



Staff Report

To: Council of Governments
 From: Veronica Lezama, Transportation Planner Telephone: (831) 637-7665
 Date: February 19 and 21, 2013
 Subject: Unmet Transit Needs Hearing

Recommendation:

- a. **RECEIVE** Report on Unmet Transit Needs Hearing.
- b. **OPEN** Public Hearing.
- c. **CLOSE** Public Hearing.
- d. **DIRECT** Staff to Return to Council of Governments with Recommendation.

Summary:

Each year, the Council of Governments (COG) is responsible for conducting Unmet Transit Needs Hearings to provide a forum for residents, transit users, and community members to comment on the local bus service provided by County Express and Jovenes de Antaño.

Financial Considerations:

The primary funding source for transit services operated by County Express and Jovenes de Antaño is provided by Transportation Development Act funds. In order to receive these funds, COG must hold annual Unmet Transit Needs hearings.

Unmet Transit Needs that can be met are paid for with Transportation Development Act funds. The annual average Transportation Development Act funds total \$1,665,000, which funds transit operations (\$1,262,702), COG administration (\$234,437) and 2% (\$25,254) is reserved for City and County bicycle and pedestrian needs.

Background:

The Council of Governments (COG) holds annual Unmet Transit Needs hearings to provide a forum for residents, transit users, and community members to express service needs provided by the Local Transportation Authority, which include County Express and Jovenes de Antaño. Unmet Transit Needs are defined as “expressed or identified needs of a significant segment of the community for public transportation services to meet basic mobility needs which are not currently being met through existing transit services or other means of transportation.”

Each year, COG identifies any "unmet transit need" that may exist in the San Benito County region. If an "unmet transit need" is identified, a further determination is needed to establish whether or not that need is "reasonable to meet" in accordance with COG adopted criteria. If an Unmet Transit Need is found "reasonable to meet," then COG is responsible for ensuring that funds are expended to meet any needs. However, if those needs are determined as "not reasonable to meet" then that determination is submitted to the State and the funds are allowed to maintain in the COG budget for existing transit operations.

A summary of last year's public requests and staff responses are enclosed for the Board's information (Attachment 1).

Staff Analysis:

The Council of Governments holds two annual hearings to receive public testimony on the bus services provided by County Express and Jovenes de Antaño. The first hearing was held on February 19, 2013 at the Hollister Community Center. The second hearing will be held at the regularly scheduled Council of Governments board meeting on February 21, 2013. After the hearings process, the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and staff review all the testimony received and provide a recommended determination of Unmet Transit Needs to the Council of Governments Board of Directors. The Social Services Transportation Advisory Council is responsible for representing the concerns of all segments of the community, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons of limited means.

Staff will return to the Board with a recommendation at a future meeting based on the Adopted Definitions and Procedures for Noticing and Conducting the Annual Unmet Transit Needs Hearings.

Executive Director Review: _____

Counsel Review: N/A

Supporting Attachment(s)

2012 Unmet Transit Needs Hearings Requests and Responses