

Social Services Transportation Advisory Council
Strategic Plan Workshop Minutes

May 15, 2017 – 10:30 A.M.

1. **Introductions:** attendees included Greg Pratt and Consuelo Espinosa, HTA; Catherine Sundquist, City Ambulance; Debra Dees, Christie Smith and Oona Smith, HCAOG; Erik Smiley, Council for the Blind; Richard Johnson, public representative; Jerry Robinson and Joanne Conzelmann, HSRC; Josielyn Gilbaugh, County Public Works; Selena McKinney (and Gordon Shaw via conference call), LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

2. **Purpose of SSTAC**

- TDA Background Selena McKinney of LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. gave an overview of TDA law and LTF, STA funding.
 - Source for LTF, STA
 - Eligibility for receiving (minimum farebox ratio systemwide; if not all spent on transit, no unmet needs)
 - If claimant doesn't meet minimum farebox ratio, either match with non-State/non-Federal funds, or reduce claim
 - Priority of Claims 1) Planning and Programing (up to 3%); 2) Pedestrian/bike (up to 2%); 3) Transit Development Board (up to 10%); 4) CTSA (up to 5%); 5) Public Transportation; and 6) miscellaneous including streets and roads IF no unmet needs that are reasonable to meet.
- Definitions of "Reasonable to Meet" and "Unmet Need"
 - Selena shared definition of TDA's "reasonable to meet" and compared it with HCAOG, noting that there is vagueness in the TDA's definition, and RTPA's such as HCAOG commonly further define "unmet needs" for their jurisdictions.
 - Gordon Shaw shared an example of limits to the definition by discussing a court case in Shasta where the Sierra Club sued because they believed Shasta's findings of "reasonable to meet" were not properly vetted. One of the three services found "unreasonable" was subsequently found reasonable to meet.
 - There was discussion about the current HCAOG definition that identifies out-of-county service as not reasonable to meet. LSC indicated that this is a matter of local control, and that it is in HCAOG's authority to change this definition (if desired) to fund services extending beyond the county limits.

3. **Scope and Function of SSTAC in Other Rural Counties**

- Role of RTPA and SSTAC
 - Selena noted the overall purpose of the RTPA is to administer funds under guidance and review of the SSTAC.
 - Ensure public funds are well used
 - Identify unmet needs and determine if they're reasonable to meet
 - Not a forum for service decisions
 - Reviewed process for identifying unmet needs

- Public Input
- Unmet versus Operational
 - Unmet if NEW, i.e. expands operating hours and cost
 - Operational if minor change, capital need, customer service and does not incur significant operating cost. If operational, refer to Service Provider and note in appendices.
- Identifying “reasonable to meet”. Once identified as an unmet need, it is reasonable to meet if...
 - Operationally feasible—it is a service the provider is capable of operating.
 - Financially viable—there is funding to support the service (implement and sustain annually)

The SSTAC follows HCAOG’s written guidance that the lack of funding alone cannot be the sole reason for finding a service not “reasonable to meet”. However, availability of funding is a valid factor in considering whether an unmet need is reasonable to meet. Even if a need meets all other criteria, if there is not adequate funding available it can be considered not reasonable to meet.

4. History of SSTAC in Humboldt County

- Selena provided overview of what is included in various “Unmet Transit Needs Findings” Reports
 - HCAOG reports include executive summary, demographics, transit overview
 - MCAG only includes outreach materials, resolution
 - Lake County—resolution, plus narrative description of findings (3 pages)
 - Butte County more extensive report
- SSTAC Strategic Plan will review peer reports and make recommendations on what to include in HCAOG reports.

5. SSTAC Strategic Plan

- Selena recorded ideas for what SSTAC members would like to see in the Strategic Plan.
- Richard Johnson noted that he was concerned about deciding what to include in the strategic plan when many of the ideas the SSTAC held about the unmet needs process were being reconsidered.
- Selena noted that she will draft an outline of the Strategic Plan and share it with the SSTAC for feedback. The outline and draft language will be presented at the next workshop, and the SSTAC can continue to provide input about what to include. Selena also noted there are items in the proposal which need to be included in the plan, such as SSTAC goals and objectives.
- Items recorded for evaluation in the Strategic Plan consist of the following:
 - Review past unmet needs findings
 - Identify SSTAC issues:
 - Clarification on definitions
 - “Unmet Needs”
 - “Financially viable”
 - Review HCAOG’s inclusion that “trips outside of Humboldt County” do not constitute an unmet need.

- Pro of this language—not required to spend TDA money outside of County; keeps “unmet needs” from spiraling out of control.
- Cons—may miss opportunity for meeting real needs of residents, particularly for medical trips.
- Determine report format / what to include
- Identify when public comments trigger a need to act. Gordon noted that any suggestion of need requires a response, but the response could be very simply “that is not an unmet need for x reason”
- Outreach
 - How should the SSTAC verify claims of need (i.e. response to surveys, claims that individuals/groups would use service)
 - Materials for outreach that help citizens understand what constitutes needs
- Prioritizing Needs
 - If multiple needs are found reasonable, how do you prioritize competing needs?
 - When do you determine a service is sustainable (Greg mentioned the 4 year process recommended by the TDA; Selena noted that you can determine the trajectory of ridership within as little as six months to a year)

6. **Next Steps:**

- LSC will develop an outline for SSTAC Strategic Report and submit to SSTAC for review and will begin writing draft plan options.
- Next workshop (July meeting) will be a discussion of draft strategic plan elements.

7. **Adjourn**