

CHAPTER 5

PUBLIC OUTREACH – UNMET NEEDS AND PROGRAM ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the comments and suggestions provided by members of the public, stakeholders, and all other interested parties in this step of the study process. The input received during these outreach efforts allowed the study team to understand local perceptions and operations of existing intercity (rural to urban) services as well as document suggestions for S.5311(f) program improvements. This document begins with a compilation of comments received from the outreach workshops. The comments are presented by the location and date in which the workshop was held. However, for each workshop, the comments have been categorized into one of the following: existing service, needs for service, and program comments and/or concerns. In some cases, comments could be classified in more than one category, in which case, they are generally represented in the category that comes first. The appendices at the end of this document contains information on the methodology used for selecting locations (Appendix C), distributing the public outreach workshop, information (Appendix D), and the list of participants at each workshop (Appendix E).

SUMMARY OF NEEDS – PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM OUTREACH INTERVIEWS

The State of California is a large state with a diversity of geographic and demographic settings. This section contains a compilation of needs that were identified throughout the various regions of the state. The first portion of this section discusses the State's process of determining unmet needs and a summary of local agencies that conducted a participatory process in defining their needs. The second portion of this section discusses the summary needs as resulting from a preliminary outreach effort for this study.

Unmet Needs

California's Transportation Development Act (TDA) governs the flow of state funds available to support public transportation programs. It delegates to the local Transportation Planning Agency as the lead agency responsible for the identification and documentation of

unmet needs in their respective area, and executing a public participation component in this process. This includes responsibility for including the city and county operating entities (claimants) as well as various planning and audit functions that ensure the proper use of state funding.

The TDA unmet needs process establishes that “Prior to making any allocation not directly related to public transportation services, specialized transportation services or facilities provided for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles”... several actions must be completed by the transportation planning agency. This includes consultation with the social services transportation advisory council, identification of needs within the jurisdiction and an annual assessment of the size and location of groups likely to be transit dependent including seniors, persons with disabilities and persons of limited means, including CalWorks recipients, an analysis of the potential alternative transportation services or improvements that would meet these needs, and an identification of unmet transit needs that are *reasonable to meet* (Section 99401.5, emphasis added).

With this process in mind, a literature review of local unmet needs documentation submitted to the DMT for evaluation was conducted. The earliest documentation reviewed is dated 2003 and the most recent was submitted in 2006. The objective in this effort was to identify general trends in the identification and types of unmet needs for regions throughout the state. Below is a summary of the findings, with more detailed information provided as Appendix A.

- **Inter-regional trips:** transportation is needed between communities within the same jurisdiction and outside.
- **Hours of Operation:** transportation needs identified include limited service; sparse weekend service; some service does not operate sufficiently early.
- **Other operational aspects:** in some cases needs are associated with the way in which transportation is provided (or not). In one case Greyhound service was determined reasonable; in another area one human service agency mentions it had difficulty paying for fare for some of its clients because it is not set up to provide cash to the clients and the only way to purchase a ticket is through the driver.

Another, and just as important, aspect of the identification of unmet needs process is how each respective agency defines the unmet need. In one case, the agency specifically identified that its report would not address interregional transportation corridors beyond specific areas of jurisdictional responsibility. This finding articulates an interesting conflict between funding sources that are directed to individual jurisdictions and the need for regional planning efforts. The TDA speaks to regional planning needs indirectly in that it assigns the unmet needs process to the regional Transportation Planning Agency—but it is up to that agency whether it wishes to address needs for transportation to or through the areas covered by RTPAs.

Another finding that affects the determination of an unmet need is the completeness of documentation of the process. Some counties provided extensive documentation on these

efforts, while others did not. In several instances, documentation was missing, incomplete, or out of date.

Preliminary Outreach – Survey

A preliminary outreach effort of this study included a telephone survey of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Councils of Government. The survey included questions about existing intercity services, any studies or plans addressing intercity services, and about unmet needs for intercity services. However, in most cases, the consultant team was directed to speak with transit operators directly. A summary of findings is provided in the following paragraphs and the survey methodology is included as Appendix B.

- **Statewide** findings: Monday thru Friday service with limited roundtrip weekday service, and less weekend service options; wide range of fares; some connection to Greyhound service; access to medical trip service very limited for transit dependent; limits on program funds constrain new service development; perception of rural transit needs not factored equitably into decision making process; difficulty in maintaining a 20% farebox recovery in rural areas.
- **Northern** California findings: need service along Highway 299 corridor (Humboldt County to Redding); Ukiah to Santa Rosa; Lassen to Redding; Lake County to Santa Rosa, through Calistoga; Truckee to Tahoe area; increased service on Plumas to Reno; Siskiyou County to Redding and Medford; Del Norte County to Oregon; Mono County needs service to airports, medical facilities, colleges; Placer County needs more service to Lincoln, Sacramento and Nevada.
- **Central/Coastal** California findings: need for service between San Joaquin County to Modesto, Sacramento, Napa, and Livermore; reduced fare option for service between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara; reverse commute service from south coast of Santa Barbara to North County, Los Alamos to Lompoc, Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valley; improved service for migrant workers and access to education, medical, retail and jobs.
- **Southern** California findings: need increased frequency from Palm Springs to Morongo Basin; establish intercity service for rural areas of Inland Empire; fare subsidies for corridors abandoned by private operators; inter-county service between southern Riverside County and northeastern San Diego County; low income population increases as they are priced-out of more coastal/urban areas.

Generally, findings were consistent throughout the regions of the state. There is an interest in increased services for the rural regions of the state to connect to services in the urban areas. One of the needs cited is access from the rural communities to the Amtrak and Greyhound services in the more urban areas. Access to medical, education, and employment centers have also been identified as needs for the rural transit depended populations. The large farm worker population has also generated a demand for long distance transportation services. There is also

some interest in evaluating the possibility of allowing users of Amtrak feeder buses to purchase “bus only” tickets rather than requiring that all Amtrak feeder bus riders have a rail connection.

Table 5-1 provides a compilation of unmet needs by district and planning agency:

Table 5-1: NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unserviced Destinations	New Service Plans
CalTrans District 1	Del Norte County	Redwood Coast Transit Greyhound	5311(f) for service to Arcata	Service to Oregon along US 101 or I-5. Would like Porter State to run it Portland to San Francisco.	Considering an interline agreement with Amtrak to Arcata. Will be applying for funds to connect into Oregon at Grants pass (Greyhound and Amtrak there).
CalTrans District 1	Humboldt County; Humboldt Transit Authority	Redwood Transit Service Humboldt Transit Authority Amtrak bus Greyhound		Direct Service to Redding.	
CalTrans District 1	Lake County	Lake Transit	5311(f) for connections out of county. Funding from St. Helena Hospital for bus that goes to it.	Better service to Santa Rosa needed.	
CalTrans District 1	Mendocino Council of Governments	Mendocino Transit Authority Amtrak bus Greyhound		Better service to Willits.	In the process of developing a plan.
CalTrans District 2	Lassen County	Sage Stage Sierra Taxi and Shuttle Plumas Transit Systems		Service to Redding, but planner unsure that 10% farebox requirement could be met.	Indian Rancheria applying for fund for 3x a week service to Redding. May meet need.
CalTrans District 2	Modoc County Local Transportation Commission	Sage Stage	5311(f) for daily trip to Reno. Breast and cervical cancer screening services cover fare to Lakeview.	Planners need CalTrans to define corridors to know if it is worth applying.	CALnections: web-based trip planning system in coordination with a mobility resource system.

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unserviced Destinations	New Service Plans
Caltrans District 2	Plumas County Transportation Commission (data was combined from 2 survey results tables for Plumas County)	Plumas Transit Systems, operated by Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc.	Local funds, state transit assistance funds. Formerly 5311(f) for service to Reno but funding was pulled after two years.	Chico to Chester, but demand is not high enough for farebox requirements and weather prevents trip in winter.	Daily service to Reno in future. Have completed a tri-county (Modoc, Plumas, and Lassen) Non-Emergency Medical Transportation study.
CalTrans District 2	Siskiyou County Transportation Commission	STAGE		Service to Redding and Medford. Board (of county commissioners?) does not recognize need, does not want to lose (retail?) business to these areas.	Seeking 5311F funding for connection to Medford.
CalTrans District 2	Shasta County	Burney Express RABBA Amtrak bus Amtrak			Some discussions with Tehama and Modoc County but just talk.
CalTrans District 2	Tehama County Transportation Commission	TRAX Mount Lassen Motor Transit Greyhound	5311(f) for planning	Service to Chico and Redding needed.	Updating their TDP. Interested in connecting to Shasta and Butte counties.
CalTrans District 2	Trinity County	Trinity County Transit	5311	Connection to Redding needed. Are having trouble making 10% farebox especially given rising gas and other costs.	Working with senior services to provide service to Redding 1 or 2 days a week. Service geared to seniors and disabled first, and then general public if seats available.
CalTrans District 3	Butte County	B-Line Plumas Transit Systems Glenn Ride Greyhound	(see note in Current Service Table for District 3, Butte County)		
CalTrans District 3	El Dorado County Transportation Commission	El Dorado Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unserviced Destinations	New Service Plans
CalTrans District 3	Glenn County	Glenn Ride		Nothing that would meet farebox requirement. Some talk about service into Tehama county for casino employees.	Agency wants better regional coordination. Wants to coordinate with Butte College service schedule to provide transfer in Chico to Tehama.
CalTrans District 3	Nevada County	Gold Country Stage		Nothing in western part of county. Eastern part may need connections to Truckee and Tahoe Basin.	
CalTrans District 3	Placer County Transportation Planning Agency	Placer County Department of Public Works	5311(f), 5311 and Transportation Development Act funds	More service needed to Lincoln, due to increasing population. Need better service to Kaiser Hospital, Roseville, Sierra College.	
CalTrans District 3	Sacramento Area Council of Governments	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Caltrans District 3	Sierra County Local Transportation Commission	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CalTrans District 3	Tahoe MPO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
CalTrans District 4	MTC Marin County Transit District	West Marin Stage Marin Airporter Golden Gate Transit	0	Connection between West Marin and East Bay needed.	Submitted planning grant for intercity needs of West Marin County.
CalTrans District 4	MTC Napa County	VINE Amtrak Bus			Plans to start commuter service connecting Fairfield to Napa.
CalTrans District 4	MTC Santa Clara County	Valley Transportation Authority Monterey Salinas Transit	N/A	N/A	N/A
CalTrans District 4	MTC Sonoma County	Mendocino Transit Authority (see District 1, Mendocino County) Sonoma County Transit Greyhound Amtrak bus	N/A	N/A	N/A

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unserviced Destinations	New Service Plans
Caltrans District 5	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (See District 5, Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties)				
CalTrans District 5	Transportation Agency for Monterey County	Monterey Salinas Transit Amtrak bus Greyhound	5311(f), JARC, local transportation funds from south county cities	San Lucas, San Ardo and Bradley want public transportation access to King City for medical and retail purposes. Better service for migrant workers: need access to education, medical services, retail and jobs.	Future service will need to be considered around new development around former Fort Ord.
CalTrans District 5	San Benito County Local Transportation Authority	San Benito County Express	5311F and Transportation Development Act funds	Following destinations identified as need: Salinas, Aromas, additional areas of Gilroy. Need to reach major cities to connect with air, rail or bus service. Also need to reach major medical facilities and post-secondary educational institutions.	Agency to consider these unmet needs as part of the SRTP. Agency anticipates SRTP completion in June 2007, with work starting out in December 2006.
CalTrans District 5	San Luis Obispo Council of Governments	Regional Transit Authority	Fares, 5307, STA discretionary (for Sunday trial service) and LTF (<i>idem</i>), 5311(f) for Route 10 (see Services table)	Most unmet needs requests are for intra county trips. One user complained that commuter service to Santa Barbara from Santa Maria does not run at a convenient time for SLO RTA passenger originating from central or southern San Luis Obispo (no transfer opportunities). There have also been requests for long distance commuting service to Monterey.	North Santa Barbara County Transit plan, posted on sbcag.org website (September 2006). The 2004 North (SLO) County Transit Study recommended permanent transit center in downtown Alacadero. Such a facility could be designed to incorporate future access by intercity buses if needed. Site selection proposed for FY 2007-2008.

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unmet Destinations	New Service Plans
CalTrans District 5	Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission	Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Amtrak bus Greyhound	N/A	N/A	N/A
Caltrans District 6	Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (operates various rural services including Coalinga, Westside, Orange Cove, Southeast)	Coalinga Transit, Westside Transit, Orange Cove Transit, Southeast Transit, etc... Orange Belt Stages Greyhound Amtrak bus	5311(f) and Transportation Development Act funds for all services operated	No shared facilities: 13 rural cities. Travel to San Joaquin has been identified as a need.	1/2 cent sales tax which will allow them to double service. Additional service to Tranquility and other unincorporated areas of the county. Will update SRTP. Based upon election, will expand services.
Caltrans District 6	Kern Council of Governments	Kern Regional Transit (part of Kern County Department of Roads) Orange Belt Stages Amtrak bus Greyhound	Intercity service partially funded from 5311(f) and Transportation Development Act funds.	Unmet needs process flawed to favor streets and roads. If public feels they are not being listened to, they do not want to continue voicing opinions. There are requests to serve Santa Clarita, Bakersfield and Frazier park for medical appointments and college. Need is not reasonable, due to low population base. Other request not reasonable to meet: new route between Ridgecrest and Lake Isabella. There are on-going requests for service expansion. Also, lack of understanding that riders can call COG to get information. Services need increased marketing.	

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unserviced Destinations	New Service Plans
CalTrans District 6	Kings County Association of Governments	Kings County Area Public Transit Agency Greyhound Amtrak bus Orange Belt Stages	Funded with 5311, TDA, STA, 5307, advertising revenue and passenger fares.	Fresno identified as a needed destination. Presently, service linking Hanford and Fresno on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Service is used primarily for medical and shopping services. There are requests for more connections between Hanford and Fresno.	
CalTrans District 6	Madera County Transportation Commission	Madera County Connection Greyhound	5311, TDA and Farebox	There are issues with service for migrant workers.	Potential pilot program to provide service from Chowchilla to Merced. A study is being conducted to provide a 10 year outlook and is due in June 2007.
CalTrans District 6	Tulare County Association of Governments	Tulare County Area Transit Amtrak Bus Greyhound Orange Belt Stages	Farebox, TDA, 5311	Service needed to Fresno county. Needs expressed include long distance commuting, access to major medical facilities, shopping and recreational travel.	
CalTrans Districts 7, 8 and 11	Southern California Association of Governments	Sunline Transit (Riverside County)	5311(f) not used	Service needed from Palo Verde to Coachella Valley, Beaumont and Banyon to Riverside (San Bernardino Metrolink Station).	Looking at 5- to 10-year I-10 express route.

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unserviced Destinations	New Service Plans
		Amtrak bus Greyhound Amtrak bus		Service discontinued but still needed to Eastern Sierras and high desert areas along SR-14 and US 395 corridor. Counties in Eastern Sierra Area (Inyo, Mono, Kern, San Bernardino, LA) have identified lots of intercity service in this corridor as an issue. Same situation for local connecting services along SR 1 linking LA, Santa Monica, Malibu and Oxnard	There have been plans to connect Coachella Valley to Imperial Valley but were not implemented. Ideas/plans for Palmdale/Lancaster area for buses connecting to Metrolink train service further north.
CalTrans District 8	(SCAG does not cover all of Riverside and San Bernardino County, yet there is no further information on transit services here in the original tables)				
CalTrans District 8	San Bernardino County				
CalTrans District 9	Inyo County Local Transportation Commission	Inyo Mono Transit	5311(f)	More direct service needed to Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and Las Vegas areas (currently have to transfer requests for direct routes). Need better access to airports, medical facilities and colleges in Reno and Ridgecrest. Demand for winter recreational and seasonal worker travel to Mammoth, Long Pine, Whitney.	Expand Crest route from 3 days a week to 4 days. IMT considering extending service into Kern County.

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unserviced Destinations	New Service Plans
CalTrans District 9	Mono County Local Transportation Commission	Inyo Mono Transit (see District 9, Inyo County) Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System	5311(f)	Expressed needs include Greyhound service to Reno for medical facilities, university, shopping. There are commuter requests for service from Mammoth Lakes to June Lakes. Need better service to medical facilities and college in Reno. Need service to military base in Pickle meadows.	
CalTrans District 10	Alpine County Local Transportation Commission	Public Works Department Douglas Area Rural Transit	5311(f) (survey answer is "yes", does this mean "Yes, 5311(f)"? Or "Yes, 5311(f) and TDA"?)	Needs expressed to go to Sacramento airport, Reno airport, and Carson City and Carson Valley for medical facilities and grocery shopping. There are also requests for access to ski resorts.	
CalTrans District 10	Amador County Transportation Commission	Amador Regional Transit System	Did not specify.	None	Agency plans to continue existing service. Discussion of link to El Dorado.
CalTrans District 10	Calaveras Council of Governments	N/A	San Andreas to Stockton (in Amador County survey data)	N/A	N/A
CalTrans District 10	Mariposa County Local Transportation Commission	N/A (no information in original tables) Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System	N/A	N/A	N/A
CalTrans District 10	Merced County Association of Governments	Merced County Transit	5311(f) and Rural Intercity Program Assistance (is this what survey data refers to as LTF and STA?)	Need service to Fresno airport, as well as service to San Francisco for work and medical purposes, BART station in Pleasanton, outlet stores in Gilroy, and need service to Stanislaus State University.	Agency currently operating intercity services. However, very unlikely that they will leave their service area for longer trips without a mandate and a new funding source.

Region	MPO, RPTA, Contact Information	Operator(s) / Carriers	Funding Sources for Intercity Services	Issues/Unmet Needs/Unservd Destinations	New Service Plans
		Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System Greyhound Amtrak bus			
CalTrans District 10	San Joaquin Regional Transit District (SJRTD)	SJRTD Fixed and Deviated Routes Amtrak bus Greyhound	N/A	Requests for more frequent service to Modesto, Sacramento, Napa, Livermore. Expressed needs include access to major medical facilities and post-secondary educational institutions.	Agency does not plan transit services.
CalTrans District 10	Stanislaus Council of Governments	Stanislaus Regional Transit Merced County Transit Amtrak bus Greyhound	N/A	N/A	N/A
Caltrans District 10	Tuolumne County Transportation Council	No direct intercity bus. Amtrak bus	N/A	Expressed desire for service to make trips to the Central Valley. Need to reach major cities to connect with air, rail or bus. Need service to reach major medical facilities and for shopping and recreational travel purposes.	None (unable to meet unmet needs within reasonable conditions)
CalTrans District 11	San Diego Association of Governments	N/A		No unmet needs issues raised at last hearings.	None at this time

PUBLIC OUTREACH WORKSHOPS

The consultant team and CalTrans identified four regions throughout the State as the most accessible and convenient for all potential interested parties to attend. The workshops held in the following cities: San Bernardino, Bakersfield, Modesto, and Redding. Each workshop consisted of two sessions: a meeting with local transit operators and agencies, and another session for general public input.

Each workshop commenced with a presentation describing the purpose of the study, program policies, demographic information, status of the study, and a representation of existing intercity bus services. After the presentation, a discussion was conducted encouraging all participants to express opinions and identify concerns with existing intercity services, potential improvements to existing service, and any S.5311(f) program comments. The following section discusses the comments from these workshops.

PUBLIC OUTREACH WORKSHOP
SAN BERNARDINO, CA
MAY 1, 2007

SAN BERNARDINO

Immediately following the presentation, participants were asked to provide comments on existing services (or lack thereof), potential improvements, and any ideas for program improvements. Points raised during the discussion include the following:

Existing Services

- **Performance measures** are of concern in this large, rural county. Long trips in from Needles and from Big River, or from Trona, are going to have many seat miles but few riders. Farebox recovery will be very modest at best with the potential to jeopardize the overall system recovery ratios that might otherwise be operating at satisfactory recovery levels.
- **Transit to Fort Irwin** (from Barstow), the Army wants the City of Barstow to assume this service, but the bus couldn't go onto the base. When the City had operated the service in the past, the City had lost money on the operation. Base personnel were concerned about the fares that would be charged to riders. Many of these riders apparently are wives, children, and aging parents.
- **Marine Base – 29 Palms** does allow the transit buses to enter the base when it is on "Red Code." Under these circumstances, the bus is often stopped and searched.
- **Purchasing bulk passes from Greyhound** has been a problem. Considerable effort was made by SANBAG staff to procure passes; first at a discount, and then, just for bulk purchase in order to provide these – at user-side subsidy rates or at full rates – to consumers. These efforts have not been successful, either to name the transit operator as a vendor who could generate the ticket or to allow SANBAG to purchase a number of tickets on behalf of the operator.

Needs – Services/Operations

- **Needles to Barstow to Victorville to San Bernardino.** Possible interest in services that could connect Needles to Barstow, then continue onto Victorville and San Bernardino. Maybe if services ran just two times a month, the demand would be sufficient to warrant the trip. Apparently, the Greyhound bus no longer stops in Needles. There was some confusion about the train, but there is the perception that it doesn't make a stop in Needles any longer. [*After a cursory search on the Amtrak reservation website, there is one train that departs Needles at 12:44 AM and arrives in Barstow at 3:34 AM.]
- **Baker is a problem.** Options appear limited for connecting Baker with either Barstow, or the San Bernardino urbanized area. What are some options?

- **Outlying communities.** Is there a possibility of establishing some kind of outlying service that can connect Needles, Baker, and Trona (possibly Ridgecrest) with Barstow and then improved options from Barstow into San Bernardino?

Needs – Program/Institutional

- Discussion of *what is a viable project?* There was concern about time-limited projects. If they are not guaranteed funds past the three-year project period, then it is very difficult to maintain a public transit system that can easily transition to other funding sources.



PUBLIC OUTREACH WORKSHOP
BAKERSFIELD, CA
MAY 3, 2007



BAKERSFIELD

Immediately following the presentation, participants were asked to provide comments on existing services (or lack thereof), potential improvements, and any ideas for program improvements. Points raised during the discussion include the following:

Existing Service

- **Kern Regional Transit** - has made a commitment to continue its services that are currently operated with S.5311(f) funds, if S.5311(f) funds are no longer available. One option would be to use Transportation Development Act (TDA) dollars.
- **Taft-Ford City service** - is funded with S.5311(f) and it is provided six days a week, six times a day; the service area includes Taft Heights and Bakersfield and achieves a 30 percent farebox return. The service makes scheduled stops at the Greyhound and Amtrak stations in Bakersfield.
- **Kings County, the Kings Area Rural Transit** – with Orange Belt service, this area is well covered. There were unmet needs reports about facilities – bus stop improvements for the discretionary, unmarked stops. The county service also operates a route to Kettleman City for connecting opportunity with Greyhound services.
- **Arvin, California** – gets its own TDA funds, but Kern Regional Transit provides connecting service between Arvin and LaMotte 5 times a day and between LaMotte and Bakersfield 7 times a day on 2 routes.
- **Kern Regional Transit provides connecting service to Amtrak and Greyhound services** – from LaMotte and from Taft.
- **Eastern Sierra Public Transportation Study** (June 2005, Nelson/Nygaard) – an examination of how Inyo, Mono, and Kern Counties can coordinate service. Specifically, utilizing US 395 as a trunk route.

Needs – Operations/Services

- **US 395 Corridor** – With Greyhound discontinuing the US 395 Route from Reno to Los Angeles, there have been various efforts to fill this significant gap. There is one group, the Eastern Sierra Corridor working group [See study of Eastern Sierra Public Transportation Plan, 2004] that is leading an effort to address this need.

Largest unmet need in the region is service along the US 395 corridor. Currently, looking at creating possibilities in the corridor that don't currently exist – possibly looking at the impacts of tourism on existing and proposed services and how this may

affect transit operator access to other potential funding sources. Also, ongoing evaluations of regional service that traverse the length of the corridor.

- **Antelope Valley** - would like to coordinate with someone regarding the services between Lancaster and Bakersfield, possibly establish some form of feeder service.
- **Ridgecrest services** - interest in coordinating a type of service and some demand-response in relation to Ridgecrest and also serving Kramer's Junction, near the San Bernardino County line.
- **Greyhound services** from Mojave to Los Vegas, or from Mojave into Los Angeles – is there any?
- **Schedule of connecting services** - is an important component of service in attracting riders, but it is very hard to execute a good connection consistently between local and intercity services. Intercity bus services have a high rate of arriving at stops past scheduled times, especially when the bus operating on the route originates from more than 500 miles away. It is very difficult for local transit services to accommodate people that might disembark the intercity service.
- **McFarland to Wasco** – there is train service in Wasco. McFarland has been having a “boomlet” in housing. Generally, new homebuyers consist of farm workers, school district personnel, and prison guards. There is also a large migrant worker population. Around the holidays a noticeable migrant worker population needs to take the bus to get into Mexico.
- Local services with possible S.5311(f) applicability are currently utilizing this funding source, although maybe they could expand to provide connections with Kramer Junction and Ridgecrest.

Needs – Program/Institutional

- A rockslide that closed Walker Canyon required two years to rebuild and when Greyhound brought back the US 395 service, people were not aware of it. Also, apparently the Greyhound computer (reservation system) was not reprogrammed, so prospective riders were not advised of this option. Then, due to low ridership of this service, the Greyhound route went away.
- Local entities have tried to coordinate services – notably Inyo and Mono Counties, with Kern Council of Governments providing oversight. San Bernardino County was also involved. Inyo and Mono Counties have institutionalized this for their leg of the service. But there is concern that there are not ongoing funding subsidies and haven't seen S.5311(f) as a stable funding source. This context makes it difficult to start a project that does not have access to a dedicated funding source. The agencies

expected that service would need to go beyond three years and, in light of the S.5311(f) program policies, they didn't perceive the program as a possible funding source, although clearly this proposed service was replacing Greyhound services that were no longer provided.

- **Welfare reform** - has been reporting large numbers of persons with no vehicle or no operating vehicle. Even where they may have a working car, it might not be in condition to complete a 500-mile trip. Many people have no insurance or no license and need to take intercity services for these long trips, while they might still make local trips in their own car.
- **Information system** is very poor – very difficult for a rider, or potential rider, to plan long distance trips that require intercity bus and local public transit service. In a lot of cases, the service may exist, but it is difficult for the general public to discover where and what the service is. It is difficult to piece together a trip. It would be of great value to include S.5311(f) funded services in the Amtrak/Train schedule.
- **Another intermodal facility is planned** - at 18th Street about 3 blocks from the train station at 18th St. and Q Street. Currently, Golden Empire Transit (GET) has two downtown transit centers.
- **State** should provide more assistance/guidance on the planning and implementation of inter-jurisdictional services.



PUBLIC OUTREACH WORKSHOP
MODESTO, CA
MAY 4, 2007



MODESTO

Immediately following the presentation, participants were asked to provide comments on existing services (or lack thereof), potential improvements, and any ideas for program improvements. Points raised during the discussion include the following:

Existing Service

- **Tuolumne Meadows Yosemite Area Regional Transit System (YARTS) service** over to the Tioga Pass entrance to the park and connecting with Highway 120 services is heavily utilized in the summer months when this road is open. This service operates weekends only in June and September and on weekdays during July and August.
- **Stanislaus Route #60** goes between Waterford and Modesto 8 or 9 times a day, connecting in Riverbank to the Amtrak and possibly the Sonora bus, if that is still going on.
- **Stanislaus Route #45** connects with the Gustine/Newman/Patterson service and then continues into Turlock. Passengers can connect there with #40 to get into Modesto. These connections run 5 times a day, 6 days a week, no service on Sunday.
- **Madera Intermodal Center** – however, Amtrak service is not located at this facility. The Madera Amtrak station is located on the outskirts of the city and the only public transit service available to the station is dial-a-ride.
- **Amador Regional Transit System (Amador County)** – provides inter-county service into Sacramento (Sacramento County). Routes: X1, X2, X3. Monday through Friday.
- Feeder service from Chowchilla/ Atwater.
- Salinas to Merced is a bus trip.

Needs – Operations/Services

- **Along Highway 41** - between Fresno and Yosemite, this is a major travel corridor for tourists visiting the region and for workers living in the greater Fresno area and working up around Oakhurst, Fish Camp, or in the Yosemite Valley itself. Fresno is the largest city in the region and has an international airport. Also, along Highway 41 is the Chukchansi Casino with workers who need to get there and visitors. Consider evaluating some kind of service along Highway 41 to Oakhurst and points beyond in the Yosemite Valley.

There is considerable tourist travel arriving by train in the Fresno area. There is a train station but it is 3 miles out from the intermodal bus station, because of the train routing (two tracks down the central valley in this area).

Ten years ago the YARTS services were eliminated along Highway 41.

- **Services out from Yosemite along Highway 140** - has been disrupted by the rockslide. For a time, traffic was diverted around Highway 41 and back up. That added considerable miles (and time, 3 additional hours per day) to the trip, and increased operating expense. Now, Highway 140 is traversable, but only with a smaller capacity vehicle that can make the two right-angle turns required with the installation of two portable bridges to bypass the rockslide that still closes the road on the south side of the Merced River. The vehicle for normal route service is a 55-passenger bus; now the agency uses an 18- to 22-passenger bus. The problem now is that the capacity of the service has been cut dramatically; farebox has also been reduced, while operating expenses have increased as a consequence of the rockslide. Possibly look at establishing some form of contingency fund to address this kind of a situation. There was a one-time assistance, but the needs continue in this current fiscal year and likely next as well.
- **Possibly employment trips** coming from Madera along Highway 41 up into the Yosemite Valley destinations. There is a Park and Ride lot at the intersection of Highway 41 and Highway 145 that is routinely quite full; needs to expand.
- **Inyo Mono Transit** picks up at the Whitney portal with 1000 persons, possibly more, making that trip by foot along the mountain range and then needing to take transit back. Customers prefer pick-up at the portal and not at Lone Pine where the bus currently goes.
- **Tuolumne Meadows** service returning from the Tioga Pass entrance to the Valley is not good service on that return trip and also poor timing. This service could be improved.
- **The Tioga Pass gate is 12 miles from Lee Vining** (Highway 395) and this is a difficult connection, considering the deviation distance from the highway. Service into Bishop is also important.
- **Tourism plays a big role** in this region with 3.5 to 4 million visitors to Yosemite National Park annually. Any improvements to their transportation options that reduce congestion and air quality impacts are favorable.
- **Greyhound driver:** There is a need to provide services to the people who used to board at Chowchilla, Atwater, Turlock, Firebaugh, Gault, and Elk Grove. The Greyhound bus is no longer stopping at these locations.

- **YARTS operates very long distance trips;** 160 mile and 200 mile trips. Scheduling YARTS trips is a challenge, given these long distances. Drivers go into the park and sit, waiting until it is time to return. Deadhead hours in the park are significant and the agency still has to pay drivers for this amount of time. This has an impact on performance measures.
- **Service along the US 395 corridor.** Observations include all hotels in the region booked and full of tourists. One of the operators researched and discovered that 85% of tourists in California are Californians.
- **Stanislaus County coordination** doesn't exist with Greyhound or with the local Amtrak. Modesto and Turlock connections 18 times a day; rely upon the transit operator and the bus rider to make the connection work. Geographically, the Turlock transit center is 100 yards away from the train station, comparatively good connection. But the Greyhound arrival times are not guaranteed when the trip originates from 1,000 miles away.
- **Stanislaus connectivity** on Route #45 to Riverbank and Oakdale, connectivity to Greyhound – no one looks at it, but the current frequency of buses means that it is fairly easy to make happen. All the buses have overhead racks and can carry passenger baggage.
- **Limited service** from Madera to Oakhurst.

Needs – Program/Institutional

- **YARTS had S.5311(f) funding** for three years, but then faced the three-year limit, even though the funding requirements remained. Caltrans now has changed the policy, and YARTS continues to receive funding. From an operator's perspective it is very difficult to file an annual application for funding and not really know if you are going to receive funds, and it is even more difficult when agencies don't find out well into the operating fiscal year.
- **Institutional issues** with these regional services are complicated. YARTS is a joint powers authority that includes Mono County (small Local Transportation Funds (LTF)), Mariposa County (small LTF), Merced County (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funding). Considering the context in which this organization operates, it requires continuing education and exposure for the elected officials, with each administration having its own set of priorities and, in some cases, resulting in processes, studies, and research are continually repeated. Protecting ongoing, stable funding is a challenge for this regional service. It would be much easier if the joint powers authority somehow had the status of other jurisdictions and received its own LTF allocation.

- **S.5311(f) does not allow for commuting services and services for students.** While Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funding may be available to support some work trips, YARTS serves a very broad-based constituency (Merced College students, commuters, hospitality workers). Because of its inter-jurisdictional nature, many of the communities with LTF don't "own" these riders though their needs are no less real to make these intercity trips.
- **Local match** is a problem where the farebox can't be used in justification of S.5311(f) projects. YARTS does fairly well on its farebox recovery; had \$275,000 in revenue, but that couldn't be counted towards the local match as the "net" amount of the grant is calculated after the farebox is taken out. This requirement makes it difficult for an operator to establish and maintain a system and not really have other dollars to use as match.
- **Local Transportation Fund** – amounts are small.
- **Funds for transportation services in the National Park** are too restrictive and make it difficult to leverage such funds for new services.
- **Greyhound consultation requirement** is difficult to coordinate and execute; it is very difficult to get meaningful exchange. Took two years to get the Greyhound local manager to agree to meet and then that meeting didn't occur for several external reasons.
- **Amtrak consultation** is also difficult, but easier compared to Greyhound.
- Have used S.5311(f) funds for capital projects: facility in Turlock, for transfers between services, and for 50 shelters. Haven't used funds for operations, as the agency wasn't sure how the funding could be replaced after the demonstration period ended. Stanislaus is a very small agency (just a 3-person staff); when staff choose to go after a grant, there needs to be some assurance of the likelihood of getting it, in order to justify the use of staff time towards it. Not clear that S.5311(f) is a viable funding source, from this perspective. The grant program/application is highly competitive and time limited.
- Suggested that demographic analysis also incorporate a component that addresses the tourist population as a group that also needs transportation services.



PUBLIC OUTREACH WORKSHOP
REDDING, CA
MAY 7, 2007



REDDING

Immediately following the presentation, participants were asked to provide comments on existing services (or lack thereof), potential improvements, and any ideas for program improvements. Points raised during the discussion include the following:

Existing Service

- Services that exist but are not listed on map include:
 - Shasta College connection for Tehama County students, TRAX hubs into Red Bluff and provides connecting service with the Shasta College bus.
 - Barney Express from Redding to Barney.
 - Plumas Transit operates intercity routes, Quincy to Reno and Quincy to Chico. Modoc Sage Stage – this service area includes Ravendale, Milford, Doyle Junction, and connecting service at Hallelujah Junction.
- Too costly to take Greyhound between Redding and Red Bluff, \$12.50 one-way.
- Generally, service along I-5 corridor is good.
- Redding has good intermodal connections. Operators that use the RABA facility are required to execute an agreement with RABA.
- Modoc County – approximately 25 percent of riders use service to get to Reno and access the airport. (Suggest that the map geocode airport facilities.)

Needs – Operations/Services

- Initially participants identified number of links that could use service:
 - Shingletown- Highway 44 to Redding (approximately 40 miles).
 - Weaverville to Redding
 - Corning-Red Bluff to Redding
 - Alturas to Redding
 - Chester to Redding
- Participants concluded that connections (feeder service) to I-5 corridor to the communities of Redding, Chico, and Santa Rosa were most important.
- Less costly service along the Redding-Red Bluff corridor that provides more convenient connections and access to Shasta College.
- The route that came out as most important is **connection between Arcata/Eureka and Redding**, along the SR 299 corridor. During the workshop an attendee, who had worked in public health in Arcata, identified the need to provide service to Redding for medical and other services. Suggestion that state sponsored intercity service

should be provided on the state routes because Greyhound is taking care of the I-5 corridor.

- Participants suggested the following S.5311(f) program improvements:
 - Get rid of liability costs - get state to indemnify services if service is participating as a component in a human service coordination plan.
 - State should provide funding to support existing state trip planning tool that has been developed.
 - Streamline the grant application process.
 - Contract for services on a biennial schedule not every year.
- One participant noted that there was no regional service to the airport and that is needed.
- Service from Redding to the Bay Area – provide direct service from Redding to a Bay Area Rapid Transit station, the trip doesn't necessarily have to end in San Francisco.

Needs – Program/Institutional

- The group also noted that a smaller local match requirement and a dedicated funding source would be great.
- Interstate travel regulations can be difficult to manage and learn about, especially considering typical agency staffing and resource constraints.
- Program review should consider weighting the rural routes, as urbanized areas already have intercity services and also have sufficient “need” based on population figures. However, there should be consideration given to adding weight to the needs of the rural population and a closer look at “life line” needs.
- Difficult to coordinate service when each jurisdiction is operating with scarce and, in some cases, unstable funding sources.
- Get rid of liability – with connecting/coordinated services, liability should be equally distributed. (One case, in which a transit operator incurred all expenses in lawsuit involving an individual in an accident that was a coordinated trip.)
- State Planning Tool – place all operators on the Internet and allow potential users to plan long-distance trips. (Also, this tool should rely on a dedicated source of funding.)
- Possibly look at how the Tri-State Corridor Management System Project can facilitate the coordination/provision of intercity services.

CONFERENCE CALL WITH GREYHOUND LINES

Following the four regional stakeholder meetings, a representative of Greyhound Lines contacted the study team to determine if it was too late to provide input to the study. Subsequently a conference call was arranged. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit input from the private sector intercity bus operator and identify issues and needs as related to this study. A secondary issue concerned the possible arrangements that would allow public transit operators or human service agencies to purchase Greyhound tickets and provide them for use by their customers or clients. The following paragraphs are a summary of this discussion. The participating parties were Fred Fravel and Reyes Barboza of the KFH Group, Inc.; Judy Norman and Dennis Brooks of Judy Norman Transportation Consultants; and Randy Isaacs (Greyhound State and Local Affairs), Mike Parnell, Tim Therrien, Tim Lucas, and Ruth LaCosta of Greyhound Lines Inc. (GLI).

Potential Service Areas

The following corridors were identified by GLI as corridors in which they thought there would be a good potential for S.5311(f) funded intercity feeder ridership, based on their previous experience:

- Northwest Coast – Eureka/Arcata toward the Oregon border. GLI representatives mentioned that they are aware of the partnership between the local transit operator in Oregon and the Oregon DOT in providing an intercity service route connecting South Coos Bay (Oregon) and Arcata/Eureka (California).
- Northwest Coast – Arcata-Redding. GLI mentioned that there had been service on this corridor, SR 299, but the operation was dependent on a subsidy. Approximately, 4 or 5 years ago, the subsidy ended as a result of the three-year term on the program funds and, subsequently, so did the service. GLI explained that they had conducted a route analysis and that ridership was determined as low. GLI also explained that there was a public transit operator that was interested in operating this route – Lake County Transit.
- Sierras – Reno-Mammoth Lakes-Los Angeles. GLI representatives mentioned that they would be interested in seeing through service with intercity connections along the US 395 corridor and they are also aware of the C.R.E.S.T. route service in this corridor.
- Northern Central Valley and Northern San Francisco Bay Area – Santa Rosa to San Francisco/Santa Rosa to Sacramento. This service can possibly include stops in Napa Valley.
- Northern Coast – Lakeport to San Francisco. Service would connect Clear Lake area with San Francisco.

- Central Coast – Santa Cruz and Monterey region. The GLI representatives had no specific ideas, but did express that in some cases it may be too costly for a route to veer off the main highway and travel into the coast. Suggested possibly partnering with a local transit operator and establishing a stop that would allow local services to extend out to the intercity route.
- An additional comment from GLI staff was that there might be places where Greyhound had dropped stops on existing routes, and that a local S.5311(f) feeder serving these stops and connecting with Greyhound at a remaining stop (functioning as “local” intercity schedule) could provide some feed traffic. During the conversation no specific examples were provided, but GLI staff said they would try to identify such opportunities and submit them to the study.

The consultant team suggested that the corridors identified by GLI should be reviewed as part of the study to determine the possibility of S.5311(f) funded intercity services. GLI did offer to provide some information regarding the aforementioned analysis of the Arcata-Redding route (subsequently they provided historical operating data for this and several other routes).

Corporate Restructuring of Services

From 2004 to 2006, GLI conducted a cost/performance analysis of its nationwide network and made service improvements and/or changes as a result of the analysis. Specifically, for some routes, the cost per mile was too high to retain the service, given existing revenues at those points. As a result, a number of communities were affected by the changes in services, in some cases GLI service was discontinued.

S.5311 Program Comments/Suggestions

- The consultant team suggested that maybe a component of the S.5311(f) Program application can include a recommendation for the “best available corridors” based on the needs assessment and analysis of potential ridership levels. However, Greyhound did mention that it is not likely that it would consider operating a subsidized route, but it would be willing to work with the operator of the subsidized service to establish a meaningful connection between the two services. Under the new S.5311(f) program guidance allowing the use of the value of “in-kind” capital on connecting unsubsidized services, Greyhound is the position to provide the local match for operating projects that they see as potentially providing feed to the national system. The consultants asked if the corridors mentioned by GLI staff are ones that could potentially benefit from this funding, if a local public transit operator was interested in providing the service—in general, GLI staff replied that these are rural corridors of interest to them, and they are more likely to agree to the use of their in-kind capital value for these corridors.
- There were opinions expressed about the perception that the Caltrans S.5311(f) program does not provide funding beyond a three-year term. The three year limit

does not exist anymore, and all parties agreed that this information should be provided to all potential applicants, as there is a perception from stakeholders and potential applicants that there exists a three year term for the S.5311(f) funds received.

- The intercity operator mentioned that the consultation process with private intercity carriers should be conducted as a component of the planning process. Regardless of state plans regarding certification (of unmet intercity need), as a matter of outreach and maintaining cooperative relationships with the private sector, the state should include a consultation component to the planning process requirements. This requirement may also serve as an opportunity to identify more realistic connectivity possibilities between local services and intercity operators.
- The S.5311(f) program also requires that operators using TDA funding must satisfy the ten percent farebox recovery goal. In general, considering the type of service – long distance and relatively small densities – the farebox recovery requirement becomes difficult to achieve.
- The issue of connectivity among existing services and the lack of information that is made available to the public were discussed. All parties agreed that a more aggressive outreach effort should be made by the public transit and intercity bus operators to reveal services that offer potential for connections.
- The S.5311(f) program needs to consider a more refined and detailed definition of “meaningful connection”. Currently, there is no measure for evaluating this particular component of the program.

Current Partnerships

- GLI provided that it has been working with San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) to work on an automated ticketing process. In the past the typical such arrangement would have allowed SANBAG to purchase tickets in bulk; however, this becomes a scheduling problem for Greyhound as it cannot rely on its digital scheduling system to manage trips, and it makes it hard to determine actual capacity as the tickets may be used at any time. This creates the possibility of a bus not having enough seating capacity because the tickets are not monitored as part of the Greyhound scheduling system.
- GLI and Victorville have established a cooperative relationship in which Victorville purchases pre-paid tickets. Victorville has established a corporate account with GLI but there is a fee for the purchase of prepaid tickets. GLI explained that, in general, for areas that have or can potentially have low ridership, the MAX system can be used. This entails that GLI provide the host facility the software, printer, and ticket stubs for printing; but requires that the host site maintain an active connection with the GLI scheduling system. The software allows for local entities to access the scheduling system and sell tickets that will guarantee capacity. Under this

arrangement, GLI can maintain its productivity levels and the customer is guaranteed a seat on the trip.

- GLI is currently working with the Modoc County Transportation Agency-Sage Stage (SS) and will be assisting SS in establishing an interlining service. GLI will provide a MAX system allowing SS to offer tickets and schedule trips on the GLI system. This is a fairly recent initiative and will require more time to assess the productivity of this operation.
- GLI acknowledges that it has some concerns about providing the MAX system for use by a transit operator or local agency when it also has a local commission agent in the same market, as the agent could be hurt financially if its passengers are diverted to the public agency. If the public agency is providing tickets only to clients, this is unlikely to be an issue, but if the general public was diverted to the public agency (possible if the public agency is discounting the tickets) Greyhound's agent would suffer, and Greyhound has an obligation to support its agents.
- GLI provided that it currently operates contracted service for Amtrak connecting the Los Angeles and Las Vegas metro areas.

Other Comments

- If a S.5311(f) carrier has an interlining agreement with GLI, it allows the public transit/non-profit operator to not pay for the licensing fee to enter the bus terminal.
- GLI explained that the Amtrak Thruway Bus service is not necessarily an intercity bus service. The Thruway Bus requires that passengers that purchase a ticket also include a portion of the trip on rail. There was one incident mentioned in which a Thruway service route made a stop directly across the street from the GLI stop in Santa Rosa. Subsequently, GLI had to discontinue the service because of the competing subsidized Thruway service. However, if the user decides not to use the train, then it essentially becomes a bus trip only, and in this respect, is in direct conflict with other unsubsidized bus operators in the same service area.
- GLI mentioned that they would be amenable to locating intercity stops at host intermodal facilities as long as GLI does not pay for construction costs.
- Consultant team suggested that possibly a portion of S.5311(f) funds may be set aside for specific corridors to be used with the in-kind match.
- GLI expressed interest in the possibility of coordinating service with Human Service Agencies. However, GLI did explain that in order for the service to provide transportation for these needs and still satisfy performance objectives, there should be multiple human service agencies working together and coordinating trips for their clients.

Recommended Consultation with the California Bus Association (CBA)

GLI mentioned that the CBA is quite interested in contributing to this study and looks forward to any opportunity for discussion. The consultant team and a GLI representative, that is also a member of the CBA, will work together in making arrangements for this meeting. CBA has been contacted.

PRESENTATION TO THE CALIFORNIA RURAL COUNTIES TASK FORCE

On July 20, 2007, Fred Fravel of KFH Group did a presentation on the statewide intercity bus study to the California Rural Counties Task Force meeting in Sacramento, California. This was an overview of the project, and he reiterated that the study is still open for input regarding unmet needs, program issues, or other concerns. Barbara O’Keeffe of Tehama County (who had attended the outreach meeting in Redding) provided immediate input, identifying unmet needs:

- Redding to Red Bluff to Corning to Sacramento
- Redding to Red Bluff to Corning to Chico

Both of these are in the I-5 corridor. She also added comments coming out of the Redding meeting, where the consensus was that the program should be used to fill gaps in bus services on existing corridors: I-5 (see the gaps identified above), SR 299, SR 99, and SR 395.