

## STAFF REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Transit Needs Assessment Update

**MEETING DATE:** January 9, 2007

**AGENDA ITEM:** 5

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- A. Receive report on actions taken by SBCAG Board at December meeting.
- B. Receive report from City of Lompoc Transit on Workshop held November 14.
- C. Receive report from Santa Maria Area Transit on Workshop held November 18.
- D. Receive report from Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District on various transit public meetings held during the month of November.
- E. Discuss next steps in responding to public input at workshops.
- F. Consider comments to present at SBCAG unmet transit needs hearing on January 18.

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

**DISCUSSION:**

**Summary of actions taken by SBCAG Board at December 2006 meeting**

At the December 2006 SBCAG Board meeting, SBCAG staff presented recommended changes to the definition of 'Reasonable to Meet.'

A public hearing notice was published in the Santa Barbara News Press announcing the opportunity for public review and comment on the recommended changes to the 'reasonable to meet' definition.

Staff presented SBCTAC's recommended changes along with staff's recommendations. The only difference between the two recommendations was that staff recommended retaining Criteria 3b of the 'reasonable to meet' definition. Staff believed that maintaining ridership data is vital in determining the viability of a new transit service.

The Board reviewed the recommended changes to unmet transit needs definitions and received no public comment on the item at the December meeting.

The SBCAG Board approved staff's recommended changes to the definition of 'reasonable to meet.'

The adopted definitions will be used as part of the upcoming annual unmet transit needs assessment. The revised final definition is in Attachment 1.

### **Unmet Transit Needs Public Outreach**

The SBCAG Board also received a presentation on public outreach efforts for this year's unmet transit needs process. With the public workshops that Lompoc and Santa Maria held in November along with SBMTD's public input meetings, staff recommended that SBCAG only conduct one unmet transit needs hearing. This hearing would be held at the January 18<sup>th</sup> SBCAG Meeting in Santa Maria.

The SBCAG Board approved staff's recommendation and set the public hearing date and time for Thursday, January 18, 2007 at 10AM. Remote testimony will be available for residents on the South Coast.

Staff requests SBCTAC's assistance in notifying local agencies of the January 18, 2007 Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing. See attached flyer for January's SBCAG public hearing for distribution.

#### City of Lompoc Public Workshop

As previously mentioned, the City of Lompoc conducted a public workshop on 'unmet transit needs' on the evening Tuesday, November 14, 2006 in the City Council Chambers. The workshop was an opportunity for residents to receive an overview of available transit services in the Lompoc valley and to provide comments and recommendations for new or expanded services. Comments received at the workshop are included as Attachment 2 to the staff report.

#### City of Santa Maria Public Workshop

Similar to the City of Lompoc, Santa Maria also conducted a public workshop in coordination with the Santa Maria Area Transit Riders Advisory Committee. This workshop was held on Saturday, November 18, 2006 and was similar in format to the Lompoc workshop. Comments received at the workshop are included as Attachment 3.

#### SBMTD Public Input Meetings

On the South Coast, SBMTD conducted four public input meetings as part of their annual service change process. Two public meetings were at the Santa Barbara Public Library on November 13 and two were held at the Goleta Valley Community Center on November 14, 2006. SBMTD provided a summary of upcoming service changes and received comment. A

summary of the public input received at the meetings will be presented by an SBMTD representative at the SBCTAC meeting.

#### Responding to comments received at Public Workshops and Meetings

With the completion of the public workshops, it is prudent to discuss the next steps in addressing input received. While some comments were operational in nature, others were for new or expanded services which apply to Transit Needs Assessment. One option SBCTAC has is to formulate and submit comment to the SBCAG Board at the January 18<sup>th</sup> Unmet Transit Needs hearing based on the input received at the workshops and meetings as discussed below. Another option is to hold an evening workshop in Lompoc or Santa Maria to discuss the need for transit improvements with the public.

#### NEXT STEPS

The committee should consider if it wishes to present testimony before the SBCAG board at the upcoming hearing on January 18, 2007. In the past, SBCTAC has presented testimony on unmet transit needs.

#### **Attachments:**

- Attachment 1: Definitions of 'unmet transit need' and 'reasonable to meet'
- Attachment 2: Summary of November 14, 2006 Lompoc Public Workshop
- Attachment 3: Summary of November 18, 2006 Santa Maria Public Workshop
- Attachment 4: UTN Public Hearing Flyers – English and Spanish

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **DEFINITIONS OF 'UNMET TRANSIT NEED' AND 'REASONABLE TO MEET'**

An unmet transit need is the expressed or identified need of the community for additional public transportation services to meet existing basic mobility needs which are not currently being met through the existing system of public transit services or private transportation services. Included, at a minimum, are those public transportation or specialized services which are identified in the Regional Transportation Plan, short-range transit plan, and/or transit development plan that have not been implemented or funded.

If an expressed or identified need is determined by SBCAG to be an "operational issue", it shall not be considered to be an unmet transit need. Requests that do not require an identifiable additional increment of service will generally be considered operational. Issues such as, but not limited to, the adequacy of location of bus stops, minor route improvements, marketing, and service reliability will generally be considered operational.

The identified needs must be for the system of general public transit services. All eligible users of a given service should have equivalent access or opportunity to use the service.

### **REASONABLE TO MEET CRITERIA** (Amended 12/21/06)

An identified unmet transit need shall be determined to be "reasonable to meet" if SBCAG determines that the transit service will be in general compliance with the following criteria:

1. Can be implemented consistent with the transportation improvement priorities, policies and performance standards contained in the Regional Transportation Plan, the transit development plan, or the short-range transit plan for the area.
2. Can be implemented safely and in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
3. Excluding the first three years of operation, the additional transit service shall not cause the system of which it is a part to fail to meet systemwide performance standards including:
  - a. the operator's ability to maintain the required fare to operating cost ratio;
  - b. the estimated number of passengers carried per service hour for proposed service shall be in the range of other similar services provided
4. The proposed service would not cause claimant to incur expenses in excess of the maximum allocation of TDA funds.
5. The proposed service is projected to reach a 20% fare box recovery within 3 years, 10% in non-urbanized areas providing rural services, 10% in non urbanized areas serving urban areas, and projected to show continuous progress toward meeting the fare box recovery ratio within 3 years.

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**Summary of November 18, 2006 City of Lompoc Public Workshop Notes**

**Transit Needs Community Meeting, November 14, 2006  
Lompoc Community Center**

Comment #1 – Concerning Route 5. Rider lives at Locust & Fir. No fixed routes are close enough to walk to her home and walk is uphill. Currently must use Dial-A –Ride to be dropped off at home.

Comment #2 – Buses 89 & 90 - smell moldy when heater turned on, etc. Can we get new buses to replace these?

Comment #3 – Bus service is the best it has been in the last few years. Drivers are trying harder to make times. Load kids onto bus efficiently; buses are clean & comfortable, frequency good. Bus always comes even if running late.

Question – Is it possible to have Sunday Service with one bus running all routes.

Comment #5 – Client would like Santa Barbara bus to run 3 days a week (Tues. Wed. & Thur.) rather than 2. Client is happy that changes have been made to allow people to get off in Buellton if necessary.

Question – Can buses run until midnight?

Comment #7 – Would like a bus route that regularly goes between Solvang/Buellton & Lompoc. There is interest from people living in Buellton who would like to be able to come to Lompoc for shopping, appointments, etc. as well as interest from those living in Lompoc who work in Solvang/Buellton.

Comment #8 – Client would like a bus that goes to S.B throughout the day.

**ATTACHMENT 3**  
**Summary of comments received at the Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT) Unmet  
Transit Needs Workshop**  
**Saturday, November 28, 2006**

# Summary of comments received at the Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT) UTN Workshop Saturday, November 28, 2006

## In attendance were:

Vibiana Saavedra

Lucille Pacheco

Elia Toledo

Ina (sp?) Lopez

Mary McKinley (MV transportation)

Natalia Bautista

John M. Graf

Barry Stotts

Ed Zoost

Mary Wilson

Hilda Zacarias

(Santa Maria City Council-elect)

## Staff

Eustaquio Valdez

Michael Seden-Hansen

## Santa Barbara County

Matt Dobberteen

## **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED**

### Facility issues:

- Route 1/8 transfer point southbound stop needs to be bigger.
- Donovan Road and College Drive by Chevron – stop is too dark.
- The Community Clinic at Miller Street and Santa Maria Way needs a stop.
- Shelter at Allan Hancock College on Bradley Road does not have working lights.
- A mini-schedule for the night service should be posted on shelters.
- A mixed use transit center might qualify for downtown redevelopment grants. Office space could be a source of revenue.
- Less distance to bus stops – does city have a plan to have bus stops no more than 6 blocks from any destination.

### Operational issues:

- The bus serving Waller Park could go straight to Goodwin Road after the Chumash Bus stop.
- Route 40 could go 1-way in Westgate.
- Routes 7 and 8 could be interlined.

- Routes 8 and 1 could be interlined on weekdays, as is currently done on weekends.
- Run Route 24 to Blosser Road to improve service.
- Route 5 could be more utilized than it is.
- Headways could be increased on heavily traveled routes.
- Better service in northeast Santa Maria is desirable.
- Feeders and connectors could connect Railroad Street, Miller Street, College Drive, Suey Road and Bradley Road.
- Bus stops should be closer to each other (riders were requested to cite specific locations where stops are too far apart).
- More service on Broadway, as well as on other of the busiest streets.
- Routes that cover more of the Northwest area same with northeast.
- Marketing should be targeted to the whole community.
- Keep the transit system growing.
- Service to community events could be better provided.

#### Fleet Issues:

- Drivers do not need to use A/C – open windows and vents can be used instead to regulate bus interior temperatures.
- Bus 162 has a problem door – it closes too slowly, and slows down the route while the driver is waiting for it to close.
- Bus 187 could have micro-screen windows for better ventilation.

#### Other City issues:

- Street lights are out at Preisker Lane.
- On Route 7 at Betteravia Road and Bradley Road, potholes in the road are an issue.

#### Breeze Bus:

- Bike space on the Breeze remains an issue – more is needed.
- Weekend service on the Breeze would be desirable.

#### Comment on services not administered by the City:

- More frequent service to and from Guadalupe.
- Better service from Santa Maria to Santa Barbara, and additional runs.

**Attachment 4**  
**UTN Public Hearing Flyers – English and Spanish**



# Need a ride on the bus?

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments will be holding a public hearing 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 Maria**

When: **Thursday, January 18, 2007 @ 10:00AM**

Where: **Board of Supervisors Hearing Room  
511 East Lakeside Parkway  
Santa Maria, 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.

Persons may also address the SBCAG Board by using the remote video testimony system located at the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 105 East Anapamu Street, Fourth Floor, Santa Barbara, CA.

You may also send your comments in writing by **February 13, 2007** 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 Maria**

Cuando: Jueves, 18 de Enero del 2007 a las 10:00AM  
Donde: Salón Board of Supervisors Hearing Room  
511 East Lakeside Parkway  
Santa Maria, California

Venga a uno de los dos comentarios publicos mencionados a las 10:00 AM. 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.

Personas pueden dar sus comentarios a la mesa directiva de SBCAG atraves de video remoto en el Salón Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, 105 East Anapamu Street, Cuarto Piso, Santa Barbara, CA.

También puede mandar sus comentarios por escrito antes del 13 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 neccesita traducción en español.