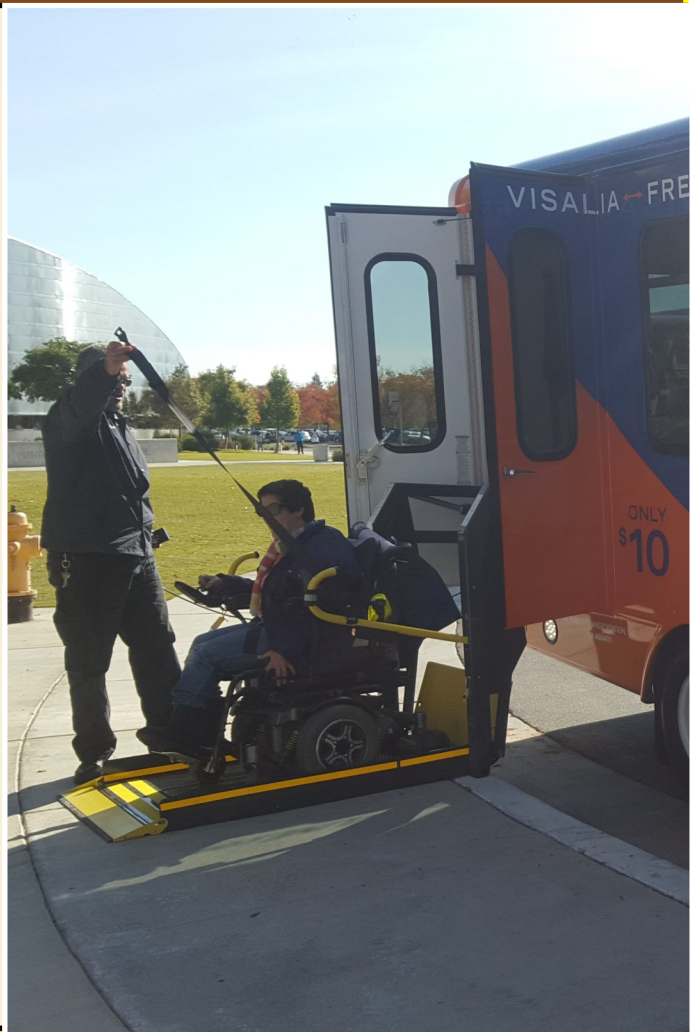


Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction/Background

This plan updates and amends the Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan, which aims to leverage existing human service transportation resources to maximal effect by encouraging close collaboration between local stakeholders. As both the state designated Regional



Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) serves as a designated recipient of state and federal transportation funding. It is also the lead agency responsible for the development of a number of regional transportation plans, in keeping with the federal mandate that such plans are developed through a “comprehensive, cooperative and continuing process”.

This plan also addresses a provision of 49 U.S. Code § 5310, first introduced by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 and subsequently amended by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) in 2012, that requires projects funded by the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. Current FTA guidance for the Section 5310 program stipulates that the plan “**identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes; provides strategies for meeting those local needs; and prioritizes transportation services and projects for funding and implementation.**”

While the Section 5310 program provides valuable funding to public agencies and private non-profit groups serving the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities, the benefits of coordinated planning go beyond the funds disbursed under that program. Coordinated plans are also a useful vehicle for including target populations in the planning process and making sure that resources are used more efficiently by eliminating duplication of services and filling

service gaps. Therefore it is important to consider the projects and strategies forwarded in this document as part of a blueprint for delivering more effective and efficient human service transportation in Tulare County rather than simply a list of grant funding priorities.

Elements of the Plan

This plan addresses all of the elements required of a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, including:

- An update of demographic profile of Tulare County, focusing on populations with special transportation needs;
- Updated inventory of transportation resources in Tulare County;
- A description of stakeholder involvement in the development of the plan;
- The most recent analysis of transportation needs and gaps; and
- A prioritized list of strategies to address the identified needs and gaps.

Plan Update Methodology

The methodology used to develop the original plan and the plan update included the following steps:

Review Recent Assessments and Best Practices: A review was conducted of recent local studies, which have examined transportation needs in the Tulare County, particularly those of low - income populations, seniors and persons with disabilities. Findings were incorporated into the plan update.

Update Demographic Profile: An updated demographic profile of the region was prepared using data from the Census Bureau and California Department of Finance statistics, to determine the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on low-income populations, persons with disabilities, and older adults. Various tables and maps in this plan were prepared to summarize and display the demographic data.

Document Existing Transportation Services: This step involved documenting the range of public transportation services that already exist in the region. These services primarily include public fixed-route and shared ride services, private medical transportation companies, and transportation services provided or sponsored by human services agencies. Information about public transit operators was obtained from existing resources such as the 2010 Needs Assessment and TCAG reports.

Conduct Outreach: Development of the original Coordinated Plan included stakeholder involvement and public participation via meetings, stakeholder interviews, and convening a Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee to examine coordination issues in detail. Through these efforts, transportation gaps were identified or confirmed. Stakeholders provided input on existing barriers to coordination as well as possibilities for improvement. Since the original plan was developed, TCAG has relied on continuous public involvement through quarterly Social Service Technical Advisory Council (SSTAC) meetings, surveys, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews. Considering there has been frequent outreach since 2010, and a detailed Needs Assessment was completed in 2010, streamlined public involvement was used for this plan update.

Assess Needs and Gaps: The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where—and how—service for low-income populations, seniors, and persons with disabilities needs to be improved. Needs are based on both a quantitative demand analysis and a qualitative assessment of transit needs developed through the conduct of public outreach, stakeholder interviews, and surveys.

Identify and Prioritize Solutions: Following the identification of service gaps the planning process identified corresponding potential service solutions. The Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was used to identify and validate regional priorities, with the understanding that priorities may shift over time, and that certain improvement strategies should be broad enough for transit project applications to be deemed eligible by state and federal approval agencies. The strategies are documented in Chapter 6 and the Appendix A.

Demographic Profile

Demographic changes since the last coordinated plan update in 2015 were tracked using U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates, American Communities Survey 5 Year Estimates and growth projections from the California Department of Finance. The County has a significant portion of residents who are likely to have greater transportation needs because they are potentially unable to drive due to age, disability, or income status. Approximately 11% of Tulare County's total population is 65 years or older, 12% of the total population has some type of disability, and over 27% of County's population is considered low – income. In addition, 5% of total households within Tulare County do not have access to a vehicle. Many of Tulare County's transportation-dependent residents live outside of the incorporated cities, posing an even greater transportation challenge given the diffuse population in these areas.

Documentation of Existing Transportation Services

The 2007 Coordinated Plan created an inventory of agencies that provide social service transportation and collected basic information about the agencies' services. This inventory was updated as part of the Plan update process.

Needs Assessment/Transportation Gaps

Several key themes emerged from the outreach efforts, stakeholder consultation, and previous planning projects and surveys. These include:

Enhanced Fixed Route Services

For persons who can and do use the fixed route system, there is a need for additional service in rural and suburban areas, and for more direct service to key activity centers that traditional and non-traditional riders need to access. Residents also would like increased frequency to avoid long waits, more service across county lines, and extended service longer into the evening and on weekends.

Enhanced Transportation Services

There is a demand for enhanced services to and from outlying County areas into the largest cities (Dinuba, Tulare, Porterville and Visalia) to facilitate participation in social programs and access to medical care. Depending on the nature of the services which are introduced to fill these needs, these may be an effective and more inexpensive alternative to enhancing fixed route services.

Enhanced Route Services in the rural areas

For persons who can and do use the transit system in the rural areas, there is a need for additional service in rural and suburban areas, and for more direct service to key activity centers (access to jobs, training and social programs in the urban areas of the County) that older adults and persons with disabilities need to access. Areas with noted gaps in service include the North County areas of London, Traver, Monson and Seville, Central County areas of Poplar, Woodville, Springville and Tipton and the South County areas of Alpaugh, Richgrove, Terra Bella, and Ducor.

Enhanced Paratransit Services

Paratransit users sometimes need a level of service above and beyond what is required by the ADA, such as service provided on the same day it is requested, where and when the fixed route service does not operate, or the ability to accommodate "uncommon" wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

Transit Alternatives

For those who need transportation where public transit (fixed-route, Dial-A-Ride or complementary ADA paratransit) is unavailable or unsuitable, alternatives are needed that enable people to live independently, such as ride-sharing or volunteer-driver programs, or mobile programs that bring support services to people's homes or rural communities.

Information and Other Assistance

There is a need for education and information in a variety of formats so that older adults and persons with disabilities can learn how to use public transit and its accessible features. Likewise, there is a need to ensure drivers, dispatchers, and other transit personnel are sensitive to passenger needs, and know how to provide assistance on-board the vehicle.

Affordability and Access to Autos

Cost is the primary barrier to auto ownership for low-income individuals and families. Transit fares, especially distance-based fares, monthly passes requiring high up-front costs, and certain transfer policies, were cited as expensive. The institution of progressive fare capping, allowing riders to pay for single-ride tickets until they have spent the equivalent cost of a monthly T-Pass, may be a useful tool for mitigating this issue.

Pedestrian Access and Land Use Coordination

The need to improve accessibility to and from bus stops and transfer centers (sidewalks, curb cuts, curb ramps, crosswalks) was widely voiced throughout the outreach meetings. Meeting attendees also mentioned the need to better coordinate land use development with the provision of transit service, especially in lower-density communities. The location of housing and facilities serving people with disabilities or seniors in areas that are inaccessible by transit was also cited as a concern.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Issues

Walking and cycling are often an important part of the transportation equation, both as a link to transit and as modes of transportation in their own right. Safe routes for walking or riding a bicycle are an issue in many low-income communities. Specific concerns include fast traffic speeds near pedestrians; lack of crosswalks and signals; lack of sidewalks, particularly in unincorporated or rural areas; sidewalks that are in poor condition; lack of proper lighting creating safety issues especially at night; lack of adequate signage and a better way finding information for pedestrians and cyclists; and lack of bike lanes or areas to secure bicycles at stops and on transit vehicles.

Connectivity

The need for better connectivity between service providers was expressed, both for inter-and intra-county travel, whether using paratransit or fixed-route service. Customers also mentioned the need for more bus shelters and bus stops as well as other amenities at transfer sites. Some wheelchair users have difficulty making effective use of the fixed-route system due to accessibility barriers and the need to enhance accessibility of vehicles and infrastructure such as shelters and stops.

Transit Experience

A number of issues were raised related to transit amenities, including bus shelters, bus stop seating if a bus stop cannot accommodate a shelter and lighting to promote safety at bus stops, especially at night.

Goals and Strategies to Enhance Human Service Transportation

Potential strategies are identified to address the gaps that emerged from the outreach process and review of prior plans. These suggested solutions are grouped into three main categories:

- Activities that better coordinate and consolidate transportation services and resources;
- Activities that enhance mobility; and
- Activities that improve communication, training, and organizational support.

These strategies represent categories of potential investments, which might be eligible for Federal Transit Administration funds subject to this plan, or other local sources of funding.

See Chapter 6 and Appendix A.

Next Steps

Support Allied Groups and Committees

TCAG should continue to foster the activities of area groups in order to clearly identify public transportation gaps and implement feasible solutions. Continued close coordination with transit operators, health care providers and social service agencies will be necessary to bring about capital equipment upgrades and enhanced service delivery.

Plan Update

Established TCAG practice has been to perform a coordinated plan update at least once every five (5) years. Because projects funded by transit programs subject to the coordinated planning requirement must be included in the plan, it may also be necessary to update or amend the list of priority strategies to coincide with future Section 5310 funding cycles, or other funding cycles specific to fund sources subject to this plan. A plan update may also be required as a result of new transportation bill regulations.

Chapter 1. Introduction and Background

Background

This document is an update to the 2015 Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan. This plan update was developed by TCAG, which is both the RTPA and the Metropolitan Planning Organization MPO for the Tulare County.



In 2005 the passage of the SAFETEA-LU established a new transportation planning requirement for counties and regions. Federal authorization legislation of SAFETEA-LU linked two existing grant programs, 5316 – *Job Access and Reverse Commute* and 5310 – *Elderly and Persons with Disabilities* capital program, with a third initiative called 5317 – *New Freedom* program, through a Coordination Plan that was to be locally developed, at the county or regional level. Its intent was to identify the transportation needs and mobility challenges of three populations:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Older adults
- Persons of low income

The Coordinated Plan brings together human service organizations and public transit agencies to identify and meet mobility needs of older adults, persons with disabilities and persons of low income. Building upon a history of coordination requirements within the 5310 program, the Coordinated Plan process helps leverage and extend scarce transportation resources by coordinating different and often separate systems. Specifically, the plan is to identify strategies for coordinating services and for meeting mobility needs and gaps, while prioritizing these for implementation.

In 2012 new authorizing legislation, MAP- 21 included changes that impacted the Coordinated Plan. It repealed the programs of 5316 – *Job Access and Reverse Commute* and Section 5317 – *New Freedom*. It retained and strengthened the

5310 program, restating the requirement of the Coordinated Plan and providing for funding support for the strategies and projects recommended through the Coordinated Plan process.

The significant change introduced by MAP-21 that relates to the Coordinated Plan is that projects funded with 5310 dollars are "projects in the Coordinated Plan," not simply derived from it as had been the case under SAFETEA-LU direction. This makes all the more important the public involvement processes of the update process. It is necessary to ensure that a breadth of voices are providing input to the plan and that identified projects are as comprehensive as possible, in anticipation of future grant cycles and to build responsive coordinated projects.

The most recent federally authorized transportation bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, was signed into law in 2015 and retained the coordinated planning provisions of MAP-21.

Regarding **how** projects are included in the Coordinated Plan, current regulatory guidance states:

"FTA maintains flexibility in how projects appear in the coordinated plan. Projects may be identified as strategies, activities and/or specific projects addressing an identified service gap or transportation coordination objective articulated and prioritized within the plan." (FTA Circular 9070.1G, pp. V-1)

Indicating also that projects are *"developed and approved through a process that include[s] participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human service providers and other members of the general public"*, this Coordinated Plan development process was designed to ensure a breadth of public involvement opportunities

Coordinated Plan Requirements

FTA has provided specific guidelines for the preparation of the Coordinated Plan. The following are the four main elements required of the Coordinated Plan, taken from FTA Proposed Circular 9070.1G, which incorporates provisions of MAP-21:

- (1) An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- (2) An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;

- (3) Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- (4) Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

Essentially, the Coordinated Plan identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, seniors, and people with low incomes; provides strategies for meeting those needs locally; and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. A Coordinated Plan should maximize the transit programs collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan must be developed through a process that includes participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public/private/nonprofit transportation and human services transportation providers, and other members of the public.

What is Coordinated Planning?

Coordinated planning is when multiple organizations work together to further their mutual goals, achieving economies of scale and strengthening services. According to United We Ride, coordination makes the most efficient use of limited transportation resources by avoiding duplication caused by overlapping individual program efforts. It encourages the use and sharing of existing community resources.



There are many levels of coordination, ranging from the basic sharing of training resources to the full integration of services. Examples of coordinated transportation include:

- Establishing feeder services to connect to fixed transit routes.
- Agreements between providers encouraging use of transit services.
- Identifying barriers to coordination in the regulatory environment and advocating for change.
- Making greater use of technology to find providers and schedule trips.
- Finding ways to group riders on the same vehicle even when they are sponsored by different funding agencies.

- Leveraging purchasing power for vehicles, fuel, maintenance, or training.
- Using school buses for community transportation or other eligible purposes.

Regardless of the type of coordination, it can involve the cooperation of:

Transportation providers — transit agencies, school districts, social service agencies, private providers, non - profit transportation programs.

Service providers — such as doctors scheduling medical appointments based on transportation availability, land use planners including mobility options as part of zoning decisions, developers building “walkable” communities.

As such, this plan brings together service providers, transportation funders, riders, and the community-at-large to improve special needs transportation throughout the Tulare County Region.

Who are Transportation-Disadvantaged?

Transportation-disadvantaged people, otherwise known as individuals with special transportation needs, are those who are unable to transport themselves due to their age, income, or health condition. Their needs can vary greatly from person to person; an elderly



woman with an ambulatory difficulty might require door-to-door transportation and help boarding and debarking the bus, a person with a self-care difficulty may need to travel with a personal care attendant, people requiring dialysis need to be able to make regular clinic visits, residents living on a limited income might rely on public transportation to travel to and from work or school, and so on; it is important that the needs of all transportation disadvantaged people are given proper consideration.

What are Special Needs in Transportation?

Given increased rates of vehicle ownership in recent years and the geographically diffuse nature of employment in the region, it is unsurprising that the private automobile is by far the most frequently used mode of transportation in Tulare County. However, for those with special transportation needs, driving a car is not always a viable option. Special needs transportation refers to any mode of transportation used by those defined as transportation-disadvantaged or with a special transportation need. This includes buses that have regular stops (i.e., fixed-

route transit for the general public, and schools), specialized services such as vans and taxis that pick up people at the curb or door (i.e., demand response or dial-a-ride), rideshare programs, volunteer driver services, trains, or any federal, state, and local publicly funded transportation.

The different agencies providing these special transportation services largely fit into two categories: human service transportation and public transit services. These broad designations, however, do little to describe the variety of providers or the diversity of people they serve.

In this planning effort, the intent is to use the widest possible interpretation of special needs transportation. This includes transportation services funded and provided by the following:

- FTA;
- County and local human service departments including programs for the elderly, and disability populations;
- Public transit;
- School districts;
- For-profit and non-profit contractors.

Coordination Efforts in Tulare County

County Wide Transit Pass (T-Pass)

One successful instance of cross-agency cooperation is Tulare County's T-Pass, a monthly transit pass honored by each of the County's five (5) fixed route providers of public transit. The T-Pass is currently sold at \$55 a month and allows pass holders to ride any transit service (with the exception of demand response services and specialized services such as the V-Line service to Fresno) an unlimited number of times during a given calendar month. Since its introduction in 2007 T-Pass sales and ridership have shown a steady increase. Only once in the program's history has year-on-year ridership declined. Fiscal Year 2018/19 data, the most recent presently available, shows that T-Pass ridership reached an all-time high of 293,132 and revenues per ride amounted to \$1.73. This was achieved in spite of an overall climate where transit ridership has declined both nationally and locally.

Transit providers have indicated the need to increase the cost of the pass to keep up with rising costs of transit rides and agency monthly passes. At the same time, the cost of transportation often presents itself as a mobility barrier for lower-income individuals. In an effort to balance these competing considerations, the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) purchases several hundred T-

Passes each month from Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT) and provides these to their clients so that they are able to travel to work and access vital human services.

Table 1-1 T-Pass Sales and Ridership, 2015-2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
T-Pass Ridership	241,429	245,927	227,678	269,693	293,132
Total Fixed-Route Ridership	3,283,990	3,023,844	2,766,783	2,815,512	2,515,733
Percentage	7.4%	8.1%	8.2%	9.6%	11.7%

T-Pass Sales by Agency

Agency	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Visalia	3,243	3,482	2,993	2,689	2,823
TCaT	2,075	1,979	1,861	4,462	5,846
TIME	591	562	430	419	466
Porterville	544	725	562	242	249
DART	109	163	170	198	151

The Green Line

The Green Line was established in July 2009 as a transit information hotline following the award of a JARC/New Freedom grant by Caltrans. The Green Line allows transit users to call the toll-free number with any questions or comments regarding any public transit service in Tulare County. The Green Line has proven to be a valuable resource and its usage has grown steadily since its introduction. The City of Visalia submitted an application for 5310 program funds to maintain, expand and promote The Green Line as part of the FY 2018/19 cycle. Expansion of The Green Line is intended to more comprehensively track unmet transit needs and provide



more extensive information on transportation services for those with special transportation needs.

College of the Sequoias Student Transit Pass Program

The provision of a transit pass to College of the Sequoias (COS) students was identified as an unmet transit need in spring 2010. That fall, COS Students voted to increase their student fees (\$5 for full time students \$4 for part time students) to establish a semester long transit pass that allows unlimited fixed route rides countywide. COS Administration agreed to match \$0.40 to each student paying the fee. In 2014 students voted to increase the cost of the pass to \$10 for full time students and \$9 for part time students. COS increased its contribution to \$1 per student. All students are required to pay the fee regardless of whether they ride the transit systems. Ridership data shows the substantial reach of the program.

Table 1-2 COS Student Transit Pass Program Ridership

Semester	Ridership
Spring 2017	99,489
Summer 2017	9,493
Fall 2017	128,279
Spring 2018	111,683
Summer 2018	12,415
Fall 2018	123,381
Spring 2019	104,984

Chapter 2. Project Methodology

As outlined in Chapter 1, the four required elements of a coordinated plan, as outlined by FTA Circular C 9070.1G, are: (1) an assessment of current transportation services; (2) an assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors; (3) strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified transportation needs (as well as ways to improve efficiencies); and (4) implementation priorities based on funding, feasibility, time, etc. This chapter describes the steps that were undertaken to develop these elements of Tulare County's Coordinated Plan, as well as steps taken to update the Plan in 2019.

Literature Search

A review was conducted of recent local studies that have examined transportation needs in Tulare County, particularly those of low-income populations, seniors and persons with disabilities. The purpose of this step was to consider the findings emerging from these plans based on their targeted outreach efforts as a starting point for considering unmet transit needs.

A broader literature search also examined some published studies which investigated issues related to human services transportation more generally. This was done in an effort to understand the outcomes of different projects and strategies for delivering such services.

Demographic Profile

A fully updated demographic profile of the service area was prepared using data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey and projections from the California Department of Finance, to determine the local characteristics of the study area, and specifically the three population groups the plan focuses on: persons with low incomes, persons with disabilities, and older adults.

Documenting Existing Services

This step involves documenting the range of public transportation services that already exist in the study area. These services include public fixed-route and demand response paratransit services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by social service agencies. Information about public transit and

paratransit was gleaned from existing resources as specified in the report, and information about services provided by other social service agencies was collected through consultation with stakeholders.

Stakeholder Involvement

TCAG places a high value on consensus and public participation and employs a collaborative process to create its Coordinated Plan. Throughout development of this Plan, TCAG sought the opinion and feedback of interested parties, including local transit agencies, various social service agencies, tribal governments, non-profit organizations and the general public. A comprehensive stakeholder list was created that included 100 such entities located in or serving Tulare County. These stakeholders were contacted via a direct mailing inviting their participation in the plan update process. A transportation user survey was also included, which recipients were encouraged to share with their clients.



Respondents who expressed an interest in participating were invited to form a Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) which met three (3) times during the course of summer 2019 to discuss issues related to human service transportation and to propose a list of recommended projects and strategies. The projects and strategies outlined in the 2015 plan were shared with committee members along with a brief report indicating the progress made towards realizing each stated goal. At the final CPAC meeting members suggested revisions to the existing list of projects and strategies and their respective priority rankings. These recommendations form the core of the coordination activities proposed in this plan.

In addition, TCAG utilized public feedback and comments pertaining to public transit service collected over the last five years from such activities as the Unmet Transit Needs process and studying the most recent regional planning documents,

such as Long Range Transit Plan, Short Range Transit Plans, State of the System Report and Southeast Tulare County Mobility Plan.

Chapter 3. Demographic Profile

Population

While the eastern half of Tulare County is mountainous and sparsely populated, its western half is home to a combined population of nearly 500,000 persons dispersed across several small to medium-sized cities separated by vast agricultural lands. State Route 99 bisects the western half of the county and provides regional connections to Fresno to the north and Bakersfield to the south. The majority of the county's population is situated east of US 99 and west of the Sierra Nevada foothills. The primary central cities of Visalia, Porterville, Tulare, Lindsay, Farmersville, and Exeter are connected by State Routes 63, 65, 137, 198 and County Route J20. The northern communities of Dinuba and Cutler-Orosi are connected by CR J40 and SR 63. The estimated populations of the 10 most populous communities in the county are listed below in Table 3-1.

According to 2018 U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the current population of Tulare County is 465,861 persons. This is a roughly 5% increase when compared to the population of 442,179 recorded by the 2010 US Census. Tulare County's largest city, and the County seat, is Visalia, with a 2018 estimated population of 133,800. Other incorporated cities include Tulare (64,475 persons), Porterville (59,988 persons), Dinuba (24,316 persons), Lindsay (13,474 persons), Exeter (10,533 persons), Farmersville (10,759 persons), and Woodlake (7,640 persons). The populations for the 10 largest population centers in the County are listed below in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Population of Primary Communities in Tulare County Source: US Census, 2018 Estimate*

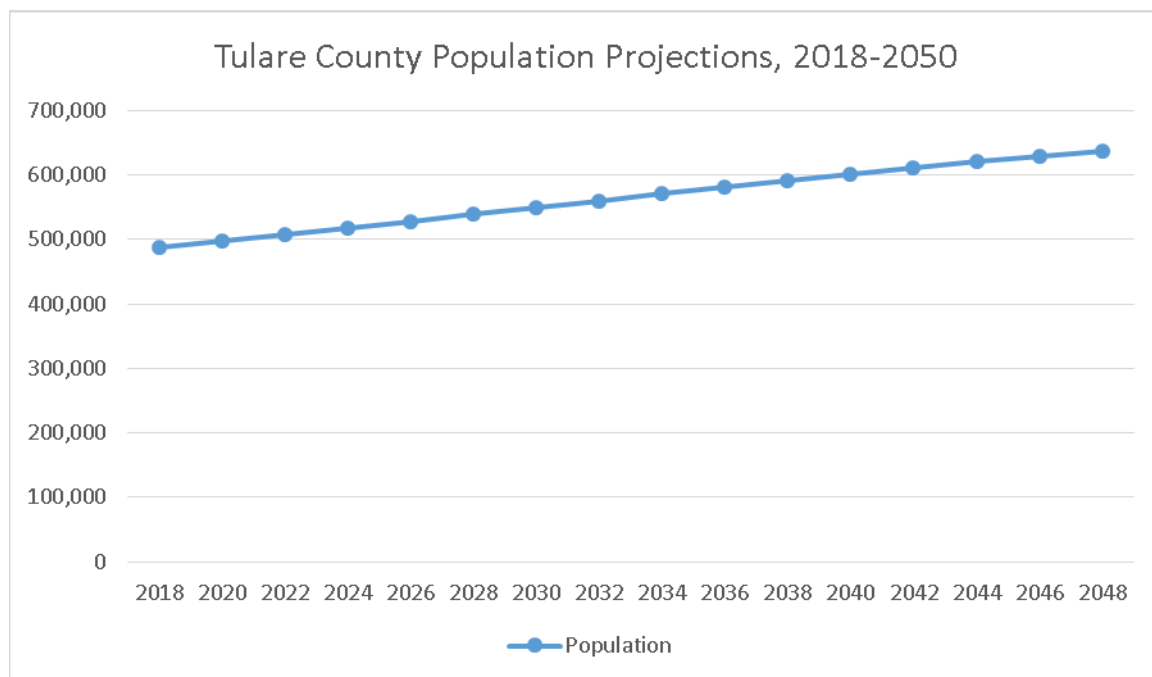
City	Population
Visalia	133,800
Tulare	64,475
Porterville	59,988
Dinuba	24,316

Lindsay	13, 474
Cutler-Orosi*	13,610
Farmersville	10,759
Exeter	10,533
Earlimart*	8,824
Woodlake	7,640

***Note: 2018 US Census Bureau Population Estimates were not available for unincorporated communities. Population estimates for Cutler-Orosi and Earlimart were sourced from American Communities Survey 2013-2017 5 Year Estimates.**

According to California Department of Finance projections, the overall population of Tulare County is expected to increase at an annual rate of 1.1% between 2018 and 2023. These same projections anticipate a countywide population of 657,000 by 2050, based on current trends. Figure 1 shows projected population growth in the county through 2050.

Figure 1 Tulare County Population Projections, 2018-2050



Senior Age 65+

The geographic distribution of the County's senior population is generally similar to that of its overall population. The largest concentrations of persons aged 65 and over occur in urbanized areas such as Visalia, Porterville, and Tulare. The primary exception to this is that the senior population is more likely to locate closer towards the urban core of each city rather than in outlying areas. Other communities with notable concentrations of senior populations include Dinuba, Cutler-Orosi, Exeter, Farmersville, Woodlake, Lindsay and Earlimart.

Although California as a whole has a greater proportion of people age 65 and older in comparison to the national average, Tulare County has a relatively low proportion of senior residents. According to the U.S. Census Population Estimates Program, there were 53,292 persons aged 65 or older residing in Tulare County in 2018. This amounts to 11.4% of the total population, lower than the comparable figures of 14.3% for California as a whole and 16.0% nationwide. This can be attributed to the fact that the median age of California's population is approximately one and a half years younger than that of the nation, with Tulare County's median age being a further five and a half years younger than the state average. This is largely due to a large, continual influx of younger immigrants with children. However, while the county's population is younger than that of the state and the nation, the number of seniors grew by approximately 11,500 between the 2010 Census and 2018. As the current population ages, the need for transportation services that meet their needs will increase; currently over 20% of the County's population is between the ages of 45 and 64. Research indicates that one in five Americans age 65 and older do not drive, and more than 50% of non-drivers age 65 and older stay home on any given day due to lack of transportation resources. In light of the anticipated growth in the senior population and a corresponding increase in demand for specialized transportation services, it would be prudent for the county to take measures which would strengthen and increase the efficiency of human service transportation in the coming years.

According to the California Department of Finance 2010-2060 projections the senior population of Tulare County is expected to grow to 85,364 by 2035, reaching 15% of the total. This would represent an increase of more than 30,000 persons aged 65 or older and a significantly higher proportion of seniors residing in the county than at any point in the past five (5) decades. Between 1970 and 2018 the percentage of County residents aged 65 or older remained fairly steady, averaging around 10%. As the population grows older, it can be expected that there will be a commensurate rise in demand for transportation services.

Figure 2 Tulare County Senior Population Projections, 2020-2050

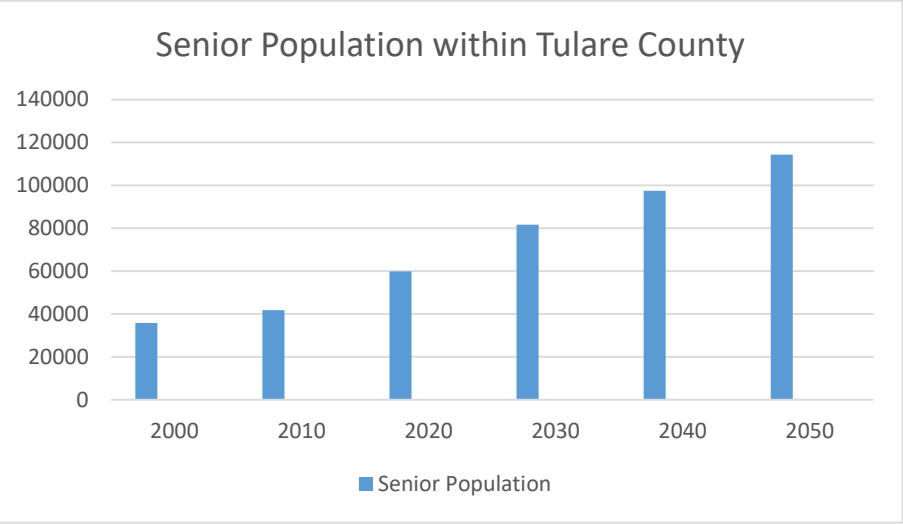
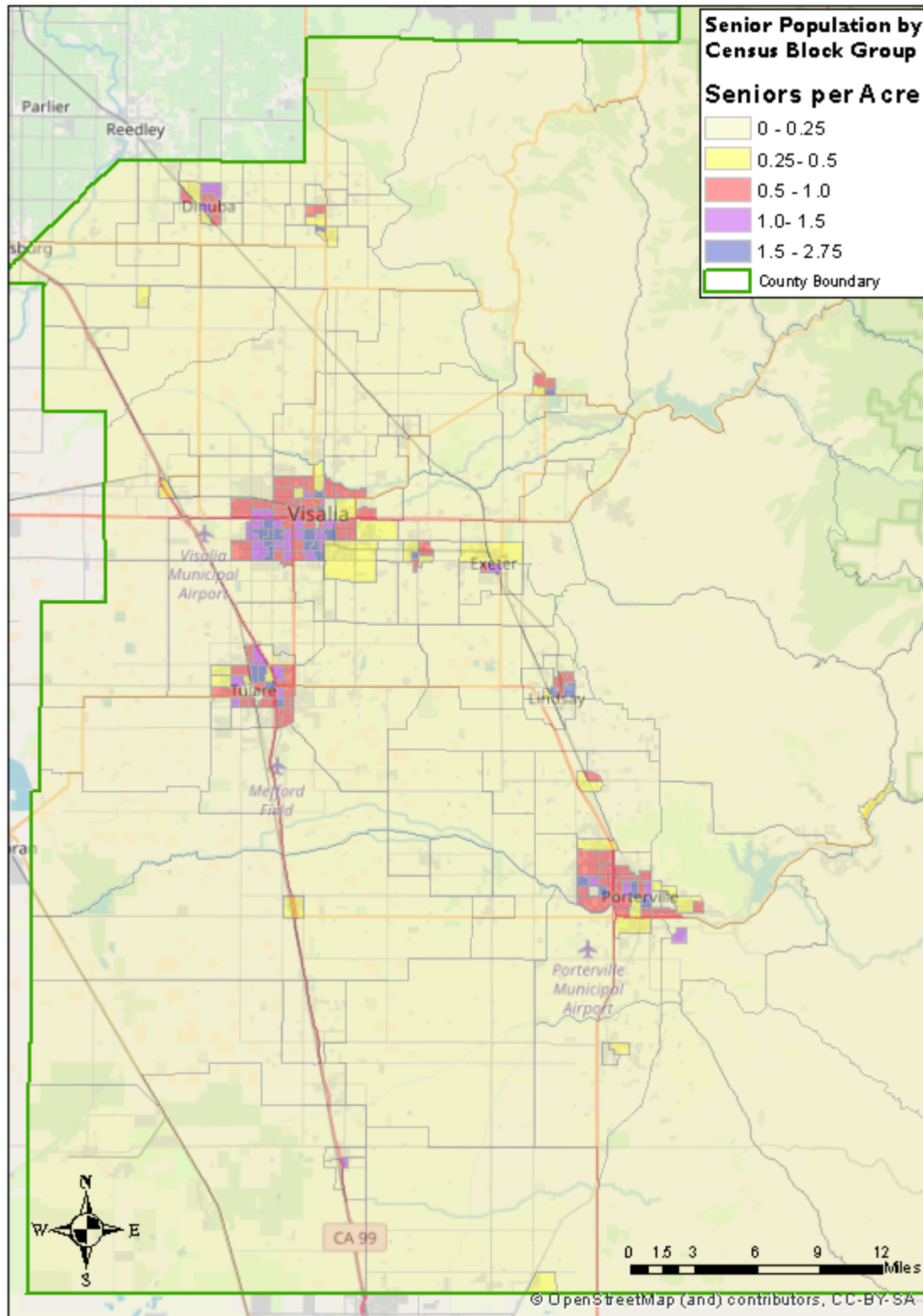


Figure 3 Population Density of Persons Aged 65+
Per American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5 Year Estimate

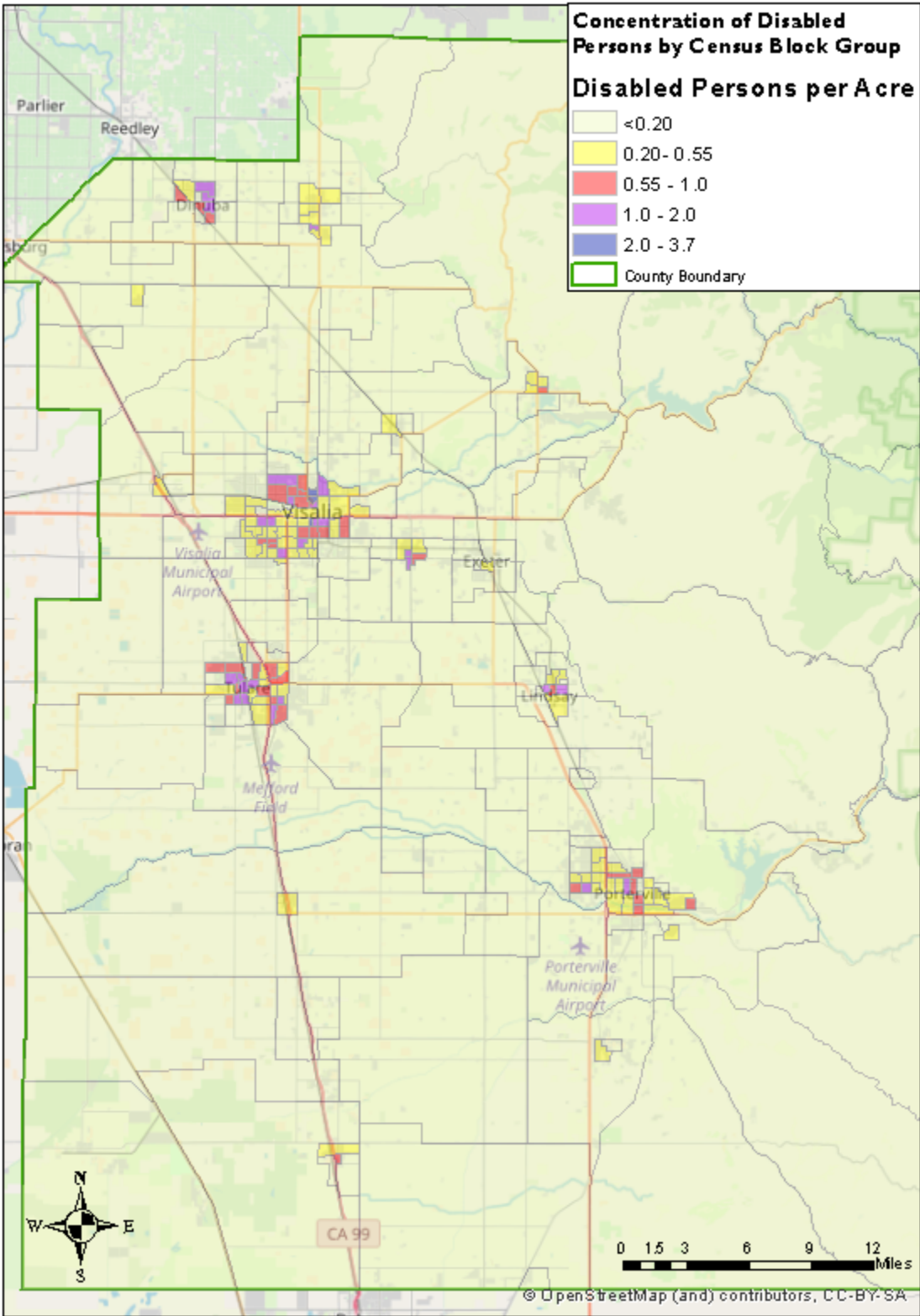


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OpenStreetMap

Individuals with a Disability

The population distribution of persons with disabilities within Tulare County largely mirrors that of the senior population, with even greater concentration within the core of urban centers.

Figure 4 Density of Persons with Disabilities
Per American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5 Year Estimate



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s data indicates that 12.3% of the total population of Tulare County currently has some type of disability. The U.S. Census defines a disability as a significant limitation in sensory, physical, or mental functions, the ability to provide self-care, or the ability to function outside of one's home. According to 2017 Census estimates, roughly 52% of this population was comprised of working-age adults between the ages of 18 and 64. Just over 20% of disabled persons aged 16 or older was employed. Compared to the general population, disabled county residents were found to be nearly three times as likely to ride transit, and about twice as likely to walk or bike to work. While American Community Survey data does not indicate the precise mobility requirements of individuals reporting disabilities, estimates are available for the prevalence of each type of disability within the county. Table 3-2 shows the breakdown of the disabled population according to the type of disability reported. Table 3-3 shows the same breakdown for disabled seniors, showing the increased prevalence of disabilities among the senior population, which suggests that as the population ages the need for paratransit services will become even greater.

Table 3-2 Disabled Population by Disability Type, 2017

Disability Type	Number of Persons	Prevalence
Hearing Difficulty	15,096	3.3%
Vision Difficulty	13,257	2.9%
Cognitive Difficulty	20,535	4.9%
Ambulatory Difficulty	30,663	7.4%
Self-Care Difficulty	10,912	2.6%
Independent Living Difficulty	21,519	6.9%
All Disabled Persons*	56,061	12.3%

*Note: The total for all disabled persons reflects the fact that some persons reported having more than one type of disability. Therefore the overall total is lower than the sum of all totals reported for each separate category.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2013-2017 5 Year Estimate.

Table 3-3 Disabled Persons Aged 65+ by Disability Type, 2017

Disability Type	Number of Persons	Prevalence
Hearing Difficulty	8,355	17.6%
Vision Difficulty	4,448	9.3%
Cognitive Difficulty	6,207	13.0%
Ambulatory Difficulty	14,824	31.2%
Self-Care Difficulty	4,483	9.4%
Independent Living Difficulty	10,266	21.6%
All Disabled Seniors	21,141	44.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2013-2017 5 Year Estimate.

Low-Income Individuals

Over 27% of Tulare County's population lives below the poverty level according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This figure is 12.5% higher than the national average and 12% above the statewide average. The FTA defines low-income individuals as those individuals who earn at or below 150% of the poverty level. The U.S. Census defines the poverty level as an annual income of \$25,750 for a family of four (2019 figure). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, nearly 42.5% of the County's population is considered low-income.

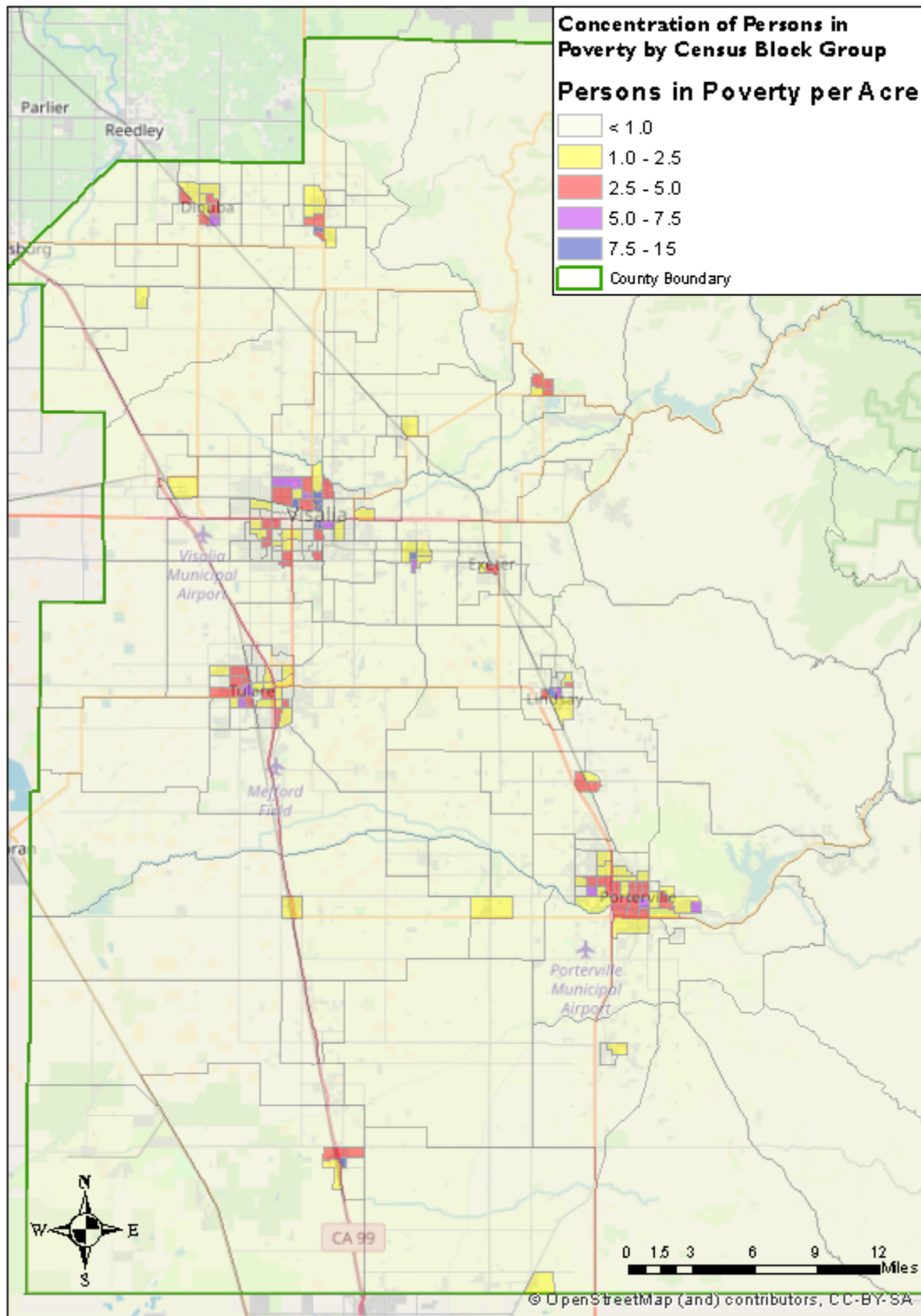
Table 3-4 Economic Indicators

	Tulare County	California
Unemployment rate	9.6%	4.2%
Low-Income population	~42.5%	~24.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2013-2017 5 Year Estimate.

The highest densities of individuals below poverty are found in Cutler, Central Visalia, Lindsay, Earlimart, the central portions of Tulare and Porterville, and the southerly

portions of Dinuba and Farmersville. In the case of many of the aforementioned places, the concentration of poverty is at least partly a function of population density rather than the prevalence of poverty among the area population. When considered in terms of poverty rates, the five most impoverished communities are: Yettem (63%), Sultana (60.9%), Strathmore (59.7%), Teviston (55.6%) and Poplar (52.4%).



Zero-Vehicle Household Density

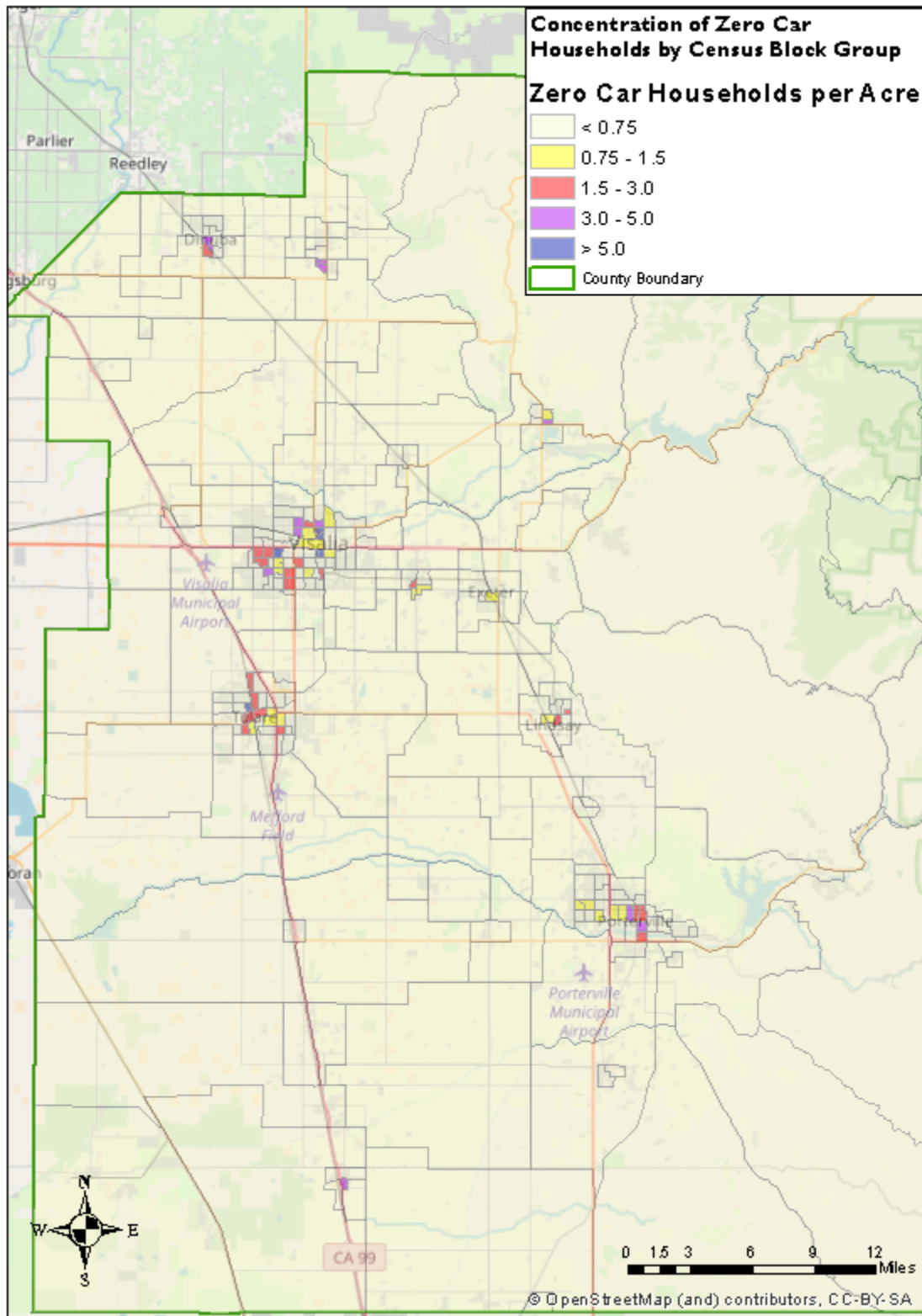
Income and access to vehicles are perhaps two of the greatest predictors of reliance upon transit when examining the demography of a region. While age and disability status are also positively correlated with greater transportation needs, the ability to afford a personal vehicle and to keep it in roadworthy condition is often a direct determinant of how likely an individual is to rely on public transportation, walking, cycling or some other alternative means of travel. Adding to the difficulties is the fact that these characteristics often combine to produce substantial physical, financial, legal, and self-imposed limitations which generally preclude individuals from driving, leaving public transportation as a necessary lifeline and the only viable option for many kinds of travel. Many low-income individuals are without a car (or at least a reliable car) to get them to and from jobs and or interviews, and without the financial means to change these cyclic circumstances. Approximately 6% of households in Tulare County do not have a vehicle available to them (see Table 3-5 below). Figure 6 depicts the concentration of households within Tulare County without access to at least one vehicle.

Tulare County	
Total Households	135,144
Households without a vehicle	8,479
Percent of Households without a vehicle	6.3%

Table 3-5 Household Vehicle Availability

As might be expected, zero-vehicle households within Tulare County are largely concentrated within the urban cores of its three largest cities: Visalia, Tulare and Porterville. These cities offer more extensive, frequent fixed route transit service than their smaller peers and also boast a higher concentration of jobs and services. While these factors serve to reduce the negative impacts of not owning a car many county households are still placed at a disadvantage due to their lack of a vehicle. This is particularly true in unincorporated communities, such as Cutler and Earlimart, which are further from major centers of employment and less frequently served by transit.

Figure 6 Households without a Vehicle (2017)



Chapter 4. Transportation Resources

Relative to its size and population, Tulare County area offers a fairly wide array of resources to meet the transportation needs of its citizens, including general public transit (both fixed route and demand-response), nonprofit transit services that provide service to special needs populations, and private transportation providers, such as local taxi services and interregional bus service (Orange



Belt Stages and Greyhound). Generally the most frequent and varied public transportation is offered in the largest cities, with lower frequency transit service connecting smaller rural communities scattered throughout the county to major population centers nearby. Human service transportation is provided by local transit, mental health organizations, health care providers, private medical transportation companies, special city/county programs for senior citizens, and disabled citizens programs.

Inventory Methodology

The transportation provider list was originally developed in 2007, by TCAG and TPG Consulting for the first iteration of the Coordinated Plan. This list was recently updated to reflect new transit and human services in Tulare County.

Transportation Providers – Agencies whose primary mission is the provision of transportation using federal and/or state resources.

Transportation Purchasers – Agencies whose ancillary mission is the provision of transportation; agencies who purchase transportation for their clients.

Transportation Providers

Dinuba Area Regional Transit (DART)



Public transit service in the City of Dinuba and the adjacent area is currently provided by the Dinuba Area Regional Transit (DART). The DART system consists of a flex route service that combines two fixed routes with a dial-a-ride component, a fixed route trolley (Jolly Trolley), and a regional fixed route service (Dinuba Connection). A private contractor, MV

Transportation, has been providing the DART service to Dinuba since 2006 and is the current provider in 2019. Prior to 2006, Dinuba transit service was provided by Dinuba Transit Inc. since 1981. The flex route and fixed route systems serve an estimated population of 24,316, with nine vehicles owned by the City, all of which are active on a rotating basis. Fixed route ridership, including both the Dinuba Connection and the Jolly Trolley, totaled 99,661 passengers in FY 2017/18. The city's demand response system is one of the most heavily used in the county, carrying 16,503 passengers in FY 2017/18.

Coordination and Schedules:

DART flex routes operate weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Friday; 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Saturday. Requests for dial-a-ride must be scheduled at least 30 minutes in advance. All Dinuba routes are flex routes. If a Dial a Ride request is received, the driver on the flex route closest to the call will be dispatched to pick up the caller and will deviate slightly from the established route. The Jolly Trolley is a free, fixed route service that serves the central business district, operating Monday-Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Friday- Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The Dinuba Connection fixed route operates during the school year from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and during the summer and winter recesses from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Operations:

A fixed route system began operating in June of 1995. DART currently operates four fixed routes, including the Trolley and the Dinuba Connection. All nine vehicles are owned and maintained by the City and have wheelchair accessibility. The 2009 Transit Development Plan (TDP) recommended that the City to construct a transit/transfer center in the vicinity of the Dinuba Vocational Center. Construction of the Transit Center began in 2013 and was completed in April 2015.

The Dinuba Transit Center now serves as the transfer point between all DART routes. The flex route system is designed to operate a north and south route, both on 30-minute headways. The Jolly Trolley is a free, fixed route that runs on 30-minute headways and services Dinuba's seven most popular shopping destinations and locations. The Dinuba Connection is a regional route that was developed in conjunction with Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA) and provides transit services between the City of Dinuba and the City of Reedley. Major destinations served by this route include Reedley College, Adventist Medical Center and the Department of Motor Vehicles Reedley office.

Porterville Transit and Porterville City Operated Local Transit (COLT)

The Porterville Transit system traces its origins back to 1980, when the city established demand response service under the Dial-a-COLT (City-Operated Local Transit) name. At its inception Dial-a-COLT provided curb-to-curb service to the general public. As the demand for transportation increased, a fixed route transit system was inaugurated in July 1997 under the Porterville Transit banner. In an effort to maintain high service quality for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) certified passengers, Dial-a-COLT transitioned to an ADA-preferred service in 2006. Current policy places demand response reservations from the general public on a waitlist, accommodating their trips if excess capacity remains once ADA-certified riders have secured their reservations. Total system ridership for FY 2017/18 was 635,648 for fixed-route service and 13,001 for Dial-a-COLT.



Porterville's current transit fleet consists of 25 transit buses, five minivans, four cutaway buses and a single road trolley. The system presently provides fixed route and demand-response service to Porterville and the surrounding communities. The city maintains its own transit center, which serves as the transfer hub for all city buses as well as the regional routes operated in the south county by Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT). In addition to accepting both cash fares and the countywide T-Pass, Porterville Transit also utilizes mobile ticketing and stored value cards. Discounted fares are offered to seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans. Children under five and personal care attendants accompanying ADA passengers are permitted to travel free of charge.

Operations:

Porterville Transit and Dial-a-COLT operate service from 6:00am to 9:00pm Monday through Friday and 8:00am to 8:00pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The fixed route system generally operates on forty-minute headways, with the primary exception being hourly service between the city and the Tule River Indian Reservation. Dial-a-COLT reservations can be made between 8:00am and 5:00pm Monday through Saturday for up to fourteen (14) days in advance. ADA eligible riders requesting reservations for the following day will be accommodated.

Daily operations and management of transit services in Porterville are contracted out to a private company, SM Transit, which has operated the city's transit system since 1994. All the vehicles are purchased and maintained by the City and are kept on a preventive maintenance program. The City's Transit Division is responsible for the management of the transit system, planning, marketing, contract administration, report preparation, grant management, and staff liaison with TCAG, Caltrans and the Federal Transit Administration.

Tulare Intermodal Express (TIME)

The City of Tulare has offered local transit service since 1980, when curb-to-curb demand response service was introduced under the Dial-A-Ride Tulare (DART) name. Increasing ridership spurred the launch of Tulare Transit Express (TTE), a full-time fixed route service, in December 1989. The two services were unified under the Tulare Intermodal Express (TIME) brand in 2007.



TIME Dial-A-Ride provides curb-to-curb transportation within the limits of the city, with priority given to seniors and persons with disabilities. ADA certified passengers may make reservations up to two weeks in advance and paratransit service is complementary when the destination is within three-quarters of a mile from a fixed route. Requests from the general public are limited to same day service, capacity permitting. TIME Fixed Route provides general public transit service within the City of Tulare and to neighboring communities. TIME operates six local routes and an express service, the 11X, between the cities of Tulare and Visalia. 11X service is operated in conjunction with Visalia Transit.

Following the 2010 Census the City of Tulare was designated as part of the Visalia Urbanized Area (UZA), a large urbanized area for purposes of FTA funding. This change resulted in the federal formula funding received by the city transitioning from the 5311 Formula Grants to Rural Areas to the 5307 Urbanized Area Formula

Grants program.

TIME has continued to provide comprehensive transit service to city residents even as it is faced with increased operating costs and stagnating levels of ridership.

Coordination and Schedules:

TIME operates local fixed route service Monday through Friday from 6:15 a.m. to 9:15 p.m., and from 8:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Dial-a-Ride reservations for same day travel can be made during these hours, with service continuing until 9:45 p.m. Monday through Friday and until 6:30 p.m. on weekends. Route 11X express service to Visalia Transit Center operates from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. seven days a week. All routes are scheduled to begin and end at the Tulare Transit Center at approximately the same time to facilitate transfers between routes. All routes are operated on 30 minute headways, though 11X service is alternately provided by TIME and Visalia Transit with each agency operating one bus in each direction every hour. The City of Tulare and the City of Visalia have been operating some form of coordinated intercity service since 1993, and have offered this express service since 2008.

The Tulare Downtown Transit Center was built in 1999 to better facilitate connections between intercity transit services. Prior to its opening, buses were routed through an on street transfer site. Currently, TIME, TCaT and Visalia Transit provide service to and from the Transit Center. The facility established a centralized location for the routing of regional transit buses, as well as the coordination of local and regional services. Greyhound Lines also utilizes the Tulare Transit Center, operating direct service to Fresno and Bakersfield.

Operations:

Administration of Tulare InterModal Express is an integrated function of the City of Tulare. The City's Transit Division, which is a branch of the Finance Department, is responsible for the management of the system. Overall administration, planning, monitoring, and marketing of the system is vested in the City's Finance Director. The Finance Director also acts as liaison to TCAG, Caltrans and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Finance Director is assisted with day-to-day operations by a Transit Analyst. TIME is operated by MV Transportation, Inc. through a multi-year contract. MV is responsible for dispatching, drivers, fare collection, daily reporting, ridership data collection, and vehicle maintenance. MV Transportation has operated the system under contract since July 2004.

The TIME fleet consists of 10 transit buses, four cutaway buses and two minivans. Seven buses are required to operate daily fixed route service. The TIME demand-

response typically operates between 2 to 4 vehicles at a time, depending on demand. All vehicles are equipped with a wheelchair lift and securement devices to better serve passengers who are physically challenged. The majority of city buses operate on CNG (compressed natural gas), with some of the smaller vehicles used for paratransit service being fueled by gasoline.

Visalia Transit

Visalia Transit operates 14 fixed routes, consisting of twelve local routes and two intercity express services. Intercity service to Tulare is operated in conjunction with TIME as Route 11X, while Visalia Transit operates its own service to Fresno under the 'V-Line' brand. The system operates seven days a week, with weekday service running between 6 a.m. and 9:30 p.m., and weekend service between 8



a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Both fixed route and Dial-A-Ride service is provided within city limits as well as to Goshen, Farmersville and Exeter. ADA certified riders can make reservations up to two weeks in advance. Requests for same day service from members of the general public are accommodated when space is available. Nearly all routes begin and end at the Visalia Transit Center on the corner of East Oak Street and North Bridge Street. The Transit Center serves as a major hub: connections are offered with TCaT Routes 10 and 30, which serve Tulare County communities to the north and east, as well as Kings Area Rural Transit (KART) Route K15 to Hanford. Amtrak Thruway Bus service provides a connection with San Joaquins rail service via Hanford and Greyhound Lines also offers direct service to Fresno, Bakersfield and Los Angeles from Visalia Transit Center.

Systemwide ridership in Visalia totaled 1,476,093 in FY 2017/18, representing 1,436,984 unlinked fixed route trips and 39,109 demand response passengers.

Coordination and Schedules:

Visalia Transit generally operates from 6:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and weekends between 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The last weekday runs for Routes 6, 8 and 15 conclude slightly later, returning to the Transit Center between 10:00-10:30 p.m. V-Line service runs seven days a week, from 4:00 a.m. to 9:15p.m. Holiday schedules are largely coordinated together with the other transit agencies in the county: with the exception of Labor Day, when V-Line operates on its normal schedule and local Visalia Transit buses provide reduced hour service, all holiday

closures are aligned with those of neighboring agencies.

The City of Visalia constructed a transit center in downtown Visalia that began operating in February 2004, and completed an expansion of the facility in 2011. Most of their routes meet at the transit center for transfers between routes and other systems. Other transfer stops are located throughout the City. In addition to Visalia Transit operates routes connecting to and from the TCaT, Kings County, TIME, Amtrak and private operators such as the Orange Belt and Greyhound connect to the transit center and allow transfers to their systems. Other transfers are available at the request of the passenger at the end of each route. Visalia Transit and TCaT have coordinated a transfer site at the Tulare County Government Plaza on Mooney Boulevard to provide intercity transportation between the City of Visalia and other Tulare County communities servicing Visalia. Visalia and Tulare have partnered in providing an express route between Visalia and Tulare every 30 minutes with the Route 11x via State Route 99.

Operations:

Visalia Transit is currently operated by First Transit, which is responsible for dispatching, drivers, fare collection, maintenance of the buses and ridership data collection. The City entered into a five-year contract with First Transit in October 2018. The Visalia Transit Division provides management of the system. The Transit Division is responsible for providing the following services: planning, marketing, contract administration, report preparation, system design and staff liaison to the Transit Advisory Committee, TCAG, Caltrans and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

All Visalia Transit vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts. Seating capacities range from 30 to 37 passenger vehicles on fixed routes. The Visalia Transit Fleet consists of 78 vehicles. Of their active vehicles, nearly all are fueled by compressed natural gas (CNG). The City of Visalia acquired three (3) battery electric buses in September 2018, and these have been placed in operation on its Route 1.

The Visalia Transit Dial-A-Ride is the demand responsive element of the Visalia Transit system. This service is available to the general public who need transportation from areas too sparsely populated to warrant fixed route service. The current dial-a-ride fleet inventory consists of 11 wheelchair lift equipped vehicles that can accommodate up to 16 passengers. The Dial-A-Ride system operates the same hours as the fixed route system.

In May of 2006, the City of Visalia implemented the Sequoia Shuttle Service. The Shuttle provides service from Visalia to the Sequoia National Park. The shuttle operates seven days a week, generally from Memorial Day weekend through Labor

Day weekend. The shuttle includes stops at various locations in Visalia, Exeter and Three Rivers and terminates at the Giant Forest Museum in Sequoia National Park where the intra-park shuttle system is accessed. There are three routes within the Park which include the Giant Forest, Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow and Lodgepole/Wuksachi routes.

Visalia Transit has developed a close working relationship with the City's Disability Advocacy Committee. This effort has led to several workshops with the City's Transit Advisory Committee and the Committee for the Handicapped meeting to discuss items affecting transit use by the handicapped. This working relationship has helped Visalia Transit to comply with all requirements of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Transit in Woodlake

The City of Woodlake transit system began service in September 1999. The City operates a demand-response service for the nearly 8,000 residents in the Woodlake urbanized area. The city's fleets consists of three 16-passenger cutaway buses that are wheelchair accessible. Annual ridership was just over 20,000 unlinked trips in 2017, the most recent year for which complete data is available. Woodlake adopted its most recent transit development plan (TDP) in 2015 and updated the financial and capital elements in 2019. The bus is fully serviced, fueled and maintained by the City. Woodlake's dial-a-ride operates from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Fixed route service is provided by TCaT Route 30, which links the city to Three Rivers and the Visalia Transit Center.

Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT)

TCaT provides rural and intercity fixed route service that operates seven days a week and dial-a-ride services Monday through Friday. The agency offers four intercity and five rural circulator routes as well as dial-a-ride services for trips either originating or terminating in the City of Lindsay or unincorporated areas of the county, all of which are ADA



compliant. Dial-a-ride services are divided into four geographic zones: North County, City of Lindsay and its environs, South County, and Waukena near the Kings County line. Hours of operation vary by route and demand response service area, with the most heavily utilized routes generally operating between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Travelers may schedule demand response service anywhere from one to 14 days in advance. In addition to dial-a-ride, TCaT offers a blended paratransit option for ADA-certified riders which allows them to request a deviation

of up to three-quarters of a mile from the scheduled route. This service costs \$4.00 rather than the \$2.00 fare which is normally charged for a one-way trip on a fixed route. Ridership was 297,253 unlinked trips in 2017.

Promoting Self Worth (PSW)



PSW is a non-profit organization serving seniors and people with mental and/or physical disabilities. It offers adult day care, independent living, behavioral health and work programs to 269 clients in a roughly 700 square miles of southeastern Tulare County centered on the City of Porterville. Transportation to these programs is provided to clients, who must be referred through the Central Valley Regional Center. Nearly 20% of these clients must use a wheelchair lift when entering and exiting the vehicles. PSW has a fleet of 24 cutaway buses, all of which are wheelchair accessible. The organization's annual operating budget is presently \$1,674,465, the majority of which is provided by the state through the Central Valley Regional Center.

CalVans

The California Vanpool Authority (CalVans) is a ridesharing service that is tailored to the needs of commuters who cannot travel between home and work with local fixed-route or demand-response service. The program in its current form grew out of a pilot project known as the Agricultural Industries Transportation Services (AITS) in Kings County, targeted at providing safer transportation options for farm workers. The CalVans program operates across multiple counties, with over 200 vanpools serving commuters and 150 serving farm workers.



Currently, there are 95 vehicles that provide service to workers who live or work in Tulare County, with a total capacity of 625 passengers. The majority of vans in Tulare County run out of Visalia (Figure x-x). The primary employment destinations are correctional facilities in Corcoran and Delano, including California State Prison and Kern Valley State Prison (Figure 6-2). In total nearly 70% of vanpools starting or ending in Tulare County serve correctional institutions. Other destinations include several state, medical, and agricultural employers.

Tule River Indian Tribe

The Tule River Indian Tribe provides transit to the Tule River Reservation to casino employees and tribe members. Many tribe members who live off of the reservation travel to the Tule River Indian Health Center for health care services, placing a significant demand on the tribe's transportation services. In October of 2012 the Tribe partnered with the City of Porterville to provide daily service between Porterville and the Tule River Indian Reservation. The service operates with one hour headways from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays.

Transportation Purchasers

Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)

The HHSA provides health and human services to Tulare County residents. They provide transportation reimbursement and monthly transit passes (T-Passes) to eligible clients. Clients must participate in an approved HHSA activity to qualify for transportation benefits.

Tulare County HHSA – Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging (KTAAA)

The KTAAA is a Tulare County HHSA program designed to empower seniors. KTAAA purchases public transportation services for clients who qualify for its Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP). Transportation is provided to seniors, and volunteers that work with seniors, to attend medical appointments and KTAAA sponsored events. Clients can receive transportation free of charge to participate in eligible activities. The program is available to individuals over 65 who are currently eligible for or receiving Medi-Cal benefits. In addition to providing transportation to seniors, the MSSP also brings a number of services to seniors at home, reducing the need for some trips.

Tulare County HHSA – Department of Mental Health

The Tulare County HHSA – Department of Mental Health provides mental health services for Tulare County residents. They purchase transportation services for their clients and encourage them to use public transportation. Clients must participate in an approved activity at one of the agency's five clinics to be eligible for transportation assistance. Clinics are located in Dinuba, Tulare, Visalia and Porterville.

Tulare County HHSA – Tulare WORKS

The Tulare County HHSA – TulareWORKS provides services for CalWORKS participants within Tulare County. Transportation reimbursement is provided to low-income, the homeless, youth, and persons with disabilities to access services

designed to help support themselves and their health care needs. Clients must participate in approved activities to be eligible for reimbursements.

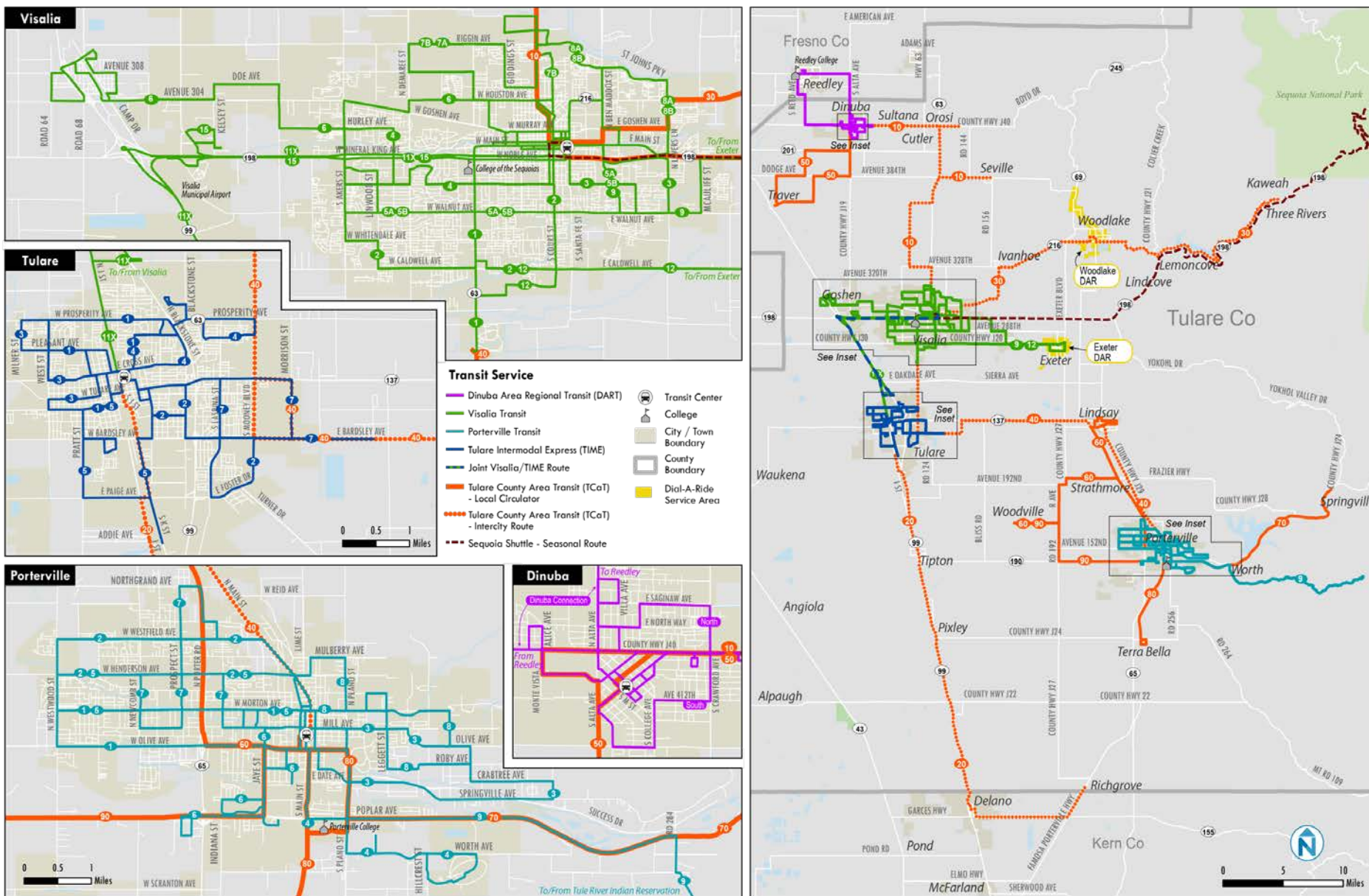
Table 4-5 Respondents and Eligible Populations

Respondent	Type of Transportation Service	Area Served	Seniors	Disabled	Low-Income	General Public
City of Dinuba	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
City of Porterville	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
City of Tulare	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
City of Visalia	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
City of Woodlake	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
Porterville Sheltered Workshop	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	
Tulare County Area Transit	Provider	Countywide	X	X	X	X
Tulare County HHSA	Purchaser	Countywide	X		X	
Tulare County HHSA – Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging	Purchaser	Kings and Tulare Counties	X	X	X	
Tulare County HHSA – Dept. of Mental Health	Purchaser	Countywide	X	X	X	
Tulare County HHSA – Tulare WORKS	Purchaser	Countywide	X	X	X	
Tulare County Veterans Aging Services	Purchaser	Countywide	X	X	X	

Transit System Map in Tulare County

The following map illustrate the areas within Tulare County served by existing public transportation providers. City operated local public transit service areas are identified geographically, and individual fixed route system maps are also provided.

Figure 7 Tulare County Transit System Map



Chapter 5. Needs and Gaps

Current transportation needs and gaps in Tulare County were assessed using a variety of methods, including: public surveys, consultation with stakeholders through the Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee, and a review of other recent long range transit planning studies. This information was supplemented with new demographic data and projections from the U.S. Census Bureau and California Department of Finance.

Transportation Needs in Tulare County

In an effort to obtain feedback directly from users of social service transportation, 100 local entities which serve the needs of the target populations were contacted and provided with a user survey that they were encouraged to share with their clients. This initial outreach included social service agencies, transit agencies, health care providers, assisted living facilities, vocational schools and colleges, as well as private non-profit groups serving the needs of seniors, disabled persons and people experiencing poverty. Representatives of these organizations were also invited to provide their own feedback and to participate more actively in the planning process beginning with a series of kickoff meetings in early June 2019.

Completed surveys were collected from May through July. In total, 78 responses were received. The county's transportation disadvantaged population was well represented in the survey sample. More than three-quarters of respondents indicated that they use fixed route public transit; nearly half of all respondents used this mode exclusively. Dial-a-Ride and transportation provided by social service agencies were the second and third mostly widely used modes reported. Their feedback provided valuable insights into how social service transportation can be improved for those who need it most. The transportation challenges they reported can be broadly placed into one of the following four categories, each of which will be further explained later in this chapter:

- Spatial Gaps
- Temporal Gaps
- Transportation Costs
- Service Awareness

Spatial Gaps

The most common transportation related issue cited by both survey respondents and stakeholders was the limited availability of transportation services in some areas, especially in less populous rural communities. Typically, operational costs and poor economies of scale impose considerable limitations on the level of transit service that can feasibly be provided in more remote rural locations, leaving people in these communities with limited access to transit. While some privately operated transportation services, such as non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) providers and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), operate in these areas they are not always readily available to rural residents due to factors such as their inability to meet demand fully or the prohibitive cost of the services they provide. At least some form of fixed route service is available in each of Tulare County's 25 most populous communities, though some are served by as few as one departure and arrival per day. Areas with noted gaps in service include the North County areas of London, Traver, East Orosi and Seville, Central County areas of Poplar, Woodville, Springville and Tipton, and the South County areas of Alpaugh, Ducor, Richgrove, and Terra Bella. Alpaugh, with a 2010 Census population of 1,026, is the largest community in the county which lacks transit service completely.

Survey respondents frequently expressed a need for additional/expanded routes in rural areas to provide more access to jobs and training in the urban areas of the County, and to provide youth and adults access to services and recreational activities not available in the rural areas.

Temporal Gaps

As noted above, transit schedules do not always align with the schedules or travel needs of residents. Over the course of the past decade, evening and weekend service was expanded significantly in response to comments received during the annual Unmet Transit Needs process. While this has reduced the number of temporal gaps significantly, it would be difficult to expand service further using the resources currently available. Therefore, when making future service planning decisions, local agencies should make extensive use of the available analytical tools to determine how service can effectively serve the greatest possible number of people with the funds available.

Tulare County transit agencies should maintain the longest operation hours feasible without threatening their ability to meet the farebox recovery ratio specified by the state's Transportation Development Act (TDA). Supplemental services which leverage partnerships with private transportation companies should also be considered, such as guaranteed ride home (GRH) programs that reimburse transit

riders for the cost of an alternative forms of transportation in certain qualifying emergencies.

Transportation Costs

Transportation costs can be a financial burden for individuals living on a fixed or limited income, especially if they need to purchase multiple fares for children or other family members. Public transit providers echoed these concerns about affordability, but noted that state farebox ratio requirements limit their ability to provide lower fares. The lack of affordable transportation between the urban and rural areas of the County was perceived as one of the greatest transportation barriers for the senior, low-income, and disabled populations of Tulare County in the 2015 Coordinated Transportation Plan.

In an effort to address these concerns, Tulare County and TCAG launched the T-Pass in 2007. T-Pass holders are able to take unlimited fixed route rides on any of the county's transit systems in a given calendar month. In addition to providing a cost savings to frequent transit riders, the T-Pass is also distributed by some social service agencies in Tulare County for the benefit of their clients. The College of the Sequoias (COS) provides a similar transit pass to its students for unlimited fixed route travel throughout the academic year. While these programs have been a great benefit, and T-Pass ridership now accounts for a greater proportion of overall transit ridership than at any time since its introduction, the cost of transportation is still a barrier to many persons in dire need. Other strategies worth consideration include fare capping, which would allow riders to purchase one-way fares until they have spent an amount equivalent to the price of the T-Pass, and piloting reduced fares or free rides to measure the impacts of pricing on ridership.

Service Awareness

In 2017 TCAG redesigned the Tulare County Transit Guide. For this iteration, a more compact pamphlet format was adopted. The guides are written in both English and Spanish and details the hours of operation, fare structures, holiday schedules, transfer policies and a route map for each fixed route transit system operating in the county. Information on Dial-a-Ride services is also provided, as well as the phone number for The Green Line information help line. The Greenline is a toll-free countywide transit information system that was established in 2009 making riding transit in Tulare County user-friendly. With travel training and passenger education being noted high priority need in the past, Greenline in conjunction with TCAG and TCaT did a countywide outreach effort to provide transit information and resources in 2009/10. The outreach efforts attempted to make passengers more aware of the transportation resources available to them. TCAG continues to provide information

on all Tulare county transit services and strives to make travel information as accessible as possible.

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Chapter 6. Coordination Opportunities

Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC)

TCAG recognizes the importance of input and consensus and employs a collaborative approach to its regular Coordinated Plan updates. Throughout development of this plan, TCAG sought the opinion and feedback of interested parties, including local transit agencies, social service agencies, tribal governments, non-profit organizations serving the needs of the target populations, and the general public.

A group of 100 stakeholders were contacted by email and direct mail with a letter inviting their participation in the plan update process beginning with a kickoff workshop in June 2019. The stakeholders who responded were invited to become members of the Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) and were a valuable source of information during the development of the updated plan.

Over the course of three (3) public workshops, TCAG staff gained insight into the transportation needs and challenges that they had encountered themselves or had been informed of by their clients. During the meetings members were asked to reevaluate the priorities outlined in the 2015 Coordinated Plan. The CPAC agreed to retain these five (5) key goals, given that they remain relevant, and made some adjustments to the corresponding list of priority projects and strategies.

Goals and Strategies

The five goals introduced in the 2015 Coordinated Plan remain in place. These goals establish the desired outcomes for this iteration of the Coordinated Plan, which are:

Goal # 1: Maintain and strategically expand public and human service transportation to the greatest extent that resources allow.

Goal # 2: Enhance mobility information and education.

Goal # 3: Formalize a mobility management function to better connect persons with the mobility services they need.

Goal # 4: Fill remaining mobility gaps with cost-effective services and self-help tools.

Goal # 5: Develop a more effective customer feedback and performance evaluation system to ensure that high quality service is maintained.

Goal #1 Maintain and Strategically Expand Public and Human Service Transportation

Tulare County has high levels of public and human service transportation relative to its modest population density, a reflection of the commitment of TCAG and its local partners to providing the most comprehensive services that their resources allow. This is of paramount importance because many individuals currently rely on both public transportation and human service transportation to meet their mobility needs.

Strategy #1: Retain and Strategically Enhance Existing Public Transportation Services

While there remain gaps in the current range of transportation services, existing services are a lifeline to a significant majority of county residents. While ridership is down somewhat from its peak in FY 2013, the county's transit agencies continue to provide millions of rides each year. The existence of a robust public transit network also insulates the most economically vulnerable residents from sharp increases in fuel prices or economic downturns that might make car ownership less attainable. Therefore it is important to make every effort to retain service at present levels. If services must be reduced or consolidated, the service changes should be carefully evaluated for Title VI implications and to ensure that the current ridership continues to have their transportation needs met.

The recently adopted Short Range Transit Plans and the Tulare County Long Range Transit Plan are designed to achieve this strategy. Supporting and implementing the recommendations of these studies is of critical importance in retaining and strategically enhancing public transportation service levels. Future plans should employ more in-depth analysis of travel patterns and social geography by utilizing route planning software that incorporates such data. TCAG and its member agencies have recently acquired a license for Remix, which is one such example of route planning software that allows users to readily view Census data and other official statistics on a tract level.

Strategy #2: Retain, Support, and Improve Human Service Transportation

As well as the extensive public transportation network, there is an invaluable array of human service agency transportation available in Tulare County. This primarily takes the form of agencies purchasing transportation on behalf of qualifying clients.

It is not only the ability to travel to medical appointments or a social service agency which has a significant impact on quality-of-life for our most vulnerable residents. A

recent study by the American Cancer Society has linked social isolation with a higher risk of death from all causes combined and heart disease for all races studied. This is something that can easily be remedied by ensuring people are able to access various social programs and activities.

Given the disproportionate impacts of travel expenses on vulnerable populations, and evidence that suggests inability to secure transportation is a critical factor behind many missed social service and health appointments, it is also of critical importance that these services continue to be supported and sustained in Tulare County.

Strategy #3: Continue to utilize FTA 5310 grant funding for procurement of vehicles and associated capital equipment by non-profit and public agencies serving mobility needs of low income, seniors and disabled persons.

Given the extensive network of both public and privately operated human service transportation, and the wide geographic area that these services must cover, it is recommended that public agencies and not-for-profit groups providing transportation to seniors and persons with disabilities seek FTA Section 5310 grant funding to aid in the procurement of new and replacement vehicles as well as associated capital equipment such as communications technology, software, and hardware that facilitate the smooth operation of human service transportation.

Caltrans issues a Call for Projects for the 5310 program on a biennial basis. The selection process differs slightly depending on whether the entity applying for funding is part of a large urbanized area or located within a small urban or rural area. Applications for Traditional 5310 Projects, which are capital expenses, are scored by the region's MPO/RTPA if located within a large urbanized area. Each large urbanized area receives its own formula funding allocation. Small urban and rural projects are awarded on a competitive, statewide basis by Caltrans. TCAG offers assistance to its member agencies and local partners who wish to apply for 5310 Funding but are unfamiliar with the program guidelines.

Strategy #4: Retain, Support and Expand Vanpool Program

The California Vanpool Authority (CalVans) is a ridesharing service that is tailored to the needs of commuters and farmworkers whose travel patterns cannot be readily accommodated by fixed route or demand response transit services. The program in its current form grew out of a pilot project known as the Agricultural Industries Transportation Services (AITS) in Kings County, targeted at providing safer

transportation options for farm workers. The CalVans program operates approximately 350 vanpools across 17 counties.

Currently, there are 93 vehicles that provide service to workers who live or work in Tulare County. The majority of vans in Tulare County run out of Visalia. The primary employment destinations are correctional facilities in Corcoran, Avenal and Coalinga, including California State Prison and Pleasant Valley State Prison. In total over 80% of vanpools starting or ending in Tulare County serve correctional institutions. Several state, medical, and agricultural employers are also served by vanpools. Calvans continues to expand its fleet and leverage its existing relationships in an effort to make vanpools more readily available to low-income workers in the region.

In 2016, Calvans and the City of Visalia entered into a five (5) year agreement to establish a vanpool voucher program for those vanpools traveling to or from Visalia. The goal is to double the number of vanpools reported in Tulare County over the next few years. In turn Calvans provides reports of vanpool mileage and ridership. The cost for the program will be offset by the additional Federal 5307 formula funds allocated to the Visalia UZA that can be attributed to the reporting of vanpool ridership.

Goal #2 Enhance Mobility Information and Education

Lack of awareness of the services available and unfamiliarity with using public transportation are themselves a major barrier to mobility for seniors, persons with disabilities, and people of limited financial means. Unlike traveling by private vehicle, use of public transportation can require a considerable amount of forethought, planning and coordination by the rider. This includes:

- Understanding which transportation services are available, when they operate and how to access them;
- Scheduling appointments and arranging activities around the availability of transportation;
- Identifying the most practical connection(s) when direct service to the desired destination is not available.

These represent significant challenges for transportation disadvantaged individuals – a population characterized by limited literacy, high incidence of limited English proficiency and the attendant problems of limited income levels. Even for well-educated individuals, such as social service providers and human service agency personnel, lack of familiarity with public transit can make it difficult to take full advantage of the services that are available. Presently there is no single,

comprehensive resource that assists transportation disadvantaged residents or social service workers to easily navigate the full range of transportation services offered and determining the best means to get to their destination.

This makes it necessary for individuals seeking travel information to consult multiple websites or make multiple phone calls to get valuable information such as when a bus will arrive at their bus stop and which, if any, connections or transfers will be necessary to complete their trip. The difficulties are even greater if a traveler must rely on a mixture of both public transportation and privately operated human service transportation, because the information on these services is not compiled in a single place.

As a result of the difficulty in obtaining complete and up-to-date information, services are underutilized and needs are not fully met simply because of an information gap. This not only makes it harder for the transportation disadvantaged population to commute to work or access other valuable social services, but it undermines the viability of the existing transportation services through lost ridership.

Given the already extensive array of mobility services available in Tulare County, the least expensive coordination strategies that can be implemented involve closing the "information gap" so that transportation disadvantaged individuals and the social service agencies that work with this population are aware of and have easy access to information about these services.

As a result of the factors described above, lack of familiarity and inability to quickly obtain travel information is often a significant barrier to utilization of the extensive array of transportation services operated within Tulare County.

To bridge the information gap we recommend the following strategies:

Strategy #5: Develop technology platforms that will provide access to comprehensive information about local transportation options and programs

Strategy #6: Continue to utilize and expand the Greenline Call Center and incorporate information on other forms of transportation, such as non-emergency medical transportation

Strategy #7: Provide comprehensive route/schedule information at bus stops, including low-frequency routes.

Strategy #5: Develop technology platforms that will provide access to comprehensive information about local transportation options and programs

Reading transit maps and schedules can be challenging to transit riders and social service providers alike. Automated trip planners are an effective tool for overcoming this barrier. For planning transit trips, both simple one system trips and those that require inter-system coordination, Google Maps offers a common platform that is familiar to most people. It allows an individual to easily switch between driving, transit, biking and walking directions and to zoom in on the map to see the exact location of bus stops. The 2015 Coordinated Plan called for making fixed route transit routes and schedules for all of the county's transit agencies available through Google Maps. All of the County of Tulare's fixed route transit services have since been incorporated into Google Maps.

In 2019 Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT) launched a redesigned website that features a trip planning tool that includes travel information for all of the county's transit agencies. This allows people who are making trips that require transfers between systems to easily obtain the information they require from a single source. Efforts like these should be supported and continually strengthened.

Strategy #6: Continue to utilize and expand the 'Green Line' call center and incorporate information on other forms of transportation, such as non-emergency medical transportation

While making countywide transit trip planning easier will address some needs, it will not resolve the special transportation challenges faced by many transportation disadvantaged populations whose needs can be highly individualized. Some people may require more detailed information or personalized assistance.

In an effort to address this, as well as general transit customer service needs, the county launched The Green Line Call Center (877-GO-GREEN) to provide readily accessible public transportation information to the general public, even for those travelers who do not have a computer or smartphone. Callers can obtain information for each and every one of the county's public transit agencies, as well as Kings Area Rural Transit (KART) connections in neighboring Kings County. Information on Greyhound Bus services is also available. In addition to providing an easy to reach venue for obtaining information or addressing complaints the Green Line reduces the burden on transit dispatch staff by directing calls to staff that is dedicated to these customer-facing functions.

Currently The Green Line operates Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and Saturdays from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm. While the call center is not staffed on Sundays, callers who dial in after hours will be greeted with a message that provides The Green Line's hours of operation and offers a choice of being transferred to a transit agency dispatcher. Typically transit agency hours of operation are slightly longer than those of The Green Line.

In October 2019, the most recent month for which complete data is available, The Green Line received 866 calls. More than 62% of these calls were for route information, with general inquiries being the next largest category at approximately 16%. Requests for bus location and trip planning were the third and fourth most common categories, respectively. While usage of The Green Line has fluctuated over the past few years, it remains an important resource- particularly when schedule changes are implemented.

It is important to note that The Green Line is not equipped to directly place Dial-a-Ride reservations or estimate arrival times once the reservation has been made. Presently requests of this nature are forwarded to the dispatcher for the respective demand response service (of which there are six operating independently in Tulare County), though this can be improved through the wider adoption of automated vehicle location (AVL) systems and the creation of streamlined communication channels between The Green Line and dispatchers.

The City of Visalia operates The Green Line and in FY 2019 submitted a Section 5310 grant application for the purposes of maintaining and expanding the service. Allocation of additional resources to The Green Line allows for even more comprehensive travel information services. For example, callers seeking non-emergency medical transportation could be provided information on alternative services if local fixed route transit or Dial-a-Ride cannot fully meet their needs. This can be as simple as asking a few screening questions to determine eligibility for complimentary shuttle services such as those offered by Family Healthcare Network, Adventist Health and Medi-Cal recipients on an Anthem administered plan. A more ambitious long-term vision would include information on rideshare and vanpool services that are available in the local area.

The Green Line will remain a valuable resource, particularly in the weeks and months following route or other service changes, but its utility can be expanded by bringing it closer to being a comprehensive "one call" resource. The pursuit of funding which will facilitate such a strengthening of this service is therefore strongly recommended.

Strategy #7: Provide comprehensive route/schedule information at bus stops, particularly for low frequency routes

Bus stops can also be a very effective channel for conveying transit information. While resources available online or over the phone are extremely valuable, there are some county residents who lack cell phones or internet access. Many of these residents are located in rural unincorporated communities with relatively infrequent transit service. Due to the relatively long headways typical on rural routes, missing the bus can mean waiting more than an hour longer or even that travelers might not be able to reach their destination for the remainder of the day.

In such areas, it is important to provide route and schedule information at key bus stops so that travelers are able to readily find this information even if they do not have a smartphone or standard mobile phone. Such signage would also make it easier for riders to familiarize themselves with new routes or schedules following service changes. In addition to being valuable to people who use transit routinely, posting fixed route schedules can also increase public awareness of the services that are offered. Signage would ideally include the following elements:

- Route name
- Selected route destinations shown on a simple line map with a “You Are Here” indicator
- Days the route operates
- Departure times for the specific route
- Fares
- Phone number
- Bilingual text
- Place names and times that are designed to be clear without requiring close reading

This type of information panel can be easily created and customized in Microsoft Publisher or other simple desktop publishing software. It can then be printed on a color printer, laminated and placed in a standard legal sized schedule holder that is readily available on the market. These can be mounted on existing sign posts. When there is a service change, the insert can be quickly and easily replaced at minimal expense.

As solar powered LED signage becomes cheaper, it creates a potential to provide more expansive travel information in the medium-term future. The most heavily used rural transit stops could benefit from the installation of such signage if it were to become affordable. This could prove particularly helpful in the event that automatic vehicle location (AVL) is added to the buses that serve these routes, allowing estimated arrival times to be displayed in real time.

Goal #3 Formalize a Mobility Management Function to Better Connect Persons with Mobility Services they need

Mobility management is defined by the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination as “a process of managing a coordinated community-wide transportation service network comprised of the operations and infrastructure of multiple trip providers in partnership with each other.” Mobility management is an eligible capital expense under a number of FTA programs, including: Section 5307, 5310, 5311, and 5318.

A number of resources exist to guide the development of mobility management services, including the FTA’s Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Issues (CCAM) and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA). It would be prudent to make use of these to formulate a comprehensive mobility management program. While The Green Line presently performs some functions that can be described as mobility management, additional elements- such as making travel reservations- would need to be incorporated to realize this goal.

Objectives and Purpose

The Tulare County Mobility Management program should aim to meet the following objectives:

- Develop strategies to educate and inform the culturally and linguistically diverse population of Tulare County’s array of transportation services, modes that include public transit’s fixed-route and demand response services, rideshare and vanpool services, and key specialized transportation programs that serve transit disadvantaged populations.
- Design strategies that will work, or can be successfully adapted, in both rural and urban areas of Tulare County.
- Involve local communities, addressing the needs of geographically or culturally isolated persons to promote and expand the use of available transit resources.
- Use data collected through mobility management to support planning for enhancement and/or targeted expansion of existing transit, ridesharing and other mobility services.
- Proactively provide the resources to inform social service agency staff who work with transportation disadvantaged individuals of the mobility services available in Tulare County. Regular updates should be given to social workers,

particularly when service changes are about to be implemented.

In order to achieve the objectives outlined above, and to respond to the market research findings, one specific strategy is recommended:

Strategy #9: Appoint a Countywide Mobility Manager

It is proposed that a Countywide Mobility Manager be appointed to ensure that there is at least one individual who can devote themselves to providing travel information and comprehensive service to travelers who require specialized assistance.

This person or entity appointed to this role would be responsible for implementation and monitoring progress of the strategies recommended in the Coordination Plan.

It is anticipated that an application for Section 5310 funding for the planning, development and implementation of mobility management will be sought once such an appointment is made. Federal funds can be used to cover up to 80% of the total project cost for capital projects, and up to 50% of the total operating cost when applying for operating assistance. Non-cash shares, including in-kind contributions, can be counted towards the required match provided certain criteria are met and the value of these contributions are properly documented. The lead agency's indirect expenses related to mobility management could, conceivably, be counted towards the 20% local match.

Goal #4 Fill Remaining Mobility Gaps with Cost-Effective Services and Self-Help Tools

There are two strategies recommended to address this goal:

Strategy #10: Develop a Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program

As mentioned previously, many of the most disadvantaged communities in the county are in rural areas outside of core urban areas. These communities typically lack many of the services or conveniences that are available within cities, meaning that transportation is usually an important lifeline for their residents. Unfortunately the economics of providing transit in a low density, dispersed rural environment are challenging. While Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT) does provide fixed route and demand response service to most of these communities, the headways are frequently so long as to make transit travel a time-consuming proposition. Indeed, some of the smallest and most isolated communities in the county have no transit service at all.

A volunteer driver reimbursement program could serve as an effective supplement,

affording greater flexibility and independence to rural residents. Such a program would fill both spatial and temporal gaps, and provide an alternative means of travel for persons whose needs cannot always be effectively met by transit due to lack of service in their community, time constraints or physical disabilities which necessitate additional assistance.

Basic Program Description

The volunteer driver, mileage reimbursement model presented here is adapted from the TRIP program operated in Riverside County by the Independent Living Partnership (ILP), which has served as a template for numerous effective programs across the nation. The ILP offers technical assistance for entities which wish to establish a similar program.

Creating a volunteer driver reimbursement program for Tulare County will ideally be achieved in two phases: 1) At its launch, the program would be aimed at the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities living in remote rural areas of Tulare County where fixed route service to their destination is unavailable or otherwise impractical; 2) If the first phase were successful, it could be expanded to serve seniors and people with disabilities living in urban areas under certain circumstances.

Figure 9 below shows the basic program elements: the sponsoring organization(s), the enrolled riders and volunteer drivers that these riders recruit themselves. The mileage reimbursement is paid to the enrolled rider who, in turn, pays the driver who has agreed to provide them transportation. The strength of this model is that it does not require that a standing pool of volunteers to be maintained, something that is particularly difficult in low-income communities where volunteerism is not practical or economically feasible.

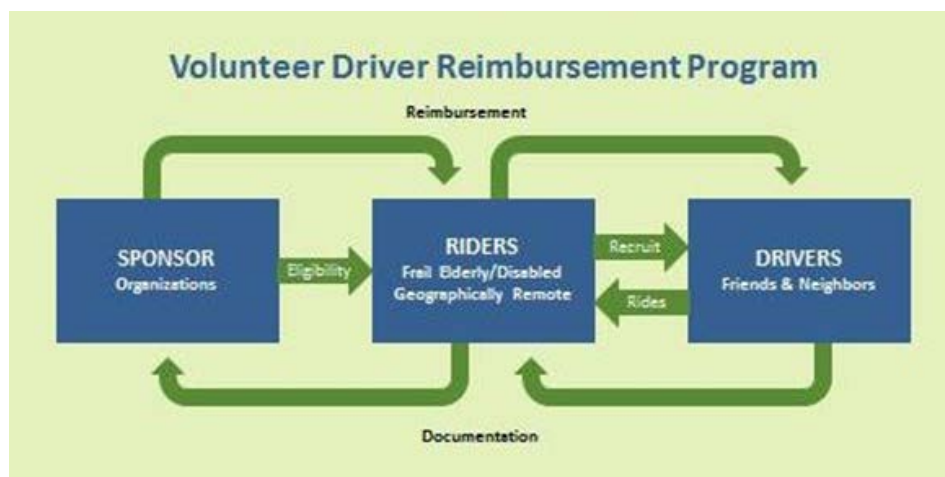


Figure 8 Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program Diagram

Enrolled participants are assisted in finding a volunteer driver via program materials that provide pointers on “how to ask for a volunteer driver.” Where this program is jointly run with a Mobility Management initiative, the mobility manager may be able to refer program participants to active community organizations from which a driver can be sought and additional tips on how to ask for assistance.

This program model is very scalable to the level of available funding. Mileage reimbursements and the enrollment of participants can be “budgeted” by the number of miles available for reimbursement, as well as by the number of enrolled persons. Mileage reimbursements, tentatively proposed at about \$0.40 per mile, can be kept at a manageable level by limiting trip purpose eligibility to the most critical functions or setting maximums for how many trips each enrollee can take in a given month. In setting the mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.40 is purposefully kept below the 2019 IRS reimbursement rate of \$0.58 for business travel and above the \$0.20 per mile IRS rate for medical and moving purposes. It is meant to cover the operating costs of fuel and maintenance for the volunteer driver, taking into account the seasonal fluctuations in fuel prices. Theoretically the rate can be set at or below \$0.58 per mile but a lower rate could make recruiting volunteers more difficult and a higher rate could limit the number of people who are able to be served with the available funding.

Implementation of a new volunteer driver mileage reimbursement program is a cost-effective means to increase the number of people whose transportation needs are effectively met, particularly in economically disadvantaged and isolated areas.

Strategy #11: Facilitate Improved Pedestrian and Bike Access to Transit Services

The availability of transit service in the immediate area is not the only factor which determines whether the local population are able to easily make use of it. In many cases access to bus stops and transit centers is hindered by the lack of sidewalks, sidewalks which are not ADA accessible or barriers created by development which does not take the needs of transit riders fully into account.

This is particularly the case for seniors and people with disabilities. One study performed by Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine found that 70% of all senior transit riders in a low-density retirement community in Florida lived within 1/8 mile of a transit stop, and 90% were traveling to destinations within 1/2 mile of a bus stop. Another study by the University of Florida found that the provision of pedestrian-only routes near transit stops in American cities increased the effective service or ‘capture’ areas for those transit stops by up to 20%.

It is important, therefore, to provide a low stress environment for pedestrians and cyclists to travel to and from transit stops. While portions of the county have a well-developed network of bike and pedestrian trails, this is not the case in every neighborhood or community. Additionally, there are some obstacles that are created by patterns of development, for example: a fractured street grid or the construction of walls surrounding subdivisions which allow only for a very limited number of ingress/egress points.

With respect to seniors and people with disabilities more specifically factors such as outdated pedestrian signals, poorly configured crosswalks and curb ramps which are too steep to be easily traversed by people in wheelchairs or those who have ambulatory difficulties. These issues should be examined in a comprehensive way to formulate plans for enhancing access to transit facilities and increase the catchment area of transit services.

While these are not activities which are eligible for Section 5310 funding they are nonetheless an important element to consider when addressing the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities. Such improvements could also improve ridership and the practical value of transit to these populations, increasing the impact of each dollar invested in paratransit or social services transportation.

Goal #5 Sustain and Enhance the Customer Feedback and Performance Monitoring System to Ensure High Service Quality Delivery

Disadvantaged individuals rely on public and human services transportation far more than the general population to get to the places they need to go. There need to be continued efforts to provide an effective customer feedback and performance monitoring system to ensure that the array of mobility services are delivered in a high quality and reliable manner.

There are two specific strategies recommended for the goal to sustain and enhance the customer feedback and performance monitoring system to ensure high service quality delivery:

Strategy #12: Incorporate All Transit Services into Future Customer Satisfaction Surveys and Inter-System Connectivity Satisfaction Questions

Considering the fact that seniors, people with disabilities and financially disadvantaged individuals rely on transit to a greater degree than most other demographics, it is reasonable to assume that these groups would be well represented in a survey of existing transit riders. Surveys should be employed routinely to collect feedback from the existing ridership base, with questions designed to invite responses that would inform transit planning decisions in a meaningful way.

An important area of emphasis in the coming years should be the connectivity between the county's different transit systems, as well as between transit and private mobility providers. Difficulties with transfers and improved coordination between social service providers and entities providing transportation were cited by more than 1 in 4 respondents to the transportation user survey that was distributed as part of this plan update. These were tied for the second most frequently requested improvements, behind only "better or more frequent transit service".

Another valuable application of surveys would be in the weeks and months preceding an anticipated service change. Surveys can be distributed to riders to ask them which transit changes would be least or most disruptive to their routines. While a public process presently exists to allow residents to voice their opinions on such changes, transit operators could be more proactive in trying to obtain this information directly from their riders.

Strategy #13: Report Transit Inter-System Connectivity Measures Annually in Productivity Evaluation Report

While existing performance metrics are useful in many respects, they do not always provide all the information that is necessary to make informed service planning decisions. Therefore it is recommended that transit agencies place an additional emphasis on measures of intersystem connectivity. Survey data yielded by Strategy #12 will likely prove to be an important component of this. Another valuable measure would be the reporting of average wait times at transfer points, particularly for those connections which are most frequently made by transit riders. This ongoing data collection can be occasionally supplemented by data produced by focus groups of transit riders who must regularly transfer between transit systems to complete their trips.

Chapter 7. Next Steps

This section summarizes the recommended Coordination Plan goals and key strategies in relation to priorities that were developed, in part through a workshop with several dozen opinion leaders and key stakeholders in Tulare County.

The five goals and thirteen strategies developed in the preceding chapter are reiterated here in summary form for two reasons. Appendix B, which follows, summarizes a complex program of projects by which the mobility needs and gaps of Tulare County's transportation disadvantaged can be addressed. The table can be used in at least two ways:



- It can be used by policy makers, agency heads, planners and key stakeholders with a summary list of goals and strategies in the Coordinated Plan.
- It can be used by Section 5310 applicants to identify how their proposed project is “in” the Coordinated Plan, a requirement in regulation for making any given project eligible for Section 5310 funding.

Prioritized Goals and Strategies to Address Information and Mobility Gaps

Based on the mobility needs of the transportation disadvantaged population in Tulare County, there are five specific goals of the Coordinated Plan:

Goal #1: Maintain and strategically expand public and human service transportation when resources allow.

Goal #2: Enhance mobility Information and education.

Goal #3: Formalize a mobility management function to better connect persons with the mobility services they need.

Goal #4: Fill remaining mobility gaps with cost-effective services and self-help tools.

Goal #5: Develop a more effective customer feedback and performance system to ensure that high service quality is maintained.

Each of these goals is supported by strategies, or proposed projects and activities, which are intended to provide a more detailed blueprint for how they can be achieved. The Coordinated Plan Advisory Committee ranked each of these strategies according to priority. This ranking, along with a brief description of each goal and strategy, is included in Appendix B.

Seeking Section 5310 Funding

Finally, the primary dedicated funding source by which some of these strategies may be realized is the FTA's Section 5310. The Section 5310 program has two components: traditional and expanded. Traditional 5310 grant funding is available for service expansion and replacement vehicles and related capital expenses such as communications equipment and computer hardware. Expanded 5310 grant funding is available for most mobility management related activities, including both capital expenses associated with the development and implementation of mobility management programs and operating expenses.

Eligible Activities

The new regulatory guidance requires that 55% of the funds available shall be used for "traditional Section 5310 projects", namely those public transportation capital projects planned, designed and carried out to meet the specific needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, unavailable or inappropriate. The regulations make it clear that this 55% is a floor and not a ceiling and that entities can spend more than the 55% on traditional FTA 5310 projects.

Additionally, up to 45% of available funds can be spent for projects that will: (1) exceed the ADA minimum requirements, (2) improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on ADA-complementary paratransit, or (3) provide transportation alternatives that assist seniors and individuals with disabilities with transportation. While these projects must be targeted to older adults and persons with disabilities, they may also be used by the general public.

All projects that are selected for funding under the Section 5310 program must be "included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan."

Eligible Capital Expenses

At least 55% of funds shall be used to support rolling stock and related equipment items that include:

- Acquisition of expansion or replacement buses or vans and related

testing, inspection and acceptance costs.

- Vehicle rehabilitation and overhaul.
- Preventative maintenance.
- Radios and communications equipment.
- Vehicle wheelchair lifts, ramps and securement devices. Other categories of eligible capital expense include:
 - Purchase and installation of benches, shelters and other passenger amenities.
 - Support facilities and equipment for Section 5310-funded vehicles that may include extended warranties, computer hardware and software, transit related intelligent transportation systems, dispatch systems, fare collection systems.
 - Leasing of equipment when a lease is more cost effective than a purchase.
 - Acquisition of transportation services under contract, lease or other arrangement.
 - Finally, mobility management and coordination programs are an eligible capital cost. Mobility management functions may enhance transportation access for populations beyond those immediately targeted by a single agency or organization. Mobility management activities may include:
 - Promotion, enhancement and facilitation of access to transportation services including the integration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities, seniors and low-income individuals.
 - Support for short-term management to plan and implement.
 - Support of state and local coordination policy bodies and councils.
 - Operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and passengers.
 - Provision of coordination services, including employer-oriented transportation management organizations, customer-oriented travel navigator and neighborhood travel coordination activities such as travel training and trip planning.
 - Development of one-stop transportation traveler call centers.

Eligible Operating Expenses

Up to 45% of available funds may be used for operational costs of projects that address the purposes identified above including meeting special needs of seniors and persons with disabilities, projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA and

enhance paratransit beyond the minimum requirements of the ADA, improve accessibility, or provide additional transportation alternatives for seniors and persons with disabilities.

This latter category of alternative transportation can include purchasing vehicles to support accessible taxis, supporting the administration and expenses related to voucher programs for transportation offered by human services or supporting volunteer driver and aid programs.

Fund Matching Requirements

For eligible capital projects, both traditional vehicle-related projects and mobility management projects, the match shall be 80% Federal dollars and 20% local funds.

For eligible operating projects, the match shall be 50% Federal dollars and 50% local funds.

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Appendix A: Inventory of Transportation Services

The following table presents an inventory of Tulare County’s public transportation programs, providing additional detail for the public operators, human service agencies and inter-regional carriers related to service area, fares, span of service and transfers, and other general information.

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
Visalia Transit									
Fixed Route	<p>Visalia Transit operates fourteen fixed routes, consisting of regular local routes, an intercity route jointly operated with Tulare Intermodal Express (TIME) and V-Line service from Visalia to Fresno.</p> <p>Visalia Transit operates routes at 15,30,45 or 60 minute headways, resulting in a combination of timed and unaligned connections</p>	<p>For information contact: The Green Line at: 1-877-404-6473 Online: VisaliaTransit.com</p>	All routes (aside from Route 12) begin and end at the Visalia Transit Center on the corner of East Oak street and North Bridge street.	<p>Monday-Friday 6:00 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Weekend 8:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.</p> <p>VT does not operate on New Year's day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.</p> <p>Limited service hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. are operated on Presidents Day, Labor Day, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.</p> <p>V-Line operates on its regular schedule on all limited service holidays.</p>	General Public, ADA and Seniors	<p>Fares one-way General.....\$1.75 Seniors (60+)/Disabled/Medicare card holder....\$0.85</p> <p>General All day pass: \$3.50 Senior/disabled day pass: \$2.50 7-day general pass: \$14.00 7-day senior pass: \$7.50 General Monthly Pass \$50.00 Senior/Disabled Monthly Pass: \$30.00 Monthly T-Pass.....\$55.00 (all county fixed routes) Monthly T-Pass sold after the 16th of each month....\$30.00</p>	<p>Visalia Transit connects with Tulare InterModal Express, Tulare County Area Transit, Greyhound, Orange Belt, KART, and Amtrak.</p> <p>Visalia Transit accepts transfers from TCaT onto VT Route 1 only. VT does not provide free transfers.</p> <p>V-Line service connects with Fresno Area Express (FAX) buses at Courthouse Park and CSU Fresno.</p>	49 Buses in Fixed Route Service	FY 2018 1,436,984 Unlinked Trips

Dial - A-Ride	<p>Visalia Transit (VT) provides a supplemental service called Dial-A-Ride; a curb to curb para-transit service on a shared-ride/demand-response basis to locations within the city limits of Visalia, Goshen, Farmersville, and to/from Exeter.</p>	<p>For information: 559-713-4750</p>	<p>Visalia Transit (VT) provides Dial-A-Ride service between, and within the city limits of Visalia, Goshen and Farmersville. Service is available between Visalia and Exeter on VT. VT serves Exeters Dial-A-Ride after hours.</p>	<p>Dial-A-Ride operates Monday-Friday from 6 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and on weekends from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>No service on holidays when fixed route is not operating</p>	<p>General Public, ADA and Seniors</p>	<p>Fares one-way</p> <p>General.....\$4.00</p> <p>ADA/Seniors/Disabled/Medicare card holder.....\$2.25</p> <p>First 2 children/6 & under...FREE</p> <p>ADA/Seniors/Disabled/Medicare card holder monthly pass...\$75.00</p> <p>ADA/Seniors/Disabled/Medicare card holder 10-ride punch pass...\$22.50</p> <p>General 10-ride punch pass.....\$40.00</p>	<p>ADA reservations may be made up to two weeks in advance; all General Public or Non-ADA passengers are limited to same day service request. Same day service requests are scheduled depending on availability for fastest response plan trips between 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.-8:45 p.m. For tips on riding VT Dial-A-Ride please refer to the Dial-A-Ride ADA Program manual, or call 559-713-4100 for a copy.</p>		
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Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
City of Dinuba									
Fixed-Route Bus	The Dinuba Transit Center is located northwest of downtown Dinuba along M St, between Mariposa ST and Merced St, The facility is directly adjacent to the Emperor Estate Senior Apartment. DART routes operate 30 minute loops, resulting in timed connections at the Transit center.	For information contact: The Green Line at: 1-877-404-6473	All DART bus routes begin and end at the Dinuba Transit Center. DART riders may catch the bus at any designates bus stop. Dinuba Connection was developed in partnership with Fresno County Rural Transit Agency, provides regional Transit service between the City of Dinuba, and the City of Reedley.	DART operates: Monday-Saturday, No service on Sundays. Monday-Thursday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Friday 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Saturday 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. DART does not operate on New Year's day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day	General Public, ADA and Seniors	Fixed Route Fares: General/age 6 & older.....\$1.00 Children 5 and younger (first two with fare-Paying adult)....FREE Each additional Child 5& younger.....\$1.00 Student/Senior Pass.\$25.00 (Valid for 20 rides / Dinuba Connection) Monthly T-Pass.....\$55.00 Mid-Month T-Pass.....\$30.00 (sold after the 16 th of every month)	Passengers may transfer between DART routes, or to TCaT at the Transit Center. DART connects with the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA) at Reedley College. Separate fares are required to board the TCaT and FCRTA systems.	4	FY 17/18 99,661 unlinked trips
Dial - A-Ride	The City of Dinuba provides service to residents of Dinuba and the adjacent are through two flex routes, which were combined in 2007 in an effort to eliminate service duplication and reduce operating costs.	For reservations, please contact: 559-595-8800	The services that is available for Dial-A-Ride is City wide.	Monday-Saturday, No service on Sundays. Monday-Thursday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Friday 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Saturday 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.	General Public, ADA and Seniors	Dial-A-Ride Fares: General.....\$1.50 Seniors/62 & older.....\$1.25 Students/age 6-17 (ID required)\$1.25 Children 5 & younger...FREE Each additional child is.....\$1.50 Disabled with ADA ID card....\$.50 Student Senior pass....\$25.00 Valid for 20 rides	ADA certification can be obtained through the Dinuba Transit Center @ 180 w. Merced St, for more information: 559-591-3278	3	FY 17/18 16,503 trips

Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
City of Tulare									
Fixed-Route Bus	The Tulare Transit Center is located at the northern edge of downtown Tulare between K and L Streets. TIME bus routes operate 30 minute headways and depart on the top bottom of the hour, resulting in timed connections through the day.	For information contact: The Green Line at: 1-877-404-6473	TIME operates seven bus routes that serve Tulare and Visalia. TIME connects with Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT) and Visalia Transit (VT)	Monday-Friday 6:15 a.m. - 9:15p.m. Saturday 8:15 a.m. - 9:15 p.m. Sunday 8:15 a.m.-6:15 p.m. TIME does not operate on New Year's day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Saturday service hours on , Presidents Day, Christmas Eve and New year's Eve	General Public, ASA and Seniors	General\$1.50 Senior65+/ADA/Medicare cardholder\$.75 First two children 5 and younger FREE with fare paying adult Each additional child\$1.50 Personal care attendant w/ ADA passengerFREE Trip Tickets/book of 20\$30.00 Monthly General Pass\$40.00 Senior 65+/ADA/Medicare Cardholder\$20.00 Monthly Student Pass ...\$33.00 T-Pass \$50/after the 16 th \$30	Free transfers are available for riders to continue a single trip within the system. Please request transfers when paying fare, transfers are not good for return trips or stop-overs. No transfer will be provided between TIME buses and VT buses on route 11X. Transfer are accepted to/from TCaT routes 20 and 40.	12	FY 17/18 289,166 trips

Dial - A-Ride	Dial-A-Ride service is provided to Senior Citizens 65 & older, Disabled and Medicare card holders within a ¼ mile radius along fixed route service.	For reservations, please contact: 559-688-5706	City limits of Tulare	Monday-Friday 6:15 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. Saturday 8:15 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Sunday 8:15 a.m.-6:30 p.m.	General Public, ADA and Seniors	Dial-A-Ride Fares: General\$3.25 ADA Certified\$2.00 ADA AttendantFREE Children seven and younger w/a fare paying adult pay\$1.25 Children w/out a fare paying adult pay\$2.50 General Public Tickets (Book of 10) pay.....\$32.50 ADA trip ticket/book of 10 ...\$20.00	Origin to destination is provided unless a reasonable modification request is granted. Cancellations must be made at least one hour before reservation time. For tips and information on Dial-A-Ride please call 559-688-5706.		FY 17/18 17,423 trips
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Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
City of Porterville									
Fixed-Route Bus	The Porterville Transit Center is Located one block from Main st, in downtown Porterville and is situated between Hockett St and D St. The facility serves as the primary transit hub in the eastern portion of the urbanized area, with connections to four TCaT routes. Most routes operate at 40 minute headways, resulting in many timed connections.	For information contact: The Green Line at: 1-877-404-6473	Porterville Transit operates 9 bus routes that serve Porterville and some county areas contiguous to the Porterville city limits.	Monday-Friday 6:00 a.m.-10:40 p.m. Saturday 8:00 a.m.-10:40 p.m. Sunday 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Porterville Transit does not operate on New Year's day, Easter Sunday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. All other holidays on which Porterville Transit operates, are on the Sunday schedule with the exception of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, on which transit operates on a normal weekday schedule.	General Public, ADA and Seniors	Fixed Route Fares: One-Way General.....\$1.50 (6 yrs. and older) Reduced.....\$0.75 (Seniors 65+/Disabled/Medicare Card Holder) Passes General 1-Day.....\$3.00 Reduced 1-Day....\$1.50 (Seniors 65+/Disabled/Medicare Card Holder) General 31-Day.....\$40.00 Student 31-Day.....\$25.00 (Student ID Required) Reduced 31-Day.....\$20.00 (Seniors 65+/Disabled/Medicare Card Holder) Monthly T-Pass.....\$55.00 Mid-Month T-Pass.....\$30.00 (sold after the 16 th of every month)	Porterville Transit connects with Tulare County Area Transit and Orange Belt. Porterville Transit accepts transfers from TCaT.	Porterville operates low-floor ADA accessible transit vehicles. Transit vehicles are equipped with Automated Voice Annunciators, Digital Displays, Real-Time Passenger Information System, WiFi, and Electronic Fareboxes and Smart Cards.	FY 17/18 635,648 unlinked trips

Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
City of Porterville									
Dial - A - Ride	Dial-A-Ride service is provided to Senior Citizens 65 & older, Disabled and Medicare card holders within a ¼ mile radius along fixed route service	For reservations please call: 559-791-7800	Porterville COLT provides Dial-A-Ride service within the city limits of Porterville and extends to some count areas contiguous to the city limits.	Monday-Friday 6:15a.m.-10:00 p.m. Saturday 8:15 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Sunday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Porterville Dial-a-COLT observes the same holiday schedule as fixed route service	General Public, ADA and Seniors	General \$5.00 Senior 65+/disabled/Medicare Card Holder..... \$2.50	ADA reservations may be made up to two weeks in advance; all General Public or Non-ADA passengers are limited to same day service request. Same day service requests are scheduled depending on availability for fastest response plan trips between 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.-8:45 p.m. For tips on riding PT Dial-A-Ride please refer to the Dial-A-Ride ADA Program manual, or call 559-791-7800 for a copy.	Porterville operates low-floor ADA accessible transit vehicles. Transit vehicles are equipped with Real-Time Passenger Information System, WiFi, and Electronic Fareboxes and Smart Cards.	FY 17/18 13,001 trips

Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
TCaT									
Fixed-Route Bus	TCaT provides reliable and convenient public transit service between cities and within many small communities throughout Tulare County. Fixed route service is offered every day on routes 10-90.	For information contact: The Green Line at: 1-877-404-6473	Tulare County	Monday-Friday 5:25 a.m.-8:15 p.m. Saturday 8:30 a.m.-6:42 p.m. Sunday 8:30 a.m.-6:42 p.m. Routes 10-40: 7 days per week Route 50: Monday through Saturday Routes 60-90: Weekday only service	General Public	Fixed Route Fares: General\$2.00 First two children/6 years of age and youngerFREE Senior 65+/ADA/Medicare Cardholder\$1.00 Punch Pass\$17.00 Monthly T-Pass\$55.00 Mid-Month T-Pass\$30.00 (sold after the 16 th of every month)	You may connect with other transit services in the cities of Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare, Visalia, Woodlake and Delano. Separate fares are required to board those systems, with the following exceptions: Transfers to/from VT route 1 are free; transfers to/from TIME are accepted on TCaT routes 20 and 40.	21	FY 17/18 289,574 trips
Dial - A - Ride	TCaT provides reliable and convenient Dial-A-Ride transit service a curb to curb paratransit service on a shared ride demand response basis to selected locations in Tulare County.	For reservations contact: 1800-431-9711	Tulare County	Monday-Friday *Rural Dinuba/Sultana 10:45-12:30 Monson/Cutler/Orosi-East *Orosi/Yettem/Seville/North *Patterson Tract 2:15-4:30 p.m. Lindsay/Toneyville/Tooleville 7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Pixley/Tipton/Teviston/Earlimart/Alpaugh/Allensworth/Richgrove* 6:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. *Rural City of Tulare 7:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. and *Waukena 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. *Must place reservations the day before.	General Public, ADA and Seniors	General.....\$3.00 ADA Cardholder\$1.00 Seniors/Disabled/Medicaid/Veterans.....: \$2.00 First two children 6 years of age and youngerFREE	No transfers. ADA reservations may be made up to two weeks in advance. ADA certification is available through TCaT @ 559-624-7180	4	FY 17/18 7,669 trips

Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
City of Woodlake									
Dial- A- Ride	The Whitney Transfer Center is located on the southwest corner of Magnolia Street and Lakeview Avenue in Woodlake.	For information and reservations: 559-564-8055 To schedule a pick up contact 559-280-2736	City of Woodlake	Monday – Friday 7a.m.-3:30 p.m.	General Public, ADA and Seniors	General.....\$1.00 20-ride pass.....\$17.00 Seniors.....\$.25 20-ride senior pass \$5.00 Passes can be purchased at Woodlake City Hall 350, N Valencia			FY 17/18 20.245 trips

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS									
Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
Porterville Sheltered Workshop									
Demand-response Transit	PSW is a social service agency that provides a variety of services to developmentally disabled residents. They provide service to all of Tulare County, Northern Kern, Southern Fresno and Eastern Kings County. They offer services to persons with mild to profound disabilities. They provide work training assistance with finding employment and independent living	Currently all passengers are referred by the Central Valley Regional Center.	PSW buses pick up passengers at their residence and offer transportation to a set of destination in Porterville and Lindsay.	Monday -Friday 5:30 am - 5:30 pm	Porterville Sheltered workshop (PSW) serves adults with developmental disabilities.	PSW provides service to adults with developmental disabilities in Southeast Tulare County. All riders must be referred through the central valley regional center. PSW shuttle is free for charge for all eligible passengers. The Regional Center provides vouchers for their clients.		25	

TRANSPORTATION PURCHASERS

Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
King/Tulare Area Agency (KTAAA)	A "one stop shop" for satisfying the needs of senior, the KTAAA also focuses on their families and loved ones, including connecting families with adult day care agencies, providing occasional respite from the caregiving task, and helping to arrange a power of attorney for a frail parent.	Information on these and numerous other issues is always available: 1800-321-2462 and on the website www.ktaaa.org	Kings and Tulare Area			Information, referrals, and assistance are provided free of charge. Some of the programs that are funded or other services we refer you to may have small charges associated with their services, depending on your income level. In addition, KTAAA runs a Multipurpose Senior Services Program which also reimburses the cost of transportation provided by vendors.			
CSET	CSET operates seven senior centers throughout Tulare County. Locations are: Cutler, Earlimart, Exeter, Goshen, Lindsay, Porterville and Woodlake	1-800-321-2462	Cutler Senior Center Exeter Senior Center Goshen Senior Center Lindsay Senior Center Porterville Senior Center Earlimart Senior Center Woodlake Senior Center	Lindsay Senior Center: 562-5859 Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Exeter Senior Center 592-596 Mon, Wed - Fri 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Porterville Senior Center 782-4725 Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Woodlake Senior Center Mon-Wed, Friday 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Earlimart Senior Center (661) 849-2232 Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Cutler-Orosi Senior Center 528-6108 Mon, Wed- Fri 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Goshen Senior Center 1-800-321-2462 Tuesday, Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	60+ years of age	Donations accepted			

OTHER INTERCITY AND REGIONAL SERVICES

Service	Service Description	Reservations or Information	Service Area	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Fare	Transfers/ Policies	Vehicles	Trips
California Vanpool Authority (CalVans)									
CalVans	The project, which began in 2001 with one van, was originally established as an offshoot of Kings Area Rural Transit. CalVans has grown to include more 87 vans especially designed for farm workers.	For more information contact: 866-655-5444 www.calvans.org		Vehicles are operated by members of the vanpool and travel times vary depending on participant work schedules.	General Public	Vanpools costs are incurred on a monthly basis and include fees for van lease, fuel, insurance, maintenance, and administration. These costs are shared equally across participants of the vanpool. T			
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)									
DAV - medical transportation	DAV operates a fleet of vehicles around the country to provide free transportation to VA medical facilities for injured and ill veterans.	Tulare County VA office contact: 559-684-4960	Tulare County and surrounding communities.	Per request	The veteran is required to give the VA a notice of the need for transportation.	Free		2,856 vehicles Nation wide	

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Appendix B: Coordinated Plan Strategies/ Strategy Priorities

Tables bellow summarize the three levels of priority for each of the goals with associated strategies. Details of each of these goals and strategies are provided in Chapters 5 and 6.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
Goal 1 – Maintain and strategically expand public and human service transportation when resources allow		
1. Retain and strategically enhance existing public transportation services	<p>A significant portion of the current transit ridership in Tulare County rely on transit as their primary means for getting from place to place. Therefore it is desirable to maintain routes, service hours and headways at levels which facilitate movement to and from key destinations within the county.</p> <p>In order to minimize the impacts of potential service cuts, it is recommended to pursue strategies such as increasing choice ridership and using route planning software to estimate the impact of any route consolidations or reductions to vulnerable populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct Strategic Service Evaluations and planning studies to formulate proposals for increasing the overall productivity & long term viability of transit through reduction in travel times, improved linkages with major trip generators, and service which aligns with the County's transportation needs ▪ Implement projects identified in Tulare County's Long Range Transit Plan, as well as those included in local Short Range Transit Plans (SRTPs) and Transit Development Plans (TDPs) ▪ Reduce both wait and travel times for riders. ▪ Improve the directness of travel and consider relocating transfer points on key routes. ▪ Secure funding devoted to maintaining and strategically improving service levels to the public transportation network.
2. Retain, support and improve human service transportation.	<p>The availability of specialized human services transportation can have a considerable impact on the ability of vulnerable populations to access the care & services they need. Consequently it is crucial to support and sustain the existing human service transportation options provided in Tulare County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop agency-based transportation information capabilities, tightening the lines of communication between transit programs and personnel who work directly with consumers. ▪ Secure grants to support agency transportation where these can extend the existing public transportation network and address unmet mobility needs.

Cont. 2. Retain, Support and Improve human service transportation	It is also recommended that mobility partnerships with health care providers, social service agencies and local community groups be cultivated with an eye towards future grant opportunities, transit planning and the exploration of alternative service models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that human service transportation personnel have access to relevant training & capacity building resources and conference opportunities such as CalACT. ▪ Secure 5310 funds devoted to maintaining and improving agency operations – e. g. Purchases of computer hardware and other ITS equipment.
STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
3. Continue to utilize FTA 5310 grant funding for procurement of replacement and expansion vehicles by non-profit and public agencies serving mobility needs of low income, seniors and disabled persons.	<p>Due to the competitive nature of the FTA 5310 program, as implemented by Caltrans, local public agencies and non-profit groups should continue to provide strong justification for the acquisition of replacement & expansion vehicles, related equipment and service enhancements.</p> <p>TCAG will continue to support the efforts of local partners to secure 5310 funds for these purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submit vehicle-based projects. ▪ As funds allow, submit vehicle-based projects that meet or exceed ADA complementary paratransit services.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
<p>4. Retain, support and expand vanpool program</p>	<p>Given the relatively low density and wide geographic distribution of jobs in the region, vanpools have proven to be a valuable transportation resource.</p> <p>CalVans provides economical transportation for many itinerant workers and long distance commuters who live and work within the county. Ridership data is reported to FTA, generating additional 5307 urban area formula funding for local transit operations.</p> <p>In light of the direct and indirect benefits which the vanpool program provides, ongoing support for its operations is encouraged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add more vanpools for low income workers over the next five years. ▪ Continue to build upon the existing partnerships and take advantage of existing available incentives. ▪ Invest available funding back to vanpool program by having public entity purchase vanpools over a five-year period to reduce rider monthly costs.

Goal 2 – Enhance mobility information and education.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
5. Develop technology platforms that will provide access to comprehensive information about local transportation options and programs.	Communicate the diverse array of transportation services and programs that have been implemented in Tulare County to transportation disadvantaged populations and the social service agencies that serve them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding and pursue low-cost, open source Find-a-Ride capabilities that can include demand response and specialized transportation programs. Build upon the existing software development or seek new models such as those being implemented nationally through the VTCLI initiatives of VetLink in Riverside/San Bernardino Counties or Atlanta, Georgia's MPO or through the MPO's Find-a-Ride for Pima County, Arizona.
6. Maintain and expand the capacities of the 'Green Line' call center, incorporating information on other transportation options	<p>The 'Green Line' call center represents an initial step towards providing easy access to information on various public transit services throughout Tulare and Kings counties at a single source.</p> <p>Currently the 'Green Line' is able to provide travel information for all public transportation agencies in Tulare County, as well as Kings Area Rural Transit (KART). By developing the capacity to provide information on other travel options such as non-emergency medical transportation, the call center would move one step closer to being a "One Click, One Call" resource.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Call Center Utilization Growth. Improve Call Center Performance Reporting to Inform and Guide Program Managers and Partners. Provider Leadership to Partners in Crafting Green Line Future, such as expanding information roles to other projects, (van pool or rideshare) Develop community-specific outreach activities to promote the Green Line across Tulare County Maintain information with local providers to ensure that Green Line information is current and accurate.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
<p>7. Provide route/schedule information at each bus stop, particularly for low frequency routes.</p>	<p>Given that knowledge of the available services and access to travel information has been identified as a factor which hinders mobility for transportation-disadvantaged populations it is recommended that such information be made as readily available as is practically possible.</p> <p>Providing detailed route & schedule information at bus stops is a cost effective way of reducing this knowledge gap, particularly at stops served only by low-frequency routes with headways that may be irregular.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set some common standards for the level of information to be provided at bus stops based on the frequency of service and number of boarding's per day. ▪ Ensure schedule information exists on every stop, especially on routes with low frequencies.

GOAL 3 – Formalize a mobility management function to better connect persons with the mobility services they need.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
8. Designate a unitary countywide Mobility Manager.	<p>Mobility management is a unified approach to transportation that aims to provide a more user-friendly experience to travelers through the management of demand and provision of a single point-of-service which incorporates trip planning & reservation functions across all transportation modes.</p> <p>Implementation of mobility management in Tulare County will make travel information more readily accessible to those who need it, increase awareness of lesser-known service offerings and better align services with demand. A designated mobility manager would also be able to offer valuable insights when future service planning decisions are made, given her/his direct exposure to the travel needs of local residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Define organizational home for Countywide Mobility Manager through a process of public & stakeholder consultation▪ Seek 5310 program funding for technical assistance to develop enhanced mobility management capacities, operating costs and/or purchase of related capital equipment

GOAL 4 – Fill remaining mobility gaps with cost-effective services and self-help tools.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
<p>9. Provide non-recurring trip ridesharing matching capability.</p>	<p>Ridesharing is often an important transportation link for the transportation disadvantaged population, particularly for people in less populated rural areas when making non- recurring trips such as shopping and medical appointments.</p> <p>At present these travelers often rely on informal social networks to obtain rides, leaving those with fewer social ties or family relations at a disadvantage. The ability to secure rideshares for non-recurring trips should be bolstered by the development of an online ride portal to match travelers with drivers and reimbursements to travelers who use the services of a TNC to access social services or medical care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a non-recurring ridesharing capability with multi-lingual access on the Find-A-Ride portal. The ridesharing application would be targeted at the transportation disadvantaged population. ▪ Consider instituting a program to reimburse or provide discounts to social service clients, seniors and/or medical patients who use TNCs to travel to appointments or other activities intended to promote health and wellness.
<p>10. Develop a volunteer driver reimbursement program.</p>	<p>Volunteer driver reimbursement programs are low-cost transportation alternatives that can improve mobility of those Tulare County residents where there are no transit services or for those too frail or whose travel needs are too complicated to be easily served by public transit. For these individuals, this becomes both a key mobility gap filler and can help to manage demand for scarce public paratransit resources.</p> <p>The creation of a reimbursement program for volunteer drivers has the potential to increase the size of the volunteer driver pool and compensate drivers for the cost of the transportation they provide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify a lead organization for development and promotion of a volunteer driver reimbursement program and include a visit to (or from) the national TRIP model in Riverside County. ▪ Prepare and submit a Section 5310 grant to develop a Tulare County volunteer driver reimbursement program. ▪ Promote and market the program through its sponsor organization(s) & the newly-designated countywide Mobility Manager.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVE & PURPOSE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
<p>11. Facilitate improved pedestrian and bike access to transit services & facilities.</p>	<p>Even in communities where transit services are available, the difficulty or perceived difficulty in traveling to the nearest bus stop can have a significant impact on ridership. One study which examined transit ridership among low-density neighborhoods with high proportions of senior residents found that roughly 70% of elderly riders lived within 1/8th mile of the bus route and that overall transit usage within this walking distance was three (3) times higher than when walking distances were up to ¼ mile.</p> <p>The removal of constraints that hamper the movement of pedestrians and cyclists, both perceived and actual, should be seriously examined. The installation of amenities which create a more comfortable and safer environment for walking and cycling would likewise improve access to transportation and deliver other incidental benefits to the broader public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Install amenities such as benches, shelters, safety lighting and refuse bins at more bus stops, with priority given to high volume stops ▪ Consider transit connectivity when planning future pedestrian & bike facilities ▪ Encourage new residential developments to provide direct and convenient pedestrian routes to nearby transit stops by keeping physical obstructions and walking distances to a minimum.

GOAL 5 – Develop a more effective customer feedback and performance system to ensure that high service quality is maintained.

<p>12. Incorporate all transit services into future customer satisfaction surveys and inter-system connectivity satisfaction questions.</p>	<p>Feedback from riders is often a valuable tool for evaluating the effectiveness of public transit and levels of customer satisfaction. Surveys should be employed routinely to collect such feedback, with questions designed to encourage responses that can inform transit planning decisions.</p> <p>A particular area of focus should be the connectivity between systems. Given that this is frequently cited as a factor which constrains people’s ability to travel across jurisdictions using transit, emphasis should be placed on identifying issues related to transfers between services so that these may be mitigated.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to asking riders which service changes would be least disruptive or most likely to impact the usefulness of transit when such changes must be made for financial or other reasons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine procedures for complaint follow-up and determine procedural changes to help implement existing agency policies’ regarding customer service. ▪ Develop strategies to inform Regional Mobility Manager on matters related to service quality, identifying instances where service is either deficient or exceptionally high quality ▪ Institute a “Driver of the Year” or similar recognition program to commend employees who provide exceptional service
<p>13. Report transit inter-system connectivity measures annually in Productivity Evaluation Report.</p>	<p>Data that tracks the efficiency of inter-system transfers should be collected and reported in a systematic fashion. Measures such as broadening the annual Transit Productivity Evaluation Report to include customer satisfaction results from Strategy #12 and the routine reporting of average wait times between transfers would be helpful in identifying when operations are very efficient and where there is still room for improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supplement data with a focus group of passengers who transfer among the systems in Tulare County. Recruitment for the focus group could be conducted randomly at key transfer locations among the systems. ▪ Target high-use connections and selected routes for improved service levels and promote this to key stakeholders.

GOAL	Strategies	Priority
Goal 1 – Retain and strategically expand public and human service transportation when resources allow	1.Retain and strategically enhance existing Public Transportation Services.	Critical
	2.Retain, support and improve Human Service Transportation.	Critical
	3. Continue to utilize FTA 5310 grant funding for procurement of replacement & expansion vehicles by non-profit and public agencies serving mobility needs of low income, seniors and disabled persons.	Critical
	4.Retain, support and expand Vanpool program.	Medium
Goal 2 – Enhance mobility information and education	5. Develop technology platforms that will provide access to comprehensive information about local transportation options and programs.	Critical
	6. Continue to utilize and expand the ‘Green Line’ call center and incorporate information on other forms of transportation, such as non-emergency medical transportation.	Critical
	7. Provide comprehensive route/schedule information at the bus stop, particularly for low-frequency routes.	High

Goal 3 – Formalize a mobility management function to better connect persons with the mobility services they need	8. Appoint a Countywide Mobility Manager.	High
Goal 4 – Fill remaining mobility gaps with cost-effective services and self-help tools	9. Provide non-recurring trip ridesharing and/or matching capabilities.	High
	10. Develop a volunteer drive reimbursement program.	Medium
	11. Facilitate improved pedestrian and bike access to transit services and facilities.	High
Goal 5 – Develop a more effective customer feedback and performance system to ensure that high service quality is maintained	12. Incorporate all transit services into future customer satisfaction surveys and intersystem connectivity satisfaction questionnaires.	Medium
	13. Report transit intersystem connectivity measures annually in a productivity evaluation report.	Medium