



HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority
Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
611 I Street, Suite B
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 444-8208
www.hcaog.net

AGENDA ITEM 4a
HCAOG Board Meeting
November 16, 2023

DATE: November 8, 2023
TO: HCAOG Policy Advisory Committee
FROM: Stephen Luther, Associate Regional Planner
SUBJECT: **Public Hearing to Receive Public Comments on Unmet Transit Needs for FY 2023-24**

Contents:

- Staff Summary
- Unmet Transit Needs Process Synopsis

Staff Summary:

The Unmet Transit Needs (UTN) is an annual process for the purpose of soliciting comments on the unmet transit needs that may exist within the jurisdiction and that might be reasonable to meet by establishing or contracting for new public transportation or specialized transportation services or by expanding existing services. An annual finding is required for HCAOG to allocate Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, which provide funding for both transit and non-transit purposes. Transit needs that are reasonable to meet must be funded prior to a jurisdiction using its Local Transportation Fund (LTF) allocation for non-transit purposes, which may include streets and roads or facilities used exclusively by pedestrians and bicyclists. Last year's UTN report found that Sunday service on RTS and a late-night Friday and Saturday service between Arcata and Eureka were unmet needs reasonable to meet. HCAOG is working with HTA to fund these services.

This process is led by HCAOG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC). The SSTAC considers public comments and deliberates on whether the requests meet the definition of an unmet transit need, and if so, if they are "reasonable to meet" based on projected ridership and operational costs. New or expanded services must meet a minimum 10% marginal farebox revenue recovery to be considered reasonable to meet. The fact that an identified transit need cannot be fully met based on available resources shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet. Comparing unmet transit needs with the needs for streets and roads is not allowable in determining transit needs that are reasonable to meet.

In October the SSTAC reviewed recommendations for revising the Unmet Transit Needs criteria stemming from the Triennial Performance Audit for HCAOG. The SSTAC recommended the HCAOG Board adopt revised UTN definitions which require amending

Appendix B of the TDA Rules and Guidelines. The revised language would add that transit needs should have sufficient broad-based community support, meaning that people likely to use the service on a routine basis made a minimum of two requests for the service in the UTN cycle. In addition, performance measures including estimated subsidy per passenger trip and passenger per vehicle hour of service will be included in the report of findings to assist in prioritizing trip requests. The TDA Rules require HCAOG to give a 30-day notice to eligible claimants prior to taking action. This staff report constitutes notice. Amended TDA Rules will be on a future agenda for action.

The purpose of today's hearing is to hear testimony from the public on unmet transit needs. HCAOG advertises public hearings to receive public comment concerning transit needs within the region. Public hearings were noticed and held at local jurisdictions in October. Comments may also be submitted to HCAOG through an online survey, in person, mail, or telephone. HCAOG accepts transit needs comments year-round. Those received by December 31, 2023 will be included in the 24-25 UTN Report of Findings.

Based on comments received from this outreach process, staff will prepare a Report of Findings in consultation with the SSTAC. The HCAOG Board will receive the Report of Findings in May 2024 and at that time make a finding of whether there are unmet transit needs, and if any are reasonable to meet.