



DATE: APRIL 17, 2019

MEMO TO: HERITAGE VALLEY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HVTAC)

FROM: CLAIRE GRASTY, PROGRAM MANAGER – REGIONAL TRANSIT PLANNING

SUBJECT: UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS – UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

- Receive and file a status report on the Unmet Transit Needs for FY 2018-19.

BACKGROUND

The Unmet Transit Needs process is conducted each year to collect requests for new or expanded transit service. Before allocating funds for non-transit purposes the Commission must make a finding that there are no unmet transit needs that are “reasonable to meet” as discussed in the attached FY 18-19 Transit Needs Assessment report (Attachment B).

Pursuant to Senate Bill 203, Ventura County cities with a population under 100,000 and not part of a transit district are subject to the Unmet Needs process. These cities are Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark and Santa Paula. Additionally, on June 11, 2018, legislation allowed Thousand Oaks to spend TDA fund on streets and roads and they therefore now participate in the process as well. VCTC Intercity service does not utilize Article 8 funds for non-transit purposes; however, service requests for the regional service it provides are included in the process. The Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD), City of Ojai and the City of Simi Valley do not utilize or claim TDA Article 8 funds for non-transit purposes and their service is not subject to the Unmet Transit Needs process.

Adopted Criteria

In order for a request to be considered an Unmet Transit Need, it must meet either of the two following definitions and must receive at least 15 requests for general public service or 10 requests for disabled service:

- Public transit services not currently provided to reach employment, medical assistance, shop for food or clothing, to obtain social services such as health care, county welfare programs and education programs. Service must be needed by and benefit the general public.
- Service expansions including new routes, significant modifications to existing routes, and major increases in service hours and frequency

If they fulfill the above criteria, the need must also be determined to be reasonable to meet.

Public Input Process

For FY 19-20, the public comment period for the annual process was held from December 17, 2018 – February 11, 2019, though any comments received throughout the year (before the public comment period) were included also.

VCTC collected public input online, over the phone and in person. VCTC hosted an online survey where over 100 surveys were collected. A social media campaign was conducted that reached nearly 25,000 people. A significant number of comments were received through Facebook, email/website, Instagram and over the phone. VCTC also conducted five community meetings (in Moorpark, Camarillo, Santa Paula, Thousand Oaks and Fillmore) and held a public hearing. Articles and/or public notices were printed in the VC Star, Acorn and Vida.

Analysis

Staff screened each comment received based on the criteria; one request met the 15-comment threshold: service to Santa Clarita. Most comments requested service from Fillmore to Santa Clarita, while some requested the service start in Ventura. However, since this is a regional service traveling a significant distance, this request is not reasonable to meet as the service cannot be provided with the existing fleet and would require additional buses. This service is a regional need and while Santa Paula and Fillmore may have LTF funds not being spent on transit, this route would serve more than those two cities and would require funding above what is allocated to them, potentially highlighting a structural issue with TDA law and the Unmet Needs process. VCTC will begin the process to plan for the future implementation of this route by working with partners such as Fillmore, Santa Paula, Santa Clarita and the Gold Coast Transit District to plan for the implementation of this route, including applying for grant funding for the additional buses required and for operations of the route.

VCTC and the operators value all comments and public input as they are essential to improving public transit in Ventura County. The transit providers receive comments about their service through this process and take all feedback received into consideration for future planning purposes.

Comments received spanned a range of service requests from increased frequency to better information. While not at a level to be defined as an Unmet Transit Need, the most frequent comments received were in the following areas:

- Connectivity between Fillmore – Moorpark
- Additional service on the East West Connector
- Weekend or additional Metrolink service
- Later or extended service on the Highway 126 route

Demand expressed for some of these service expansions has been limited and in this case staff is recommending continued monitoring of the ridership demand before pursuing extensive analysis of cost-effectiveness.

The most frequent comments that are not applicable to the Unmet Transit Needs process but are nonetheless valuable for the operators are the following:

- More frequency and extended service on the Coastal Express

- More frequency on numerous routes and services
- Later service
- Improved service to LA county
- Bus stop improvements

Attachment A lists all comments received that pertain to Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Santa Paula or Thousand Oaks.