



August 9, 2023

To: Social Service Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC)

From: Irene Enriquez
Regional Planner

Subject: Unmet Transit Needs Regional Finding

Description:

The Social Service Transportation Advisory Committee's primary role is to advise Kern COG's Transportation Planning Policy Committee (TPPC) about potential unmet transit needs in Kern County. SSTAC members fulfill this role by:

- Reviewing unmet transit needs public hearing documents within the Kern Region, including unmet transit needs that may exist within the jurisdiction of the Committee and that may be reasonable to meet by establishing or contracting for new public transportation or specialized transportation services, or by expanding existing services based upon SSTAC member technical expertise.
- Analyzing, coordinating, and consolidating existing transit services to meet specialized transportation services; and
- Making a recommendation of finding to the TPPC.

Discussion:

Prior to making Transportation Development Act (TDA) fund allocations, Kern COG staff must determine whether unmet transit needs might exist within its jurisdictional boundary. The SSTAC is one of the avenues through which information on unmet needs is obtained by Kern COG. Each city and the County Regional Transit Division hold public hearings to determine if unmet transit needs can be identified within their communities.

This report documents efforts by Kern COG staff to gather and disseminate information regarding possible unmet transit needs in relation to existing services within incorporated and unincorporated areas of Kern County. Current services include:



Local Services

Arvin Fixed Route, Dial-A-Ride, and commuter service to Tejon Ranch Industrial Complex, Valley Plaza, and Bakersfield College
Delano Fixed Route and Complementary Paratransit.
California City, Dial-A-Ride
Frazier Park (Kern Transit) Dial-A-Ride (servicing the communities Frazier Park, Lebec, Lake of the Woods, Pinon Pines, Gorman, and Pine Mtn. Club)
Golden Empire Transit Fixed Route, complementary paratransit, and commuter service to Tejon Ranch Industrial Complex)
Lamont/Weedpatch (Kern Regional Transit) Dial-A-Ride
Mojave (Kern Regional Transit) Dial-A-Ride
Golden Empire Transit District (CTSA senior and disabled)
Ridgecrest Deviated, Fixed-Route, and Complementary Paratransit
Rosamond (Kern Transit) Dial-A-Ride
Shafter Dial-A-Ride
Taft Dial-a-Ride
Tehachapi (Kern Transit) Dial-A-Ride
Wasco Dial-A-Ride

Kern Regional Transit Intercity Services

Arvin/Weedpatch (Bakersfield/Arvin/Weedpatch/Lamont)
Boron/Mojave
Buttonwillow/Bakersfield
East Kern (Bakersfield/Keene/Tehachapi/Mojave/Rosamond/Lancaster)
Frazier Park/Bakersfield Corridor
Kern River Valley (dial-a-ride serving the communities of Kernville, Wofford Heights, Lake Isabella, Weldon, and Onyx)
Lake Isabella/Bakersfield
Mojave/Ridgecrest Route (Mojave/California City/Inyokern/Ridgecrest and Inyokern)
North Kern (Delano/McFarland/Wasco/Shafter/Bakersfield)
Ridgecrest/Randsburg/Johannesburg
Taft/Fellows/Derby Acres/McKittrick
Westside Express (Ford City/Taft Heights/Taft/Bakersfield)

SSTAC concerning transit **will provide its recommendations needs findings at its August 9, 2023 meeting.** This report assists SSTAC members in making a recommendation to the Kern COG Transportation Planning Policy Committee as to whether any unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet exist in areas of Kern County, including the metro Bakersfield area served by the Golden Empire Transit District.



Kern Council of Governments

In considering unmet transit needs, SSTAC must use the following definitions and performance standards:

Unmet Need

“An unmet need exists if an individual of any age or physical condition is unable to transport his or herself due to deficiencies in the existing transportation system. Excluded are: 1) those requests for minor operational improvements, and 2) those improvements funded and scheduled for implementation in the following fiscal year.”

Reasonable to Meet

“An unmet need exists if an individual of any age or physical condition is unable to transport his or herself due to deficiencies in the existing transportation system. Excluded are: 1) those requests for minor operational improvements, and 2) those improvements funded and scheduled for implementation in the following fiscal year.”

Size and Location of “Transit Dependent” Populations:

Detailed information on those and other categories is also gathered from surveys conducted for short-range Transit Development Plans (TDPs) developed by transit agencies in Kern County. TDPs provide detailed transit-related characteristics of cities and unincorporated communities. Information thus gathered is used to retool the transit service for the next five years.

Adequacy of Existing Systems

Some residents of Kern County may not have immediate access to Kern transit providers. Kern transit providers must provide service that meets financial requirements (e.g., a 10% farebox recovery ratio in rural areas, 20% in small urban areas, and 20% in large urban areas) and satisfy the unmet transit needs criteria.

Kern County has an extensive network of social service transportation services, with numerous providers represented on the SSTAC. These agencies provide specialized transportation services to groups such as the developmentally disabled and seniors. Kern COG has actively supported these agencies in their efforts to provide better transportation to their constituents. One such area where Kern COG’s support has been fruitful is the capital assistance program of the Federal Transit Administration. This program, Section 5310, pays up to 80% of the capital purchases such as buses, vans, and computer equipment.



As of this report, **Kern COG staff recommends that the members of the SSTAC find that there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet within Kern County.**

Action:

Consider the information so that the SSTAC can make an informed recommendation to the Transportation Planning Policy Committee on one of the following three:

1. There are no unmet transit needs; or
2. There are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet; or
3. There are unmet transit needs, including those that are reasonable to meet.

Action: Kern COG staff recommends a finding that there are no unmet transit needs within Kern County.

cc: Ahron Hakimi, Kern COG Executive Director
Robert Ball, Director of Planning
Becky Napier, Director of Administration