

ATTACHMENT 'A'

DRAFT 2024 Tulare County Unmet Transit Need Definition and Criteria

“Unmet Transit Need”: An unmet transit need, as identified during Tulare County Association of Governments’ annual Unmet Transit Needs Process, exists where an individual of any age or physical condition is unable to transport his or herself due to deficiencies in the existing public transportation system. An unmet need must be identified by community input through the public outreach process or identified in a Short-Range Transit Plan, Coordinated Transportation Plan, or the Regional Transportation Plan. Excluded are: 1) those requests for minor operational improvements, and 2) those improvements already funded and scheduled for implementation in the following fiscal year.

“Reasonable to Meet”: Following is the TCAG definition of "Reasonable to Meet" including the recommended benchmarks for the passenger farebox recovery ratio for new transit services in Tulare County. An unmet transit need shall be considered “reasonable to meet” if the proposed service conforms to the following criteria, as applicable:

Equity

1. The new, expanded, or altered transit service will benefit the general public or is needed by seniors and persons with disabilities.
2. The proposed service will not require reductions in existing transit services that have an equal or higher priority.
3. The proposed service will require a subsidy comparable to other similar services.

Feasibility

1. Sufficient ridership potential exists for the new, expanded, or revised transit service.
2. The proposed service can be provided with the existing fleet or under contract to a private provider.
3. The proposed service can be provided with available TDA funding (per state law, the lack of available resources shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet.)

Performance

1. The proposed service will not unduly affect the operator's ability to maintain the required passenger fare recovery ratio for its overall system.
2. The proposed service can meet the scheduled passenger fare ratio standards as described in the recommended benchmarks for the passenger farebox recovery ratio for new transit services in Tulare County.
3. The estimated number of passengers to be carried will be comparable to that of similar services, and/or, the proposed service provides a "link" or connection that enhances the effectiveness of the overall transit system.
4. The proposed service must have prospective providers that are available to implement the service.

Community Acceptance

1. The proposed service has community acceptance and/or support as determined by the unmet transit needs and other public outreach processes, inclusion in adopted programs and plans, adopted governing board positions, and/or other supporting documentation.

ADA Conformity

1. The new, expanded, or revised transit service will conform to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act; specifically, in that paratransit is available or can feasibly be provided within its service area.

Operational Feasibility

1. The new, expanded, or revised transit service must be safe to operate and there must be adequate roadways and turnouts for transit vehicles.

Notes:

1. Per state law, the lack of available resources shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet.

RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS FOR PASSENGER FAREBOX RECOVERY RATIO FOR NEW TRANSIT SERVICES IN TULARE COUNTY.

The state has established a basic requirement in Section 99268 of the Public Utility Code for all proposed transit services in urban areas (the Visalia, Tulare, and Porterville Urbanized Areas). This requirement is to achieve a 20% passenger fare ratio by the end of the third year of operation. A passenger fare ratio of 10% exists for special services (i.e., paratransit for seniors and persons with disabilities) and rural area services. Transit serving both urban and rural areas, per state law, may obtain a blended passenger fare ratio target. If a provider is granted a blended farebox recovery target, performance levels should be adjusted accordingly.

TCAG has established more detailed interim passenger fare ratio standards, which will be used to evaluate new services introduced in response to the unmet needs process as they are proposed and implemented, which are described below. Transit serving both urban and rural areas, per state law, may obtain an "intermediate" passenger fare ratio.

END OF TWELVE MONTHS OF SERVICE

Performance Level

<u>Urban Service</u>	<u>Special/Rural Service</u>	<u>Recommended Action</u>
Less than 6%	Less than 3%	Provider may discontinue service
6% or more	3% or more	Provider will continue service, with modifications if needed

END OF TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS

Performance Level

<u>Urban Service</u>	<u>Special/Rural Service</u>	<u>Recommended Action</u>
Less than 10%	Less than 5%	Provider may discontinue service
10% or more	5% or more	Provider will continue service, with modifications, if needed.

END OF THIRTY-SIX MONTHS

Performance Level

<u>Urban Service</u>	<u>Special/Rural Service</u>	<u>Recommended Action</u>
Less than 15%	Less than 7%	Provider may discontinue service
15-20%	7-10%	Provider will continue service, with Modifications if needed
20% or more	10% or more	Provider will continue service, with Modifications if needed

Implementation Guidance

An annual assessment of the size and location of identifiable groups likely to be transit dependent or transit disadvantaged, including, but not limited to, the elderly, the disabled, and persons of limited financial means shall be prepared before the SSTAC meets to review unmet transit needs comments collected that year.

All unmet transit needs will be placed on a two-year list, to be made available on the TCAG website. This list will be a reference for stakeholders and decision makers. This list would also be revisited during each annual unmet transit needs cycle prior to reviewing any new comments. Comments would be displayed on the list for two (2) years.

If a UTN is recommended by the SSTAC and found to be 'reasonable to meet' by the TCAG Board, the affected claimant(s), with respect to their own capacity constraints, will present a new proposed service to the TCAG Board prior to implementation of the new service.

A claimant with any available TDA funds, including LTF funds being used for non-transit purposes, will use those funds to pay for the new service.

When a proposed service crosses multiple jurisdictions, TCAG will work as a convener and facilitator with the affected claimants to determine the funding split on a case-by-case basis.