
COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES PLAN: MENDOCINO COUNTY

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Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Full
ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CalWORKs	California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids
CDBG	Community Development Block Grants
CRC	Community Resource Connection
CSBG	Community Services Block Grants
CTSA	Consolidated Transportation Service Agency
CTH	Consolidated Tribal Health
DOF	Department of Finance
DOT	Department of Transportation
FY	Fiscal Year
JPA	Joint Powers Authority
LTA	Lake Transit Authority
LTF	Local Transportation Funds
MCOG	Mendocino Council of Governments
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTA	Mendocino Transit Authority
NEMT	Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
OAA	Older Americans Act
RCRC	Redwood Coast Regional Center
RTPA	Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Section 5310	Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities program
SGR	State of Good Repair
SMART	Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit
SSBG	Social Services Block Grant
SSTAC	Social Services Transportation Advisory Council
TDA	Transportation Development Act
TPC	Transit Productivity Committee
VA	Veterans Administration

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document is an update to the 2015 Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan for Mendocino County. Coordinated transportation is essential to keep people linked to social networks, employment, healthcare, education, social services, and recreation. Having access to reliable transportation can present a challenge to vulnerable populations, such as seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. For these groups, a coordinated transportation plan is necessary to improve access, efficiency, and promote independence.¹

Projects selected for funding under Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 must be included in a coordinated public transit – human services transportation plan. According to the FTA, this Coordinated Plan should be a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of [three priority groups/transportation disadvantaged groups]: 1) individuals with disabilities, 2) seniors, and 3) individuals with limited incomes”. This plan lays out strategies for meeting these needs and prioritizing services. The plan should be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, nonprofit, and human services transportation providers; members of the public; and other stakeholders.

This plan is intended to meet coordinated-planning requirements as well as provide the Mendocino Council of Governments and its partners a “blueprint” for implementing a range of strategies intended to promote and advance local efforts to improve transportation for persons with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low incomes.

1.2 Approach

Required elements of the Coordinated Plan include:

- Assessment of transportation needs for transportation disadvantaged populations (seniors, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes)
- Inventory of existing transportation services
- Strategies for improved service and coordination
- Priorities based on resources, time, and feasibility

With the 2015 Coordinated Plan as the starting point, this update was shaped by recent planning documents, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) meeting minutes, and Unmet Transit Needs Findings. Transit providers, other stakeholders, and the public provided input through conference calls and written comments.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, outreach involved a series of virtual consultations and online surveys. The community meeting where the Mendocino Coordinated Transportation Plan was discussed formed part of the November 16, 2020 SSTAC meeting and was held virtually through a Zoom meeting. This meeting was attended by SSTAC members, some community members, and representatives from the Center for Business & Policy Research Center (CBPR). A list of contacts was compiled by staff at the Center for Business and Policy Research and invited to attend through phone calls and emails. The contact list consisted of possible stakeholders and organizations in the community that provide services and assistance to seniors, the disabled, or low-income individuals.

Additionally, a short online survey accessible through a Survey Monkey link soliciting community input on community needs was shared with community outreach meeting attendees, to members of the public through the social media pages of community partners, and other key stakeholders. Survey questions were written after the 2020 community outreach meeting and focused on previously identified needs, input from stakeholders and community outreach meeting attendees, and feedback from the Mendocino Council of Governments. The Survey link was live from,

¹ Language taken from 2004 Executive Order: Human Service Transportation Coordination. Issued by George W. Bush, February 24, 2004.

November 24, 2020, to December 18, 2020. A total of 17 responses were collected. These responses helped inform the Unmet Transportation Needs to be discussed in sections 6 and 8 of this report.

1.3 Funding for Public Transportation in Rural California

Transportation funding in California is complex. Funding for public transportation in rural California counties is dependent primarily on two sources of funds: 1) Federal Section 5311 funds for rural areas and 2) Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds generated through California sales tax revenues. These two funding programs are described later in this section.

Federal and state formula and discretionary programs provide funds for transit and paratransit services. Transportation funding programs are subject to rules and regulations that dictate how they can be applied for, used, and/or claimed through federal, state, and regional levels of government. Funds for human service transportation come from a variety of non-traditional transportation funding programs, including both public and private sector sources.

Federal transit funding programs require local matching funds. Each federal program requires that a share of total program costs be derived from local sources and may not be matched with other federal Department of Transportation funds. Examples of local 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, may be an eligible local matching source; however, the documentation for this is extensive and usually not practical for rural agencies.

The following sections discuss different funding sources, some of which are new and some of which have been consolidated or changed from previous programs.

Federal Funding Sources

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

This program provides formula funding to increase the mobility of seniors and persons with disabilities. Funds are apportioned based on each state's share of the targeted populations and are apportioned to both non-urbanized (population under 200,000) and large urbanized areas (population over 200,000). The former New Freedom program (Section 5317) is folded into this program. The New Freedom program provided grants for services for individuals with disabilities that went beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Activities eligible under New Freedom are eligible under the Section 5310 program. Section 5310 is reauthorized under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) Act.

As the designated recipient of these funds, Caltrans is responsible for defining guidelines, developing application forms, and establishing selection criteria for a competitive selection process in consultation with its regional partners. State or local government authorities, private non-profit organizations, or operators of public transportation that receive a grant indirectly through a recipient are eligible recipients and sub-recipients for this funding. Projects selected for 5310 funding must be included in a local coordinated plan. The following is an overview of the funding program:

- Capital projects, operating assistance, mobility management, and administration-related projects are eligible.

Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Plan: Mendocino County
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- 20% of program funds must be used on capital projects 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.
- 50% may be used for operating assistance 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.
- 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.
 - Up to 10% of funding is allowed for program administration costs by Caltrans due to state law.
- Funds are apportioned for urban and rural areas based on the number of seniors and individuals with disabilities.
 - Federal share for capital projects, including the acquisition of public transportation services is 80%.
 - Federal share for operating assistance is 50%.

The national apportionment for FTA Section 5310 in fiscal year (FY) 2019 was over \$278 million and increased to over \$288 million in FY 2020, with California receiving \$32.3 million.²

FTA Section 5311 Formula Grant for Rural Areas³

The Section 5311 program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to support public transportation in rural areas with populations less than 50,000. The Section 5311 program, as amended under Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), combines the 5311 program and the repealed 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute program activities into one program. The goal of the program is to:

- Enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation.
- Assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in non-urbanized areas.
- Encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all transportation funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services.
- Assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation.

Program goals also include improving access to transportation services to employment and employment-related activities for low-income individuals and welfare recipients and to transport residents of urbanized and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities.

² “Table 8: FY 2020 Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities (Full Year)”

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/apportionments/table-8-fy-2020-section-5310-enhanced-mobility-seniors-and-people>.

³ “Table 9: FY 2020 Section 5311 and Section 5340 Rural Area Formula Apportionments, Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) Allocations, and Appalachian Development Public Transportation Assistance Program (Full Year)”

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/apportionments/table-9-fy-2020-section-5311-and-section-5340-rural-area-formula>.

Eligible projects under 5311 consists of planning, capital, operating, job access and reverse commute projects, and the acquisition of public transportation services.

- 20% for capital projects
- 50% for operating assistance
- 20% for ADA non-fixed-route paratransit service
- Up to 10% of a recipient’s apportionment

Funding is formula-based for rural areas and tribal transit programs.

- Rural Formula
 - 83.15% of funds apportioned based on land area and population in rural areas.
 - 16.85% of funds apportioned on land area, revenue- vehicle miles, and low-income individuals in rural areas.
- Tribal Transit Program
 - \$5 million discretionary tribal program.
 - \$30 million tribal formula program for tribes providing transportation.
 - Formula factors are vehicle revenue miles and the number of low-income individuals residing on tribal lands.

Eligible recipients include the following:

- States, Federally Recognized Indian Tribes
- Subrecipients: State or local government authorities, nonprofit organizations, operators of public transportation or intercity bus service that receive funds indirectly through a recipient.

Toll Credit Funds In lieu of Non-Federal Match Funds⁴

Federal-aid highway and transit projects typically require project sponsors to provide a certain amount of non-federal funds as a match to federal funds. Through the use of “Transportation Development Credits” (sometimes referred to as toll credits), the non-federal share match requirement in California can be met by applying an equal amount of Transportation Development Credit and therefore allow a project to be funded with up to 100% federal funds for federally participating costs. Caltrans has been granted permission by the FTA to utilize Toll Credits, and in the past has made credits available for FTA Section 5310, 5311, 5316, and 5317 programs. Local agencies may now use other federal funding to replace the required local match for both On-System Local Highway Bridge Program (HBP) projects and Highway Safety Improvement Program projects. With this option, toll credits can be applied to federal funding components in the project to achieve the 100% federal reimbursement rate.

Non-Traditional Transportation Program Funding

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Prior to MAP-21, apportionments of Transportation Enhancements were included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for each region. MAP-21 replaced Transportation Enhancements with the Transportation Alternatives Program which is funded at 2% of the total of all MAP-21 programs with set-asides. Transportation Alternatives Program projects must be related to surface transportation but are intended to be enhancements that go beyond the normal transportation project functions. Eligible activities include Transportation

⁴ “Use of Toll Credits in Lieu of Non-Federal Share Match for Local Assistance Federal-Aid Highway Projects”
<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/local-assistance/documents/ob/2016/f0012533-ob14-03.pdf>.

Enhancements; Recreational Trails; Safe Routes to Schools program; and planning, designing, or constructing roadways within the right-of-way of former interstate routes or other divided highways.

In September 2013, California legislation created the Active Transportation Program (ATP). The ATP consolidates existing federal and state programs, including TAP, Bicycle Transportation Account, and Safe Routes to School into a single program with a focus to make California a national leader in active transportation.

Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST)⁵

The FAST Act was signed into law in 2015 and replaced the MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program. The FAST Act essentially built on the changes made through the TAP. The FAST Act offers Surface Transportation Block Grants for transportation alternatives.⁶ These set-aside funds include all projects and activities that were previously eligible under TAP, encompassing a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects. Eligible applicants include all entities that were eligible to apply for TAP funds. The FAST Act also allows nonprofit entities responsible for the administration of local transportation safety programs to apply. \$850 million in FAST Act funding per year was made available for FY 2018-2020.⁷

State Funding Sources

Transportation Development Act (TDA)

The California TDA has two funding sources for each county that are locally derived and locally administered: 1) the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and 2) the State Transit Assistance Fund (STA).

LTF revenues are derived from 1/4 cent of the 7.25 cent retail sales tax collected statewide. The California Department of Tax and Fee Administration returns the 1/4 cent to each county according to the amount of tax collected in each county. TDA funds may be allocated under Articles 4, 4.5, and 8 for planning and program activities, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, community transit services, public transportation, and bus and rail projects. Funding allocated from Articles 4 and 8 vary by county and support public transportation systems, research and demonstration, local streets and roads and projects, passenger rail service operations and capital improvements, and administrative and planning costs. Article 4.5 provides up to 5% of remaining LTF funds and supports community transit services for the disabled and those who cannot use conventional transit services.

Prior to approving TDA funds for purposes other than public transportation, specialized transportation, or facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, the RTPA, sometimes referred to as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), conducts an annual unmet transit need process which includes a public hearing and assessment of transit. Commission staff and the local SSTAC review public comments received and compare the comments to the adopted definitions to determine if there are unmet transit needs, and whether or not those needs are “reasonable to meet.” Each RTPA is required to adopt definitions of “unmet transit need” and “reasonable to meet.” Any unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet must be funded before funds can be allocated for streets and roads.⁸

⁵ “A Summary of Highway Provisions” <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/summary.cfm>.

⁶ Transportation Enhancements was replaced with Transportation Alternative Program, which was then replaced by FAST Act Surface Transportation Block Grants.

⁷ “Transportation Alternatives” <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/factsheets/transportationalternativesfs.cfm>.

⁸ The concept of “unmet needs that are reasonable to meet” is discussed later in this report.

STA are revenues derived from statewide sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels. Eligible recipients include public transit operators. STA funds are appropriated by the legislature to the State Controller's Office. The State Controller's Office then allocates the tax revenue, by formula, to planning agencies and other selected agencies. Statute requires that 50% of STA funds be allocated according to population and 50% be allocated according to transit operator revenues from the prior fiscal year. STA is allocated annually by the local transportation commissions based on each region's apportionment. Unlike LTF, they may not be allocated to other purposes. STA revenues may be used only for public transit or transportation services. STA funds will reach approximately \$692.25 million for FY 2021.

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)⁹

The STIP is a biennial five-year plan adopted by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for major capital projects of all types. State transportation funds under STIP may be used for state highway improvements, intercity rail, and regional highway and transit improvements. State law requires the CTC to update the STIP biennially, in even-numbered years, with each new STIP adding two new years to prior programming commitments. The current structure of the STIP was initiated by SB45 in 1997. The STIP is constrained by the amount of funds estimated to be available for the STIP period in the fund estimate, which is developed by Caltrans and adopted by the Commission every other odd year. The amount available for the STIP is then constrained by formulas for regional and interregional shares per Streets and Highways Code (Sections 164, 187, 188, and 188.8). Eligible recipients include cities, counties, transit agencies, transit operators, regional planning agencies, and CTCs. STIP funding is estimated to include \$2.6 billion for FY 2021-FY 2025, with \$569.4 million specified for new programming.

Social Services Funding Sources

This section summarizes a variety of social services funding sources. A portion of the budgets for these sources are used to fund transportation services for clients, patients, and other beneficiaries.

Older Americans Act (OAA)¹⁰

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

Title III(B) funds six programs including supportive services and senior centers. Funds may be used for capital projects and operations, and to purchase and/or operate vehicles and fund mobility management services. 73% of OAA appropriations go to Title III, which consisted of \$138 million in FY 2019 and \$137 million in FY 2020. Eligible recipients include State Units on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging. The state will match funding as listed below:

- 15% state match for Supportive Services and Senior Centers,
- 15% for Congregate and Home-delivered Nutrition Services, and

⁹ Language and information from this section was taken from the 2014 Report of STIP Balance County and Interregional Shares.

¹⁰ "Older Americans Act: Funding Formulas" <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22549.pdf>.

- 25% for National Family Caregiver Support Program

Title VI funds nutrition and caregiver support services to reduce the need for costly institutional care and medical interventions and responds to the needs of a culturally diverse Native American community.¹¹ Funds may be used for supportive and nutrition services and transportation services, including rides to meal sites, medical appointments, grocery stores, and other critical daily activity locations. Eligible recipients include Native American Tribal organizations, Alaskan Native organizations, non-profit groups representing Native Hawaiians where the tribal organization represents at least 50 Native elders aged 60 or older. \$34.2 million in grant funds for supportive and nutrition services and \$10.1 million for Native American caregiver programs were made available in FY 2019.

Regional Centers

Regional centers are nonprofit private corporations that contract with the Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services for individuals with developmental disabilities. They have offices throughout California to provide a local resource to help find and access the many services available to individuals and their families. There are 21 regional centers with more than 40 offices located throughout the state. Regional Centers provide a number of support services, including transportation services. Transportation services are provided so persons with a developmental disability may participate in programs and/or other activities identified in their Individual Program Plan. A variety of sources may be used to provide transportation through public transit; specialized transportation companies; day programs and/or residential vendors; and family members, friends, and others. Transportation services may include help in boarding and exiting a vehicle as well as assistance and monitoring while being transported.

Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal is California's health care program for low-income children and adults. Medi-Cal will provide assistance with expenses for non-emergency medical transportation and nonmedical transportation trips. Eligible recipients include individuals who receive Medi-Cal through a managed care plan and who have exhausted other available transportation resources. Nonmedical transportation consists of transportation by private or public vehicle for those without transportation while non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is defined as transportation by ambulance, wheelchair van, or litter van. Transportation providers submit applications to the California Health and Human Services Agency to participate as a provider in the Medi-Cal program. Transportation expenses constitute less than 1% of Medicaid expenses.

Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)¹²

The SSBG is a flexible source of funds provided by the Department of Social Services. States use SSBG funding to support a variety of social services for vulnerable children, adults, and families to achieve five broad goals, including: reduce dependency, achieve self-sufficiency, protect children and families, reduce institutional care by providing home/community-based care, and provide institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate. SSBGs support programs that allow communities to achieve or maintain economic self-sufficiency to prevent, reduce, or eliminate dependency on social services. SSBGs fund a variety of initiatives organized into 29 service categories, including childcare, child welfare, services for persons with disabilities, transportation, case management services, and protective services for adults. Eligibility is determined by the State, and can include Child Welfare Services, Foster Care, Deaf Access, Community Care Licensing, California Department of Education Child Care, Department of Developmental Services programs. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grants may also be transferred into SSBG grant programs. Title XX SSBG programs included \$1.7 billion in FY 2019 nationally.

¹¹ "Services for Native Americans (OAA Title VI)" <https://acl.gov/programs/services-native-americans-ooa-title-vi>.

¹² "SSBG Fact Sheet" <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/ssbg-fact-sheet>.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)¹³

The Community Services Block Grant is provided by the Department of Health and Human Services. CSBG is designed to assist low-income persons through different services: employment, housing assistance, emergency referrals, and nutrition and health. CSBG supports services and activities for low-income persons including the homeless, migrants, and the elderly that alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. States, federally and state-recognized Native American tribes and tribal organizations, Community Action Agencies, and migrant and seasonal farmworkers' agencies are eligible for this funding. Portions of these funds can be used to transport participants of these programs to and from employment sites, medical and other appointments, and other necessary destinations. \$725 million in grants were provided in FY 2019 and reauthorization is currently pending.

Consolidated Health Center Program¹⁴

Consolidated Health Center Program funds are provided by the Department of Health and Human Services. They are used to offer access to health centers that provide comprehensive primary and preventative health care to diverse and medically underserved populations. Centers provide care at special discounts for people with incomes below 200% of the poverty line. Health centers can use funds for center-owned vans, transit vouchers, and taxi fares. Eligible organizations include all community-based organizations, including tribal-based and faith-based organizations that contribute to patients' health care.

Community Mental Health Services Block Grant

This program provided by the Department of Health and Human Services provides a flexible fund to support comprehensive, community-based mental health services for those with serious mental illnesses. Funds can be used for a variety of mental illness prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services. This grant program includes mandatory set-asides for programs addressing the needs of those with early serious mental illness, children with serious mental and emotional disturbances, mobile crisis units, crisis stabilization beds, and crisis call centers. Grants are awarded for both the health services and supporting services including the purchase and operation of vehicles to transport patients to and from appointments. Additionally, funds can be used to reimburse those able to transport themselves. Eligible recipients include states, territories, and county mental health departments. Available national funds included \$723 million in FY 2020 and \$757.6 million in FY 2020.

Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant

The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program was authorized to provide funds for the purpose of planning, implementing, and evaluating activities to prevent and treat substance abuse among targeted populations and service areas, including pregnant women and women with dependent children, intravenous drug users, tuberculosis services and early HIV/AIDS intervention. At least 25% of funds must be spent towards substance abuse primary prevention strategies. Transportation-related services may be broadly provided through reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management. It is the largest federal program dedicated to improving publicly funded substance abuse prevention and treatment systems.¹⁵ Funds may be used to support transportation-related services such as mobility management, reimbursement of transportation costs, and other services. There is no matching requirement for these funds. Eligible recipients include states, territories, and tribal

¹³ "Community Services Block Grant" <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/825>.

¹⁴ "Consolidated Health Centers" <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/610>.

¹⁵ "Fact Sheet: Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant" https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sabg_fact_sheet_rev.pdf.

governments. Program funds included \$1.86 billion in FY 2020 nationwide and are anticipated to apportion \$254 million in FY 2021 for the State.¹⁶

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

This program provides subsidized childcare services to low-income families. Although the grant is not a direct source of transportation funds, services may be covered by voucher payments if childcare providers provide transportation. This can include driving the child to and from appointments, recreational activities, and more. Eligible recipients include states and recognized Native American tribes. There are no matching requirements for discretionary or mandatory funds; however, Medicaid has a matching rate for the remaining portion of mandatory funds. National funds totaled approximately \$5.2 billion in FY 2019 and will increase to \$7.7 billion in FY 2020.

Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance

The purpose of this program is to create and enhance opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to contribute to and participate in all facets of community life. Priorities include improving state employment policies and outcomes, collecting data and providing technical assistance, and to support national and state policy that enhances these goals. Projects are awarded for programs that are considered innovative and likely to have significant national impacts. This funding can be used towards a variety of short term (1-5 year) projects addressing critical issues affecting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, mandatory set-aside for transportation assistance activities, training of personnel on transportation issues pertaining to mental disabilities, and reimbursement of transportation costs. Eligible recipients include state, local, public or private non-profit organizations or agencies. PNS funding totaled \$12 million nationally in FY 2018, including \$1 million for transportation assistance activities for older adults and people with disabilities.

Head Start

This program provides grants to local public and private agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to low-income children and families and promote school readiness from birth to age five, focusing on local needs. Funds may be used for program expansion and discretionary funds. Head Start programs provide transportation services for children either directly or through contracts with transportation providers. Program regulations require the Head Start makes reasonable efforts to coordinate transportation resources with other human services agencies in the community. Eligible recipients include local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies. Matching requirements consist of a 20% grantee match through cash and in-kind donations. Head Start funds totaled \$10.1 billion in FY 2019 and increased to \$11.6 billion in FY 2020.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)/CalWORKs

TANF is the federal program that funds CalWORKs. TANF provides temporary cash aid to needy families, including supportive services such as job services, transportation, and childcare. Recipients are required to participate in activities that assist them in obtaining employment. Supportive services are provided to enable recipients to participate in these activities. States, federally recognized Native American tribes, and families defined as eligible in the TANF state plan can receive this funding. TANF funding totaled \$16.6 billion with \$3.7 billion allocated for California, approximately 2.9 billion of which was used to fund maintenance-of-effort expenditures. CalWORKs funding totaled \$4.86 billion in FY 2019 and \$5.25 billion in FY 2020.

¹⁶ House Appropriations Bill 2020 Report.

https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/FY2020%20LHHS_Report.pdf.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)¹⁷

CDBG are funds from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development that are given to the state to disseminate among all eligible local governments. The CDBG program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable community members, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. Specifically, funds may be used for activities related to housing, real property, public facilities, economic development, public services.

The annual CDBG appropriation is allocated between state and local jurisdictions and are called “non-entitlement” and “entitlement” communities respectively. Entitlement communities are comprised of central cities of Metropolitan Statistical Areas; metropolitan cities with populations of at least 50,000; and qualified urban counties with a population of 200,000 or more (excluding the populations of entitlement cities). Eligible recipients include state and local jurisdictions, where at least 70% must be used for activities that benefit entitlement communities and 30% must be used amongst smaller towns and rural counties. Administration costs in excess of \$100,000 must be matched. CDBG national funding totaled \$3.4 billion in FY 2020 with \$400 million apportioned for California.

Other Sources

This section summarizes a number of other transportation support sources.

Private and Non-Profit Foundations

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

Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

Organizations such as the Rotary Club, Soroptimists, Kiwanis, and Lions often pay for special projects. For transportation, they might pay for or help contribute toward the cost of a new vehicle.

AB 2766 (Vehicle Air Pollution Fees)

California Assembly Bill 2766 allows local air quality management districts to level a \$2 to \$4 per year fee on vehicles registered in their district. These funds are to be applied to programs designed to reduce motor vehicle air pollution as well as towards the planning, monitoring, enforcement, and technical study of these programs. Across the state, these funds have been used for local transit capital and operating programs.

Traffic Mitigation Fees

Traffic mitigation fees are one-time charges on new developments to pay for required public facilities and to mitigate impacts created by or reasonably related to development. There are a number of approaches to charging developers; these fees must be clearly related to the costs incurred as a result of the development with a rational connection between fee and development type. Furthermore, fees cannot be used to correct existing problems or pay for improvements needed for existing development. A county may only levy such fees in the unincorporated area over which it has jurisdiction, while a city must levy fees within the city limits. Any fee program must have the cooperation of all jurisdictions affected.

¹⁷ “CPD Appropriations Budget/Allocations” https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/budget.

Advertising

One modest but important source of funding for many transit services is on-vehicle advertising. Local transit agencies may enhance their efforts by pursuing an advertising program that could lead to discretionary revenue. However, it is important to consider that managing an advertising program requires staff time and can potentially overload vehicle aesthetics with excessive advertising.

Contract Revenues

Transit systems can also generate income from contracted services. Social service providers, employers, higher education institutions, and other entities may contract with local transit services. These contracted revenues can form important funding streams for local transit service agencies. This may involve subsidizing dedicated routes or contributing funds to the overall transit system.

Employer and Member Transportation Programs

Businesses and other local agents with workers, visitors, and/or members with transportation needs are sometimes willing to provide transportation to fill their needs. This may not be limited to employment sites but could also include transportation to recreational activities, shopping destinations, and medical appointments. These programs have their own buses and routes that may involve coordination of their transportation efforts with other transportation programs and services. For example, some vacation resorts or tribal casinos provide multi-purpose transportation services.

In-Kind

In-kind contributions can take many forms. Donations can range from financial contributions to the donation of a vehicle, a transit bench, and right of way for bus stops as well as contributions by local businesses in the form of featuring transit information and/or selling transit tickets.

2 Demographics Profile¹⁸

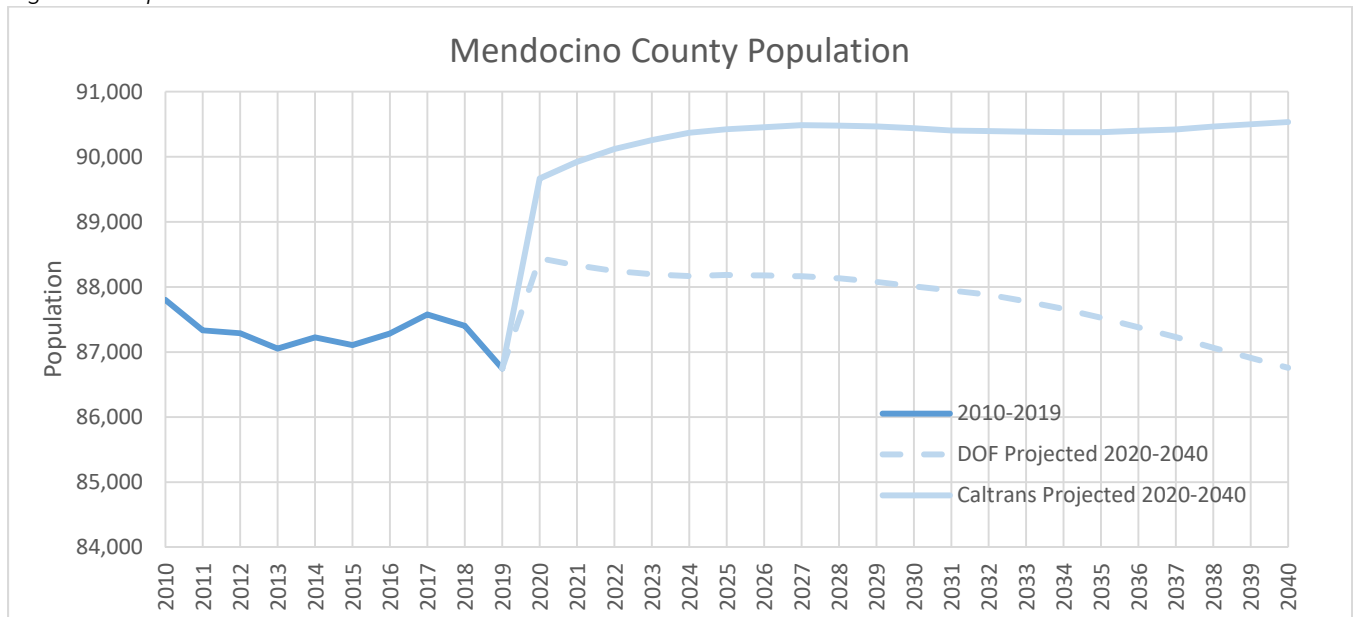
Located along the north coast of California, Mendocino County is large and geographically diverse. With a land area of over 3,500 square miles, the County is bordered by Sonoma County to the south, Glenn, Lake, and Tehama Counties to the east, Humboldt and Trinity Counties to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The County can be broken into four distinct areas: 1) the coastal areas following Highway 1, 2) the Highway 101 corridor that traverses the county from north to south, 3) the mountainous area between Highway 101 and Highway 1 (including the Anderson Valley), and 4) the more remote northeast corner of the county that includes the Round Valley Indian Reservation.

2.1 Target Population Characteristics

County Data

Nationwide, transit system ridership is drawn largely from various groups of persons who make up what is often called the “transit-dependent” population. This category, also described as transportation disadvantaged, includes elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and low-income persons. In addition, veterans, members of households with no available vehicles, and passengers with limited English proficiency may have transportation needs that differ from the general public.

Figure 1: Population Trendline 2020-2040



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates for the Resident Population for Counties.
California Department of Finance, P-1. Vintage 2019 (2020.1.10) County Population Projections.
California Department of Transportation, Vintage 2019 Long-Term Socio-Economic Forecasts by County.¹⁹

Mendocino County has an estimated total population of 87,946, or 0.22% of California’s population. The proportion of the county’s population that is transit-dependent is higher than both state and national averages. Table 1 below

¹⁸ The language and information from this section were taken from Mendocino County’s 2015 Coordinated Plan-Human Services Transportation Plan and 2018 American Community Survey

¹⁹ Data from the Caltrans Long-Term Socio-Economic Forecast for Mendocino County is also referenced in this section. Note that the data from Caltrans and Department of Finance slightly differ from one another because of years the data represent as well as differences in the sources of data and methodology of calculation.

provide population characteristics, including details of the key demographic groups for this report: seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals. For comparison, the total population and percent of these demographic groups are also presented for California and the United States.²⁰

As seen in Figure 1, the population of Mendocino County has had small periods of decline followed by growth. Currently, Mendocino County is expected to experience a population growth in the coming years. This growth is projected to continue in the coming decades.

Table 1: Target Population Characteristics

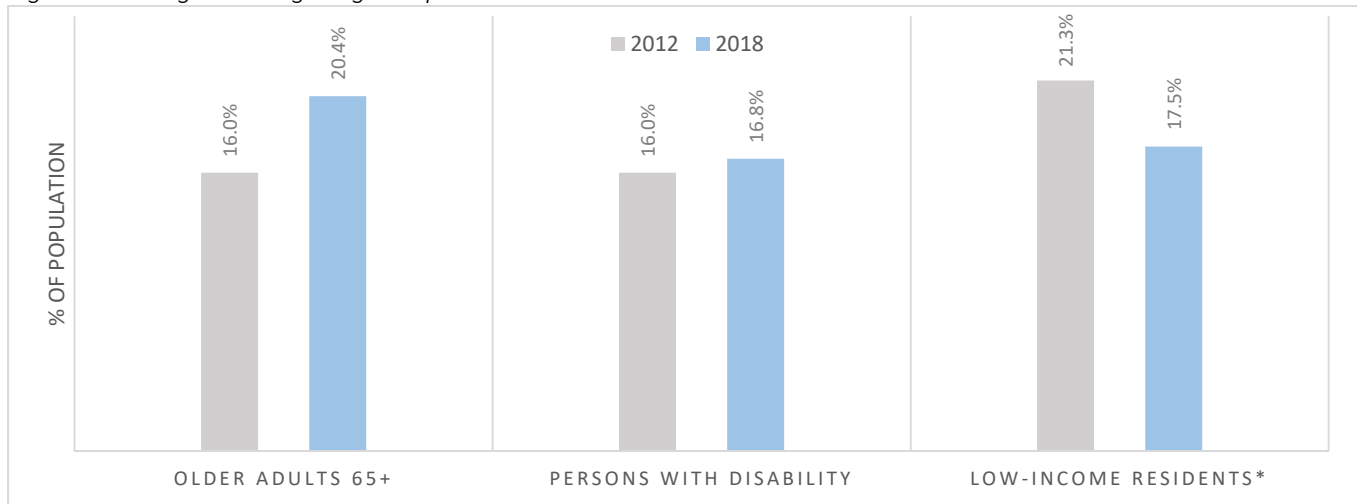
Area	Total Population	% persons aged 65+	% persons w/ disability	% poverty level	% veterans	% speak English less than “very well”
Mendocino	87,946	20.4%	16.8%	17.5%	8.8%	9.3%
California	39,148,760	13.6%	10.4%	12.8%	5.4%	18.1%
United States	322,903,030	15.2%	12.6%	13.1%	7.5%	8.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey (ACS), 2018 5-year Estimate
 California Department of Finance, E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties, and the State, 2019.
 *Source: U.S. Census Bureau: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 2018

Changes among Target Populations

Figure 2 provides information reflecting the changes among target populations in recent years. Since 2012, Mendocino County’s older adult population has grown, while overall poverty levels have decreased.

Figure 2: Changes among Target Populations



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey (ACS), 2012 and 2018 5-year Estimate
 *Source: U.S. Census Bureau: SAIPE, 2012 and 2018

²⁰ Data from the State of California’s Department of Finance is also referenced in this section. Note that the data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Department of Finance slightly differ from one another because of years the data represent as well as differences in the sources of data and methodology of calculation.

Older Adults

To better understand how the older adult population in Mendocino County is changing, refer to Table 2, which shows the total number of older adults (65 and older) in 2010 along with projections for every decade until 2060. As is the case nationwide, the population in Mendocino County is aging.

Using California’s Department of Finance population projection data, between 2010 and 2060, Mendocino County’s population that is over the age of 65 is expected to grow by 22% (see Table 2). During the same time period, the population under the age of 65 is expected to decrease by 6%. By 2060, approximately 19% of the County’s population will be older adults.

Table 2: Population Projections for Older Adults

Age Group	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	Population Change 2010-2060
Under 65	74,155	68,566	65,626	66,452	67,475	69,627	-6.1%
65-74 (Young Retirees)	7,655	11,750	9,877	7,226	7,522	6,839	-10.7%
75-84 (Mature Retirees)	3,967	6,225	9,463	8,073	5,947	6,075	53.1%
85+ (Seniors)	1,988	1,898	3,043	5,008	4,759	3,745	88.4%
Subtotal Pop: Age 65+	13,610	19,873	22,383	20,307	18,228	16,659	22.4%
% Older Adults	15.5%	22.5%	25.4%	23.4%	21.3%	19.3%	24.5%

Source: California Department of Finance, State and County Population Projections by Major Age Groups, January 2020

People with Disabilities²¹

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2018 5-Year data, 16.8% of the non-institutionalized population of Mendocino County population has a disability. This proportion is higher than both the California and the national average (see Table 1). In Mendocino County, the top three disability issues for those disabled under 18 are cognitive, ambulatory, and self-care difficulties. For those disabled between ages 18 and 64, the top three disability issues are independent living, cognitive, and ambulatory difficulties. For those 65 and older, the top three disability issues are hearing, ambulatory, and independent living difficulties. 35.4% of the non-institutionalized population in Mendocino County that is 65 and older has a disability.

These disability statistics, which cover five disability types, were produced based on questions introduced to the ACS in 2008.²² Because of changes in questions, one must be cautious when comparing previous Census/ACS disability data.

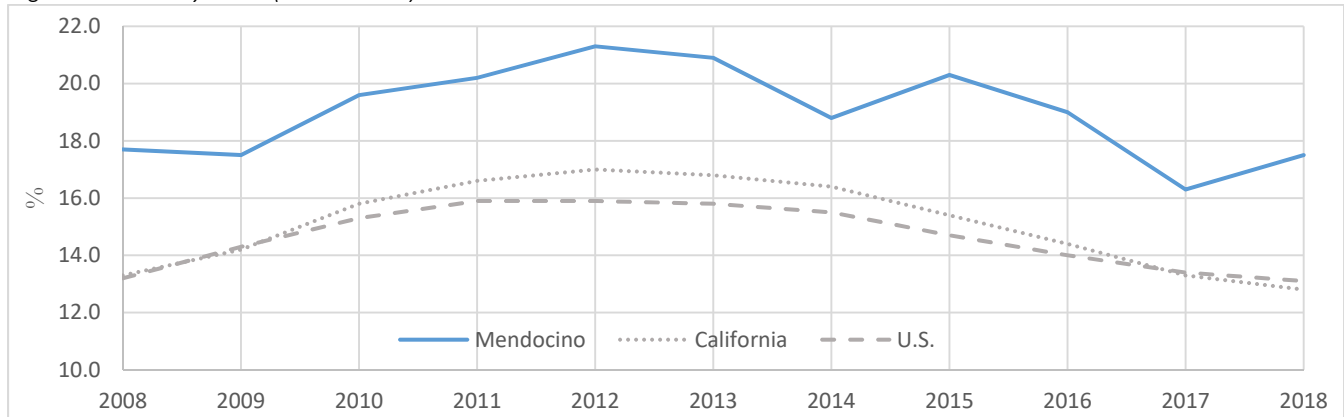
²¹ “Disability.” ACS. <https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/guidance/data-collection-acs.html>

²² For more information, please visit the Census Bureau’s page on Disability and American Community Survey at <https://www.census.gov/topics/health/disability/guidance/data-collection-acs.html>.

Low-Income Residents

According to the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) produced by the U.S. Census Bureau, 15,140 persons, or 17.5% of the population, in Mendocino County live below the federal poverty level. In the past decade, the Mendocino County poverty rate has been consistently higher than both state and national rates, currently 12.8% and 13.1%, respectively.

Figure 3: Poverty Rate (2008-2018)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: SAIPE, 2008-2018

Vehicle Access

The vehicle availability of Mendocino County households is examined in Table 3. While 2018 ACS data shows that the majority of households have access to one or more vehicles, 6.3%, or over 2,100 households, do not.

Table 3: Household Vehicle Availability

Households with:	
0 vehicle	6.3%
1 vehicle	31.6%
2 vehicles	37.9%
3 or more vehicles	24.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: ACS, 2018 5-year Estimate, Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units

Table 4 below summarizes the mode of transportation utilized by the working population. The majority (74%) of all workers are driving alone, while less than 1% of workers utilize public transportation as a means of transportation to work.

Table 4: Means of Transportation to Work

Working population (16 years and over in households)	36,095
Travel to work by:	
Car, truck, van – drove alone	74.3%
Car, truck, van – carpooled	11.1%
Public transport	0.1%
Walked	5.2%
Taxi, motorcycle, bike, other	1.3%
Work at home	8.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: ACS, 2018 5-year Estimate, Means of Transportation to Work by Vehicles Available

2.2 Distribution of Transit Services and Persons

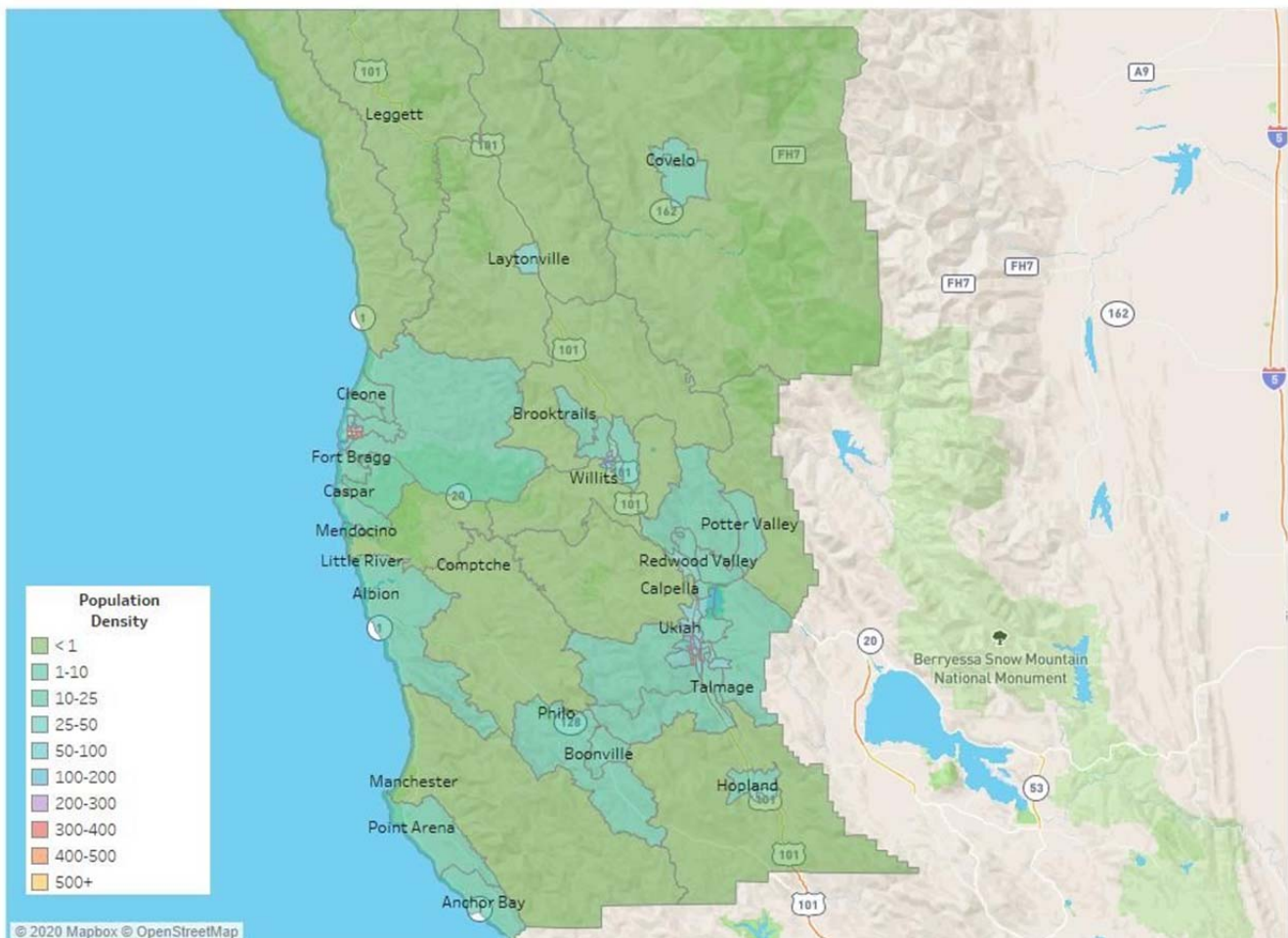
Mendocino County has a population density of approximately 25 persons per square mile. For comparison, the population density for the state of California is 256 persons per square mile. Population clusters exist around Fort Bragg and Ukiah, along State Route (SR) 1 and Highway 101, and around Willits at SR 1 and Highway 101

The primary transportation corridors are Highway 101 through the middle of the county and SR 1 along the coast. SR 253 and 128 connect the Ukiah area to the coast and travel through the Anderson Valley. Highway 20 connects the Highway 1 corridor with Highway 101 further east before continuing to the I-5 corridor. In addition to these major routes, some smaller communities are served only by County roads such as Potter Valley, or minor State Routes such as Highway 162 to the Round Valley area.

Figure 4: Population Density

Population Density By Census Block In Mendocino County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2014 5-Year ACS



3 Existing Transportation Resources

This section documents the various transit providers and resources that serve Mendocino County, including public, private, and social service providers. Particular focus is given to providers that meet the transportation needs of older adults, persons with disabilities, and persons of low income.

RTPA: Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) of the County of Mendocino, and four incorporated cities: Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Willits, and Point Arena, formed in 1972.

CTSA: Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) is a Joint Powers Agency (JPA) which was formed in 1976 by the County of Mendocino, and the four incorporated cities: Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Willits, and Ukiah.

3.1 Key Origins and Destinations

Ukiah, as the largest community in Mendocino County, is home to the majority of services, including most of the major shopping centers and medical facilities. Ukiah is a key recreational destination in the county and is home to government services, Mendocino College, and Adventist Health Ukiah Valley. The smaller communities of Willits and Fort Bragg also provide access to shopping and basic services and some limited social and medical services. Most of the employment in the county is located in Ukiah, Willits, and Fort Bragg, although there are also agricultural sectors in rural areas that provide lower-income jobs.

Table 5 outlines key activity centers in Mendocino County for low-income residents, older adults, and people with disabilities. This list includes medical facilities, retail, social services, large employers with significant low-income jobs, and senior centers.

Table 5: Key Activity Centers in Mendocino County

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

3.2 Public Transit Service

Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA)²³

MTA operates the public bus system that serves the most densely populated parts of the county: Ukiah, Willits, Anderson Valley, and the coastal regions of the County. MTA's service area encompasses about 2,800 square miles. The transit system includes a network of long-distance, commute, and local fixed routes, and demand response services. MTA has a fleet of approximately 43 vehicles.

Fixed Bus Routes: MTA provides nine fixed and flex bus routes. Fares range from \$1.50 for within Ft. Bragg service (\$0.75 for seniors and people with disabilities with MTA discount cards), to \$23.00 for service to Santa Rosa (\$11.50 for seniors and people with disabilities with MTA discount cards). Mendocino College students are eligible for free rides. Up to two children, 6 years and younger, ride free with a fare-paying adult. Monthly passes and youth summer passes are also available.

- **Route 65/CC Rider:** Route 65 runs seven days a week from Ft. Bragg to Willits, Ukiah, and Santa Rosa. Connections can be made in Santa Rosa to San Francisco, regional airports, Sonoma County, and Amtrak stations. The bus begins its route at 6:30 am and makes stops in Willits, Ukiah, Hopland, and Windsor before reaching Santa Rosa at 10:35 am. The route back to Ft. Bragg leaves Santa Rosa at 2:25 pm and arrives at Ft. Bragg at 6:23 pm. Route 65 makes multiple trips each day.
- **Route 7/Ukiah Jitney:** Route 7 is a direct route that connects north and south Ukiah Monday through Friday during peak ridership hours. The trip takes approximately 26 minutes and the route makes seven stops. The first northbound trip begins at 6:35 am, and the last trip departs at 5:19 pm. The first southbound trip begins at 7:40 am, and the last trip departs at 5:23 pm.
- **Route 9/Ukiah Local:** The Ukiah Local route serves the same area as the Ukiah Jitney route; however, it makes more stops and will deviate from its path from 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm for those that live within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the fixed route. Advanced reservations and an additional fare are required for route deviation. Service for Route 9 is available Monday through Friday and with reduced hours on Saturday. Route 9 makes nine stops between Plant Road and Mendocino College. The trip takes approximately 35 to 50 minutes. Route 9 makes 12 round trips each day of operation.
- **Route 1/Willits Local (Willits Rider):** Route 1 is a Monday through Friday service within Willits. The Willits Rider makes 16 stops in the city and the entire trip takes approximately 25 minutes. Stops include the clinic/hospital, Post Office, market, and the Senior Center. The Willits Rider provides both scheduled and flex stops.
- **Route 20/Willits-Ukiah:** Route 20 is a Monday through Friday service which connects Willits and Mendocino College through timed transfers to Route 9/Ukiah Local. Beginning at the Integrated Service Center in Willits, Route 20 makes twelve to fifteen stops on the way to Mendocino College, located just north of Ukiah, where it connects with Route 9 three times per day. It then makes the trip down to Ukiah on its own three times per day.
- **Route 5/BraggAbout:** Route 5 is a Monday through Friday, hourly service within Ft. Bragg. Service begins at 8:00 am and runs every hour until 6:00 pm. BraggAbout makes ten stops including at the hospital, Rite Aid and Safeway. This route also connects with Route 60 four times per day.
- **Route 60/The Coaster:** Route 60 serves Ft. Bragg south to Navarro River Junction. This is a Monday through Friday service. Within Ft. Bragg, The Coaster operates on the same route as Route 5/BraggAbout, however, at

²³ Language and information in this section are taken from the 2014 Mendocino County Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

the Navarro River Junction, it connects with Route 75 for trips to the South Coast and Ukiah. The Coaster runs four round trips per day, two of which connect with Route 75. Saturday service runs twice a day, one of which connects with Route 75.

- Route 95/South Mendocino Coast-Santa Rosa: Route 95 runs seven days a week and connects the South Coast with Santa Rosa. It serves the coastal communities from Point Arena south to Bodega Bay. From Santa Rosa passengers can also connect to other Santa Rosa transportation, transit services to San Francisco, Amtrak, and regional airports. Route 95 makes 16 to 18 stops on its way to Santa Rosa. Only one round trip is made per day.
- Route 75/South Mendocino Coast-Ukiah: Route 75 runs Monday through Saturday and connects the South Coast with Ukiah. This route serves South Coast communities from Navarro River Junction to Gualala as well as the inland communities of Navarro, Philo, and Boonville. It connects with The Coaster at Navarro River Junction Monday through Friday. The route leaves Gualala at 7:45 am and reaches Ukiah at 10:35 am after making 11 stops and connecting with The Coaster at Navarro River Junction. The return trip leaves Ukiah at 2:50 pm and arrives at Gualala at 5:55 pm after making 13 stops and connecting with The Coaster at Navarro River Junction.

Table 6: MTA Fare Schedule

	General Public	Senior/Disabled (MTA Discount card)
Local Fixed Routes		
Fort Bragg/Ukiah/Willits	\$1.50	\$0.75
Intercity & Commuter Routes		
Coastal Services (Routes 5, 60, 75)	\$1.50 - \$5.75	\$0.75 - \$2.60
Inland Services (Routes 1, 7, 9, 20)	\$1.50 - \$3.00	\$0.75 - \$1.50
Route 65	\$1.50 - \$23.00	\$0.75 - \$11.50
Route 95	\$1.50 - \$8.25	\$0.75 - \$4.10 \$1.05 - \$6.00 (students)

Source: Mendocino Transit Authority, Fare Schedule

Table 6 above shows the MTA fare schedule for all 9 bus routes for the general public and senior/disabled individuals and students. Additionally, Table 6 shows MTA’s transit performance statistics for the 2015,2016, 2017, and 2018 fiscal years.

Table 7: MTA Transit Performance Statistics

Statistic	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Ridership	337,221	329,446	299,188	285,514
Passengers/Hour	8.1	7.5	6.5	6.3
Passengers/Mile	0.49	0.47	0.38	0.30

Source: Triennial Performance Audit of Mendocino Transit Authority – FYs 2016-2018

Dial-A-Ride: Dial-A-Ride is a demand response, curb-to-curb service available in Fort Bragg and Ukiah. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. In Fort Bragg, the service is open to the general public, with discounted fares for seniors (62+) and persons with disabilities. Fort Bragg services run Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. As of September 1, 2019, the Dial-A-Ride service in Ukiah is only available to seniors (62+) and persons with disabilities. Ukiah services run Monday to Friday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

ADA Paratransit service is also available on a limited basis. This service is only offered to those with ADA certification living within ¼ of a mile of MTA’s local Ft. Bragg, Willits, or Ukiah bus routes. To utilize this service reservations are required at least 24 hours in advance. Service in Ft. Bragg and Ukiah is operated by MTA; service in Willits is operated by Willits Seniors Inc. Table 7 below highlights more details about Dial-a-ride fares, hours, and locations of operation.

MTA also contracts with five local senior centers to provide Dial-A-Ride services.

Table 8: MTA Dial-A-Ride Details

	Ukiah	Fort Bragg
Hours	Monday – Friday 7:00 am – 6:00 pm Saturday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm	Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Saturday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm
Senior/Disabled	\$3.00	\$3.00
ADA Attendant	Free	Free
ADA Companion	\$3.00	\$3.00
General Public	Not eligible	\$6.00
Children, 6 and under	Not eligible	\$1.25
Additional zone fares	\$4.00 – outside new central Ukiah \$6.00 – outermost zone	\$6.00 – outside central zone

Source: Mendocino Transit Authority

3.3 Social Service Transportation

Anderson Valley Senior Center

Transportation is provided by the senior center on Tuesdays and Thursdays for rides to and from the center’s nutrition program lunches. Rides are available by reservation only and must be made no later than 11:00 am on the day of the lunch. The senior bus is also provided on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for errands around Anderson Valley. Rides are available for Ukiah appointments on Fridays upon request. Services are available to all senior citizens and low-income residents.

Through an endowment fund, the program also pays for monthly trips into Ukiah for entertainment purposes. Volunteer drivers are provided by the endowment fund when the bus is not in service. The program is provided through a contract with MTA which is funded by MCOG allocations of LTF as part of MTA’s annual claim for funding.

Ukiah Senior Center

The Ukiah Senior Center provides a variety of services to older and disabled adults in Ukiah and the surrounding areas. Using three wheelchair-equipped buses, the Center provides door-through-door transportation to seniors over 55 and those with disabilities. This door-through-door service provides an additional hands-on assistance that helps passengers through the door of their residence or destination as needed. Caregivers ride free if they are actively assisting the passenger. The buses operate Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday between 8:00 am and 4:45 pm. Fares range from \$3.00 to \$6.00 one way, depending on distance. Passes for multiple rides can also be purchased. Additionally, the Ukiah Senior Center also provides rides for seniors to out of town medical appointments using a passenger van and volunteer drivers through their outreach program. The program is provided through a contract with MTA which is funded by MCOG allocations of LTF as part of MTA’s annual claim for funding. Additionally, fees for

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this program are on a sliding scale depending on the distance to the destinations and the rider's ability to pay. Rides are subject to the availability of the program's volunteer drivers.

The Center also provides transportation to an activity called The Lunch Bunch for seniors with dementia or Alzheimer's for a fee of \$25 (funding may be available for low-income individuals through scholarships).

Redwood Coast Senior Center

The Redwood Coast Senior Center operates small transport buses for seniors aged 60 and over and disabled passengers in the greater Fort Bragg area through a contract with MTA. This is a demand, door-through-door service. Operating hours are 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 am to 3:00 pm Friday. The cost of the service depends on the destination, although fares range from \$1.00 to \$3.00. Drivers will assist people in entering and exiting the vehicle, along with helping to carry bags and packages as well.

MTA pays a large part of the cost of this service and is a longtime partner of the Redwood Coast Senior Center. Funding comes from MCOG allocations of LTF as part of MTA's annual claim for funding.

Willits Harrah Senior Center

The Willits Senior Center provides a door-through-door service and operates a 4-passenger van and 7-passenger wheelchair bus for those aged 55 and above and the disabled. Services run Monday to Friday 8:15 am to 4:00 pm, on-demand, and by appointment. The vehicles service Brooktrails and Pine Mountain, north to Reynolds Highway, south to Walker Road, east to Canyon Road/Hearst, and west (Highway 20) to the railroad tracks. Rides are also offered for out of town medical appointments to Ukiah, Santa Rosa, Lake, Sonoma, Napa, Marine, and San Francisco Counties for a fare. Transportation for necessities continued during the COVID-19 pandemic. MTA pays a large part of the cost of this service and is a longtime partner of the Willits Harris Senior Center. Funding comes from MCOG allocations of LTF as part of MTA's annual claim for funding and MTA also contracts with the Willits Harrah Senior Center.

Coastal Seniors

The center provides demand-response transportation services to older adults and disabled passengers Monday through Wednesday. This includes transportation to and from senior lunches and local errands. Fares are between \$1.00 and \$4.00. In addition, out-of-town trips are made for shopping, medical appointments, and more. This includes bus service to Santa Rosa every Thursday and Friday, and bus service to Fort Bragg or Ukiah every Friday. Fare is \$10.00. MTA pays a large part of the cost of this service and is a longtime partner of the Coastal Seniors center. Funding comes from MCOG allocations of LTF as part of MTA's annual claim for funding and MTA also contracts with the Coastal Seniors center.

Mendocino County Department of Social Services

Veterans Shuttle: The Mendocino County Department of Social Services provides transportation services to veterans needing rides to the Ukiah VA Clinic. The shuttle departs from the Mendocino Department of Social Services office in Fort Bragg on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7:30 am and arrives at the Ukiah VA Clinic at 10:00 am. The shuttle then departs the Ukiah VA Clinic at 2:00 pm and arrives back at the Social Services office at 4:00 pm. Additionally, there is also a shuttle that transports veterans to the San Francisco VA Medical Center from the Ukiah VA Clinic. This shuttle completes four trips. The first trip departs Ukiah at 7:00 am and arrives at the SF VA Medical Center at 9:30 am, the second trip departs at 8:50 am and arrives at 10:45 am, the third trip departs at 10:30 am and arrives at 1:30 pm, and

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the final trip departs at 2:30 pm and arrives at 5:15 pm. The 8:50 shuttle is a direct trip; all the others stop in Santa Rosa. Reservations required.

Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC)

The Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) is one of 21 private, non-profit regional centers in California serving people with developmental disabilities through a contract with the California Department of Developmental Services. RCRC assists residents with developmental disabilities and their families to obtain community support and services. The center does not provide transportation services itself, however, it does assist individuals and families in paying for both public and private modes of transportation to and from the RCRC.

Community Resources Connection (CRC)

Community Resources Connection is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that provides transportation assistance for seniors, disabled adults, youth, and other residents of the Northern California coastal area between the communities of Timber Cove and Elk. It functions in conjunction with Redwood Coast Medical Services, a non-profit based in Gualala. This service is provided free of charge for residents unable to drive themselves or arrange other private or public transportation to health-related appointments, significant community events, or to pick up necessities.

Transportation is provided either in the volunteers' own vehicle (for which the volunteer pays for all fuel, tolls, and parking fees) or in CRC's seven-passenger van. CRC also provides weekly van services to Santa Rosa on Wednesdays.

Consolidated Tribal Health (CTH)

Eligible patients can schedule transportation and, in some cases, receive travel reimbursements. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CTH's Transportation Department began service to pick up and deliver medications.

Round Valley Indian Health Center

Transportation may be provided for diabetes-related appointments, homebound seniors, and children for immunization appointments with no other means of transportation. Services are dependent on the availability of vehicles and staff, along with valid referrals and 72-hour notice.

3.4 Private Service

Mendocino Wine Tours & Limousine

Mendocino Wine Tours & Mendocino Limousine serves Mendocino, Lake, Northern Sonoma, and Southern Humboldt Counties. Private limousine service, personalized charters, and ambulatory non-emergency medical transport is offered. Rates range from \$65.00 to \$105.00 per hour with a minimum of three hours.

Obar 11 Enterprises Door to Door

Obar 11 Enterprises Door to Door is a private charter service that offers service in Fort Bragg and the general Mendocino area.

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Redwood Taxi

Redwood Taxi operates 7:00 am-2:00 am 7 days a week and provides service for the Greater Ukiah area and all of Mendocino County.

Riley’s Cab

Riley’s Cab is a taxi service that operates 24 hours, 7 days a week and all holidays. They provide service to the Ukiah and Lakeport area.

Sellars Limousine Service

Sellars Limousine Service operates 24 hours, 7 days a week in the Ukiah area.

Taxi 707

Taxi 707 operates 24 hours, 7 days a week. They provide service to the greater Ukiah area. Fares are \$3.00 to start at \$3.00 a mile with a \$0.60 charge per minute of waiting time.

3.4 Interregional Transportation Service

Lake Transit

Lake Transit Authority (LTA) operates service within Lake County and offers connections to Mendocino and Napa Counties. Lake Transit’s Route 7 operates between Lakeport and Ukiah with stops at Robinson Rancheria, Upper Lake, Blue Lakes, Calpella, and Mendocino College. Connections can be made to Amtrak, Greyhound at the Ukiah Regional Airport, and Mendocino Transit service in Ukiah. There are four runs in each direction Monday through Saturday.

Golden Gate Transit

Golden Gate Transit Route 101 provides hourly service between downtown San Francisco and the 2nd St. Transit Mall in Santa Rosa, where passengers can connect with MTA Routes 65 and 95.

Greyhound

Greyhound services two locations in Mendocino County: Willits and Ukiah. It provides one trip each day to Eureka/Arcata with a 1:50 am and 6:25 pm scheduled departure from Ukiah. There is also a southbound trip each day, departing from Eureka at 9:50 am and 10:35 pm, which provides direct service to San Francisco and a one-transfer trip to Sacramento.

Amtrak

There are four Amtrak stops in Mendocino County in Ukiah, Willits, Laytonville, and Leggett. These stops are designated for bus pick-up for transport to a rail station and are only available for passengers with rail tickets. However, they do afford extra transportation for those seeking to utilize the Amtrak train system.

4 Coordination of Service

The various transportation providers and social service agencies in a county require coordination to compile information, avoid duplication of services, and cover all community transport needs. The state legislature sought to address these needs with 1979 Assembly Bill 120, named the Social Services Transportation Improvement Act. The bill allowed for the designation of a Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) for each county. CTSA's are charged with improving transportation quality for the county, particularly for the transportation disadvantaged, by reducing inefficiencies and service gaps, and improving availability and cost-effectiveness. This can include identifying opportunities for agencies to share vehicles, eliminating duplicate routes, synchronizing schedules, and increasing awareness of specialized transportation. The CTSA for Mendocino County is the Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA).

Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) meeting minutes, regional transportation plans, short-range transit plans, and other documents informed the identification of current barriers to coordination. In addition, this plan has drawn on updated analyses of demand in Section 2 and services in Section 3 along with information collected through outreach meetings, communication with county contacts, and comments from the public and stakeholders. Although progress was described, many barriers identified in the last coordinated plan remain. While progress in previously identified coordination issues is reviewed in Section 5, the following are current issues.

Barriers to Coordination

Geography: Although Mendocino County is more urbanized than a number of counties in California, it still contains some very isolated communities (e.g., Covelo, Laytonville, Manchester, and others). This isolation, coupled with the size of the county, makes it very difficult to coordinate the limited transportation resources in the county to reach all isolated areas.

Special Client Needs: Many customers of services that provide transportation to those with special needs cannot independently make use of transportation programs. They require assistance such as help on and off the buses, assistance using safety belts and other equipment, or even help finding the right transportation provider for their specific need. In many cases, the level of assistance these clients need is not conducive to system integration. Some agencies have established service standards or guidelines for consideration in transporting clients, such as the need for higher levels of care, required use of seatbelts, and more. These guidelines may preclude the transportation of special needs clients.

Funding Restrictions: Inadequate funding and funding limitations make it difficult to sustain transportation services. Many agencies that serve specific clients are required to use those funds to provide transportation solely to their clientele. This precludes funds from being spent on providing transportation to any other group. This makes coordination between different agencies and social service groups very difficult to implement.

Timing with other transit systems: Timing is an important factor in the effectiveness of coordination with other transit systems. This barrier has improved over the last couple of years.

Complexity of transfers and wait times: While wait times are typically minimal and not complex, wait times for transfer to LTA can be longer due to few LTA buses. Transfers to the SMART train can take up to 45 minutes as of March 2020. However, passengers can use the Route Shout app and Google Transit to better plan their trips, minimize wait times, and improve the transfer process.

Duplication of Services

MTA has determined that duplication of services is not currently a coordination issue.

5 Progress on Coordination, Needs, and Strategies

Previous coordinated plans described coordination, unmet needs, and priority goals of the county, identified through an outreach process including stakeholder interviews, consumer focus groups, and surveys. This section discusses Mendocino County’s progress in these components.

5.1 Progress in Coordination of Service

Coordination between transportation and other service providers can increase populations served and awareness of resources while reducing redundancy and costs for the funding agencies and service providers. Barriers to such coordination efforts were identified through the stakeholder engagement process for previous Coordinated Plans. While some barriers linger or are unfeasible to address, MCOG and service providers have made progress on other coordination efforts.

During outreach for previous Coordinated Plans, service providers and other stakeholders identified barriers that prevented coordination of services in Mendocino County and would-be areas of interest for the CTSA to address.

Geographic restraints, special client needs, and funding restrictions remain barriers to coordination and expansion of transport services. These barriers were first identified in previous Coordinated Plans and many remain classified as such because they are beyond the scope of a transportation agency.

Geography: In February 2021, MCOG applied for a Caltrans transportation planning grant to conduct a feasibility study of mobility solutions for rural communities of inland Mendocino County. The grant decision is expected in late Spring, 2021.

Limited Staff Resources: In rural communities, transportation staff is often required to assist with many jobs, including grant writing, program administration, and even driving vehicles. Because there are fewer designated staff, projects such as the coordination of services, which requires dedication and development over time, do not occur because of lack of staffing. In Mendocino County, MTA serves as the CTSA. While the CTSA is well-positioned to assume a leadership role in overseeing coordination projects and activities, there is currently no dedicated staff member available for this purpose.

Progress has been made on the limited staff resources that were identified as a barrier in the last Coordinated Plan and are no longer a barrier for MTA.

Duplication of Services

Some duplication of service was previously identified in 2015, such as multiple demand response programs servicing the same area. However, duplication of services in Mendocino County is not as prevalent as it is in many other counties in California.

5.2 Gaps, Challenges, Unmet Transportation Needs

Due to a multitude of reasons including funding and staffing constraints and highly specific client needs, transportation providers are often unable to meet all of the needs in their communities. These unmet needs and their reasonability to meet are defined to meet the TDA standards and guide local transportation commissions in developing or adjusting services. Exact definitions are provided in Section 6. The Mendocino Council of Governments and service providers have made noticeable progress on the unmet needs identified in previous Coordinated Plans, including needs that were initially classified as unreasonable to meet.

In the last Coordinated Plan, 22 unmet needs were identified from SSTAC meeting minutes and additional 28 unmet needs were discovered during the public outreach process. The 50 needs were then classified as either constrained or unconstrained with input from MCOG staff. Below is a description of the progress on these needs identified in that last coordinated plan.

Constrained

The list of unconstrained transit needs includes all requests to close service gaps by residents and stakeholders that are not currently considered reasonable to meet. Both the constrained and unconstrained needs from the 2015 coordinated plan and their progress are found below.

Bus Service from Ukiah to the coast and Back on the Same Day: A service which originates in Ukiah, travels to the coast and returns on the same day was identified as a constrained need in the last Coordinated Plan.

Route 75, which runs twice a day, fulfills this need by connecting Ukiah to the coast.

Additional/Later CC Rider Trips from Santa Rosa: Adding a second trip from Santa Rosa or leaving Santa Rosa later than 2:25 pm was identified as a need in the last coordinated plan.

No changes are planned in the near future.

Saturday Bus Service between Willits and Ukiah: Route 65 now runs on Saturday's between Willits and Ukiah, but more frequent service is not planned.

Reinstate Saturday Service on Route 60 and Connections to Route 75: Reinstating Saturday service on Route 60 was identified as a need in the last Coordinated Plan because it would allow passengers weekend access to key destinations in Point Arena and Ukiah.

Saturday service on Route 60 and connections to Route 75 are currently planned.

Mobility Management Solution for Covelo and Laytonville: Covelo and Laytonville are the two smallest communities in Mendocino County and as such coordinating transportation services to these areas is very difficult. Service to these areas was identified as an unmet need in the last coordinated plan to better provide for these communities' transportation needs.

MCOG has submitted a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Planning Grant application in 2021 to study mobility options/transit alternatives in Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, and Hopland.

Brooktrails to Willits/Ukiah Ride Share: A rideshare from Brooktrails to Willits and Ukiah was identified as an unmet need that would benefit the community by allowing easier access to current routes.

There are currently no formal plans for a rideshare from Brooktrails to Willits and Ukiah.

Service to Brookside Elementary School in Willits: The last Coordinated Plan identified the need for a bus stop close to Brookside Elementary School, the site of the county's only Head Start program. The addition of a stop at Brookside Elementary School on Route 1 was also identified as a way to increase ridership.

There are currently no planned changes.

Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Plan: Mendocino County
Mendocino Council of Governments

Service to the Redwood Valley Loop: Service to the Redwood Valley Loop and the nearby Coyote Valley Reservation was identified as a need in the last coordinated plan.

Currently, MTA Dial-a-Ride is servicing the entire Redwood Valley Loop.

Mental Health Mobile Services Van for Healthcare Workers to Service Outlying Areas: The need for mental health services in rural areas was identified in the last coordinated plan.

No changes are currently planned by MTA.

Ukiah Assisted Transportation for Seniors on Wednesdays: The need for Wednesday assisted transportation for Ukiah Senior Center seniors is well documented in previous Coordinated Plans.

No changes are currently planned.

Ukiah Assisted Transportation for Seniors on Sundays, Specifically to Church: Sunday assisted transportation for seniors was identified as a need in the last plan.

No changes are currently planned.

Ukiah Assisted Transportation to Willits, Hopland, and Potter Valley: No changes are currently planned.

Shuttle Service between Point Arena, Along the Ridge to Gualala, and the Sea Ranch Apartments: The need for a dedicated shuttle that runs between Point Arena and Sea Ranch Apartments to facilitate more travel to the Point Arena area was identified in the last coordinated plan.

No changes are currently planned.

Additional Service between Fort Bragg and Ukiah: An additional route that provides service between Fort Bragg and Ukiah is now available.

Bus Service to Potter Valley: Bus service to Potter Valley was identified as a need in the last Coordinated Plan.

No changes are currently planned.

Bus Service in Ukiah on Sundays: The last Coordinated Plan identified some need for Sunday assisted transportation service for seniors on Route 9.

There is currently not enough demand, and no changes are planned.

Restore Bus Service between Laytonville and Ukiah: The need to restore service to Laytonville to connect Laytonville to the rest of the Mendocino County transportation system was identified in the last Coordinated Plan.

MCOG has submitted a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Planning Grant application in 2021 to study mobility options/transit alternatives in Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, and Hopland.

Service between Fort Bragg and Point Arena and Back in One Day: No changes are currently planned.

Bicycle Share System Linked to Transit Stop: No changes are currently planned.

Bike Racks at Bus Stops: Although some bus stops currently have bike racks, it is not feasible to add bike racks to all stops at the moment.

Sidewalks and Safer Pedestrian Routes for Child Strollers, South State Street, Ukiah: Sidewalk improvements and ADA ramps are occurring as funding becomes available.

Funds for a New Transit Administration Building: Funding for a new transit administration building and transit center is still needed.

Increased Funding for Operations: The need for increased funding for operations is a need that will always exist, especially in rural counties like Mendocino.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation: Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is an important service to provide for those who have medical needs and cannot transport themselves. NEMT is a need that will always exist, especially in Mendocino County where the population that is over the age of 65 is expected to grow by 22% by 2060.

Better Timing with Services in Santa Rosa and Golden Gate Transit: Route 65 offers connections to Golden Gate transit's Route 101, which provides hourly service between downtown San Francisco and the 2nd St. Transit Mall in Santa Rosa.

Expand MTA Demand Response: Currently, MTA demand response service in Ukiah Valley was expanded by eliminating general public service. MTA plans to expand demand response service in Fort Bragg but also keeping general public service unlike what was done in Ukiah Valley.

Trips between Campuses in Willits, Ukiah, and Fort Bragg: Although trips between Campuses in Willits, Ukiah, and Fort Bragg can be achieved with existing routes to some extent, no changes are currently planned.

Unconstrained Needs

Van for Veterans to be Transported to Medical Appointments: The Mendocino County Veterans Services Department has increased its fleet size and services offered to veterans in recent years.

Dedicated Service between Fort Bragg and Ukiah with the Schedule Allowing for a Full Workday: No changes are currently planned.

Regular Bus Service from Little River to the Redwood Coast Senior Center: MTA does not have any changes planned. Additionally, Redwood Coast Senior Center does not provide service to Little River.

Van to Transport Seniors to Services: This need was brought up by a representative of the Redwood Coast Senior Center specifically with regards to the Senior Center Without Walls program. Senior Center Without Walls is a program for homebound seniors. It provides a sense of community for those who are unable to leave home on their own. The purpose of the van would be to transport seniors to activities and services they learn about using Senior Center Without Walls. However, there are no updates or changes planned at this time.

Service to Albion: No changes are currently planned.

Dedicated Service between Fort Bragg and the Town of Mendocino: MTA is currently providing regular fixed-route service. No demand response is currently planned.

Bus Trip from Ukiah to Redwood Valley Leaving between 1:30 and 3:30 pm: MTA currently provides service that leaves Redwood Valley at 1:25 pm. This need is now being met.

Local Bus Service between Point Arena and Gualala: The current route from Point Arena to Gualala has been in place for many years. Additional service not planned by MTA, but Coastal Seniors has expanded service in that area.

Transportation for Homeless Persons to/from the Buddy Eller Center: The shelter in Ukiah is accessible by the Ukiah Local Route 9 and the Fort Bragg shelter is accessible through Local Route 5.

Wheelchair Door-Through-Door Service on Wednesdays: No changes are planned at this time.

More Frequent Coaster Service: No changes are currently planned.

Additional Senior Center Provided Transportation in Very Remote Areas Both Within and Outside of Current Service Areas: This is still needed.

Expand Demand Response Hours for the Senior Centers: This may not be needed in all areas. No changes are currently planned.

Expanded Meals on Wheels Program: There are no updates on this need at this time.

Bragg About Service Every Half Hour Instead of Every Hour: No changes are currently planned.

More Frequent Service to the Coast from Inland: More frequent service to the coast from Inland has been done.

ADA Compliant Sidewalks Within 1/3 Mile of Fixed Route Bus Stops: Improvements are being done as funding becomes available.

More Frequent Service Across All Services: This is not feasible and not needed in all services.

Weekend Coaster Service: No changes are planned at this time.

Service Out of the County, North to Humboldt: This is not feasible for MTA.

Subsidize a Zip Car System: There are no changes currently planned, but MCOG has submitted a planning grant for mobility solutions that could be used in different areas if awarded.

Later Service to Santa Rosa: No change is currently planned.

5.3 Priority Strategies

Priority strategies identified in the previous Coordinated Plan were outlined to address unmet transit needs and improve coordination while remaining feasible within funding, staffing, and sustainability restraints. The following is a discussion on the progress of the eight previously identified priority strategies for Mendocino County in 2014.

Maintain the current level of transportation services: From 2016-2018, overall ridership decreased by 15%. MTA was able to maintain the current level of service during internal restructuring and has not raised fares since 2014.

Expand Demand Response: Demand response services are more efficient than fixed-route services, although they generally come at a higher price. There was a noticeable need from both workshop attendees and those that filled

out surveys, for expanded demand response service in the last Coordinated Plan. This need was especially acute in the South Mendocino Coast region of the county.

From 2016-2018, Dial-a-Ride ridership decreased by 27% while senior center contract services ridership has increased by 16%. Ukiah area Dial-a-Ride has transitioned from serving the general public to paratransit passengers only.

Establish a non-emergency medical transportation service and increase paratransit services: Exploring partnerships with hospitals to provide transportation continues to be an area of interest.

Expand intercity services, especially between Fort Bragg and Ukiah: Intercity connections have improved, specifically between Route 1 and CC rider where an additional route was added.

Expand weekend service: Weekend service has increased to 4 out of 9 routes. Route 65 and 95 operate 7 days a week, while Route 9 operates as a Saturday service.

Multi-organizational approach to solutions: Coordination between SSTAC, Transit Productivity Committee, and senior center workshop helped to address coordination issues and increase public knowledge of services. MCOG is currently leading these efforts.

Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers: This was a suggestion in previous Coordinated Plans and Short-Range Transit Development Plans. MTA is not currently offering mileage reimbursement for volunteer drivers; however, other agencies may engage in reimbursement.

Replace vehicles and other capital equipment in Accordance with the Capital Replacement Program: The phasing out of vehicles has begun to be scheduled. MTA previously planned to replace a total of 45 vehicles from 2010 to 2015. This includes:

- 9 paratransit vehicles at a cost of \$946,000
- 11 20-passenger vans at a cost of \$1,062,000
- 4 medium-duty buses at a cost of \$998,000
- 7 heavy-duty buses at a cost of \$3,946,000
- 7 vehicles designated for senior centers at a cost of \$474,000
- 7 staff vehicles at a cost of \$242,000

When feasible, vehicles designated for replacement will be replaced with hybrids or electric vehicles. Additionally, computers and other personal equipment are scheduled to be replaced at a cost of \$483,000 and a new transit center is being planned at a cost of \$22 million. A total of 45 vehicles have since been replaced with either hybrid or electric vehicles and funding is being pursued to continue fleet improvement.

6 Unmet Transportation Needs

6.1 Evaluation Criteria

To qualify for LTF under the TDA, rural counties must hold a minimum of one annual public hearing for receiving comments on unmet transit needs. The two types of needs are defined below.

Unmet Transit Needs: Whenever a need to transport people is not being satisfied through existing public or private resources.

Reasonable to Meet:

- a) Service will be capable of meeting the Transportation Development Act fare revenue/operating cost requirements and established MCOG criteria for new services
- b) Transit services designed or intended to address an unmet transit need shall not duplicate transit services currently provided either publicly or privately
- c) The claimant that is expected to provide the service shall review, evaluate and indicate that the service is operationally feasible, and vehicles shall be currently available in the marketplace
- d) Funds are available, or there is a reasonable expectation that funds will become available.

It should be noted that the unmet need hearing is only required if LTF is awarded to street and road projects; otherwise, it is optional.

6.2 Gaps, Challenges, Unmet Transportation Needs

Unmet needs were identified through communication with MCOG staff, meeting minutes, input from key stakeholders, unmet transit need findings, and a Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey using Survey Monkey that went live on November 24, 2020, until December 18, 2020.

The Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey was distributed to community members and key stakeholders through a Survey Monkey link. The survey was available for three weeks and a total of 17 survey responses were received. Survey questions centered on previously identified needs and needs discussed during the Community Outreach meeting in 2020. Respondents were asked whether they agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed with some previously identified needs. Additionally, respondents were also given the space to provide additional needs not listed. Detailed information about questions asked and responses and comments received are available in Appendix A.

The unmet needs below were classified as reasonable or unreasonable to meet by SSTAC discussion.

Reasonable to Meet Unmet Needs

The 2015 Coordinated Plan, SSTAC meeting minutes, and other planning documents helped to inform this section. The following issues were identified as gaps and unmet needs in transit service.

- **Increased funding for operations:** Funding will always be needed to sustain, expand, and improve services. MTA is also still awaiting funds for the new administration building.
- **Reinstate Saturday service on Route 60 and connections to Route 75:** Six of the twelve Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey respondents agreed there was a need to expand Sunday fixed-route service for Route 60 and Route 75. Reinstating Saturday service is currently in the works.

- **Trips between campuses in Willits, Ukiah, Fort Bragg:** A majority of Coordinated Plan Survey respondents agreed there is a need for an expanded inter-city bus service. Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey respondents agreed there is a need for more trips between Willits and Ukiah because many individuals work in Ukiah and live in Willits. A majority of respondents also said there is a need to expand Saturday fixed-route bus service for Route 20 Willits/ Ukiah. Followed by Route 1, the Willits Local, Route 7, Ukiah Jitney, and Route 5, Bragg about. Currently, nothing is planned to create trips between campuses, although this can be achieved with existing routes to some extent.
- **Mobility management solution for Covelo and Laytonville:** MCOG has submitted a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Planning Grant application in 2021 to study mobility options/transit alternatives in Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, and Hopland.
- **Service to the Redwood Valley Loop:** MTA Dial-a-ride is currently serving the entire Redwood Valley Loop.
- **Additional service between Fort Bragg and Ukiah:** An additional route has been added to address this need.
- **Expand Route 9 to Sundays:** There is currently not enough demand to add Sunday service to Route 9. However, a majority of Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey respondents (8 out of 12) said there was a need to expand Sunday fixed-route service for Route 9.
- **Restore bus service between Laytonville and Ukiah:** MCOG is currently seeking a planning grant to study mobility solutions between Laytonville and Ukiah.
- **Bike racks at bus stops:** Some stops have added bike racks; however, this is not feasible for all stops.
- **Expand MTA Demand Response:** Demand response has expanded in Ukiah Valley by eliminating the general public. MTA plans to expand demand response in Fort Bragg and the North Coast and keep it open to the general public.

Constrained Needs

- **Additional van for Veterans Services:** Veterans services and fleet size have been increased.
- **Service between Fort Bragg and Town of Mendocino:** MTA provides a regular fixed-route service. No demand response is currently planned.
- **Additional service between Point Arena and Gualala:** The current route has been in place for many years. Additional service is offered by Coastal Seniors, which has expanded service in that area.
- **Transportation for homeless shelter:** The homeless shelter in Ukiah is on the Local 9 route. The Fort Bragg shelter is part of the Local 5 route.
- **Expand senior center transportation in remote areas is still needed.**
- **Expand senior center demand response hours may not be needed in all areas.**
- **ADA compliant sidewalks within 1/3 mile of fixed-route bus stops:** Improvements are being done as funding is made available.

7 Priority Strategies

7.1 Evaluation Criteria

A number of factors were utilized to develop and identify strategies that would address unmet transit needs in the community. Three main themes and a series of questions related to those themes were taken into consideration when developing a list of strategies. These criteria were used to process, analyze, and interpret data collected from surveys, public outreach, and conversations with stakeholders.

1) Unmet needs: Does the strategy address transportation gaps or barriers?

This question also brought up additional concerns for consideration.

Does the strategy:

- provide service in a geographic area with limited transportation options?
- serve a geographic area where the greatest number of people need a service?
- improve the mobility of clientele subject to state and federal funding sources (i.e. seniors and individuals with disabilities)?
- provide a level of service not currently provided with existing resources?
- preserve and protect existing services?

2) Feasibility: Can this strategy be feasibly implemented given the timeframe and available resources?

Other questions for consideration:

- Is the strategy eligible for FAST Act or other types of grant funding?
- Does the strategy result in efficient use of available resources?
- Does the strategy have a potential project sponsor with the operational capacity to carry out the strategy?
- Does the strategy have the potential to be sustained beyond the grant period?

3) Coordination: How does this strategy build upon existing services?

Additional concerns for consideration:

- avoid duplication and promote coordination of services and programs?
- allow for and encourage the participation of local human service and transportation stakeholders?

7.2 Priority Strategies

The following is a list of strategies for MCOG and the region to pursue until the next coordinated plan. Not all strategies directly connect with reasonable to meet unmet needs but are strategies to help maintain and improve services and help address other gaps and issues given current circumstances. If additional resources become available, projects connected to unmet needs not addressed in these priority strategies should be pursued; these projects can be derived from the discussion on gaps, challenges, and unmet needs in section 6.

Strategy 1- Maintain the current level of transportation services:

While the residents of Mendocino County certainly have unmet transportation needs that are currently not being met, there was a level of satisfaction with the service that is currently being provided.

In this time of decreasing budgets and increasing competition for federal and local grant funding, it is important to first and foremost protect the current level of service from decreased funding. Conversations with MTA staff have shown transportation funding is very volatile with a decreasing trend. While these budget issues are not currently affecting operations, it would not be difficult for operational funds to also be put in danger. Before attempting to increase or expand service to other areas, MTA and other service providers should be sure that funding exists, for the forecasted future, to maintain the current level of services provided.

Additionally, efforts should be made to increase ridership given current services and routes provided. Increasing ridership while maintaining the current level of service will increase the farebox recovery rate. Increasing this rate will add an extra layer of security to operational funds as less of the money will have to come from grant funding. Future grants obtained for feasibility studies should include an assessment of the existing services and be used to guide future system improvements.

Maintaining the current level of services also includes vehicle replacement. Buses, vans and other capital equipment have finite useful lives and must be replaced when that useful life is over. It is important to seek funding to replace capital equipment.

Strategy 2- Expand Demand Response:

There are seven demand response services in Mendocino County. Five are operated by senior centers and are slated solely for the use of senior citizens and the disabled. The other two demand response services are run by MTA and are available in Fort Bragg and Ukiah.

Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey respondents stated they would like to see Demand Response service expanded. There are multiple benefits to adding additional demand response service. The first is that it would complement the existing services supplied by the senior centers. Currently the Ukiah Senior Center only operate Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Adding additional MTA demand response could fill the hole left by the senior centers on Wednesdays. In addition to supplementing the senior center demand response, adding additional demand response service could increase the mobility of all residents of Mendocino County. Alternatively, expanding the service provided by the senior centers on Wednesday's would also help serve the same population served by the Demand Response service. For this reason, expanding the service provided by senior centers can also be an alternative approach in addressing this strategy.

While a large part of this strategy is to expand MTA provided demand response for the general public, expanding the senior center provided demand response is also important. Whenever possible funds should be identified and pursued to obtain additional funding for senior centers providing demand response services as well.

Strategy 3- Establish a non-emergency medical transportation service and increase paratransit services:

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit organizations) to become providers of NEMT. A variety of funding resources, see Section One for further details, may be available to support this strategy including Federal 5310 and 5311 funds, State TDA funds as well as several social services funding sources: The Older Americans Act, Medi-Cal, Community Services Block Grants, Consolidated Health Center Program, and Child Care and Development Block Grants. Given this variety it will be necessary to plan how the necessary resources are combined into a coordinated NEMT system.

In developing this service, it will also be important to consider the different requirements for the use of these funding streams. For example, people receiving Medi-Cal covered services may be provided funds for NEMT, but only when it is provided by a carrier licensed by Medi-Cal, and only when the individual's medical condition requires transport by a wheelchair van, litter van, or ambulance. In Mendocino County the number of organizations that could qualify to become a Medi-Cal NEMT provider is limited, although there are some that could qualify, and the number increases if you include surrounding counties. Some notable organizations that might qualify include Mendocino Community Health Clinics, Mendocino Coast Clinics, the Mendocino Coast District Hospital and Hospice of Ukiah.

Strategy 4- Expand intercity services, especially between Fort Bragg and Ukiah:

Expansion of the fixed route, intercity service is important for Mendocino County. The size of the county and the distance between communities makes this even more important. Of those that indicated on the online survey that limitations prevented them from using public transit, 54% listed lack of transportation in their areas and schedule conflicts as the reason why. Expanded inter-city service area was seen as important by 75% of those surveyed.

There are, of course, other areas that need intercity service as well. Besides Fort Bragg, Willits and Ukiah, the three areas with the most requested service are: Brooktrails, Potter Valley, and Covelo. Any future expansions should take into consideration these requested service areas.

Strategy 5- Expand weekend service:

Currently the only routes that operate seven days a week are the CC Rider and Route 95 on the coast. The Ukiah Local route, and Route 75 operate Monday through Saturday. The Ukiah Jitney, Willits Local, Willits/Ukiah, Bragg About and the Coaster run Monday through Friday. This severely limits the opportunities for some residents to visit with family, shop, work and reach other destinations on the weekends.

Saturday Service for the Willits/ Ukiah local, the Ukiah Jitney and the Willits Local were listed as important by survey respondents. Additionally, Sunday service for The Ukiah Local, Willits Local, and the Ukiah Willits routes were also listed as important routes to expand by survey respondents.

Weekend service should not just apply to routes that are currently being operated. If new routes are initiated, either because new funding sources have been identified or because existing routes have been changed, these new routes should also have weekend service. Adding weekend service will drastically increase the mobility of Mendocino County residents.

Strategy 6- Multi-organizational approach to solutions:

This strategy calls for establishing more communication/connections between various stakeholders (community development, health and human services, other government agencies, the various Native American tribes, non-profits, TANF, private businesses, and other groups) to come up with solutions to transportation and other related issues, share information and resources, apply for funding, deal with coordination issues, and other related activities. This can be done by the creation of an email listserv, holding a meeting once or twice a year, or inviting each other to existing meetings to help each other stay informed and create opportunities for coordination. Members of the public and various stakeholders may not be able to commit to joining a committee such as SSTAC but may be able to participate in an occasional meeting.

Additionally, many local senior centers are already providing transportation to the senior population. An evaluation of service may therefore show that it is possible during certain times to scale back Demand Response and efficiently substitute the centers' buses. This could reduce any perceived duplication of services and allow the senior centers, which operate buses in the larger population areas to provide the bulk of these rides with their staff of specialized drivers who are well-trained in the handling of disabled and senior riders.

This strategy requires a leader to coordinate meetings, manage contact lists, and communicate with various stakeholders. The individual or agency in charge of this endeavor will have to actively engage in outreach to make the initiative meaningful.

Strategy 7- Conduct a Feasibility Study of Mobility Solutions for Rural Communities of Inland Mendocino County

This strategy calls for a feasibility study to look at unserved rural areas of Inland Mendocino County where traditional transit service is infeasible, both operationally and financially.

MCOG has applied for a Mobility Solutions grant to study mobility solutions in several rural communities and will continue to look for funding opportunities that may aid in this strategy in the coming years.

8 COVID-19

This section discusses changes made to transportation and social services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic of 2019 and 2020.

COVID-19 Specific Needs

The following are some COVID-19 specific needs that were identified via a 2020 SSTAC meeting and the Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey.

Food/ Grocery delivery: The need for food/ grocery delivery service was identified as a COVID-19 specific need, specifically for vulnerable populations like seniors who depend on transit to get groceries normally and may be unable to leave their homes due to reduced hours of operation or over a fear of the pandemic.

Decrease in Ridership: The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in people going out less over the fear of contracting the virus. Since the onset of the pandemic, MTA ridership has decreased to about 600 riders a month. Before COVID, ridership averaged around 700-750 riders a month. Additionally, social distancing rules are limiting the number of people allowed on the bus at a time and further decreasing ridership. Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey respondents said individuals did not feel safe using public transportation even with the limits placed on passengers.

Public worry over the pandemic: Many older individuals are choosing to shelter in place and not attend day programs or use public transportation over the fear of the pandemic because they are high risk. A Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey respondent said 80% of clients were sheltering in place instead of attending day programs.

Appendix A: Mendocino County Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey Materials

Mendocino County Coordinated Plan Outreach Survey

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to participate in this short survey!

The Mendocino Council of Governments is currently updating the region’s Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan. This plan is important because it facilitates funding and serves as a guide to promote and advance local social service transportation.

We are encouraging the community to provide input on the plan and share thoughts on social service transportation needs in Mendocino County. You can read the draft of the current plan by clicking [here](#).

Your participation is very important in helping identify transportation needs in the community, but participation in this survey is completely voluntary.

The following is a list of needs currently identified by the community. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of these needs:

1. Do you think there is a need to expand Saturday fixed-route bus service for any of the following routes? Select all that apply.

- Route 1, Willits Local
- Route 5, Bragg About
- Route 7, Ukiah Jitney
- Route 20, Willits/ Ukiah
- Route 60, The Coaster

If you would like to comment on your response, please use the space below.

2. Do you think there is a need to expand Sunday fixed-route bus service for any of the following routes? Select all that apply.

- Route 1, Willits Local
- Route 5, Bragg About
- Route 7, Ukiah Jitney
- Route 9, Ukiah Local
- Route 20, Willits/ Ukiah
- Route 60, The Coaster
- Route 75, South Mendocino Coast/ Santa Rosa

If you would like to comment on your response, please use the space below.

3. Do any of the following limitations prevent you from using the Public Transportation System? Select all that apply.

- Schedule conflicts
- Inadequate bus shelters
- Too expensive
- No service to my area and/or my destination
- Other (Please Specify)

4. Is there a need to extend fixed-route service to any of the following locations? If so, on what days? Select all that apply.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Brooktrails							
Covelo							
Hopland							
Laytonville							
Potter Valley							
Other location (please describe below)							

If you would like to comment on your response, please use the space below.

5. There is a need for inter-city bus service.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

If you would like to comment on your response, please use the space below.

6. There is a need for Saturday on-demand service.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

If you would like to comment on your response, please use the space below

7. There is a need to expand on-demand bus service after normal business hours.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

If you would like to comment on your response, please use the space below

8. There is a need to expand non-emergency medical transportation after normal business hours. Non-emergency medical transportation is transportation to get to and from medical appointments/ visits for routine and preventative care when no elements of life support are required in the vehicle.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

If you would like to comment on your response, please use the space below

9. There is a need to expand the out of county destinations of non-emergency medical transportation.

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

If you would like to comment on your response, please use the space below

We are also interested in any additional social service transportation needs in the community as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please use the following questions and the comment box to share your perspectives:

10. Are there any important social service destinations that are not accessible with current transportation services?

- Yes
- No
- Please use the space below to explain further.

11. Has the COVID-19 pandemic changed social service transportation needs?

- Yes
- No
- Please use the space below to explain further.

12. Use the space below to include any questions/comments/concerns:

13. (Optional) If you would like your participation to be noted in the report, please fill out the form below with your details as you would like them to appear.

Name

Title

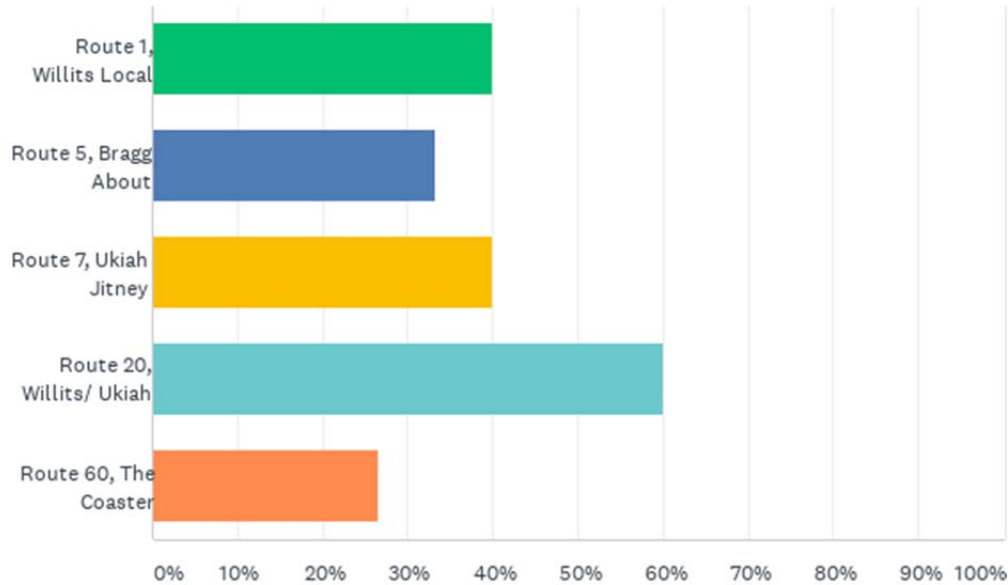
Company/Organization

Mendocino County Coordinated Plan Survey Responses

English (17)

Q1. Do you think there is a need to expand Saturday fixed-route bus service for any of the following routes? Select all that apply.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 2



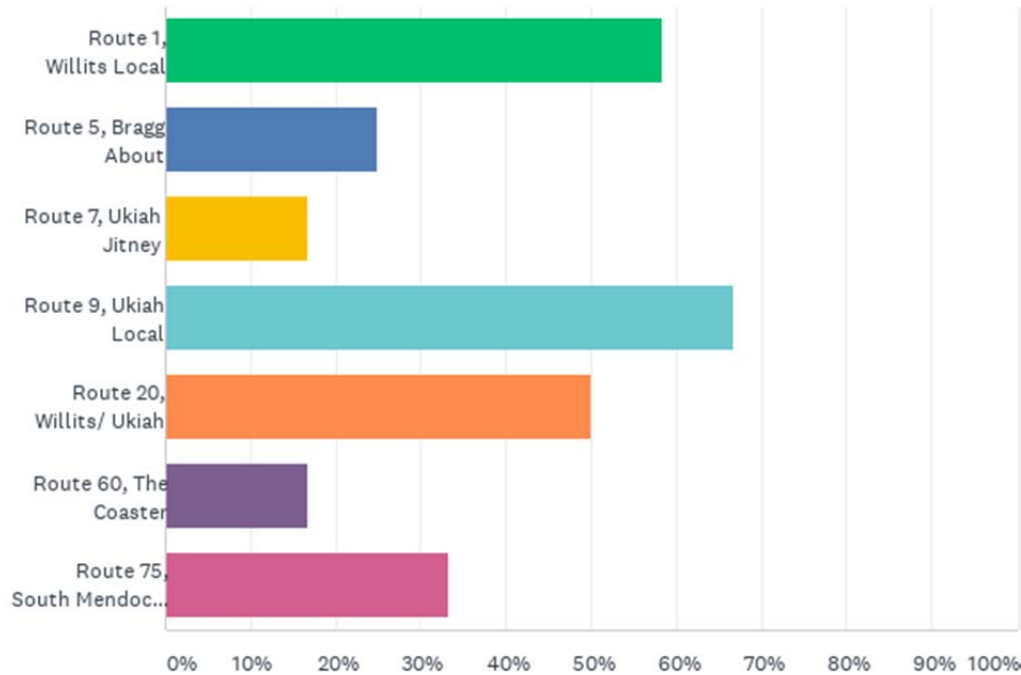
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Route 1, Willits Local	40.00% 6
Route 5, Bragg About	33.33% 5
Route 7, Ukiah Jitney	40.00% 6
Route 20, Willits/ Ukiah	60.00% 9
Route 60, The Coaster	26.67% 4
Total Respondents: 15	

Comments (4):

- Fixed routes do little for me. More interested in a Lyft-like local transportation collective with some sort of subsidy from transportation funds.
- Many people live in Willits and work in Ukiah
- Also, South Coast/Santa Rosa also. The senior bus is limited to number of trips we can do and increases number of seniors who need to go to SR for medical appointments.
- Many individuals use the bus to transport from Willits to Ukiah to do shopping, medical and other resources.

Q2. Do you think there is a need to expand Sunday fixed-route bus service for any of the following routes? Select all that apply.

Answered: 12 Skipped: 5



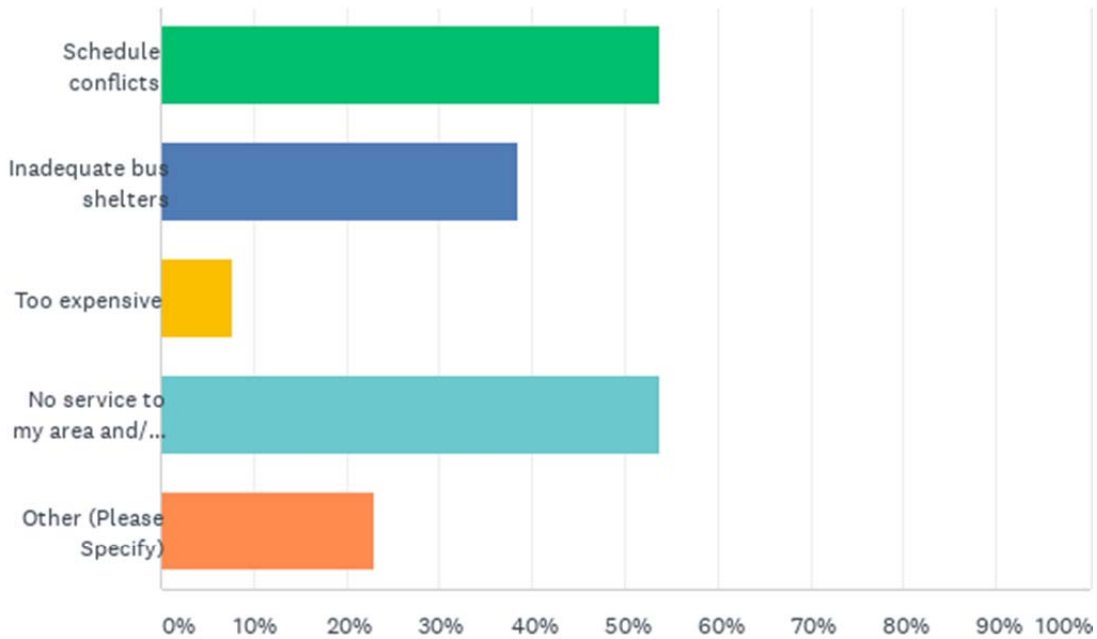
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Route 1, Willits Local	58.33% 7
Route 5, Bragg About	25.00% 3
Route 7, Ukiah Jitney	16.67% 2
Route 9, Ukiah Local	66.67% 8
Route 20, Willits/ Ukiah	50.00% 6
Route 60, The Coaster	16.67% 2
Route 75, South Mendocino Coast/ Santa Rosa	33.33% 4
Total Respondents: 12	

Comments (5):

- N/A
- Other than attending church I didn't see why people can't plan to get their destinations during the weekends.
- Again, for working people to access their jobs. Especially people with disabilities that cannot drive cars.
- There is only one bus (I think) from Santa Rosa to Ukiah on Saturday.
- Many of our disabled clients rely on transportation on the weekends to help with shopping.

Q3. Do any of the following limitations prevent you from using the Public Transportation System? Select all that apply.

Answered: 13 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Schedule conflicts	53.85%	7
Inadequate bus shelters	38.46%	5
Too expensive	7.69%	1
No service to my area and/or my destination	53.85%	7
Other (Please Specify)	23.08%	3
Total Respondents: 13		

- Other, 3 responses
 - Schedules are too infrequent. Don't fit the times I need to travel. Hard to imagine the county would ever be able to afford a robust public transportation program that would be highly effective.
 - Infrequent service
 - Buses quit running too early for many people with jobs. Any extenuation of evening service would be helpful.

Q4. Is there a need to extend fixed-route service to any of the following locations? If so, on what days? Select all that apply.

Answered: 7 Skipped: 10

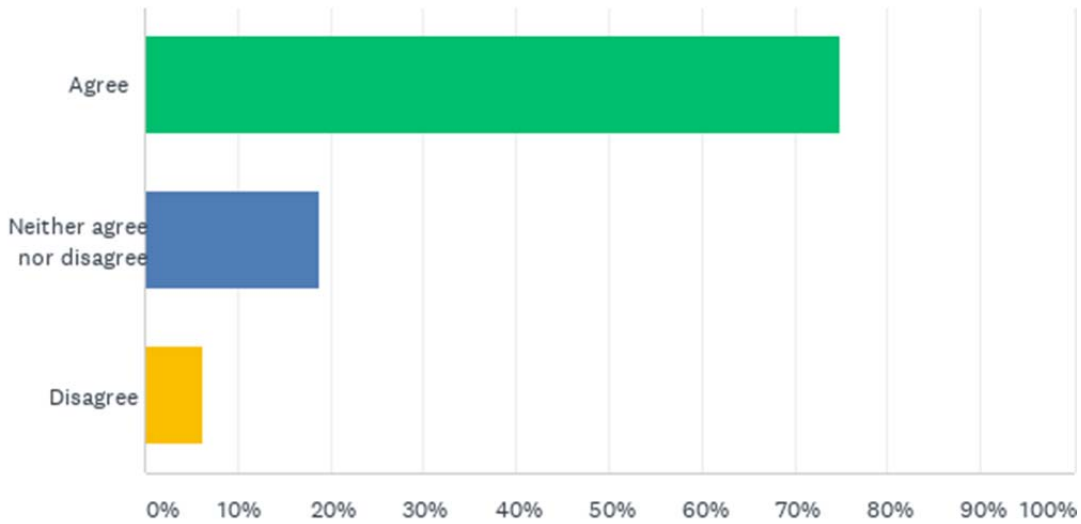
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Brooktrails	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
Covelo	2	1	2	1	2	1	1
Hopland	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Laytonville	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Potter Valley	2	2	2	2	1	0	2
Other location (please describe below)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Comments (1):

- There is a large population and no service.

Q5. There is a need for inter-city bus service.

Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



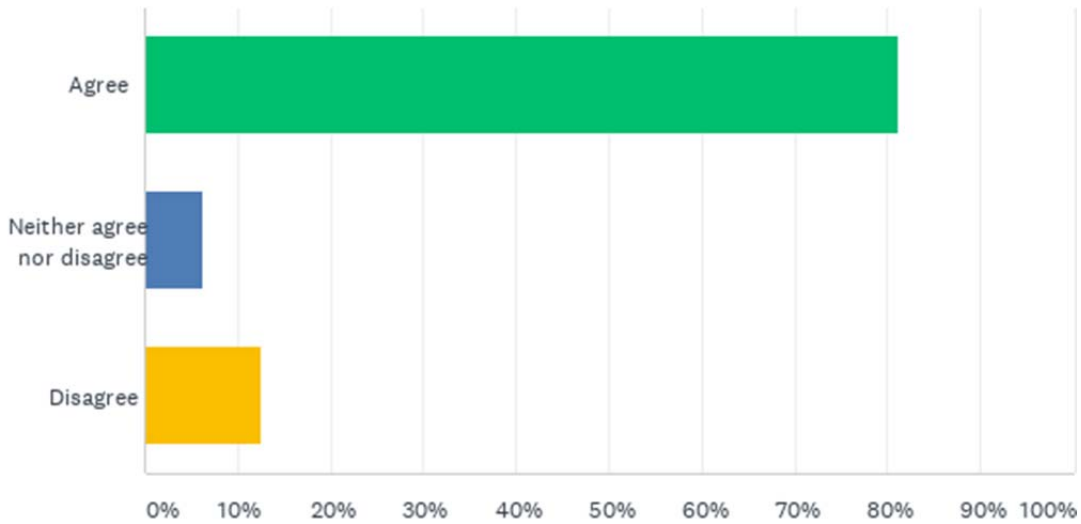
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	75.00%	12
Neither agree nor disagree	18.75%	3
Disagree	6.25%	1
Total Respondents: 16		

Comments (2):

- Try something different from traditional large busses following a set route with very infrequent stops.
- I think the current service inadequate.

Q6. There is a need for Sunday on-demand service.

Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



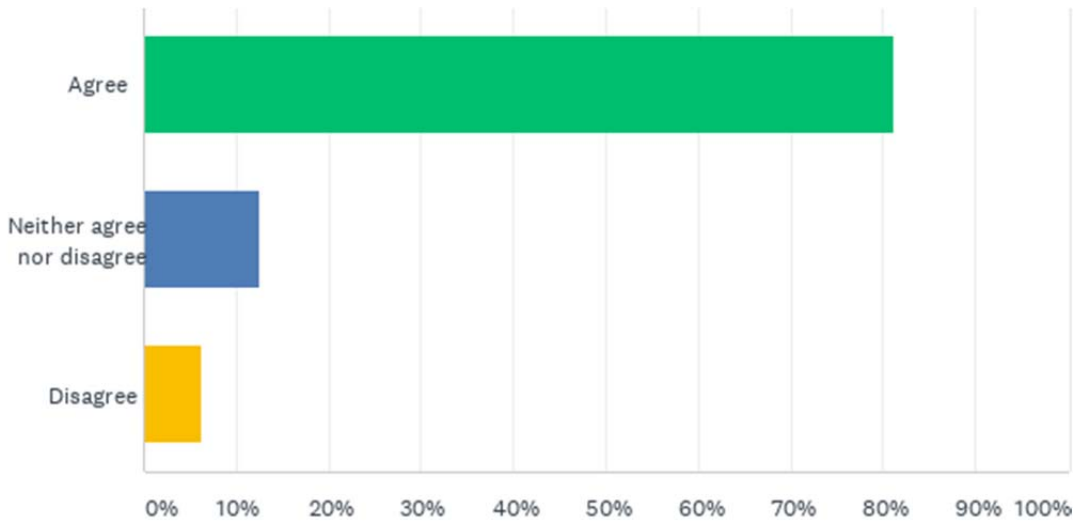
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	81.25%	13
Neither agree nor disagree	6.25%	1
Disagree	12.50%	2
Total Respondents: 16		

Comments (1):

- If the system were to be more flexible and more available, I believe more people would use it.

Q7. There is a need to expand on-demand service after normal business hours.

Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



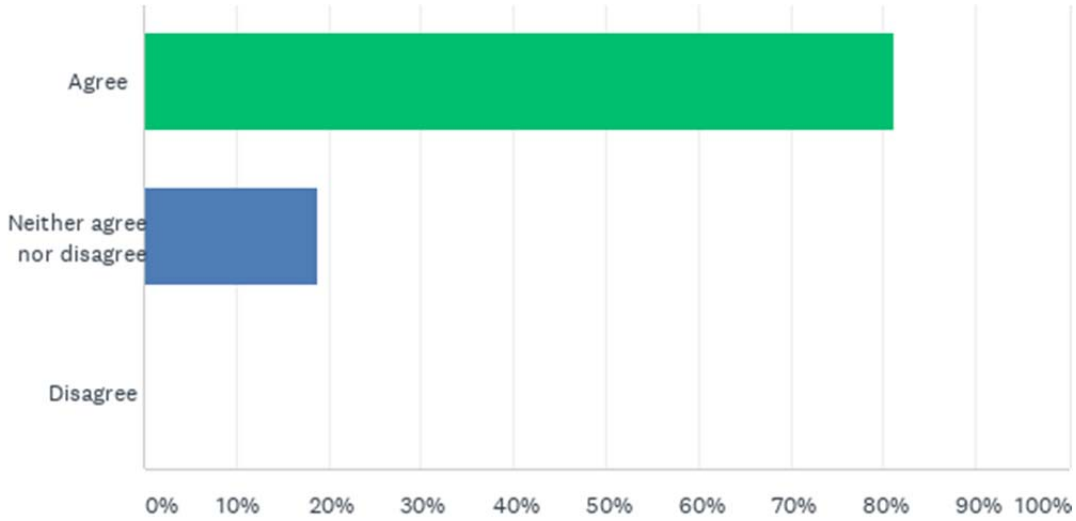
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	81.25%	13
Neither agree nor disagree	12.50%	2
Disagree	6.25%	1
Total Respondents: 16		

Comments (1):

- There is need and demand, but are the funds available?

Q8. There is a need to expand non-emergency medical transportation after normal business hours. Non-emergency medical transportation is transportation to get to and from medical appointments/ visits for routine and preventative care when no elements of life support are required in the vehicle.

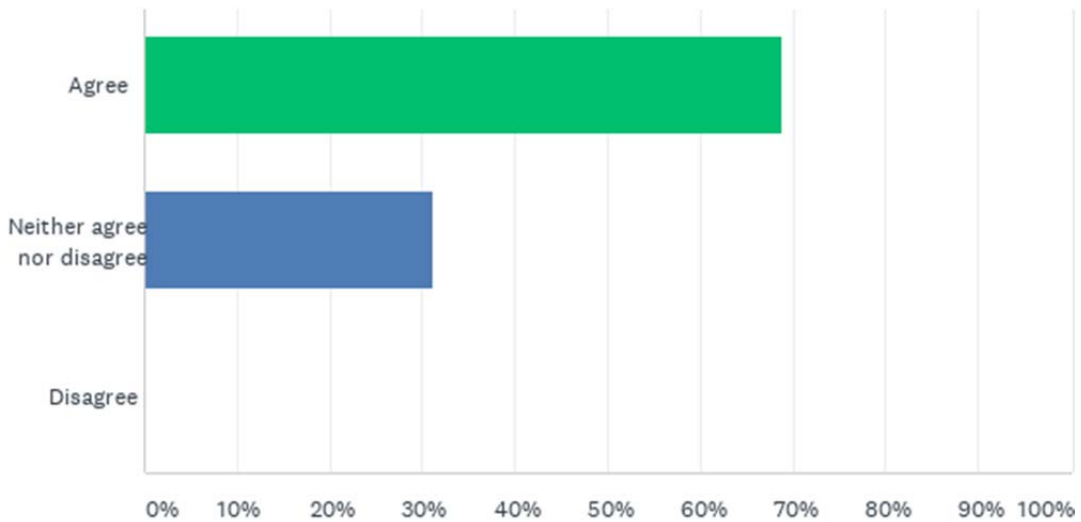
Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	81.25%	13
Neither agree nor disagree	18.75%	3
Disagree	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 16		

Q9. There is a need to expand the out of county destinations of non-emergency medical transportation.

Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



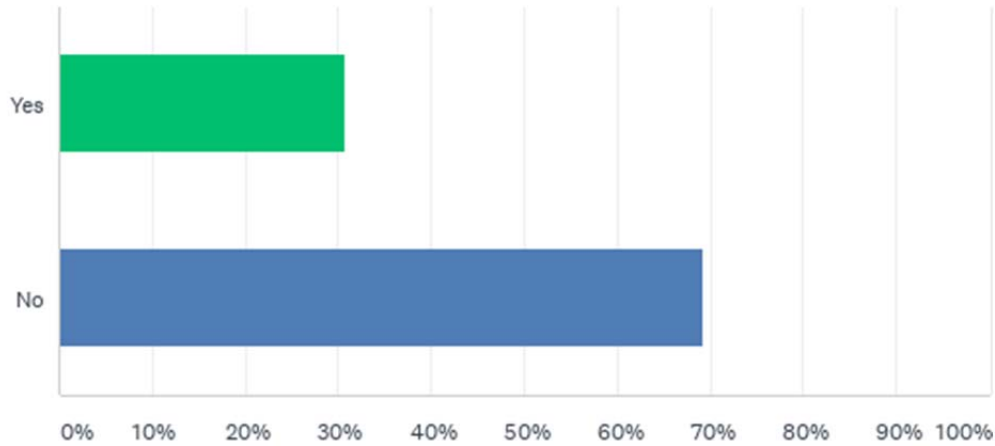
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	68.75%	11
Neither agree nor disagree	31.25%	5
Disagree	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 16		

Comments (1):

- In Willits, we have non-emergency medical transportation already.

Q10. Are there any important social service destinations that are not accessible with current transportation services?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 4



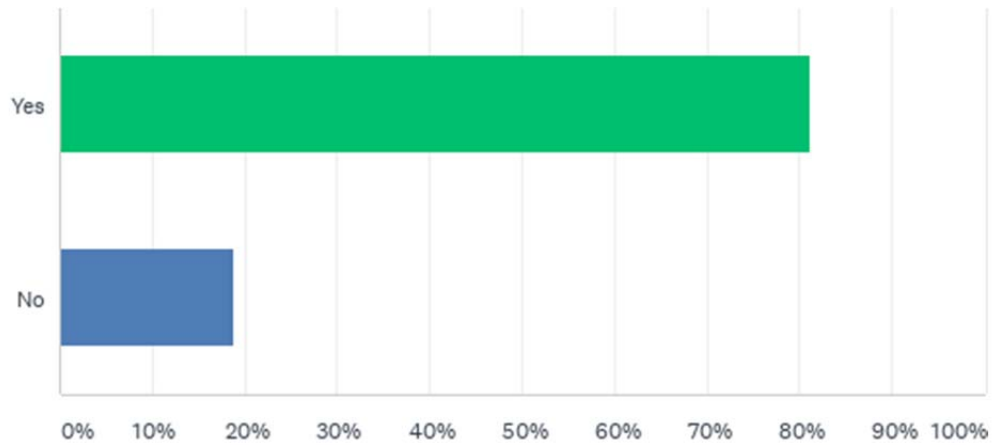
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30.77%	4
No	69.23%	9
Total Respondents: 13		

Comments (4):

- Not for me, but possibly for other people
- I have not had anyone request a ride to any inaccessible social service destinations.
- Foodbanks etc.
- I don't know

Q11. Has the COVID-19 pandemic changed social service transportation needs?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.25%	13
No	18.75%	3
Total Respondents: 16		

Comments (4):

- The COVID19 pandemic has limited the number of passengers we can transport at any one time.
- People don't feel safe on public transportation
- 80% of our clients are sheltering in place and not coming to day programs.
- Too scared to use public transportation due to high-risk population

Q12. Use the space below to include any questions/comments/concerns:

- Would it be helpful to have a Ukiah area on and off again loop route that circled the Senior housing apartments and the shopping centers? Maybe even a passenger van that does a one-hour route loop picking up and dropping off along the way?
- Any extension of service offers non-drivers more access to jobs and increased independence.

Q13. (Optional) If you would like your participation to be noted in the report, please fill out the form below with your details as you would like them to appear.

Title:

- Executive Director (retired)
- Executive director
- Program Director
- Executive Director
- Executive Director

Company/ Organization:

- Ukiah Senior Center
- Potter Valley Tribe
- Willits Seniors Inc.
- Uvah
- UVAH
- UVAH
- Coastal Seniors