



Final Monterey Bay Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

October 2022

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Executive Summary

The Federal Transportation Authority defines a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPTP) as a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes, and lays out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizes services.” The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), in collaboration with the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) and public transit operators in the tri-county area, has produced the region’s CPTP. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region and with guidance from the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, AMBAG is required to produce this plan for incorporation into the region’s long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The CPTP establishes project eligibility for federal funding under the Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310).

The Monterey Bay Region’s CPTP has been prepared collaboratively by AMBAG and its regional transportation partners. The Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC); the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC); the Council of San Benito County Governments (SBtCOG); Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (Santa Cruz METRO); Monterey–Salinas Transit (MST), and San Benito County Local Transportation Authority (San Benito County Express) have also worked with local transportation providers, community organizations and human service advocates, as well as members of the public to identify the existing gaps and needs in human service transportation.

This CPTP incorporates these needs and presents innovative implementation strategies for closing the gaps and improving the management of mobility services. Some of the reoccurring transit needs identified by the contributing agencies include expanding service to underserved locations and increasing the frequency and hours of operation of existing routes; providing same day paratransit services and low cost transportation options; establishing mobility management programs; replacing old vehicles; and providing transportation services to farmworkers.

Strategies for meeting these needs and the prioritization of projects planned for receiving future federal funding vary between Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties given differences in existing resources and funding; due to different demographics and the structure of existing transportation services. However, a common theme emerging from the work and planning between AMBAG, the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies and the Public Transit Operators within the Monterey Bay Region is that there is an increasing need and

importance for further coordination and consensus building among regional planning partners with regard to meeting the needs of the transportation disadvantaged.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Purpose of the Plan

The Monterey Bay Region Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (“CPTP”) is a planning document that identifies the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities and prioritizes strategies and projects to help meet their local transportation needs.

Federal transit law, as amended by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), requires that projects selected for funding under the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA’s) Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (referred to as Section 5310) be included in a locally developed Coordinated Plan. The Plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.

The four required elements are:

1. An assessment of available services and current transportation providers (public, private and non-profit);
2. An assessment of transportation needs for seniors and persons with disabilities. 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.

While MAP-21 does not define the term “coordinated plan,” the FTA defines coordinated plan as “a unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults and individuals with limited incomes, and lays out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizes services.”¹

¹ Federal Register Notice (Vol. 71, No. 50), March 15, 2006, p. 13458.

The CPTP must be developed through a process that includes input from representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, as well as the public. The preparation and implementation of this plan will improve coordination between transportation systems and providers in the Monterey Bay region, and strengthen transportation services for those with special needs throughout Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties.

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), Caltrans District 5, MST, SBtCOG, San Benito County Express and Specialized Transportation, SCCRTC, Santa Cruz METRO and TAMC have cooperated in the preparation of this plan.

These regional planning partners have coordinated efforts and provided numerous opportunities for interested parties and the public to participate in the creation of this plan. These outreach and consultation efforts are described and documented in the following sections, and involve activities conducted by each of the planning partners both collectively and individually to engage communities with an interest in the provision and accessibility of transportation services for the elderly, individuals with disabilities and low income individuals.

By covering a diverse set of transportation topics relevant to individual localities and the region as a whole, the CPTP provides an all-inclusive snapshot of the region's available services and a comprehensive vision of special needs transportation in the future.

Project Identification and Funding

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 regulations and guidelines that determine the objectives, eligible uses and how they can be applied for or awarded through federal, state and regional levels of government. 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. Federal programs require that a share of total program costs be derived from local sources and may not be matched with other federal Department of Transportation (DOT) funds. Examples of local matches 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, private donations and revenue from advertising and concessions. Non-cash funds

such as donations, volunteer services, or in-kind contributions can 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 at the end of this chapter. The information shows funding programs and their purpose, how funds can be used, who is eligible to apply and other relevant information.

Funding for public transportation in rural California counties is dependent primarily on two sources of funds: Federal Section 5310 funds intended for seniors and individuals with disabilities and TDA funds generated through State of California sales tax revenues. These two funding programs are described below. A brief overview is provided of other funding sources that are available for public transit and social service transportation.

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310)

The Coordinated Plan will inform priorities and certify projects receiving funds authorized under the FAST Act (2015) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021. Planning requirements specific to the authorizations are described below. The IIJA retains the same planning requirements identified under the FAST Act for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310). Section 5310 is a funding program with coordinated planning requirements under IIJA. In relation to the locally developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, the IIJA requires:

1. That projects selected are “included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.”
2. That the coordinated plan “was developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers, and other members of the public.”
3. That “to the maximum extent feasible, the services funded will be coordinated with transportation services assisted by other Federal departments and agencies,” including recipients of grants from the Department of Health and Human Services.

In 2012, the passing of MAP-21 eliminated the Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program, formerly 5316, and transferred its functions into the 5307 and 5311 programs. MAP-21 also eliminated the New Freedom program (5317) and transferred its functions into the 5310 program.

In 2015, the passage of the FAST Act continued to consolidate the previous 5310 program (Elderly and Disabled Program) and New Freedom program eligibilities into a single formula based program. This program is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond the traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. IJA made no made no structural, formulaic or programmatic changes to Section 5310 funding.

Caltrans serves as the designated recipient for these funds for the state. As designated recipient, Caltrans is required to select projects for use of federal funds through a competitive process, and to certify that projects funded are included in the Coordinated Plan. The funds are apportioned based on each State's share of the target populations and are apportioned to areas under 200,000, and large urbanized areas (over 200,000). Section 5310 funds are available to the states during the fiscal year of apportionment plus two additional years (total of three years).

Projects selected for 5310 funding must be included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. Section 5310 program information is described below:

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS AND SUBRECIPIENTS:

- Designated Recipient or a State receiving a grant directly (for all areas over 200,000 in population).
- Subrecipients: states or local government authorities (for areas under 200,000 population), private non-profit organizations, or operators of public transportation that receive a grant indirectly through a recipient.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:

- Capital, Operating, Administration
- At least 55% of program funds must be used on capital projects that would have been eligible under the former Section 5310 program, that are public transportation projects planned, designed and carried out to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable (Traditional 5310 Projects).
- The remaining 45% may be used for any other eligible purpose, including capital and operating expenses and New Freedom-type projects:
 - Public transportation projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA.
 - Public transportation projects that improve access to fixed route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on complementary paratransit.

- Alternatives to public transportation that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- At most, 10% is allowed for program administration.

STATEWIDE FUNDING FORMULA:

- 60% to designated recipients in urbanized areas with populations over 200,000.
- 20% to states for small urbanized areas (under 200,000 population).
- 20% to states for rural areas

FUNDING:

- Funds are apportioned for urban and rural areas based on the number of seniors and individuals with disabilities.
 - Federal share for capital projects (including acquisition of public transportation services) is 80%.
 - Federal share for operating assistance is 50%.

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR FY2020-FY2024:

- Approximately \$3.3 Million over 5 years in the AMBAG region
- Projects are funded 100% with Federal funds upon FTA approval of Transportation Development Credits (Toll Credits)
- FTA mandates that at least 55% of funding is used for vehicle and other equipment projects.
- FTA mandates that no more than 45% of funding be used for Operating Assistance and Mobility Management projects.

As a planning tool, the CPTP identifies a set of strategies and programs and establishes a framework for the prioritization of projects in the region seeking federal funding assistance. FTA requires projects funded through the programs listed below be “derived from a locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.”²

Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities funds are apportioned directly to the state based on a formula that accounts for the number of elderly persons and individuals with disabilities living in that state. These funds are distributed via a statewide competitive selection program and are eligible to be spent anywhere in the state, including urbanized areas.

² Federal Register Notice (Vol. 71, No. 50), March 15, 2005, p. 13458.

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.

Transportation Development Act (TDA)

The California Transportation Development Act (TDA) of 1971 provides funding for public transit and non-transit related projects that comply with regional transportation plans. Each county or regional entity that are locally derived and locally administered are eligible for TDA funding. The TDA provides two funding sources: The Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and the State Transit Assistance Fund (STA).

LTF revenues are recurring revenues derived from a quarter cent of the general sales tax collected statewide. The percent of the general sales tax collected is returned by the State Board of Equalization to each county's LTF based on the amount of tax collected in that county. If conditions are met, counties with a population of less than 500,000 may be allocated LTF funds for local streets and roads, construction, and maintenance.

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 Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) and conduct an assessment of current transit services and infrastructure, and determine whether there are unmet transit needs, and whether or not those needs are "reasonable to meet." Each Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) is required to adopt definitions of "unmet transit need" and "reasonable to meet." Annually, each RTPA is required to hold at least one public hearing for the purpose of soliciting comments on unmet transit needs that may exist within the county. Any unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet must be funded before funds can be allocated for streets and roads and may not be deemed unviable solely based on lack of funding.

STA revenues are provided for capital and operating costs associated with local mass transportation programs and are derived from statewide sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels. STA is allocated annually by the State Controller's Office by formula based 50% on population and 50% according to the transit operator revenues from the previous fiscal year. Availability of funds varies annually based on fluctuations in gas and diesel prices. Unlike LTF, which may be allocated to other purposes, STA revenues may be used only for public transit or transportation services.

Role of Consolidated Transportation Service Agencies (CTSAs)

AB 120 Social Services Transportation Improvement Act authorized the establishment of CTSAs and recognizes them as direct claimants of Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 4.5

funds. CTSAs are designated by the RTPAs. Very little guidance exists as to expectations or roles of the CTSAs, but generally CTSAs assist with the coordination of paratransit services.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

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 transportation projects programmed with state funds. STIP programming generally occurs every two years.

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. The San Andreas Regional Center, located in San Jose, offers services and support for children and adults with developmental disabilities who live in San Benito, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. 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 its 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.

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.

Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

Organizations such as the Rotary Club, Seroptimists, 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 childcare.

Employers

Employers are sometimes willing to underwrite transportation in order to fill their labor needs. Employers sometimes contribute to transportation programs such as a flex route night bus, a subsidized carsharing program, or a shuttle or vanpool to their employment site. In the AMBAG region, some social service agencies pay for transportation for their clients by buying bus tickets in bulk and handing them out to their clients.

Chapter 2 – Transportation Services and Providers

Introduction

This section provides detailed descriptions of the transportation services and specific providers at the regional and county level. Transportation services represent all forms of transportation provided through demand-response communication. The following pages describe the type of transportation services provided within the region and by each county.

Service providers can be a public, private or nonprofit agency and will typically focus their services to meet the transportation needs of specific, underserved populations. Service providers include, in addition to service operators, members of advisory committees and task forces that influence and shape policies and programs devoted to improving transportation accessibility for the elderly, individuals with disabilities and low income.

Local Advisory Committees

There are a number of advisory committees that weigh in on all aspects of transportation issues and services involving older adults, people with disabilities and people with limited means. The local advisory committees conduct public meetings where specialized transportation service agencies and interested parties voice their transportation concerns and needs. This section identifies transit committees in each county.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 stipulates that individuals with disabilities are entitled to fixed route transit services and/or complementary paratransit services.

Fixed Route Transit

Passengers access transportation vehicles at permanent bus stops with pre-scheduled, designated routes which are usually supported by printed timetables and schedules. These transit services do not deviate from their designated route or time services.

Paratransit Services

The term “paratransit” describes a transportation service that is more flexible and personalized than conventional, fixed route transit. Some examples of paratransit services include shared ride taxis, car and vanpooling, subscription bus services and other public entities. Public transit

agencies, community groups or not-for-profit corporations and for-profit private companies or operators can all operate paratransit services.

Since elderly and individuals with disabilities are more likely to experience difficulties accessing fixed bus routes independently, given physical, mental, or age-related impairments, Section 223 of ADA requires that public entities operating non-commuter fixed route transportation services also provide paratransit service for individuals unable to use the fixed route system if:

- The individual is unable to access fixed route service independently, due to his or her disability
- The fixed route service is not accessible to the individual
- The individual has a special physical or mental impairment in which interaction with a barrier prevents getting to or from a bus stop or rail station.

ADA-compliant paratransit service by public transit operators within the region occurs within a three-quarter mile service buffer around fixed route bus service, as shown in Figures 2-1A, 2-1B and 2-1C on the following pages.

Shared Van

Vans provide transportation for a number of people who travel along the same route, or to and from the same location on a regular basis. Vanpools are organized and operated by public and private agencies, including employers, hospitals, non-profits and individuals. The vans are owned by, loaned or leased to the service provider.

Vans can be outfitted with lifts or other equipment to carry individuals using mobility assistance devices. Vans in the Monterey Bay region are owned and/or operated by both public and non-profit agencies as well as private for profit companies.

Private Taxicab Services

Taxi services exist in each county, but most companies operate within the county or local jurisdiction only, and the extent of special needs service for all private taxis vary. Examples of private transportation services include Yellow Cab Santa Cruz which operates taxis, vans, minivans and paratransit vehicles, with trips to regional airports, and has low-cost rider tickets, Monterey Yellow Cab which also offers discount trips for senior citizens and Medical Appointments Made Easy which transports individuals to medical destinations. A full list of service providers can be found in Appendix A.

FIGURE 2-1A

2020 Transit Routes Including 3/4 Mile Buffer
Monterey County



FIGURE 2-1B
2020 Transit Routes Including 3/4 Mile Buffer
San Benito County

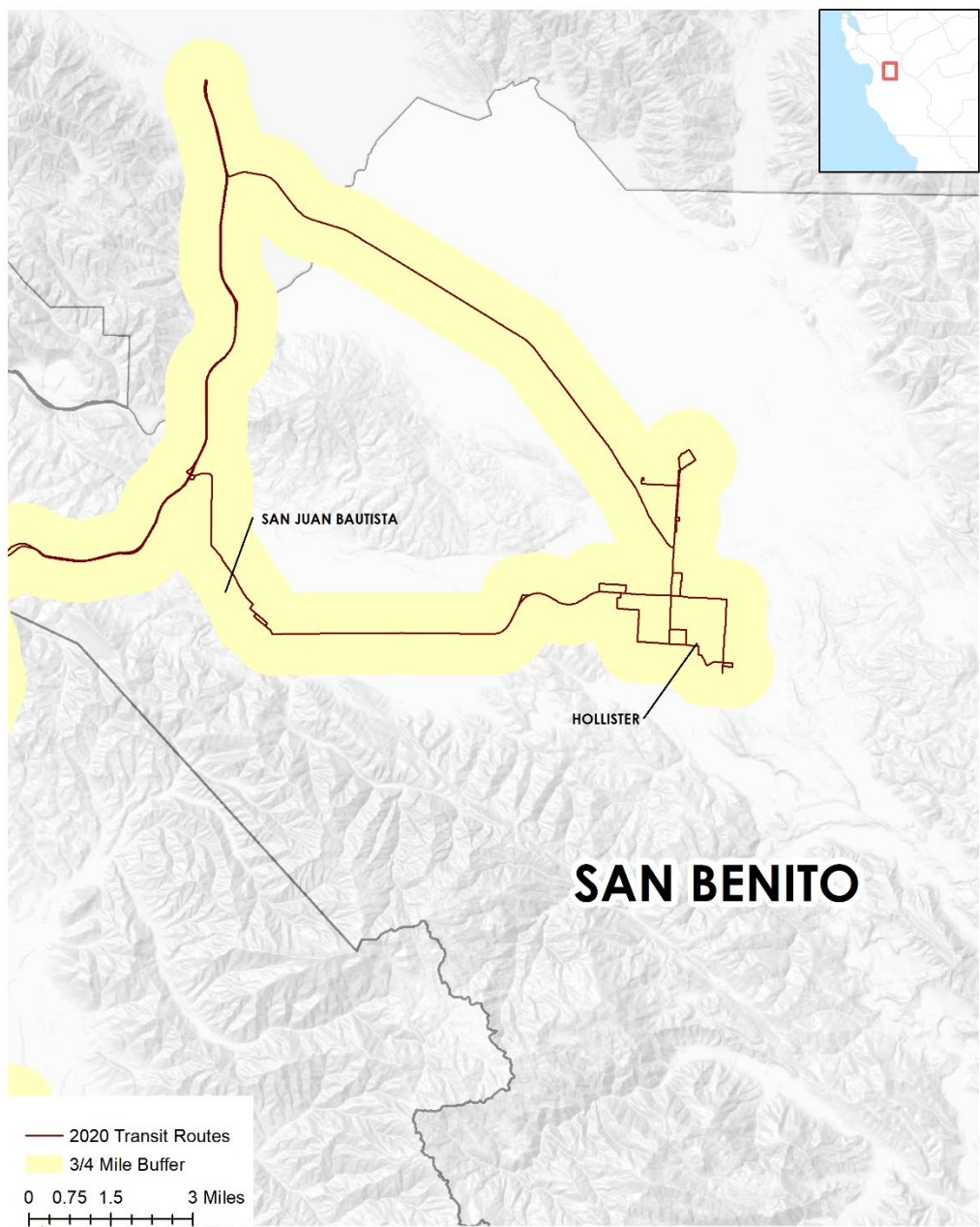
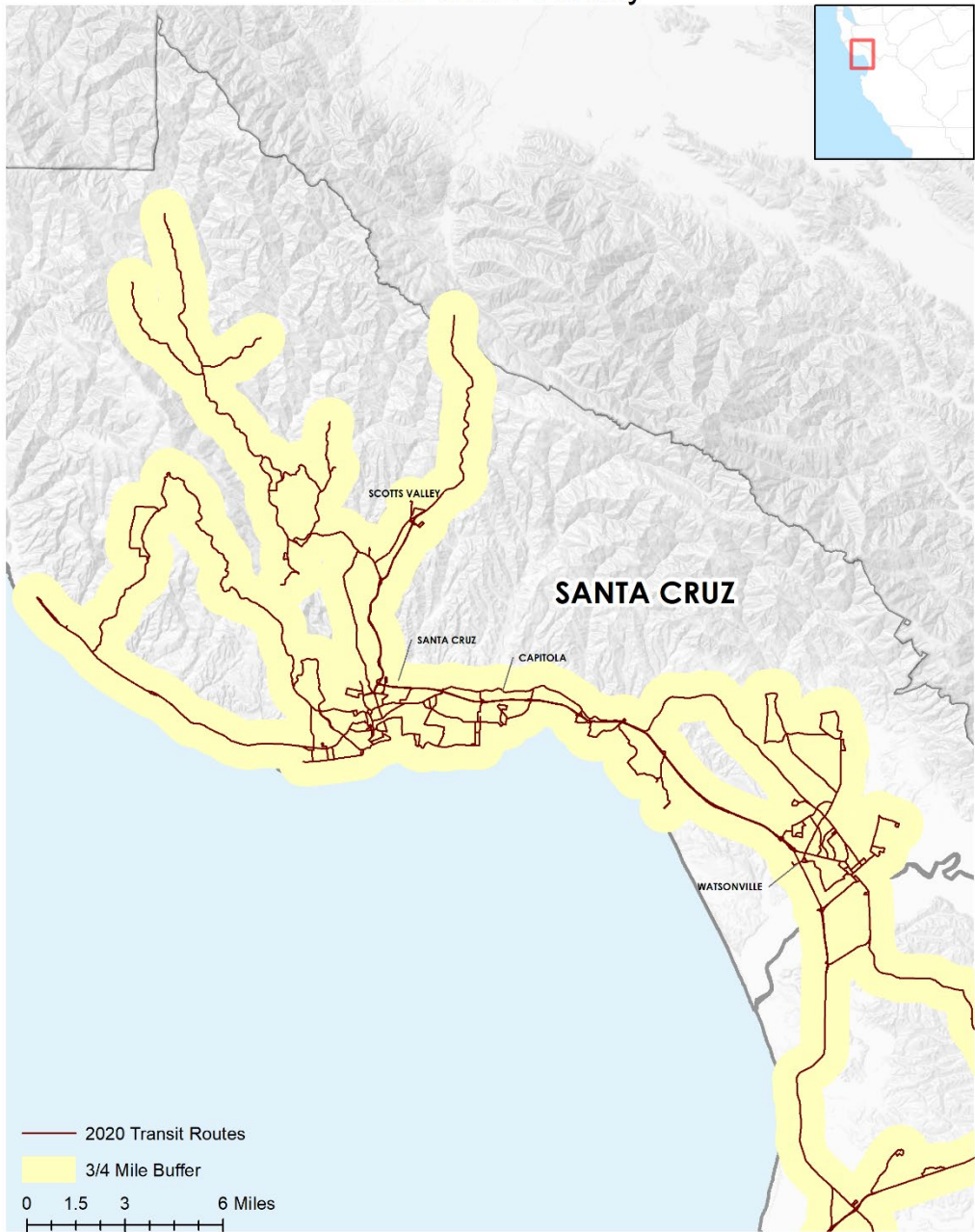


FIGURE 2-1C

2020 Transit Routes Including 3/4 Mile Buffer
Santa Cruz County



A. Regional

At the regional level, AMBAG works with RTPAs and service providers to coordinate the schedules, service zones, connections and programs among fixed route, paratransit and non-profit transportation services in an effort to improve accessibility, increase participation, ease constraints and provide more efficient service. All agencies in the plan are working to meet the goals of California Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act, which requires statewide greenhouse gas emissions are at 1990 levels by 2020. Many transportation agencies, including Santa Cruz Metro and Monterey Salinas Transit (MST) are replacing diesel and gasoline fleet vehicles with natural gas and electric buses to meet this and other clean vehicle goals. San Benito County Express is in the planning process to do the same.

Fixed Route Transit

GREYHOUND BUS LINES

Greyhound is a nationwide intercity bus operator that services Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties. Regionally, Greyhound has stations in Gilroy, Greenfield, King City and at Ft. Hunter Leggitt in Jolon. Buses travel between Monterey and Santa Cruz connect with San Benito County Express in Gilroy and provide low-cost transportation to other parts of the state and country.

AMTRAK

Amtrak connector bus service travels through Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, providing service for residents traveling for leisure or business on over one-hundred intercity trains and connecting buses in California. Amtrak passenger rail services include: the Coast Starlight, running from Seattle, Washington to Los Angeles; the Capitol Corridor, providing service between San Jose and Sacramento; and the Pacific Surfliner, offering service along the coast between San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles.

Amtrak trains accommodate individuals in wheelchairs by providing bridge plates, station board lifts, and ramps between station platforms and train cars. The trains also allow travel for individuals with disabilities with accompanying trained service animals. Persons over 65 years of age and individuals with disabilities, including companions and aids, receive a 10% discount.

Non-Profit Organizations

THE CENTRAL COAST ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH, (THE ALLIANCE)

The Alliance is a regional non-profit health plan which provides health services for 407,000 low income patients in Santa Cruz, Monterey and Merced Counties. About 95 percent of the agency's

members receive Medi-Cal, with the remainder enrolled in plans offered by Healthy Families, Healthy Kids, or Alliance Care IHSS, which provides insurance coverage to in-home healthcare service caregivers. The Alliance is an example of a regional non-profit agency that accommodates seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low income Central California residents. For instance, members who use wheelchairs may qualify for rides, as will those who require an ambulance to move them from one care facility to another. The agency has an annual operating budget of \$1.5 billion and gets the bulk of that money from the state. Transportation services offered by the Alliance are limited to medical trips, including pharmacies, and are contracted to non-profit and/or private transportation providers.

THE CENTRAL COAST CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CCCIL)

CCCIL is part of the nationwide network of Centers of Independent Living, providing a diverse set of services for people with disabilities with the mission of supporting their equal and full participation in community life. Serving all three counties within the Monterey Bay region, CCCIL provides clients with information and referral services regarding transportation access and mobility. They also work with the county RTPAs to advocate programs and policies improving accommodation and accessibility for the communities with disabilities.

SENIORS COUNCIL'S FOSTER GRANDPARENT/SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

The Seniors Council's Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion program is a regionwide volunteer program that places low income seniors in a variety of different community sites, including public schools, day care facilities, local family shelters, and hospitals. Senior companions provide companionship and light respite care to frail elders at adult day care facilities and assisted living facilities to enable them to live independently in their homes.

B. Monterey County

Agencies and Councils

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY (TAMC)

There are 23 members of TAMC, with local officials from 12 cities and five supervisor districts, and ex-officio members from six public agencies. TAMC is dedicated to the development and maintenance of “a multimodal transportation system that enhances mobility, safety, access, environment quality, and economic activities in Monterey County.”³ TAMC is an instrumental and dynamic force for assessing the concerns and continuance of numerous transportation systems of Monterey, including freeways, expressways, bike and pedestrian paths, and bus routes.

TAMC testifies that the social and institutional barriers that restrict the service areas of transportation programs include language differences, age, and lack of knowledge about available resources to elderly and those with disabilities. TAMC staff members are committed to contacting such organizations about the financial options for these services and to investigating local transportation agencies in “unincorporated” areas that might increase special needs services. They provide non-profit accessible transportation providers with information regarding federal and state grants and other means of financing their operations.

MOBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC)

Monterey-Salinas Transit’s Mobility Advisory Committee (MAC) now serves as the Transportation Agency’s Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC). The MAC is comprised of consumers and medical/social service agency personnel who have first-hand experience using our services and/or in assisting others to do so. The MAC provides advice and recommendations on improving these services to the MST staff and board of directors. The MAC both advocates on behalf of the elderly and disabled populations of Monterey County, while studying the transportation services at their disposal. The committee holds public hearings and conducts online surveys in order to gather and analyze evidence of any unmet needs that concern the transit options for the elderly and individuals with disabilities. The MAC hosts the annual Unmet Transit Needs Hearing, a county requirement under the California Transportation Development Act. The most recent adoption of the Unmet Transit Needs occurred in June 2022 and included needs identified by the MAC.

³ <http://www.tamcmonterey.org/committees/tamc/index.html>

Fixed Route Transit

MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT (MST)

Monterey-Salinas Transit serves a 154 square-mile area of Monterey County and Southern Santa Cruz County with 59 routes and a fleet of over 134 vehicles. Service originates from two primary service hubs- the Monterey Transit Plaza and the Salinas Transit Center.

Paratransit

THE MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT (MST) RIDES

MST RIDES provides ADA complementary paratransit transportation to individuals with disabilities that prevent them from using fixed route systems independently. The ride-share program provides service throughout the Monterey Peninsula to Carmel, Carmel Valley, Salinas, Chualar, Gonzales, Greenfield, Soledad, King City and to the Watsonville Transit Center.

Currently, the MST RIDES program gives eligible individuals with disabilities “last-door-to-first-door” transportation in order to accommodate transit opportunities for those who cannot use a fixed route service independently within $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of an MST route.

Special non-ADA required paratransit service is also provided for registered MST RIDES clients living outside of the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile ADA corridors.

Special Medical Trips

THE MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT (MST)

Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) Special Medical Trips service provides medical transportation four days per month; two days to the San Jose area and two days to the San Francisco area. The program is open to all Monterey County residents. To ride, you must make a reservation. Reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis, and must be made by 5:00 PM three days before you plan to travel. Cancellations must also be made before 5:00 PM one day before your reserved trip. Failure to cancel by 5:00 PM may jeopardize future riding privileges. The round-trip fare is \$20 payable in cash or with MST Special Medical Trips tickets. Your personal care attendant (PCA) rides free when registered with MST. Other companions can ride when space is available for the \$20 fare. There are no discounts offered for this program.

For residents of **King City, Greenfield, Soledad** and **Gonzales**, only designated stops will be served when requested and prior to the 9:00AM departure from Salinas Transit Center.

TRIPS

Eligible seniors, veterans or persons with disabilities outside MST’s service area can request a reimbursement of 40 cents per mile, up to 250 miles per month, to compensate family members and friends who volunteer their time and vehicles to transport them. There are no restrictions on trip purpose for this program.

Non-Profit Organizations

HOPE SERVICES

Hope Services serves Monterey County with a range of employment and job training programs, developmental activities, professional counseling, infant services, senior services, supported and independent living services, and mobility training for approximately 3,000 children, adults and seniors. Many of HOPE's clients work in the community at both large and small Silicon Valley companies, as well as government facilities throughout Santa Clara, San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. In order to make these services accessible, HOPE has a partnership with San Andreas Regional Center, which provides vans that transport clients to training and activities at HOPE's office.

THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED CENTER OF MONTEREY COUNTY

The Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County customizes services to the person's specific needs, goals and abilities by giving the visually impaired population access to "client instructors." Instructors give clients information about transportation services that accommodate their specific condition. The Center can arrange transportation through the Monterey County RIDES program. A Spanish-speaking interpreter is available by appointment.

SHELTER OUTREACH PLUS

Shelter Outreach Plus is a non-profit in Monterey County that collaborates with local organizations, coalitions, leaders, and volunteers to educate and inform the general public and help shape policies affecting victims of domestic violence and those experiencing homelessness. More specifically, Shelter Outreach Plus helps individuals transition into community life and meet basic needs by assisting with employment and transportation options. The agency is therefore of particular support to low income individuals that lack transit options due to financial status and undetermined housing accommodations.

TAXI VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Taxi Voucher Program is a service of MST in partnership with the various cities and community service departments in the County as well as senior centers. The Taxi Voucher Program is extended to seniors, persons with disabilities and seniors, and offers \$17 vouchers with a \$3 co-pay for individuals over 65. Vouchers are approved by three taxi providers locally, Central Coast Cab, Green Cab and Yellow Cab.

COUNTY VETERANS' AFFAIRS OFFICE TRANSPORTATION

Free van transportation may be scheduled for transportation of Monterey County veterans to the VA Medical Center in Palo Alto and the San Jose VA Outpatient Clinic. Veterans may access medical centers by contacting the Monterey County Veterans Affairs Office. Other programs coordinated by the Veteran's Affairs Office include: assistance purchasing or retrofitting ADA-accessible vehicles, assistance repairing and purchasing ADA-accessible vehicles and coordinating mobile medical clinics.

List of Providers

A summary of the provider list is included in Appendix A.

C. San Benito County

Agencies and Councils

COUNCIL OF SAN BENITO COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (SBtCOG)

The Council of San Benito County Governments was formed in 1973 through a Joint Powers Agreement between the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista and the County of San Benito. The Council of Governments is the regional transportation planning agency and is committed to improving transportation for San Benito County. Some examples of its efforts are the Highway 25 Bypass, funding public transportation, and providing emergency roadside call boxes. The Council of Governments Board of Directors consists of City Council members from the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista and the Board of Supervisors from the County. The Council of Governments Board meets every 3rd Thursday at 4:00 p.m. During the COVID pandemic, Board meeting have been held virtually and previously met at 481 4th Street, Hollister, CA at the Board of Supervisors Chambers.

COUNCIL OF SAN BENITO GOVERNMENTS SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC)

The SSTAC consists of members appointed by SBtCOG from a broad spectrum of social services and transit providers, advising SBtCOG on matters related to transportation accessibility for the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and persons of limited means. The Advisory Council strives to achieve balanced geography and minority representation by having ten members from social service organizations, the consolidated transportation service agency, and members from the community. The Advisory Council meets quarterly on the 4th Friday at 10:00 a.m. During the COVID pandemic, meetings have been held virtually and previously met at 330 Tres Pinos Road, Suite C7, Hollister CA at the Council of Governments Conference Room.

SAN BENITO COUNTY LOCAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (LTA)

Formed in 1990 through a Joint Powers Agreement, the Local Transportation Authority receives a variety of funds through the SBtCOG. The Authority administers and operates public transportation services in the County through County Express and Specialized Transportation. The Authority's Board of Directors consists of City Council members from the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista and the Board of Supervisors from the County. The Council of Governments Board meets every 3rd Thursday at 4:00 p.m. During the COVID pandemic, Board meeting have been held virtually and previously met at 481 4th Street, Hollister, CA at the Board of Supervisors Chambers.

SBtCOG is required by the guidelines of the Transportation Development Act to hold Unmet Transit Needs Hearings, and these hearings are held annually, usually around February. The hearings provide a forum for residents, transit users, and community members to express concerns with the local transit service (County Express and Specialized Transportation) and identify needs for new transit services. The 2022 Unmet Transit Needs Report was approved by

SBtCOG at their July 21, 2022 Board meeting. An example of commentary from a recent Unmet Needs Hearing is listed in the “Unmet Needs” section of the Coordinated Plan.

Fixed Route Transit

SAN BENITO COUNTY EXPRESS

Under the name County Express, the San Benito County Local Transportation Authority operates the public transit service in the County. County Express provides convenient and affordable transportation to residents and visitors to San Benito County. Services include:

- Tripper/Fixed Route service in the City of Hollister
- Dial-A-Ride in the Cities of Hollister, San Juan Bautista
- Paratransit services are only provided in the City of Hollister relative to the Tripper/Fixed Route offered in Hollister
- Intercounty service connecting Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista to Santa Clara County in Gilroy
- On-demand, shared-ride, ADA accessible public transit service within the City of Hollister

The Intercounty Service allows County Express customers to connect to other public transit services such as: Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST), Caltrain, Greyhound and AMTRAK in Gilroy.

In addition to administering and operating County Express, the Authority partners with the Council of Governments for San Benito County Rideshare Program. The Rideshare Program promotes alternative modes of commuting by providing valuable information regarding alternative commute options, including carpooling and vanpools, to residents and workers in San Benito County. Besides environmental benefits, these alternative modes of transportation assist low income residents and workers in traveling to and from work.

There is limited taxi service available through Hollister Taxi for residents and visitors to San Benito County.

Paratransit

Paratransit services are provided for individuals with disabilities that have difficulty accessing the fixed route bus stops. Paratransit eligibility is determined by the Authority through a simple application process and is valid for three years. Paratransit services may be scheduled up to 14 days in advance and on the same day. Same day service is subject to a premium fare and availability. The Paratransit application form is available for download at www.SanBenitoCountyExpress.org or requested at 330 Tres Pinos Road, C7, Hollister, CA 95023.

Intelligent Transportation Systems and Technology

The LTA has minimal Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and technology due to funding constraints available on County Express and Specialized Transportation fleet and services. ITS that the LTA has or in the process of implementing includes the following:

- Fixed Route and Intercounty routes and schedules available on Google Transit
- Demand-Response Dispatch Software
- On-Demand Dispatch Software and App
- Upgraded Digital On-Board Radios with GPS
- Mobile Data Tablets on transit vehicles
- App-based electronic fare media

Non-Profit Organizations

JOVENES DE ANTAÑO

Since May 1975, Jovenes de Antaño (Youth of Yesteryear) has been dedicated to improving the general welfare of elderly and individuals with disabilities of San Benito County. They provide a wide variety of services that include the following:

- Senior nutrition services
- Meals on Wheels
- Adult Day Care Center
- Family caregiver support program
- Social and exercise programs

In addition to these services, Jovenes de Antaño is contracted by San Benito County Local Transportation Authority to provide Specialized Transportation services including Out-of-County Non-Emergency Transportation, the Medical Shopping Assistance Program, and the Senior Lunch Transportation Program to its senior lunch congregate meal site.

List of Non-Profit Providers

A summary of the provider list is included in Appendix A.

D. Santa Cruz County

Agencies and Councils

SANTA CRUZ COUNTRY REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMISSION (SCCRTC)

The SCCRTC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, is required to perform a number of oversight functions regarding the planning, funding and provision of transportation for seniors, low income individuals and people with disabilities.

SCCRTC ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (E/D TAC)

The Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee is a group of transportation providers, social service agencies and members of the public who meet every two months to determine planning, funding and policy for specialized transportation to serve Santa Cruz County's seniors and people with physical and/or economic disabilities. The E/D TAC develops the first draft of the Unmet Specialized Transportation Needs list and develops an Annual Report to outline work tasks to be pursued. This committee monitors and plans for the entire network of specialized transportation services in Santa Cruz County and advises SCCRTC, as well as other decision makers, on related issues.

SANTA CRUZ METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC)

This committee is an advisory body to the Santa Cruz METRO Board of Directors on transit and paratransit issues. This committee took the place of the Metro Users Group (MUG) and the Santa Cruz METRO Accessible Services Transit Forum (MASTF).

SCCRTC TRANSIT AND PARATRANSIT UNMET NEEDS HEARINGS

SCCRTC voluntarily adopts a list of unmet transit needs annually. The most recent adoption occurred in May 2022 and included needs identified by the E/D TAC and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission. Forty-four unmet, paratransit/specialized and transit needs were identified and prioritized. The highest priorities, defined as services or projects that fill a gap in service or make permanent intermittent services, advocate more funding for transportation services for seniors, low income, and people living with disabilities, including low-cost or free transit services and safety improvements to travel paths and bus facilities. Transportation services for caregivers of senior and disabled clients and development of a Mobility Management Center was also identified as a high priority need. High priority capital needs includes consolidating operating facilities and vehicle replacement for transit and specialized transit services. The medium-level needs, defined as needs to expand existing services, concentrate on specialized services, such as same-day specialized transit services to medical appointments, and senior meal sites, specialized transportation services for people with cognitive impairments and outreach about to seniors about transportation options and. Lower priorities are those which may be infrequent or still conceptual and require additional development. Included in the unmet needs list are strategies that may be available to address the identified needs.

Fixed Route Transit

SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)

Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District is served by the Santa Cruz METRO bus system. The vehicle features and facilities accommodate almost all residents in Santa Cruz. For example, ramp equipment permits a secure ascent on and descent off buses for persons with wheelchairs, and those unable to walk up and down stairs. In addition, buses include a “kneeling” device that reduces the stepping distance on and off buses. “Priority seating” is available for passengers in wheelchairs.

Totally or partially blind, deaf/hearing impaired and persons with disabilities have the right to be accompanied on a transit bus by a guide, signal, or service dog that is especially trained for this purpose. In the bus, stops are announced by an electronic enunciator for the total or partially blind. Scrolling signs in the front of the bus assist the hearing impaired. Every person with a disability also has the right to be accompanied by one attendant who rides for free. Santa Cruz METRO conducts “Mobility Training” with free instruction to seniors and people with disabilities who want instruction and assistance riding the bus. In addition, fare discounts are offered for individuals with disabilities and seniors.

Santa Cruz METRO runs express buses frequently and has recently improved service from Watsonville to Santa Cruz where riders can connect with the Highway 17 express. This provides improved inter-city service to urban and rural residents, and connections with Santa Clara County for interregional trips.

Paratransit

Paratransit, shared-ride and door-to-door transportation services are offered by a number of service providers in Santa Cruz County. The two main providers are Santa Cruz METRO ParaCruz and Community Bridges Lift Line.

SANTA CRUZ METRO PARACRUZ

Santa Cruz METRO ParaCruz is the ADA-required service that complements Santa Cruz METRO’s regular fixed route bus service to origins and destinations within ¼ mile of existing bus routes. ParaCruz accommodates individuals who are unable to independently use fixed route buses due to a disability some or all of the time, and who are eligible under ADA 1990. ParaCruz highlights the population of its riders who have disabilities as a result of permanent or temporary physical, cognitive, or psychiatric disabilities, and meet the specific qualifications:

- Individuals who, because of their disability, cannot independently board, ride, or disembark from any accessible vehicle
- Individuals with impairment- related conditions that prevent them from getting to or from a boarding or disembarking location
- Visitors who have been certified by another transit system than ADA are eligible for 21 days of service per 365 day period

It should be noted that Santa Cruz METRO ParaCruz also accommodates pick-ups at the Watsonville Transit Center for inter-regional paratransit trips.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING SERVICES DEPARTMENT (TAPS)

The University of California, Santa Cruz's Transportation and Parking Services Department (TAPS) provides a Disability Van Service, a complimentary paratransit service for individuals with permanent or temporary disabilities to access the UCSC campus and fully participate in the UCSC campus environment.

Non-Profit Organizations

COMMUNITY BRIDGES

Community Bridges is a 30 year old non-profit, whose goal for the Lift Line transportation program is to provide "Transportation for Independent Living." Nearly 100,000 door-to-door rides per year are provided to county residents who have disabilities, elderly or frail by both the in-house Lift Line program and by contract with private operators. The majority of rides are to senior meal sites, medical destinations and "safety net" transportation to seniors and people with disabilities who need specialized transportation to origins or destinations outside the ParaCruz service area or eligibility criteria. For nearly three decades this agency has been the designated Consolidated Transportation Services Agency in Santa Cruz County.

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY | TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Volunteer drivers provide transportation to older adults 60 years of age or older that are no longer able to drive and have difficulty using public transportation. The primary focus is to support low income, homebound individuals with transportation to essential services such as medical and dental appointments, grocery shopping and banking. Program volunteers use their own vehicles to provide a comfortable, reliable and friendly service to many lonely and isolated seniors throughout Santa Cruz County. Over 4,500 door-to-door rides are given each year. This is the only no cost, non-profit, volunteer transportation program in the tri-county area.

Other agencies such as the American Red Cross, the Mental Health Client Action Network provide specialized transportation services to clients that meet their eligibility requirements. The Volunteer Center uses volunteer drivers to provide rides and companionship to many of the region's frail elderly residents who are not eligible for other transportation services.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY'S HOPE SERVICES

Hope Services is the leading provider of services to people with developmental disabilities in Silicon Valley for over 66 years. We serve more than 3,500 people and their families in six counties and provide a broad spectrum of services for infants through seniors such as children's services, day programs, staffing, mental health services, community living services, and senior services.

SENIOR’S COUNCIL (AREA AGENCY ON THE AGING)

It is the mission of the Seniors Council to enable older persons to function with independence and dignity in their homes and in the community to their fullest capacity. The Area Agency on Aging provides planning and advocacy for seniors and contracts with other local non-profit organizations for Santa Cruz and San Benito County.

List of Providers

A summary of the provider list is included in Appendix A.

Chapter 3 - Human Service Transportation Needs

Many people believe that individuals with special transportation needs are only those with disabilities or wheelchair users. In fact, the term “transportation disadvantaged” covers a much larger spectrum. *Transportation disadvantaged* people, otherwise known as individuals with special transportation needs, are those who are unable to transport themselves due to their age, income, or health condition. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), “transit dependent or transit disadvantaged shall include, but not be limited to, the elderly, individuals with disabilities and persons of limited means.”⁴ A transportation disadvantaged person may have different types of transportation requirements. Examples of transit dependent users could include an elderly person trying to get to a specialized health center or an evening concert, a veteran traveling to a VA medical centers, a student attending an evening city council meeting, a woman volunteering downtown at night, or a visually impaired individual with a guide dog on his way to and from work.

Special needs transportation is any mode of transportation used by those defined as transportation disadvantaged or with a special transportation need. This includes buses that have regular stops, such as: fixed route transit for the general public; specialized services such as vans, ambulances and taxis that provide pick up service at the curb or door; demand response or dial-a-ride; volunteer driver services; or any federal, state, and local publicly funded transportation. The different agencies providing these special transportation services largely fit into a number of categories: human service transportation, public transit, and student transportation services. These designations, however, do not adequately describe the variety of providers or the diversity of people they serve.

In this planning effort, the intent is to use the widest possible interpretation of special needs transportation to impact as many persons as possible. This includes transportation services funded and provided by the following:

- County and local human service departments including programs for children, the elderly, and disability populations
- Public transit
- For-profit and non-profit contractors

⁴ Caltrans, “Unmet Transit Needs” and “Reasonable to Meet” Definitions, p.1. Available at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/DOCS_PDFS/tdaunmet.pdf

A. Regional

Approximately 774,146 people currently live in the Monterey Bay Region, and up to 35 percent of the population may merit special transportation services because of their potential inability to drive due to a disability, age or income status.⁵ Based on the California Department of Finance (DOF) and American Community Survey estimates, of the total population in the region ten percent has one or more disabilities, nearly 14 percent are seniors, defined as persons over the age of 65 years, and 11 percent are considered “Below the Poverty Line”.

Table 3-1

	Total Population	Seniors	Percent Seniors	Percent Disabled	Percent Disabled	Below Poverty Line	Percent Below Poverty Line
Monterey County	441,290	58,050	13%	37,082	8%	50,052	11%
San Benito County	62,789	7,711	12%	6,237	10%	5,709	9%
Santa Cruz County	270,067	44,451	16%	31,219	12%	31,120	12%
Total	774,146	110,212	14%	74,538	10%	86,881	11%
<i>Percentage of Elderly, Disabled and Low income based on DOF 2021 and American Community Survey 2016-2020 data. Some individuals are in multiple population groups and may be double counted; i.e. a senior with a disability.</i>							

The Department of Finance (DOF) also provides forecast data for each county within the AMBAG region. Table 3-2 below provides information regarding the population trends for different age cohorts that look at the ageing and senior populations within Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties for the years 2025, 2035, 2040 and 2045. In 2025, Santa Cruz County is expected to have the largest proportion of its population (22%) be senior citizens (65+) within the region.⁶ By 2045, 25 percent of Santa Cruz County’s population will be over the age of 65 years, as shown in Figure 3-2.

⁵ The California Department of Finance: E-5 City/County Population Estimates and 2016-2020 American Community Survey

⁶ Department of Finance P-2. Population Projections July 2021.

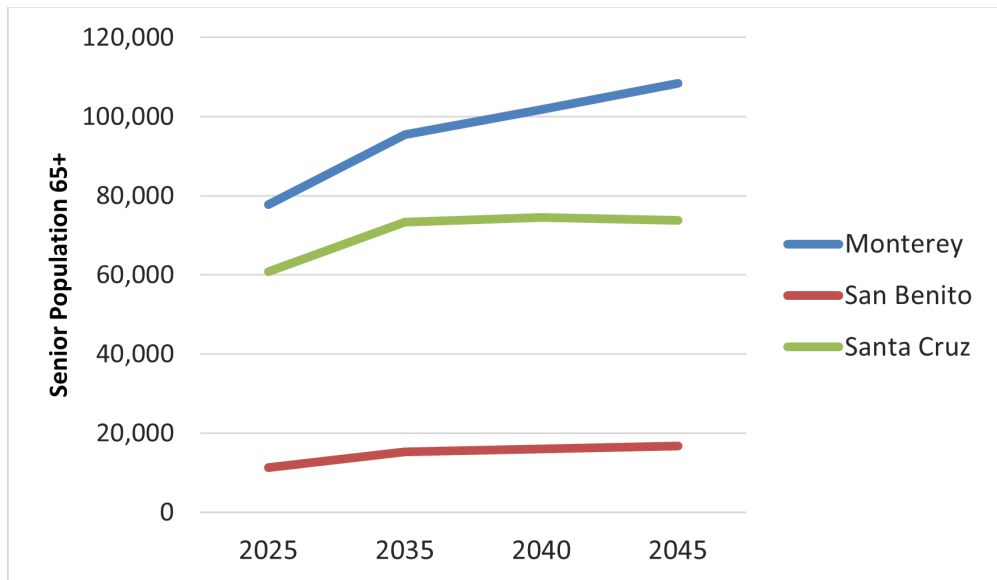
Table 3-2

Monterey	Population	2025		2035		2040		2045	
	Total	453,956		471,901		477,265		480,694	
	60-64	23,019	5%	23,431	5%	25,413	5%	26,585	6%
	65-69	22,817	5%	21,838	5%	22,419	5%	24,388	5%
	70-84	45,060	10%	56,231	12%	57,155	12%	57,543	12%
	85+	9,907	2%	17,345	4%	22,199	5%	26,524	6%
	Seniors*	77,784	17%	95,414	20%	101,773	21%	108,455	23%
	San Benito	Population	2025		2035		2040		2045
Total		63,604		68,908		70,866		72,395	
60-64		3,946	6%	3,320	5%	3,498	5%	3,546	5%
65-69		3,656	6%	3,730	5%	3,234	5%	3,409	5%
70-84		6,483	10%	9,187	13%	9,700	14%	9,409	13%
85+		1,151	2%	2,337	3%	3,134	4%	3,922	5%
Seniors*		11,290	18%	15,254	22%	16,068	23%	16,740	23%
Santa Cruz		Population	2025		2035		2040		2045
	Total	279,617		288,195		289,843		290,001	
	60-64	17,391	6%	14,497	5%	14,594	5%	14,492	5%
	65-69	17,930	6%	15,287	5%	13,921	5%	14,026	5%
	70-84	37,028	13%	45,091	16%	43,128	15%	39,974	14%
	85+	5,913	2%	13,009	5%	17,418	6%	19,772	7%
	Seniors*	60,871	22%	73,387	25%	74,467	26%	73,772	25%
	AMBAG Region	Population	2025		2035		2040		2045
Total		797,177		829,004		837,974		843,090	
60-64		44,356	6%	41,248	5%	43,505	5%	44,623	5%
65-69		44,403	6%	40,855	5%	39,574	5%	41,823	5%
70-84		88,571	11%	110,509	13%	109,983	13%	106,926	13%
85+		16,971	2%	32,691	4%	42,751	5%	50,218	6%
Seniors*		149,945	19%	184,055	22%	192,308	23%	198,967	24%

Data from DOF: P-2: County Population Projections (2010-2060) July 2021

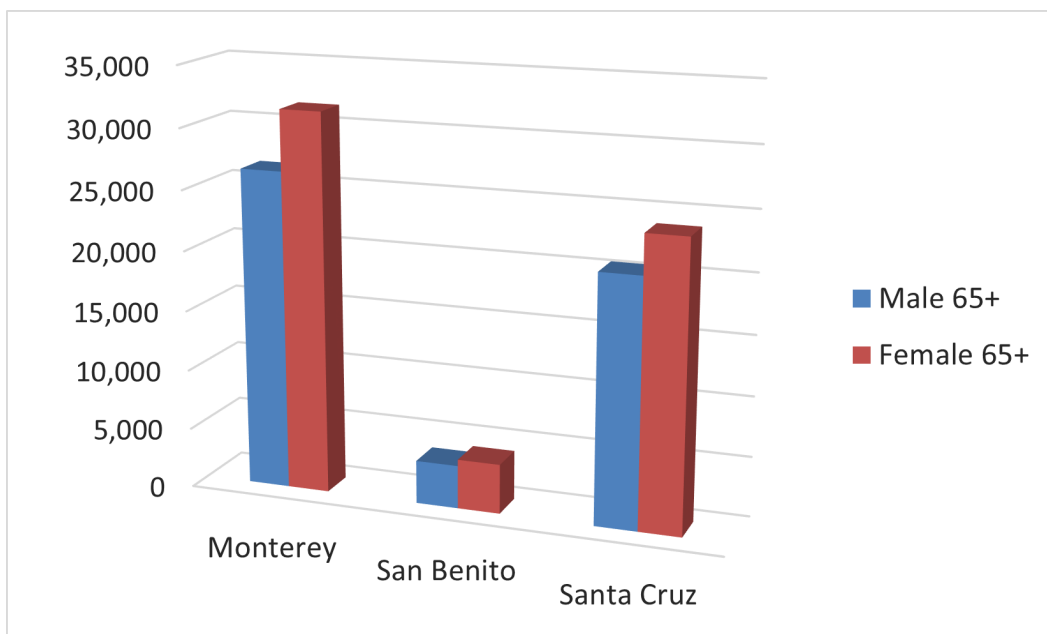
*Seniors are defined as 65+

Figure 3-1



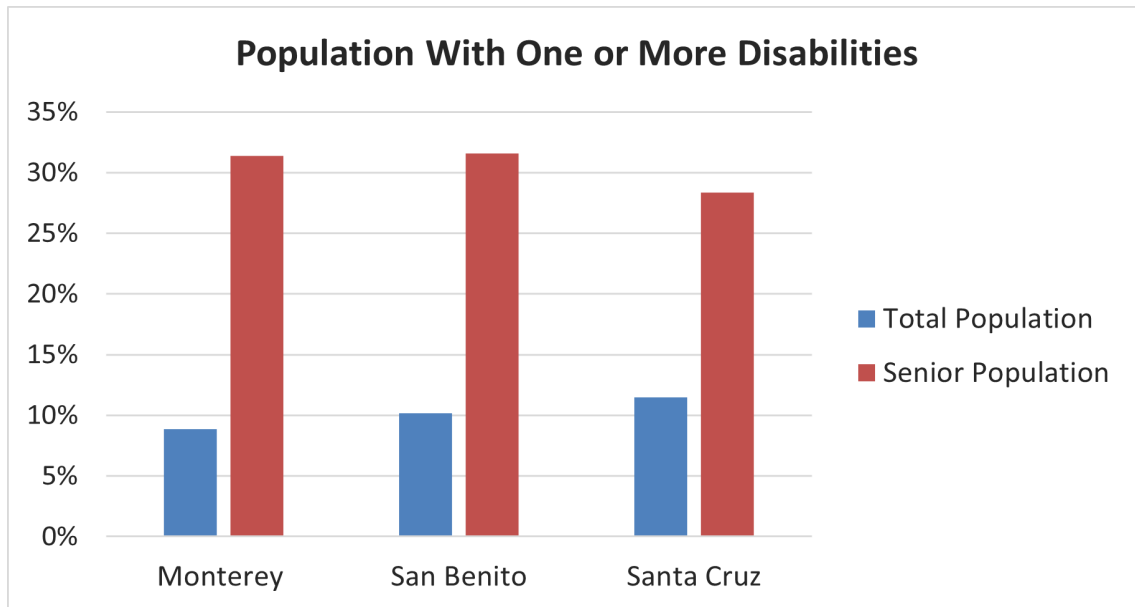
Across all three counties there are more female seniors than males, as Figure 3-2 demonstrates. The senior populations in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties each have a 54% female majority with San Benito close behind at a 53% female majority. Using American Community Survey Data 2016-2020, the largest disparity between genders of those 65 years and older was in Monterey County, which had over 5,000 more female seniors than males. Santa Cruz County also shows a great difference between male and female senior populations with roughly 3,300 more females. San Benito County has over 500 more senior females than males.

Figure 3-2



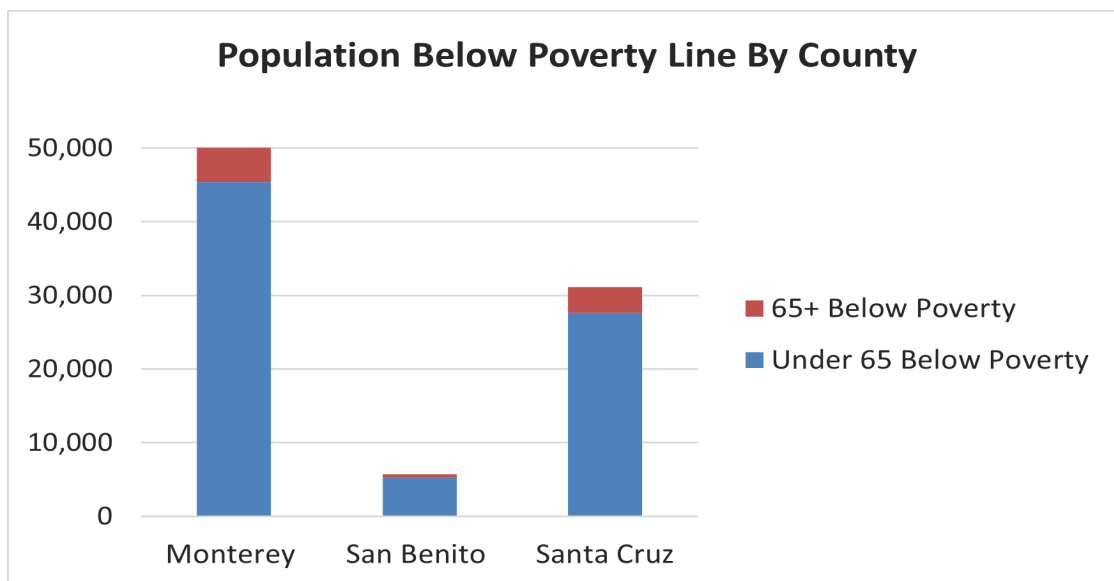
As to be expected, a greater proportion (31% Monterey, 32% San Benito and 28% Santa Cruz) of the senior community, ages 65 years and older, have one or more disabilities compared to the general population (9%, 10% and 11% respectfully) as shown in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3



Among those identified as falling below the poverty line, regionally seniors make up approximately 10 percent of the low income population, with Santa Cruz having a slightly higher percentage (11%), with Monterey and San Benito both just under the regional percentage (9%) as shown in Figure 3-4 below.

Figure 3-4



In addition to the data above collected from the 2020 Census, the American Community Survey (ACS) conducts annual research on population demographics related to aging, income, and disabilities in counties with a population of over 65,000 people. The survey delineates income and disabilities by age factors showing how some elderly individuals have more than one special need for an increase in transit options.

B. Monterey County

Monterey County's topography and geographical reach presents some challenges to the provision of fixed line transit services due to the preponderance of rural agricultural land uses over much of the county interspaced with much more dense municipalities. Several demographic characteristics have been shown to predict the value and propensity in using transportation services, including population density, the elderly, households with children, physical and/or mental disability, poverty-level income and private vehicle ownership.

The ACS indicates that 14 percent of Monterey residents are over 65 years, and 12 percent of this population lives below the poverty line. The majority of those with the greatest economic need reside in Salinas, Marina, Seaside, the Salinas Valley cities, and the unincorporated communities throughout the county. For those who live in the County's more affluent areas, such as Pebble Beach, Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley, Monterey and Pacific Grove, the rising costs of transportation, health care, food, and other standard costs of living place many of these elderly in a "land rich, cash poor" situation. This economic scenario highlights the necessity for local governments, as well as public and private organizations, to offer programs that will help to address the specific transportation needs of all special needs groups in Monterey County, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, and low income or transportation disadvantaged populations.

C. San Benito County

San Benito County is a 1,390 square mile bedroom community to Silicon Valley with \$338 million agricultural production in 2020. According to Census projections, in 2045 San Benito County will have an approximate population of 72,395. According to AMBAG's 2022 Regional Growth Forecast, by 2045 Hollister's population will be at roughly 46,000 and San Juan Bautista will be at nearly 2,500. Low population in a large geographic area creates a great challenge for the County to meet all the transportation needs for its residents in a safe, efficient, and reliable manner.

Since a large percent of San Benito County's population may be deemed as transit dependent, public transit services provided by County Express and Specialized transportation Service are vital to the County's mobility. These two public transportation services allow transit dependents to make lifeline trips, such as: transportation to medical services, social services, education, and employment. In addition to providing mobility for the transit dependent, County Express' Intercounty service improves the quality for a large percentage of the population commuting out of the County for work by providing commute alternatives to driving alone.

D. Santa Cruz County

The County of Santa Cruz encompasses approximately 445 square miles with an average density of around 609 people per square mile and total population of 271,815, concentrated in two urban areas (Santa Cruz and Watsonville), with unincorporated and rural areas in between. From the far north county, hugging the California coast up to Davenport (population ~390) and Freedom/Corralitos to the south (~6,220) to the urban cities and municipalities of Scotts Valley (~12,232), Santa Cruz (~61,950), Watsonville (~52,067), Capitola (~9,846) and areas such as Aptos (~6,2435), Live Oak (~16,508), Soquel (~10,721) and unincorporated, rural landscapes, this is a unique part of the state.

Three coastal mountain ranges and a slew of growth-regulating and ecological measures inhibit the area's expansion into rural areas. Urban development in the county lies primarily along the bay coastal plains and foothills between the City of Santa Cruz (north) and City of Watsonville (south), with the urban areas serving as both employment and housing centers in need of a healthy public transit system, ideally with broad, coordinated geographic coverage at needed frequencies. Individuals have special transit needs for more than one reason. Of the total Santa Cruz County population, 16% are elderly, 11% have one or more disabilities and 11% are below the poverty line. Although Santa Cruz County has the second smallest land area of the state's 58 counties, it has the twelfth highest population density. By 2045, housing and employment is projected to increase by 8% and 17% respectively.

The high cost of housing in Santa Cruz County presents a challenge to low income individuals, which includes seniors and people with disabilities. Although nationwide the housing market has been affected by the mortgage industry, housing costs in desirable coastal areas generally do not follow national trends. This coupled with the County being a bedroom community for the Silicon Valley create challenges for assessment.

Chapter 4 - Unmet Needs Assessment

A. Regional

EXPANDING REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Although many regional residents have cars and prefer driving a private vehicle, elderly, individuals with disabilities and persons of low income lack either the physical capability or financial stability to own and operate a private vehicle. Expanding transportation services between the counties within the region and locations outside of the region is constantly an Unmet need in all three counties.

ONE-STOP INFORMATION (511) SERVICE (BILINGUAL)

The Monterey Bay region is lacking a one-stop informative telephone number, similar to the 511 service, that consumers can call to get information needed for planning, scheduling and using all forms of available transportation available to them in the region regardless of the provider or mode. An accompanying website with trip-planning functions would further improve the public's regional opportunities to access and use the transportation information. In Santa Cruz County the Cruz 511 Program is available to commuters and community members. The service offers educational workshops, informative sessions and online resources for transit options throughout the county. Access to these self-service travel resources 24 hours a day would be especially valuable to individuals with limited travel choices due to economics or disability. There may be benefits to linking the 211 Social Service Information Line, developed by the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services (CAIRS), to this service.

PARATRANSIT AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

Although the more densely populated city centers have consistent paratransit and accessible transportation services, there is a lack of direct paratransit and accessible transit connections between the tri-county region, as well as with neighboring counties. This restricts mobility options, particularly for those communities near the borders of each county and for the more rural communities in Southern Monterey County, San Benito County and Santa Cruz County.

EXPAND EXISTING TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES AT A LOW COST OPTION

The cost of traveling to homes and community centers for many human-services care providers and volunteers is costly. Aging and disabled individuals tend to need at home care. Living in remote locations creates difficulty finding a care provider that can afford the fuel to drive the commute. Additionally, the Monterey Bay region has active elderly and low income volunteer programs in which participants have difficulty affording the transportation costs to serve in the community at locations like schools, family shelters, juvenile halls, and hospitals around the region. Addressing the cost of transportation to work or volunteer sites for human-services care providers is an unmet need.

B. Monterey County

Public comments provided through the Unmet Transit Needs process conducted by TAMC in coordination with MST's Mobility Advisory Committee (MAC) in the Spring of 2022 included:

- Request for increased frequency of MST Line 18 service
- Improved connection between south county and Monterey County's Superior Court of California
- Improved service to rural areas in North and South Monterey County
- More frequent transit service in the City of Gonzales and San Juan Bautista
- Connections to locations in neighboring cities

Specifically, Monterey County residents would benefit significantly by having the following areas addressed:

SAME DAY SERVICE

While current resources do not allow for the increased number of drivers and vehicles necessary to provide same-day service, a hardship nonetheless exists for some riders, as not all needed trips can be planned.

DOOR-THROUGH-DOOR

Some riders may not be able to safely arrive and return from their planned destination without assistance from an able, responsible adult. This could be the result of a physical or mental impairment, or both, in which dropping a rider at a curb near their destination does not assure they can navigate their way to their destination.

GUARANTEED RIDE HOME (GRH)

While MST offers some GRH service, it does not always extend to all areas of need. It is still possible that someone might become stranded because of work or school schedules that extend beyond normal MST operating hours.

INCREASED FREQUENCY AND COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Studies indicate that decreases in waiting times produce increases in rider satisfaction. This is especially true for transportation-challenged riders who often require longer travel times between each leg of their trip. In addition, service hours and operations of local dial-a-ride transit services and fixed route regional services in the Salinas Valley are not completely coordinated, leaving a potential gap in service for riders, especially riders with special needs.

TRAVEL TRAINING

When training is available to teach people how to use all the forms of transportation available to them, and tickets are easy to purchase, challenged riders have greater freedom to move about their community. MST's free program is available to individuals with disabilities, seniors and veterans. Continued investment and expansion of this program will increase mobility and education to important community members.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

MST should expand the capabilities of the Mobility Management Center to become a one-stop-shop for personal transportation services with accompanying website that allow consumers to apply for mobility programs and transportation services available regardless of the provider or mode.

ACCESSIBLE TAXI SERVICE

Monterey County Taxi Authority should oversee the availability of accessible taxi services countywide, especially in the south county.

IMPROVED SERVICE TO RURAL AREAS

There are many challenged riders who currently live outside the ADA services corridor and do not have access to RIDES or accessible taxi services. Subsequently, they do not receive MediCal or social services until a crisis arises, at which time the expense of such services and the detrimental effects to the individual are much greater. The rural unincorporated communities of Pajaro, Aromas and Los Lomas in North Monterey County, and San Lucas, San Ardo and Bradley in South Monterey County are the most impacted.

REPLACEMENT OF OLD VEHICLES

Many RIDES vehicles have reached the end of their useful life and the cost of keeping them on the road is so high that it precludes the expansion of needed services into other areas. Safe, fuel-efficient and low maintenance vehicles are critical to the provision of reliable services. Social Service Providers in Monterey County also provide transportation service to special needs groups, and operate vans and wheelchair accessible vehicles that need replacement.

ABILITY TO USE AVAILABLE VEHICLES AND DRIVERS REGARDLESS OF FUNDING SOURCE

The current system of discrete, inflexible vehicle pools, where many vehicles travel with few passengers, is inefficient and prevents the preservation of resources that could otherwise be redistributed into areas of need. When bureaucratic barriers are finally removed, technology solutions will need to be employed for tracking and matching riders to their funding source(s). These technology solutions should provide for inter-county travelers as well.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION-CHALLENGED CONSUMERS

In times of natural disaster or civil unrest, persons without private vehicles are vulnerable and potentially reliant on a transportation operating system that might not meet their transit needs. Currently, there is no database containing the information needed to create an emergency response plan.

AGRICULTURAL WORKER VANPOOLS

The agricultural industry is the largest in Monterey County, generating approximately \$4.1 billion in revenues annually. Many agricultural workers in the County lack adequate transportation to and from rural agricultural work sites and must rely on carpools and ad-hoc vanpool arrangements that can be unsafe. Implementing a vanpool program patterned after the Agricultural Industries Transportation Services program started in King's County is a possible strategy to address this need, one for which state grant funding has been made available.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION

Monterey County has several housing communities dedicated to seniors, some of which are in isolated areas where affordable land and zoning requirements permit their establishment. There are many advantages to older adults living in these types of communities; however, there are also some inherent problems that accompany the locations where they are forced to reside.

Although MST operates four Senior Shuttle Routes (91, 92, 94 and 95) public transportation can be a major problem for many in these communities. Some seniors are no longer able to drive and are dependent upon others for their transportation needs. In addition, many depend upon outside helpers to assist them with cleaning and personal care activities and these helpers often must also depend upon public transportation. Since some of these senior residents are not eligible for the RIDES paratransit program, and none of their helpers are eligible, an alternative transportation service needs to be developed. Such a service would provide linkage between isolated facilities and a nearby transit stop where riders could safely embark and disembark accessible MST coaches.

C. San Benito County

The Council of San Benito County Governments holds annual Unmet Transit Needs Hearings to provide a forum for transit users and community members to express concerns of their needs that may not be satisfied by the local public transit services. The Council of Governments staff analyzes the public hearing testimonies and presents its findings to their Board of Directors for resolution. After the resolution of the Unmet Needs Hearings, the Board of Directors allocates Transportation Development Act funding to the San Benito County Local Transportation Authority to implement the solutions.

In past hearings there was a wide range of unmet transit needs. Requests have ranged from changing funding policies for public transit to route change requests. The Authority makes an effort to address all unmet transit needs that can be reasonably met and some operational concerns as it may increase quality of service.

At the most recent unmet transit needs hearing in February 2022, the public voiced concerns about the following:

- Gaps in Service for the County Express Service
- Operational Comments
- General Service Comments about both County Express and the On-Demand application

SBtCOG staff determined that some of these needs were operational in nature and were not unmet needs. In current and past unmet transit needs, operational concerns were generally correlated to a lack of funding to increase hours of service or the size of the fleet to meet service gaps. A national labor shortage, resulting in additionally reduced or delayed services, has further strained operations.

The following are gaps that were identified by the Council of San Benito County Governments, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and San Benito County Local Transportation Authority. The gaps are not listed in the order of priority and also not limited to the list below.

SERVICE LEVELS

In 2009, the LTA reduced its services due to a reduction in state funding. The reduction of funding resulted in a mid-day service gap in County Express' Fixed Route service and reduced weekend Intercounty service schedule. Services from the rural areas surrounding to the City of Hollister was negatively impacted, making it harder for rural residents to come into the urban area for work, school, and recreation.

The LTA's Specialized Transportation services, by Jovenes de Antaño, are in high demand as well. These services are geared towards seniors and persons with disabilities, except for the Out-of-County Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (OOCMT). The OOCMT services are open to all residents of the County for medical services that are not provided within the County. These transportation services, OOCMT, Medical Shopping Assistance, and Senior Lunch Transportation meet and exceed the requirements of ADA by providing escort services, minor Spanish translation, and door-through-door services.

The LTA has received requests to extend the service area and additional services hours. Rides for OOCMT service must be scheduled at least one week in advance due to limited availability and are on first-come, first-serve basis.

Requests were received for extended County Express service including from Campo San Benito to Southside School. Currently, nationwide labor shortages, combined with higher rates of bus driver retirements, have limited the drivers available through County Express transit. The LTA is considering a contract amendment with MV Transportation to increase starting hourly wages to address this shortage. Trips to and from Southside School currently have limited availability due to pick up and arrival times being less flexible with the school's schedule.

FLEET REPLACEMENT, CAPACITY, AMENITIES AND MAINTENANCE

The LTA owns and maintains a variety of vehicles for its County Express and Specialized Transportation Services. The vehicles reflect the need of each service and are regularly maintained by the LTA. All vehicles are equipped with a wheelchair lift, and wherever applicable, a bicycle rack.

With the decrease in transit funding, the LTA has been purchasing most its fleet using state or federal funds and grants. As a result, limited amenities and types of vehicles are only purchased due to budget constraints. Such impacts include, but not limited to, seating capacity, and upgraded air conditioning.

ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY

The rural nature of San Benito County poses as a mobility obstacle for the elderly, individuals with disabilities and persons of limited means because the agricultural terrain and sparsely populated areas are not pedestrian friendly. Even within urbanized areas, there are sidewalk gaps that make walking hard for those that difficulty navigating the physical terrain. For individuals that do not have access to a personal vehicle or know of someone who can drive them to and from their destination, it creates a sense of being excluded from the mobile community.

The LTA currently offers discount fares on County Express services for seniors, youths, and persons with disabilities. Children under the age of five ride for free with a paying adult. Persons of limited means that do not qualify for the discount fares are required to pay the regular fare. There are no discounted rates for Specialized Transportation services.

TRAVEL TRAINING

When training is available to teach people how to use all the forms of transportation available to them, and tickets are easy to purchase, challenged riders have greater freedom to move about their community. San Benito County should look to implement a travel training program.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Volunteer drivers are recruited and organized into a driver pool. Agencies match the travel requests of their clients with the availability of volunteer drivers. It is common to reimburse the driver through gas vouchers or at a per mile rate. Gas voucher values can be based on the amount of gas used to travel to and from a center such as Hollister, Gilroy, San Jose or San Francisco.

Current IRS per mile travel cost rates are generally used for mileage-based reimbursements. In some examples, passengers are required to pay a contribution (fare) for the ride and this is net from the paid driver reimbursement. An alternative structure could include is a driver reimbursement program where clients identify a friend or family member who can provide transportation where drivers are reimbursed on a mileage or flat rate basis.

TAXI SCRIP

Programs for taxi scrip or developing a relationship to allow ride hail (e.g., Uber or Lyft) trips to be paid may also be a means of reducing trip costs for the agency. Clients would be allowed to purchase a certain amount of scrip each month. For example, they could be allowed to purchase \$25 per month, but that \$25 could also be used to pay for double (\$50) or triple (\$75) the value on shown on the taxi meter. A similar arrangement could be possible to purchase a certain amount of credit on ride hail services; however, because this type of service is using a common carrier, an alternative with similar booking times and availability would have to be offered for passengers requiring a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT CENTER

A coordinated and seamless system of information and coordination for specialized transportation services is needed. A Mobility Management Center would assist the community in streamlining both the information and referral systems as well as the efficient delivery of services regardless of the funding source. Many entities already provide information and referral services and Mobility Management could be added to their existing duties. As more people rely on the internet, web-based services are also needed for accessing information and reserving rides. A community vehicle program, whereby vehicles are available to trained drivers from social service agencies and activity centers, would assist in coordinating infrequent specialized transportation needs.

D. Santa Cruz County

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission adopted the most recent list of Unmet Transit and Specialized Transportation Needs following a public hearing in May 2022. The SCCRTC's Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee reviewed and updated the majority of needs included in the draft list. In addition, public input into the Unmet Needs list was solicited from the general public on the SCCRTC's website and ads in local newspapers. The adopted list indicates high, medium and low priorities and is summarized in Chapter 2. A copy of the list developed at the time of this Coordinated Plan, categorized into general, transit, and paratransit needs, is included in Appendix B. The list is adopted annually.

Included below are the highest priority items on the 2022 Unmet Transit and Specialized Transportation Needs in Santa Cruz County, for the full list, please see Appendix B.

SAFE PATHS OF TRAVEL

There is a need to ensure safe travel paths between senior and/or disabled living areas, or other origins/destinations and bus stops is problematic and though bus stops are ADA accessible, to and from transit stops. With direct accessible paths of travel, many more individuals with disabilities could access regular transit and have much greater mobility than what paratransit service could provide.

INCREASED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Increased transportation services to areas with high concentrations of seniors, disabled, and low income individuals, are needed, particularly in South County. Alternative transportation programs that encourage ridesharing and serve low income and senior housing areas outside of the transit service area in South County would be beneficial to the community.

LOW COST TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

There is a need for transportation services for low income families with children, including transportation for people transitioning from welfare to work. Programs that could meet this need include volunteer drivers for transportation family members to visits at detention facilities, taxi vouchers for low income families, ride to work programs, and free youth bus passes for low income households.

Low cost transportation services are needed for caregivers of senior and disabled clients. This need could be met with transportation programs for caregivers to get to clients, taxi vouchers for caregivers, or ride to work programs.

LACK OF PUBLICITY ABOUT EXISTING SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

A Mobility Management Center (central information point, one stop shop) that provides a coordinated and seamless-to-the-public system of transit services available to transit users including older adults and people living with disabilities is needed to provide easy to access and customized transit information, training about how to use transportation services, and other transition services needed for senior drivers.

INCREASE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SERVICE AND VEHICLES

For those using mobility devices, traditional on demand ride share services can make using the transportation system difficult when they aren't properly equipped. Providing accessible on demand services for the community includes ensuring public taxi and transportation network company services are accessible for those using mobility devices.

EXPAND PARATRANSIT SERVICES

Increased paratransit service is needed for those who lost paratransit service due to changes in Santa Cruz Metro ParaCruz program in 2015. Policies that expand ADA mandated paratransit service area and the taxi voucher program and/or provide specialized transportation to areas outside the ADA-mandated paratransit service area for a fee or at no cost would meet this need.

There is a need for specialized transportation in areas outside the ADA-mandated paratransit service area for medical, non-medical trips. Identifying priority origins and destinations outside the ADA service area and implementing programs that could provide service to those areas would meet this need.

LOW COST PARATRANSIT SERVICES

Programs are needed that provide discounted and free paratransit rides, on-demand ADA accessible rides, and increase specialized transportation services to low income and disabled individuals for educational and work opportunities at higher education institutions.

PARATRANSIT AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

There is a need for direct paratransit and accessible transit connections with neighboring counties- including Monterey (Pajaro), San Benito, Santa Clara, and other points to the North. Ways to meet this need would be to develop plan to coordinate between agencies providing specialized transportation services in neighboring counties and support continuous funding for specialized transportation services to out-of-county medical appointments.

Expansion of outreach efforts to recruit drivers and promote services with volunteer drivers in county-wide, particularly in South County and San Lorenzo Valley is needed.

INCREASE SPAN AND FREQUENCY OF TRANSIT SERVICES

There is a need for greater frequency and span of transit service in densely populated areas with a mix of land uses land uses, particularly in Live Oak, Capitola, and Mission Street in Santa Cruz, and extended transit service hours later in the evening and early in the morning serving commercial centers of Santa Cruz, Live Oak, Cabrillo (Aptos), and Watsonville. Funding towards the Highway 1 Bus on Shoulder project increase the speed of trips, resulting in increased frequency.

'SAME DAY' MEDICAL AND 'BED TO BED' MEDICAL AND NON-MEDICAL TRIPS ON PARATRANSIT NOT AVAILABLE

With a few exceptions, resources are not available to provide same day specialized transportation services. This is problematic for those needing urgent medical attention, those needing 'bed to bed' transportation service, those without readily able funds to pay the fare box requirement, or those with last minute trip changes such as the need for dialysis patients to go to medical facilities for same day follow up procedures. The lack of flexible services and special care trips and gurney vehicles for the medically fragile creates a hardship for the most frail and vulnerable in our community.

TRANSIT AND PARATRANSIT/SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL NEEDS

There is a need for a permanent operation and maintenance facility for ParaCruz to accommodate reduced operating costs, a permanent operation and maintenance facilities for Consolidated Transportation Services Agency, paratransit vehicle replacements, and electric vehicle charging stations. With a need for increased electric vehicle education and infrastructure resources to provide an electric vehicle emergency preparedness plan and inclusion of electric vehicles in the Section 5310 grant program are pertinent.

There is a need to provide ADA compliant bus stops, prioritize bus stop improvements and shelter replacements based on high usage by seniors and people with disabilities, and install Braille and raised numbers on bus signage at bus stops indicating which bus routes are being offered at each stop (or a technology-based way finding alternative).

Additional funding is needed for maintenance of existing bus stops, parking lots, transit centers, and buildings, and to replace buses that are beyond their useful life with electric options.

There is a need to install transponders and an Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) System in all buses to provide better monitoring of on-time performance and more accurate data reporting. Installation of this equipment would assist with real-time operations, security, scheduling, and planning. Audio and video surveillance system for all buses is also needed.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES TO SUPPORT FOSTER YOUTH AND COURT ORDERED SUPERVISED VISITATION

INSUFFICIENT

AB 490 established requirements related to the education of dependents and wards in foster care, including the legislative intent that foster youth be provided increased stability of school placements and access to the same educational opportunities and resources as other students. Additionally, for child welfare cases where non-custodial parents are determined to have visitation rights with their children, supervised visitation in approved neutral settings is mandated through the Family Court. Court-ordered visitation in Santa Cruz County often takes place at Parents Center, one of the most impacted supervision sites in the county. While this particular site is served by existing bus service with frequent service, safe and reliable services for transporting children to school and supervised visitation settings and funding to accomplish the mandated services is an unmet need for dependents and wards in foster care.

Chapter 5 – Next Steps

On September 14, 2022, AMBAG released the Draft 2045 CPTP which was available until October 17, 2022 for a public review period, pursuant to public participation requirements set forth by the FAST ACT (2015).

Public access to the Draft CPTP included posting the Draft CPTP on AMBAG’s website, directly consulting community organizations and advocacy groups that support seniors, persons with disabilities and low income populations, and presenting the draft plan to the AMBAG Board.

The AMBAG Board of Directors are scheduled to approve the Final CPTP at their November 9, 2022 meeting. The CPTP will then be incorporated in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.