



LAKE COUNTY/CITY AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

Lisa Davey-Bates, Executive Director
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525 South Main Street, Suite G
Ukiah, CA 95482

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC) AGENDA

DATE: Wednesday, February 19, 2025

TIME: 1:30 pm

PLACE: City of Lakeport
Large Conference Room
225 Park Street
Lakeport, California

Zoom Login

Dial-in number: **1-669-900-6833** / Meeting ID: **890 4027 7106** Passcode: **999044**

*Zoom link provided to the public by request

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1. Call to Order and Introductions
 2. Public Input
 3. Approval of Draft November 14, 2024 SSTAC Meeting Minutes
 4. Update on the 2026 Lake County Regional Transportation Plan / Active Transportation Plan (*Speka*)
 5. FY 2025/26 Unmet Transit Needs Process and Proposed Approval (*Sookne*)
 6. Update on Lake Links
 7. Update on Lake Transit Projects and Grants
 8. Update on Lake Transit Authority (LTA) meetings
 - a. Next meeting date March 12, 2025
 9. Update on Human Services Transportation Programs
 - a. People Services (*Dakari*)
 - b. Other programs and plans
 10. Discussion of issues and/or concerns of the members of the SSTAC
 11. Discuss next meeting Date: TBD
 12. Announcements/Good of the Order
 13. Adjourn SSTAC meeting

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Any member of the public may speak on any agenda item when recognized by the Chair for a time period, not to exceed 3 minutes per person and not more than 10 minutes per subject, prior to the Public Agency taking action on that agenda item.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) REQUESTS

To request disability-related modifications or accommodations for accessible locations or meeting materials in alternative formats (as allowed under Section 12132 of the ADA) please contact the APC office at (707) 234-3314, at least 72 hours before the meeting.

Date posted: 2/13/25

List of Attachments:

- Agenda Item #3: November 14, 2024 Draft meeting minutes*
- Agenda Item #5: Staff Report: 2025/26 Unmet Transit Needs Process
Adopted Definitions
24/25 Adopted Unmet Needs List & Findings*
- Agenda Item #6: Lake Links Mobility Report*



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SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC) MEETING Draft Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 14, 2024
1:00 p.m.

Location
Lake Transit Authority
9240 Highway 53
Lower Lake, CA

Present: Laurie Fisher; Karen Dakari; Rev. Shannon Kimbell-Auth, Theresa Showen (for Melinda Lahr), Holly Goetz (1:10 p.m.)

Absent: Annie Barnes

Non-SSTAC Attendees: Saskia Rymer-Burnett (Caltrans); Blake Batten (Caltrans); Faith Newton, TRI (Consultant)

Staff Present: James Sookne, Lisa Davey-Bates, John Speka

1. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. Public Input

None.

3. Approval of Draft April 29, 2024 SSTAC Meeting Minutes

Laurie motioned, Karen seconded, to approve the April 29, 2024, minutes as presented.

Ayes: Laurie, Karen; Nays – None; Abstain - Theresa

4. Update on Wildfire Evacuation and Preparedness Plan

John stated that the Lake APC had received a grant to develop a Wildfire Evacuation and Preparedness Plan for Lake County. The Lake APC hired The Resiliency Initiative (TRI) to do the work. He introduced Faith Newton from TRI to go over what the plan is and to get input from the SSTAC.

Faith began by giving a project overview, with the main objectives of the project being to identify and mitigate risk, finalize evacuation routes, develop communication procedures, and establish coordination protocols. The project is currently in the public outreach phase and is on track to have the final deliverable complete in October 2025. Faith went over the demographics of Lake County, noting that Lake County has a higher percentage of vulnerable populations than the state average. Faith went over the results of the public outreach survey that TRI just completed, which was promoted through social media and various community events. She said that these results were just the initial results since the survey closed last Friday, but TRI will dive deeper into the results.

Pastor Shannon asked if this survey was able to access the vulnerable populations. She also asked if LTA or Lake Links helped with evacuations during disasters and if so, how many people utilized public transit. Pastor Shannon said she'll provide some additional data regarding disasters and survey data. Theresa asked how people were able to access the survey. Faith stated it was primarily online, but TRI did work with the library system to make it available there. The Lake APC and TRI also distributed the survey at the County Fair and the Health and Wellness Expo, resulting in over 50 handwritten surveys. Theresa stated that while those were good efforts, she's concerned that the survey missed some of the most vulnerable populations such as people who are homebound or unhoused.

Pastor Shannon asked if the survey could be reopened. Faith said she would discuss it with the Lake APC and go from there. Pastor Shannon felt that the survey would be bolstered by getting responses from the following groups of people: those who receive meals on wheels because many are homebound; homeless shelter providers who have direct contact with the unhoused, on-site interviews at senior centers; and NCO because they're doing the case management for people impacted by the Boyles fire, many of whom were Spanish speakers.

Pastor Shannon mentioned that the County has a contract with 2-1-1, who has a contract with the United Way, who has a contract with Lyft, to provide free transportation to people who are homebound that need help with evacuations. This is currently an underutilized service since there are only three Lyft drivers in Lake County who are available to provide this service. Theresa mentioned that, in the past, LTA has done a good job to help with evacuations. Pastor Shannon asked if there was data specific to LTA's assistance during disasters. James stated that there is data from the Valley and Rocky fires but not from the more recent fires because LTA wasn't utilized in those. Lisa stated that LTA could be better utilized to help during disasters and asked Faith if that was something that could be looked at further in the report.

5. FY 2025/26 Unmet Transit Needs Process and Proposed Approval

James quickly reviewed the FY 24/25 Unmet Transit Needs list. He stated that this list is a little shorter than in previous years due to the removal of the two NEMT needs that had been on it. Although those needs have technically been met, LTA and Lake Links are continuing to work on them to make them better.

Theresa asked if LTA still had a driver shortage. James stated that LTA currently has enough drivers, however a public hearing was just held to reduce service. These service cuts were made to help reduce costs to address a budget deficit and make the system financially sustainable. Theresa asked if there is a route to Spring Valley or if that is LTA's plans. James stated that the Transit Development Plan identified lifeline service to Spring Valley as a potential new service, but there isn't funding for that at this time.

Pastor Shannon clarified that LTA's current issue isn't a driver shortage but a funding shortage. James concurred and explained that the cost of doing business continues to rise for several factors such as paying the drivers a living wage, increased insurance costs, and an increase in maintenance costs.

The group reviewed Lake Transit Authority's responses to the FY 24/25 Unmet Transit Needs list. James mentioned that he and Lisa had discussions about whether Unmet Transit Needs #3 and #4 (below) could be removed from the list since some service has been established through Medi-Links, the Pay-Your-Pal Program, and the up-and-coming volunteer driver program. He clarified that it doesn't mean that work to improve those services won't continue, but that there is at least some service that is available to meet these needs.

James stated that he plans to do additional outreach to see if there are additional needs in the community. Holly said a QR code in the waiting rooms at medical facilities would be a good idea. Theresa said she could send something out with the welfare-to-work mailing. Pastor Shannon mentioned community health workers would be another good place since they directly interface with vulnerable populations.

6. Update on Lake Links

Laurie stated that there are approximately 85 people enrolled in the Pay-Your-Pal program at this time, which pays \$0.40 per mile and caps out at 300 miles. After reviewing the available grant funds, Lake Links decided to do a three-month promotion for the holidays, increasing the mileage reimbursement rate to \$0.50 per mile and increasing the mileage cap to 400 miles. They have also expanded the types of trips that are allowed under the program to increase peoples' quality of life.

Regarding distributing materials, she said that Lake Links sends out mileage reimbursement forms every month, and something could be included in there. Many clients don't use cell phones or email addresses so something like a QR code wouldn't work.

Pastor Shannon asked if the Pay-Your-Pal program could be used to transport people to resiliency centers during extreme weather events. Laurie said it would be good to get together with Pastor Shannon to get a clearer picture of what that could look like and see what types of grants are available for this.

Laurie reported that Ride Links started in September of 2023. It took about 10 months to get insurance for the program, which delayed implementation. This program is an alternative for people who don't have a driver for the Pay-Your-Pal program. Another volunteer driver training will be held on December 6. The program has been soft-launched but hasn't been heavily promoted yet due to a lack of volunteer drivers.

7. Update on Lake Transit Projects and Grants

James reported LTA has entered into an agreement with a consultant to do project management for the transit center project and that the hydrogen buses and infrastructure is on hold for now. The consultant will manage the transit center portion from design through construction. The next step is to get a Request for Proposals out for the design of the transit center. The current schedule is to have the center constructed by September of 2027.

Pastor Shannon asked if there are other grants that are available to help with operations that are being missed. James replied that there are a lot of grants available for capital projects, especially for the conversion to zero-emission vehicles, but there are only a few available to LTA for operations.

8. Update on Lake Transit Authority (LTA) Meetings

a. December 11, 2024 meeting

James stated that the next meeting is December 11 and the only thing on the agenda would be the first quarter report.

9. Update on Human Services Transportation Programs

a. People Services

Karen reported that People Services brought on an onboarding specialist and she's amazing. Hiring people has been a huge challenge since the pandemic but things are starting to improve.

b. Other programs and plans

10. Discussion of issues and/or concerns of the members of the SSTAC

Karen asked how long 2-1-1 has been in place. Pastor Shannon said the contract is new and she's expecting more information to be coming out in the near future.

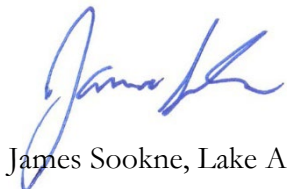
11. Discuss next meeting Date: James stated that the next meeting will be in late January or February. James said he'd send out a poll at a later date.

12. Announcements/Good of the Order

None.

13. Adjourn SSTAC Meeting - Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



James Sookne, Lake APC Administration



SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TITLE: 2025/26 Unmet Transit Needs Process

DATE PREPARED: 2/11/25

MEETING DATE: 2/19/25

SUBMITTED BY: James Sookne, Program Manager

BACKGROUND: Lake APC has been conducting formal Unmet Transit Needs processes since 2014. The process is a requirement of the Transit Development Act (TDA) prior to a region using any Local Transportation Funds (LTF) for streets and roads purposes. Although the APC does not allocate any LTF funds for streets and roads purposes, the process is still considered useful as a means of identifying potential transit needs in the region as well as analyzing opportunities for Lake Transit Authority (LTA) to meet those needs if feasible. It assists the APC and LTA in determining how to best use the limited transit funding available to the region. The Unmet Transit Needs process also meets TDA requirements calling for annual public input opportunities for transit dependent or transit disadvantaged persons before the SSTAC.

The SSTAC met in November and reviewed the previous year's list of Unmet Transit Needs that were approved by the Lake APC Board. The next step will be for the SSTAC to develop the 2025/26 list of needs, the basis for which will be the FY 24/25 list. Once developed, the 2025/26 list will be presented to the APC Board at a public hearing in May to determine whether any of the needs qualify as an "unmet transit need" consistent with the approved definitions (attached). The Unmet Transit Needs will then be directed to APC and LTA staff members for analysis and further review by the SSTAC. Following this analysis, a recommendation will go to the APC Board determining whether or not any of the needs are considered "reasonable to meet." If needs are found reasonable to meet, those needs will then become part of the budgeting process.

ACTION REQUIRED: Develop a list of Unmet Transit Needs in Lake County that will be presented to the Lake APC at a public hearing. If desired, advise the APC on any other major transit issues per TDA mandated SSTAC duties.

ALTERNATIVES: None

RECOMMENDATION: None

**Adopted Definitions for the
Unmet Transit Needs Process
Approved by the APC 12/10/14**

Unmet Transit Need: Whenever a need by a significant number of people to be transported by moderate or low cost transportation to specific destinations for necessary purposes is not being satisfied through existing public or private resources.

Reasonable to Meet: It is reasonable to meet a transit need if all of the following conditions prevail:

- Funds are available, or there is a reasonable expectation that funds will become available. This criterion alone will not be used to determine reasonableness.
- Benefits of services, in terms of number of passengers served and severity of need, justify costs
- With the added service, the transit system as a whole will be capable of meeting the Transportation Development Act fare revenue/operating cost requirements
- Transit services designed or intended to address an unmet transit need shall not duplicate transit services currently provided either publicly or privately
- 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



Lake Transit Authority

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April 19, 2024

Lisa Davey-Bates
Executive Director
Lake Area Planning Council
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Lake Transit Authority Response to Potential Unmet Transit Needs & Recommended Findings for the APC FY 2024/25

Dear SSTAC Members, Technical Advisory Committee Members, and APC:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the list of FY 2024/25 Potential Unmet Needs. Lake Transit Authority (LTA) takes these very seriously. It is unfortunate that all available TDA dollars are already expended making our response to new potential needs difficult. In most cases, responding to an unmet need will mean that LTA and/ or the APC must either find a new funding source, such as a federal or state grant, or weigh the importance of the unmet against cutting an existing service.

1. Eastbound service to Spring Valley. Currently, there is no service east of SR 53.

Response: Transit service for residents of Spring Valley is an unmet need. The Live Oak Transportation Project, an FTA Section 5317 funded program that was sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging and operated by Live Oak Senior Center, attempted to serve Spring Valley residents while that project was active for several years beginning in 2009; however, there was very little demand for service. The recommendation from the FY 22/23 Unmet Transit Needs Process was to further study this issue during the current update to the Transit Development Plan for Lake County. The 2023 Transit Development Plan recommends operating a lifeline service from Clearlake/Lower Lake to Spring Valley two times a day, one day a week. This service would be by advance reservation only and would cost approximately \$11,000 per year.

Recommended Finding: At this time, service to Spring Valley is an unmet need that is unreasonable to meet due to a lack of resources.

2. Eastbound service, allowing people to connect with service to the Sacramento area. Currently, the closest connection is at the Cache Creek Casino.

Response: Intercity bus service connecting to Sacramento is an unmet need that may be reasonable to meet. Lake Transit Authority was included in a coordinated joint Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) grant application submitted by the Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) that would provide capital funding for a zero-emission bus project for Phase II of the North State Express. Unfortunately, SRTA's TIRCP application that included this service was not successful. LTA is currently working with SRTA and other rural northern California transit agencies on interagency connectivity, which would include a connection from Lake County to I-5. At this time, these plans are purely conceptual and due to a lack of funding, it is unknown when implementation will occur. Therefore, this unmet need is not reasonable to meet.

Recommended Finding: The unmet need for service connecting to the Sacramento region is unreasonable to meet at this time due to a lack of funding.

3. Fixed route service on Sundays. Another frequently noted need subject to funding availability.

Response: There is a need for service on Sundays throughout Lake County, as noted during the public survey process during the 2023 update to the Transit Development Plan (TDP). Based on transit industry statistical evidence, transit service attracts fewer riders on Saturday than weekdays, and even fewer on Sunday than on Saturday. LTA Saturday ridership supports the industry evidence as there are 35 to 40 percent fewer Lake Transit riders on Saturdays than on weekdays. Sundays would likely generate even fewer riders. A recommendation from the 2023 TDP is to do a pilot project within the City of Clearlake that would offer on-demand microtransit service on Sundays from 9:00AM to 3:00PM, for an approximate annual cost of \$31,300. This pilot project would gauge whether this type of service could be implemented in other major community centers throughout the County.

Recommended Finding: There is an unmet need for transit service on Sundays. The need is not reasonable to meet at this time due to a lack of funding.

4. NEMT after normal business hours. Instances in which a need for non-emergency transport arises outside of normal service hours.

Response: During LTA business hours, many NEMT needs are met by LTA transit and paratransit services. When LTA is closed, the only resources are typically taxi and emergency medical transportation provided by fire districts. Utilizing EMT services for NEMT needs is costly and problematic. One idea to address this situation is to extend LTA paratransit hours, or provide an alternative NEMT service through Lake Links, and work with the fire districts to dispatch the most appropriate and cost-effective service. If the patient is ambulatory, the Lake Links' Pay-Your-Pal or Volunteer Driver Program could be an option. The extent of the need for afterhours NEMT is not well documented, and the feasibility of providing afterhours NEMT is therefore unknown.

Recommended Finding: NEMT after Lake Transit operating hours is an unmet need. At this time, it is unknown if it is reasonable to meet. This requires additional study by LTA, Lake Links, and/or the APC.

5. Individualized, flexible transportation to meet the transportation needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, or low-income persons who are unable to utilize the existing public transportation system.

Response: Although most of the focus as of late has been on non-emergency medical transport (NEMT) services, there is also a need for other “on-demand” types of services for non-medical trips. A previous survey for the Pay-Your-Pal (PYP) program revealed that 90% of the respondents were in favor of this type of service. The recommendation from the FY 22/23 Unmet Transit Needs Process was to further study this issue during the current update to the Transit Development Plan (TDP) for Lake County. Based on current ridership data and survey results from the TDP, microtransit could be implemented in some parts of the county, specifically in Lakeport and the Rivas, which would provide a partial solution to this unmet need. However, without additional funding dedicated to this “on-demand” service, implementation of this service at this time could only be done by reducing existing fixed-route service. Another potential solution to help meet this need could be Lake Links’ Pay-Your-Pal or Volunteer Driver Program. While these programs aren’t necessarily “on-demand”, both could help to meet this need.

Recommended Finding: At this time, implementation of an “on-demand” type service to meet the transportation needs of seniors, persons with disabilities, or low-income persons who are unable to utilize the existing public transportation system is an unmet need that is unreasonable to meet due to a lack of funding.

6. Earlier service to Ukiah for medical appointments, criminal justice appointments, and courses at Mendocino College. The existing fixed route service to Ukiah doesn’t allow riders to attend early morning medical or criminal justice appointments or early classes at Mendocino College.

Response: Over the years, LTA has received the occasional comment that there should be earlier service to Ukiah so riders could get to their early appointments; however, the exact demand for this service hasn’t been known. The recommendation from the FY 22/23 Unmet Transit Needs Process was to further study this issue during the current update to the Transit Development Plan for Lake County. The 2023 Transit Development Plan recommends eliminating the last Route 7 run, which currently leaves Lakeport at 5:00PM and returns to Lakeport at 8:28PM and adding an earlier run that would leave Lakeport at 6:30AM and arrive in Ukiah at 8:00AM. This would allow riders to attend their early morning medical or criminal justice appointments or early classes at Mendocino College.

Recommended Finding: With some planning and adjustments to the existing schedule, earlier service to Ukiah for medical appointments, criminal just appointments, and courses at Mendocino College could be an unmet need that is reasonable to meet.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond to unmet needs testimony. The partnership between LTA and the Area Planning Council to identify unmet needs, and plan appropriate responses has continued to provide many useful and important transportation improvements.

Sincerely,



James Sookne
Program Manager



From: Laurie Fisher, CEO/Program Manager, Lake Links

Mobility Report 2/03/25

1). Pay-Your-Pal - Mileage Reimbursement Program

- **Update**
27 new riders enrolled in the program since last report dated 12/02/2024.

PAY-YOUR-PAL UTILIZATION

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u># RIDERS</u>	<u># ONE-WAY TRIPS</u>	<u>TOTAL MILEAGE</u>	<u>TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT</u>
October 2024	85	1,352	20,583 (Medical Miles: 11,025 Medical Hardship Miles: 672 Non-Medical Miles: 8,886)	\$8,233.20 (Medical Miles: \$4,410.00 Medical Hardship Miles: \$268.80 Non-Medical Miles: \$3,554.40)
November 2024 (Holiday Promotional Period: increased mileage rate from .40 to .50 per mile and increase max. mileage from 300 to 400 per month)	88	1,483	23,018 (Medical Miles: 10,925 Medical Hardship Miles: 1,012 Non-Medical Miles: 11,081)	\$11,509.00 (Medical Miles: \$5,462.50 Medical Hardship Miles: \$506.00 Non-Medical Miles: \$5,540.50)
December 2024 (Holiday Promotional Period)	98	1622	25,325 (Medical Miles: 12,151 Medical Hardship Miles: 1,116 Non-Medical Miles: 12,058)	\$12,662.50 (Medical Miles: \$6,075.50 Medical Hardship Miles: \$558.00 Non-Medical Miles: \$6,029.00)

2). Ride Links - Volunteer Driver Program

- Currently, we have 8 volunteer drivers on board that can accept ride assignments, but 2 aren't active.
 - Currently, we have 21 riders enrolled that can now request rides.
 - Currently, 1 volunteer driver is willing to take clients to medical appointments outside of the County on occasion.
-
- **Ride Links Ridership for the last 6 months:**
 - **August 2024:** 4 Rides scheduled (3 completed & 1 cancelled)
 - **September 2024:** 5 Rides scheduled (3 completed & 2 no drivers available)
 - **October 2024:** 6 Rides scheduled, and all were completed.
 - **November 2024:** 7 Rides scheduled (6 completed & 1 no driver available)
 - **December 2024:** 8 Rides scheduled (5 completed & 3 cancelled)
 - **January 2025:** 5 Rides scheduled (4 completed & 1 cancelled by rider.)
 - Pre-screenings continue to be done by phone with potential riders to see if they qualify to apply for the program once we have more volunteers drivers. Those that live within an area where we have a volunteer driver available to take ride assignments are being enrolled in the program.
 - Others that reside in areas where we don't have volunteers serving yet get put on a waiting list. We currently have 28 people on our waiting list interested in enrolling in the program.
 - There's still a need for more volunteer drivers. We're sending out information on volunteering to the 200+ drivers that support the participants of the Pay-Your-Pal program.