-249
Endoscopy Center	Ukiah	250-499
Fetzer Vineyards	Hopland	250-499
Food Help Program	Ukiah	100-249
Forest Ranger Unit Headquarters	Willits	100-249
Harwood Products Inc	Branscomb	250-499
Hillside Health Center	Ukiah	250-499
Hopland Band Of Pomo Indians	Hopland	250-499
Hopland Sho Ka Wah Casino	Hopland	250-499
Laborers Hod Carriers Local	Ukiah	250-499
Mendocino Coast District	Fort Bragg	100-249
Mendocino Coast District Hospital	Fort Bragg	250-499
Mendocino College	Ukiah	100-249
Mendocino County Office of Education	Countywide	100-249
Mendocino County Sheriff	Countywide	250-499
Mendocino County Social Services	Ukiah	250-499
Metalfx	Willits	100-249
Raley's	Ukiah	100-249
Safeway	Fort Bragg	100-249
Ukiah Valley Medical Center	Ukiah	250-499
Wal-Mart	Ukiah	100-249

Source: California Employment Development Department, 2007

Projected Public Transportation Demand

Since Mendocino County has no formal models that would predict demand for public transportation services that serve older people, people with disabilities, and people with limited incomes, population projections provide the best available evidence. Useful projections of the population with limited incomes are not available, and the best evidence about the future of the disabled population is that it will grow in proportion to total population and the population in older age groups. For purposes of this plan therefore, the projected growth of the total population in Mendocino County is used as a low-end projection for transit demand, and the projected growth

of the population over the age of 65 is used as a high-end projection for transit demand. Based on the California Department of Finance figures used in Figure 3-3, a low-end projection for transit demand is that it will grow by 10% between 2010 and 2020 and by 19% between 2010 and 2030. A high-end projection is that transit demand will grow by 46% between 2010 and 2020 and by 68% between 2010 and 2030.

Population/Employment Density

A Population/Employment Matrix was created to present existing demographic components of the study area. The Population/Employment Matrix presents concentrations of population and employment at the census block-group level. The matrix is based on 2000 Census data for population and 2000 CTPP (Census Transportation Planning Package) data for employment numbers. In order to generate the matrix, density of population and employment were calculated for each block-group. Then the population and employment density values were categorized into three classes each - both using the quantile method which places an equal number of values into each class. This identified a 1, 2 or 3 value (lowest, middle, and highest) for each. Once combined, the Population/Employment Matrix contains nine values, from a low population - low employment density (1,1 = 1) to a high population - high employment density (3,3 = 9).

Resultant Matrix Values

Population, values 1-3	7	8	9
	4	5	6
	1	2	3
Employment, values 1-3			

The matrix values were then color coded and applied to a map of Mendocino County, as seen in Figure 3-8. The map illustrates where there are high levels of employment and population density and includes the locations where these areas overlap. In particular, it shows that Ukiah and Willits have the highest density of employment and population.

Figure 3-8 Mendocino County 2000 Population/Employment Density

Insert Figure 3-8 Population/Employment Density Map is ready

Transit Dependency

A Transit Dependency Index was created to present existing demographic components and transportation needs of the study area. The Transit Dependency Index presents concentrations of populations with higher public transportation needs: seniors 65 year or older, people with disabilities, and low-income (150% of poverty level) population. The index value is based on 2000 Census data. To generate the index values, density of seniors, people with disabilities and low-income population were calculated individually for each block group. Then the density values were categorized into five groups, from one to five, using the quantile method. The Transit Dependency Index value equals the sum of the three category values, resulting in some number between 3 and 15. Block-groups with higher index values have greater concentrations of seniors, people with disabilities and/or low-income population. A potential limitation of this analysis is the relatively small number of block-groups in many rural areas.

Figure 3-9 presents concentrations of populations with higher public transportation needs—older adults (65 year or older), individuals with disabilities, and those with limited incomes (150% of poverty level). The maps are based on 2000 Census data. The map shows that the highest concentrations of transit-dependent populations are located in Ukiah, Willits, and Fort Bragg.

Figure 3-9 Mendocino County 2000 Transit Dependency Index

Insert Figure 3-9: Transit Dependency Map is ready

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Chapter 4. Existing Public Transit Service and Social Service Transportation Providers

This chapter presents existing public transit services and social service transportation providers in Mendocino County. Both private and public transportation services are included. A map illustrating existing services (Figure 4-3) and a matrix summarizing operating characteristics and contact information of all county transportation providers (Figure 4-4) can be found at the end of the chapter.

Public Transit

Mendocino Transit Authority

Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) is the public bus system that serves the most densely populated parts of the county: Ukiah, Mendocino Valley, and coastal regions of Mendocino County. MTA operates two flex/deviated routes, two dial-a-ride services, six inland and local bus routes, and five coast bus routes, traveling as far south as Santa Rosa and as far north as Fort Bragg/Laytonville.⁷ The following sections describe services provided by MTA.

Willits Rider

The Willits Rider provides deviated fixed-route bus service within the City of Willits, traveling along Main Street and making stops at the Integrated Service Center, City Park/City Hall, JD Redhouse/Post Office, Safeway, Little Lake Clinic/Hospital, Evergreen Shopping Center, and Oak Glen Apartments. When the Willits Rider was established in 2007, it replaced the demand-response paratransit system in Willits.

There are eleven roundtrips Monday through Friday and eight roundtrips on Saturday. Weekday service operates between 7:25 AM and 6:35 PM and Saturday service operates between 8:25 AM and 5:25 PM at 60-minute headways. Passengers may board the bus at a scheduled stop or at a “Flex Stop,” and are required to call in advance to arrange for flex service.

This service is scheduled to connect with MTA Route 20 for service to and from Ukiah; with Route 65, the CC Rider providing service between the North Mendocino Coast and Santa Rosa; and Route 15 to Laytonville.

Ukiah Valley Bus Service (7 Jitney, 9 Local, 9 Evening)

Route 9 Local is a fixed-route bus service that serves the City of Ukiah and populated areas to the north and south, making stops at Mendocino College, Ukiah Adult School, the library, Wal-Mart, and locations downtown. The route operates on 30-minute headways from 6:45 AM until to 6:00 PM on weekdays. On Saturday, the bus operates on 35-minute headways from 8:25 AM to 6:00 PM.

⁷ Flex routes or deviated service is a curb-to-curb bus service.

Route 9 Local Evening Service operates Monday through Friday, providing extended evening service between Mendocino College and South State Street/Plant Road in Ukiah. Service operates from 6:10 PM until 10:50 PM. The last run leaves Mendocino College at 10:10 PM. Stops are also made at Ukiah Adult School, downtown Ukiah, Wal-Mart, Plowshares (a program that provides meals for very low-income residents), and the airport. This line operates as a deviated fixed-route service.

The Route 7 Jitney is a limited fixed-route service with service between Mendocino College and Plant Street/South State Street with stops at Redwood Academy, the Library, Ukiah Theater, the Public Health Department, and Greyhound (across from airport). There are four runs every day between 7:40 AM and 4:45 PM.

South Mendocino Coast Bus Service (Routes 75 and 95)

Route 75 operates between Gualala and Ukiah via Point Arena, Manchester, Elk, Navarro, Philo, and Boonville. There is one run in each direction: the northbound run leaves at 7:45 AM and arrives in Ukiah at 10:35 AM, and the southbound run departs Ukiah at 3:05 PM and arrives in Gualala at 5:55 PM. Stops can also be made at Sea Ranch by request. Service operates six days a week.

Route 95 operates between Point Arena and Santa Rosa, making stops at the Santa Rosa Greyhound and Amtrak stations, Sebastopol, Bodega, Jenner, Sea Ranch, and Gualala. It operates as a flex route in Santa Rosa. Service operates seven days a week from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

North Mendocino Coast Bus Service (5 BraggAbout, 60 The Coaster, 65 CC Rider)

The Route 5 BraggAbout provides hourly local service within Fort Bragg between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM Monday through Saturday. The service is the Fort Bragg segment of the Coaster and the CC Rider routes, which are explained below.

The Route 60 Coaster provides fixed-route service between Fort Bragg and Mendocino or Navarro River, making stops in Caspar, Mendocino, Little River, and Albion. There are approximately six runs in each direction between 7:20 AM and 6:20 PM, Monday through Saturday.

The Route 65 CC Rider operates between Mendocino and Santa Rosa, making stops in Caspar, Fort Bragg, Willits, Redwood Valley, Ukiah, and Hopland. There is one run in each direction daily, leaving Mendocino/Caspar at 7:20 AM and arriving in Santa Rosa by 10:55 AM. The return trip leaves Santa Rosa at 2:40 PM and arrives in Mendocino at 6:20 PM.⁸ There is some route deviation allowed within Santa Rosa.

Inland Bus Service

MTA’s Inland Bus Service, Routes 20, 21, and 30, provide weekday regional and commute service in Willits, Redwood Valley, and Ukiah. Routes 20 and 21 travel between Ukiah and Willits, and Route 30 travels between Redwood Valley and Ukiah.⁹

⁸ The Route 60 bus operates as the Mendocino/Caspar leg of this route and Route 65 CC Rider runs the local route in Fort Bragg.

⁹ Some of these runs require a transfer to/from the Route 9 Local.

Laytonville to Willits Bus Service (15 Laytonville)

Route 15 Laytonville travels between Laytonville and Willits, with connections to and from Ukiah weekdays only. There is one morning run from Laytonville to Willits and one evening run from Willits to Laytonville.

Dial-a-Ride

MTA operates two general public dial-a-ride programs, one in Ukiah and one in Fort Bragg. Within Willits, the deviated fixed-route service (described above) replaced a demand-response paratransit system. Dial-a-ride service operates from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM on weekdays and 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday. The fare is \$4.00 for the general public and \$2.00 for older adults and disabled passengers.

Operating Costs

MTA’s FY 2006-2007 operating costs were \$3,053,000. Dial-a-Ride accounted for about 36% of the total operating budget. Inland Services were 38% and Coast/Long-distance routes represented 27% of total operating costs.

The agency’s revenues in FY 2006-07 totaled \$3,465,223. The sources of revenue are shown in Figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1 MTA FY 2006-2007 Operating Revenues

Source	Operating Revenue
TDA-Operations	\$ 2,130,857
Fares-Passenger & Agencies	\$ 515,536
5311 Operating Grant	\$ 338,637
Sonoma County (Route 95)	\$ 135,787
Contract Service (RCRC)	\$ 86,969
Maintenance Labor Revenue	\$ 83,198
Federal Planning Grant	\$ 40,000
Charter	\$ 39,410
Senior Center Admin/ Dispatch	\$ 24,290
Rental and Other Income	\$ 53,239
Display Ads	\$ 17,300
TOTAL	\$ 3,465,223

Transportation Offered by Social Service Providers

Senior Centers in Mendocino County

There are six senior centers in Mendocino County with locations in Boonville, Ukiah (two locations), Fort Bragg, Point Arena-Gualala, and Willits. The centers provide a variety of programs for older adults, such as:

- *Nutrition program:* Lunch is served at centers and meals are delivered at home.
- *Information and assistance program:* The centers are a resource for older adults and provide information about benefits, other social service programs, etc.
- *Referral services:* The centers provide a referral service to seniors of pre-screened in-home caregivers.
- *Social activities:* There are numerous planned social activities and classes at the senior centers.

MTA distributes approximately 16% of Mendocino County’s TDA funds to the senior centers to assist them with providing transportation services to older adults and the disabled. The amount of TDA funding available for the senior centers is outlined in Figure 4-2. In addition, MTA provides assistance with vehicle procurement, grant review and support, vehicle maintenance, financial and performance review, and liability insurance.

Figure 4-2 FY 07-08 TDA Funding: Mendocino Senior Centers

Senior Centers	TDA Funding
Anderson Valley Senior Center (Booneville)	\$25,974
Indian Senior Center(Ukiah)	\$8,605
Redwood Coast Senior Center (Fort Bragg)	\$147,880
South Coast Senior Center(Point Arena-Gualala)	\$22,597
Ukiah Senior Center	\$136,554
Willits Senior Center	\$95,774
Total	\$437,384

The following details the types of services provided by three of the six senior centers in Mendocino:

Ukiah Senior Center

The Ukiah Senior Center provides a variety of services to older and disabled adults in Ukiah area. Providing transportation to participants in the Adult Day Health Program is a major part of the daily operations. Three buses are used to transport passengers to and from the senior center in the morning and afternoon. The buses have seven seats and are wheelchair accessible.

During the day, buses are used to provide door-through-door trips that are reserved in advance for any trip purpose from older and disabled adults in the Ukiah area and rural areas on the outskirts of the city. Same-day trip requests are accommodated when possible. The buses are not available for the general public in the afternoons when they are all used to transport clients from the Adult Day Health Program to their homes. Any older adult or disabled person is eligible for the transportation service. Service is provided Monday through Friday only.

Transportation services are operated in-house with one program manager, one full-time driver/manager, four part-time drivers, and one dispatcher. Most of the drivers are older adults.

MTA supports the senior center with its vehicles in a number of ways. It purchases, maintains, and provides secure parking for its vehicles. All of the senior center's vehicles were purchased with federal FTA 5310 funds.

Redwood Coast Seniors

Redwood Coast Seniors provides a number of programs for older adults in the Fort Bragg area. Programs include home-delivered meals, suicide prevention, adult day care and a lunch program.

Approximately 150-200 meals are served each day, Monday through Friday, in Fort Bragg. The center provides transportation to those who would like to travel to the site and have no means to get there. The service area includes Mendocino and Albion. The center also provides transportation in Mendocino twice a week and in Albion every Friday, when meals are served. The meal program in Mendocino and Albion is relatively small with only about eight to 14 participants.

Approximately 75 home-delivered meals are provided from the Fort Bragg center to surrounding areas where older adults are homebound and isolated. Meals are delivered by volunteers using their own private vehicles.

Dial-a-Ride Service

The center provides door-through-door service for older adults and disabled passengers for any trip purpose.

The transportation service is provided with three 10-passenger ADA-accessible vehicles, which were purchased using federal FTA 5310 funds. The suggested fare is \$4.00 for long-distance trips and \$1.00 for trips within Fort Bragg. In FY 2006-2007, the organization provided 6,762 passenger trips.

The operating cost for transportation services is approximately \$172,000. About 86% of the budget comes from TDA funds. The target farebox recovery is 12% of the budget, but the gap is offset with general funds.

The center employs two full-time drivers, but has had difficulty retaining drivers due to the school district's demand for drivers and wage competition.

South Coast Senior Center

The South Coast Senior Center is located in Gualala and Point Arena, and alternates its services between these communities throughout the week. The center provides dial-a-ride

transportation services to older adults and disabled passengers Monday through Wednesday. In addition, out-of-town trips are made once a week for shopping, medical appointments, etc.

The center currently has one vehicle to provide in-house transportation. MTA will procure a replacement vehicle for the center, which has additional seating capacity. In addition to TDA funds, the center uses its general funds to pay for transportation expenses.

Mendocino County Department of Social Services

This program oversees eligibility determination for CalWorks, and administers services for eligible persons, including disbursement of benefits. With respect to transportation, the agency reimburses clients for mileage for eligible activities if they have an automobile; otherwise it purchases bus tickets and passes. No transportation services are provided directly. The agency will also purchase up to three months of auto insurance for clients. Roughly 75% of client trips are for travel to work or to attend school. The agency's annual budget for transportation is \$231,900.

Redwood Coast Regional Center

The Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) is one of 21 private, nonprofit regional centers in California serving people with developmental disabilities. RCRC supports residents with developmental disabilities and their families to obtain community support and services in Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake and Mendocino counties.

In Mendocino County, the Regional Center assists clients with transportation, but does not provide the service directly. The RCRC spends approximately \$100,000 each year to purchase MTA bus passes. It issues them to clients who are able to take advantage of public transportation.

RCRC also contracts with MTA and pays approximately \$69,000 to operate Route 97, an exclusive bus route for clients who are not capable of riding regular public transit. The route is a subscription bus service and it is not open to the general public. The service operates within the greater Ukiah area, taking clients to Ukiah Valley Association for Habilitation.

In addition, RCRC pays Hey Taxi and Transportation Plus, private taxi services, to transport clients to medical appointments. Hey Taxi operates throughout the county and also in Lake County, and Transportation Plus operates primarily between Ukiah and Willits.

RCRC sponsors services that support clients in their own home. The center contracts the service to a private provider, who in addition to providing supportive services, provides transportation when necessary. RCRC will spend approximately \$223,000 in Mendocino for transportation during Fiscal Year 2007-2008.

Community Resources Connection

Community Resources Connection (CRC) is a nonprofit, volunteer, community organization that provides assistance to the general public on the coastal area between the communities of Timber Cove and Elk. The CRC office is in Gualala at the midpoint of its service area. It functioned for several years in association with RCMS Healthcare (RCMS), the Gualala-based nonprofit clinic which serves patients in the same coast area.

CRC provides volunteer non-emergency demand-response medical transportation that relies upon more than 40 volunteer drivers to transport residents in the volunteer's private automobile. Volunteers may request reimbursement, which is \$25 per 250 miles (\$.125 per mile).

Using volunteer drivers, CRC also operates a van that travels to Fort Bragg once a month and Santa Rosa weekly. This is a fixed-route service. CRC uses a Dodge Caravan leased from MTA for one dollar per year.

RCMS and private donations pay for the mileage reimbursement as well as insurance, gas, maintenance, etc. for the Fort Bragg and Santa Rosa service. Maintenance is contracted to a local mechanic.

Consolidated Tribal Health

Consolidated Tribal Health is a community health clinic located in Ukiah and open to the public. It is administered by the Indian Health Consortium, an alliance of eight tribal governments. It has been in business for 25 years.

The clinic provides a free in-house transportation service to registered patients. Trips are provided to the clinic in Ukiah or to other specialized medical appointments at the University of California Medical Centers in San Francisco and Stanford Medical Center in Palo Alto. The service area includes all of Mendocino County with the exception of Round Valley, where there is the Round Valley Indian Health Center. There are a considerable number of clients living along the Highway 101 corridor.

Transportation service is provided with six vehicles, two full-time drivers, and two part-time drivers. In addition, the center provides bus passes to patients who can utilize existing transportation services.

Transportation services are provided using the clinic's general funds, which includes the following funding sources:

- Federal Indian Health Services funds
- Reimbursement from Medi-Cal and private insurance
- California State Indian Health funds
- Local tribal contributions

Round Valley Indian Health Center

The Round Valley Indian Health Center provides medically necessary transportation to Native Americans in the Round Valley area. Older adults and diabetic patients are given first priority.

The clinic owns a couple of vehicles. One vehicle is used to provide demand-response service to the clinic from locations in Round Valley. The other vehicle is used to transport patients to specialized services in Ukiah, Willits, and Santa Rosa. Approximately five trips a week are made out of the Round Valley area.

Hey Taxi

Hey Taxi is a private for-profit company that provides taxi and medical transportation in Lake and Mendocino counties, as well as Santa Rosa in Sonoma County. Hey Taxi is the only Sunday and late night service available in Lake and Mendocino counties. Taxi service is available in the following communities:

- **Ukiah:** Service is provided 24 hours a day and seven days a week
- **Clearlake:** Seven days a week, until 2:00 AM on weekends
- **Lakeport:** Service is currently more limited because there is not a full-time driver
- **Willits:** Monday through Saturday, 6:00 AM-midnight
- **Santa Rosa:** Medical trips only

Local service is \$2.50 per pick up and \$2.50 per mile. Out-of-town service is negotiated, but costs roughly \$2 per mile. Medical transportation is \$50 plus \$3 per mile for wheelchair pick ups and \$150 plus \$6 per mile for gurney trips.

Hey Taxi service operates 15 to 19 vehicles, and approximately 10 vehicles are devoted to medical transportation. The company currently employs approximately 30 drivers, including three owner-operators with independent contracts and employees.

Medi-Cal pays for 80 to 90% of medical trips provided by Hey Taxi. Most of these trips are within a 10-mile radius of the patient's home. Medi-Cal does not pay enough to cover out-of-county trips since its rules stipulate that trips must be limited to 90 minutes. The trips are more cost-effective if patients can double up on their trips, which is allowed under Medi-Cal guidelines.

Transportation Plus

Transportation Plus provides medical transportation within Mendocino and Lake Counties and to other medical centers in Northern California.

Connecting Transit Services beyond the County

MTA Routes 95 and 65 provide service to Santa Rosa, where it is possible to connect with Amtrak, Golden Gate Transit, Sonoma County Transit, Greyhound and Santa Rosa City Bus. In Santa Rosa, connections can also be made to the Airport Express with connections to San Francisco and Oakland.

Lake Transit

Lake Transit operates service within Lake County and offers connections to Mendocino and Napa counties. The majority of Lake Transit's routes operate Monday through Saturday. Lake Transit offers fixed-route service in Clearlake, and express routes and deviated fixed-route service on all other parts of the county.

Lake Transit's Route 7 operates between Lakeport and Ukiah with stops at Robinson Rancheria, Upper Lake, Blue Lakes, Calpella, and Mendocino College. Connections can be

made to Amtrak, Greyhound at the Ukiah Regional Airport, and Mendocino Transit service in Ukiah. There are four runs in each direction Monday through Saturday.

Greyhound

Greyhound serves two locations in Mendocino County: Willits and Ukiah. It provides one trip each day to Eureka/Arcata with a 4:45 PM scheduled departure from Ukiah and 9:30 PM arrival in Eureka. There is one southbound trip each day, departing from Eureka at 2:00 PM, which provides direct service to San Francisco and a one-transfer trip to Sacramento.

Amtrak

There are two Amtrak stops in Mendocino County: in Ukiah and Willits; however, there are limited travel options from these locations. Amtrak operates bus service from McKinleyville to Martinez Amtrak Station, making a stop in Ukiah and Willits twice a day. This bus service is only available for passengers who book a ticket with a connecting trip by rail (e.g., south to Bakersfield or east to Sacramento.) As there are no connecting rail trips north of Ukiah, there are no opportunities for traveling northbound out of Ukiah by Amtrak.

Figure 4-3 Mendocino County Transit Services and Activity Centers

[Insert Figure 4-3: Map of Existing Services]

Transportation Provider Inventory

Figure 4-4 outlines all of the transportation providers in Mendocino County, including the public transit agency, social service providers, and private operators. The matrix provides basic operating characteristics, describes the types of service provided and outlines which clients and areas are served. The matrix was compiled by Caltrans staff and has been updated with information collected during stakeholder interviews.

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Figure 4-4 Transportation Inventory

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R												
Anderson Valley Senior Center	Non-profit		X				Anderson Valley Senior Transportation	Paratransit service for seniors	TDA, General Funds	Not Available	Booneville	Demand response	Seniors	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Community Resources Connection	Non-profit				X		Not Available	Primary goal of program is to provide NEMT to South Coast residents	RCMS and private donation	Not Available	Between Elk and Timber Cove	Demand response	General public for NEMT	Volunteers' personal vehicles; 1 van	For volunteer program(2007): 1,583	Training for van drivers is done in house by van coordinator; volunteers: clean driving record	Contracted out	No
Hey Taxi	For profit		X				Medical Taxi	Non-emergency medical transportation	Fares and Medi-Cal (in-county only)	\$ 700,000	Lake and Mendocino Counties and out-of-county trips	Demand response	General public	3 mini-vans (6 pax) + 6 wheelchair / gurney capable vans	3,000	None, Class C License required with first aid and CPR Certification (as per MediCal)	Contracted - local auto dealer	None used
Hillside Health Center (Mendocino Community Health Clinics)	Public		X				Shuttle for patients from Buddy Eller Center	Provide transportation to the clinic for all patients	Ukiah-homeless grant to the clinic	\$ 48,335	Mendocino County	Shuttle, Demand response	Low-income, underinsured, and general public	1	Not Available	Not Required	Maintenance by dealer, Thurston Auto and tires by Les Schwab	None used
Hopland Tribal Health	Tribal govt		X				Not Available	Provide transportation to doctor's appointment for tribal members	HIS	Not Available	Ukiah & Hopland	Demand response	Tribal members (Pomo and Non-Pomo)	2	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Indian Senior Center	Non-profit						Indian Senior Transportation	Transportation to Native American seniors.	TDA	Not Available	Ukiah	Demand response	Native American population	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R												
Mendocino Transit Authority	Public	X					Fixed route and Dial-A-Ride service	TDA, Fares, 5311, Contracted revenues, Senior Center Admin, Rental income	\$ 3,053,000	Mendocino County	Fixed route and demand response	General public	44	75,000	Commercial DL, General Public Paratransit Vehicle certification, Passenger endorsement	In-house	No specific software for trip planning or scheduling	
Transportation Plus	For profit		X				Transportation Plus	Non-emergency medical transportation	Not Available	Lake and Mendocino Counties, and out-of-county	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	
Redwood Coast Regional Center - Ukiah	Non-profit			X			Not Available	Contracts with MTA and pays taxi services to provide transportation to developmentally disabled persons who are not capable of riding regular public transit.	\$ 223,000	Mendocino	Bus passes, fixed route, demand response	Developmentally disabled persons	None	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	
Redwood Coast Seniors	Non-profit		X				Not Available	Paratransit for seniors	\$171,198	Mendocino County Coast, between Inglenook and Albion	Demand response	Seniors and disabled	3	225 miles	Class B Driver's license, medical cards, finger prints, passenger endorsements	Contracted to private provider (Gordon's Quick Lube in Fort Bragg)	Dispatching by radio	
Round Valley Indian Health Center	Tribal govt		X				Not Available	Transportation for Native American patients who need transportation to medical appt.	Not Available	Round Valley, Ukiah, Willits, San Francisco, Lake Port, Yreka, Santa Rosa	Demand response	Tribal elders, dialysis patients are priority	2 government cars/ vans	1,100	None required, basic CPR / First aid training	Maintained at stations approved by GSA in Ukiah	None used	

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Name	Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R												
Sherwood Valley Rancheria	Tribal govt		X				Not Available	DHHS / HIS	\$ 103,723	Within Mendocino County, includes out-of-county trips	Demand response	Tribal members without access to transportation	3	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	
South Coast Senior Citizens	Non-profit		X				Not Available	Funds available through MTA	\$ 23,000	Gualala and Point Arena	Demand response	Seniors and disabled	1 Van, provided by MTA	1,800	MTA provides drivers and trains them	MTA	None used	
Ukiah Senior Center	Non-profit		X				Ukiah Rider	TDA, General Funds	\$ 230,244	Ukiah, Talmage, Calpella, Redwood Valley	Reservation, contracted, Demand response	Seniors and disabled	3 W/C accessible buses, 1 backup bus	5,500	Inhouse training	Contracted to Mendocino Transit Authority	None used	
Ukiah Valley Association for Habilitation	Non-profit		X				Not Available	Regional Center	Not available	Mendocino County (Ukiah and Willits)	Shuttle service	Disabled	10	Not available	Driver's training by insurance company	Outside mechanic	Not Available	
Willits Senior Center	Non-profit		X				Willits Senior Inc.	Subsidy from MTA, Donations	\$ 105,000.00	Approx. 10 miles radius from the City Hall of Willits	Demand response	Seniors	1 small bus (15 pax), 1 van (7 pax), 1 car (4 pax)	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	

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Chapter 5. Key Findings: Service Gaps, Unmet Needs, and Institutional Issues

This chapter summarizes the range of unmet transportation needs that were identified through stakeholder input and research. Stakeholder input was gathered from the SSTAC and through stakeholder interviews. This input was critical in identifying unmet transportation needs. Figure 5-1 outlines project stakeholders who provided input to the study.

Figure 5-1 Project Stakeholders

Agency	Position
AAA (Lake & Mendocino)	Director
Action Network	Executive Director
Community Resources for Independence	Rural Outreach Director/ CAP Advocate
Hey Taxi	President
Indian Health Consortium	Director of Community Outreach
Mendocino County Dep. of Social Services	Program Manager
Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA)	General Manager
MTA Board	Chair
Redwood Coast Medical Services	Social Service Case Manager, Living Well Program
Redwood Coast Regional Center	Community Resource Manager
Redwood Coast Seniors Inc.	Executive Director
Ukiah Senior Center	General Operations & Transportation Manager
Willits City Council	Councilmember
SSTAC Members	

The consultant staff convened a kick-off meeting with the SSTAC in January 2008 with the goals of introducing SSTAC members to the project and obtaining their feedback on transportation needs. Meeting minutes are included in Appendix A.

Stakeholders were asked to elaborate on the role their organization plays in providing or arranging transportation, the budget and level of service provided, if available, and any perceptions or experiences with unmet transportation needs or gaps in service specific to the clientele served by the agency. It is important to note that the summary reports reflect the views,

opinions, and perceptions of those interviewed. The resulting information was not verified or validated for accuracy of content.

In addition to stakeholder interviews, the list of unmet transit needs submitted through the annual unmet transit needs hearing were considered. All TDA funds available to jurisdictions within Mendocino County are currently dedicated for transit purposes and none are used for streets and roads; therefore, an unmet needs hearing is not required. Nonetheless, the local RTPA (MCOG) conducts such a hearing annually in order to allow members of the public an opportunity to comment on their perceptions of needs. These are then referred to MTA for analysis for potential inclusion in the agency’s annual operating budget.

Key Origins and Destinations

As discussed, Mendocino County is a large county with a geographically dispersed population. While the communities around Ukiah have more transportation options available to them, many of the outlying communities in the county do not. In rural communities, it can be difficult to access basic needs (groceries, shopping, etc.), social services, and medical facilities. Although this situation is an expected condition of rural living, low income individuals living in these areas may find it difficult to afford to purchase and maintain a private vehicle—further compounding the need for transportation.

Many stakeholders interviewed for this plan identified significant transportation needs in the outlying communities throughout the county. In particular, communities in the southern and northern portions of Mendocino County have significant transportation needs given the rural nature of the areas.

As the largest community in Mendocino County, the majority of services in the county are located in Ukiah, including most of the major shopping and medical offices. Ukiah is a key shopping destination in the county and is home to government services, Mendocino College, and Ukiah Valley Medical Center.

The smaller communities of Willits and Fort Bragg also provide access to shopping and basic services and some limited social and medical services. Most of the employment in the county is located in Ukiah, Willits, and Fort Bragg, although there are also agricultural sectors in rural areas that provide low income jobs.

Figure 5.2 outlines key activity centers in Mendocino County for low-income residents, older adults, and people with disabilities. The list includes medical facilities, retail, social services, large employers with significant low income jobs, and senior centers¹⁰.

¹⁰ The locations are also illustrated in Figure 4-3 Mendocino County Transit Services and Activity Centers and listed in Figure 3-7 Major Employers in Mendocino County.

Figure 5-2 Key Activity Centers in Mendocino County

Activity Centers	Location
Anderson Valley Senior Center	Boonville
City of Ukiah	Ukiah
College of the Redwoods	Fort Bragg
Fetzer Vineyards	Hopland
Food Help Program	Ukiah
Harwood Products	Branscomb
Hillside Health Center	Ukiah
Hopland Band of Pomo Indians	Hopland
Howard Memorial Hospital	Willits
Laborers Hod Carriers Local	Ukiah
Little Lake Health Center	Willits
Mendocino Coast District Hospital	Fort Bragg
Mendocino College	Ukiah
Mendocino County Dept. of Social Services	Willits
Mendocino County Dept. of Social Services	Ukiah
Raley's	Ukiah
Redwood Coast Senior Center	Fort Bragg
Round Valley Tribal Health	Covelo
Safeway	Fort Bragg
Safeway	Ukiah
Sho Ka Wah Casino	Hopland
South Coast Seniors	Point Arena
Ukiah Senior Center	Ukiah
Ukiah Valley Medical Center	Ukiah
Wal-Mart	Ukiah
Willits Senior Center	Willits

Transportation Needs

This section discusses transportation needs as identified by stakeholders in previous planning efforts and as part of this study.

Needs Previously Identified

Comments were received at MTA meetings or through written correspondence, from the SSTAC, from the public hearing, and from the Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan for South Mendocino Coast. The list of unmet needs submitted to MTA from MCOG in December 2007 is as follows:

- Saturday service between Willits and Ukiah
- More bike rack space on MTA vehicles
- Service to Covelo with connections to Mendocino County
- Student pass for college students
- Service from Anderson Valley to Mendocino College
- Later bus returning to Willits from Mendocino College
- Service to the new Plowshares facility
- Transit service along Dora corridor to Grace Hudson School
- Saturday service to Mendocino College from Ukiah and Willits
- Additions to CC Rider, Route 65 service
- Additional summer service between inland and the coast
- Additional local service on the South Mendocino Coast
- More frequent service on Fort Bragg's BraggAbout
- Commute service from Inland Mendocino to Santa Rosa
- Commute service from outlying inland areas to Ukiah (including Willits and Redwood, Potter and Anderson Valleys) and vanpool service from outlying areas to more populated areas for work and/or services
- Assisted transportation in Ukiah on Sundays
- Connection from Brooktrails to transit in Willits (one trip in morning, return trip in evening)
- Connection from Fort Bragg to Amtrak stop in Ukiah
- Service between Albion and Santa Rosa
- Additional service between Laytonville and Willits
- Local dial-a-ride service in South Mendocino County
- Route deviation service on the "ridge"
- Activities van (pre-arranged) for group trips
- Adjustment for Sea Ranch apartments
- Establish volunteer mobility managers

The following sections describe the transportation needs that have been identified for Mendocino County.

Improvements on Fixed-Route Transit

The county is served by MTA, which provides a combination of fixed-route and deviated fixed-route service within and between Mendocino County communities, as well as transportation to neighboring Sonoma County. Recently, MTA added late-night service in Ukiah, between Mendocino College and the southern end of Ukiah.

Although MTA provides valuable linkages with its services, it has some limitations with respect to frequency, service coverage, and service span, which is consistent with a large rural, sparsely populated county. Currently, MTA only operates Sunday service on its two intercity bus routes (Routes 95 and 65). Although the addition of evening service in Ukiah is welcomed by many transit riders, other locations in the county could also use bus service that operates in the evening.

Stakeholders spoke about the need for greater frequency in order to reduce wait times, which can be onerous for older adults and disabled passengers. Many said that there is a need for service in the evening and on Sundays.

MTA offers transportation to Santa Rosa via its CC Rider, but stakeholders expressed the need for additional frequency. In addition, residents travel outside of Mendocino County to reach job opportunities and medical appointments, and could use supportive transportation. This is especially true for those who are transit dependent.

According to some stakeholders, there is a need for additional transportation services between Ukiah and Fort Bragg. There are a considerable number of people with disabilities traveling in this corridor as many travel from Fort Bragg to Willits or Ukiah for medical appointments.

In addition, MTA has the following capital needs:

- MTA's headquarters needs significant investment in order to upgrade its maintenance facilities and administrative offices. The conference room on the administrative building's second story is not ADA accessible because there is no elevator in the building. In addition, the maintenance facilities need to accommodate an alternative fuel storage system.
- MTA would benefit from a transit center in Ukiah. This would allow more convenient scheduling and routing, and would also facilitate transfers to Greyhound and Amtrak. A new transit center would serve as a connection point for persons traveling to Lake and Sonoma counties as well as people who need to access local, regional, and intercity services.

New or Enhanced Service in Rural Areas of the County

Given the rural nature of the county, there are communities without any—or with limited—available public transportation. The county's population is not concentrated enough to provide comprehensive public transit everywhere. Therefore, isolated and small populations are difficult to serve with public transportation.

Round Valley

Currently, there is no public and limited private transportation between Willits and Covelo/Round Valley in northern Mendocino County.¹¹ Dial-a-ride service within Round Valley and from Round Valley to Willits was discontinued around 1990 and fixed-route service was discontinued a couple of years later.

Some stakeholders mentioned the need to re-instate transportation between Covelo and Ukiah by initiating service between Covelo and Willits, where a connection could be made to MTA routes to Ukiah. In addition, there is no public transportation between Willits and Brooktrails, which is about 3.5 miles outside of Willits. Despite its proximity, there are significant safety issues related to walking or biking between the two communities due to the winding roads.

The Indian Health Consortium has a clinic in Round Valley, just outside of Covelo. This clinic, along with the other in Ukiah, provides transportation to clients living in rural or remote areas of the county. Passengers are primarily tribal members, but the clinic in Ukiah also transports non-tribal residents who are clients. The clinics cannot meet the demand for service and would benefit from additional drivers and resources.

Local tribal nations administer their own transportation programs, but they do not provide a sufficient amount of service to meet the needs of the county's tribal population. The clinic could reduce the number of trips it provides if there were more frequent and comprehensive public transportation service in the county.

South Coast

The South Coast area of Mendocino County, including Manchester-Point Arena and Gualala, has limited access to public transportation. The area is rural, low-density and isolated from larger urban areas. In addition, the geography of the region is composed of a narrow strip of coastal land adjacent to mountains and windy roadways. Many services, including higher education, social services, major medical care, and bulk shopping are not available within the region, requiring citizens to travel sixty to ninety miles for such services. The Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan states that “while existing services offered by MTA, South Coast Seniors, and Community Resource Connection fulfill certain transportation niches, other transit needs are unserved.” It further identified the following transportation needs:

- **Inter-versus intra-area trips:** Locals have a need to travel within the region to Redwood Coast Medical Clinic, for errands, and to access entertainment and educational offerings. However, for more specialized services, access is needed to Fort Bragg, Ukiah, and Santa Rosa.
- **Non-emergency medical trips:** While the CRC provides trips for “essential needs”, they cannot provide transportation for emergent needs of under 48 hours (per reservation requirements). Non-emergency medical transportation has repeatedly been identified as a top priority.
- **Transit service off of State Route 1 (SR1):** Current limited services operate along SR1, but much of the population is on “the Ridge”, a parallel route east of SR1.

¹¹ Special Needs Project Transportation Study, prepared by Haun & Associates for the California Institute of Human Services, 2007.

- **Lack of evening and weekend service:** There are limited public transit services available during the evening and on weekends, which limits mobility options for all trip types. As a resort area, many of the employment transportation needs, in particular, extend into the weekends and evening hours. This also impacts the elderly, many of whom can drive in daytime conditions but not at night.
- **Family transportation needs:** Families need assistance in transporting youth to and from after-school programs and extracurricular activities, as well as to and from day-care service. In addition, various educational and recreational programs require after-school transportation in order to get youths to the various activities.
- **Senior citizens transportation needs:** It is important for senior citizens to have transportation services accessible in order for them to keep their independence and to allow them to “age in place”.

Job Access Services

Mendocino residents need transportation service enhancements that support improved access to jobs or training opportunities. Most entry-level jobs (nursing homes, office jobs, hospitality industry, agriculture) are located in Ukiah, Fort Bragg or Willits. The public transit system does not serve the more rural areas, and evening service is limited. Some entry level jobs require employees to be at work during non-traditional commute hours, such as late at night.

According to the Transportation Committee of Mendocino Works¹², job access in Mendocino County would be improved by implementing transportation service in the following locations during key times:

- **Covelo-Willits.** Service is needed before 8:00 AM and after 5:00 PM. There may also be a need for local circulation in Covelo.
- **South Mendocino Coast.** (Gualala, Point Arena, Manchester and Elk) There is a need for intercity bus service to Fort Bragg and Ukiah scheduled for full work days and a local service to the Sea Ranch to support local entrepreneurial efforts. In addition, there is a need for local circulation for work and work-related activities, or to Welfare-to-Work training or educational opportunities on the South Coast.
- **Anderson Valley-Ukiah.** There is a need for service that arrives in Ukiah before 8:00 AM plus midday and departs from Ukiah in the midday and just after 5:00 PM.
- **Mendocino College Evenings.** There is a need for service between Willits/Redwood Valley and the college between 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM.

Commuter Services and Ridesharing

Another need identified through this planning effort is that of providing alternative services for commuters. The MTA intends to research opportunities to develop rideshare or vanpool programs specific to commuters, and has applied for FTA planning funds to study specific commuter patterns and needs in order to identify potential rideshare markets. The goal of the study is to determine the appropriate type of service for commuters in specific communities in the County to access employment in Ukiah and Sonoma County. This work is expected to lead to proposals for ridesharing services, which will provide a viable option to public transit fixed

¹² Area-wide Job Access Transportation Plan, prepared by the Transportation Committee of Mendocino Works (1998 and updated May 2002).

route service. These could include carpool matching service, van pools and subscription bus service, all of which could be organized by a Mobility Manager, consistent with another strategy listed in this report. Some linkage is anticipated with the State’s Agricultural Worker Transportation Program.

Paratransit

MTA provides complementary paratransit services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) within the cities of Ukiah and Fort Bragg. This means that paratransit is required to be provided for eligible persons, at minimum, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of MTA’s fixed routes, and during the same hours of service as MTA otherwise operates. Outside these cities, paratransit service for seniors and persons with disabilities is primarily provided or sponsored by other nonprofit organizations, such as the Redwood Coast Regional Center, and senior centers.

However, these local paratransit programs may have limited availability or experience other constraints, leading to long wait times for passengers. Senior centers accommodate some older adults in need of door-through-door service, which MTA cannot provide on its complementary paratransit program. Even so, some senior centers have limited service hours and often have to turn down requests for transportation, especially during the afternoons.

MTA subsidizes the transportation services provided by the county’s senior centers, covering 67% to 88% of the costs. The agency is not able to provide the entire transportation budget for the centers, which require additional operating funds. Despite this subsidy, a number of senior centers began to cut back on transportation services due to escalating costs to operate the service; for example, the Ukiah Senior Center’s short-lived extended service was one of those that was recently cut due to a loss in funding.

Other Transportation Needs

Other transportation needs discussed by stakeholders include the following:

- **Travel training:** Some older adults and disabled passengers could benefit from travel training, which assists new riders with learning about available transportation services. This is especially the case where services may have recently changed, such as in Willits, which recently began operating a deviated fixed-route service.
- **Accessibility:** Outside of Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Willits, there are problems with accessibility, such as a lack of sidewalks to bus stops. This is particularly difficult for disabled passengers who do not qualify for paratransit.
- **Farmworkers:** There were over 4,000 farmworkers employed in Mendocino County during 2006. In a survey of Mendocino County farmworkers, approximately 50% of respondents indicated that they drove their own car to work, while 39% drove with others. This group, which is primarily low-income, could benefit from affordable transportation options.

Duplication of Services

While it is possible that some overlap exists in Mendocino County with respect to multiple providers operating within the service area, for the most part these services are distinct and serve different populations. For example, senior centers in Ukiah and Fort Bragg provide door-through-door dial-a-ride services whereas MTA provides general public curb-to-curb Dial-a-Ride

as well as fixed-route services. In Willits, MTA provides deviated fixed-route service and the senior center operates door-through-door paratransit.

Existing Coordination of Services

Coordination between MTA and Senior Centers: MTA makes available approximately 16% of Mendocino County's TDA funds to six locally-based senior centers to support their transportation services. The distribution of TDA funds for the senior centers is outlined in Figure 4-2.

MTA provides assistance with vehicle procurement, including:

- Provision of the match for 5310 grants and full cost of the vehicle when necessary
- Grant application review and support
- Vehicle maintenance
- Parts and fuel at cost for centers close enough to Ukiah
- Financial and performance review
- Liability insurance (MTA pays for annual premium using TDA)

MTA also provides training opportunities for the senior center drivers. This long-standing arrangement has benefited senior centers by providing sustained operating assistance. It also has benefited MTA because the senior centers are able to provide a higher level of service (door-through-door) than what MTA can provide, and they can provide it at a lower cost.

Coordination between MTA and Redwood Coast Regional Center: In Mendocino County, the Regional Center assists clients with transportation, but does not provide the service directly. The RCRC spends approximately \$100,000 each year to purchase MTA bus passes. It issues them to clients who are able to take advantage of public transportation.

RCRC also contracts with MTA and pays approximately \$69,000 to operate Route 97, an exclusive bus route for clients who are not capable of riding regular public transit. The route is a subscription bus service and it is not open to the general public. The service operates within the greater Ukiah area, taking clients to Ukiah Valley Association for Habilitation.

Barriers to Coordination

The following barriers or obstacles preventing or hindering coordination of public transit and human service agency transportation programs are not unique to Mendocino County; rather, they are universal in nature and are faced by local communities throughout the country.

Geography: Opportunities to coordinate service among transportation services in Mendocino County are limited in part by the limited number of service providers, and also by the size and geography of the county. Mendocino County is a large county with some very geographically isolated communities (e.g., Covelo, Laytonville, Manchester).

Specific client needs: By definition, customers of special needs transportation programs have difficulty or cannot independently make use of programs established for the general public. In many cases, these customers need a level of care that may not prove conducive to integration

with other passengers. Some agencies have established service standards or guidelines for consideration in transporting their clients, such as maximum time on a vehicle, the need for a higher level of care, required use of seat belts, etc. that may preclude transporting them with other client groups.

Funding restrictions: Social service agencies tend to fund or support transportation for their clients as an auxiliary service—as a means to support the end goal of providing a primary service such as training, medical assistance, etc. These agencies must ensure, often through cumbersome audit processes, that agency funds are being spent in support of eligible clients. While in theory some agencies have indicated support for mingling dollars and passengers through a single service delivery system, participants need to reach consensus on a methodology for equitably sharing the cost of service among various client groups.

Limited staff resources: In rural communities, transportation program staff often “wear many hats,” and may be required to administer programs, write grants or funding applications, prepare reports and invoices, supervise staff and, on occasion, even drive a vehicle. Staff resources may not be available to pursue coordination strategies, which need to be developed and nurtured over time. In Mendocino County, the MTA serves as the CTSA. The CTSA is well positioned, by virtue of its designation and authority established in state statute (AB 120) to assume a leadership role in overseeing coordination projects and activities. However, there is currently no dedicated staff available for this purpose.

Chapter 6. Identification of Strategies and Evaluation

This chapter presents strategies and solutions as identified by local stakeholders to address the service gaps and unmet transportation needs. It also describes the process and results of two public workshops that took place in Mendocino County to develop and prioritize strategies. Finally, it presents the criteria that were considered when ranking the strategies.

Public Workshop

On May 19, 2008, the consultant facilitated public workshops in both Fort Bragg and Ukiah. The purpose of the workshops was to confirm previously identified transportation needs and to identify and prioritize strategies for addressing these needs. The prioritization process, which was required by Caltrans per SAFETEA-LU planning guidance, is a cursory step toward selecting the most necessary strategies for addressing the county’s top transportation needs. It is foreseeable that Mendocino County stakeholders may undergo another similar yet more comprehensive process to select desired strategies.

The following public outreach methods were used to involve a variety of stakeholders:

Selection of invitees: With input from the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) and the Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA), the consultant team compiled a list of stakeholders to be invited to the workshops. Invitees included representatives from the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC), senior centers, social service organizations, transit agencies, and local and tribal governments.

Letter of invitation: The consultant team sent a letter of invitation via regular mail or email to approximately 50 stakeholders.

Media coverage: MCOG provided the names of local media contacts, including local newspapers and radio stations in Mendocino County. The consultant team submitted a press release to local media contacts, including:

Radio Station	Newspapers
KZYX KOZT KMFB	Ukiah Daily Journal Fort Bragg Advocate Willits News Independent Coast

Internet posting: MCOG advertised the workshops on their website and posted a copy of the press release, presentation materials for workshop, and the draft Existing Conditions report.

The flier, list of invitees, press release, media coverage, and list of attendees are included in Appendix B.

Four people attended the workshop in Fort Bragg, including representatives from MTA, MCOG Redwood Coast Seniors, and Area Agency on Aging (AAA). In Ukiah, there were nine people in attendance, including representatives from AAA, MTA, MCOG, North Coast Opportunities, and Community Care. It should be noted that findings about transportation strategies may be limited by the fact that there was low stakeholder attendance at the public workshops.

Workshop Approach

Both workshops were conducted in the same format and included the following elements:

- **Introductions.** Each workshop began with introductions by the consulting team, followed by group introductions. Participants were asked to identify what organization they were associated with, along with how they found out about the workshop and what they expected to get out of the workshop.
- **Brief presentation.** Following introductions, a brief Power Point presentation was delivered that provided general information about the planning process, discussed the three primary funding sources subject to this plan, and summarized the unmet transportation needs that were identified for Mendocino County.
- **Confirmation of unmet needs and presentation of strategies.** A handout was provided to workshop participants that listed all of the unmet transportation needs (as discussed in the presentation) and an initial set of potential strategies to meet those needs. The unmet transportation needs were first reviewed to ensure they were represented accurately, and to provide the opportunity to add new unmet needs. Each potential strategy was then described in detail and workshop participants were asked to suggest additional strategies as applicable.
- **Prioritization of strategies.** Participants were presented a set of draft evaluation criteria (discussed in the following section) and asked to keep the criteria in mind when prioritizing the potential strategies. The initial list of potential strategies was displayed on a large print-out that was posted on the wall. Additional strategies identified during the workshop were added to the list before the prioritization exercise. Each person was then given five votes, and was asked to “vote” for strategies they felt best met the unmet transportation needs in Mendocino County. Participants could vote for a single strategy, or distribute their votes among multiple strategies. The purpose of this exercise was to visually indicate which strategies are supported by those attending the workshop, and to reach consensus on which strategies are considered most important to pursue.
- **Workshop summary.** Following the prioritization exercise, the consulting team provided a recap of the workshop and discussed the next steps. All participants were encouraged to contact the consulting team if they had questions or wanted the plan to include additional needs and/or strategies.

Evaluation Criteria

One of the requirements of this plan, per SAFETEA-LU planning guidance, is to prioritize potential strategies. To provide assistance to stakeholders and workshop participants in ranking strategies, a draft set of evaluation criteria was developed. The evaluation criteria were not intended to be rigorously applied to all strategies in the workshop setting, but rather to help guide each participant in deciding which strategies best meet the identified needs in the county.

Three draft evaluation criteria were developed:

1. Strategy 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

2. Feasibility of implementation. How likely is the strategy to be successfully implemented? The strategy should:

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

3. 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

Stakeholders and workshop attendees were presented the draft evaluation criteria to assist them in prioritizing the strategies identified for Mendocino County.

Identification of Strategies

Prior to convening the workshops, the unmet transportation needs presented in Chapter 5 were organized into six broad categories:

- Unserved or underserved areas (service not available where it's needed)
- Lack of availability (service not available when it's needed)
- Capital improvements
- Cost of transportation is difficult for some
- Additional information and marketing programs
- Program policies and requirements

A list of potential strategies was then developed that corresponded directly to the identified unmet transportation needs identified in Chapter 5. The potential strategies were based on an

expansion or modification of services currently provided in Mendocino County or strategies that have been implemented elsewhere and may be suitable in Mendocino County. The list of potential strategies was not intended to represent all possible strategies appropriate for Mendocino County and workshop participants were encouraged to suggest additional strategies, modify strategies or eliminate strategies from consideration.

The strategies are presented in Figure 6-1 and are organized into the six broad categories of unmet transportation needs. Workshop participants clarified or added several additional unmet transportation needs and then made modifications to several suggested strategies and added new strategies to the list. The unmet needs and/or strategies that were added or modified are highlighted in the table in ***italic and bold typeface***.

Figure 6-1 Strategies and Prioritization

Unmet Transportation Needs	Strategies
Address Unserved or Underserved Areas	
<p>Service is limited in rural areas of the county—people need to travel from outlying areas into Ukiah, Willits and Fort Bragg</p> <p>Service is needed to and from Covelo and Ukiah and Willits</p> <p>Service is needed between rural communities</p> <p>Inter-county service is needed between Mendocino and Lake and Sonoma (Santa Rosa), Counties for employment trips</p> <p>Job access services are needed</p> <p>Inter-county service is needed between Mendocino and Sonoma County for medical trips.</p> <p>Additional service needed in South Mendocino Coast</p>	<p>Establish a “lifeline” transit network to connect Fort Bragg and Ukiah to outlying communities once or twice a week</p> <p>Establish ride share matching service for van pools or car pools</p> <p><i>Provide transportation to medical appointments outside county</i></p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of coordinating with Indian Health Facility to seek tribal transportation funds to support enhancements for tribal members and other community residents</p> <p>Institute new service to operate between smaller communities not currently well served through existing services</p> <p>Institute or expand deviated fixed route or general public dial-a-ride service (e.g., South Mendocino Coast)</p>

Unmet Transportation Needs	Strategies
Address Service When its Needed	
<p>Better access is needed to entry level job sites (i.e. hospitality industry, nursing homes, agriculture) during off-peak hours</p> <p>More frequent service is needed for existing transit services</p> <p>Commuter services and ridesharing are needed</p> <p>Community college students could use more frequent and more direct service from various parts of the county (i.e. Anderson Valley)</p> <p>Saturday service between Ukiah and Willits</p> <p>More frequent service on BraggAbout and Willits Rider</p> <p>Sunday transit and dial-a-ride service needed</p>	<p>Extend service hours for Mendocino Transit</p> <p>Seek collaboration with local businesses to partner in providing late-night shuttle or van service for employees</p> <p>Seek collaboration with local community college to co-sponsor enhanced service for students</p> <p>Investigate vanpool services for off-peak hour commuters; seek vanpool program funds through Caltrans' Agricultural Program</p> <p>Study shift times and locations for entry level jobs as part of Commute Study.</p> <p>Add evening hours for service between Willits and Ukiah</p> <p>Establish ride share matching service for van pools or car pools.</p> <p>Develop program for college students to ride free with student body card</p> <p>Increase frequency of Mendocino Transit service</p>
Capital Improvements	
<p>Need to improve access to the bus stop for persons with mobility impairments</p> <p>Need for more benches, shelters, signs</p> <p>Need to replace vehicles that serve elderly, disabled and low-income people</p> <p>Some wheelchair users have difficulty using bus lifts</p>	<p>Develop capital improvement program specific to other social service needs</p> <p>Identify high priority locations for capital improvements</p> <p>Prioritize bus stop locations needing improvements</p> <p>Replace vehicles and other capital equipment in accordance with the Capital Replacement Schedule, working with local non-profit and public agencies.</p> <p>Purchase alternative fuel vehicles to replace existing vehicles</p> <p>Replace lift-equipped vehicles with low-floor ramped vehicles to allow easier access for wheelchair, stroller and wheeled carts or suitcases</p>

Unmet Transportation Needs	Strategies
Address Issues of Affordability	
<p>Some low-income persons could benefit from having access to an automobile</p> <p>Increasing cost of gas is discouraging volunteers</p> <p>Cost of using transit is difficult for low-income families with several people using transit</p>	<p>Encourage social service agencies to establish car loan programs, or other incentives (i.e. insurance, maintenance) to allow for improved access to autos</p> <p>Encourage planners of affordable housing or other social service programs to locate facilities in proximity to transit.</p> <p>Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers</p> <p>Encourage more public and social service agencies to purchase bus passes and tickets for their clients. Consider selling those for a further discount.</p>
Address Need for Outreach, Marketing	
<p>Lack of awareness of available services by human service agency staff</p> <p>Need for clearinghouse of information options for the public</p> <p>Need for better maps and transit information at stops and transfer points</p> <p>Travel training is needed to assist persons learn how to use transit</p>	<p>Provide additional outreach and training for human service agency staff</p> <p>Through a Mobility Management Program, establish a central clearinghouse and information center</p> <p>Upgrade maps and information provided at major bus stops and shelters</p> <p>Initiate a travel training program and offer classes or workshops to senior centers or other groups of interested potential users</p> <p>Upgrade MTA website to make Google Transit available to visitors of the website.</p> <p>Initiate community bulletin boards to encourage ridesharing and to disseminate information about transit alternatives in smaller communities within the county.</p>
Policies or Other Strategies to Address Coordination	
<p>Some persons with disabilities or older adults need a higher level of service (i.e. door to door service) than is provided on the deviated fixed route service</p> <p>Coordinate services and resources among existing providers and ensure there is no duplication of services</p>	<p>Allow for more individualized service for those who need it (i.e. provide an escort, provision of door-through-door service, etc.)</p> <p>Identify opportunities for agencies to share use of vehicles or broaden their passenger base.</p> <p>Document funding or regulatory barriers that may prevent vehicle sharing; advocate for strategies to address these barriers.</p> <p>Evaluate MTA's subsidy program of senior centers to assess equity of contributions and to document program objectives</p>

Highest Priority Strategies

FTA planning guidance calls for identification *and prioritization* of strategies to address the unmet transportation needs. For purposes of this planning effort, the suggested high-ranking strategies listed below were based in part on a prioritization process that took place in the two workshops, as well as a comparison of each strategy with the evaluation criteria. It should be noted that (1) the workshop exercise was limited in scope because only those who were able to attend the workshops were able to provide direct input; (2) new ideas and strategies were put forward at each of the workshops which were, in turn, not considered at the companion workshops; (3) efforts were made to contact other stakeholders unable to attend the workshops to solicit their views which are included in this assessment; and (4) Consultant staff used discretion in attempting to match strategies to needs that had been identified and are thoroughly discussed in Chapter 5.

It should also be noted that all the strategies are useful to consider when considering service improvements, and implementation efforts should not be limited to those that ranked highest. The following section provides a discussion about the highest priority strategies in Mendocino County.

The highest ranked strategies in Mendocino County include:

- **Establish Mobility Management Program:** This strategy recognizes the need to dedicate staffing for promoting coordination activities within Mendocino County.
- **Expand dial-a-ride services:** This strategy was recognized as a critical need by attendees in both workshops, as well as by other stakeholders providing comments who could not attend the workshops. There is a particular need for additional dial-a-ride services on the South Mendocino Coast.
- **Provide more specialized paratransit services, including door-through-door services throughout the county:** Again, participants in both workshops expressed the need to provide a higher level of paratransit or specialized services for older adults or persons with disabilities than what is now available.
- **Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers.** Increased fuel costs over the past year is a key reason why this strategy ranked highly.
- **Replace vehicles and other capital equipment in accordance with the Capital Replacement Program.** This strategy recognizes the need to coordinate efforts to identify capital needs, such as facilities and vehicles, and to pursue opportunities to address those needs.

Chapter 7. Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies

This chapter presents conceptual steps and a cursory evaluation of feasibility for implementing the highest ranked strategies in Mendocino County. The top-ranking strategies for Mendocino County include:

- Establish Mobility Management Program
- Establish expanded dial-a-ride services
- Provide more specialized paratransit services, including door-through-door services
- Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers
- Replace vehicles and capital equipment in accordance with Capital Replacement Program

Figure 7-1 provides a “snapshot” summary of implementation steps needed to advance the highest ranked strategies. It is important to note that these “strategies” are not fully defined, nor does this implementation plan necessarily reflect actual projects or programs that may be carried out by local sponsors. Rather, it highlights some project assumptions and presents options should those sponsors wish to pursue grant funding through Caltrans or other sources.

Each of the strategies would, to some extent, address the unmet transportation needs as defined through this planning process. Therefore, they are all included for reference in the Plan. Figure 7-2 summarizes other potential strategies.

Chapter 7 also introduces other strategies for Mendocino County stakeholders to consider that could advance coordination efforts, which include:

- Access to Jobs and Employment
- Volunteer Programs
- School Transportation
- Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
- Consolidated Maintenance Programs (see Appendix C for more information)
- Consolidated Driver Training Programs (see Appendix D for more information)

The chapter concludes with a discussion on effective program administration and oversight, including the development of performance monitoring standards.

Implementation Steps for High Priority Strategies

This section provides more detail about the five high priority strategies identified for Mendocino County and discusses *potential* preliminary steps for implementation. **It is important to note that the detail provided for each strategy is conceptual and further study would be required before moving forward with any of the strategies.**

Establish Mobility Management Program

During stakeholder interviews and workshops, members of the general public as well as human service agency representatives indicated they lack information on available transportation services. One of the primary identified unmet transportation needs in Mendocino County is that of providing additional outreach and marketing to improve knowledge of available transportation services. Specifically, there is a need for a central countywide clearinghouse that would distribute information about available transportation services. In addition, the program could support ridesharing and disseminate information about transit alternatives throughout the county.

The purpose of developing mobility management capacity is to address this need by ensuring that the organizational structure is in place to advance coordination activities and improve mobility throughout the county. In addition to serving as a clearinghouse, a mobility management program could address a wide range of transportation issues.

Mobility management refers to a broad spectrum of practices, which make innovative use of transit resources to respond to demand. These operational, technological or informational improvements that promote transit usage in a variety of ways. Examples of mobility management strategies include:

Operational	Technological	Informational
Ridesharing, vanpools, carpooling, biking	Real-time rideshare matching	Trip planning tools and kiosks
Subscription buses	Multi-provider trip reservation	Transit telephone center with information on all modes
Shuttles funded by private sector	Integrated fare media	Joint programs w/ private sector
Dial-a-ride (night and low density) and demand-response feeders		
Guaranteed Ride Home		
Volunteer and community-based transportation services		

Potential Lead Agency

As the county’s public transit agency and CTSA, MTA is a logical host agency for mobility management efforts. It would sponsor a part-time or full-time mobility manager devoted to implementing identified mobility strategies. The mobility manager ideally works in collaboration with other organizations to provide a full range of travel options that are more effective in meeting needs.

Although the mobility manager can work to provide improved mobility for the general public, they may be especially effective in meeting the travel needs of persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes.

Cost

A full-time mobility manager would cost approximately \$60,000 each year. An additional \$5,000-10,000 should be budgeted for program start-up costs related to purchasing a computer, other technology, office furniture, etc. More should be budgeted if purchasing specialized trip planning software.

Depending on the specific mobility management activities that are pursued, there will be additional capital costs associated with project implementation. Some programs can be implemented on a limited budget whereas others, such as establishing an on-line trip-planning program, may require additional technological expenses as well as technical assistance from consultants.

Funding

The most likely sources of funding for mobility management are 5310, JARC, and New Freedom.

Under SAFETEA LU, FTA explains the following about mobility management:

- Mobility management is an eligible Federal capital expense supported with 80% Federal public transportation funding.
- It consists of short-range planning and management activities and projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation service providers. It includes personnel and technology activities.
- Mobility management funding may not be applied to operating public transportation services.

Expand dial-a-ride services

This strategy proposes to expand dial-a-ride service into locations where it is needed and does not currently exist. In particular, stakeholders expressed the need for additional transportation services in the South Coast area. According to the *Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan*¹³ (*Redwood Transit Plan*), local dial-a-ride service would best meet the basic needs of the general public for the low-density population on the Redwood Coast.

The plan suggested that service operate from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM in the Manchester/Point Arena area Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, dial-a-ride service would be provided from 7:30 AM until 11:00 AM and from 12:00 PM until 4:00 PM in the Anchor Bay/Gualala/Sea Ranch area. From 11:00 AM until noon, the vehicle could be used for other purposes.

Due to the low volume of ridership, poor cell reception on the coast, and limited radio capacity, the driver would dispatch the service by checking phone messages every half hour.

¹³ *Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan*, 2006, prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants.

The Transit Plan suggested that the dial-a-ride service be provided using a wheelchair-equipped, 12-passenger van.

Potential Lead Agency

The *Redwood Transit Plan* suggests that CRC or MTA are potential candidates for providing the dial-a-ride service. If CRC were to assume responsibility, it would need to implement a new management framework and expand its administrative capacity. CRC is currently operated using volunteer drivers. To implement dial-a-ride service, CRC would need at least one paid driver and other paid administrative staff.

MTA is a candidate operator for the proposed dial-a-ride service. However, any service that is above and beyond what MTA currently provides will need to be supported with additional local revenues, or be funded at the expense of cutting other service. Since MTA is the public transportation provider for the county and currently operates in the area, it is a potential provider, possibly under contract to CRC, as long as additional funding can be identified.

Cost

The *Redwood Coast Transit Plan* assumes that the MTA service model will be provided within the existing organizational structure in Ukiah. If CRC provides service using paid drivers, there will be associated dispatching needs, which are assumed to be provided using existing volunteer staff and CRC office space. If the CRC transit program expands, a budget of approximately \$5,000-10,000 would be needed to purchase office equipment, including a computer with Internet access, office supplies, and phone equipment.

According to the plan, if service is provided by CRC, a non-profit organization, it is estimated to cost approximately \$67,500¹⁴ annually and would require an operating subsidy of approximately \$61,000 annually. If provided by MTA, the estimated annual operating cost would be approximately \$106,000 annually, requiring an operating subsidy of \$99,350 annually.

Providing the proposed dial-a-ride service would require acquisition of a 12-passenger, wheelchair accessible van. This type of vehicle currently costs approximately \$85,000. Existing CRC vans could be used as back-up vehicles.

Funding

Potential funding sources include:

- Federal 5311 for Rural Areas
- State Transit Assistance (STA) funds
- TDA
- Advertising
- Public-private partnerships
- Tribal revenue

¹⁴ The Redwood Coast Community Transit Plan originally estimated CRC's operating cost to be \$61,640; this number has been adjusted for 3% inflation over a period of three years and rounded up. Subsequent numbers have also been adjusted for inflation.

More specialized paratransit (door-through-door)

One of the key unmet transportation needs for the county was the need for a higher level of service, including door-through-door service, than is provided on deviated fixed-route service and other complementary paratransit services.

Specialized paratransit, especially door-through-door service, is needed for those who have difficulty getting in and out of vehicles or leaving their homes by themselves. Door-through-door service is administered by a driver who transports the passengers between their home and destination as well as an escort who provides “hands on” assistance. These passengers require a specialized network of communication between drivers, dispatchers, caregivers, family members and program workers that other transportation services can not give.

In Mendocino County, MTA provides complementary dial-a-ride service in Ukiah and Fort Bragg and deviated fixed route service in Willits. MTA also subsidizes local senior centers using TDA funds throughout the county as the locally based centers can provide more specialized services to older adults and people with disabilities.

Even though both MTA and the senior centers operate dial-a-ride service in Ukiah and Fort Bragg, they differ in the level of service they provide. For example, the Ukiah Senior Center provides door-through-door service to passengers who are not able to walk to the fixed-route bus stops because of their physical disabilities. These individuals are unable to stand with walkers, canes and oxygen tanks or wait for extended times in wheelchairs for curbside pick-up by MTA’s dial-a ride service.

Specialized door-through-door service may be needed in several locations throughout the county. For example, the Ukiah Senior Center, which currently provides door-through-door service needs additional resources to reinstitute extended service hours in the afternoon and to support their traveling companion program. This program may consist of volunteer or paid escorts from local service groups who assist the driver with the disabled passengers needs. The volunteers will also educate seniors about using transportation services.

Potential Lead Agency

Senior centers may be well-suited for implementing door-through-door service and generally have access to volunteers, who can serve as drivers or escorts. However, it is important to note that other types of organizations are capable of providing the service.

Cost

Ukiah Senior Center estimates that adding afternoon service would cost approximately \$20,000, which includes the cost of the driver, gas, maintenance, etc. However, establishing a new program or expanding existing door-through-door service in other locations may cost between \$22-\$55/hr, depending on how the service is provided, staffing arrangements, etc. Volunteer resources can help to decrease the cost of operating door-through-door service.

Funding

Potential funding sources include:

- TDA
- New Freedom

- Local business contributions

Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers

Increasing mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers was identified as a potential strategy in Mendocino County, especially as fuel prices continue to increase.

CRC, a non-profit organization, operates a volunteer, community-based program that provides assistance to seniors, disabled adults, youths and other residents of the coastal area between the communities of Timber Cove and Elk. The volunteer driver program offers a reimbursement rate of about 10 cents per mile. The IRS guideline (which was raised to 58.5 cents per mile in June 2008) is the amount that volunteers can be reimbursed without it counting as income that they have to declare on their income taxes.

Capital/Operating Costs

Assuming the reimbursement rate is increased to 58.5 cents per mile, this is an increase of 48.5 cents per mile. Based on the approximately 19,000 miles driven by CRC in 2007, the estimated additional cost per year would be about \$11,000.

Strategy Sponsor/Operator

The most likely candidate to administer the volunteer program in the South County is the CRC since they have an existing volunteer program.

Potential Funding Sources

The most likely funding source for this new service is the New Freedom program, although these funds are primarily intended for new services for persons with disabilities. TDA could be a possible source of funding if MTA were willing to pass through the funds under contract.

Replace Capital Equipment in Accordance with Capital Replacement Program

Implementation of this strategy entails a collaborative approach among local human service transportation providers and the MTA to replace capital equipment, including vehicles, according to the Capital Replacement Program. The primary benefit of the capital improvement program is that it allows service providers relying on limited funding sources to mutually plan for and prioritize their capital needs, and to establish a rationale for developing a long-term schedule and process for making capital improvements. It is important that steps are taken to replace capital equipment in accordance with this plan.

Components of a capital improvement program include:

- Identification and prioritization of transit facilities and equipment needing improvement
- Identification and prioritization of bus stops or transit centers needing improvement to enhance their usability, such as installation of shelters, benches, curb cuts, etc.
- Modification of bus stops to ensure their accessibility for wheelchair users
- Schedule for replacement of vehicles operated by local non-profit agencies funded with FTA Section 5310 funds

- Development of an expansion plan to increase operators' fleets; identification of applicable fund sources
- Identification and prioritization of other capital equipment such as computerized scheduling and dispatching program, enhanced telephone or communication systems, or vehicle modifications needed to meet air quality standards

Other Opportunities to Coordinate

This section of the report discusses other potential strategies to improve the status of providing transportation in Mendocino County. Figure 7-1 summarizes other strategies identified by stakeholders and confirmed, through the stakeholder workshops, that are viable options for Mendocino County transportation partners to pursue. The matrix suggests a timeframe for implementation based on whether it is feasible to implement in the short-term (between 6-12 months), medium term (1-3 years) or long-term (full implementation anticipated beyond three years). Realistically, the feasibility of implementation depends on whether funding can be identified to support them. In many cases, funding new programs could come at the expense of cutting existing services unless new funds can be identified.

In addition to those identified in Mendocino County workshops, the chapter presents strategies for local stakeholders to consider with respect to:

- Access to Jobs and Employment
- Volunteer Programs
- Pupil Transportation
- Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Finally, the following additional strategies can be found in Appendices C and D:

- Consolidated Maintenance Programs
- Consolidated Driver Training Programs

Figure 7-1 Implementing High Priority Strategies

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency/Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Potential Funding Sources	Next Steps
Establish Mobility Management Program	MTA	Medium term	Start up capital: \$5,000-10,000 Operating: \$67,500/annually	5310 JARC New Freedom 20% local funds	Identify proposed programs, funding sources
Establish Dial-a-Ride	MTA CRC	Medium term	MTA: Operating: \$106,000 CRC: Start up capital: \$5,000-10,000 Operating: \$67,500	5311 STA TDA Advertising Public-private partnerships Tribal revenue	Identify lead agency, define service area, refine cost estimates, identify funding sources
More specialized paratransit (door-through-door)	Senior centers	Short-medium term	Ukiah Operating cost: \$20,000 Vehicle: \$60,000+	TDA New Freedom Local business contribution	Determine where there is need for door-through-door service; utilize volunteer capacity where possible
Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers	Not Identified	Short-medium term	N/A	New Freedom TDA	Identify Project Sponsor; consider including in Mobility Management Program
Develop Capital Replacement Program	MTA and SSTAC	Short term	Some staffing and/or planning resources needed	N/A	Identify partner agencies, assign lead agency to initiate planning efforts

Figure 7-2 Other Potential Strategies

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Comments
Establish a “lifeline” transit network to connect Fort Bragg and Ukiah to outlying communities once or twice a week.	This service could potentially be implemented by MTA. However, new revenues need to be identified.
Establish ride share matching service for vanpools or carpools.	The proposed Mobility Management Program could support ride sharing and vanpooling programs in Mendocino County. As the CTSA, MTA is a likely home for this program.
Institute new service to operate between smaller communities not currently well served through existing services.	This service could potentially be implemented by MTA. However, new revenues need to be identified.
Seek collaboration with local businesses to partner in providing late-night shuttle or van service for employees.	Public-partnerships are an increasingly popular way of enhancing transit service.
Seek collaboration with local community college to co-sponsor enhanced service for students.	MTA is currently providing service to Mendocino College and Ukiah Adult School in Ukiah and College of the Redwoods in Fort Bragg. The institutions may be willing partners in expanding service to students. This may include more frequent service or discounted bus passes for students.
Increase frequency of Mendocino Transit service.	This strategy could be implemented fairly easily, but would require additional revenues.
Encourage social service agencies to establish car loan programs, or other incentives (i.e., insurance, maintenance) to allow for improved access to automobiles.	This strategy may be particularly effective for assisting people living in the most remote areas of the county, in places with no public transit services.
Encourage planners of affordable housing or other social service programs to locate facilities in proximity to transit.	This strategy is a long-term planning strategy that helps to concentrate new development where there are existing transit services. Transit-oriented development is critical for low-income individuals, older adults, and people with disabilities.
Encourage more public and social service agencies to purchase bus passes and tickets for their clients. Consider selling those for a further discount.	This strategy is easy to implement and can be incorporated into other programs such as travel training, etc.
Provide additional outreach and training for human service agency staff.	This relatively inexpensive strategy is easy to implement and would have substantial pay-off. It would require dedicating a staff person to conduct the outreach.

Program Administration and Oversight

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of a new program or project. As a first step, a project sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage the project. The lead agency would most likely be responsible to:

- Apply for grant funding and develop a program budget
- Develop program policies and guidelines
- Establish program goals and objectives, and define desired outcomes
- Provide ongoing supervision or program oversight
- Monitor actual performance as compared to program objectives
- Report on program outcomes and communicate to project stakeholders

For each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an on-going basis; successfully applying for grant funds is just the first step.

In Mendocino County, the MCOG will also play a role in program administration, in that it allocates TDA funds and is responsible for adopting the Coordinated Plan. As the local CTSA, the MTA may also appropriately assume a lead coordination role for some activities.

Decision Making Process

In addition to staff administering the program or service, a more formal decision-making process will need to be in place to ensure effective program oversight. As mentioned, MCOG is responsible to allocate and disburse state transportation funds, and will require the adopted Coordinated Plan. The SSTAC advises MCOG on various transportation issues and concerns. By definition, the SSTAC is comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders, including users of transit, and those representing the elderly and persons with disabilities. The SSTAC is appropriately the entity, within Mendocino County, to provide input as new services are considered and/or implemented.

Guidelines for Transportation Provider Agreements and Service Standards

Developing service agreements and monitoring system performance criteria are important tasks for transportation providers. Service agreements should include the following basic monthly and year-to-date operating and performance data:

- Revenue Hours
- Deadhead Hours (Non-Revenue Hours)
- Passengers (including a breakdown by category such as fare type, transfers, passes, etc)
- Passenger Fares
- Revenue Miles

- Deadhead Miles (Non-Revenue Miles)
- Operating Costs
- Cost/Passenger
- Cost/Hour
- Farebox Recovery Ratio
- On-Time Performance or Ride Time
- Accidents/Incidents/Passenger Complaints/Driver Issues
- Vehicle Issues
- Road Calls
- Out of Service
- Maintenance Activities
- Missed Runs or Service Denials

Agencies are encouraged to develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating transit and paratransit services. While specific standards can vary depending on the service and operating environment, industry practice generally uses the standards to monitor efficiency, and service quality and reliability.

Efficiency standards use operational performance data to measure the performance of a transit system. Monitoring operational efficiency and productivity requires data such as operating cost, farebox revenue recovery, vehicle revenue miles, vehicle revenue hours and boardings (passenger trips).

Many rural agencies do not have the staff resources to collect and analyze a broad range of performance data. Therefore the recommended efficiency performance standards are limited to key indicators that will provide agencies with a good picture of how well service is doing. Recommended efficiency performance for fixed route and paratransit services include:

- **Operating Cost per Passenger:** Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by total passengers (with passengers defined as unlinked trips).
- **Operating Cost per Revenue Hour:** Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by the total number of vehicle revenue hours (with revenue hours defined as time when the vehicle is actually in passenger service).
- **Revenue to Non-Revenue Hour Ratio:** Non-revenue hours include deadheading between the garage and the location where the buses go in and out of scheduled service. This is a relevant measure because of some of the potential long-distance deadheading required in rural counties. Non-revenue hours can also include paid operator time before and at the end of their shift (vehicle checks, sign in time and time spent refueling buses etc.) and the time to deliver replacement buses when a bus is taken out of service because of an accident or breakdown. Note that revenue to non-revenue hour measurement is difficult to apply to contracted services because contractors are not normally required to track non-revenue hours of operation.

- **Passengers per Revenue Hour:** Calculated by dividing the total number of passengers (unlinked trips) by the total number of vehicle revenue hours. The number of passengers per hour is a good measure of service productivity.
- **Farebox Recovery Ratio:** Calculated by dividing all farebox revenue by total operating and administrative costs. Farebox recovery evaluates both system efficiency (through operating costs) and productivity (through boardings). Farebox recovery ratio benchmarks are critical to the establishment of passengers per revenue hour benchmarks and benchmarks for design standards.

Local fixed route and dial-a-ride services also measure and monitor **reliability standards**. Recommended reliability standards for fixed route and paratransit services include:

- **On-Time Performance:** Can be monitored by road supervisors. No bus shall depart a formal time point before the time published in the schedule. Dial-a-ride and demand response service should pick up passengers within the policy pick-up window established for the service.
- **Passenger Complaints/Passengers Carried:** Requires the systematic recording of passenger complaints.
- **Preventable Accidents/Revenue Mile Operated:** Operator training efforts should increase as the number of preventable accidents increases. While there should be no preventable accidents, a benchmark should be established to permit some flexibility in the evaluation of training efforts.
- **Road Calls/Revenue Mile Operated:** A high number of road calls reflects poor bus reliability and may indicate the need for a more aggressive bus replacement program or changes to maintenance procedures and practices

Access to Jobs and Employment

Providing access to jobs and employment is a critical function of public transportation. For persons without access to an automobile, availability of transit can mean the difference in self sufficiency. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this plan addresses, in part, the need for low-income persons to access employment or training activities. Through SAFETEA-LU, federal transportation dollars (FTA Section 5316) are available to support access to jobs projects.

Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites
- Car-share or other projects to improve access to autos
- Access to child care and training

These service enhancements are viable candidates for JARC funds if it can be demonstrated that providing the service would directly serve low-income persons needing access to jobs.

Volunteer Transportation Programs

CRC currently operates a volunteer driver program to provide non-emergency medical transportation for the general public on the South Coast. The Willits Senior Center also operates a small program. However, volunteer transportation programs could be expanded to meet county transportation needs.

Many rural counties have developed high functioning volunteer driver programs to supplement public transit, especially to support residents who live in outlying areas or who need non-emergency medical transportation. Program administration is the key to the successful implementation and ongoing viability of volunteer programs, thus the need for an individual or community agency to be the champion is critical.

The issue of agency liability frequently is raised as an obstacle to the implementation of volunteer driver programs. Efforts are underway through agencies such as Nonprofits United to create special insurance packages for individuals or agencies that offer an initial layer of coverage when a volunteer is operating a vehicle. This would supersede the coverage provided by the individual or agency when not in volunteer service. Early indications from Nonprofits United are that such coverage may be on the horizon.

The Beverly Foundation offers online resources for volunteer driver programs at www.beverlyfoundation.org. Additional information is available at the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation in the State of Washington, which has a manual for starting and maintaining volunteer transportation programs. It addresses the liability issues and provides forms and templates for agencies. The manual is available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/training/vdg/default.htm

Becoming a Medi-Cal NEMT Provider

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit organizations) to become providers of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) under existing Medi-Cal arrangements. Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health insurance program. It pays for a variety of medical services for children and adults with limited income and resources. People receiving Medi-Cal covered services may be provided NEMT at Medi-Cal's expense under certain very limited circumstances. Medi-Cal will pay for NEMT only when it is provided by a carrier licensed by Medi-Cal, and only when the individual's medical condition requires transport by a wheelchair van, litter van, or ambulance. Although the rules limit NEMT to people who need a wheelchair van, ambulance or litter van, this can include people who just need a high level of care, for example very frail dialysis patients, even though they do not need to use a lift or ramp.

In many rural counties there are no Medi-Cal NEMT providers. Some rural counties are served by an NEMT provider in another county with very limited availability of service. By becoming a Medi-Cal NEMT provider, the local agency could help address a lack of providers now available and improve access to medical care for people who have difficulty using other modes, including ADA paratransit, volunteer transportation, or taxicabs. NEMT is free to the rider. Medi-Cal's standard rates for NEMT are currently \$17.65 per patient plus \$1.30 per mile with a patient on-board. The pick-up rate is reduced when multiple patients are picked up at the same time. Effective July 1, 2008 a 10% reduction from the standard rates is in effect as part of the state deficit reduction program. These rates may not be sufficient to recover the full cost of providing service (or for a private provider to make a profit), but they would pay for the major portion of

actual cost in a public operation. Medi-Cal payments would qualify as match for New Freedom funding.

In the Bay Area, the Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority (ECCTA, or “Tri-Delta”) has created an NEMT program called MedVan. It uses a separate fleet of vehicles and accepts referrals from social workers and medical providers just as a private provider of NEMT would. According to Tri-Delta staff, they got involved because there is a shortage of NEMT providers in their area and this was limiting Medi-Cal clients’ ability to get rides. They report that Medi-Cal staff were eager to help them complete the paperwork to become qualified for the program. Requirements for vehicles and driver training are similar to those already met by agencies using federal transit funding. The fact that MedVan is separate from Tri-Delta’s dial-a-ride program may help deal with the issue sometimes encountered of whether Medi-Cal will pay full price or only the public fare—there is no public fare for this program. Most of the MedVan riders are going to dialysis. They are not necessary wheelchair users.

If an agency wishes to make its NEMT service available to riders who are not covered by Medi-Cal, the announced fare would need to at least equal the rate charged to Medi-Cal. However, it might be possible to provide subsidies for this fare. Another limitation concerns use of facilities funded with certain Federal transit grants.

Forms and instructions for becoming an NEMT provider are available on the Medi-Cal web site at http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/prov_enroll.asp.

Coordinating/Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services

Student Transportation in Mendocino County

In Mendocino County, there are 13 school districts. Home-to-school student transportation operations during the academic year are primarily provided in-house by school districts. The home-to-school transportation and transportation to after-school programs are completely separate from the public transportation system, although high school students do use the public transit to access after-school jobs, especially with the public transit system linking high schools to employment opportunities.

The coordination/integration of student transportation and public transportation services is fraught with obstacles. These include legislative and institutional barriers; restricted funding requirements and reporting requirements; attitudes and perceptions about student safety; vehicle design, and operational issues.

In California,¹⁵ there are no state statutes or regulations that prohibit using school buses to transport non-pupils. Indeed, from the state perspective, the use of school buses and in particular the co-mingling of pupils and non-pupils on school buses appears to be allowed as long as seating is available. Ultimately, though, the responsibility for school bus operations and policies is delegated to the local districts, which traditionally have been uninterested in broadening their focus beyond student transportation.

¹⁵ Based on Information provided by John Green, California Department of Education, for TCRP Report on Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services in Nonurban Communities, and confirmed via e-mails and a telephone conversation on June 27, 2008.

According to the California Department of Education, there have been sporadic uses of public school buses for transporting the general public, primarily in connection with moving people for special events, such as spectators at a professional golf tournament or marathon participants. CDE staff is not aware of any instances in California where the general public is being transported along with students on home-to-school routes.

California Utility Vehicle

School buses are not designed to carry the general public, and transit buses are not necessarily designed for children; as a result, the California Department of Education (CDE) initiated in the late 1990s the development of an accessible hybrid utility vehicle merging currently available technology from both school bus and transit industry vehicles. The integrated passenger-school bus, known as the California Utility School Bus, is intended to meet the needs of the entire passenger transportation industry. Currently, the CDE uses the vehicle in their Bus Driver Instructor Training Program and takes it to educational conferences and industry trade shows. Interest in this vehicle has remained dormant for some time, but recently has increased because of the upswing in coordination planning. In future years, the CDE envisions the flexible Utility School Bus as a vehicle that can be used for the transportation of both students and the general public.

Summary and Next Steps

This draft final Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan is simultaneously submitted to Caltrans and to the local project sponsor, the Mendocino Council of Governments. At a minimum, updates to the coordinated plan should follow the update cycles for metropolitan transportation plans (i.e., four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and five years in air quality attainment areas). However, communities and states may update the coordinated plan more frequently to be consistent with the competitive selection process based on needs identified at the local levels.

States, MPOs, designated recipients, and public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation should set up a cycle that is conducive to and coordinated with the metropolitan and statewide planning processes, to ensure that selected projects are included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), to receive funds in a timely manner.

While this plan was prepared in response to the requirement that federal transportation funding authorized through SAFETEA-LU be derived from such a plan, it can also serve as a broad-based blueprint to advance programs and projects that will increase the mobility of older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. By increasing mobility for these targeted populations, the mobility of all Mendocino County residents will be enhanced.

It is intended that local stakeholders, community leaders and citizens who participated in the development of this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan use it as a basis to strengthen communication and coordination between the public transportation and social service agencies. As a first step, the plan should be adopted by the Mendocino Council of Governments and disseminated to the stakeholders who have been involved. A next step would be to reconvene the stakeholders and identify those to champion the respective strategies in order to move them forward.