



**HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**Regional Transportation Planning Agency**  
**Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority**  
**Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies**  
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## **Citizen Participation Process for Assessing Unmet Transit Needs**

### **Transportation Development Act**

The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is responsible for allocating Transportation Development Act funds for public transportation services within the region. Each year the Unmet Transit Needs process is carried out to identify and evaluate any potential needs that are not being met through existing public transportation services. HCAOG is required to assess unmet transit needs prior to allocating any TDA funds for purposes *not* directly related to public transit.

### **Public Process to Make a Finding**

HCAOG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) leads the public participation process. Although only one public hearing is required, public meetings are held to gather public suggestions. The SSTAC considers all public testimony and input, determines if the suggestions meet the adopted definition of an unmet transit need and applies adopted criteria to determine if the need is "reasonable to meet".

At the end of the process, the SSTAC will forward one of the following findings to the HCAOG board for consideration:

- (a) there are no unmet transit needs; or
- (b) there are no unmet transit needs which are "reasonable to meet"; or
- (c) there are unmet transit needs, including those that are "reasonable to meet"

Transportation Development Act funds must be allocated first to unmet transit needs, which are found to be reasonable to meet within a jurisdiction, before any remaining funds can be allocated for non-transit purposes, such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities or streets and roads.

### **Opportunities for Public Comment on Unmet Transit Needs**

- The form linked at the project page: <http://hcaog.net/documents/unmet-transit-needs>
- Utilization of SSTAC members for information sharing among the community;
- At one of the advertised public meetings;
- Use the Remix platform to post comments: <https://bit.ly/transitneeds>
- Written comments and/or feedback gathered from staff during direct outreach;
- Comment submittals by email or telephone: [stephen.luther@hcaog.net](mailto:stephen.luther@hcaog.net)/444-8208

## UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS DEFINITION & REASONABLE TO MEET CRITERIA

**Unmet transit needs** are, at a minimum:

- (1) Trips requested from residents who do not have access to public transportation, specialized transportation, or private transport services or resources for the purpose of traveling to medical care, shopping, social/recreational activities, education/training, and employment; or
- (2) Proposed public transportation, specialized transportation, or private transport services identified in the following, but not limited to: a Transportation Development Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan.

HCAOG Plans can be found at: <http://hcaog.net/library>

Additionally, unmet transit needs do not include:

- ❖ Improvements funded or scheduled for implementation in the next fiscal year. Two potential new services that will be reevaluated this year are:
  - Express bus service between McKinleyville and Eureka during peak hours
  - Late Night Weekday Service on the Regional Transit System
- ❖ Minor operational improvements or changes such as bus stops, schedules, and minor route changes. Minor operational improvements are changes to service which do not affect the operating cost of the transit service either by requiring additional staff and/or additional vehicle hours of service or miles of service.
- ❖ Trips for primary or secondary school transportation
- ❖ Sidewalk improvements or street and road needs

**Reasonable to meet** criteria:

- (1) To be considered “reasonable to meet”, a service must be operationally feasible and financially sustainable, as defined below:
  - a) The service must have adequate roadways, and must be safe to operate.
  - b) Enough money should be available from identified sources of funding to pay for the marginal operating costs of the service continuously for three years.
- (2) The service must be projected to meet a minimum “marginal farebox-return-ratio” of 10 percent within 2 years. If multiple competing services are requested, other factors may also be considered such as estimated subsidy per passenger trip and passengers per vehicle hour of service. For new service, ridership and farebox-return-ratio thresholds will be considered.
- (3) Pursuant to the requirements of TDA Statutes (Public Utilities Code Section 99401.5c, a determination of needs that are “reasonable to meet” shall not be made by comparing unmet transit needs with the need for streets and roads, for the allocation of TDA funds.
- (4) Once a service is determined to be "reasonable to meet" and is implemented, it can be expected that the ridership in the first 1-2 years of the new service will be less than the projected optimal ridership. Ridership should be evaluated at 6-month intervals to determine if service is meeting performance standards adopted by the transit provider, and specifically, whether the service meets a minimum 10 percent marginal farebox-return-ratio. If the service is being adequately promoted and fails to be within 60 percent of the identified standards after six months, 90 percent with the first year, or 100 percent within two years, the service may be cancelled and deemed "no longer reasonable to meet." An exception to this rule is when a community or group is willing to participate in sharing the ongoing cost of the new service.