

# Mariposa County Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan



## FINAL PLAN

Submitted to Mariposa County Local Transportation Commission

October 2008

**Nelson | Nygaard**  
consulting associates

In association with:

**Innovative Paradigms**  
Building Mobility Partnerships  
a subsidiary of paratransit inc. 

  
**FLT** Consulting, Inc.



## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1. Project Overview.....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
Introduction .....	1-1
Report Outline.....	1-3
SAFETEA-LU Planning Requirements.....	1-4
Federal Coordination Efforts .....	1-4
State of California Coordination Efforts.....	1-5
Funding Public Transportation in Rural California.....	1-6
Mariposa County Planning Documents and Relevant Research .....	1-11
<b>Chapter 2. Project Methodology .....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
Demographic Profile.....	2-1
Literature Review .....	2-1
Stakeholder Involvement and Public Outreach.....	2-1
Existing Transportation Services.....	2-2
Needs Assessment .....	2-2
Identification and Evaluation of Strategies.....	2-2
Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies.....	2-2
<b>Chapter 3. Demographic Profile.....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
Study Area Description and Demographic Summary.....	3-1
Population Characteristics .....	3-1
Population Growth.....	3-3
Projected Future Growth.....	3-3
Income Status .....	3-4
Employment .....	3-4
Access to a Vehicle.....	3-5
Population/Employment Density .....	3-5
Transit Dependency.....	3-8
Projected Demand for Public Transportation .....	3-8
<b>Chapter 4. Existing Public Transit Service and Social Service Transportation Providers .....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
Introduction .....	4-1
Public Transit Operators .....	4-1
Social Service Transportation Providers.....	4-4
Other Transportation Services.....	4-7
Connecting Transit/Transportation Services.....	4-7
<b>Chapter 5. Key Findings: Service Gaps, Unmet Needs, and Institutional Issues .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
Existing Coordination of Services .....	5-1
Barriers to Coordination .....	5-2
Key Origins and Destinations.....	5-3
Gaps and Unmet Needs.....	5-5
Duplication of Services.....	5-8
Conclusion .....	5-8
<b>Chapter 6. Identification of Strategies and Evaluation .....</b>	<b>6-1</b>
Public Workshop .....	6-1
Evaluation Criteria.....	6-3

Identification of Strategies .....6-4

**Chapter 7. Feasibility of Implementation .....7-1**

Introduction .....7-1

Implementing the Strategies .....7-1

High Priority Strategies .....7-5

Medium Priority Strategies .....7-10

Low Priority Strategies .....7-12

Review of Plan Opportunities .....7-13

Summary and Next Steps .....7-16

**Appendix A. Stakeholders**

**Appendix B. Workshop Publicity and Attendance**

**Table of Figures**

Figure 1-1 Caltrans Coordinated Planning for California Counties .....1-2

Figure 1-2 Projected State of California Funding Sources/Amounts .....1-9

Figure 1-3 Transportation Funding Matrix.....1-13

Figure 3-1 Basic Population Characteristics (2000).....3-1

Figure 3-2 Population Growth for Mariposa County 2000-2006.....3-3

Figure 3-3 Projected Growth for Mariposa County.....3-3

Figure 3-4 Income Status for Mariposa County (1999) .....3-4

Figure 3-5 Largest Employers in Mariposa County.....3-5

Figure 3-6 Households with No Vehicle Available .....3-5

Figure 3-7 Mariposa County 2000 Population/Employment Density.....3-7

Figure 3-8 Mariposa County 2000 Transit Dependency Index.....3-9

Figure 4-1 Summary of Mariposa County Transit Services .....4-2

Figure 4-2 Summary of YARTS Service .....4-3

Figure 4-3 YARTS Fares for Highway 140 Route .....4-4

Figure 4-4 Mariposa County Transit Service and Activity Centers.....4-9

Figure 4-5 Transportation Provider Inventory .....4-11

Figure 5-1 Key Travel Destinations within Mariposa County .....5-4

Figure 6-1 Summary List of Needs Presented at Workshop.....6-2

Figure 6-2 Strategies.....6-4

Figure 6-3 Sample Auto Loan Program: Costs for Contra Costa County's KEYS Program .....6-14

Figure 7-1 Agency Functional Skills and Resources.....7-2

Figure 7-2 Implementing High Priority Strategies .....7-7

Figure 7-4 Implementing Medium Priority Strategies .....7-12

Figure 7-5 Implementing Low Priority Strategies .....7-13

# Chapter 1. Project Overview

## Introduction

This planning project for Mariposa County is sponsored by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and is part of a larger planning effort overseen by Caltrans on behalf of 23 counties in non-urbanized areas within the State of California.

As described further in this report, federal planning requirements specify that designated recipients of certain sources of funds administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must certify that projects funded with those federal dollars are derived from a coordinated plan. Caltrans serves as the designated recipient in non-urbanized areas of California for funds subject to this plan.<sup>1</sup> (See Figure 1-1)

These projects are intended to improve the mobility of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited incomes. This plan focuses on identifying needs specific to those population groups, as well as identifying strategies to meet their needs. Caltrans is sponsoring a statewide planning effort on behalf of the rural counties for whom the funds are intended so that potential sponsors of transportation improvements may access the funds.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The term “non-urbanized area” includes rural areas and urban areas under 50,000 in population not included in an urbanized area.

<sup>2</sup> Some plans in rural areas have been completed independently of this effort. Caltrans’ website lists the status of the plans at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/Coord-Plan-Res.html>.

# Figure 1-1 Caltrans Coordinated Planning for California Counties



## Report Outline

The report is organized in seven chapters, as described below:

**Chapter 1** presents an overview of the project, its sponsorship by Caltrans, and federal planning requirements established by the passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, commonly referred to as SAFETEA-LU. This chapter also provides a summary of other key documents related to transportation planning in Mariposa County that have helped inform this effort. In addition, it discusses federal and state roles in promoting coordination among public transit operators and human service transportation providers. It also describes the funding environment for transportation in rural California.

**Chapter 2** summarizes the steps taken and the methodologies used to prepare the Coordinated Plan. It provides a description of the process, from initial contact through final plan.

**Chapter 3** includes a demographic profile of Mariposa County, which was prepared using US Census data as well as information available through the State of California Department of Finance. This step establishes the framework for better understanding the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: persons with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited incomes.

**Chapter 4** documents the range of public and private transportation services that already exist in the area. These services include public fixed-route (YARTS) and dial-a-ride/deviated services (like Mariposa County Transit), and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies. These were identified through review of existing documents, and through local stakeholder interviews. This chapter also incorporates an inventory of social service providers that was initially prepared by Caltrans' staff, and confirmed with local program staff.

**Chapter 5** consists of the needs assessment. An important step in completing this plan includes the identification of service needs or gaps as well as institutional issues that limit coordinated transportation efforts in Mariposa County. The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where—and how—service for the three population groups needs to be improved. The needs assessment for this plan was derived through direct consultation with stakeholders identified by the project sponsors, and through a review of existing documents and plans that also provide information on existing services and the need to improve them.

**Chapter 6** presents strategies and solutions to address service gaps and unmet transportation needs. It also presents results of a workshop with the public and stakeholders to develop strategies and evaluation criteria.

**Chapter 7** presents an implementation plan for the most highly-ranked strategies. A potential project sponsor is identified, along with projected costs, potential sources of funds, and an overall assessment of how implementation of these strategies could address service gaps identified in Chapter 5.

## SAFETEA-LU Planning Requirements

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed SAFETEA-LU into law, authorized the provision of \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over six years through Fiscal Year 2009, including \$52.6 billion for federal transit programs.

Starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three programs in SAFETEA-LU, including the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) are required to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the FTA indicates that the plan should be a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.”<sup>3</sup>

The FTA issued three program circulars, effective May 1, 2007, to provide guidance on the administration of the three programs subject to this planning requirement.

These circulars can be accessed through the following websites:

<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html</a>	Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities
<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html</a>	Job Access and Reverse Commute
<a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html">http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html</a>	New Freedom Program

This federal guidance specifies four required elements of the plan, as follows:

1. An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and nonprofit);
2. An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. 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.

## Federal Coordination Efforts

Coordination can enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate cost-effective solutions with available resources. Enhanced coordination also results in joint ownership and oversight of service delivery by both human service and transportation service

---

<sup>3</sup> Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458)



agencies. The requirements of SAFETEA-LU build upon previous federal initiatives intended to enhance social service transportation coordination. Among these are:

- **Presidential Executive Order:** In February 2004, President Bush signed an Executive Order establishing an Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility to focus 10 federal agencies on the coordination agenda. It may be found at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040224-9.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040224-9.html).
- **A Framework for Action:** The Framework for Action is a self-assessment tool that states and communities can use to identify areas of success and highlight the actions still needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation. This tool has been developed through the United We Ride initiative sponsored by FTA, and can be found on FTA's website: [http://www.unitedweride.gov/1\\_81\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.unitedweride.gov/1_81_ENG_HTML.htm).
- **Previous research:** Numerous studies and reports have documented the benefits of enhanced coordination efforts among federal programs that fund or sponsor transportation for their clients.<sup>4</sup>

## State of California Coordination Efforts

### Assembly Bill 120 (1979)

Initiatives to coordinate human service transportation programs in the State of California have been largely guided by the passage of state legislation, The Social Services Transportation Improvement Act (Assembly Bill No. 120, Chapter 1120), often referred to as AB 120, in 1979. This law, among other things, added Sections 15973 and 15975 to the California Government Code, requiring transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions to:

- Develop an Action Plan for the coordination and improvement of social service transportation services.
- Designate a Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) to implement the Action Plan within the geographic area of jurisdiction of the transportation planning agency or county transportation commission. CTSA's are considered eligible applicants of TDA Article 4.5 funds.
- Identify the social service recipients to be served and funds available for use by the consolidated or coordinated services.
- Establish measures to coordinate the services with fixed route service provided by public and private transportation providers.
- Establish measures to insure that the objectives of the action plan are consistent with the legislative intent declared in Section 15951.

### Senate Bill 826 (1988)

In 1988, Senate Bill 826 was introduced amending the Assembly Bill 120. It required the establishment of

---

<sup>4</sup> Examples include United States General Accounting Office (GAO) reports to Congress entitled *Transportation Disadvantaged Populations, Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation, but Obstacles Persist*, (June 2003) and *Transportation Disadvantaged Seniors—Efforts to Enhance Senior Mobility Could Benefit From Additional Guidance and Information*, (August 2004).

- Measures for the effective coordination of specialized transportation service from one provider service area to another.

And required that

- Transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions shall every four years update the social services transportation inventory pursuant to Section 15973 and every two years shall update the action plan prepared pursuant to Section 15975 and submit these reports to the California Department of Transportation.

### **Assembly Bill 2647 (2002)**

In 2002, Section 15975.1 was repealed, which no longer required the transportation planning agencies to submit an Action plan or inventory to the California Department of Transportation. The Department no longer has a role in the development of the Social Service Transportation Action Plan and will not be receiving information or reporting to the Legislature.

### **Role of Consolidated Transportation Service Agencies (CTSAs)**

AB 120 authorized the establishment of CTSAs and recognizes them as direct claimants of TDA Article 4.5 funds. CTSAs are designated by Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) or, where RTPAs do not exist, by the Local Transportation Commission. Very little guidance exists, however, as to expectations or the roles of the CTSAs. As discussed below, TDA law requires that any rural county intending to use some of its TDA funds for streets and roads purposes establish a Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC); representatives from the CTSA are required to participate on the SSTAC.

In Mariposa County, the Mariposa County Local Transportation Commission is the designated CTSA.

## **Funding Public Transportation in Rural California**

Transportation funding in California is complex. Federal and state formula and discretionary programs provide funds for transit and paratransit services; sales tax revenues are also used for public transit purposes. Transportation funding programs are subject to rules and regulations that dictate how they can be used and applied for (or claimed) through federal, state and regional levels of government. Additionally, some funds for social service transportation come from a variety of non-traditional transportation funding programs including both public and private sector sources.

Another complexity with federal funding programs is the local match requirements. Each federal program requires that a share of total program costs be derived from local sources, and may not be matched with other federal Department of Transportation funds. Examples of local match which may be used for the local share include: state or local appropriations; non-DOT federal funds; dedicated tax revenues; private donations; revenue from human service contracts; toll revenue credits; private donations; revenue from advertising and concessions. Non-cash funds such as donations, volunteer services, or in-kind contributions are eligible to be counted toward the local match as long as the value of each is documented and supported.

A review of federal, state and local funding programs for public transit agencies and social service providers is presented in Figure 1-3 at the conclusion of this chapter. The figure

highlights the funding programs and their purpose, how funds can be used, who is eligible to apply and other relevant information. More detailed information on funding sources commonly used by public transit agencies in rural counties are described the following section.

Funding for public transportation in rural California counties is dependent primarily on two sources of funds: TDA funds generated through State of California sales tax revenues, and Federal Section 5311 funds intended for rural areas. These two funding programs are described in this chapter. A brief overview is provided of other funding sources that are available for public transit and social service transportation. Because the funding arena is complex and varied, this section on funding is not intended to identify all potential funding sources, but rather to identify the major sources of funding for public transit and human service transportation in rural California.

The three sources of federal funds subject to this plan (FTA Section 5316, 5317 and 5310), are described below. Caltrans serves as the designated recipient for these funds intended to be used in rural and small urbanized areas of the state. As designated recipient, Caltrans is required to select projects for use of SAFETEA-LU funds through a competitive process, and to certify that projects funded are derived from the coordinated plan.

### **FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program**

The purpose of the JARC program is to fund local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals. JARC funds are distributed to states on a formula basis, depending on that state's rate of low-income population. This approach differs from previous funding cycles, when grants were awarded purely on an "earmark" basis. JARC funds will pay for up to 50% of operating costs and 80% for capital costs. The remaining funds are required to be provided through local match sources.

Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites
- Car-share or other projects to improve access to autos
- Access to child care and training

Eligible applicants for JARC funds may include state or local governmental bodies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), RTPAs, Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

### **FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Program**

The New Freedom formula grant program aims to provide additional tools to overcome existing barriers facing Americans with disabilities seeking integration into the workforce and full participation in society. The New Freedom Program seeks to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

New Freedom funds are available for capital and operating expenses that support new public transportation services and alternatives, beyond those required by the ADA, that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities with accessing transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. The same match requirements for JARC apply for the New Freedom Program.

Examples of eligible New Freedom Program projects include:

- Expansion of paratransit service hours or service area beyond minimal requirements
- Purchase of accessible taxi or other vehicles
- Promotion of accessible ride sharing or vanpool programs
- Administration of volunteer programs
- Building curb-cuts, providing accessible bus stops
- Travel training programs

Eligible applicants may include state or local governmental bodies, MPOs, RTPAs, LTCs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations.

### **FTA Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program**

Funds for this program are allocated by a population-based formula to each state for the capital costs of providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Typically, vans or small buses are available to support nonprofit transportation providers; however, Section 5310 funding can also be used for operations if the service is contracted out. In California, a local match of 11.47% is required.

The following chart provides an estimate on the levels of JARC and New Freedom funding available for non-urbanized portions of the state from 2007 to 2009, as well as Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) funds for the entire state. As the designated recipient of these funds, Caltrans is responsible to define guidelines, develop application forms and establish selection criteria for a competitive selection process in consultation with its regional partners.

**Figure 1-2 Projected State of California Funding Sources/Amounts**

Designated Recipient	Fund Source	2007 \$ estimate	2008 \$ estimate	2009 \$ estimate
Caltrans	Rural JARC	1,467,032	1,573,618	1,659,360
Caltrans	Rural New Freedom	681,111	777,302	821,719
Caltrans	Elderly and Disabled Section 5310 Statewide (includes urban areas)	12,394,851	13,496,069	14,218,737

**FTA Section 5311**

Federal Section 5311 funds are distributed on a formula basis to rural counties throughout the country. The goals of the non-urbanized formula program are: 1) to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation; 2) to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas; 3) to encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all Federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services; 4) to assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation; and 5) to provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible.

A portion of 5311 funds is set aside for a Tribal Transit Program (TTP), which provides direct federal grants to Indian tribes to support public transportation on Indian reservations. For the period 2006 through 2009 the amount is \$45 million nationally. Awards are made directly to tribes by FTA through a competitive process. TTP was not intended to replace or reduce funds tribes receive from states under the Section 5311 program.

Fifteen percent of the Section 5311 apportionment is for the Intercity Bus Program, Section 5311(f). The Intercity Bus Program funds public transit projects that serve intercity travel needs in non-urbanized areas. Projects are awarded on a statewide competitive basis. This program funds operating and capital costs, as well as planning for service. As with most federal capital funds, the Section 5311 grant funding program provides 80% of capital costs with a 20% matching requirement. Section 5311 funds provide up to 50% of operating costs to support transit operations.

**Transportation Development Act (TDA)**

The California Transportation Development Act has two funding sources for each county or regional entity that are locally derived and locally administered: 1) Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and 2) State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF).

- **LTF** revenues are recurring revenues derived from  $\frac{1}{4}$  cent of the retail sales tax collected statewide. The  $\frac{1}{4}$  cent is distributed to each county according to the amount of tax collected in that county. In counties with a population of less than 500,000 as of the 1970 US Census, TDA funds may be allocated under Article 8 for transit services or for local streets and roads, pedestrian or bicycle projects.

Prior to approving TDA funds for purposes other than public transportation, specialized transportation, or facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, the local transportation planning

agency is expected to consult with its local SSTAC and conduct an assessment of transit and determine whether there are unmet transit needs, and whether or not those needs are “reasonable to meet.” Each RTPA is required to adopt definitions of “unmet transit need” and “reasonable to meet.” Any unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet must be funded before funds can be allocated for streets and roads.

- **STAF** are revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels. STAF is allocated annually by the local transportation commissions based on each region’s apportionment. Unlike LTF which may be allocated to other purposes, STAF revenues may be used **only** for public transit or transportation services.

## State Transportation Improvement Program

To receive state funding for capital improvement projects, such as new vehicles or other capital equipment, projects must be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program, or STIP. The STIP is a multi-year capital improvement program that includes projects programmed with state funds. Local agencies should work through the Mariposa County LTC to nominate projects for inclusion in the STIP.

## Other Funding Sources

### Older Americans Act (OAA)

The Older Americans Act was signed into law in 1965 amidst growing concern over seniors’ access to health care and their general well-being. The Act established the federal Administration on Aging (AoA), and charged the agency with advocating on behalf of an estimated 46 million Americans 60 or older, and implementing a range of assistance programs aimed at seniors, especially those at risk of losing their independence. Transportation is a permitted use of funds under the Act, providing needed access to nutrition and other services offered by the AoA, as well as to medical and other essential services required by an aging population. No funding is specifically designated for transportation. However, funding can be used for transportation under several sections of the OAA, including Title III (Support and Access Services), Title VI (Grants to American Indian Tribes), and the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) program.

### Regional Centers

While Regional Centers are nonprofit private corporations, they were established by state legislation. They receive public funds under contract to the California Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services and support for individuals with developmental disabilities. There are 21 regional centers with more than 40 offices located throughout the state. Transportation is a critical component of Regional Centers because clients need specialized transportation services for traveling to and from sheltered workshops. It is the responsibility of each Regional Center to arrange their client’s transportation. Regional Centers are primarily funded with a combination of State General Fund tax dollars and Federal Medicaid funds. The primary contractual relationship is with the State Department of Developmental Services.

### Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)

The Legislature appropriated \$20 million from the Public Transportation Account in FY06-07 for grants to public agencies statewide, seeking to provide transit services specifically for farm workers. The intent of the AWTP is to provide safe, efficient, reliable and affordable

transportation services, utilizing vans and buses, to agricultural workers commuting to/from worksites in rural areas statewide. The emphasis of the AWTP will be to implement vanpool operations similar to the successful Agricultural Industries Transportation Services (AITS) program ongoing in Southern San Joaquin Valley, transporting agricultural workers to regional employment sites. The California Department of Transportation administers the AWTP. It is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010.

#### Private Foundations

Many small agencies that target low-income populations are eligible for foundation grants. Typically, foundation grants are highly competitive and require significant research to identify foundations appropriate for transportation of the targeted populations.

#### Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations

Organizations such as the Rotary Club, Soroptomists, Kiwanis, and Lions often pay for special projects. For transportation, they might pay for or help contribute toward the cost of a new vehicle or a bus bench or shelter near senior citizen housing. These organizations might also pay for trip reimbursement for after school or child care.

#### Employers

Employers who are in need of workers are sometimes willing to underwrite transportation in order to fill their labor needs. Employers sometimes contribute to a flex route night bus, a subsidized car-sharing program or a shuttle or vanpool to their employment site.

## Mariposa County Planning Documents and Relevant Research

To learn more about existing studies or reports relevant to this plan, the consulting team conducted a literature review, with key findings highlighted below.

### **County of Mariposa General Plan (2006)**

The General Plan includes a Circulation, Infrastructure, and Services chapter, which covers transit and non-motorized transportation. Public and group transit in Mariposa County has traditionally focused on serving visitor needs and the needs of Yosemite employees. With growth and development countywide, the need for public and group transit serving local residents and workers has increased. These needs include expanded operating hours and increasing the number of stops, communities served, and routes to Yosemite National Park. In the past, visitor-oriented transit focused on moving tourists from outside Mariposa County to Yosemite, however, the county anticipates a greater demand for visitor-oriented transit linking communities and events not associated with Yosemite within Mariposa County.

The General Plan also discusses the Mariposa County Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Equestrian Facilities Plan, which was presented to the public in 2001 but as of 2006 had not been adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The Plan designates the locations of existing and proposed paths and trails for non-motorized travel and recommends improvement standards, classification systems, and funding mechanisms for acquisition, operation, and maintenance of the county's trail system.

## **YARTS Short Range Transit Plan, Merced County Council of Governments (2003)**

This plan provides a summary of YARTS services and farebox recovery, and provides a framework for short-term improvements to the transit system. Goals for YARTS include a 5% increase in ridership, a 10 % increase in commuter ridership (by Yosemite employees), a reduction of 50 cars per day entering Yosemite National Park and the identification of dedicated funding sources.

The SRTP looked at capacity problems and identified no capacity problems along the route serving Highway 395/120 currently or in the future. Some capacity problems were projected on the YARTS Highway 140 service.

As part of the five-year action plan, the Highway 395/120 YARTS service will be marketed in promotional materials and a manual for hotel operators, for hikers and backpackers, and for airlines. The five-year plan includes a funding and organizational plan for YARTS.

## **Ferguson Slide Restoration Project (2007), Caltrans**

Almost 50% of Mariposa County income and employment is dependent on full access to tourism in Yosemite from the Mariposa area along State Route 140. The Ferguson Slide of April 2006 closed Highway 140, limiting access between Mariposa and Yosemite. Within three months, Caltrans constructed a temporary project consisting of a single one-lane detour with one-way traffic control to re-open passage through the slide area. However, this temporary “fix” did not accommodate YARTS buses, school buses or other large vehicles. Seven different reconstruction alternatives were considered, and the final road rebuilding process was expected to take six years, however Caltrans was able to fast track the project and a new bridge was completed in June 2008 that can accommodate buses of any size.

## **Mariposa County Transit Development Plan (1997)**

The most recent Mariposa County Transit Development Plan (TDP) was written in 1997 in collaboration with the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation Study, which initiated the YARTS transportation system. Onboard surveys were conducted on the VIA Yosemite Connection service (which was for the most part replaced by YARTS), Mariposa County Transit Dial-a-Ride service, and Mariposa County Transit medical transportation service. Of all respondents, nearly 50 percent identified themselves as Yosemite Park visitors, and an additional 25% stated that they were not residents of Mariposa or Merced Counties. However, over 70% of those who indicated that they use transit service at least once per week were Mariposa County residents. The majority of all trips (73%) were made for the purpose of tourism/recreation. The second most frequent trip purpose was work (18%). When asked how they would have made the trip if public transportation was not available, over one half (53%) of all respondents indicated that they would not have made the trip. Over 19% said they would have driven.

Service improvements that were suggested included providing more frequent service, improving service reliability, lowering fares, offering better information, extending service to the redwoods, and providing better coordination with the airlines and service to the Fresno airport.



**Figure 1-3 Transportation Funding Matrix**

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
<b>Federal Sources</b>						
<b>Transportation Funding</b>						
Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5309 Funds (Congressional Earmark)	Capital Projects for bus and bus-related facilities.	Capital projects only	Discretionary, varies annually	Public transit operators	20% for capital projects	Obtaining a Congressional earmark is in part dependent upon the "clout" of the local delegation and the funding amount can vary tremendously.
FTA Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program	Local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals.	Capital projects and operations	Maximum of \$200,000 per project per year	MPOs, RTPAs, Local Transportation Commissions (LTCs), social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs. Can match with other federal funds.	Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website <a href="http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/">http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/</a>
FTA Section 5317 New Freedom Program	Supports <i>new</i> services and alternatives, beyond ADA that are designed to assist individuals with disabilities access transportation services, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services.	Capital projects and operations	Maximum of \$125,000 per project per year.	MPOs, RTPAs, LTCs, social services agencies, tribal governments, private and public transportation operators, and nonprofit organizations	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs. Can match with other federal funds.	Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website <a href="http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/">http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/</a>
FTA Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Specialized Transportation Program	Providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities.	Capital projects only	\$12 million in FY 2008	Nonprofit agencies, public agencies	11.47% match	Typically vans or small buses are available to support nonprofit transportation providers. Annual grant cycle. Applications are available at Caltrans website <a href="http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/">http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/</a>

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
FTA Section 5311	Enhance access for those living in non-urbanized areas and improve public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas.	Capital projects and operations	Formula based funding - Apportionment by area	Public agencies, local governments, tribal governments, nonprofit agencies	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs	Funds are distributed on a formula basis to rural counties throughout the country. A portion of 5311 funds (\$45 million nationally from 2006-2009) is set aside for a Tribal Transit Program, which provides direct federal grants to Indian tribes to support public transportation on Indian reservations.
FTA Section 5311(f)	Funds public transit projects that serve intercity travel needs in non-urbanized areas.	Capital projects and operations		Public agencies, local governments, tribal governments, nonprofit agencies	50% for operating costs, 80% for capital costs	Projects are awarded on a statewide competitive basis
<b>Health and Human Services Funding <sup>(1)</sup></b>						
Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) (Department of Social Services)	Goals: 1. Reduce dependency, 2. Achieve self sufficiency, 3. Protect children and families, 4. Reduce institutional care by providing home/community based care, 5. Provide institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate.			Child Welfare Services, Foster Care, Deaf Access, Community Care Licensing, CDE Child Care, and Department of Developmental Services programs.	Unknown	Grant must be used for one of the goals of SSBG and cannot be used for certain purposes such as the purchase or improvement of land or payment of wages to any individual in social services. These funds are not allocated separately but are used in lieu of state general fund.
Healthy Communities Access Program (HCAP) (Department of Social Services)	Develop/strengthen integrated community health systems that coordinate health care services for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured, such as transportation coordination to improve access to care.		\$83 million	Public and private health care providers as well as social services, local government and other community based organizations.	Unknown	Build upon Federal programs that support entities serving low-income populations in an effort to expand and improve the quality of services for more individuals at a lower cost.

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) (Department of Community Services & Development)	Assist low income people in attaining the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency.			Community action agencies, low income individuals in CA (100% of Federal poverty level).	Unknown	None
Aging & Disability Resource Center Grant Program - Part of the President's New Freedom Initiative (Dept. of Aging)	Support state efforts to create "one stop" centers to help consumers learn about and access long-term supports ranging from in-home services to nursing facility care.		\$800,000 awarded to California in 2004	State of California	Unknown	None
HIV Care Formula Grants (Dept. of Health and Human Services)	Support programs designed to increase access to care and treatment for underserved populations, reduce need for costly inpatient care, reduce prenatal transmission, improve health status of people with HIV. A portion of the funds can be used for transportation.		\$2,073,296,000	State, local governments, public and nonprofit private agencies.	Unknown	None
Consolidated Health Center Program (Bureau of Primary Health Care)	Fund health centers that provide primary and preventative health care to diverse underserved populations. Health centers can use funds for center-owned vans, transit vouchers, taxi fare.			Community based organizations including faith based organizations.	Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Older Americans Act Title III B - Grants for Supportive Services & Senior Centers (Administration on Aging)	Funds are awarded by formula to State units on aging for providing supportive services to older persons, including operation of senior centers. May be used to purchase and/or operate vehicles and funding for mobility management services.	Capital projects and operations.	\$357 million	States and territories, recognized Native American tribes and Hawaiian Americans as well as non-profit organizations.	Unknown	None
Program for American Indian, Alaskan Native, & Native Hawaiian Elders (Administration on Aging)	This program supports nutrition, information and referral, multipurpose senior centers and other supportive services for American Indian, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian elders. Transportation is among the supportive services, including purchase and/or operation of vehicles and for mobility management.	Capital projects and operation	\$26 million	Recognized Native American tribes and Hawaiian Americans as well as non-profit organizations.	Unknown	None
Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (Center for Mental Health Services State Planning Branch)	Improve access to community-based health-care delivery systems for people with serious mental illnesses. Grants also allot for supportive services, including funding to operate vehicles, reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management.	Capital projects and operations.	\$430,000		Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Block Grant (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration)	Block grants provide funds for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. Transportation-related services supported by these grants may be broadly provided through reimbursement of transportation costs and mobility management to recipients of prevention and treatment services.		\$1.78 billion	State of California	Unknown	States are required to expend their primary prevention services funds using six specific strategies: community-based processes, information dissemination, education, alternative activities, problem identification and referral, and environmental strategies. A seventh category, "other" strategies, can be approved on a limited basis.
Child Care & Development Fund (Administration for Children & Human Services)	Provide subsidized child care services to low income families. Not a source of direct transportation funds, but if child care providers include transportation as part of their usual services, covered by their fee, these services may be covered by voucher payments.		\$4.8 billion	States and recognized Native American Tribes	Unknown	None
Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance (Administration for Children and Families)	Promote and increase independence, productivity, inclusion and integration into the community of persons with developmental disabilities, and support national and state policy that enhances these goals. Funding provides special projects, reimbursement of transportation costs and training on transportation related issues.		\$11.5 million		Unknown	None

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
Head Start (Administration for Children & Families)	Head Start provides grants to local public and private agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to children and families. Local Head Start programs provide transportation services for children who attend the program either directly or through contracts with transportation providers.		\$7 billion	Local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies	Unknown	The Head Start regulation requires that programs make reasonable efforts to coordinate transportation resources with other human service agencies in their communities.
TANF / CalWORKs (California work opportunity & responsibility to kids) (Department of Social Services)	Provide temporary assistance to needy families. Recipients are required to participate in activities that assist them in obtaining employment. Supportive services, such as transportation and childcare are provided to enable recipients to participate in these activities.			States and Federally recognized Native American tribes. Eligible families as defined in the TANF state plan	Unknown	TANF funds cannot be used for construction or to subsidize current operating costs. State and county funds in the CalWORKS program are used to meet the TANF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement and cannot be used to match other federal funds.
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (Department of Housing & Community Development)	Create or preserve jobs for low income and very low income persons.			Counties with less than 200,000 residents and cities of less than 50,000 residents	Unknown	Applicants cannot be participants on the US Department of HUD CDBG entitlement program.

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
<b>State Sources</b>						
Agricultural Worker Transportation Program (AWTP)	Provide safe, efficient, reliable and affordable transportation services, utilizing vans and buses, to agricultural workers commuting to/from worksites in rural areas statewide.	Capital projects and operations	\$20 million in FY2006/07	Public agencies	No mandatory matching requirements	Administered by the Caltrans. Scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2010.
Transit System Safety, Security and Disaster Response Account	Develop disaster response transportation systems that can move people, goods, and emergency personnel and equipment in the aftermath of a disaster.	Capital projects	Varies by county	Agencies, transit operators, regional public waterborne transit agencies, intercity passenger rail systems, commuter rail systems	None	Part of Proposition 1B approved November 7, 2006.
State Transit Assistance Fund (STAF)	Public transit and paratransit services	Capital projects and operations	Varies from year to year depending on appropriation to Public Transportation Account of which 75% goes to STA.	Allocated by formula to public transit operators	None	Revenues derived from sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels.
State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	Major capital projects of all types, including transit.	Transit capital projects	Varies from year to year depending on appropriation to Public Transportation Account of which 25% goes to STIP.			Determined once every two years by California Transportation Commission.
Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA)	Advance the State's policy goals of providing mobility choices for all residents, reducing congestion, and protecting the environment	Transit capital projects	\$600 million statewide in FY2007-08. \$350 million proposed for 2008-09.	Transit operators and local agencies who are eligible to receive STAF funds pursuant to California Public Utility Code Section 99313	None	Bond act approved by voters as Proposition 1B on November 7, 2006

Program Fund Source	Funding Purpose	Use of Funds	Estimated Fund Amount	Eligible Recipients	Matching Requirements	Comments
<b>Regional/Local Sources</b>						
Transportation Development Act (TDA) Articles 4 and 8 (1/4 cent sales tax)	Transit operating assistance and capital projects, local street and road maintenance and rehabilitation projects, pedestrian/bicycle projects	Capital projects and operations	Varies by county	Cities and counties. Allocated by population formula within each county.		Revenues are derived from 1/4 cent of the retail sales tax collected statewide, distributed according to the amount of tax collected in each county to a Local Transportation Fund in each county.
Transportation Development Act (TDA) Articles 4.5	Paratransit operating assistance and capital projects	Capital projects and operations	Up to 5% of the Local Transportation Fund revenue	Cities and counties and CTSA's		
<b>Private Sources</b>						
Tribal Casino Transportation Programs	Coordinating transportation efforts on Indian reservations	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	Wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	Some tribes have funds available to assist with the purchase of a new vehicle or to subsidize plans to transport employees to and from the worksite.
Service Clubs and Fraternal Organizations	Variety of transportation services, especially capital improvements	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	May be interested in paying for bus benches or shelters
Employers	Variety of transportation services, especially capital improvements	Capital projects and operations	Unknown	wide variety of agencies and organizations	None	Employers sometimes are willing to underwrite transportation to support their workers getting to/from worksite.

(1) Source: Caltrans, Division of Mass Transportation



## Chapter 2. Project Methodology

The four required elements of a coordinated plan, as outlined by FTA in the May 15, 2007 guidance for the JARC, New Freedom and Section 5310 programs are 1) an assessment of current transportation services, 2) an assessment of transportation needs, 3) identification of strategies, activities and/or projects to address the identified transportation needs (as well as ways to improve efficiencies), and 4) implementation of priorities based on funding, feasibility, time, etc. This chapter describes the steps that were undertaken to develop these elements of Mariposa County's Coordinated Plan.

### Demographic Profile

A demographic profile of Mariposa County was prepared using Census data and information available through the State of California Department of Finance. This step establishes the framework for better understanding the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: persons with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status.

The demographic profile is incorporated in Chapter 3 of this report.

### Literature Review

The consulting team conducted a literature review of recently completed—or currently underway—planning efforts relevant to this Coordinated Plan. The purpose of this literature review is to learn about other planning activities in Mariposa County and to identify major transportation issues and concerns to ensure issues of importance are incorporated in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. A summary of the literature review is outlined in Chapter 1.

### Stakeholder Involvement and Public Outreach

Stakeholder involvement is an important element of this plan, and is required by SAFETEA-LU. As a first step, staff from the California Department of Transportation's Division of Mass Transportation identified the Mariposa County LTC as the primary point of contact. The consulting team then collaborated with the local staff to identify key stakeholders to be included during the development of this plan. Stakeholder involvement was solicited primarily through a series of in-person and telephone interviews. The results of the interviews are described in Chapters 4 and 5. In addition, consultant staff convened a kick-off meeting with the newly regrouped SSTAC in December 2007, with the goals of introducing SSTAC members to the project, and obtaining their feedback on project activities. In particular, the SSTAC and stakeholder involvement was critical in identifying unmet transportation needs, and will be critical in identifying and prioritizing potential project strategies to mitigate these needs.

Stakeholders were convened again in May 2008 to define strategies. A public workshop was conducted that included the development of strategies and opportunities for enhanced coordination.

## Existing Transportation Services

This step involves documenting the array of public transit and human service transportation services that already exist in the area. To ensure all existing services have been identified and accurately described, the consulting team reviewed the inventory with key stakeholders and updated it in June 2008. The services in the inventory include public fixed-route and dial-a-ride (paratransit) services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies. The description and corresponding maps of existing services are presented in Chapter 4.

## Needs Assessment

An important step in completing this plan is to identify service needs or gaps. The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where, and how, service for the three population groups needs to be improved. In some cases, maintaining and protecting existing services is identified as a service need.

The needs assessment for this plan was derived through direct consultation with stakeholders identified by the project sponsors, and through a review of existing documents and plans that also provide analysis of existing services and opportunities to improve them.

## Identification and Evaluation of Strategies

On May 14, 2008, the consultant facilitated a public workshop in Mariposa. The goal of the workshop was to confirm previously identified unmet transportation needs, confirm criteria to evaluate potential strategies, and identify and prioritize strategies for addressing the needs.

The consultant drafted proposed evaluation criteria to use when ranking the strategies and facilitated a discussion with workshop participants to develop a list of strategies. An interactive process directly involving workshop participants resulted in refining the list of strategies, and in prioritizing them. Chapter 6 presents the findings of that exercise.

## Implementation Plan for Recommended Strategies

As a final step in this planning process, an implementation plan was developed for each of the highly ranked strategies. The implementation plan identifies a potential lead agency with the institutional, operational and fiscal capacity to implement the proposed strategy; a timeframe for implementation; estimated costs; and potential funding sources, including potential use of SAFETEA-LU funds. This is presented in Chapter 7.

# Chapter 3. Demographic Profile

## Study Area Description and Demographic Summary

Mariposa County is located in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and is bordered by Tuolumne County to the north, Madera County to the southeast and Merced County to the west. It lies north of Fresno, east of Merced and southeast of Stockton. The county seat is located in Mariposa.

The county is very rural with a dispersed population, and its eastern half is the central portion of Yosemite National Park. Mariposa County encompasses approximately 1,463 square miles in area. The county contains no incorporated cities, however three of its communities are recognized as census-designated places: Bootjack, Mariposa and Yosemite Valley. Other unincorporated places include Coulterville, Hornitos, El Portal, Midpines, Yosemite Village, Wawona, and Catheys Valley.

## Population Characteristics

As of the 2000 Census, Mariposa County has a recorded population of 17,130. The county seat of Mariposa has a population of 1,437. This represents only eight percent of the county’s overall population, further illustrating that much of the population is not concentrated in towns but is dispersed throughout the county. A population comparison between the state of California, Mariposa County and the county seat of Mariposa is shown in Figure 3-1.

As of the 2000 Census, about 17% of Mariposa County residents were seniors (over the age of 65), which is higher than the statewide average of 11%. The percentage of residents with a disability is also higher than the statewide average (22% vs. 19%).

Fifteen percent of the county population lives below the federal poverty level, only slightly above the statewide average.

**Figure 3-1 Basic Population Characteristics (2000)**

Area	Total Population	Percent of County Population	Percent Age 65+	Percent with Disability	Percent Below Poverty Level
California	33,871,648		11%	19%	14%
Mariposa County	17,130		17%	22%	15%
Mariposa	1,437	8%	29%	26%	24%

Source: 2000 Census

The proportion of seniors, persons with a disability and persons living below the federal poverty line are all much higher in the county seat of Mariposa than in the county or the state as a whole.

The definition of “disability” varies. For this project, information cited is consistent with definitions reported in the 2000 Census. It included two questions with a total of six subparts with which to identify people with disabilities.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that this definition differs from that used to determine eligibility for paratransit services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for ADA paratransit services, an individual's disability must prevent them from independently being able to use fixed-route transit service, even if the vehicle itself is accessible to persons with disabilities (i.e., lift or ramp equipped).

The Census Bureau has determined that the 2000 Census overstated the number of people with disabilities. This overstatement occurred because of a confusing instruction in the Census questionnaire. In the particular, the number of people with a “go outside the home disability” was substantially overstated as a result of a confusing skip pattern in the mail-back version of the Census long form.<sup>6</sup>

The Census's 2006 American Community Survey incorporated an improved questionnaire that eliminated the source of the overstatement. For California as a whole, the 2000 Census estimated that 19.2% of non-institutionalized people age five and older had a disability. The corrected estimate, based on the 2005 American Community survey, was 12.9%. Corrected results are not yet available for many rural counties. Therefore, disability tables in this section still use the 2000 Census disability data.

---

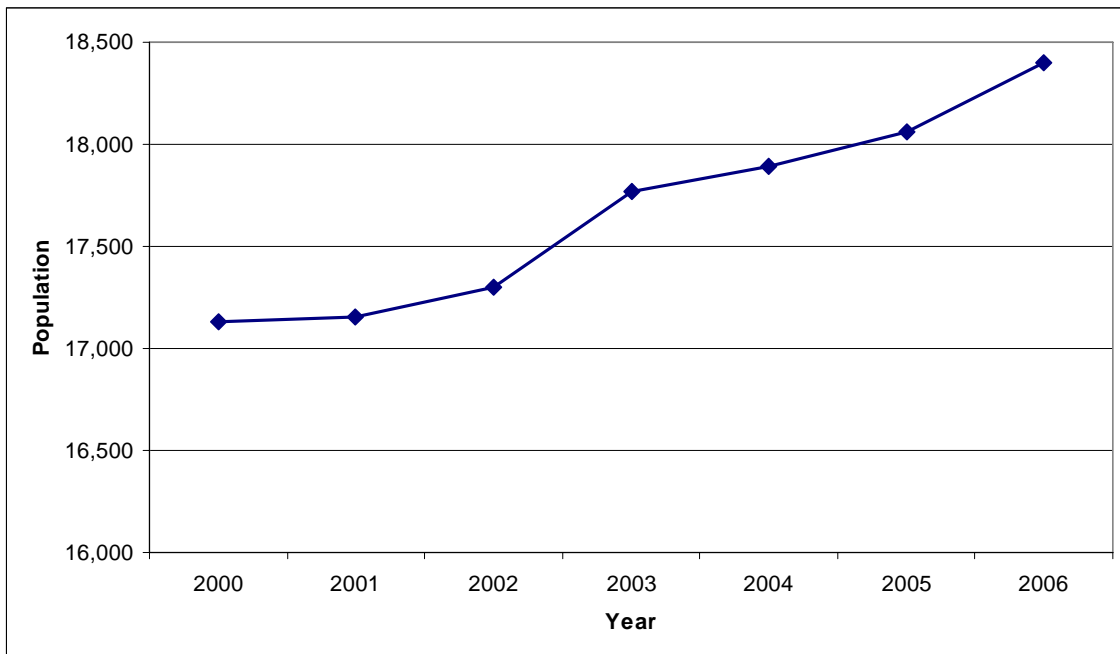
<sup>5</sup> These questions were: 18. Does this person have a physical, mental, or other health condition that has lasted for 6 or more months and which (a) limits the kind or amount of work this person can do at a job? (b) prevents this person from working at a job? 19. Because of a health condition that has lasted for 6 or more months, does this person have any difficulty—(a) going outside the home alone, for example, to shop or visit a doctor's office? (b) taking care of his or her own personal needs, such as bathing, dressing, or getting around inside the home?

<sup>6</sup> Sharon Stern and Matthew Brault , “Disability Data from the American Community Survey: A Brief Examination of the Effects of a Question Redesign in 2003,” Feb. 2005. At [www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/ACS\\_disability.pdf](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/ACS_disability.pdf).

## Population Growth

The county population increased by more than seven percent from 2000 to 2006, rising from 17,130 residents to 18,401 residents, according to the US Census Annual Population Estimates. Figure 3-2 shows the population growth in Mariposa County between 2000 and 2006.

**Figure 3-2 Population Growth for Mariposa County 2000-2006**



Source: Census Annual Population Estimates

## Projected Future Growth

The population of Mariposa County is expected to grow steadily through 2030. As in many other parts of the country, the senior population in the county is growing at an even faster rate than the population as a whole. In 2000, fewer than one in five Mariposa County residents was over 65 years of age, by 2030 this proportion is expected to increase to one in three. Figure 3-3 below depicts the projected growth for Mariposa County as a whole and for its senior population.

**Figure 3-3 Projected Growth for Mariposa County**

	2000	% Change 2000-2010	2010	% Change 2010-2020	2020	% Change 2020-2030	2030
Mariposa County	17,130	12%	19,108	14%	21,743	10%	23,981
Population Over 65	2,915	43%	4,178	45%	6,052	33%	8,030

Source: California Department of Finance

## Income Status

The median household income in Mariposa County in 1999 was \$34,626, which is 37% lower than the median household income for California as a whole (\$47,493). The median household income for the county seat of Mariposa is very low: nearly half that of the county. The percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line was slightly higher for Mariposa County than for California as a whole (15% vs. 14%), however, the proportion of residents in the county seat of Mariposa living below the federal poverty line is much higher, at nearly one in four residents. Figure 3-4 compares the income status of residents from the State of California, Mariposa County and the county seat of Mariposa.

**Figure 3-4 Income Status for Mariposa County (1999)**

Area	Median Household Income	% of Individuals Below Poverty Level
California	\$47,493	14%
Mariposa County	\$34,626	15%
Mariposa	\$18,144	24%

Source: 2000 Census

Another indicator of income is the percentage of students enrolled in a free or reduced price lunch program. For Mariposa County, Nearly 64% of the students at Coulterville-Greeley Elementary, 56% at Mariposa Elementary and 47% at Catheys Valley Elementary School are enrolled in this program. The data substantiate the clusters of low-income families in the county, and especially in certain communities.

## Employment

Figure 3-5 below lists the five largest employers in Mariposa County. Most employers in the county employ fewer than 100 people. The major employers consist of recreation, government, hotel and medical entities. Yosemite National Park attracts many tourists throughout the year to Mariposa County. Therefore, many employers are either located within the park itself or are related to the park in some way. According to the California Employment Development Department, the unemployment rate in Mariposa County as of December 2007 was 7.3%. In 2006, Mariposa County’s labor force was estimated at 9,100 individuals, one-half of the county population.

### Figure 3-5 Largest Employers in Mariposa County

Company	Category	Location
DNC Parks & Resorts - Yosemite	Recreation	Yosemite National Park
Forestry & Fire Protection	Government	Mariposa
Tenaya Lodge	Hotels	Fish Camp
Ahwahnee Hotel	Hotels	Yosemite National Park
John C Fremont Hospital	Medical	Mariposa

Source: California Employment Development Department

### Access to a Vehicle

Six percent of households in Mariposa County do not have access to a vehicle (lower than the statewide average of nine percent). However, in the county seat of Mariposa, 14% of households do not have access to a vehicle. A significantly greater number of households where the head of household is over 65 years of age do not have access to a vehicle in both Mariposa County as a whole and in the county seat. Figure 3-6 summarizes the percent of households with no vehicle available for both the overall population and the population where the head of household is over 65.

### Figure 3-6 Households with No Vehicle Available

Area	All Households	Head of Household Over 65
California	9%	12%
Mariposa County	6%	9%
Mariposa	14%	22%

Source: 2000 Census

### Population/Employment Density

A Population/Employment Matrix was created to present existing demographic components of the study area. The Population/Employment Matrix presents concentrations of population and employment at the Census block-group level. The matrix is based on 2000 Census data for population and 2000 CTPP (Census Transportation Planning Package) data for employment numbers. In order to generate the matrix, density of population and employment were calculated for each block-group. Then the population and employment density values were categorized into three classes each, both using the quantile method which places an equal number of values into each class. This identified a 1, 2 or 3 value (lowest, middle, and highest) for each. Once combined, the Population/Employment Matrix contains nine values, from a low population - low employment density (1,1 = 1) to a high population - high employment density (3,3 = 9).

**Resultant Matrix Values**

Population, values 1-3	7	8	9
	4	5	6
	1	2	3
Employment, values 1-3			

Figure 3-7 shows the county with areas colored according to the matrix. Both the population and employment densities of Mariposa County are relatively low. Nowhere in the county has a population density greater than 118 persons per square mile or an employment density greater than 36 jobs per square mile. However, the area around the county seat of Mariposa has higher population and employment densities than outer parts of the county. The area north of Mariposa, between Midpines, El Portal and Wawona has a slightly higher employment density but a very low population density. This is probably because several hotels are located in the area, servicing visitors to Yosemite National Park, but no significant residential clusters are located in this area. In addition, a developing area in the far west side of the county, east of Lake McClure and southwest of Don Pedro Reservoir, has a slightly higher population density, but very little employment.





## Transit Dependency

A Transit Dependency Index was created to present existing demographic components and transportation needs of the study area. The Transit Dependency Index presents concentrations of populations that typically have greater public transportation needs: seniors 65 year or older, people with disabilities, and low-income (150% of poverty level) population. The index value is based on 2000 Census data. To generate the index values, density of seniors, people with disabilities and low-income population were calculated individually for each block group. Then the density values were categorized into five groups, from one to five, using the quantile method. The Transit Dependency Index value equals the sum of the three category values, resulting in a number between three and 15. Block groups with higher index values have greater concentrations of seniors, people with disabilities and/or low-income population. This analysis is somewhat limited by the small number of block-groups in Mariposa County.

Figure 3-8 displays a map of the county with areas colored according to the Transit Dependency Index. The transit dependency in Mariposa County is highest in the area surrounding the county seat of Mariposa, with slightly lower transit dependency to the southeast and northwest of Mariposa, and very low transportation dependency in other areas of the county. Areas with high transit dependency are areas with higher concentrations of seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income persons. The percentage of the population falling into these categories is much higher in the county seat of Mariposa than in the county as a whole.

## Projected Demand for Public Transportation

Because Mariposa County has no formal models that would predict demand for public transportation services that serve older people, people with disabilities, and people with limited incomes, population projections provide the best available evidence. Useful projections of the population with limited incomes are not available, and the best evidence about the future of the disabled population is that it will grow in proportion to total population and the population in older age groups.

For purposes of this plan, the projected growth of the total population in Mariposa County is used as a low-end projection for transit demand, and the projected growth of the population over the age of 65 is used as a high-end projection for transit demand. Based on the California Department of Finance figures shown in Figure 3-3, a low-end projection for transit demand is that it will grow by 14% between 2010 and 2020 and by 26% between 2010 and 2030. A high-end projection is that transit demand will grow by 45% between 2010 and 2020 and nearly double — growing by 92% — between 2010 and 2030.

**Figure 3-8 Mariposa County 2000 Transit Dependency Index**

Insert Blank Page

# Chapter 4. Existing Public Transit Service and Social Service Transportation Providers

## Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of existing public transit service as well as transportation services provided or funded by social service agencies in Mariposa County. It also includes a brief discussion of private transportation operators that contract with agencies serving low-income individuals, older adults, or people with disabilities, in addition to serving as a transportation resource for the community as a whole. A map illustrating existing transportation services and a matrix summarizing existing services can be found at the end of this chapter (Figures 4-4 and 4-5, respectively).

## Public Transit Operators

### **Mariposa County Transit**

Mariposa County Transit, also informally known as Mari-Go, provides general public dial-a-ride service for Mariposa County. It is a curb-to-curb service with designated routes and service areas on specific days. Riders must call ahead to arrange for a ride.

Dial-a-ride service is provided within the town of Mariposa, within two miles of the Mariposa County Transit office (see Figure 4-4), between 10:30 AM and 1:00 PM, four days a week (Tuesday, the bus is in Merced). Regular transit routes operate five days a week, and service options vary each day. Mariposa County Transit operates two buses: a South County bus and a North County bus. The South County bus provides service to the communities between El Portal and the Mariposa/Merced County line, primarily along Highway 140 and Highway 49. The North County bus covers the communities in the northern part of the county, including Coulterville, Greeley Hill and Groveland. On Tuesdays the Northside bus provides service from Coulterville to Sonora, located in Tuolumne County. Transportation between Mariposa and the Coulterville/Greeley Hill area is provided if arrangements are made in advance. Figure 4-1 summarizes the service options available by day of the week.

Mariposa County Transit also travels to the Tuolumne Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) Center in Sonora on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, however this service is only available for ADHC clients who live in Mariposa County.

Mariposa County Transit is supported by funds from the FTA 5311 program, TDA (specifically, LTF), AAA, the Central Valley Regional Center, and farebox revenues. In particular, AAA provides funding for transportation service for seniors, including the service to the ADHC center in Sonora.

The Mariposa County Transit fleet consists of three buses, each equipped with wheelchair lifts, two vans with ramps providing wheelchair access, and two autos.

**Figure 4-1 Summary of Mariposa County Transit Services**

Day	Route	Span of Service	Fare*
<b>South County Bus</b>			
Monday	49 North / Hornitos / 140 Catheys Valley	Pick-up in the morning, return starting at 1:00 PM	\$1 - \$3 one way, depending on distance
Tuesday	Mariposa to Merced	Pick-up in Mariposa starting at 8:30 AM, return from Merced starting at 2:30 PM	\$3 one way from Mariposa to Merced, \$2 one way from Catheys Valley to Merced
Wednesday	49 South / Bootjack / Ponderosa Basin	Pick-up in the morning, return starting at 1:00 PM	\$1 - \$3 one way, depending on distance
Thursday	Within Mariposa - 3 mile radius of transit office	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM	\$1 one way
Friday	Highway 140 E / El Portal	Pick-up in the morning, return starting at 1:00 PM	\$1 - \$3 one way, depending on distance
<b>North County Bus</b>			
Monday, Wednesday, Friday	Coulterville / Greeley Hill / Groveland	Pick-up in Coulterville at 8:00 AM, last return to Coulterville at 3:45 PM	\$3 one way
Tuesday	Coulterville / Sonora	Leaves Coulterville at 8:00 AM	\$3 one way
Thursday	Mariposa / Coulterville / Greeley Hill	Service available upon request	\$3 one way

\* Current fares, subject to increase. For local South County service, current fares are \$1 within 3 miles of the Mariposa County Transit office in Mariposa, \$2 one-way between 3-15 miles of the office, \$3 one-way for more than 15 miles from the office. A fare increase has been proposed, for \$2 within 2 miles of the Mariposa County Transit office, \$4 one-way between 2-10 miles of the office, and \$5 one-way for more than 10 miles from the office. Other fare changes have been proposed for out-of-county services and North County Services.

**Medi-Trans**

Mariposa County Transit also operates a medical dial-a-ride service, called Medi-Trans, for seniors (60 or over) and veterans. The service operates from locations in Mariposa County to medical offices in northern and central California. Although many of these trips are to appointments in the city of Merced, trips are occasionally made to Fresno, as well. In the past, trips were made as far as Modesto and San Francisco, but due to limited funding, Medi-Trans can no longer afford to make these longer trips. Medi-Trans will carry non-seniors, such as family members of riders, if space is available and passengers are picked up in the same vicinity as senior riders.

There are different fares for local trips and for trips to Merced and Fresno. Medi-Trans uses the two low-floor vans from the Mariposa County Transit fleet. The service is funded through the VA Hospital, donations and TDA.

Dispatch is managed out of the Senior Center as a joint operation with the general public dial-a-ride. Because of limited resources, passengers are encouraged to schedule appointments at specific hours. Before an individual calls a doctor to schedule an appointment, they often call the dial-a-ride dispatch to verify that the service will be available to them. Many local physicians

regularly reschedule appointments based on when Medi-Trans will be operating. Both physicians and their patients who are regular riders have become accustomed to the flexible scheduling required to use Medi-Trans for medical appointments.

### Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)

The Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) began running regional transit buses in May of 2000, serving communities in the counties of Mariposa, Merced and Mono. YARTS provides service to activity centers in Yosemite National Park and connects with Yosemite shuttles including the free Valley Shuttle. Service levels vary to meet seasonal demand, as well as different scheduling needs required for different days of the week.

YARTS has two core routes. The first runs along Highway 120 through Yosemite National Park and into Mammoth Lakes in Mono County. The second route is the one that serves Mariposa County’s communities, running along Highway 140 from Yosemite National Park, through El Portal, Midpines, Mariposa and Catheys Valley to Merced. The two routes share a common stop at the Yosemite Visitor Center.

Figure 4-2 summarizes the service options provided.

**Figure 4-2 Summary of YARTS Service**

Route	Daily Inbound Runs to Yosemite	Daily Outbound Runs from Yosemite	Span of Service
Highway 140 – Merced*, Catheys Valley, Mariposa, Midpines, El Portal, Yosemite Visitor Center	6**	6 runs during winter, 7 runs during summer**	5:50 AM -11:00 PM***
Highway 120 – Mammoth Lakes, June Lake, Lee Vining, Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite Visitor Center	1	1	Inbound: 7:00 AM-10:55 AM, Outbound: 5:00 PM-8:50 PM

\* Not all runs go to Merced and some locations are only served on demand.

\*\* Earliest run only operates Monday-Friday.

\*\*\*Weekend service spans from 6:30 AM-11:00 PM.

YARTS fares vary based on distance. Round trip fares for the Highway 140 route range from \$1 to \$25:

- Passengers traveling between Mariposa and Midpines pay \$1.
- Adults traveling between Mariposa and Catheys Valley pay \$6 while children (12 and under) and seniors (62 and older) pay \$4.
- Adults traveling between Merced and Yosemite pay \$25 while children and seniors pay \$18.
- One-way tickets cost one-half of the round-trip fare, rounded up to the nearest dollar.

Figure 4-3 summarizes the fares for the Highway 140 Route. Fares for children are indicated in parenthesis. With each paid adult ticket, one child rides free.

**Figure 4-3 YARTS Fares for Highway 140 Route**

	Merced	Catheys Valley	Mariposa	Midpines	El Portal	Yosemite
Merced		(\$4) \$6	(\$8) \$12	(\$8) \$12	(\$13) \$18	(\$18) \$25
Catheys Valley	(\$4) \$6		(\$4) \$6	(\$4) \$6	(\$8) \$12	(\$13) \$18
Mariposa	(\$8) \$12	(\$4) \$6		(\$1) \$1	(\$4) \$6	(\$8) \$12
Midpines	(\$8) \$12	(\$4) \$6	(\$1) \$1		(\$4) \$6	(\$8) \$12
El Portal	(\$13) \$18	(\$8) \$12	(\$4) \$6	(\$4) \$6		(\$5) \$7
Yosemite	(\$18) \$25	(\$13) \$18	(\$8) \$12	(\$8) \$12	(\$5) \$7	

Fares on the Highway 120 route range from \$5 roundtrip between Lee Vining and Tuolumne Meadows and \$30 roundtrip between Yosemite Valley and Mammoth Lakes. The same rules apply for one way, children and senior tickets as on the Highway 140 route.

YARTS is funded through federal, state, and local funds. The YARTS fleet consists of six 2007 Glaval 26-passenger transit buses, all of which are lift equipped. Since June 2008, YARTS is also using larger over-the-road coaches, now that Highway 140 is open to vehicles of all sizes. Prior to the construction of the new bridge, buses sometimes were forced to pass people waiting at stops because they were too full to accommodate more passengers. This had caused employee ridership to drop.

Yosemite National Park employees make up 35% to 40% of YARTS ridership. The park has Commuter Choice for employees, which allows employees to ride without paying a fare.

**209-966-RIDE: Single Phone Number for Transit Information**

The public transit information line was established by the Mariposa County Department of Public Works in response to unmet needs findings in Mariposa County. The automated message on the transit information line allows callers to press a button to have their call transferred to a particular transportation provider. The following providers are included on the line: Mariposa Public Transit, YARTS, Medical Transportation (Medi-Trans), Airport Shuttle (Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle), and Amtrak.

**Social Service Transportation Providers**

Transportation is additionally provided by a range of social service agencies serving clients or consumers in Mariposa County. While some agencies provide transportation directly, others arrange for it on behalf of their clients or consumers by contracting with other agencies or providers, or subsidizing transit fares. Most of the agencies listed below have a particular focus on the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, or low-income individuals; however, some agencies may serve a broader group.



## **Area 12 Agency on Aging**

The Area 12 Agency on Aging is a Joint Powers Agreement between Mariposa, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Alpine counties that provides funding to community senior services providers and administers several direct service programs. Area 12 subsidizes transportation for older adults through the provision of gas vouchers funded through the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Multi-purpose Senior Services Program (for medical transportation).

## **Mariposa County Department of Human Services**

Human Services encompasses both Social Services and Behavioral Health. Within Social Services are Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Services and Eligibility. Social Services vehicles are mostly automobiles for use by social workers and others on staff, but clients are occasionally transported using one of these vehicles.

CPS has six vehicles to transport children in protective services, consisting of one Safari van, one Chevrolet Impala, one Chevy Blazer, two Jeep Liberty SUVs, and one Jeep Moreno. Children in CPS include foster children and detained children, many of whom are low income. Any of the fourteen CPS staff members are qualified to drive the van. Children are transported as needed, but typically there is at least one trip per day.

## **Heartland Opportunity Center**

Heartland Opportunity Center provides services to adults with developmental disabilities. Currently all members of the program qualify as low income, and none are over 60 years old. Heartland transports program members between their homes, the center, various recreational programs, etc. The center has a daily transportation schedule, with five morning routes in which patients are picked-up at their homes starting at 8:10 AM, in addition to five evening routes returning patients to their homes.

The routes use five vehicles: two 8-passenger vans, one 10-passenger van, one 6-passenger pick-up truck, and one 6-passenger van. None of the vehicles are wheelchair accessible, but the center has access to a wheelchair-equipped van at the Madera center if needed. Transportation services are funded through the Central Valley Regional Center and the Heartland Opportunity Center. Passengers are typically transported within Mariposa County, but are occasionally taken to programs in Madera County. On average, the vehicles travel 4,000 miles per month and the center currently employs eleven drivers.

## **Mariposa County Unified School District**

Mariposa County Unified School District provides bus service to K-12 students living within the district. As much as fifty percent of students in the district ride the bus to school, and very few walk. Typically the students are transported to schools within the district, but four students are transported to schools in Merced and Madera Counties. The district has 37 standard yellow school buses, which transport students along 18 regular routes and six special needs routes. The buses typically operate weekdays between 6:00 and 8:00 AM for the trip to school and from 2:00 to 5:00 PM for the return trip. The buses travel approximately 33,000 miles per month or 400,000 miles per year. The Mariposa County Unified School District provides funding for the vehicles and employs four full-time drivers and eight part-time drivers.

## **Mariposa Head Start**

Mariposa Head Start is a nonprofit organization that provides pre-school services to low-income children age five and younger to prepare them for kindergarten. Mariposa Head Start provides transportation to the school using a van (with car seats built in) that has room for fourteen children plus one parent. The van follows a route based on a subscription service and picks up students at established stops within Mariposa County. The transportation program is supported by federal funds through the Head Start program. The van transports students to the Head Start program from August through April. During the summer months the van is used for the migrant Head Start program in Madera County.

## **Mariposa Indian Health Clinic**

The Mariposa Indian Health Clinic is a nonprofit organization with a goal of ensuring that Native American elders receive health care services. The clinic provides transportation services for Native American elders primarily for medical appointments, but occasionally for other purposes, on a demand-response basis. Most trips are within Mariposa County, but at times trips are provided to neighboring counties for specific types of medical appointments. Trips are provided using two vehicles: a wheelchair accessible Chevrolet van with room for ten passengers, and a Ford Bronco with room for five passengers. Transportation is funded through the Mariposa, Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties Health Board, Inc. The clinic employs two drivers.

## **Mercy Medical Transport**

Mercy Medical Transport serves the emergency transportation needs of Mariposa County, using five ambulances that provide both basic life support and advanced life support functions. Everyone is eligible for the service including both Medi-Cal patients and people who pay out-of-pocket or have private insurance. Mercy Medical Transport is funded through client fees, which are sometimes covered by insurance and sometimes paid directly by the client, and through a subsidy from Mariposa County. Patients are primarily picked up in Mariposa County, including Yosemite National Park, and are usually taken to John C. Fremont Hospital in Mariposa, although some patients are taken to hospitals in other areas including Fresno and Modesto, and sometimes as far as San Francisco. Mercy Medical Transport has a total of fifteen paramedics who take turns driving the ambulances.

## **Mountain Crisis Services**

Mountain Crisis Services is a nonprofit organization that provides shelter and support services to domestic violence victims and their dependents. The center has a seven-passenger Chrysler Town and Country van that is used to satisfy the various transportation needs of the victims, such as transport to the shelter after an incident, to and from court, transfer to another county for safe housing, medical trips, or mediation services out of the county. The van is funded through the Office of Emergency Services (OES) which also provides financial support for the agency. The price for gas can range from \$150 to \$300 per month. Mountain Crisis Services has one main volunteer who typically drives, however all nine staff members at the center are qualified to drive the van.

## **Thumbs Up!**

Thumbs Up! is a community integration program for individuals with developmental disabilities in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties. The organization's goal is to help its clients live as

independently as possible. The Central Valley Regional Center provides funding for Thumbs Up! to transport its clients (those who are unable to use public transportation on their own) between their homes and the Thumbs Up! program.<sup>7</sup> Thumbs Up! also transports program participants to activities and outings in and outside of the county. The organization's vehicle fleet includes one 16-passenger van and two six-passenger vans. Two drivers are used to transport clients between their homes and the program in the morning and the evening, and program instructors drive the vehicles during the day.

## Other Transportation Services

### **Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle**

The Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle provides on-demand service to airports in Fresno, Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, Modesto and Stockton, as well as small general aviation airports in the mountains and Central Valley. The shuttle is included on the County's 966-RIDE "one-stop" phone directory. Service is provided using one 6-passenger Ford van. There is a tiered fee, based on the number of people using the shuttle. For example, for travel to Fresno, one passenger is \$70 one-way; each additional rider is \$30. For the Bay Area and Sacramento Airports, a one-way trip is \$165 for one passenger and \$35 for each additional passenger.

### **Taxi Services**

Sierra Taxi and Limousine provides taxi service throughout Mariposa County and beyond the county line as needed. The small family-run business has limited capacity, but has expressed interest in providing additional service if taxi subsidies can be provided.

## Connecting Transit/Transportation Services

### **Merced County Transit (The Bus)**

The Bus offers 16 regular fixed routes and five special deviated or dial-a-ride services throughout Merced County. The Bus can most easily be accessed from Mariposa County by taking the YARTS bus to Merced.

Service generally operates from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday and from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM on Saturday. Transfers between YARTS and The Bus can be made at Merced Transpo.

### **Yosemite Valley Buses**

Several shuttles operate free-of-charge within Yosemite Valley, allowing for connections from YARTS to other parts of Yosemite National Park.

- **Yosemite Valley Shuttle System.** The free Yosemite Valley shuttle system provides access around Yosemite Valley. The shuttle serves eastern Yosemite Valley, with stops at or near all major destinations, accommodations, shopping areas and views. The Yosemite Valley Shuttle operates year-round from 7:00 AM to 10 PM. The shuttle runs

---

<sup>7</sup> In addition to holding a contract with Central Valley Regional Center, Thumbs Up! holds a contract with the Valley Mountain Regional Center to provide similar transportation services for persons with developmental disabilities in Tuolumne County.

every 10-20 minutes, depending on the time of day, during summer months. During the rest of the year the service typically runs every 30 minutes.

- **El Capitan Shuttle.** The El Capitan Shuttle serves El Capitan, Four Mile trailhead, and the Valley Visitor Center. This shuttle operates every 30 minutes from mid-June through early September. Service begins at 9:00 AM and goes until 6:00 PM.
- **Badger Pass Shuttle.** The Badger Pass Shuttle provides service two times each day between Yosemite Valley and the Badger Pass ski area. The shuttle operates only when the ski facilities are open, typically mid-December through March.
- **Tuolumne Meadows Shuttle Bus.** This shuttle provides a connection to the Highway 120 YARTS route. It provides access throughout Tuolumne Meadows between Tioga Pass, Tenaya Lake and Olmsted Point during summer months (typically mid-June through early September).
- **Wawona-Mariposa Grove Shuttle Bus.** Although there is no connection from YARTS to this service, it should be noted that a Wawona-Mariposa Grove shuttle bus travels between Wawona and the Mariposa Grove during the warm season. Bus passengers are guaranteed access to the Mariposa Grove, even when the road is closed due to high traffic.

## Tuolumne County Transit

Passengers riding Mariposa County transit to Sonora can make a connection to Tuolumne County Transit, presumably for riders staying in Tuolumne County for one week, so they can make the return trip to Mariposa County the following week.

## Greyhound

Merced is served by Greyhound bus at its downtown station. Mariposa County residents can ride YARTS to Merced to transfer to Greyhound. The bus departs Merced for Stockton and Sacramento five times per day, at 12:10 AM, 3:30 AM, 9:05 AM, 2:10 PM, and 5:05 PM. Southbound trips toward Fresno depart at 5:45 AM, 11:15 AM, 02:10PM, 6:35 PM, 9:25 PM, 9:40 PM and 11:25 PM.

## Amtrak

Amtrak service on the San Joaquin lines is available from the Merced station or via the YARTS bus that operates as an Amtrak Thruway bus in this corridor. The San Joaquin routes run between the Bay Area or Sacramento and Bakersfield. The Merced Amtrak Station is located at 324 W. 24th Street in Merced. A combined bus-rail fare for Amtrak service from Mariposa to Fresno is about \$22.00, with a connection to the train made in Merced.

## **Figure 4-4 Mariposa County Transit Service and Activity Centers**

Insert Blank Page

**Figure 4-5 Transportation Provider Inventory**

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R												
Mariposa County Transit	Public	X	X				Delivers meals to homebound seniors	charged from the transit budget	\$214,725 (for FY 06-07)	Mariposa County	Door to Door	Elderly	(1) Chevy Malibu	3,000 miles/ mth (10 miles/ day)	Contracted - County Public Works	None used, 2-way radio for contact, Portable GPS available for use	3 buses are equipped w/lifts, 2 vans are equipped w/ramps.	
Mariposa County Transit	Public	X	X			Provide transit services for the County of Mariposa and services eligible seniors to Adult Day Health Care Center in Sonora	5311, AAA for 60+ passengers, funding, Central Valley Regional Center funding, Medi-trans fares	One North Side and one South Side bus primarily within Mariposa County with select trips to Merced and Sonora (Tuolumne County). Provides regular service between Mariposa County and Adult Day Health Care Center in Sonora.		Dial a Ride with designated areas on select days	General Public	(3) buses, (2) vans, (2) autos	4,430 / mth (53,135 / yr)					
Mariposa County Transit	Public	X	X			Provide transit services for seniors (60+) and Veterans of any age. Will carry non-seniors on a space available basis	Medi-Trans fares	Mainly County with trips to Merced and Fresno for medical purposes		Demand response	Seniors and Veterans	Two (2) vans, both low floor	3,900 / mth (46,658 / yr)					
Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)	Public	X	X			Provide transit services for tourists, employees, & people traveling between Mono, Merced, Mariposa counties, and Yosemite National Park	Federal, State, and Local Funds (Mariposa County, Mono County, National Park Service Contribution, FTA Section 5311(f), DOT Fare Subsidy, Farebox and other contracts, ATPPL)	\$2,059,205	Merced, Mono & Mariposa Counties	Fixed Route	All	Six (6) 2007 Glaval 26-passenger transit buses provided by contractor	39,000 in summer, 27,000 in winter	YARTS is responsible for training drivers - do classroom & application (driving) training and are licensed by the CA Highway Patrol.	Contracted to YARTS	None	All buses are lift equipped	
Area 12 Agency on Aging	Public			X		X	Five-county JPA providing funds to community senior services providers and advocating for older adults; administers some programs in-house	Older Americans Act, State funds, private donations	Not Applicable	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa counties	Gas vouchers	Individuals age 60 and over; disabled individuals 18 and over wishing to avoid institutionalization for Linkages program	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Gas vouchers provided for trips to medical appointments through OAA funds and MSSP program	

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R												
Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living (DRAIL)	Non-Profit					X	Among other services, DRAIL connects consumers with transportation-related resources, provides travel training on public transit, and assists with applications for ADA paratransit	Department of Education, State Department of Rehabilitation, Community Development Block Grants, United Way, private donations	Not Applicable	Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties	Assistance with Dial-a-Ride Certification; travel training	People with disabilities	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	DRAIL is a resource for individuals applying for ADA paratransit services and also provides travel training assistance on public transit. DRAIL also serves as a source of information and referral for individuals calling with transportation-related needs.
Heartland Opportunity Center	Nonprofit		X				Transport members of the program from their homes to the center, jobs, recreational programs, special programs, etc. It is an Adult Day Mobile Program	Central Valley Regional Center, and Heartland Opportunity Center	\$66,000	Mainly Mariposa County, sometimes Madera County	Fixed service, door-to-door	Members of the program only - adults with developmental disabilities. All low income, no members over 57.	5 vehicles: 2 8-passenger vans, 1 10-passenger van, 1 6-passenger pick-up truck, 1 6-passenger van. None are wheelchair accessible, but have access to a wheelchair-equipped vehicle in Madera office.	Approx. 4,000/month	In house - Vehicle Safety training, updated Annually	Contracted	None used	Marina would like to be contacted for the meeting. For Medicaid and future software possibilities, Jen Armstrong (559-674-8828)
Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle	Private		X				Personalized service taking people to Fresno Bay, Sacto and Merced Stockton and Modesto.	Private - fares	Not Available	Mariposa County to FAT, SMF, OAK, SFO, SJC + Valley airports (Modesto, Merced)	On Demand	Not Available	1 6-passenger Ford Aerostar	Not Available	No	Own vehicle, in-house	No	On-demand service. On the county dispatch 966-ride. Has been serving the local community for a while. Will also take people to Amtrak in Merced. And once to Amtrak in Fresno. Tiered fee, based on number of people going on the shuttle - For example, Fresno: 1 passenger \$70 one-way; \$30 for each additional rider; Bay Area and Sacto is \$165 for one passenger and \$35 for each additional; Has responded to requests from some of the tour operators, he'll pick up people in the park and charges additional \$30 for service to the park (each additional passenger is \$10); Offers 24 -hour service and has surcharge for early hours and late hours. Rates haven't changed since October 2006. Gary is on the planning commission. He is not interested in providing taxi service, but it would be helpful. Is hard to provide taxi service in the area. A lot of people need to be picked up from very remote locations.



Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R												
Mariposa County Department of Human Services (Social Services)	Public		X		X		A welfare center with medical benefits - has work programs, Child Welfare Services and Adult Services	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	does not provide transportation	Adults and children, in need of help and rescuing	14-15 total (CWS: 6, Adult Services: 3-4; Eligibility: 5)	Not Available	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	They have 14-15 total vehicles among all of the various departments. Human Services encompasses both Social Services and Behavioral Health. Within Social Services are Child Welfare, Adult Services (including IHSS), and Eligibility. Social Services vehicles are mostly cars. Child Welfare Services has one van (6-7 passengers), one Chevrolet Impala, one Chevrolet Blazer, three Jeep SUVs; Adult Services has sedans (between 3 and 4) and Eligibility has five sedans. Any of 14 staff members can drive vehicles.
Mariposa County Unified School District	Public		X				Yellow school bus transportation	School District funding	Not Available	Mariposa County, transport 4 students to neighboring Merced and Madera Counties	Fixed Route	K-12 students	37 vehicles- standard yellow school buses	Approx. 33,000/mth or 400,000 miles per year	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Buses are used on weekdays from 6AM - 8AM and again in the afternoon from 2PM - 5PM
Mariposa Head Start	Nonprofit		X		X		Educational program for Low income families	Federal Funds through Head Start Program	Not Available	Mariposa County	Demand response subscription service	Low income children aged 5 and younger	Small bus with car seats built in – room for 14 passengers plus one parent	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Head Start school runs August through April. During summer months van is used for migrant head start program in Madera County
Mariposa Indian Health Clinic	Nonprofit		X		X		Transportation services for Native elders primarily for medical trip purposes. Limited services available for personal business trips that are for necessities	Funded through M.A.C. T. Health Board Inc. (Mariposa, Amador Calaveras and Tuolumne counties)	Not Available	Mainly Mariposa County, although will travel to neighboring counties for specialty medical appointments	Demand response	Native American elders	1 Chevy Van: Wheelchair accessible; approximately 10 passenger seats + 2 tie downs and one Ford Bronco, 5-5 passenger seats	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	
Mercy Medical Transport	Private		X				Service emergency transportation needs of Mariposa County (ALS/BLS)	Client fees/insurance, subsidy from Mariposa County	Not Available	Serving patients in Mariposa County and Yosemite, usually taking them to the county hospital (John C Fremont Hospital) sometimes taking patients to other areas - Fresno, San Francisco, Modesto.	Demand response	Not Available	5 ambulances	Not Available	Not Available	Contracted	None, CDF does the dispatching	

Agency Name	Agency Type	Transportation Role(s)					Program Purpose and Description	Funding Source(s)	Annual Operating Cost	Area Served	Service Type	Clients	Vehicles Quantity / Type	Average Monthly Miles	Driver Training Program	Vehicle Maintenance Provider	Technologies	Miscellaneous Comments
		Public Transit	Operates transportation	Funds or subsidizes transportation	Volunteer / staff drivers	Provides I&R												
Mountain Crisis Services	Nonprofit		X				California Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Services (OES) - funder for agency as well	Not Available	Mainly within Mariposa County, but travel to other counties as well	demand response	Women and children, many low income, some senior and disabled	One 7-pax van, Town and Country Christler. Costs about \$150-300 per month for gas	300-500 miles	No	Contracted	No	Staff also use the van for out of town conferences. Van has no wheelchair lift. Lack of transit is a problem in the county. There is only one bus from Mariposa to Merced, runs 3 times in morning, once in the evening. There is a Via bus to outlying communities. Need a bus around town, people must structure appointments around transportation and it isn't always possible. Suggested calling school district, recently had to cut some buses due to lack of funding. Suggested calling Mariposa Safe Families, want to establish a family resource center for high risk families, one barrier is access to center.	
Salvation Army	Nonprofit			X	X		Provide gas vouchers, subsidize Mariposa County Transit, volunteer drivers. Mainly for medical appointments or family emergencies.	Salvation Army	Not Applicable	Anywhere - San Francisco, LA, out of state	Not Applicable	Low income	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Usually people only come to the Salvation Army under extreme circumstances when they have no other option. Usually medical appointments or for family emergencies, going to SF, LA, even other states like Colorado. Salvation Army funds can be used to help pay for gas, pay for Grey Hound, sometimes the volunteers will even drive them somewhere. Amtrak has been difficult to use, not usually an option. Sometimes they will reimburse people who need to use Mariposa County Transit - usually for trips to Fresno/Merced.
Veterans Services			X				Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Use Mariposa County Transit

## Chapter 5. Key Findings: Service Gaps, Unmet Needs, and Institutional Issues

Public and private operators, as well as human service agencies in Mariposa County, offer several different types of transportation services. This chapter provides an overview of background data and stakeholder input for the development of this Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Findings in this chapter illustrate key activity centers and travel destinations, service gaps, and areas where there is a duplication of services.

The consulting team contacted stakeholders representing public agencies, institutions and nonprofit organizations to provide input. Through telephone interviews and face-to-face meetings, individuals commented on a number of issues regarding transportation needs and opportunities for older adults, people with disabilities and low-income residents of Mariposa County. A list of organizations represented in the stakeholder process is included in Appendix A.

### Existing Coordination of Services

A number of coordination efforts are already underway in Mariposa County. Some examples of existing coordination and collaboration are identified, as well as some opportunities for further coordination.

#### **966-RIDE**

(209) 966-RIDE is a public transit information line that was established by the Mariposa County Department of Public Works in response to unmet needs findings in Mariposa County. The automated message on the transit information line allows callers to press a button to have their call transferred to a particular transportation provider. The following providers are included on the line: Mari-Go (Mariposa County Transit), YARTS, Medi-Trans (medical transportation for seniors and veterans), Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle, and Amtrak. Although it is limited and is hardly a clearinghouse for public transit information, the service represents a positive initial step in making it easier for people to get information about transportation options. The service has capacity for additional providers and enhanced coordination.

#### **Medi-Trans**

Medi-Trans, which is operated by Mariposa County Transit, is a medical dial-a-ride service for seniors (60 and over) and veterans. However, the service will also pick up members of the general public who are going to the same destination, if there is space. This often includes family members of those traveling. Medi-Trans typically picks up passengers in Mariposa County and transports them to medical appointments in Merced and Fresno. The program represents an informal coordinated effort between Mariposa County's transportation and senior programs as well as the local veterans' service programs.

## **YARTS**

YARTS is an example of intercounty coordination established through a Joint Powers Authority (JPA): a regional multi-county transit system that provides service to destinations in Mariposa, Merced, and Mono Counties. The effort to establish YARTS was a complex process, and included a broad range of stakeholders including the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, Caltrans, and several local agencies and private businesses. Although the service is more limited in scope than it was originally conceived to be, its success may allow it to eventually expand the services provided, potentially beyond the three participating counties.

The Highway 140 Route provides transportation between Yosemite and Merced, while the Highway 120 Route provides service between Yosemite and Mammoth Lakes. Both routes stop at the Yosemite Visitor Center, which serves as a transfer point between lines. YARTS has the capacity to coordinate further to build partnerships and to help in fostering connecting transit services in Mariposa County.

## **Area 12 Agency on Aging**

Another example of intercounty coordination is the Area 12 Agency on Aging, which is a Joint Powers Agreement between Mariposa, Amador, Calaveras and Alpine counties that provides funding to community senior services providers and administers several direct service programs. The fact that staff oversee programs in several counties allows them to coordinate both formally and informally among a number of programs. The Area 12 Agency on Aging subsidizes transportation for older adults through the provision of gas vouchers funded through the Older Americans Act and the Multi-purpose Senior Services Program.

## **Mariposa County Unified School District**

The Mariposa County Unified School District has 37 school buses that it uses to transport students weekdays from 6:00 to 8:00 AM and from 2:00 to 5:00 PM, and occasionally to transport students on field trips or to sporting events. The school district has recognized the potential to coordinate the use of its vehicles with other uses. In the past, the school district has coordinated with the following entities:

- Contract with Mariposa County to provide service to the fairgrounds
- Contract with the DA office to take a jury to the crime scene
- Contract with a local dance group to take members to Yosemite

The school district has the capacity and interest to explore further opportunities for coordination, such as transporting persons from rural communities to medical services in Mariposa. One constraint is that the buses cannot be used to transport other passengers while students are on the bus (based on current operating procedures). However, this still leaves several hours a day and all day on weekends when the buses could be used for other purposes.

## **Barriers to Coordination**

A number of barriers to coordination exist. These are either existing or perceived challenges that have resulted in the various agencies in Mariposa County not coordinating as extensively as they otherwise could. One of these barriers is the lack of a sufficient number of vehicles, with some agencies reporting they do not have the resources they need for their own clients. As a result, they do not have the capacity to coordinate with other agencies.

Several stakeholders talked about spatial limitations and temporal limitations in Mariposa County, which can also be identified as barriers to coordination. A small population and low ridership on some existing services is a barrier because it provides little incentive to coordinate services with other agencies. Even some of Mariposa County Transit’s services have barely enough ridership to support the service.

Another barrier that was identified in Mariposa County is the lack of funding for transportation programs. With insufficient funding, there is competition for the limited funds that are available, and agencies do not perceive that they will necessarily benefit by sharing their knowledge of different funding sources with the other agencies that are also seeking funds. Many agencies talked about funding limitations and their impact on the services they can provide. Competition for funding was also identified as a related issue. There is a limited amount of funding available for rural transportation projects throughout the state, so not all projects may be approved. Clarifying funding requirements and providing clear information and instruction on how to apply for various funding sources for which agencies may be eligible would provide a useful benefit for many agencies.

A lack of centralized and comprehensive information was also noted as a barrier. Mariposa County Transit’s information can be confusing to understand and YARTS service is revised regularly. Information becomes outdated quickly. The lack of centralized information means there is no single source for individuals seeking to find transportation options, eligibility requirements, fares and service hours, nor is there a regional directory providing information on transportation services available in the region beyond Mariposa County.

Program eligibility and trip purpose restrictions also inhibit coordination. Many of the existing services are available to only subsets of the three target populations. As a result, some populations, especially individuals with low incomes, have limited access to the transportation resources. Other transportation programs are limited to taking people to/from medical appointments, or only to specific programs. Organizations have specific missions, vehicle requirements and insurance requirements, which makes it difficult to coordinate with other agencies.

## Key Origins and Destinations

Key services and many other important origins and destinations in Mariposa County are concentrated in the county seat, Mariposa, which is located in the center of the county. Thus, it is common for people seeking local medical, social, and educational services to travel to Mariposa. However, sometimes even the county seat of Mariposa does not provide enough options and many must travel outside the county for medical services, educational opportunities, or transportation connections — typically to Merced, Fresno, and Oakhurst. Yosemite National Park is also a key destination, not just for tourists, but for residents of Mariposa County who work in or around the park. The northern part of the county does not offer many services, so those residing in the area may travel to destinations in other parts of the county or to Sonora in Tuolumne County. A list of key destinations in Mariposa County is included in Figure 5-1.

**Figure 5-1 Key Travel Destinations within Mariposa County**

<b>Major Employers</b>	
Apple Tree Inn	Fish Camp
DNC Parks & Resorts and Yosemite National Park	Yosemite National Park
Forestry & Fire Protection	Mariposa
Tavis Corp.	Mariposa
Tenaya Lodge	Fish Camp
<b>Medical Facilities</b>	
John C Fremont Hospital	Mariposa
<b>Schools</b>	
Mariposa County High School	Mariposa
<b>Senior Centers</b>	
Mariposa Senior Services	Mariposa
<b>Senior Housing</b>	
Mariposa Pines Villa	Mariposa
Sierra Country Home	Greeley Hill
<b>Shopping Locations</b>	
49er Market	Mariposa
Fish Camp General Store	Fish Camp
Pioneer Market	Mariposa
<b>Social Services</b>	
First Five of Mariposa County	Mariposa
Heartland Opportunity Center	Mariposa
Manna House	Mariposa
Mariposa County Social Welfare	Mariposa
Mother Lode Job Training	Mariposa
Mountain Crisis Services	Mariposa

The sections below summarize key origins and destinations for different areas of the county, as well as important out-of-county destinations.

**Central Mariposa County**

The county seat of Mariposa is located in the center of the county. The area around Mariposa has the highest population density in the county, and many trips are made exclusively within this area. The key destinations include the only hospital in the county, several major employers, schools, stores, the senior center, senior housing, and the majority of the county’s social services. It is not surprising that the county seat of Mariposa is the de facto transit hub for the

county. Daily dial-a-ride service is provided within the area, in addition to dial-a-ride services to other towns in the county, and regular transit service from Mariposa to both Merced and Yosemite National Park.

### **Eastern Mariposa County**

Yosemite National Park covers the eastern part of Mariposa County. This is a major tourist destination and also the location of several major employers in the county. Transit access is available only via YARTS into the park, with six to seven runs per day from Merced, through Mariposa, into Yosemite.

The far eastern portion of the county, including Wawona and Fish Camp, is most easily accessed from the central part of the county via Highway 41, through Oakhurst in Madera County. Thus, most residents in the eastern portion of the county travel to outside of Mariposa County, to Oakhurst, for goods and services. Oakhurst is also identified as a major destination for retail services, and has Gottschalk's and Sears, as well as Von's and Raley's. Employment in this area is mainly within Yosemite National Park, at Tenaya Lodge and other tourism-based businesses, and in Oakhurst.

### **Northern Mariposa County**

Medical, retail and social services are limited in Northern Mariposa County. Small communities like Coulterville and Greeley Hill have very few local services, and as with much of the county these areas are very rural with dispersed populations. Dial-a-ride service is available within the Coulterville/Greeley Hill area, and north into the Groveland community in Tuolumne County on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In addition, transit service is available between Coulterville and Sonora on Tuesdays, providing north county residents access to medical, retail, and social services in Sonora. However, transit service to the county seat of Mariposa is extremely limited. Many need to travel to Mariposa for social services, to attend court or to visit their probation officer. This can be extremely difficult for those without access to a car.

Community advocacy groups have recognized the need for a family resource center located in the north county, in addition to regular transit service between the northern portion of Mariposa and the county seat.

### **Outside Mariposa County**

In addition to Tuolumne County and Oakhurst in Madera County, Mariposa County residents travel to hospitals in Fresno, Madera, and Merced. Merced is also a major destination for educational and job training services, especially at Merced College, but also at the University of California, Merced. Other destinations include transportation services such as Amtrak in Merced and the airport in Fresno.

## **Gaps and Unmet Needs**

The vast distances traveled between some of the origins and destinations, as described above, and the lack of transportation options to connect origins and destinations are the factors that lead to most of the gaps or unmet needs in Mariposa County. Although regular fixed-route and dial-a-ride service coverage has expanded over the years, some areas of Mariposa County are not accessible by transit and most communities, especially those not served by YARTS, have only basic lifeline transit services.

## **Lack of Service**

Many areas of Mariposa County are only provided with lifeline services. Weekday service on Mariposa County Transit is limited and no service is provided on weekends. Dial-a-ride service from the communities of Bear Valley, Hornitos, and Bootjack to Mariposa is only available one day per week. Transportation between Mariposa and the northern part of the county is extremely limited, with service only available during select hours on Thursdays.

While both Mariposa County Transit and YARTS provide transit service between Mariposa and Merced, Mariposa County Transit provides only one round trip per week. YARTS provides only four daily trips from Merced to Mariposa and at most six daily trips from Mariposa to Merced. In addition, YARTS provides at most six daily roundtrips between Mariposa and Yosemite National Park. Since runs are typically only scheduled in the mornings and evenings, passengers often have long waits for return trips.

Mariposa County has one taxi provider at the present time, but also has a history of failed taxi services that were unable to operate profitably or with adequate insurance. Although Sierra Taxi provides service throughout the county, many stakeholders were not aware of the service and some said that more taxi services are needed, but they are difficult to provide given the rural geography and limited road network.

## **Lack of Vehicles**

Many social services organizations have only one vehicle, limiting the transportation services that can be provided. For example, when Head Start's only vehicle is being used for field trips, staff report that they have nothing else to provide needed services. Other organizations have no vehicles, but have clients who require transportation. For example, John C Fremont Hospital has no vehicle to provide transportation to patients. However, hospital staff indicated they would like to purchase a wheelchair-accessible van to provide transportation between the hospital and a patient's home, particularly for people who used skilled nursing services and who are incapable of taking care of themselves. The main limitation to purchasing additional vehicles is limited funding. Better information about the availability of grants and how to apply for them could be very helpful for small agencies in Mariposa County. Coordination of existing vehicle resources may also be an option for reducing the need for additional vehicles.

## **Transit Accessibility**

Difficulty accessing transit services is an important transportation gap for many in the county. Factors contributing to poor transit access include the distance of residents' homes from bus routes, hilly terrain and/or poor quality roads. One stakeholder noted that in some portions of the county, residents must ask a family member or a neighbor for a ride to a location where they can access a bus.

Discontinuous pedestrian facilities and a lack of accessible pedestrian infrastructure were identified as mobility barriers and potential safety issues. While continuous pedestrian infrastructure is not expected given the rural nature of the county, several stakeholders noted that it can be difficult or unsafe to get around as a pedestrian, even in the places like the county seat of Mariposa. Sidewalks are not contiguous, even in the central shopping district. This can inhibit transit access, particularly for people using mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Additionally, not all transit vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts or low floors.



## **Availability/Quality of Information**

Much of the information about transit services in Mariposa County is provided by word-of-mouth. Mariposa County Transit does a good job of distributing transit information to seniors through the senior services center; less effort is made to market the service to the general population. Additional stakeholder feedback related to the availability and quality of transit information in Mariposa County included the following:

- One stakeholder commented that she was unaware bus service existed in Mariposa County until she saw a vehicle near her home.
- Mariposa County Transit information is not widely distributed, but the service is included on the 966-RIDE telephone line. Mariposa County Transit does not offer any information online.
- Although YARTS has fare and schedule information available online, not everyone in the county has access to the internet.
- Stakeholders suggested that the media (such as TV, radio and community newspapers) should be utilized to present information.
- Transit information in Spanish would be desirable.

## **Limited Capacity**

The rockslide which led to roadway limitations on Highway 140 had significantly impacted YARTS' operations for two years, as the system was forced to convert its fleet to smaller buses with one-half the current capacity. With the highway now reopened to vehicles of all sizes, bus capacity is not expected to be a challenge. However, within increasing gasoline prices and many people turning to transit services in rural areas, additional capacity for YARTS may be warranted in the future.

Medi-Trans sometimes becomes overbooked and must deny rides to callers. Reliability is reduced when customers cannot depend on transportation due to service capacity. Additional vehicles, improved scheduling efficiency or increased coordination with other services or organizations could help to alleviate this problem.

## **Aging Population**

Mariposa County has recently seen an influx of retirees, thus driving up housing costs and displacing the younger population. This raises the median income and has a potential impact on the level of federal assistance available to the county. Many of these senior retirees will eventually cease driving and find public transportation options more limited than those in urban areas.

## **Funding for Operations and Capital Needs**

Funding is often available to purchase vehicles but not to operate them. For example, an agency must operate a vehicle purchased with 5310 funds for at least 20 hours per week. An agency with a small staff is often unable to find individuals to operate their vehicles, or is unable to pay expenses for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of vehicles due to limited funding. Furthermore, with increased gasoline prices, several agencies indicated that controlling costs has become more challenging. In a sparsely populated and very rural county like Mariposa, it can be difficult to find local funding partners because most employers are small

businesses, and many private businesses tend to focus their resources on amenities and services for tourists.

In addition, coming up with match funding, for capital or operating costs can be difficult, both for small agencies and public transit operators. As a result, transportation providers in Mariposa County emphasize that often transit programs are easy to start, but difficult to sustain. Caltrans' forthcoming Rural Interconnectivity Study identifies potential changes to how rural transit can be funded and, if recommendations are implemented, may provide some solutions to advance funding options for Mariposa County's transportation providers.

## Duplication of Services

Duplication of services refers to the overlap of various transportation services offered not only by general public transit providers, but also by human service agencies. Service duplication often exists because multiple human service agencies operate their own vehicles for their own clients, traveling within the same vicinity. Some of the objectives of coordinating transportation include identifying opportunities to reduce this duplication of services by comingling clients from various agencies, allowing agencies to share vans, and providing information about where all of the existing services are operating and when they operate so agencies can schedule different types of clients on vehicles that are serving the same destinations.

Because transportation options in Mariposa County are limited, very little service duplication occurs. For example, both Mariposa County Transit and YARTS provide transportation from Mariposa to Merced. YARTS focuses on frequent intercity service along the corridor. Mariposa County Transit, on the other hand, essentially provides a limited lifeline service for Mariposa residents, offering a curb-front pickup and personalized round-trip experience. Mariposa County Transit offers only one round trip between Mariposa and Merced on Tuesdays, leaving Mariposa in the morning and returning from Merced in the early afternoon.

Both Medi-Trans and the Mariposa Indian Health Clinic have a focus on transporting seniors. Medi-Trans is flexible and will sometimes provide transportation to non-seniors; the Indian Health Clinic's two vehicles are heavily used during the week providing transportation to Native American elders. Although the clinic staff expressed an interest in coordinating with other services, they acknowledged there may be funding restrictions or requirements that may limit their ability to coordinate.

## Conclusion

Understanding key destinations, service gaps and service duplication allows for the development of coordinated solutions to address transportation needs in Mariposa County. Nevertheless, challenges with mixing different rider groups (liability, funding restrictions, vehicle needs, and passenger behavior) and an agency's sense of pride and flexibility in operating its own service — and perhaps unwillingness to give up oversight of the service — represent obstacles to enhanced coordination. In addition, limited availability of funding for services is a key barrier to addressing transportation needs in Mariposa County.

The county has some examples of successful coordination already in place, and also some small efforts to maximize the use of existing vehicles. For example, the Mariposa Head Start program has one van that seats fourteen children and one adult. During most of the year the

van is used to transport children from within Mariposa County to Mariposa Head Start. During the summer months, the van is used for the migrant Head Start program in Madera County.

Transportation is one of the greatest challenges faced by people of Mariposa County, and providing solutions to this problem is becoming a priority among agencies and political leaders. Stakeholders indicated that there is support by elected officials for transit service in Mariposa County.

Several opportunities for more effective coordination and increased utilization of public transportation were identified. In addition to providing better information about existing services and increasing regular public transit services, stakeholders noted some nontraditional funding sources, as well as opportunities related to special events. For example, the upcoming Centennial Celebration for Yosemite National Park was noted as a possible means for additional transportation funding given the expected influx of visitors to the park and the anticipated growth in transportation demands of Yosemite employees.

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that many people in Mariposa County have a sense of independence and pride, often making them reluctant to take advantage of government programs and assistance that may be designed to serve them. Although certainly all counties have strong-willed independent people, stakeholders suggested that the rugged geography and remote communities mean a more self-sufficient population resides in Mariposa County than in other places in California. As a result, a larger proportion of residents — and even agencies — may be hesitant to apply for services or funding, even if it means being forced to cut back and remain self-reliant.

Insert Blank Page

## Chapter 6. Identification of Strategies and Evaluation

The focus of the coordinated plan is to identify strategies and solutions to address the service gaps and unmet needs presented in Chapter 5. This chapter identifies these strategies and presents a set of criteria used to evaluate them. It also describes results of a public workshop held in Mariposa in May 2008 to develop and prioritize strategies.

### Public Workshop

As a community-based plan, a key focus for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan is to ensure that agency representatives, the transit provider and members of the public have an opportunity to provide input about local needs and identify possible solutions to address these needs. For this reason, a public workshop was held in Mariposa on May 14, 2008. Individuals who were unable to attend the workshop were encouraged to submit their comments to CCOG staff or the consultant.

### Methodology

A lot of effort was put into encouraging attendance at the public workshop. Steps taken include the following:

- The consultant sent an email invitation and flyer to stakeholders including those who had attended the Plan kick-off meeting in December 2007
- The consultant made follow-up phone calls to all stakeholders on the project contact list, reminding them about the meeting and asking them to inform colleagues about the workshop
- A press release was prepared and submitted to the local newspaper, the Mariposa Gazette

A copy of the flyer, press release, and a list of meeting attendees is included in Appendix B.

### Approach

The workshop was a facilitated meeting where participants sat around conference tables to allow for face-to-face interaction. The meeting began with introductions and a review of the meeting agenda. All workshop participants were asked to introduce themselves and describe any transportation services they operate or fund.

The consultant provided an overview of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan process and purpose, explaining Caltrans' role in the completion of these plans in rural counties across the state. The consultant also provided information about FTA 5310, FTA 5316, and FTA 5317 funds and noted that applications for these grants were available at the workshop.

The focus of the next item on the agenda was to provide a brief overview of the Existing Conditions report, with an overview of existing transportation services in Mariposa County and a brief review of demographic data. Finally, the consultant presented the unmet transportation

needs, challenges, and gaps identified by stakeholders and presented in Chapter 5 of this Plan. Participants were asked to supplement the list of needs and gaps, and confirm that they accurately represent the primary needs for Mariposa County residents. A summary list of the needs presented is shown in Figure 6-1.

**Figure 6-1 Summary List of Needs Presented at Workshop**

<b>Lack of Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more weekend service</li> <li>• Some areas not served by transit</li> <li>• Some areas only served once per week</li> <li>• Long waits for return service on transit</li> <li>• Need more taxi service within the county</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of Vehicles</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many social services organizations only have one vehicle</li> <li>• Some organizations have no vehicles</li> <li>• Need funds to purchase vehicles</li> </ul>
<b>Transit Accessibility</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long distances between home and bus stop</li> <li>• Hilly terrain/rough or winding roads</li> <li>• Need accessible pedestrian infrastructure</li> <li>• Need wheelchair accessible vehicles</li> </ul>
<b>Availability and Quality of Information</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for wider dissemination of current transit information throughout the county</li> <li>• Need multi-agency transit/transfer information</li> <li>• Need for trip planning assistance and transit training</li> </ul>
<b>Limited Capacity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capacity on YARTS (should change later this year)</li> <li>• Sometimes drivers are forced to bypass passengers waiting at bus stops</li> <li>• Medi-Trans must sometimes deny rides to callers</li> </ul>
<b>Aging Population</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influx of retirees raises median income and reduces level of federal assistance</li> <li>• Some seniors can no longer drive and live in remote areas</li> </ul>
<b>Funding for Operations and Capital Needs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more funding</li> <li>• Need more flexible grants (some only cover capital costs)</li> <li>• Need to control rising fuel costs</li> </ul>

Workshop participants confirmed the items listed in Figure 6-1 are the primary issues in Mariposa County. Workshop participants were then asked to focus on the outcomes of the workshop. They were asked to review a set of preliminary evaluation criteria – goals that shape the development of strategies in the workshop and in the Plan – and identify strategies. A list of strategies was compiled and individuals spoke about the merits of various strategies and the potential roles their organizations could play in implementation of strategies. They also

discussed some of the challenges in implementing certain strategies. For example, providing door-through-door service to encourage more seniors to use transit could be a liability for the transit agency.

Following the development of strategies, workshop participants ranked the identified solutions. These rankings form the basis for the prioritization of strategies defined in this chapter.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants shared information about their programs and asked questions. Some participants picked up copies of the federal grant fund applications that were available.

## Evaluation Criteria

Workshop participants reviewed the following criteria and provided comments. These criteria were used to evaluate the various strategies and serve as the basis for implementation of key strategies in Chapter 7.

The evaluation criteria used are as follows:

- **Does the strategy meet the documented gap?** How well does the strategy address transportation gaps or barriers identified in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan? Strategies are evaluated based on how successfully they accomplish each of the following:
  - Provide service where there are few transportation options
  - Serve locations where the greatest number of people will benefit
  - Improve the mobility of low-income, elderly, and persons with disabilities
  - Provide a higher level of service than currently provided with existing resources
  - Preserve and protect existing services
- **How feasible is the strategy to implement?** How likely is the strategy to be successfully implemented given available resources, funding opportunities, and the availability of agencies or “local champions” to take the lead? The most successful strategies would rank highly for each of the following:
  - Possibly be eligible for SAFTEA-LU or other grant funding
  - Efficiently use available resources
  - Have a potential project sponsor with staff or vehicles (or equipment) to carry out the strategy
  - Be sustainable beyond a short-term grant period
- **How much does the strategy reflect a coordinated effort?** Is coordination an element of the solution? How would the strategy encourage agencies to work with one another? Strategies are evaluated based on how successfully they accomplish the following:
  - Avoid duplication of services
  - Encourages agencies to work together to find efficient, effective solutions
  - Promote coordination of transportation services and other programs

## Identification of Strategies

A total of 10 strategies are identified in this plan. All of them were developed by workshop participants, and are listed based on how they were prioritized at the workshop. Each strategy is also ranked based on how effectively it meets the evaluation criteria listed above (H=high; M=medium; L=low). A summary of the strategies and their ranking can be seen in Figure 6-2.

**Figure 6-2 Strategies**

Strategies	Addresses Documented Gap/Need	Feasibility of Implementation	Coordination
<b>High Priority</b>			
Provide Northern County transit service one day per week; coordinate services and appointments for day of service	H	H	H
Expand Community Link as a transportation information resource	H	H	H
Hold quarterly transportation workshops with agencies and transportation providers	H	H	H
Replacement and expansion of vehicle fleet and capital equipment for transportation programs and transit agencies*	H	M	L-H
<b>Medium Priority</b>			
Expand Mariposa County Transit service	H	M	H
Purchase wheelchair-accessible vehicle for hospital and/or other organizations	H	M	M
Provide more taxi service (subsidized and/or wheelchair-accessible)	H	M	M
Provide group transportation service for special events	M	M	M-H
Automobile assistance program	H	L	M
<b>Low Priority</b>			
Implement automated trip planning/coordination software	M	L	H
Initiate a car-sharing program in Mariposa	M	L	L
Implement sidewalk improvements and curb cut program*	H	M	L

\*Additional recommended strategy not identified by workshop participants

### High Priority Strategies

High-priority strategies shown in Figure 6-2 are defined below. These are strategies that are recommended for short-term or ongoing implementation and that may be eligible for grants using New Freedom (5317), JARC (5316) and Elderly and Disabled (5310) funds. In some cases, these high-priority strategies will require a long lead time, but others can be implemented immediately. Implementation of these strategies is discussed in Chapter 7.



**Provide Northern County Transit Service One Day per Week; Coordinate Services and Appointments for Day of Service**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Problems with availability and quality of information*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expands transit services</li> <li>• Provides link between communities that were not served by transit</li> <li>• Coordinated appointments with Northern County John C. Fremont Clinic</li> <li>• Pilot project provides alternative to all ridership groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low ridership on existing service</li> <li>• Need for additional staff time and advertising</li> <li>• Very limited service only offers lifeline connection</li> </ul>

Although this service was discussed at the workshop and recommended by stakeholders as a priority, it has been in place since May 1. According to Mariposa County Transit Staff, between May 1 and July 1, nobody had requested a ride on this service.

The recommended service is a result of a collaborative effort between Mariposa County Transit and John C. Fremont Clinic to offer service and two days each month and coordinate medical appointments. Currently, service is offered the first and second Thursday of each month, meaning individuals with medical appointments in Greeley Hill can use the service only for an occasional or monthly appointment.

The bus operates back and forth between Greeley Hill and Coulterville, as needed, allowing riders to travel not only to medical appointments at the clinic, but also to limited shopping, laundry and recreational activities in either of the two communities. Rides must be requested at least one day in advance. The Clinic holds open appointment slots on days the service is operating to allow people to use the bus to access the appointments.

Although the recommended strategy is to offer the service one day per week, one-day service is currently operated only two weeks each month. This may limit the ability of individuals who would require weekly appointments to use transit. Nevertheless, as a pilot program, the very limited service two days per month should provide an indication of the service's likelihood for longer-term success.

Some stakeholders noted that such a service should be actively marketed. Distribution of flyers to households in Coulterville and Greeley Hill via utility bills, postings at key activity centers, and through advertising at the clinic are some of the opportunities Mariposa County Transit has to inform the community and build ridership on the service. Once riders begin to use the service, they should be surveyed about their preferences for the service, and whether additional service is warranted.

**Expand Community Link as a Transportation Information Resource**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of service; Problems with availability and quality of information*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves access to and awareness of transit services</li> <li>• Allows for coordination of non-transportation services in combination with transportation needs</li> <li>• Benefits clients and human service organizations</li> <li>• Consolidated information about multiple agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of services means developing and updating information to one source will be challenging</li> <li>• Requires lead organization to take responsibility for county-level and/or regional directory</li> <li>• Information requires on-going maintenance</li> </ul>

Workshop participants indicated that while seniors often receive information about transit by word of mouth through the senior services center, there is still a need to increase awareness about transit services among other populations, including individuals with disabilities and people with limited incomes. One cost-effective way to reach these people is by piggybacking onto an existing information and referral service such as Community Link, which is run by Mariposa County Safe Families.<sup>8</sup> Since Community Link is already providing information to the public on a variety of county services, it could concurrently inform these people about complementary transit options.

Residents can get information from Community Link in four different ways: through a hard copy directory of services; on the internet ([www.mariposalink.org](http://www.mariposalink.org)) 24 hours a day, seven days a week; by phone (209-742-LINK or 877-256-LINK) Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm; or in person (at 5078 Bullion Street, Mariposa) Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Community Link currently helps Mariposa County residents locate a variety of services and opportunities including business and consumer services, clothing and food services, counseling/crisis services, disaster services, education and training, employment services, financial assistance, family/community services, health/medical and mental health services, legal services, and shelters. Community Link also provides basic information about existing transportation programs when appropriate, but this particular area of expertise needs to be further developed and expanded. For instance, as of July 2008 the Transportation section of the Community Link website was empty because no transportation information has been added yet.

One opportunity for the expansion of the Community Link service is to integrate the 266-RIDE telephone information service. The public transit information line currently offers only a recorded message about transit information and transfers callers to Mariposa County Transit, YARTS, Medical Transportation (Medi Van), Airport Shuttle (Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle), and Amtrak telephone lines. If the phone number could be routed to Community Link, staff could provide more comprehensive transportation information and direct callers to the appropriate provider.

It should be noted that Mariposa County Safe Families is the designated 211 telephone referral information service provider for Mariposa County, and once the service is established, all local phone numbers for information and referral — and transportation assistance — could be replaced by 211.

<sup>8</sup> Mariposa Safe Families is the incorporated, nonprofit form of the Mariposa County Child Abuse Prevention Council.

This strategy proposes to expand Community Link’s information and referral services in the area of transportation, and then to advertise and market Community Link as a source of transportation information. Efforts should also include updating the Community Link website and the printed directory to include comprehensive information on all of the transit options including Mariposa County Transit, YARTS, human service transportation providers, and the connecting regional transit services in neighboring counties. Community Link staff should also be trained on the county’s transportation system so that they can inform clients about their various transportation options, particularly when a transit service is specifically suited to the client’s needs (e.g., if the client lives in Bear Valley and is inquiring about medical services in Mariposa, the Community Link staff person could tell that client that Mariposa Transit offers dial-a-ride service to and from Bear Valley on Mondays).

**Hold Quarterly Transportation Workshops with Agencies and Transportation Providers**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Problems with availability and quality of information; Need for operations and capital funding*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates regional coordination</li> <li>• Allows agency representatives to meet face-to-face to share program information</li> <li>• Ensures program information is updated and ready to distribute and discuss</li> <li>• Benefits transit agencies and human service organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires commitment from agencies to attend and participate</li> <li>• Requires lead organization to take responsibility for developing program and facilitating summit</li> </ul>

Sharing of information about programs and transportation services is one of the benefits that was derived in the process of developing the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. Although representatives of agencies meet from time to time in different forums to share information about client needs, health care needs, educational opportunities and funding issues, outside of the SSTAC, few opportunities exist for agency staff to convene to discuss coordination of services based on transportation. Furthermore, many agency staff are unaware of the availability of public transit services or complementary human service agency transportation programs that might benefit their own clients.

Bringing together the array of transportation providers and agency staff at a transportation workshop is a recommended strategy to provide information via word-of-mouth. The workshop could include travel training information, materials from each of the transportation programs that serve the residents of Mariposa County, a roundtable on transportation coordination issues (and opportunities to implement elements of this plan), and could even feature discussions on grant applications for joint vehicle or software purchases.

The quarterly workshop would logically be held in conjunction with the quarterly SSTAC meeting. After the SSTAC meeting is adjourned, participants could be invited to share information about their transportation programs, identify opportunities to work together, and discuss how they can better service the residents of Mariposa County.

**Replacement and Expansion of Vehicle Fleet and Capital Equipment for Transportation Programs and Transit Agencies**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of service; Lack of vehicles; Limited capacity; Aging population*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced operating costs when older vehicles are replaced by new vehicles</li> <li>• Improved service reliability</li> <li>• Allows agencies to address needs and gaps by increasing service capacity and coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive process for capital funds to replace vehicles</li> <li>• Requires agency staff time to purchase and integrate new vehicle(s) into fleet</li> <li>• Agencies must secure funds to operate new/expansion vehicles</li> </ul>

Vehicle replacement is critical for the continued operation of public and agency transportation service. As vehicles age, they become less reliable and have higher operating costs because they are less efficient and require more maintenance. All transportation providers must replace vehicles, and some must expand their fleets to address higher levels of demand.

Organizations and agencies for which this would be an appropriate strategy include Mariposa County Transit, YARTS, the Central Valley Regional Center (for its contract providers), and other human service transportation providers that address the needs of older adults, low-income residents and people with disabilities.

Implementation of this strategy entails a collaborative approach among local human service transportation providers and/or sponsors to develop a county-based or regional program to replace or expand capital equipment. Components of a capital improvement program would include the following:

- Identification and prioritization of transit facilities needing improvement
- Identification and prioritization of bus stops or transit centers needing improvement to enhance their usability, such as installation of shelters, benches, curb cuts, etc.
- Modification of bus stops to ensure their accessibility for wheelchair users
- Schedule for replacement of vehicles operated by local non-profit agencies funded with FTA Section 5310 funds
- Development of an expansion plan to increase operators’ fleets; identification of applicable fund sources
- Identification and prioritization of other capital equipment such as computerized scheduling and dispatching program, enhanced telephone or communication systems, or vehicle modifications needed to meet air quality standards

## Medium Priority Strategies

### Expand Mariposa County Transit Service

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of service; Transit accessibility; Aging population*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced travel options, especially in communities that are currently served by transit only one day per week</li> <li>• Provides an alternative means to access YARTS</li> <li>• Facilitates regional travel by maximizing coordination between agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funds must be secured for capital, administrative and operating expenses</li> <li>• Need to develop service, implementation and marketing plan</li> <li>• Requires commitment from both YARTS and Mariposa County Transit to coordinate transfers</li> </ul>

Many people, including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited incomes, have mobility issues that are not being addressed with the limited amount of transit service currently available in the county. In several of the County’s rural communities, for example, transit service is only available one day per week. Providing additional transit service would improve these residents’ access to life-enhancing opportunities, such as job training or other social services.

This strategy proposes expanding Mariposa County Transit service so that it operates one additional day per week in some communities. The proposed service would be similar to current Mariposa County Transit service in that riders would still call in advance to schedule a ride to and from their home. However, on this extra day of service, rather than transporting passengers all the way to Mariposa as the bus currently does, the bus would simply connect riders to a nearby YARTS stop. YARTS Route 140 has several stops in Mariposa County including stops in Catheys Valley, Mariposa, Midpines, El Portal and Yosemite Valley. Service to and from YARTS stops should be timed with the YARTS schedule in order to minimize passengers’ waiting time.

As revealed during the planning process, hilly terrain and poor quality roads make it difficult for residents to travel even a short distance to a bus stop. This strategy would therefore increase the number of people who are able to use existing YARTS service by bringing them from their homes to the bus stop, greatly improving their access to regional services and opportunities. This solution, because it maximizes the use of existing services through improved coordination, is more cost effective than it would be for Mariposa County Transit to carry the passengers all the way to their final destination.

If funding is not available to provide a full second day of dial-a-ride service to all communities, those communities with lower demand could simply incorporate the YARTS connections into their regularly-scheduled, weekly Mariposa County Transit service. For instance, passengers could be given the option of traveling all the way to Mariposa as they typically do, or electing to be dropped off at a YARTS stop to continue their regional travel. Incorporating YARTS connections into the regularly scheduled service is less expensive than providing a full second day of service. It would simply require coordinating existing services to serve YARTS stops, and then marketing this service as a potential travel option. As the service to YARTS becomes more familiar and demand grows, an additional day of service could be added in select communities as necessary.

Whether the YARTS connections are provided on a separate day, or on the same day as regular service to and from Mariposa, marketing this service is an essential component of the strategy. The concept of transferring between Mariposa County Transit and YARTS is completely unfamiliar to most county residents at this time, so a targeted informational campaign would be required to stimulate ridership.

**Purchase Wheelchair-Accessible Vehicle for Hospital and/or Other Organizations**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of service; Lack of vehicles; Limited capacity*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital employees can provide additional support to riders with special medical needs</li> <li>• Helps address capacity shortage on Medi Van</li> <li>• Enhances customer accessibility, mobility and convenience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive process for capital grant funds</li> <li>• Funds must be secured for administrative and operating expenses</li> </ul> <p><i>If vehicle is shared with another organization</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reluctance to share agency funded vehicles</li> <li>• Issues such as insurance, maintenance, and fees or in-kind payments</li> <li>• Requires additional staff and/or volunteer resources at the organization</li> </ul>

The county’s only hospital, John C. Fremont Hospital in Mariposa, has no vehicle to provide transportation to patients. This strategy recommends that the Hospital apply for a grant (e.g., FTA Section 5310, FTA Section 5317) to purchase a vehicle, which would allow the hospital to transport patients between their homes and the hospital when necessary. Stakeholders suggested that this service be targeted at those patients who are unable to take care of themselves, use skilled nursing, and do not have any other means of transportation to the hospital.

Many grants have rules regarding vehicle use that are tied to the grant funding. For instance, FTA Section 5310 grant funds can only be used to purchase a vehicle that will operate at least 20 hours per week. If the Hospital does not have adequate staff, resources, or demand to operate the vehicle 20 hours per week, then another human services transportation provider should join the Hospital on the grant application and share the use of the vehicle.

Vehicle sharing has been implemented successfully by other agencies in the U.S. For example, Dakota Area Resources and Transportation Services (DARTS) in West South Paul, Minnesota, is a private, non-profit human service agency with 37 vehicles. DARTS shares the operation of a Section 5310 vehicle with the City of Farmington Senior Center and St. Michael’s Church. DARTS applied for the 5310 vehicle, paid the local match, and pays insurance and maintenance costs. DARTS operates the vehicle Monday through Thursday. The City of Farmington Senior Center operates the vehicle on Fridays and for special after hours and weekend events, providing the driver and paying for fuel and a maintenance and insurance fee. St. Michael’s Church operates the vehicle on weekends using volunteer drivers; they pay for the fuel. All drivers operating the vehicle must complete DARTS drivers’ training program and be certified by DARTS.

**Provide More Taxi Service (Subsidized and/or Wheelchair-Accessible)**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of service; Limited capacity; Problems with transit accessibility; Aging population*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides same-day service</li> <li>• Effective for unanticipated travel and evening and weekend hours</li> <li>• Effective for trips outside of service area</li> <li>• Offers way to set/control subsidy per trip</li> <li>• Effective in low-density areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No taxi service in Mariposa County at this time</li> <li>• Requires good communication among all parties</li> <li>• Need to establish fraud-protection mechanisms</li> </ul>

Sierra Taxi is currently the only taxi provider in Mariposa County. The county has a history of failed taxi services that were unable to operate profitably or with adequate insurance. Additional, affordable taxi service is needed throughout the county, according to stakeholders, but is difficult to provide given the rural geography and road network. Additional taxi service could be developed through a taxi subsidy program.

A taxi subsidy program typically involves an arrangement between a sponsoring organization and a participating taxi company or companies. Under the arrangement, the taxi company accepts and accommodates trip requests from registered customers, clients, or residents, and accepts vouchers provided by the sponsoring organization to riders as partial payment for the trip. Most taxi subsidy programs focus on seniors and/or persons with disabilities residing within specific service areas, but some are available to general public residents as well. Human service agencies that employ this strategy generally limit taxi subsidies to agency clientele or program participants.

Under a taxi subsidy program, riders are issued taxi scrip/vouchers to pay for part of their trip. In some cases, taxi programs can establish a direct-billing arrangement with the agency. A taxi subsidy program allows people to make a trip that might not be served by transit and pay a lower rate than they would otherwise pay (if they were paying full taxi fares). Sierra Taxi indicated an interest in providing service as part of a taxi subsidy program.

In some communities, taxis are also contracted to offer after-hours service for the general public, or to provide trips in areas where it would not be cost-effective for the transit agency to operate regular transit service.

**Provide Group Transportation Service for Special Events**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of service; Lack of vehicles; Limited Capacity, Aging Population*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases travel options and travel flexibility for shopping and recreation</li> <li>• Attracts new riders to transit</li> <li>• Maximizes efficient use of vehicles</li> <li>• Potential to share resources</li> <li>• Potential for private investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to develop service and implementation plans</li> <li>• Less flexibility for riders than regular curb-to-curb service</li> </ul> <p><i>If group trips provided by transit agency</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional funding required to operate additional hours</li> <li>• May require evening and/or weekend driver staffing</li> </ul> <p><i>If group trips provided by human service provider (shared vehicles)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reluctance to share agency funded vehicles</li> <li>• Issues such as insurance, maintenance, and fees or in-kind payments</li> <li>• Requires additional staff and/or volunteer resources</li> </ul>

Many seniors and persons with disabilities are homebound and may be uncomfortable scheduling individual trips through Mariposa County Transit for special events such as the 4th of July festivities, Summer Music in the Arts Park, annual Flea Market, County Fair, or Coulterville Easter Egg Hunt. Group trips provide both a social outlet to spend some time with others via an uncomplicated prescheduled trip. This promotes independence and may encourage some hesitant Mariposa County Transit users to make greater use of the system. Riders would be able to call ahead to schedule a space on the bus(es), which would provide special public service to anyone seeking to attend a special event.

The event transportation would have to be well publicized, and could be included in notices, advertisements and mailing about the special event. In addition, Mariposa County Transit could maintain a schedule of special event transportation programs for which service is available so riders could be informed of the events and call ahead for service.

Another alternative is to have a social service agency or organization provide special event service for their clients using a transit agency vehicle during its “downtime” or when the vehicle is not in operation (e.g., on weekends, in the evening). This would reduce the amount of capital costs needed to implement this strategy for certain groups, though it would require additional coordination between the agencies.

This strategy offers potential for private investment. In other communities event sponsors have contributed toward the operation of special event transportation services.



**Automobile Assistance Program**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of service; Lack of vehicles*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides flexible travel hours (e.g., evenings, weekends, same-day)</li> <li>• Improves mobility to areas with limited transit service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires lead agency to champion</li> <li>• Funds must be secured for capital (fuel vouchers and/or loan collateral) and administrative expenses</li> <li>• Only a modest number of residents would benefit</li> </ul>

Private automobiles offer an extremely flexible and convenient means of transportation to those who can afford them. With access to a private vehicle, a person can travel at any time of day, including evening and weekend hours when transit service is typically unavailable or infrequent, and to any destination, even those that are remote and would not typically be served by transit.

The freedom of automobile travel comes at a price, however. Many low income residents of Mariposa County cannot afford the high up-front costs associated with purchasing a vehicle. Even if the vehicle is fully paid for, ongoing costs such as fuel and maintenance can be prohibitive. This strategy proposes to subsidize car ownership for certain county residents, particularly those with low-incomes who participate in certain types of job training or educational programs, for whom an automobile is the only practical means of transportation to employment, training, or other critical services. Automobile subsidies proposed as part of this strategy include the provision of subsidized gas vouchers and a low-cost auto loan program.

**Subsidized gas vouchers** are commonly used to ease the costs of automobile travel and enhance transportation options for low-income residents. For instance, the Area 12 Agency on Aging already subsidizes transportation for older adults through the provision of gas vouchers funded through the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Multi-purpose Senior Services Program (for medical transportation). The Salvation Army also provides gas vouchers for travel to medical appointments or in the case of family emergencies.

A lead agency or agencies could provide subsidized gas vouchers to qualified seniors and low-income Mariposa County residents who provide an in-kind service, who carpool, or are enrolled in specific job-training or educational programs. For example, individuals who volunteer their time driving others to medical appointments or spend their time helping others at community events or in the schools could be eligible for gasoline vouchers. Persons who are enrolled in specific job-training programs might receive gasoline vouchers.

The implementing agency or organization would need to identify a source of funding for these vouchers, which could include some public and private funds, including private foundations and nonprofit organizations. For example, in Texas, United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast funds gas vouchers for private automobile travel by seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income families.

Some employers can receive tax breaks for supporting alternative transportation programs for their employees. Gasoline vouchers could be issued to employees who carpool or vanpool to work, providing a benefit to both employers and employees.

Examples of **low cost auto-loan programs** can be found throughout California. One successful example, which Mariposa County could replicate, is found in Contra Costa County.

Contra Costa County’s Employment & Human Services Department’s KEYS Auto Loan Program offers low interest loans to purchase an automobile to former CalWORKS participants who have been employed for three months. Loans up to \$4,000 per individual are extended for two-year terms to eligible recipients, and repayments are cycled back into a revolving fund to provide additional loans. Recipients must take a money management class and an auto maintenance class offered by the county. The approximate costs of the program are highlighted in Figure 6-3.

**Figure 6-3 Sample Auto Loan Program: Costs for Contra Costa County’s KEYS Program**

Items	Cost
Average loan amount	\$3,000 per participant
Diagnostic inspection by certified mechanic (two inspections are sometimes necessary)	\$100 per inspection
Money management class	\$200 per participant
Auto maintenance class	\$30 per participant
Administrative costs	\$50 per participant
Total average cost of program	\$3,480 per participant

Source: Contra Costa Employment & Human Services Department (2006)

Low-cost auto loans provide a number of benefits far beyond transportation. In addition to receiving financial management training, recipients have the opportunity to build good credit for themselves so that they can become increasingly financially stable. Some auto loan programs even provide checking accounts for recipients so that they can avoid expensive check cashing services.

**Low Priority Strategies**

**Implement Automated Trip Planning/Coordination Software**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of vehicles, Limited capacity*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower per trip costs</li> <li>• Encourages coordination of services</li> <li>• Increased vehicle productivity</li> <li>• Improved service quality</li> <li>• Benefits consumers by providing better information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires scheduling software for Mariposa County Transit</li> <li>• Requires lead agency to champion</li> <li>• Requires staff training</li> <li>• Ongoing maintenance and software updates are required</li> </ul>

Stakeholders suggested there would be value in automated trip planning software, so agencies could review when and where the various transportation programs operating through Mariposa County would be available. This would allow for enhanced coordination of services, and allow agency staff to understand the various options available for scheduling their clients.

One of the challenges in implementing this strategy is that Mariposa County Transit does not use scheduling software for dispatch, and at least one agency in the county should have an existing software platform through which other agencies could coordinate services. Fully

automated scheduling software typically utilizes a scheduling algorithm to automatically assign a trip request to a particular vehicle run. This type of software also uses a spatial database and mapping capabilities to perform scheduling tasks based on local street networks and geographic constraints. Often the software has the capability to build-in local service parameters such as:

- Peak vs. non-peak commute speeds
- Dwell time (time to assist passengers on/off vehicle)
- Vehicle speed limits and/or ramp up times (time it takes to reach traveling speed)
- Vehicle occupancy
- Vehicle hours of operation (when first and last pick up can be made)

A fully automated scheduling system may be overkill for a dial-a-ride operation the size of Mariposa County Transit, and even for the transit agency and several partners that will continue to maintain their own services. With a cost range of \$20,000 to \$60,000 for one operator and additional costs of up to \$20,000 to link software with multiple providers, it is difficult to justify the procurement and implementation of an automated scheduling system. More costly programs often have an automatic vehicle locator (AVL) or GPS system, some of which might be difficult to sync with the dispatchers due to Mariposa County’s rugged mountain terrain.

A lower cost alternative to linking scheduling software would be a web-based booking and scheduling program that could be developed for participating agencies in Mariposa County. This kind of software could allow agencies to enter information about their vehicles, trips they are making and excess capacity, allowing other agencies to schedule their consumers on these vehicles or make phone calls to coordinate services as needed.

Given available software, a simple web-based trip planning and coordinating program could be developed for less than \$15,000. There would be additional costs for training and the initial entry of existing routes and services offered by each of the participating agencies. Rather than having a single transit agency purchase costly trip planning software, this more affordable alternative might allow multiple agencies and/or organizations to pool their resources in contract with a database specialist or software developer to tailor a program for Mariposa County providers.

**Initiate a Car-Sharing Program in Mariposa**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Lack of service; Lack of vehicles*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide same-day service</li> <li>• Effective for unanticipated travel and evening and weekend hours</li> <li>• Effective for trips outside of service area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires lead agency or person to champion</li> <li>• Finding a partner agency or organization</li> <li>• Requires training and marketing to teach staff and the public how car-sharing works</li> <li>• Regulatory obstacles such as zoning and business licensing laws</li> <li>• Challenging to obtain affordable insurance and cover the high capital costs of technology, vehicles, and labor</li> </ul>

Car-sharing is a strategy that was identified by stakeholders as a potentially valuable option for people with limited automobile access. Car-sharing is typically a service that provides the public

(usually pre-registered members of the car-sharing program) with access to a vehicle or fleet of vehicles on an hourly basis. Members reserve a car online or by phone, walk to the nearest vehicle, open the doors with a special key card, and drive off. They are billed at the end of the month for time and/or mileage. Car-sharing can improve people’s mobility while containing costs that are associated with car ownership.

Car-sharing is typically run by an independent operator such as a for-profit company, a cooperative, or a nonprofit with an environmental and social change mission. However, in some places such as Aspen, Colorado it is run by a local municipality.

Unfortunately, Mariposa County has several characteristics — lower population densities, limited transit, auto-oriented developments — that typically mitigate against car-sharing success. This does not mean that car-sharing cannot be viable in Mariposa County or that it is not worth pursuing, but rather suggests that success will be premised to a higher degree on partnerships with human service providers or social service agencies. For example, vehicles may need to serve the residents of a specific housing complex or the clients of a specific social service organization, rather than serving a neighborhood with good walking access and more diffuse demand.

A preliminary trial program administered in the county seat of Mariposa would be advisable to assess local interest and potential success in other towns, especially considering the relatively high capital costs that can be involved.

Although larger than Mariposa, a good example of a small community served by a car-sharing organization can be found in Nelson, British Columbia (population 9,300). The program is a nonprofit venture that serves the City of Nelson, a rural town with forestry, mining, and tourism as its main industries.

Yearly costs for the user include an annual fee, time-based fees, and distance-based fees. The program is run completely on membership dues, which cover the cost of fuel, insurance, and vehicle maintenance. With two cars, a small pick-up truck and a sedan, the program offers three levels of membership, for frequent, moderate or occasional users. The program is administered by the Nelson Car-Share Cooperative, which consists mostly of volunteers and some paid staff members. The Cooperative also runs other unrelated programs in the City of Nelson.

Car-sharing has also been established in many small US cities, such as Aspen (population 5,900) and Rutledge, Missouri (population 100). Rural and small-town car-sharing appears to be characterized by a high degree of personal involvement by the members. In some cases, this is provided by volunteers, such as the program in Rutledge, or in Traverse City, Michigan where the withdrawal of the volunteers led the program to close. According to studies in Britain, the presence of a strong local champion is more important in making rural car-sharing feasible than factors such as good public transportation.

**Implement Sidewalk Improvement and Curb Cuts Program**

*Needs addressed by strategy: Need for accessible pedestrian infrastructure*

Expected Benefits	Potential Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides mobility options for short travel distances for pedestrians and persons using mobility devices</li> <li>• Facilitates safe access to YARTS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High capital costs</li> <li>• Only benefits a limited number of users</li> <li>• Not feasible in all locations</li> </ul>

Sidewalks allow residents to walk or use mobility devices to travel within small towns, or from their home to a bus stop. In addition to newly paved pathways, good pedestrian access requires safe crossings at intersections and along busy roads, and curb cuts and ramps where there are significant grade variations. Many streets in Mariposa County do not have complete sidewalks or sufficient infrastructure to ensure pedestrian safety.

Because of the county’s rural nature and the long distances between communities, continuous pedestrian infrastructure is not expected nor is it feasible. Sidewalks should be limited to the densest portions of the county such as the county seat of Mariposa, where a greater number of people might benefit from these types of improvements, particularly if they provide connections to social service or senior-oriented destinations.

Many communities have leveraged the additional funding necessary to provide these amenities through transportation impact fees on new development. New Freedom funds can be used for accessible bus stops and curb cuts.

New developments can be required to install completed sidewalks, especially to anticipate the need for people as they age, who may need to use canes and wheelchairs. Developments can also be required to install bus stops with shelters and places for people to sit, or to provide connecting pathways to existing transit routes. County transportation officials, in coordination with social service agencies and organizations for whose clients these transportation amenities will be especially important, should work together to advocate that these requirements be added to plans and zoning ordinances.

Insert Blank Page

# Chapter 7. Feasibility of Implementation

## Introduction

Mariposa County transportation providers have a number of opportunities to implement strategies that improve coordination among agencies and enhance mobility for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income individuals and families. To implement the strategies, it is important to identify the specific issues to be addressed, who would be involved in implementation, what the costs would be, and where funds might be available. In some cases, implementation efforts may involve pilot projects, or experiments to test various approaches.

## Implementing the Strategies

This section addresses implementation steps for the strategies identified in Chapter 6.

### **Program Administration**

Implementation of the recommended program strategies is a responsibility of the various agencies in Mariposa County, as well as Mariposa County Local Transportation Commission (LTC). As the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the County of Mariposa, Mariposa County LTC is the planning and administrative agency for transportation projects and programs in the county.

Although this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan identifies an array of possible funding sources to aid in the implementation of the various strategies presented, the three key funding sources include the JARC program, the New Freedom program, and Section 5310 funds. All of these programs are administered by Caltrans, and Mariposa County LTC has no direct role in the administration of these programs except for the disbursement of the funds in Mariposa County. Mariposa County LTC recommends to Caltrans the programs that should be prioritized for Section 5310 based on funding requests from entities within the County, and Mariposa County LTC and Caltrans prioritize applications that are consistent with strategies and needs identified in the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. The selection of projects for funding under the JARC and New Freedom programs is evaluated by Caltrans.

Mariposa County LTC will also play a role in program administration, because they are responsible for allocating TDA funds and adopting the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.

Effective program administration is a crucial factor in ensuring the ongoing success of each new program implemented based on the strategies defined in this plan. As a first step, a sponsor or lead agency needs to be designated to manage each project. The lead agency would most likely be responsible for the following:

- Apply for grant funding and develop a program budget
- Develop program policies and guidelines

- Establish program goals and objectives, and define desired outcomes
- Provide ongoing supervision or program oversight
- Monitor actual performance as compared to program objectives
- Report on program outcomes and communicate to project stakeholders

Later in this chapter, for each of the highest ranked strategies, a lead agency is suggested; however, in some cases numerous entities could serve in this capacity. The lead agency should have the administrative, fiscal and staffing resources needed to carry out the program on an ongoing basis.

Through workshops and the development of the inventory, it was noted that various organizations in the county have skill or experience in scheduling and dispatching; maintenance; providing information and referral or marketing; volunteer recruitment; and planning and programming (see Figure 7-1) These agencies could be called upon to offer their skills or share resources with the appropriate lead agencies and organizations, facilitating the implementation the strategies defined in this plan.

**Figure 7-1 Agency Functional Skills and Resources**

Routing, Scheduling, and Dispatching	Maintenance Services	Customer Information, Referral, and Marketing	Volunteer Recruitment	Planning and Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Mariposa County Transit</li> <li>• Mariposa County Unified School District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mariposa County Public Works</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• School District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mariposa County Safe Families</li> <li>• Area 12 Agency on Aging</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• DRAIL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salvation Army</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mariposa County LTC</li> <li>• Area 12 Agency on Aging</li> <li>• Mariposa County Dept. of Human Services</li> </ul>

**Decision-Making Process**

In addition to the staff administering the service or program (derived from the strategies) policy oversight is essential for formal decision making. This function could rest with the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors and/or the boards of any of the agencies taking a leadership role in the implementation of strategies.

There is no permanent coordination body to carry forward some of the coordination activities that are encouraged in the various strategies. Although the SSTAC focuses on the array of transportation issues that arise in Mariposa County, coordination has not specifically been one of the SSTAC’s primary areas of focus. The SSTAC provides a forum, however, for sharing information and building consensus on strategies and tools. A recommended strategy to address this function, described in Chapter 6, is to hold a quarterly meeting following the regular SSTAC meeting to further develop and formalize ongoing communication and discussions held during the process of developing this plan. Conducting a quarterly transportation meeting could serve as an opportunity to bring together organizations that may be interested in an ongoing



role in coordinating service, cultivating a coordinated decision-making process appropriate for Mariposa County.

## Service Standards

To ensure that programs developed from this Coordinated Plan are effective, it is recommended that agencies coordinating services or receiving any of the funding sources identified in this plan develop and adopt a set of standards and benchmarks that can be monitored and measured to provide a framework for effectively managing and evaluating services. While specific standards will vary depending on the service and operating environment (i.e., volunteer driver program versus transit service), standards are recommended to monitor (1) efficiency and (2) service quality and reliability. Service performance should be monitored by the lead agency for each program and data should be reported to participating agencies, the SSTAC and the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors.

**Efficiency standards** use operational performance data to measure the performance of a transportation program or transit system. Monitoring operational efficiency and productivity requires data such as operating cost, cost recovery (or farebox revenue recovery), vehicle revenue miles, vehicle revenue hours and information about boardings or the number of individuals served by the program.

Many small transportation programs do not have the staff resources to collect and analyze a broad range of performance data. Thus, a few key indicators provide agencies with a good picture of how well service is doing:

- **Operating Cost per Rider/Program Participant:** Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by total people using the transportation program.
- **Operating Cost per Revenue Hour:** Calculated by dividing all operating and administrative costs by the total number of revenue hours (with revenue hours defined as time when the vehicle is actually serving consumers).
- **Passengers per Revenue Hour:** Calculated by dividing the total number of people using the program by the total number of vehicle revenue hours. The number of passengers per hour is a good measure of service productivity so the Mariposa County LTC can compare different types of programs and evaluate which is the most efficient.
- **Cost Recovery or Farebox Recovery Ratio:** Calculated by dividing all revenue (farebox and donations) by total operating and administrative costs. This evaluates both system efficiency (through operating costs) and productivity (through total number of consumers served).

It is also possible to measure and monitor **service quality and reliability**. Recommended reliability standards include:

- **On-Time Performance:** For transit, this can be monitored by supervisors and trip logs. For volunteer programs or taxi services, users can report the information in surveys.
- **Complaints per Individual Served:** Requires the systematic recording of passenger complaints. **Compliments per Individual Served** can also be monitored to provide feedback on the personalized service provided by ambassadors, volunteers and drivers.
- **Road Calls per Revenue Mile Operated:** For transit services, a high number of road calls reflects poor bus reliability and may indicate the need for a more aggressive bus replacement program or changes to maintenance procedures and practices.

- **Percentage of Repeat Riders/Users:** To evaluate the effectiveness of a personalized transportation program, the total proportion of individuals using the service on a regular basis gives an indication of consumer loyalty, comfort and familiarity with the program.

Other standards can be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of informational materials and outreach tools, and the general level of mobility in the community. Each program manager is encouraged to develop standards and monitor program progress in achieving the standards.

## Facility Needs

The overall inventory of transportation providers, which excludes school district transportation programs, includes three buses, four vans, and three sedans as part of the Mariposa County Transit fleet, and six buses as part of the YARTS fleet. In addition, the various human service agencies operating transportation programs and services own about seven vans and buses, and approximately 19 to 20 SUVs or sedans. Overall, there are approximately 10 buses, 12 vans, and 23 sedans operating among the various providers, in addition to 37 school buses operated by the School District.

Virtually all of the vehicle maintenance in Mariposa County is contracted out to agencies, maintenance providers and local service shops with a few exceptions. YARTS maintenance is provided by its contractor, VIA Adventures. Mariposa County Transit maintenance is carried out by the Mariposa County Public Works Department.

Given current operations, no significant need has been defined for expanded or new facilities. Nevertheless, agencies in Mariposa County may wish to consider consolidation of some maintenance functions to reduce costs and enhance the level of transportation coordination within the county.

The goal of a consolidated maintenance program would be to more fully utilize existing facilities and staff by making services available to organizations and agencies that require a level of technical maintenance expertise beyond what may be available to them. Consolidated maintenance agreements can provide high quality skills and facilities as well as other benefits, including the following:

- **Unique Expertise:** A centralized maintenance program that services paratransit-type vehicles (typically cutaway buses) develops specialized technical expertise not usually available from commercial repair shops. This expert knowledge extends to serving wheelchair lifts, fareboxes, tiedown systems, brake interlock systems, electrical systems and cutaway chassis.
- **Service Availability:** The human service agencies in Mariposa County most frequently utilize their vehicles during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, from about 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM). Maintenance service that is offered evenings and weekends can minimize the need for organizations to cancel service while vehicles are in the shop or to postpone maintenance because there is no back up vehicle. Work schedules that are carefully designed can maximize the use of facilities while providing service geared to meet the needs of the customer.
- **Loaner Vehicles:** Small agencies often have difficulty maintaining routine maintenance schedules because they do not have backup vehicles. Thus, a day in the shop means a day without client transportation. A consolidated maintenance program can address this

issue by providing a loaner vehicle of similar size and configuration while servicing the customer's vehicle. For example, retired buses, still fully functional but not able to take the heavy daily use required by public transit, can be used to provide this type of support. A loaner program allows agencies to continue to provide service while their vehicles are in the shop.

- **Centralized Record Keeping:** Sophisticated maintenance providers rely on software to ensure record keeping is in compliance with federal, state and local laws and regulations. In addition, maintenance software can track customer-specific data such as maintenance intervals, costs, vehicle replacement timing, and life cycle costs. This level of detail is often far beyond what human service agencies maintain.
- **Fueling:** Consolidated fueling from a centralized location also can be a benefit to nonprofit agencies. A fueling program can result in lower fuel prices as a result of bulk purchasing as well as guaranteed availability in time of shortage. It also allows for careful monitoring of fuel usage.
- **Consolidated Purchasing:** A consolidated maintenance agreement can include combined purchasing of commodities such as tires. Cost savings can be realized when several agencies join together to order supplies and equipment.
- **Liability Coverage:** The maintenance provider routinely obtains garage keeper's liability insurance coverage to protect the customer organizations doing business with the organization. This coverage is standard for repair shops. It is readily available in the insurance market. Such coverage insures an agency's vehicles while they are in the care and custody of the maintenance provider.

## High Priority Strategies

Figure 7-2 illustrates each of the high priority strategies discussed in Chapter 6. Information presented includes the name of the strategy; an appropriate agency or organization to develop a more detailed plan and implement the strategy; basic guidelines for an implementation timeframe; approximate costs; cost-effectiveness; and potential funding sources:

- **Lead Agency or Champion:** As appropriate, an agency is listed to take the lead in implementing the strategy. Agencies were identified based on skills shown in Figure 7-1, interest among agency leaders, or a role that agencies are already playing that is related to the strategy. For example, because Mariposa County Safe Families already operates the Community Link information and referral service, it is logical for that agency to also serve as a resource for complementary transportation information, and has already been targeted to operate the 211 information system.
- **Implementation Timeframe:** Some projects already have a defined implementation timeframe. For example, transit service between Northern Mariposa County and Mariposa was already implemented in early May 2008 by Mariposa County Transit. However, for other strategies timeframes have not been defined. In those cases timeframes are estimated based on experience with similar efforts in other counties.
- **Order of Magnitude Costs:** Where specific cost information is available, costs have been included based on already-budgeted amounts. When unavailable, costs are estimated based on the assumed scope of the strategy.

- **Cost-Effectiveness of Strategy:** When strategies were prioritized in Chapter 6 based on the evaluation criteria, cost-effectiveness was one of the considerations in ranking a priority as “high” with regard to ease of implementation. Although some strategies may be more costly than others, certain no-cost and low-cost strategies may be easiest to implement in the short-term. More costly strategies are ranked as high when they positively impact the mobility needs of large numbers of seniors, people with disabilities, or low-income residents.
- **Potential Funding Sources:** Refer to Chapter 1 for a basic list of funding sources that might be available to fully or partially implement each strategy. In some cases, other funding sources are listed based on existing contributions for similar programs in Mariposa County.

**Figure 7-2 Implementing High Priority Strategies**

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency/ Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Cost-Effectiveness of Strategy	Potential Funding Sources	Comments
Provide Northern County transit service one day per week; coordinate services and appointments for day of service	Mariposa County Transit	Implemented May 2008; Ongoing operations	Up to \$24,000 per year in operating costs for full recommendation of one day per week service (cost for existing two day per month pilot program would be approximately half); additional \$1,500 for marketing costs.	Medium	FTA 5317, FTA 5311, FTA 5311(f), FTA 5310, TDA, fares, and donations	Cost based on 416 additional transit service hours per year (8 hrs/wk x 52 wks/yr) at \$58 per hour. Service was implemented in May 2008, but no rides had yet been requested as of July 1.
Expand Community Link as a transportation information resource	Mariposa County Safe Families; Mariposa County LTC	6-9 months for collecting current transit data, training Community Link staff, updating directory and website, marketing/advertising	\$15,000 per year in additional costs (staff, admin/ operating, directory printing, advertising); \$50,000 has been budgeted annually for 211 program in Mariposa County of which this could be a part.	High	Existing Mariposa County Safe Families agency funding; TDA; agency donations; advertising revenues; in-kind services; private sector sources; FTA 5317 (for accessible formats)	Can build upon the strengths of existing Community Link information and integrate information about transportation programs, including integration of the 266-RIDE telephone information service and 211 information and referral program
Hold quarterly transportation workshops with agencies and transportation providers	Mariposa County LTC	Up to 3 months to organize/prepare materials	Up to \$5,000 per year for facility rental, training materials, preparation.	High	TDA; agency and private donations; health and human service agency funding	A transportation workshop is proposed as a quarterly event.

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Lead Agency/ Champion	Implementation Timeframe	Order of Magnitude Costs (Capital or Operating)	Cost- Effectiveness of Strategy	Potential Funding Sources	Comments
Replacement and expansion of vehicle fleet and capital equipment for transportation programs and transit agencies	Mariposa County Transit, YARTS, Central Valley Regional Center, DHS, Head Start, Heartland Opportunity Center, Mariposa Indian Health Clinic, Mountain Crisis Services, Thumbs Up!, and other human service transportation providers	10 months for equipment replacement; ongoing	Depends on vehicle type, from \$20,000 for a sedan to \$450,000 for a YARTS coach.	Medium	FTA 5310, FTA 5311	Ongoing vehicle replacement is warranted for all nonprofit providers, Mariposa County Transit and YARTS. Expansion vehicles should be secured based on need.

## **Provide Northern County Transit Service One Day per Week; Coordinate Services and Appointments for Day of Service**

Mariposa County Transit and John C. Fremont Clinic have already collaborated to take the lead on this strategy, which was implemented in May 2008. If the service had been implemented as recommended by stakeholders, with service one day per week, the total annual operating costs would be estimated at \$24,000 based on eight revenue service hours per week at \$58 per hour. Service is currently being offered only two days per month, the first and second Thursday of each month, and therefore costs are expected to be much lower.

As of July 2008, although the service had been available for two months, Mariposa County Transit had not yet received any requests for a ride on this new service. This is surprising because stakeholders believed that the service would address a strong need within the community. This low ridership may simply suggest, as stakeholders predicted, that the service needs to be more actively marketed in order to build ridership. Mariposa County Transit should distribute flyers to households in Coulterville and Greeley Hill via utility bills, post notices of the new service at key activity centers, and post and distribute advertising at the clinic. It is estimated that a simple targeted marketing campaign would cost approximately \$1,500 for printing and mailing, plus any additional staff time.

Funding for the existing two day per month pilot program comes from existing funding sources. The operating cost of the service can be paid with FTA 5317, FTA 5311 and FTA 5311(f) funds. If medical services for seniors and people with disabilities comprise a significant portion of the operation, FTA 5310 funds could also be used to secure equipment. Other potential funding sources include TDA, fares, and donations.

## **Expand Community Link as a Transportation Information Resource**

Mariposa County Safe Families is best equipped to take the lead on this strategy, which proposes to build upon that organization's existing information and referral program, Community Link. The Community Link information distribution structure is already in place—a website is up and running, a phone line is active, an information desk is open to the public, and staff is available to provide information. Developing and expanding the transportation portion of the existing program should not be a significant challenge, although keeping it updated and advertising it to potential users may be. The 266-RIDE phone line could be routed to Community Link as one way of attracting new customers, or it could be eliminated and all transportation calls could be incorporated into the 211 program.

Any materials developed (e.g., the website, the directory) should be available in accessible formats (and perhaps also in Spanish language formats if it is deemed desirable). New Freedom funds could be a source to fund the accessible formats under the criterion allowing for additional tools to overcome mobility barriers.

This strategy is highly cost-effective and can be completed in less than six months, but should be updated annually or whenever there are significant service changes. Assuming that an additional part-time staff person will need to be hired to accommodate increased demand, costs are estimated at \$15,000 per year (includes additional administrative and operating costs, printing costs for the directory, and advertising costs). Likewise, \$50,000 per year has been budgeted for the 211 program, and enhancing transportation information as part of that program could mean less money is needed specifically to address this strategy. The program can make

use of Mariposa County Safe Families agency funding, TDA funds, agency donations, advertising funds (if advertising is included in the directory) and FTA 5317 funds (to provide materials in accessible formats).

### **Hold Quarterly Transportation Workshops with Agencies and Transportation Providers**

It is recommended that the Mariposa County LTC take the lead on this strategy, a low-cost effort designed to improve the dissemination of information in the county, bring together agencies with similar concerns, dispel myths and rumors and build partnerships around the topic of transportation. This strategy can be accomplished in as little as three months and could be planned in conjunction with the quarterly SSTAC meeting to ensure that transportation issues are addressed. Total annual costs are estimated at up to \$5,000 for facility rental, training materials, and workshop preparation, and can be funded with TDA planning funds, as well as agency and private donations.

### **Replacement and Expansion of Vehicle Fleet and Capital Equipment for Transportation Programs and Transit Agencies**

Vehicle and equipment replacement is a necessity for ongoing safe and reliable transportation operations. Fleet replacement, new dispatch equipment, and other capital purchases may be necessary for Central Valley Regional Center, Mariposa County Transit, YARTS, DHS, Head Start, Heartland Opportunity Center, Mariposa Indian Health Clinic, Mountain Crisis Services, Thumbs Up!, and any other human service transportation providers in Mariposa County.

Many of these providers would be eligible, depending upon the use of the vehicle, for FTA 5310 funding. Applications for FTA 5310 funds must be submitted to Mariposa County LTC, which evaluates applications and submits them to Caltrans. Costs range widely from about \$20,000 for a sedan to \$250,000 for a large bus.

## **Medium Priority Strategies**

Medium priority strategies include a number of recommended programs that may be more costly to implement or were evaluated to have less of an impact on mobility for seniors, people with disabilities and low-income individuals than high priority strategies. As medium priority strategies, these are assumed to require more time to implement, and it may be more challenging to find funding for implementation of these coordination strategies. Figure 7-4 presents the medium priority strategies.

**Expanding Mariposa County Transit Service**, as discussed in Chapter 6, will require additional analysis to determine which communities have sufficient demand to warrant a second day of dial-a-ride service each week. Operating plans will need to be developed for the selected communities. There is no doubt that expanded services would improve mobility options in Mariposa County, but analysis is needed to determine in which communities this service will be most cost-effective. JARC funds may be available for certain services that improve access to jobs and job training. Service changes could be planned within one year. Up to two years could be needed to secure funding and hire additional staff if needed.

**Purchasing a wheelchair-accessible vehicle for the hospital and/or other organizations** would not be a complicated strategy to pursue initially. John C. Fremont Hospital would simply



need to apply for grant funding through the FTA 5310 grant program. This strategy is rated as a medium priority because of several implementation challenges that could be faced once the vehicle is available. John C. Fremont Hospital would need to secure ongoing operating funds and staff to provide the service. If the Hospital was the recipient of FTA grant funds, it would also need to make sure that it complied with all of the FTA regulations regarding vehicle use, such as operating the vehicle for a minimum of 20 hours per week. If the Hospital uses the vehicle for fewer than 20 hours per week, it will need to find a partner organization and coordinate the shared use of the vehicle with that organization to increase vehicle use.

**Providing more taxi service** would be very complicated to implement, and may require incentives so new taxi operators would be able to offer service in the county. Both existing and potential new operators would likely be interested in contracting to provide service as part of a subsidized taxi program. Incentives to help them purchase accessible vehicles could also be used to encourage their participation in a subsidized program. FTA 5317 funds can be used to purchase accessible taxis.

**Providing group transportation service for special events** could be relatively easy to implement if a transit agency that owns vehicles suitable for group trips, such as Mariposa County Transit or YARTS, is willing to take the lead and offer the use of its vehicles (and perhaps also staff) for this service. Issues that the transit agency would need to consider include developing a payment process, creating a contract to ensure payment, and complying with federal regulations regarding the use of publicly funded vehicles for private charter service (e.g., the agency may need to issue a public notice regarding the proposed charter service so that private operators can be considered for the service.)

In a rural area like Mariposa County where there is very limited transit service available, an **automobile assistance program** could fill a large gap for those low-income, senior, or disabled residents who need to travel outside of transit service hours or to destinations unserved (or underserved) by transit. Despite its potential benefits, this strategy is rated as medium priority because it is one of the most difficult to implement and has minimal coordination benefits. The biggest challenge associated with this strategy is finding an appropriate source of funding. Most transit funds cannot be used for automobile subsidies. Subsidized gas vouchers are currently provided by some agencies, including the Area 12 Agency on Aging and the Salvation Army. Those programs could potentially be expanded if additional funding were secured. A low-cost auto loan program could also provide significant benefits, but would require the lead agency to invest staff time and resources in order to ensure maximum success.

**Figure 7-4 Implementing Medium Priority Strategies**

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Timeframe	Comments
Expand Mariposa County Transit service	1 year to develop staffing and operations plan; up to 2 years for funding and to secure additional staff if required	Should be implemented within 1 year if identified as an unmet transit need. Otherwise, transit plan should be developed with recommendations to address needs and provide additional service.
Purchase wheelchair-accessible vehicle for hospital and/or other organizations	1 year to secure grant funding for vehicle	According to FTA regulations, if the hospital receives grant funding, it may need to share the vehicle in order to meet FTA vehicle use requirements (minimum 20 hours per week of vehicle service.)
Provide more taxi service (subsidized and/or wheelchair-accessible)	1 year to develop subsidy program with taxi provider; may take up to 3 years to secure additional taxi providers	A taxi plan must be developed, which might include incentives to encourage taxi operators to provide service in Mariposa county. Training, contracts and payment procedures must be developed for a subsidized taxi program.
Provide group transportation for special events	6 months	Lead agency should own vehicles. Lead agency will need to consider federal regulations regarding the use of publicly funded vehicles for private charter service.
Automobile assistance program	Ongoing	Very difficult to find funding sources for automobile subsidies.

## Low Priority Strategies

Figure 7-5 illustrates the three low priority strategies. These were identified in Chapter 6 as being lower priority either due to complexity of implementation or effectiveness of the strategy in addressing the needs of the target populations.

For example, **implementing automated trip planning/coordination software** has the potential to improve countywide coordination and service productivity; however, fully automated scheduling software can be prohibitively expensive. Even if several agencies were able to pool their resources to purchase a less expensive web-based trip planning program, for the software to be used effectively, staff at each agency would have to be trained to use the program. The logistics of pooling resources, hiring a software developer, and training a large number of staff at different agencies to use the new software make this strategy very difficult to implement.

A **car-sharing program** could provide tremendous mobility and accessibility benefits to low-income Mariposa County residents who cannot afford to own a vehicle. Unfortunately, studies show that car-sharing is more likely to succeed in an area with higher densities, more transit service, and better pedestrian access. When car-sharing has succeeded in rural areas, it has often been because of the efforts of a strong local champion, or a high degree of personal involvement by the car-sharing members. Success in Mariposa County would be contingent on finding a human services agency that was dedicated to making the program work, and could perhaps even encourage its clients to voluntarily administer the program (e.g., schedule

reservations, keep track of fees and dues) in exchange for free or reduced-cost program membership. Car-sharing projects are eligible for FTA 5316 funds. Other funding sources could include local funds, human service agency funds, or private contributions.

A **sidewalk improvements and a curb cut program** would be relatively easy to implement, but it can be costly to secure capital funds for this type of construction. New sidewalks can cost up to \$500,000 for a large block. Potential funding sources include FTA 5317, Proposition 1B, TDA and other sources of funds that can be used for public works capital projects.

**Figure 7-5 Implementing Low Priority Strategies**

Strategy (to address need/gap)	Timeframe	Comments
Implement automated trip planning/coordination software	Up to 1 year to plan, develop software, and train staff	Logistically very difficult to pool resources from several agencies, develop software, and train staff at multiple agencies.
Initiate a car-sharing program in Mariposa	Ongoing	Often requires a local champion or dedicated volunteers to achieve success in a rural area such as Mariposa County.
Implement sidewalk improvements and curb cut program	Sidewalks and curb cuts may take up to 5 years to implement; ongoing maintenance	Can be very costly to implement but significantly enhances the pedestrian environment to encourage transit use while allowing people to walk around their communities safely.

## Review of Plan Opportunities

The Coordinated Plan identifies strategies to address an array of needs identified by stakeholders and planners. Some opportunities identified in this plan are summarized in the following sections.

### Access to Jobs and Employment

Job access is a significant challenge in a rural county with a limited public transit network and limited service hours. Although some of Mariposa County’s major employers – Yosemite National Park, Yosemite View Lodge, Forestry and Fire Protection – afford some access to transit service, others have very limited access. Stakeholders talked about costly long distance travel and the lack of regularly scheduled transit services in communities where YARTS is not available.

Key opportunities to improve access to jobs and employment, as identified in this plan, include the expansion of the Community Link information and referral service to include comprehensive transportation information, the provision of Northern County transit service, the expansion of Mariposa County transit service (including better connections to YARTS), and an automobile assistance program. While these proposed strategies might not help people travel to jobs five days per week, they have the potential to expand residents’ employment opportunities by improving their access to job training resources and initial job interviews.

Participation by regional employers in the quarterly transportation workshops may also contribute to improved job access. The workshops would give employers, human service

agencies, and transportation providers the opportunity to share information about proposed strategies and existing services. Major employers did not fully participate in the development of this plan, but if they can encourage employees to use transit, possibly providing subsidies or enjoying tax breaks themselves, the level of mobility for work-related trips can be significantly enhanced in Mariposa County.

## **Volunteer Transportation**

Several of the needs identified in this plan are best addressed through volunteers. Insufficient service coverage by Mariposa County Transit, the need for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle at the John C. Fremont Hospital, the need for group transportation service for special events, and the need for a car-sharing program in Mariposa are all challenges that might be able to include volunteers as part of the solution.

Volunteers could play a role in new transit service to John C. Fremont Hospital, either by volunteering to drive, schedule trips, or provide assistance to seniors and people with disabilities on the bus. Volunteers may also have a role in group transportation service for special events by chaperoning the group event or serving as a volunteer driver. Lastly, in order for car-sharing to be viable in such a rural, low-density community, the program would likely rely on a group of dedicated volunteers who may receive free or reduced cost car-sharing memberships for in-kind services.

## **School Transportation**

In Mariposa County, the home-to-school transportation and transportation to after-school programs is completely separate from the public transportation system. Although YARTS affords access to college classes in Merced, and for high school students to travel to jobs or shopping opportunities, existing transit services in Mariposa County are not utilized by high school students.

An effort was made to include school transportation in the coordinated planning process in Mariposa County, and Mariposa Unified School District served as one of the planning stakeholders. District representatives expressed an interest in further coordination of services not only for students, but also for the general public and indicated a willingness to work with other agencies if funding is available and if regulations do not prohibit it. Mariposa County may want to advance efforts to work with Mariposa Unified School District because in selected rural communities across the US, school districts are transporting the general public on school buses, more often at times when the school buses are not being used for student transportation, but in some cases, at the same time.

Efforts to coordinate/integrate services are not limited to operations. Transit agencies and school districts, and in some cases, Head Start programs, have coordinated support services such as joint purchasing of fuel and maintenance service.

In California, there are no state statutes or regulations that prohibit using school buses to transport non-pupils.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, from the state perspective, the use of school buses — in particular the comingling of pupils and non-pupils on school buses — appears to be allowed as

---

<sup>9</sup> Based on Information provided by John Green, California Department of Education, for TCRP Report on Integrating School Bus and Public Transportation Services in Nonurban Communities, and confirmed via e-mails and a telephone conversation on June 27, 2008.

long as seating is available. Ultimately, though, the responsibility for school bus operations and policies is delegated to local districts. An agency may contract with the local school district to use buses for agency trips; however, the driver must have proper licensing to drive a school bus.

According to the California Department of Education, there have been sporadic uses of public school buses for transporting the general public, and an example in Mariposa County is using school buses to shuttle the public to the Fairgrounds. California Department of Education staff is not aware of any instances in California where the general public is being transported along with students on home-to-school routes.

Mariposa Head Start is supported through Federal Head Start and First Five California Commission grants. Mariposa Head Start owns one van (with car seats built in) that has room for fourteen children plus one parent. The van transports students to the Head Start program from August through April. During the summer months the van is used for the migrant Head Start program in Madera County.

## **Non-Emergency Medical Transportation**

It is possible for local providers (including public agencies and non-profit organizations) to become providers of non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) under existing Medi-Cal arrangements.

Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid health insurance program. It pays for a variety of medical services for children and adults with limited income and resources. People receiving Medi-Cal covered services may be provided NEMT at Medi-Cal's expense under certain very limited circumstances. Medi-Cal will pay for NEMT only when it is provided by a carrier licensed by Medi-Cal, and only when the individual's medical condition requires transport by a wheelchair van, litter van, or ambulance. Although the rules limit NEMT to people who need a wheelchair van, ambulance or litter van, this can include people who just need a high level of care, for example very frail dialysis patients, even though they do not need to use a lift or ramp.

In Mariposa County, only one of the transportation providers contacted as part of the inventory — Mercy Medical Transport — identified themselves as a Medi-Cal NEMT provider. If other providers were to become Medi-Cal NEMT vendors, it would help improve access to medical care for people who have difficulty using other modes, including ADA paratransit, volunteer transportation, or taxicabs.

NEMT is free to the rider. Medi-Cal's standard rates for NEMT are currently \$17.65 per patient plus \$1.30 per mile with a patient on-board. The pick-up rate is reduced when multiple patients are picked up at the same time. Effective July 1, 2008 a 10% reduction from the standard rates is in effect as part of the state deficit reduction program. These rates may not be sufficient to recover the full cost of providing service (or for a private provider to make a profit), but they would pay for the major portion of actual cost in a public operation. Medi-Cal payments would qualify as match for New Freedom funding.

In the Bay Area, the Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority (ECCTA, or "Tri-Delta") has created an NEMT program called MedVan. It uses a separate fleet of vehicles and accepts referrals from social workers and medical providers just as a private provider of NEMT would. According to Tri-Delta staff, they got involved because there is a shortage of NEMT providers in their area

and this was limiting Medi-Cal clients' ability to get rides. They report that Medi-Cal staff were eager to help them complete the paperwork to become qualified for the program. Requirements for vehicles and driver training are similar to those already met by agencies using federal transit funding. The fact that MedVan is separate from Tri-Delta's dial-a-ride program may help deal with the issue sometimes encountered of whether Medi-Cal will pay full price or only the public fare—there is no public fare for this program. Most of the MedVan riders are going to dialysis. They are not necessarily wheelchair users.

If an agency wishes to make its NEMT service available to riders who are not covered by Medi-Cal, the announced fare would need to at least equal the rate charged to Medi-Cal. However, it might be possible to provide subsidies for this fare. Another limitation concerns use of facilities funded with certain Federal transit grants.

Forms and instructions for becoming an NEMT provider are available on the Medi-Cal web site at [http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/prov\\_enroll.asp](http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/prov_enroll.asp).

## Summary and Next Steps

Mariposa County has committed agencies and transit staff that seek to improve mobility for seniors, people with disabilities and individuals with low incomes. Most of the highest priority strategies can be implemented within one year, but some strategies are ongoing. Those strategies with a number of partners that are interested in taking a leadership role are the most likely to have the greatest impact and be the most successful because they show support from a broad base of agencies and providers. Some other considerations that will impact the success of a program are as follows:

- **Partnerships with the Mariposa County LTC and YARTS.** The Mariposa County LTC and YARTS' access to financial, operational and management resources can help ensure that new services or projects are supported as they build and sustain the momentum necessary for success.
- **A broad base of funding support.** Local project sponsors must identify several funding sources that can be used to start a new service and provide ongoing support to keep services operational beyond any initial grant funding periods. The most successful coordinated planning projects typically include services that are developed with a broad range of funding partners.
- **Strong marketing to support new services.** Marketing/promotional efforts to raise awareness, especially among job seekers, job developers and job placement organizations, and to garner employer and community buy-in, are essential.
- **Ongoing evaluation of service ridership/productivity.** Most successful projects evolve by tailoring services in response to user and sponsor feedback. Collecting timely information allows sponsors to track program progress and refine services as needed. Evaluation results also support marketing and outreach campaigns.

The initial impetus for this plan was to meet federal requirements in order to apply for SAFTEA-LU funds: FTA Section 5310, FTA Section 5316 (JARC), and FTA Section 5317 (New Freedom) programs. In the process of developing the plan, it became clear that stakeholders were participating in the process for more than funds alone. This plan can be a blueprint for programs and projects to increase the mobility of older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income

individuals. By increasing mobility for these targeted populations, the mobility of all Mariposa County residents can be improved.

Community leaders and citizens who participated in the development of this Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan can use it to make transportation a “coordination issue” in Mariposa County. Coordinating around transportation provides a basis for greater communication between the agencies to address needs that are common to most clients and consumers.

After this plan has been adopted and distributed, it is recommended that stakeholders reconvene to identify specific individuals and agencies with the willingness and capacity to move the implementation of the strategies forward.





# **APPENDIX A**

---

## **STAKEHOLDERS**



## Appendix A. Stakeholders

Following is a list of stakeholder organizations whose representatives provided input in the development of this plan.

- Adult Protective Services (division of County Social Services)
- Area 12 Agency on Aging
- Central Valley Regional Center
- Child Protective Services (division of County Social Services)
- Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living (DRAIL)
- Employment Development Department
- First Five
- Heartland Opportunity Center
- Infant/Child Enrichment Services
- John C. Fremont Hospital and Healthcare District
- Juniper Crest Airport Shuttle
- Mariposa Behavioral Health and Recovery Services/Mental Health
- Mariposa Chamber of Commerce
- Mariposa County
- Mariposa County Department of Human Services
- Mariposa County Transit
- Mariposa County Unified School District
- Mariposa Head Start
- Mariposa Indian Health Clinic
- Mariposa Safe Families
- Mercy Medical Transport
- Mountain Crisis Services
- Salvation Army
- Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)



## **APPENDIX B**

---

### WORKSHOP PUBLICITY AND ATTENDANCE

