

Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)
and Coordinated Plan Committee

MEETING AGENDA
November 10, 2020
10:00 a.m.

Tulare County Association of Governments

ZOOM/ CALL-IN ONLY
Phone: 669-900-9128
Meeting ID: 858 7908 5411
Passcode: 942456

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the California Ralph M. Brown Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids, translation requests, or other accommodations, or to be able to access this agenda and documents in the agenda packet, please contact the TCAG office at 559-623-0450 at least 3 days prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Council on items within its jurisdiction but not on this agenda. Unscheduled comments are limited to 3 minutes.

Note: Prior to action by the Council on any item on this agenda, the public may comment on that item.

ITEMS FOR ACTION AND DISCUSSION:

- I. Welcome & Introductions**
- II. Action: Approval of Minutes**
 - a. August 11, 2020 (Pages 4-6)
- III. New Transit Outreach Campaign**
- IV. The Green Line Update**
- V. Transit Provider Updates (includes COVID-19 Updates)**
 - a. Visalia Transit
 - b. Dinuba Area Regional Transit (DART)
 - c. Tulare Intermodal Express (TIME)
 - d. Porterville Transit
 - e. Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT)

VI. Social Service Provider Updates

- a. Optional updates from those in attendance

VII. Other Items/Future Agenda Item Requests

VIII. Adjourn. The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2021 at the Tulare County Association of Governments' Office, 210 N. Church St., Suite B, Visalia, CA, 93291 at 10:00 a.m.

**Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) Members
for the
Tulare County Regional Transportation Planning Agency (TCAG)**

Dan Fox ² – Chair	Representative of Potential Transit User 60 Years of Age or Older
Rebecca Donabed- Vice Chair ³	Representative of Potential Transit User who is Disabled
<i>Vacant</i>	Representative of a Local Social Service Provider for Seniors/Social Service Transit Provider
John Mauro ²	Representative of a Local Social Service Provider for Seniors/Social Service Transit Provider
Mark Michaelian ¹	Representative of a Local Social Service Provider for the Disabled/Social Service Transit Provider
Norma Verduzco ¹	Representative of a Local Social Service Provider for the Disabled/Social Service Transit Provider
Albert Cendejas ¹	Representative of a Local Social Service Provider for Persons of Limited Means
Teresa Ortega ³	Transit Operator Representative
Angelina Soper ²	Transit Operator Representative
Carlos Garza ²	Representative of Potential Transit Users from Local Youth

¹ indicates term ending June 30, 2021

² indicates term ending June 30, 2022

³ indicates term ending June 30, 2023

SSTAC Chair – term ending June 30, 2021

SSTAC Vice Chair – term ending June 30, 2021

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TCAG Transit Staff

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Tulare County Association of Governments
Social Services Transportation Advisory Council

August 11, 2020

ATTENDANCE LIST

Representative of potential transit user 60 years of age or over	Dan Fox - Chair (P)
Representative of potential transit user who is disabled	Rebecca Donabed (P)
Representative of local social service provider for seniors/social service transportation provider	Violeta Tapia (A)
Representative of local social service provider for seniors/social service transportation provider	John Mauro (A)
Representative of local social service provider for the disabled/social service transportation provider	Mark Michaelian (P)
Representative of local social service provider for the disabled/social service transportation provider	Norma Verduzco (P)
Representative of local social service provider for persons of limited means	Albert Cendejas (P)
Transit Operator Representative	Teresa Ortega (P)
Transit Operator Representative	Angelina Soper (A)
Representative of potential transit users from local youth	Carlos Garza (A)

Others Present: Caleb Bowman, City of Visalia; Steve Bonville, City of Tulare; Rich Tree, City of Porterville; Georgina Cardenas, Calvans;

TACAG Staff: Giancarlo Bruno; Benjamin Kimball

SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES

Public Comments

Mr. Bruno shared that TACAG staff has received requests from several HHSA clients who are being temporarily sheltered at the 99 Palms Inn for transit service to and from the vicinity of the 99 Palms. He noted that a few dozen comments were submitted and that he intends to forward a complete typewritten summary of these comments to the transit agencies, particularly TCaT & TIME.

I. Welcome & Introductions

The Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) was called to order by Chair Fox at 10:15 a.m. on August 11, 2020. Persons in attendance noted presence over the phone.

II. Action: Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes for May 12, 2020 were approved upon a motion by Member Michaelian and second by Vice Chair Donabed. Member Cendejas abstained and the remaining votes were unanimous.

III. 2019-20 Unmet Transit Needs Follow-up

Chair Fox briefly summarized the unmet needs recommendations the SSTAC made at its May 2020 meeting. He stated that though the comment requesting that the City of Tulare provide Spanish-speaking staff at its transit center was not recommended as an unmet transit need that is reasonable to meet, it was nonetheless of concern because it could represent a significant Title VI issue. Mr. Bruno informed the Chair that the TCAG Board had adopted its 2019/20 Unmet Findings at its June meeting and that this comment was not included in the findings of unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet. He added that any Title VI concerns that might exist should be addressed as quickly as possible. Chair Fox and Member Verduzco echoed this sentiment. Mr. Bonville answered that the City of Tulare employs a significant proportion of bilingual staff and that the contract with its transit operator requires that the operator employ bilingual and/or Spanish-speaking staff. He suggested that the complaint might have resulted from a one-off occurrence and agreed to follow up to make sure that assistance for Spanish speakers is available.

IV. Discussion: Proposed Revisions to TCAG Unmet Transit Needs Criteria

Mr. Bruno explained that staff periodically reviews TCAG's unmet transit needs definition & criteria to ensure that the criteria remain reasonable, clear and relevant. After considering minor edits to the current criteria, staff decided to recommend reaffirming the existing unmet needs definition pending an expected overhaul of the Transportation Development Act that will likely necessitate significant changes.

Chair Fox expressed that the current criteria appears to have worked well and that he was comfortable with the decision to retain it. Member Verduzco asked if the related agenda attachment was a draft text of proposed changes. Mr. Bruno clarified that such a draft was originally proposed, but staff now recommends that the existing criteria be retained unless SSTAC members saw fit to modify it. The members in attendance agreed that the current definition is adequate.

V. Transit Provider Updates

Visalia Transit- Mr. Bowman briefly described the measures Visalia Transit is taking to limit the spread of COVID-19. He noted that tripper buses continue to be utilized to pick up riders who cannot board the bus due to capacity issues. Vice Chair Donabed asked whether capacity for riders in wheelchairs was being limited. Mr. Bowman explained that only one (1) rider in a wheelchair was permitted on a bus at a given time due to the location of the wheel chair securement devices making it impossible to maintain social distancing when more than one wheelchair is properly secured. He added that dial-a-ride vehicles would be dispatched to help in instances where a passenger is left behind due to wheelchair capacity issues. Vice Chair Donabed also reported that some drivers have not been wearing face masks, which Mr. Bowman agreed to take action to correct.

TIME- Mr. Bonville reported that TIME is in the process of acquiring & fitting out driver shields to protect bus drivers from the spread of COVID-19. The city is still operating on a fare-free basis, requiring all passengers & drivers to wear masks and using primarily the rear doors on the bus for

ingress/egress. Vice Chair Donabed mentioned that she has also seen bus drivers in Tulare not wearing their masks or wearing them improperly, which Mr. Bonnaville agreed to address.

Porterville Transit- Mr. Tree explained that Porterville Transit continues to operate on a Sunday schedule seven (7) days a week, and is sanitizing its buses more frequently. He noted that fixed route ridership is down some 70% from pre-COVID. Porterville has recently introduced a microtransit service under the 'TransPort' name and it has proven very successful so far. Since its launch in April, there has been a roughly 400% increase in microtransit trips. Porterville is currently examining its lower performing routes with an eye toward replacing or partially replacing them with expanded microtransit offerings.

Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT)- Member Ortega described the tightened sanitation protocols that TCaT is currently implementing and noted that ridership has declined about 30% since the start of the pandemic. TCaT is still not collecting fares.

Dinuba Area Regional Transit (DART) - No update provided.

VI. Social Service Provider Updates

Family HealthCare Networks- Member Verduzco reported that FHCN continues to offer transportation to patients and that they have implemented infection control measures to ensure the safety of their patients.

CSET- Member Cendejas stated that because senior centers have been shuttered since March, CSET has shifted its focus to meals on wheels and other forms of COVID-19 relief. All seniors 60 years of age and older are eligible to participate in the program at no cost, but donations are welcome. The number of meals on wheels clients has grown from roughly 300 to over 1,300 though Member Cendejas remarked that the numbers now appear to be leveling off. He added that CSET is also focused on providing rental and mortgage assistance to families to help them stay in their homes and encouraged those present to go to the CSET website for details on eligibility.

Able Industries- Member Michaelian explained that Able Industries facility has been closed since the beginning of the pandemic and that their buses are currently dormant. No alternative uses for their vehicles have been arranged so that they can remain available if Able Industries returns to normal operations with short notice.

VII. Other Items/Future Agenda Item Requests

Chair Fox added that he would like an update on the current state of the transit joint powers agreement (JPA) at the November SSTAC meeting. He also mentioned that Orange Belt Stages had formally declared bankruptcy and suggested the possibility of looking into the acquisition of its local facilities for transit-related purposes.

VIII. Adjourn

Chair Fox adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.