

# 2023 Preliminary Draft Unmet Transit and Paratransit Needs List

## Prioritization of Need:

**H - High** priority items are those items that fill a gap or absence of ongoing of service.

**M - Medium** priority items that supplement existing service.

**L - Low** priority items should become more specific and then be planned for, as funds are available.

**1-3 Graduated scale** indicates to what extent the need, if addressed, would: increase the number of individuals who are within a 30-minute transit trip to key destinations; increase transit mode share and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; improve safety; support economic vitality by way of decreasing transportation costs; or, improve cost-effectiveness of transportation services.

## Strategies:

- Proposals and suggestions to address need, including programs and projects.
- **Updates since the 2022 Unmet Transit and Paratransit Needs list are shown using underline and strikeout.**

## General

1. **H1** - Safe travel paths between senior and/or disabled living areas, medical facilities, educational facilities, employment locations, retail centers, entertainment venues, bus stops, and/or potential future transit stations on the rail line.
  - Improve accessibility at and to bus stops - such as, but not limited to, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements connecting destinations frequented by senior and disabled individuals and transit stops such as, but not limited to, those identified in the RTC Safe Paths of Travel Final Report.
  - Secure funding assistance to make Safe Paths of Travel improvements.
  - Expand publicity regarding sidewalk maintenance.
2. **H1** - Transportation services to areas with high concentrations of seniors, disabled and low income individuals.
  - Support alternative transportation programs, such as vanpool programs, serving low income and senior housing areas outside of the transit service area in south county.
  - Explore pilot projects, such as regularly scheduled paratransit trips two-three times per week, to serve residents.

- Secure funding for taxi voucher programs for senior and low income individuals.
  - Provide affordable and desirable housing for seniors and low income individuals within the existing transit service area.
  - Provide incentives for senior and social services and medical and social services providers to be located in existing transit service areas.
  - Support programs that encourage ridesharing to destinations popular with seniors or high concentrations of seniors.
  - Seek volunteer drivers to provide transportation services.
  - Evaluate on-demand transit services.
  - Increase bus service near senior living facilities.
3. **H3** - Transportation services for low-income families with children, including transportation for people transitioning from welfare to work.
- Support welfare to work programs and training programs.
  - Support transportation programs dedicated to serving low-income families with children.
  - Seek volunteer drivers for transportation family members to visits at detention facilities.
  - Provide taxi vouchers to low income families.
  - Reinstate ride to work programs.
  - Provide youth bus passes to low income households
4. **H1** - Transportation services for caregivers of senior and disabled clients.
- Support programs providing transportation for caregivers to clients.
  - Provide taxi voucher to caregivers.
  - Reinstate ride to work programs.

### **Paratransit/Specialized Transportation Services**

5. **H1** - Coordinated and seamless-to-the-public system of specialized transportation with a Mobility Management Center (central information point, one stop shop).
- Assess feasibility and seek funds for development/start-up of the center, and assess entities already providing information and referral services).
  - Utilize information technology solutions to provide transit information that is accessible to all users.
6. **H1** - Wheel chair accessible vehicles for taxis and transportation network company services
- ~~Monitor the Transportation Network Company (TNC) Access for All program.~~

- ~~Evaluate other comparable options to provide services (i.e. new companies, subcontract with services equipped with wheelchair vehicles).~~
- Provide on demand paratransit service.
- Ensure accessible public taxi service for those using mobility devices.
- ~~Ensure accessible on demand ride share service for those using mobility devices.~~
- Add multi-person ride access to on-demand TNC ride share services to lower cost and carbon footprint.

7. **M1** - Paratransit service for the people who lost paratransit service due to changes in Santa Cruz Metro ParaCruz program in 2015.
  - Support policies that expand ADA mandated paratransit service area.
  - Support programs providing specialized transportation to areas outside the ADA-mandated paratransit service area for a fee or at no cost.
  - Expand taxi voucher program.
8. **H2** – Access to paratransit services on all holidays.
  - Extend existing paratransit services to holidays.
  - Support taxi voucher programs.
9. **H1** - Specialized transportation for areas outside the ADA-mandated paratransit service area for medical, non-medical trips.
  - Secure funding for taxi voucher programs.
  - Provide affordable and desirable housing for seniors and disabled individuals within ADA paratransit service area.
  - Provide incentives for senior and social services to be located in transit service areas.
  - Support programs providing specialized transportation to areas outside the ADA-mandated paratransit service area for a fee or at no cost.
  - Support continuous funding for transportation to medical services.
  - Seek volunteer drivers to provide transportation services from areas not served by transit or ADA paratransit service.
  - Identify priority origins and destinations outside the ADA service area.
10. **H1**- Free or low-cost paratransit options.
  - Provide funding for programs that provide discounted and free paratransit rides.

- Support programs that provide on-demand ADA accessible rides.
  - Support increased specialized transportation services to low-income and disabled individuals for educational and work opportunities at higher education institutions (UCSC and Cabrillo).
11. **H2** - Direct paratransit and accessible transit connections with neighboring counties- including Monterey (Pajaro), San Benito, Santa Clara and other points north.
- Establish direct inter-regional fixed route accessible transit service.
  - Develop plan to coordinate between agencies providing specialized transportation services in neighboring counties.
  - Support programs providing inter-regional specialized transportation for a fee or at no cost.
  - Establish feeder services to inter-regional accessible transit services.
12. **M1** - Affordable transportation for dialysis and other medical appointments, including 'same day' specialized transportation services for medical trips, on a continuous basis.
- Support continuous funding for 'same day' transportation to medical and emergency services.
  - Support continuous funding for no or low-cost specialized transportation to medical appointments.
  - Increase capacity of existing programs providing transportation to dialysis and other medical appointments.
  - Secure funding for taxi voucher programs.
13. **M2** - Transportation for programs that promote senior and disabled individuals health, safety and independence including, but not limited to, all senior meal sites in the county, the stroke centers, medical facilities, and senior activity centers.
- Support continuous funding for transportation services to meal sites.
  - Provide transit and paratransit services to medical service centers.
  - Support volunteer drivers to provide transportation services.
14. **M2** – Conduct targeted outreach to seniors, people living with disabilities, and transportation service providers to provide information about transportation options and safety.
- Provide safe driving and transit information at locations with concentrations of seniors.
  - Support field trips to events by bus ("Mobility Trainer" and "Bus by Choice" models)
  - Annual updates to transportation service providers including, but not limited to, providers included in the Guide for Specialized Transportation about paratransit service options.

15. **L2** - Publicity about existing specialized transportation services including ADA paratransit, non-ADA paratransit, taxi services, Medi-Cal rides and mobility training for people to use regular fixed route buses.
  - Streamline communication activities by establishing a central point of contact within health providers to disseminate information about specialized transportation services.
  - Support continuous funding for communication and outreach activities.
16. **H2** - Volunteer drivers in Santa Cruz County particularly in south-county and San Lorenzo Valley.
  - Expand outreach efforts to recruit drivers and promote services.
  - Support for the Volunteer Center Transportation Program.
17. **M2** - Affordable special care trips and gurney vehicle for medically fragile individuals and those needing "bed to bed" transportation.
  - Provide vouchers for specialized care trips.
  - Identify a service provider for gurney trips and assist in procurement of a vehicle for services.
  - Partner with assisted living and hospice care to provide services.
  - Publicize availability of services, if available.
18. **M3** - Ongoing provision of ADA Paratransit certification, provided by Santa Cruz Metro, at group facilities.
  - Provide on-site services to reach a greater number of individuals.
19. **M3** - Specialized transportation services for people living with a cognitive impairments, dementia or mental health diagnosis.
  - Provide on demand transportation services for people living with a mental health diagnosis.
  - Provide services designated to assisting people with mental illness navigate transit and paratransit eligibility requirements.
20. **L1** - Specialized transportation for 'same day' low cost non-medical trips.
  - Expand taxi voucher program.
  - Support "on-call" volunteer drive programs.
21. **L3** - Anticipate growing demand for services by projecting funding needs for specialized transportation (including fixed route, ADA and non-ADA Paratransit) to provide transportation services to the senior population expected to increase over the next 15 to 30 years.
  - Identify funding needs for paratransit over a 15-30 year horizon.
  - Designated funding source for paratransit service.

22. **M1** - Provide increased UCSC on-campus paratransit service between campus to campus destinations.
- Increase existing UCSC specialized transportation services to supplement increased demand.

### **Paratransit/Specialized Transportation Capital**

23. **H1** - ParaCruz operating facilities.
- Acquire and develop permanent operations and maintenance facility for ParaCruz to reduce operating cost.
  - Increase funding opportunities for paratransit capital projects.
24. **M2** - Consolidated Transportation Services Agency operating facilities.
- Increase funding opportunities for paratransit capital projects.
25. **H2** - Paratransit vehicle replacements.
- Increase funding opportunities for paratransit capital projects including funding for electric vehicles and/or zero emission vehicles.
  - Take measures to include electric vehicles as option for purchase in the Section 5310 grant program.
26. **H2** – Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
- Support funding for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Provide an electric vehicle emergency preparedness plan that includes battery storage, vehicles, and facilities.

### **Transit Services**

27. **H1** – Greater frequency and span of transit service in densely populated areas with a mix of land uses.
- Increase service level between downtown Santa Cruz and Capitola Mall Transit Center through the Live Oak corridor.
  - Enhance service on Mission Street.
  - Extend transit service hours later in the evening and early in the morning serving Cabrillo College and commercial centers of Santa Cruz/Live Oak/ Watsonville.
  - Enhance service to employment entities.
  - Enhance service on Scotts Valley Drive.
  - Enhance service in Soquel and Old San Jose Road.
  - Enhance service in Aptos.
  - Enhance service in Corralitos.

28. **H1** – Greater evening frequency and span of transit service in coverage-oriented areas, in keeping with METRO service standards.
- San Lorenzo Valley Route 35 variants (Mt. Store and Country Club)
  - Local Watsonville services
  - La Selva Beach
  - ~~Consider~~ Creating “All Nighter” (24-hour) circular bus network providing late-night and early-morning bus service ~~in~~ county wide, downtown areas
29. **M1** – More transit service to UCSC.
- Increase weekend and weekday UCSC service.
  - Increase service to UCSC campus.
  - Increase service to the University of Santa Cruz employment center in Scotts Valley.
30. **H1** - More interregional and cross county transit services.
- Increase Hwy 17 weekend service frequency.
  - Provide transit service from Santa Cruz County to Los Gatos.
  - Provide direct transit service to San Jose Airport.
  - Enhance Monterey County to Santa Cruz County service including connections to the Salinas Intermodal Transportation Center
  - Support for an integrated transit network, which includes transit services on a dedicated transit facility on the rail right-of-way consistent with the Unified Corridor Investment Study and the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis.
  - Provide direct bus transit service from San Lorenzo Valley to Los Gatos.
  - Provide direct transit connection between Live Oak and San Jose Diridon Station.
  - Implementation of express bus service using bus-on-shoulder operations on Hwy 1.
31. **H1** – Free and low-cost transportation options, including fixed-route transit services.
- Support programs that provide transportation services, including, but not limited to bus services, for a reduced or no fee.
  - Seek volunteer drivers to provide transportation services. Support programs that allow seniors, disabled, and low-income individuals to ride free during designated time periods.

- Provide free transit rides to jurors, veterans, and fare-free federal or non-federal election days.

32. **H3M1** – More transit service between primary destinations in Santa Cruz County.

- Provide service between Capitola Mall and Cabrillo.
- Expand transit service to new residential and commercial areas in Watsonville.
- Improve north - south transit connections (ex. Soquel Ave/Drive \ to coastal communities).
- Support for an integrated transit network, which includes transit services on a dedicated transit facility on the rail right-of-way consistent with Unified Corridor Investment Study and the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis.
- Provide single trip service.
- Provide express bus service from Watsonville to Scotts Valley.
- Increase bus service to libraries, ~~and other~~ public venues, and public agencies.
- Increased transit service using bus-on-shoulder facilities on Hwy 1 and transit prioritization on Soquel Drive.
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33. **M2** - More transit service to facilities providing medical, health and other social services.

- Provide transit service to medical facilities.
- Provide medical, health, and social services within the existing transit service area.

34. **M2** - Access to transportation services on all holidays.

- Provide regular Santa Cruz Metro service on holidays.
- Support taxi voucher programs.
- Support volunteer transportation services.

35. **H2** - Easier and faster transit trips system wide.

- Enhance connections through increasing the span and frequency of service.

36. **H2** - Faster run times on transit routes.

- Investigate opportunities for transit priority lanes and signal priority.
- ~~Pursue right turn pockets for bypass lanes for buses service and transit priority on Soquel Ave/Drive and Freedom consistent with the Unified Corridor Investment Study.~~
- Consider direct services between more locations, reducing need for transfers.



37. **M2** - Intra-community service in Santa Cruz County communities.
  - Develop San Lorenzo Valley circulator.
  - Develop Scotts Valley circulator.
  - Investigate need for intra-community and neighborhood transit services
  - Consider partnerships with ride-hail and/or taxi services for first/last mile connections.
  - Develop Micro Transit programs in San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley, Soquel, Aptos, and Watsonville.
  
38. **L2** - Transit service to major tourist destinations.
  - Provide transit service to Waddell Creek and North Coast and Highway 17 direct service to Boardwalk on weekends.
  
39. **H2** - Commuter transit service.
  - Extend Highway 17 service to Watsonville, or improve connections between Watsonville-Santa Cruz service and Highway 17 service.
  - Provide faster commute option for transit riders between SLV and Santa Cruz.
  
40. **L3** - Special event services.
  - Establish program to coordinate with Santa Cruz Visitor Center and partner agencies to provide special event services.

## **Transit Capital**

41. **H3** – Bus stops.
  - Provide ADA compliant bus stops.
  - Prioritize bus stop improvements and shelter replacement based on high usage by seniors and people with disabilities.
  - Install braille and raised numbers on bus signage at bus stops indicating which bus routes are being offered at each stop (or a technology-based way finding alternative).
  - Provide the ability to lower the height of braille for wheelchair access.
  - Work with local jurisdictions to provide bus shelters, benches and ~~increased~~ lighting at all bus stops and connecting crosswalks including in-pavement lighting fixtures, solar LED overhead lights, and in-road warning lights.
  - Increase sidewalk connectivity at bus stops and overhead LED lighting at connecting crosswalks.

- Reinststate and fund bus stop committee to study and monitor bus stop accessibility.
  - Add bus stop at intersection of Granite Creek Rd and Santa’s Village Rd on the southwest corner after Hwy17 exit 5.
  - Install bus stop amenities such as digital bus tracking and information displays, USB charging, and Wi-Fi for transit users.
  - Construct bus shelters at all park and ride lots in Santa Cruz County.
42. **M1** – Maintenance of existing transit facilities.
- Support funding for maintenance of bus stops, parking lots, transit centers, buildings.
43. **H1** – Bus replacement: Replace buses beyond useful life as needed including buses, including buses providing rural service.
- Support funding for transit capital improvements.
  - Support funding for electric vehicle bus replacements and electric vehicle charging stations.
44. **H1** - Transit station improvements.
- Investigate options for renovation or redevelopment of Santa Cruz Metro Center.
  - Coordinate improvements to Capitola Transit Center with Capitola Mall ownership.
  - Coordinate improvements of the Watsonville Transit Center’s transit facilities and provide increased parking.
  - Install bike lockers at transit stations.
45. **H1** - Faster transit travel times.
- Installation of transponders on all buses for signal priority on major corridors improving traffic flow, reducing travel time, and improving on-time performance.
  - ~~Support and seek funding for bus on shoulder on Highway 1.~~
46. **H1** – Dedicated transit facilities.
- Right-of-way improvements and stations along Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line if a bus rapid transit (BRT) or rail service is developed consistent with the Unified Corridor Investment Study and the Transit Corridor Alternatives Analysis.
  - Multimodal transfer facilities at stations along the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line if BRT or rail service is developed.
  - ~~Implementation of bus on shoulder operations on portions of Hwy 1.~~
47. **H3** - New equipment to assist with real-time operations, security, scheduling and planning.

- Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) System to provide better monitoring of on-time performance and more accurate data reporting.
- Automatic Passenger Counting (APC) system to make mandatory reporting more efficient and improve data for service planning.
- Install audio and video surveillance system for all buses.
- Install audio and video surveillance system for all buses
- Electronic fare payment for more convenient payment options and to speed up boarding.
- Modernize planning and scheduling software for more efficient service planning and better community outreach.

48. **M1**– More multimodal connections to transit.

- Construct park and ride lots in strategic locations along inter-city routes that lack adequate feeder service.
- Bike lockers and/or bike share stations at key locations to facilitate first/last mile of travel.
- Dedicated a park and ride lot near Hwy 1, connecting to transit service in Watsonville.

49. **M3** - Wifi expansion on buses.

- Install wifi equipment at all facilities and on all buses.
- Partner with private companies to provide wifi.