

## STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Transit Needs Assessment

**MEETING DATE:** February 16, 2006

**AGENDA ITEM:** 9

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Conduct public hearing on unmet public transportation (transit) needs.

**STAFF CONTACT:** Sarkes Khachek, Michael Powers

**SUMMARY:**

The annual Transit Needs Assessment process, as required by the state Transportation Development Act (TDA), requires SBCAG to hold at least one public hearing each year to receive public comments regarding unmet transit needs. This is the second of two public hearings held by SBCAG. Prior to allocating TDA funds for non-transit purposes, SBCAG must evaluate and make findings regarding the existence of transit needs. The Transit Needs Assessment process schedule is shown in **Attachment 1**. No board action is required at this time.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) statutes require that SBCAG hold at least one public hearing on the existence of unmet transit needs if local agencies plan to allocate TDA - LTF, Article 8 funds for purposes other than transit or bicycle/ pedestrian facilities (i.e., streets and roads). This is the second of two public hearings held by SBCAG. By statute, the highest priority for use of TDA funds is for transit, unless it is found that there are no unmet transit needs or those unmet needs are not reasonable to meet. The purpose of this public hearing is to enable persons to present testimony on any existing unmet transit needs in Santa Barbara County. SBCAG will use the testimony presented at these hearings to assist in making findings regarding the existence of any unmet transit needs.

A notice of this public hearing was published 30 days prior to this hearing (**Attachment 2**) in the Santa Barbara News Press. In addition, flyers notifying the public of the Unmet Transit Needs public hearing, were printed in both English and Spanish (**Attachment 3**), and were distributed

through the Santa Barbara County Transit Advisory Council (SBCTAC) email list which includes public, transit, and, social services representatives, elected officials and members of SBCATC (an email list of over 75 persons).

#### Summary of public input to date

There were twenty-two speakers at the Unmet Transit Needs public hearing held on January 19, 2006 in Santa Maria. Spanish language translation was available at the public hearing. A summary of the comments are located in January 2006 Board minutes. In general, advocates called for all TDA funds to be allocated to transit service, agricultural workers requested service from Santa Maria to the agricultural fields. There were also requests for later transit services to accommodate students' schedules, increased bus stops, and comments regarding efficient and effective transit service where feasible. These comments focused on transit service in the Santa Maria Valley.

A total of twelve emails/letters of correspondence have been received as of February 6, 2006. Copies of this correspondence are located in **Attachment 4**. In general, the comments center on the request for expanded commuter service from Santa Barbara/Goleta to Lompoc and Santa Maria.

Staff also conducted outreach in the form of a focus group with clients of the Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People on Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup>. A summary of the group comments are located in **Attachment 5**. Of note, the focus group was satisfied with the general local service, requesting some local service improvements, with a focus on intercommunity or commuter service to communities and activities outside the Santa Ynez Valley, such as to Lompoc and Santa Maria. Along with weekend service to Santa Barbara.

Public outreach for the North County Transit Plan will be conducted on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at transit centers in Lompoc and Santa Maria. Input received from these public workshops, one-on-one stakeholder interviews, and on-board Santa Ynez Valley Transit surveys will also be included as part of the unmet transit needs assessment.

Staff continues to work with transit and public agencies, SBCTAC and transit advocates in public outreach and collection of pertinent data and consideration of transit needs within the context of the TDA, as well as transit needs in general.

#### Next Steps

After this public hearing, staff will analyze all public input and transit/demographic related data and will begin an initial assessment to determine findings of unmet need and reasonable to meet. A draft of the Transit Needs Assessment report will be presented to the SBCTAC at their March and April 2006 meetings for their review and consideration. The Transit Needs Assessment will also be presented to TTAC at their April meeting for review and consideration. Your board will consider a draft of the report at your April 20 meeting.

#### **COMMITTEE REVIEW:**

SBCTAC is involved throughout the Transit Needs Assessment process pursuant to PUC Section 99238. As well, the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) will be involved in the review and comment on the draft Transit Needs Assessment and SBCTAC will

provide a recommendation regarding the Transit Needs Assessment findings and resolution that will be presented to the SBCAG Board.

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1 Transit Needs Assessment Schedule
- Attachment 2 Public Hearing Notice , South Coast
- Attachment 3 Public Outreach Flyer, South Coast in English and Spanish
- Attachment 4 Emails/Letters of Correspondence
- Attachment 5 Focus Group Comments

## ATTACHMENT 1

### Transit Needs Assessment 2006 Schedule

Action	Benchmark
Consultation with SBCTAC regarding forms of public outreach to be used as part of the Unmet Transit Needs process.	October/December 2005
Public outreach for North County Public Hearing English/Spanish language flyer distribution through-out North County News-release for newspapers and radio (English & Spanish) Request for PSA's (English & Spanish)	December 2005 January 2006
Notice of Public Hearing – North County (media distribution) (Santa Ynez Valley News) (Santa Barbara News Press, Santa Maria Times, Lompoc Record)	December 15 -23, 2005
Posting of notice of Public Hearing on SBCAG web site	January 3, 2006
Public outreach for South Coast Public Hearing English/Spanish language flyer distribution to South Coast social service agencies, public & transit agencies and transit advocates.	January 2006
Notice of Public Hearing – South Coast (media distribution) (Santa Barbara News Press)	January 2006
Notice of Public Hearing on SBCAG web site	January 2006
Public Hearing – North County (Santa Maria)	January 19, 2006
Public Hearing and data review and consultation with SBCTAC	February 2006
Transit Needs Assessment process update and survey data review with TTAC	February 2006
Public Hearing – South Coast SBCTAC presentation of comments to SBCAG Board	February 16, 2006
Draft Transit Needs Assessment	March 2006
Review and comment period for the draft Transit Needs Assessment (including presentation to SBCTAC and TTAC)	March/April 2006
Presentation of Draft Transit Needs Assessment and findings Board comments and consideration of public testimony	April 20, 2006
Board adoption of findings of unmet need and reasonable to meet	May, 2006

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**Public Hearing Notice**



## Public Hearing Notice Unmet Transit Needs

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) is holding a hearing to receive public comments on unmet transit needs in Santa Barbara County, as required under Section 99401.5 of the Public Utilities Code.

**The public hearing will be held:**

**Date:** Thursday, February 16, 2006  
**Time:** 10:00 AM (Time certain)  
**Where:** Board of Supervisors Hearing Room  
105 E. Anapamu Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Santa Barbara, CA

Remote testimony available at Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 511 East Lakeside Parkway, Santa Maria, CA.

Written comments must be received by February 16, 2006. Mail comments to SBCAG at 260 North San Antonio Road, Suite B, Santa Barbara, CA 93110. Comments may also be emailed to [comments@sbcag.org](mailto:comments@sbcag.org). An Unmet Transit Needs on-line comment form is available at [www.sbcag.org](http://www.sbcag.org).

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals needing special accommodations to participate in the meeting should contact SBCAG at least three working days prior to the meeting at (805) 961-8900. A Spanish translator will be available at the hearing.

For more information, call SBCAG at 961-8900. Favor de llamar a SBCAG al 961-8918, para más información del reunión.

**ATTACHMENT 3**

**Public Outreach Flyers**



# Need a ride on the bus?

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments will be holding two public hearings to learn about the transit needs of the residents of Santa Barbara County. Please plan to attend and present your comments or concerns about transit service in Santa Barbara County.

## **In Santa Barbara**

When: Thursday, February 16, 2006 @ 10:00AM  
Where: Board of Supervisors Hearing Room  
105 E. Anapamu Street, 4th Floor  
Santa Barbara, California

Simply come to the public hearing mentioned above by 10:00 AM. Fill out a “comment card” located on the table in the back of the Supervisors Hearing Room. Staff will forward your card to the Board Chair, who will call your name for you to come to the podium and express your views.

You may also send your comments in writing by February 16, 2006 to:

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments  
260 N. San Antonio Rd., Suite B  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
or by email to [publiccomment@sbcag.org](mailto:publiccomment@sbcag.org)

Favor de contactarse con SBCAG al 961-8918 tres días antes de la reunión si usted necesita traducción en español.



# ¿Necesite un paseo en el autobús?

El Association de Gobiernos del Condado de Santa Barbara tendrá dos comentarios publicos para aprender cuales son las necesidades de transito que tienen los residentes del Condado de Santa Barbara. Por favor asista y presente sus comentarios o preocupaciones acerca del servicio de transito en el condado de Santa Barbara.

## **En Santa Barbara**

Cuando: Jueves, 16 de Febrero del 2006 a las 10:00AM  
Donde: Salón Board of Supervisors Hearing Room  
105 E. Anapamu Street, 4th Floor  
Santa Barbara, California

Venga a la junta publica a las 10:00AM. Llene la tarjeta de comentarios que esta en la mesa atrás del salón. Su nombre sera llamado para pasar adelante y dar su punta de vista.

También puede mandar sus comentarios por escrito antes del 16 de Febrero 2006 a:

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments  
260 N. San Antonio Rd., Suite B  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

o por correo electronico a [publiccomment@sbcag.org](mailto:publiccomment@sbcag.org)

Favor de contactarse con SBCAG al 961-8918 tres días antes de la reunión si usted necesita traducción en español.

**ATTACHMENT 4**

**Emails / Letters of Correspondence**

**Comment #1**

**From:** Brian Hanrahan [mailto:HanrahanB@worldminerals.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, May 05, 2005 1:56 PM

**To:** cleanairexpress information

**Subject:** SB/Goleta --> Lompoc commute

Scott,

I just spoke with you and am interested in service from either S.B. or Goleta to Lompoc (preference for S.B. departure) in the morning with return service in the evening. Please let me know if you ever offer this service.

Thanks,  
Brian Hanrahan  
hanrahanb@worldminerals.com

**Comment #2**

**From:** Porter, Lorie [mailto:lorie.porter@thomson.com]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2005 12:29 PM

**To:** Scott L. Spaulding

**Subject:** commute to Santa Maria

Hi,

I was wondering whether there are any clean air express buses going TO SANTA MARIA from Santa Barbara on a daily basis.

Lorie Porter  
lorie.porter@thomson.com

**Comment #3**

**From:** Brown Joyce A Civ 30 SW/XP [mailto:Joyce.Brown@vandenberg.af.mil]

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 06, 2005 10:08 AM

**To:** Scott L. Spaulding

**Subject:** Commuter Service from Goleta to Lompoc/VAFB

Is there commuter service from Goleta to Lompoc in the morning hours?

*Joyce A. Brown  
Office Assistant, 30 SW/XPR  
Vandenberg AFB CA  
Phone: (805) 606-7363  
DSN: 276-7363*

#### **Comment #4**

> **From:** mindy bachrach [mailto:bigmetfan38@yahoo.com]

> **Sent:** Tuesday, September 27, 2005 10:31 PM

> **To:** cleanairexpress information

> **Subject:** carpooling

>

> hi scott,

>

> i spoke with you today about finding a way to get to santa maria from

> santa barbara. i did go to the website you suggested in order to find

> a carpool. i attempted to register but it would not let me do so.

> when i attempted to select that my company was not listed, it sent me

> an error message. when i finally got to the password page, it again

> would not let me complete the process. is there a problem with the

> server or something?

>

> i also wanted to suggest to you that there be a bus service leaving

> from santa barbara going to santa maria daily. i am sure there are

> others in santa barbara who have the same need. please keep me

> informed whether that is going to be happening anytime soon.

>

> please send any suggestions about getting listed for the carpooling

> since i was unable to get through.

>

> thank you so much

>

>

> mindy

#### **Comment #5**

**From:** Walsh, Barbara [mailto:bewalsh@SantaBarbaraCA.gov]

**Sent:** Thursday, December 01, 2005 2:30 PM

**To:** Scott L. Spaulding

**Subject:** Late buses

Steve,

Why aren't there any later buses than the 5:05 from S.B.? Some people have to work later. Will there be one in the future? Leaving around 8:00 or so?

Barbara

**Comment #6**

**From:** Cheryl Rogers  
**Sent:** Monday, January 09, 2006 8:43 AM  
**To:** SBCAG Comments  
**Subject:** Unmet transit needs response

SBCAG:

I would like to call your attention to what I have identified as an unmet transit need. I am an elderly resident who is still driving, however, I foresee a time when I might have disabilities which prevent me from driving. Other than the Easy Ride service for the low-income there is no transportation availability such as a shuttle to take people for groceries or to the hospital.

Although I am not yet disabled I occasionally need transportation to the hospital for a procedure and have no other option than to rely on friends or an expensive cab ride.

I have been an active tax-paying citizen here since 1999 and I feel that the County should sponsor a shuttle service for the above-noted purpose. Many elderly would be able to afford some partial payment toward this service, so I believe that County leadership on this issue would be greatly helpful.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cheryl Rogers

**Comment # 7 - Received on Tuesday, January 17, 2006 via telephone**

Richard Maxwell of Lompoc telephoned and suggested that there be a transit service on Saturdays for residents of Lompoc to travel to and from Santa Barbara and Santa Maria for shopping purposes.

He also commented:

- Flyers or signs should be posted in a more professional manner on The Breeze bus to keep and attract more 'choice' riders.
- Wi-Fi (wireless internet accessibility) would be a great addition on the Clean Air Express so people can connect to the internet to do work on the bus.

**Comment #8**

**From:** Hinshaw, Thomas [mailto:thinshaw@sbcourts.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 18, 2006 2:29 PM  
**To:** Scott L. Spaulding  
**Subject:** Commuting to Santa Maria

**Will there ever be a Clean Air Express (maybe a smaller bus) from Santa Barbara to Santa Maria in the morning and back in the afternoon?**

**Tom Hinshaw**

**Comment #9**

**From:** Hinshaw, Thomas [mailto:thinshaw@sbcourts.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2006 8:47 AM  
**To:** Scott L. Spaulding  
**Subject:** RE: Commuting to Santa Maria

**Scott:** Thank you for your prompt reply. I need to get to work in Santa Maria by 8:00 a.m. (or at least close to that). I would need a bus that leaves Santa Barbara - - depending on how many stops there are after my pickup spot -- around 6:30 or 6:45. The ideal return bus would leave Santa Maria at 5:15 or so. It will be interesting to see how many people have this need. With North County employment growing and people already settled in South County considering those jobs, I would think the need would grow. Have you considered running smaller buses on routes with less demand? I realize some of the costs -- like the driver -- are fixed and small bus savings may not be significant.

Thanks again. I look forward to your analysis.

Tom Hinshaw

**Comment #10**

**From:** webserver@sbcag.org [mailto:webserver@sbcag.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2006 10:59 AM  
**To:** PublicCommentSBCAG  
**Subject:** Data posted to form 1 of <http://sbcag.org/public-comment.html>

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FirstName: Sara  
LastName: Macdonald

I would like to see The Breeze Service expand to Saturdays and evenings. Also if we could get all the transit organizations to have shuttle services done during all the major festivals throughout the area. Think of the gas that would be saved if people from Lompoc could take the bus in to Santa Maria for the Fair and also The Midstate fair and to the Flower Festival, Danish Days, Fiesta, and Greek Festival etc. During the summer months these buses could also be a way to have transportation to the PCPA in both Santa Maria and Solvang! Have these shuttle opportunities expanded to run in the evenings during major festival times, this could be a creative way of marketing the transit lines.

One area of concern is the need for demand response and door to door service in Lompoc on Sundays and a neighborhood shuttle service up in the Village for the elderly and disabled. Thank you for all that you do in the area of transit and road care. I also urge the passage of the renewal of Measure D.

**Comment #11****From:** Pedro Lopez [mailto:yogibear805@hotmail.com]**Sent:** Friday, January 20, 2006 6:46 PM**To:** SBCAG Information Requests**Subject:** Mixteco comments

I am writing in concerns about the petition that was submitted to board in order to provide transportation to farm workers.

Not all farm workers agree with what they are petitioning. I don't think it is a good Idea that people such as Jesus Estrada who head the FIOB be speacking for all the mixtecos and farm workers in the area. We don't think It will be effective especially since it won't be free and not everyone is benefiting from it. Another reason why it is not a fair to grant such transportation is because these people petitioning don't really represent the whole farm working people or mixtecos. These people representing the farm workers only have about ten families they are representing; it is obvious that all they seek is to misuse the money that belong better to be use else were chosen by the board to meet the need of the whole community. I think that maybe you should try and contact all the other organization that represent the Mixtecos and the farm workers such as the earlier organization that were involve in the beginning of the petition for transportation. I am aware that when the petition initiated it was delegated by more than to local organization here in Santa Maria but, one decided to withdraw the support because of some disagreements within the farm working community. I hope you try and contact this other organization. I would also like to remind you that most farm workers really want are drivers licenses and not transportation.

Thank you for you time,

Jose Luis

**Comment #12****From:** jaruhge [mailto:jaruhge@hotmail.com]**Sent:** Saturday, February 04, 2006 1:04 PM**To:** Gregg Hart**Subject:** UTN

To: SBCAG--Unmet Transportation Needs Meeting Santa Maria, 1-18-2006, 10am.

The only unmet transportation need in the county is in the unwidened 14 miles of highway 101 between Milpas and La Conchita, 11 miles in Santa Barbara County and 3 miles in Ventura County. This 14% of the National Highway is the only portion unwidened between Fairview in Goleta and Los Angeles. All the rest has been widened to 6 and 8 lanes in the past 20 years.

With the widening of this small remaining portion of the National Highway, Clean Air Express busses can be used to transport workers between Santa Barbara and Ventura.

There are no other Unmet Transportation Needs in the County.

SBCAG should not consider providing transportation for Santa Maria field hands. Many of these are illegal immigrants and as felons should not be supported by state tax dollars.

There is no reason why the ranchers that employ these workers should not pick them up at designated spots in the town and take them to their fields if they wish. The public sector should not pay for this private service.

Concerned Taxpayers, I.N.C. Justin M. Ruhge, Lompoc, Ca. 93436, [jaruhge@Hotmail.com](mailto:jaruhge@Hotmail.com)

**ATTACHMENT 5**

**Focus Group Comments**

To: SBCAG Board  
Date: February 1, 2006  
Re: Unmet Transit Needs Focus Group Session with Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People  
From: Sarkes Khachek, SBCAG

As part of the public outreach process for the annual unmet transit needs assessment for Santa Barbara, SBCAG staff coordinated with the Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People (SYVPHP) program to conduct a focus-group meeting with their clients.

The SYVPHP program aims to improve the lives of residents in the Santa Ynez Valley by addressing emergency and basic needs and furnishing comprehensive integrated family and individual support services.

The focus group session was held on the evening of Friday, January 20, 2006 at Santa Ynez Valley Union High School. There were 9 attendees/clients from SYVPHP program (see below for attendee list) and Spanish translation was provided. Staff provided attendees with an overview of available local transit services in addition to intercommunity transit and services offered by SBCAG's Traffic Solutions program. About half the attendees use Santa Ynez Valley Transit (SYVT) services and those who didn't utilize the service responded they would if the schedules and routes met their needs.

When clients were asked which major destinations they would like transit service to, the majority of destinations were located in Lompoc and Santa Maria. There was also heavy input to reach Santa Barbara on the weekends. In terms of local service, clients responded that they would like shorter-time routes on SYVT. See below for a summary of comments on transit services from attendees.

**Attendees:**

Maria Magdalena  
Martha Caramibias  
Hilda Navarro  
Monica Martinez  
Elivia Santos  
Liz Guerrero  
Rosaura Guerrero  
Maria Zepada  
Arelfo Zepada

**Transit Comments:**

- Service from Solvang to Lompoc and Santa Maria with early evening departures for students attending Allan Hancock College.
- Service from Solvang to Santa Barbara on the weekends with morning arrivals to Santa Barbara and evening arrival to Solvang for shopping purposes
- Service from Solvang to Lompoc and Santa Maria in the mornings with returns in the evening to reach destinations such as the Department of Motor Vehicles, Courthouse, County medical facilities, Walmart, Social Services buildings and Allan Hancock College.
- Evening service from the Santa Ynez Valley to Santa Barbara

- More information on transit services in Spanish on television and radio advertisements
- Shorter route on Santa Ynez Valley Transit