

SHORT-RANGE TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023 UPDATE

Technical Memorandum 1: Existing Conditions



Prepared for the
Mendocino Transit Authority



June 27, 2023



Mendocino Transit Authority
Short Range Transit Development Plan
2023 Update

Technical Memorandum 1
Existing Conditions

Prepared for

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INTRODUCTION

Mobility is an essential issue that influences the economy, environment, and overall well-being across a region. Mendocino County is large, rural, and rugged, making mobility a distinct challenge for many local residents. Public transit is an important transportation alternative that plays a significant role in helping mobility-limited individuals in Mendocino County get where they need to go. The Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) is the primary public transit provider serving Mendocino County, operating both fixed route and complementary paratransit services. In addition to helping people in need of transportation assistance, the MTA also supports a range of other benefits for Mendocino County such as decreased road congestion, improved air quality, better community health, and more small business activity.



The MTA has retained LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., to prepare an update to the Authority's Short Range Transit Development Plan (SRTDP). The SRTDP analyzes the current setting for transportation in Mendocino County and then identifies alternatives to improve transit services over the next five years to either better meet the needs of residents or to be more efficient. This *Technical Memorandum One: Existing Conditions* first reviews the factors influencing transit demand in Mendocino County, such as regional demographic information and existing unmet transit needs. Existing transit providers, as well as other intercounty services which operate within the county, are then summarized in Chapter 3. In the fourth chapter, a performance analysis of recent MTA operations is conducted to determine the effectiveness of the current public transit services. The information presented in this report will be used to inform the development of service, capital, funding, and institutional alternatives to be considered for inclusion in the final, updated MTA SRTDP.

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STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS

STUDY AREA

Mendocino County is located along the scenic coast of northern California, approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco. The landscape ranges from stunning coastline to dense redwood forests and picturesque vineyards. While massive in size at 3,509 square miles, Mendocino County is home to only 91,305 residents, resulting in a population density of only 25 persons per square mile. Bisected by the Coastal Mountains, the county is split into distinctive inland and coastal regions, with about two-thirds of the population living within the inland region.



There are four incorporated cities and nineteen census-designated places (CDPs) in Mendocino County. The largest inland communities include the Cities of Ukiah, the county seat, and Willits, the “Gateway to the Redwoods,” as well as the CDPs of Brooktrails and Redwood Valley. Some of the larger communities along the Mendocino County coastline include the Cities of Fort Bragg and Point Arena, and the CDP of Mendocino. There are also ten registered tribal nations within Mendocino County: the Cahto Tribe, the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, the Guidiville Indian Rancheria, the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians, the Manchester Band of Pomo Indians, the Pinoleville Pomo Nation, the Potter Valley Tribe, the Redwood Valley Little River Band of Pomo, the Round Valley Reservation, and the Sherwood Valley Rancheria. Most local economic activity is generated by the agricultural, healthcare, tourism, and government sectors.

Figure 1 shows the study area and important roadways. Mendocino County’s road network includes city streets, county roads, state routes, and United States (US) highways. There are no interstates. US 1 and 101 are the major north-south roadways for the region; US 1 travels along the coastline and US 101 travels further inland through the Russian River Valley. People can take US 101 to travel south to Santa Rosa. Both US 1 and 101 provide connections to the San Francisco Bay Area. Major east-west roadways traversing the Coastal Mountains and providing connectivity between the two regions of Mendocino County include California (CA) 20, 128, 175, and 253, Mountain View Road, and Comptche Ukiah Road. Both CA 20 and 175 travel eastward into Lake County, from which travelers can continue onwards eventually to Interstate 5 in the Sacramento River Valley. Given the geography of Mendocino County, a large portion of the county’s roads are narrow, meandering, and difficult to navigate.



**Figure 1
Study Area**



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Historic and Projected Population

It is important when planning transit services to not only consider current characteristics of the population living in the service area, but also how the population will likely change with time. Historical population information, sourced from the US Census Bureau, for Mendocino County and its incorporated cities (as well as unincorporated Brooktrails) is shown in Table 1. From 2010 to 2020, the Mendocino County population remained incredibly consistent in size, decreasing by only 737 persons (-0.8 percent) (Table 1). This trend differed from the State of California, however, which saw a population increase of 6 percent during the same time period. The communities which experienced the greatest growth from 2010 to 2020 were Brooktrails (30 percent) and Fort Bragg (1 percent). Point Arena, Ukiah, and Willits all saw either neutral or negative population growth (Table 1). This data indicates that future growth will likely be concentrated in unincorporated areas near Ukiah and Willits (which are more difficult to serve with fixed route transit service) or near Fort Bragg.

	2010		2015		2020	
	Population	% Annual Growth	Population	% Annual Growth	Population	% Annual Growth
Mendocino County	87,847	--	87,544	-0.1%	87,110	-0.1%
Brooktrails	3,495	--	3,225	-1.6%	4,559	6.9%
Fort Bragg	7,196	--	7,261	0.2%	7,279	0.0%
Point Arena	476	--	391	-3.9%	407	0.8%
Ukiah	15,942	--	15,936	0.0%	15,963	0.0%
Willits	4,913	--	4,853	-0.2%	4,895	0.2%
Balance of the County	55,825	--	55,878	0.0%	54,007	-0.7%
State of California	37,253,956	--	38,907,642	0.9%	39,538,223	0.3%

Source: US Census and California Department of Finance.
 Note 1: Brooktrails is an unincorporated community but the fourth largest community in Mendocino County.

While Mendocino County’s overall population size is not expected to change much in upcoming decades, the average age of residents is predicted to increase significantly. Population projections by age category for Mendocino County, based on data from the US Census Bureau and the California Department of Finance (DOF), are shown in Table 2. The total population numbers shown in Table 2 differ slightly from those in Table 1 as they represent population projections from the State. Highlights of the projection data include:

- Mendocino County’s population will continue to stay relatively consistent in size for the next twenty years, experiencing positive growth from 2020 to 2030 (2 percent), before declining in the decade following (-1 percent).
- The number of children ages 5 to 17 will decrease from 2020 levels (-7 percent by 2040).
- The number of college-aged adults (18 to 24) is also expected to decrease from 2020 to 2040 (-7 percent).

Table 2: Population Projections by Age Category

Year	Total (All Ages)	Preschool (0-4 years)	School Age to Young Adult (5-17 years)	College Age (18-24 years)	Working Age (25-64 years)	Young Retirees (65-74 years)	Mature Retirees (75-84 years)	Older Seniors (85 or older)
2010	87,847	5,468	13,167	7,065	48,464	7,739	3,972	1,972
2020	87,698	4,823	12,830	7,306	42,441	12,778	5,615	1,904
2030	89,404	4,863	11,908	7,563	41,261	10,435	10,017	3,357
2040	88,483	4,889	11,921	6,823	41,680	8,670	8,326	6,174
2010 to 2020 Change								
Number	-149	-645	-337	241	-6,024	5,039	1,644	-68
Percent	-0.2%	-11.8%	-2.6%	3.4%	-12.4%	65.1%	41.4%	-3.4%
2020 to 2030 Change								
Number	1,706	40	-922	257	-1,179	-2,343	4,401	1,453
Percent	1.9%	0.8%	-7.2%	3.5%	-2.8%	-18.3%	78.4%	76.3%
2030 to 2040 Change								
Number	-922	26	12	-740	419	-1,765	-1,690	2,817
Percent	-1.0%	0.5%	0.1%	-9.8%	1.0%	-16.9%	-16.9%	83.9%

Sources: US Census Bureau, California Department of Finance. Report P-28: Population Projections by Individual Year of Age, 2010-2060, California Counties

- Mendocino County has experienced a significant decrease in the size of the adult population of traditional working age (25 to 64) in recent years (-12 percent), but this trend is expected to stabilize, with only a 2 percent decrease expected from 2020 to 2040.
- From 2020 to 2040, the senior population between the ages 65 and 74 is expected to decrease in size faster than any other age bracket as Baby Boomers age (-32 percent).
- Seniors between the ages of 75 and 84 are expected to increase in numbers by over 78 percent between 2020 and 2030 before declining sharply in the next decade (-17 percent).
- The older senior population (85 and older) will experience significant growth this decade (76 percent) before increasing even more during the next decade (84 percent). This growth will result in the population of older seniors living in Mendocino County in 2040 being more than three times as large compared to 2020. This age group will be the most likely to become transit dependent.

Overall, the population forecast for Mendocino County reveals how the population will age significantly in coming years as the number of senior adults ages 75 and older nearly doubles (93 percent increase from 2020 to 2040). It is likely the bigger senior adult population will result in increased demand for public transit. New or expanded transit services should focus on meeting the needs of this growing senior population. Examples of transit services popular among seniors are demand response, paratransit, or non-emergency medical transportation programs.

Transit Dependent Population

Transit services are often designed to specifically meet the needs of the transit dependent population. The group of potentially transit dependent persons within a region is typically considered to be youths, senior adults, persons with a disability, low-income persons, and persons who live in zero-vehicle households. These groups are all less likely to be able to drive their own personal vehicles, and therefore more likely to rely on transit to get where they need to go.

Demographic data about where potentially transit dependent persons live within Mendocino County is shown in Table 3 at the census tract level, with detailed figures depicting this data included in Appendix A. Obviously, the demographic groups considered to be transit dependent are not exclusive from each other, and some people may fall into more than one category and therefore be double counted. Despite this technicality, the census data is still valuable in showing trends regarding where large numbers of persons who may benefit from transit live.

Highlights from Table 3 include:

- About one out of every five Mendocino County residents (21 percent) are estimated to be **youth** (children younger than 18), which is almost the same rate as the State of California (22 percent). El Roble, Willits, Redwood Valley, Fort Bragg, and Calpella are all home to high numbers of children, with each community being located in a census tract that is home to 6 percent or more of the county's total youth population.

Table 3: Mendocino County Demographic Characteristics

Census Tract	Area Description	Square Miles	Total Persons	Total Households	Youth (Under 18 Years)		Seniors (65+)		Persons with a Disability		Persons Below Poverty Level		Zero-Vehicle Households	
					#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
101	Covelo	777.3	2,839	1,011	690	3.5%	481	2.3%	450	2.6%	773	5.4%	100	3.9%
102	Leggett, Laytonville	739.9	3,655	1,534	419	2.1%	1,182	5.8%	757	4.4%	1,083	7.6%	76	2.9%
103	Alpine, Cleone	184.3	4,329	1,719	771	3.9%	1,410	6.9%	885	5.1%	347	2.4%	25	1.0%
104	Fort Bragg / Downtown	2.7	3,116	1,423	530	2.7%	853	4.2%	800	4.6%	490	3.4%	179	6.9%
105	Fort Bragg / Noyo Harbor	1.4	4,562	1,783	1,340	6.8%	938	4.6%	826	4.8%	821	5.8%	388	15.0%
106.01	Ridgewood Park	103.7	2,555	968	422	2.2%	768	3.7%	600	3.5%	439	3.1%	11	0.4%
106.02	Brooktrails / Arnold	182.8	4,363	1,663	1,087	5.5%	904	4.4%	856	5.0%	312	2.2%	80	3.1%
107	Willits	10.1	7,019	2,889	1,412	7.2%	1,794	8.8%	1,553	9.0%	1,245	8.7%	496	19.2%
108.01	Redwood Valley	70.3	5,827	2,057	1,333	6.8%	873	4.3%	836	4.8%	758	5.3%	129	5.0%
108.02	Potter Valley	120.1	1,673	692	286	1.5%	382	1.9%	341	2.0%	172	1.2%	0	0.0%
109	Calpella	133.5	5,008	1,725	1,175	6.0%	981	4.8%	882	5.1%	455	3.2%	94	3.6%
110.01	Little River / Albion	80.8	2,070	992	156	0.8%	827	4.0%	424	2.5%	322	2.3%	18	0.7%
110.03	Fort Bragg / Caspar	27.2	4,001	1,545	596	3.0%	952	4.6%	1,286	7.5%	518	3.6%	48	1.9%
110.04	Caspar / Mendocino	70.5	2,458	1,117	332	1.7%	969	4.7%	275	1.6%	211	1.5%	0	0.0%
111.02	Point Arena / Anchor Bay	320.9	4,427	1,876	852	4.3%	1,299	6.3%	537	3.1%	432	3.0%	39	1.5%
112	Boonville / Comptche / Philo	250.5	3,353	1,040	604	3.1%	851	4.2%	397	2.3%	786	5.5%	36	1.4%
113	El Roble	101.7	6,336	1,984	1,691	8.6%	902	4.4%	1,637	9.5%	1,116	7.8%	102	3.9%
114	Ukiah (West)	4.3	4,789	1,678	1,142	5.8%	989	4.8%	728	4.2%	476	3.3%	9	0.3%
115.01	Ukiah (Northwest)	0.6	3,891	1,336	1,065	5.4%	649	3.2%	579	3.4%	550	3.9%	285	11.0%
115.02	Ukiah (Wagenseller)	1.4	3,180	910	1,063	5.4%	215	1.0%	322	1.9%	628	4.4%	93	3.6%
116	Ukiah (Downtown)	1.5	5,714	2,087	1,342	6.9%	905	4.4%	1,126	6.5%	1,262	8.9%	356	13.8%
117	Ukiah (East) / Talmage	68.2	4,472	1,488	950	4.9%	1,025	5.0%	926	5.4%	727	5.1%	20	0.8%
118	Hopland	253.2	1,887	666	329	1.7%	348	1.7%	228	1.3%	323	2.3%	5	0.2%
Total		3507	91,524	34,183	19,587	21%	20,497	22%	17,251	19%	14,246	16%	2,589	8%

Source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey 2021 5-Year Estimates.

X% = (bolded) tracts with the highest percentage of population type.

- **Senior adults** over the age of 65 represent 22 percent of the total Mendocino County population, which is a greater proportion compared to the State of California (15 percent). Census tracts with distinctly large senior populations include those which encompass Willits, Alpine/Cleone, Point Arena, and Laytonville/Leggett. All of these census tracts are home to over 5.5 percent of the total county senior population.
- It is estimated that 19 percent of Mendocino County residents are **people with a disability**, based on the definition used by the US Census Bureau. This is a greater rate of disabled persons compared to the State of California (11 percent). The census tracts which contain Willits, Fort Bragg, Caspar, El Roble, and the Wagenseller neighborhood of Ukiah are all regions home to 6.5 percent or more of the total Mendocino County disabled population.
- As defined by the US Census Bureau, 16 percent of Mendocino County residents are **persons living below the federal poverty level**. This equals a higher rate than the State of California (12 percent). Areas with large numbers of low-income individuals include the census tracts where Downtown Ukiah, Willits, El Roble, Laytonville, and Leggett are located, each of which is home to over 7.5 percent of the total county population of low-income persons.
- The US Census Bureau estimated there are 2,589 **zero-vehicle households** in Mendocino County (8 percent). This equals a rate slightly higher than the State of California as a whole (7 percent). Most of these households are located in Willits (19 percent of the total countywide zero-vehicle households), the Noyo Harbor-area of Fort Bragg (15 percent), and Downtown and northwest Ukiah (14 and 11 percents, respectively).

Transit Needs Index

It is helpful to consider all five of the potentially transit dependent groups simultaneously to paint a better picture about what areas of Mendocino County have the greatest relative transit need. To better compare the transit needs of different communities, LSC developed a Transit Needs Index (TNI) (Table 4) for Mendocino County using the demographic data presented in Table 3.

The first step in developing the TNI was to calculate the density of each specific transit dependent group within each census tract (for example, there is one youth per square mile in Census Tract 101). Then, the ranges of densities for each subpopulation were divided into quintiles. Population densities in the highest quintile were assigned a score of 5 to represent the high density and resulting high transit need, while the lowest population densities were assigned a score of 1 to represent the lower need for transit. The scores for each subgroup were then summed to yield an overall transit needs index rank for each census tract (Table 4 and Figure 2). Ultimately, the TNI measures the relative demand for transit services from the population living in the census tracts, with possible values ranging from a low of 5 to a high of 25. A score of 25 indicates the greatest relative need for transit services considering all five transit dependent subgroups.

Table 4: Mendocino County Transit Needs Index

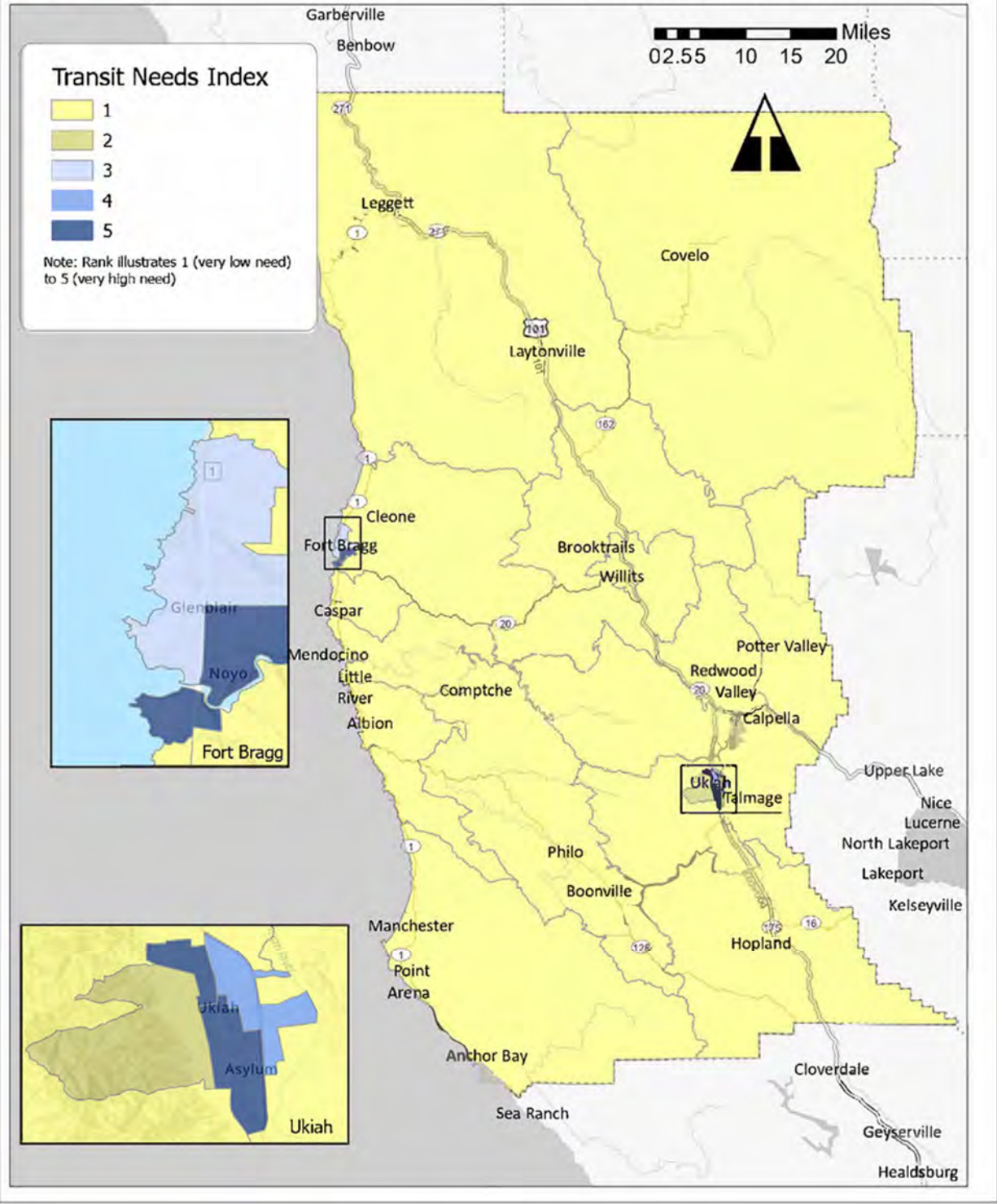
Legend	
1	Very Low Rank
2	Low Rank
3	Medium Rank
4	High Rank
5	Very High Rank

Census Tract	Rank						Overall Transit Needs Index Rank
	Youth (Under 18 Years)	Senior Adults (65+)	Persons with a Disability	Persons Below Poverty Level	Zero-Vehicle Households		
101 Covelo	1	1	1	1	1	5	
102 Leggett, Laytonville	1	1	1	1	1	5	
103 Alpine, Cleone	1	1	1	1	1	5	
104 Fort Bragg / Downtown	1	2	2	2	1	8	
105 Fort Bragg / Noyo Harbor	3	4	4	4	3	18	
106.01 Ridgewood Park	1	1	1	1	1	5	
106.02 Brooktrails / Arnold	1	1	1	1	1	5	
107 Willits	1	1	1	1	1	5	
108.01 Redwood Valley	1	1	1	1	1	5	
108.02 Potter Valley	1	1	1	1	1	5	
109 Calpella	1	1	1	1	1	5	
110.01 Little River / Albion	1	1	1	1	1	5	
110.03 Fort Bragg / Caspar	1	1	1	1	1	5	
110.04 Caspar / Mendocino	1	1	1	1	1	5	
111.02 Point Arena / Anchor Bay	1	1	1	1	1	5	
112 Boonville / Comptche / Philo	1	1	1	1	1	5	
113 El Roble	1	1	1	1	1	5	
114 Ukiah (West)	1	2	1	1	1	6	
115.01 Ukiah (Northwest)	5	5	5	5	5	25	
115.02 Ukiah (Wagenseller)	3	1	2	3	1	10	
116 Ukiah (Downtown)	3	3	4	5	3	18	
117 Ukiah (East) / Talmage	1	1	1	1	1	5	
118 Hopland	1	1	1	1	1	5	

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.



Figure 2
Mendocino County Transit Needs Index



Based on the TNI, the areas of Mendocino County with the greatest need for transit services are Ukiah and Fort Bragg. In Ukiah, the Downtown, Wagenseller, and northwestern regions of the city had the highest ranks. In Fort Bragg, the census tract encompassing the southern region of the city and Noyo Harbor had the highest rank. It is important to note, however, that the total number of transit dependent persons presented in Table 3 also needs to be considered when determining areas of high transit need, as sometimes census tract boundaries can sway TNI results. For instance, Census Tract 107 is 10 square miles in size, encompassing not just Willits, but also adjacent forests and agricultural land. This means that while Willits is home to large numbers of transit dependent persons, the population density of these subgroups within the census tract is low because the total tract area is much larger than the area within city limits.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

Some of the most regular transit riders are those who rely on the bus for commuting to and from work. This section reviews the Mendocino County economic characteristics influencing transit demand for the purpose of commuting.

Top Employers

Major employers can be significant transit trip generators due to their many employees who need to get to and from work. Mendocino County’s largest employers, according to the California Employment Development Department (2022), are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Mendocino County Major Employers		
Company	Location	# Of Employees
The County of Mendocino	Ukiah	1000-1499
Adventist Health Ukiah Valley	Ukiah	500-999
Mendocino Redwood Company, LLC.	Calpella	500-999
Adventist Health Mendocino Coast	Fort Bragg	250-499
Fetzer Vineyards	Hopland	250-499
Mendocino College	Ukiah	250-499
Mendocino Community Health	Ukiah	250-499
Adventist Health Howard Memorial	Willits	100-249
CA Department of Forestry	Willits	100-249
Costco	Ukiah	100-249
Coyote Valley Casino	Redwood Valley	100-249
Dharma Realm Buddhist Association	Ukiah	100-249
MetalFx, Inc.	Willits	100-249
Pacific Coast Farm	Ukiah	100-249
Pacific Medical Resources	Fort Bragg	100-249
Safeway	Fort Bragg	100-249
Ukiah City Civic Center	Ukiah	100-249
Ukiah High School	Ukiah	100-249
Walmart	Ukiah	100-249
<i>Source: California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Info, 2022</i>		

The largest employer is the County of Mendocino itself, which is primarily located in the county seat of Ukiah with some smaller offices in other locations. Most of the other large employers are also located in the inland region consisting of Ukiah, Willits, and adjacent communities. The largest employers along the coastal region are all in Fort Bragg. The economic sectors most represented by the top employers are government services, healthcare, agriculture, and education.

Also, this dataset does not indicate whether a job is held by a remote worker. Despite the data not clarifying who works in-person or remote, most of this information can be logically assumed. For instance, most of the Mendocino County residents with jobs based out of Santa Clara County are likely working remotely. Even with these caveats, the LEHD data still provides useful information about popular commute patterns that could potentially be served by transit. Currently, over 80 percent of Mendocino County workers either drive alone or carpool to get to their place of work, indicating that new transit services would likely be needed to encourage workers to choose transit for commuting instead.

The majority of Mendocino County jobs are held by county residents (72 percent), with most jobs being held by people who live in Ukiah (15 percent), Fort Bragg (8 percent), Willits (5 percent), Brooktrails (3 percent), or Redwood Valley (2 percent). The top out-of-county locations Mendocino County workers are commuting from are Lake (6 percent) and Sonoma Counties (5 percent). As shown in Table 6, the majority of Mendocino County residents also, as expected, hold jobs within the county (66 percent). The top place for work is Ukiah, where one out of every five Mendocino County residents is employed (20 percent). Other communities where large numbers of residents commute to work include Fort Bragg (9 percent), Willits (7 percent), Santa Rosa (3 percent), and Talmage (2 percent). The top out-of-county locations residents are commuting to are also Sonoma (10 percent) and Lake Counties (3 percent). In all, about 4,000 people commute between Mendocino and Sonoma Counties and 2,300 commute between Mendocino and Lake Counties based on the total number of workers estimated to be traveling in either direction. There are existing transit services between Mendocino County and both Lake and Sonoma Counties, however it is important to evaluate whether these services can actually be used by commuters.

MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS

A large proportion of transit trips, if not to work, are to other major activity centers such as hospitals, grocery stores, social service agencies, tribal headquarters, and schools. People will only take transit if they are able to get to the places they need to go, therefore a transit system should try to serve as many major activity centers as possible. Table 7 identifies some important activity centers in Mendocino County's larger communities. It should be noted that the information presented in Table 7 is not all inclusive.

Ukiah, as the county seat, is home to a number of activity centers including government offices for both the County of Mendocino and the City of Ukiah, the Ukiah Valley Medical Center, Walmart, Safeway, the main campus of Mendocino College, and number of grade schools. In Willits, there are also multiple government and tribal offices, the Mendocino College Willits Campus, grade schools, and multiple senior housing complexes. Fort Bragg has the most activity centers of the coastal communities and a large number of senior and affordable housing complexes, many of which are located downtown near the Adventist Health Mendocino Coast Health Center. Mendocino County residents also travel out-of-county

to a variety of activity centers. Most out-of-county travel is focused southward to Sonoma County and the Bay Area beyond; however, some people also travel to destinations in Lake County to the east or Humboldt County to the north. Figures 3 through 9 in Chapter 3 show the activity centers included in Table 7 in reference to transit services.

Table 6: Mendocino County Local and Regional Commute Patterns
2020

Where Employees In Mendocino County Commute From					
Counties	# of Jobs	% of Total	Cities/Towns	# of Jobs	% of Total
Mendocino	19,959	72.0%	Ukiah	4,271	15.4%
Lake	1,667	6.0%	Fort Bragg	2,074	7.5%
Sonoma	1,292	4.7%	Willits	1,380	5.0%
Humboldt	399	1.4%	Brooktrails	932	3.4%
Sacramento	301	1.1%	Redwood Valley	435	1.6%
Tehama	291	1.1%	Lakeport	410	1.5%
Alameda	264	1.0%	Santa Rosa	405	1.5%
All other locations	3,535	12.8%	Talmage	203	0.7%
			Calpella	190	0.7%
			Covelo	178	0.6%
			All other locations	17,230	62.2%
Total Number of Jobs	27,708		Total Number of Jobs	27,708	
Where Mendocino County Residents Work and Commute to					
Counties	# of Jobs	% of Total	Cities and Towns	# of Jobs	% of Total
Mendocino	19,959	66.6%	Ukiah	6,238	20.8%
Sonoma	2,888	9.6%	Fort Bragg	2,708	9.0%
Lake	743	2.5%	Willits	2,064	6.9%
Sacramento	624	2.1%	Santa Rosa	974	3.2%
Alameda	494	1.6%	Talmage	615	2.1%
San Francisco	447	1.5%	San Francisco	447	1.5%
Napa	416	1.4%	Mendocino	436	1.5%
Contra Costa	344	1.1%	Healdsburg	328	1.1%
Santa Clara	315	1.1%	Sacramento	305	1.0%
Humboldt	285	1.0%	Laytonville	253	0.8%
All other locations	3,467	11.6%	All other locations	15,614	52.1%
Total Number of Jobs	29,982		Total Number of Jobs	29,982	
<i>Source: US Census Bureau LEHD Database, 2020</i>					
Note: Bold text indicates locations within Mendocino County.					

Table 7: Major Transit Activity Centers

Community	Type of Activity Center				
	Human Service & Tribal Agencies	Senior Services	Schools & Youth Programs	Shopping & Recreation	Medical
Covelo	Round Valley Food Pantry Round Valley Indian Tribe	--	Round Valley Unified School District	Hidden Oaks Casino Keith's Market IGA	Round Valley Tribal Health
Fort Bragg	Redwood Coast Regional Center Mendocino County Dept. of Social Services Mendocino County Food and Nutrition The Plateau	Cottages at Cyprus Moura Senior Housing Redwood Coast Senior Center Oceanside Comfort Care	Fort Bragg Unified School District Mendocino County Youth Project Mendocino College	Boatyard Shopping Center Harvest Market Safeway	Adventist Health Mendocino Coast District Hospital Mendocino Coast Clinic
Hopland	Hopland Band of Pomo Indians	--	--	Sho Ka Wa Casino	--
Laytonville	Cahto Tribe Laytonville Food Pantry	Harwood Hall and Family Resource Center	Laytonville Unified School District	Geiger's Long Valley Market	Long Valley Health Center
Point Arena	Point Arena Food Pantry Manchester Band of Pomo Indians	South Coast Seniors	Point Arena Schools	Arena Market & Cafe Garcia River Casino	Redwood Coast Medical Services
Redwood Valley	Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Redwood Valley Little River Band of Pomo	--	--	Coyote Valley Casino Redwood Valley Market	Redwood Valley Health Clinic Consolidated Tribal Health Project
Ukiah	Food Help Program Mendocino County Dept. of Social Services Pinoleville Pomo Nation Potter Valley Tribe Redwood Coast Regional Center Ukiah Food Bank	Mountain View Assisted Living & Memory Care Ukiah Senior Center Brookside Retirement Residence	Arbor Youth Resource Center Boys & Girls Club Mendocino College Mendocino County Youth Project Ukiah Unified School District	Public Library Pear Tree Center Raley's Safeway Walmart	Dora Street Health Center Hillside Health Center Ukiah Valley Medical Center
Willits	Mendocino County Dept. of Social Services Sherwood Valley Rancheria Willits Food Bank	Redwood Meadows Senior Apartments Lenore Street Senior Housing Willits Senior Center	Mendocino College Willits Kids Club Willits Unified School District	Grocery Outlet Safeway Sherwood Valley Casino Willits Shopping Center	Adventist Health Howard Memorial Little Lake Health Center
Out-of-County Destinations	Lakeport, Oakland, San Francisco, Santa Rosa				
Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.; Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan: Mendocino County (2021)					

An important trend to note from Table 7 is the concentration of resources in Mendocino County's more populated communities of Ukiah, Willits, and Fort Bragg. These three communities are home to approximately one-third of Mendocino County residents, meaning there are still thousands of people distributed throughout more rural communities who have to travel to the three forementioned places in order to attend medical appointments, buy food and other necessities, or attend to personal business. This indicates the likely significance of the intercity and regional transit services offered by the MTA and social service providers to transit dependent persons living in more rural regions of the county. These services will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

RECENT PLANNING STUDIES

The SRTDP should both reflect and complement the goals and strategies presented in other related studies recently adopted in Mendocino County. Recently completed plans related to the SRTDP effort include local studies related to land-use such as the City of Ukiah 2040 General Plan, county-wide studies such as the Mendocino County Regional and Active Transportation Plan, as well as regional studies such as the California Intercity Bus Study. These studies were reviewed while updating the SRTDP to ensure the final five-year plan aligns with the work of these other studies. The review of planning documents is provided in Appendix B.

OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of public, private, and non-profit organizations which operate transit and transportation services in Mendocino County. While all of these organizations help move people around, each transportation program differs in the types of services, availability, and passenger eligibility they offer. This chapter primarily discusses the services and amenities of the county's public transit provider, the MTA, with other services summarized afterwards.

MENDOCINO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Administration and Management

The MTA is a Joint Powers Agency (JPA) that was established in 1976 by the County of Mendocino and Cities of Ukiah, Willits, Fort Bragg, and Point Arena. The MTA has a seven-member Board of Directors consisting of one representative from each of the four respective City Councils and three representatives from the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Directors meets monthly and oversees operational and policy issues. The General Manager is responsible for coordinating the MTA's daily operations and overseeing the roughly sixty employees. Employees include operations, maintenance, and administrative staff. The MTA is the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for the region and therefore receives state Transportation Development Act funding under both Article 4 (Public Transit Services) and Article 4.5 (Community Transit Services).

MTA Fixed Routes

The MTA currently operates nine fixed routes ranging from local to intercounty services. Most of these services begin weekday operations between 6:00 AM to 8:00 AM and end between 5:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Four routes are also available on Saturday, and one route is available on Sunday. Passengers can board fixed routes both at designated stops, as well as at flag stops. Flag stops refer to locations which are where a passenger can hail down the driver in order to board, as long as it is safe for the driver to pullover.

The MTA has had to reduce its service schedule multiple times over the last few years due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide bus driver shortage. MTA services as of June 2023 are summarized in Table 8. More detailed descriptions are included in the following pages.

Route 1 – Willits

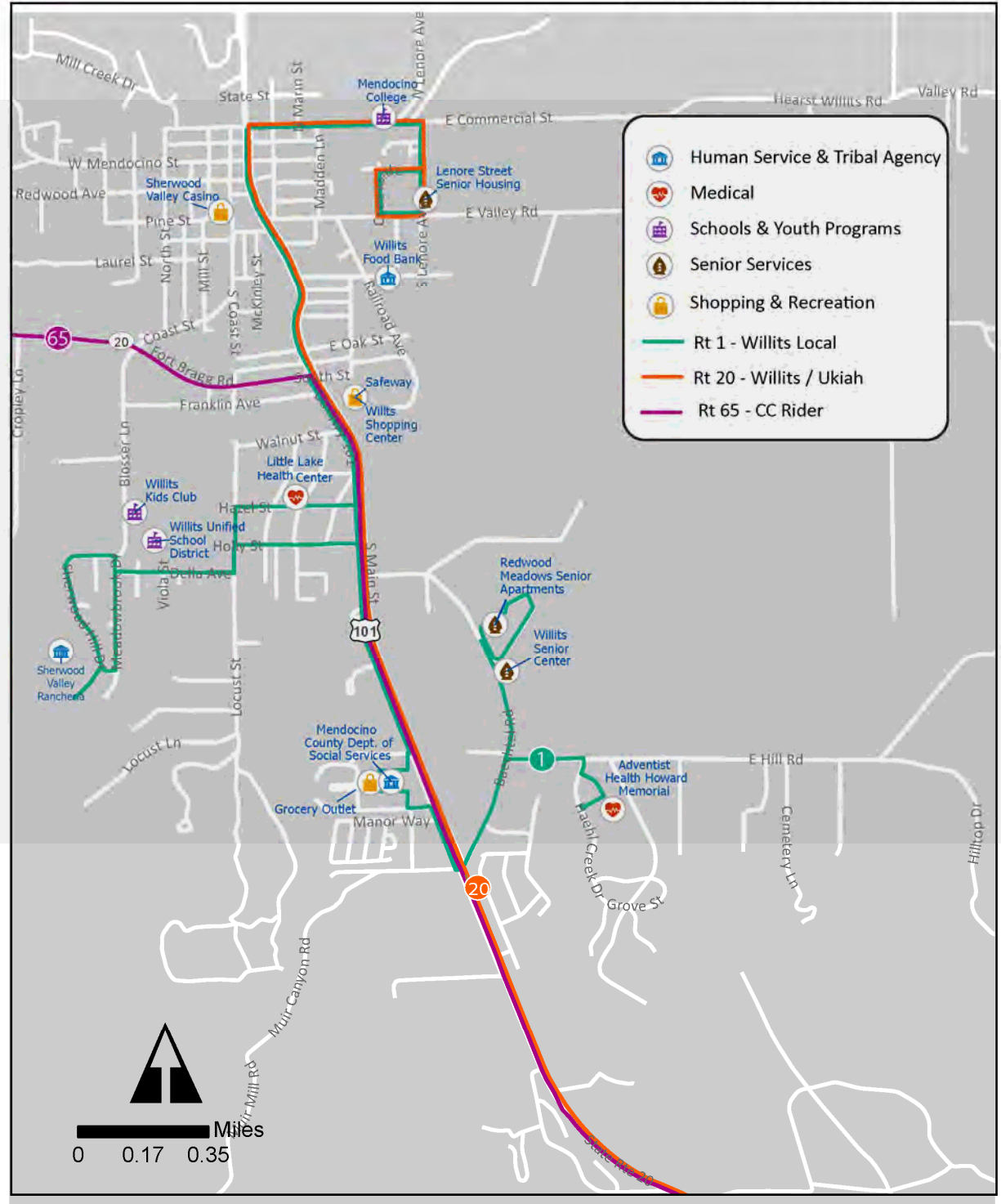
Route 1 provides local, hourly service within the City of Willits (Figure 3), serving important destinations such as Howard Hospital, the Willits Senior Center, the Evergreen Shopping Center, Safeway, and the Mendocino College Willits Campus, among others. Route 1 operates on weekdays between 7:12 AM and 6:08 PM, completing eleven roundtrips throughout the day.

Table 8: Summary of MTA Services and Frequency

	Service Hours ¹				Start & End Locations		Weekday Service Frequency (Minutes)
	Weekday		Saturday		Start	End	
	Start	End	Start	End			
<u>Bus: Fixed Route</u>							
Route 1 - Willits	7:12 AM	6:33 PM	--	--	Creekside Drive (Willits)	Same as start	60
Route 5 - Bragg>About	7:15 AM	5:23 PM	--	--	Denny's (Fort Bragg)	Same as start	60
Route 7/9 - Ukiah Jitney/Local ²	6:15 AM	6:15 PM	8:15 AM	5:08 PM	Mendocino College (Ukiah)	Plant Rd. & So. State	30-60
Route 20 - Ukiah/Willits	6:41 AM	6:35 PM	--	--	Integrated Service Center (Willits)	Same as start	6 Round Trips
Route 60 - The Coaster	7:40 AM	5:43 PM	--	--	Boatyard (Fort Bragg)	Same as start	4 Round Trips
Route 65 - Cross County	6:30 AM	5:55 PM	6:30 AM	5:55 PM	Denny's (Fort Bragg)	Same as start	2 Round Trips
Route 75 - South Coast/Ukiah ³	7:15 AM	6:20 PM	9:15 AM	4:15 PM	Point Arena	Same as start	2 Round Trips
Route 95 - South Coast/Santa Rosa ⁴	8:00 AM	7:05 PM	8:00 AM	7:05 PM	Point Arena	Same as start	1 Round Trip
<u>Dial-a-Ride</u>							
Ukiah	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	10:00 AM	5:00 PM	--	--	--
Fort Bragg	8:00 AM	6:00 PM	10:00 AM	5:00 PM	--	--	--
<p>Note 1: Summary accurate as of June, 2023.</p> <p>Note 2: Route 7 provides express service within the City of Ukiah.</p> <p>Note 3: Route 75 operates a reduced schedule on Saturdays between the Navarro Store and Ukiah.</p> <p>Note 4: Route 95 operates the same schedule Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, Route 95 operates one roundtrip between 10 AM and 7:05 PM.</p> <p>Note 5: No service on New Year's Day, MLK, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, or Christmas Day. Limited service on Juneteenth and the day after Thanksgiving.</p> <p>Source: MTA</p>							



Figure 3
Willits Routes and Activity Centers



Route 5 – Fort Bragg

Route 5, or the BraggAbout service, is a local route within the City of Fort Bragg (Figure 4). The BraggAbout follows a north-south route through the city, stopping at the Adventist Health Mendocino Coast Hospital, the Mendocino College Coast Center, Safeway, and Rite Aid. Route 5 is a weekday service that operates hourly between 7:15 AM and 5:00 PM each day.

Route 7 – Ukiah Jitney

Route 7, or the Ukiah Jitney, provides local service in Ukiah (Figure 5). Locations served by the Jitney include Mendocino College, the Ukiah Theater, Mendocino Public Health, and the Ukiah Municipal Airport. Route 7 follows a route similar to Route 9, providing more direct service with fewer stops during peak travel hours. Route 7 operates two roundtrips each weekday.

Route 9 – Ukiah Local

Route 9 is the main local service within the City of Ukiah (Figure 5), operating every 30 to 60 minutes on weekdays and every hour on Saturday. Service on weekdays begins at 6:15 AM and ends at 6:15 PM, and Saturday service begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 5:08 PM. Key stops served by Route 9 include Mendocino College, the Pear Tree Center, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Walmart, and the Adventist Health Ukiah Valley Hospital. Deviated fixed route service is available after 6:00 PM to destinations within 0.75 miles of the route. Passengers must schedule deviated stops in advance.

Route 20 – Willits / Ukiah

Route 20 completes six roundtrips each weekday between Willits and Ukiah, starting service in Willits at 6:41 AM and ending service back in Willits at 6:35 PM. Route 20 stops at the Integrated Service Center, Mendocino College Willits Campus, and the Willits Post Office among other locations before leaving Willits and heading south, stopping in Redwood Valley and Calpella before eventually arriving at Mendocino College in Ukiah and turning back north. Route 20 is depicted in both Figures 3 and 5.

Route 60 – The Coaster

Route 60, or The Coaster, follows a north-south route between Fort Bragg and Navarro River Junction (Figures 4 and 6). The Coaster completes four roundtrips between 7:40 AM to 5:43 PM, Monday through Friday. Additional communities served by The Coaster include Caspar, Mendocino, Little River, and Albion.

Route 65 – Cross County Rider

Route 65, or the Cross County Rider, is an important service connecting the coastal and inland regions of Mendocino County. Route 65 operates two roundtrips daily, Monday through Saturday. One roundtrip goes from Fort Bragg to Santa Rosa, passing through Willits and Ukiah along the way, while the second roundtrip goes only between Fort Bragg and Ukiah. The first south-travelling bus leaves the Denny's in Fort Bragg at 6:30 AM, and the last northbound bus arrives back in Fort Bragg at 5:55 PM. Key stops served by the Cross County Rider include the Denny's and Boatyard Drive in Fort Bragg, the Pear Tree

Center in Ukiah, and the SMART Train, Sonoma County Airport, and 2nd Street Transit Mall in Santa Rosa. Route 65 is depicted in Figures 4, 5, and 6.

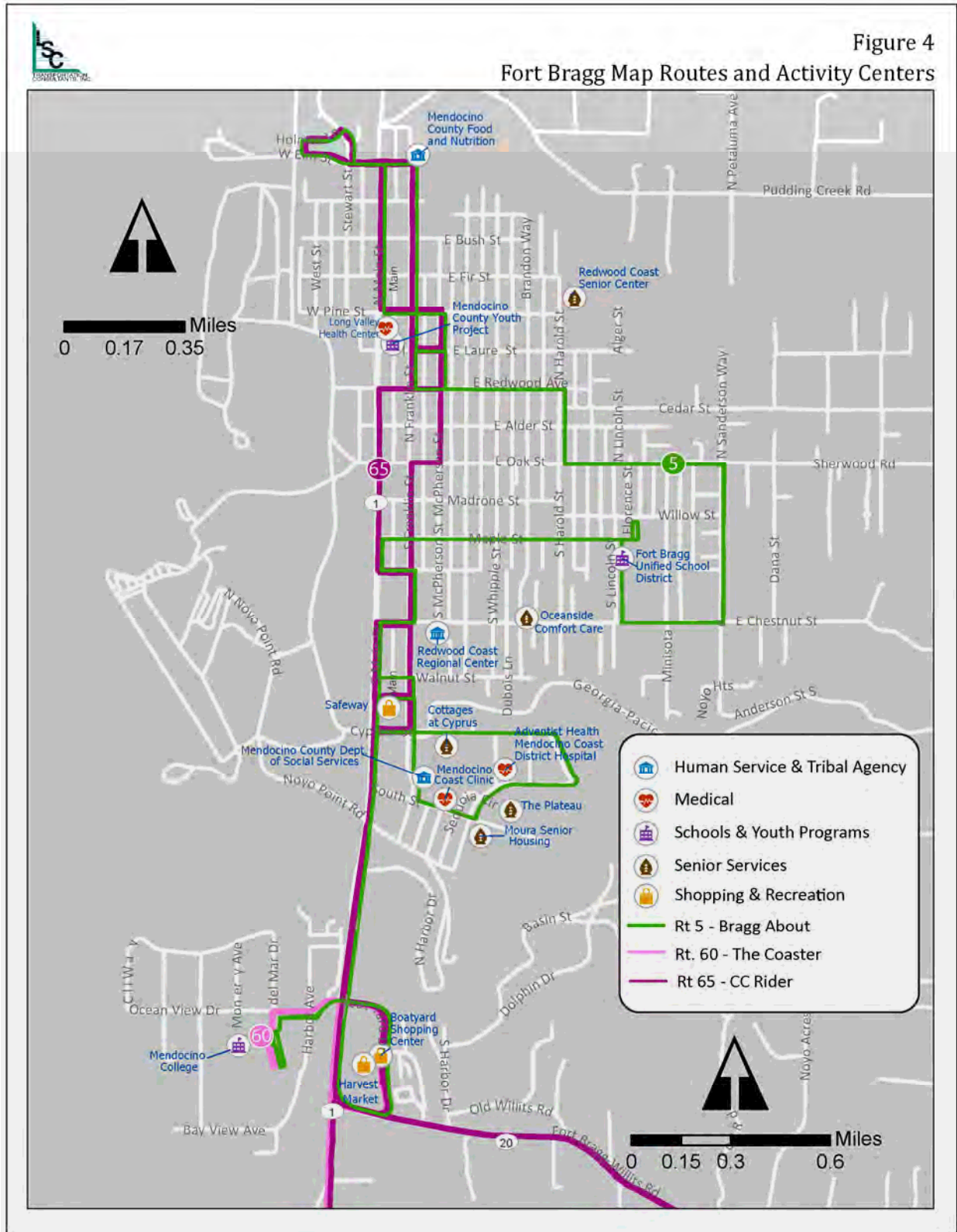
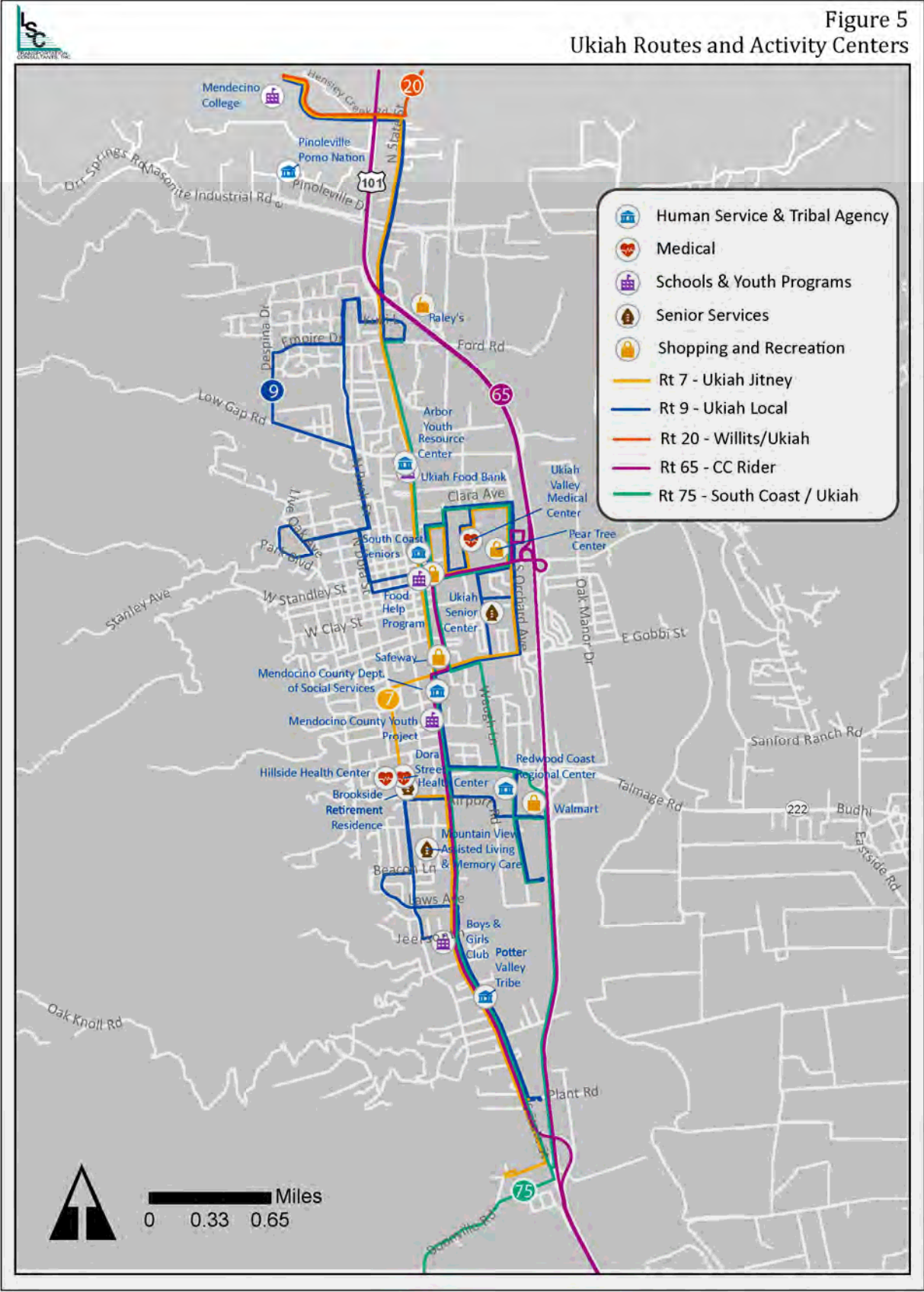


Figure 5
Ukiah Routes and Activity Centers



Route 75 – South Coast / Ukiah

Route 75 begins in Point Arena, first going south along the coast to Gualala, and then back north again to Point Arena and Navarro River Junction before traversing east across the county on CA 128 and 253 to Ukiah, connecting coastal residents to the inland region (Figure 6). One Route 75 roundtrip is provided daily Monday through Saturday. On weekdays, the bus leaves Gualala at 7:45 AM and arrives at the Ukiah Library at 10:35 AM. The bus then leaves the Raley’s in Ukiah to head back to the coast at 2:50 PM, arriving in Gualala at 6:00 PM. On Saturdays, Route 75 only operates between Navarro and Ukiah.

Route 95 – South Coast / Santa Rosa

Route 95 operates one roundtrip between Point Arena and Santa Rosa seven days per week. The schedule is the same Monday through Saturday, but on Sundays, the morning southbound trip leaves a bit later in the day. Each leg of the trip takes approximately three hours to complete. In Mendocino County, Route 95 serves the communities of Point Arena, Anchor Bay, and Gualala. In Sonoma County, the bus stops in Sea Ranch, Stewart’s Point, Fort Ross, Bodega Bay, and Sebastopol before arriving in Santa Rosa. In Santa Rosa, Route 95 stops at the 2nd Street Transit Mall and the Sonoma County Airport. Route 95 is shown in Figure 6 along with the other regional MTA routes.

MTA Dial-a-Ride Services

The American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that public transit agencies provide paratransit services to eligible passengers within 0.75 miles of local fixed route services. MTA operates paratransit, or dial-a-ride (DAR), services in both Ukiah and Fort Bragg. Passengers must call and reserve their rides at least 24 hours in advance. Personal Care Attendants are allowed to accompany passengers for free.

Local senior centers in Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Willits, and Point Arena also provide demand response services with Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding allocated to their organizations by the MTA. These services are explained further in the section discussing social service transportation providers.

Ukiah

The Ukiah DAR is available for disabled people and senior adults ages 62 or older Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The Ukiah DAR service area consists of five zones, shown in Figure 7. Passengers can schedule rides between any two destinations within the overall service area, but pay additional for trips outside of the central, downtown zone.

Fort Bragg

The Fort Bragg DAR is available to the general public as well as ADA and senior passengers on weekdays from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM and on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The service area and various zones are shown in Figure 8. Similar to Ukiah, rides can be scheduled between any zones, with additional fares added for rides outside of the central zone.



Figure 7
Ukiah Dial-A-Ride

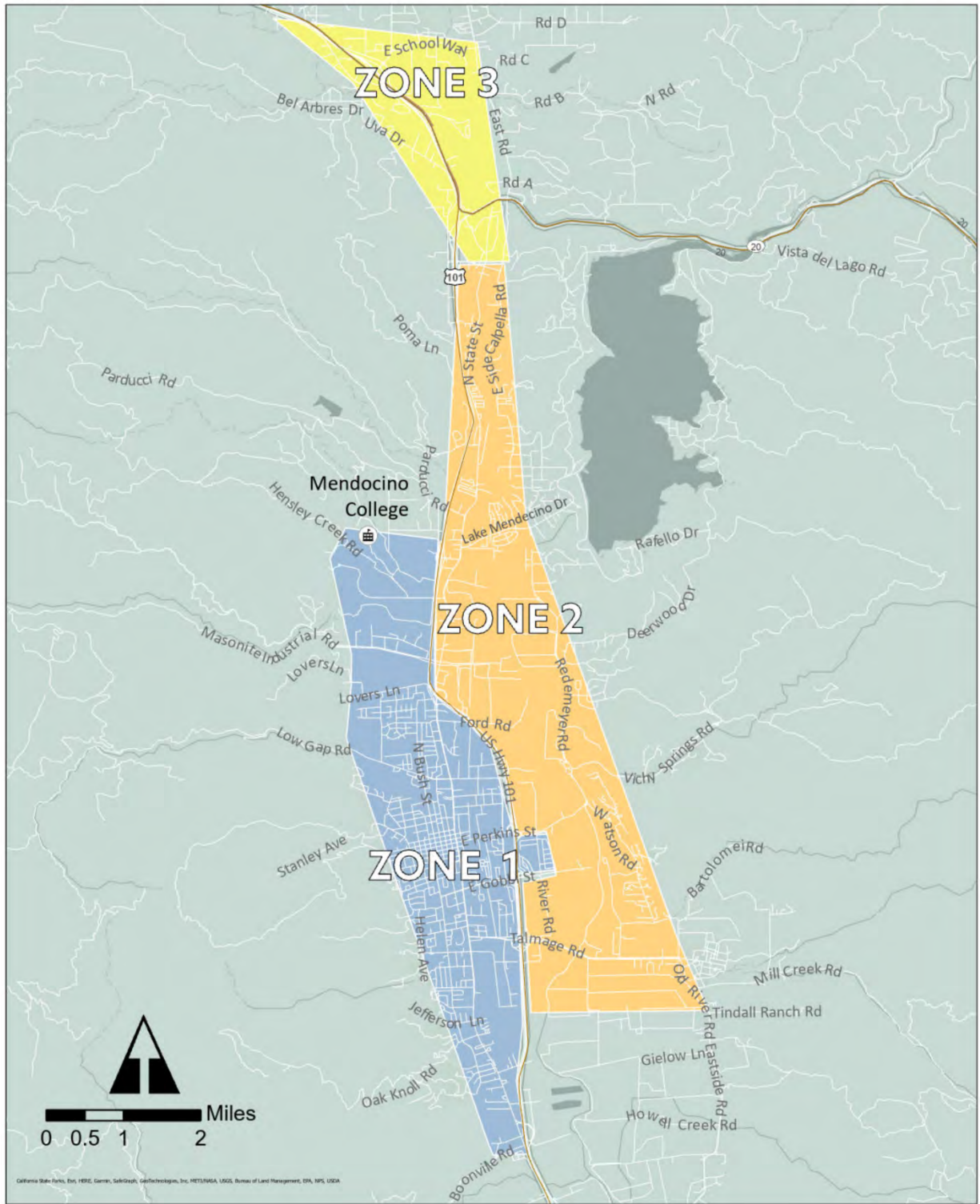
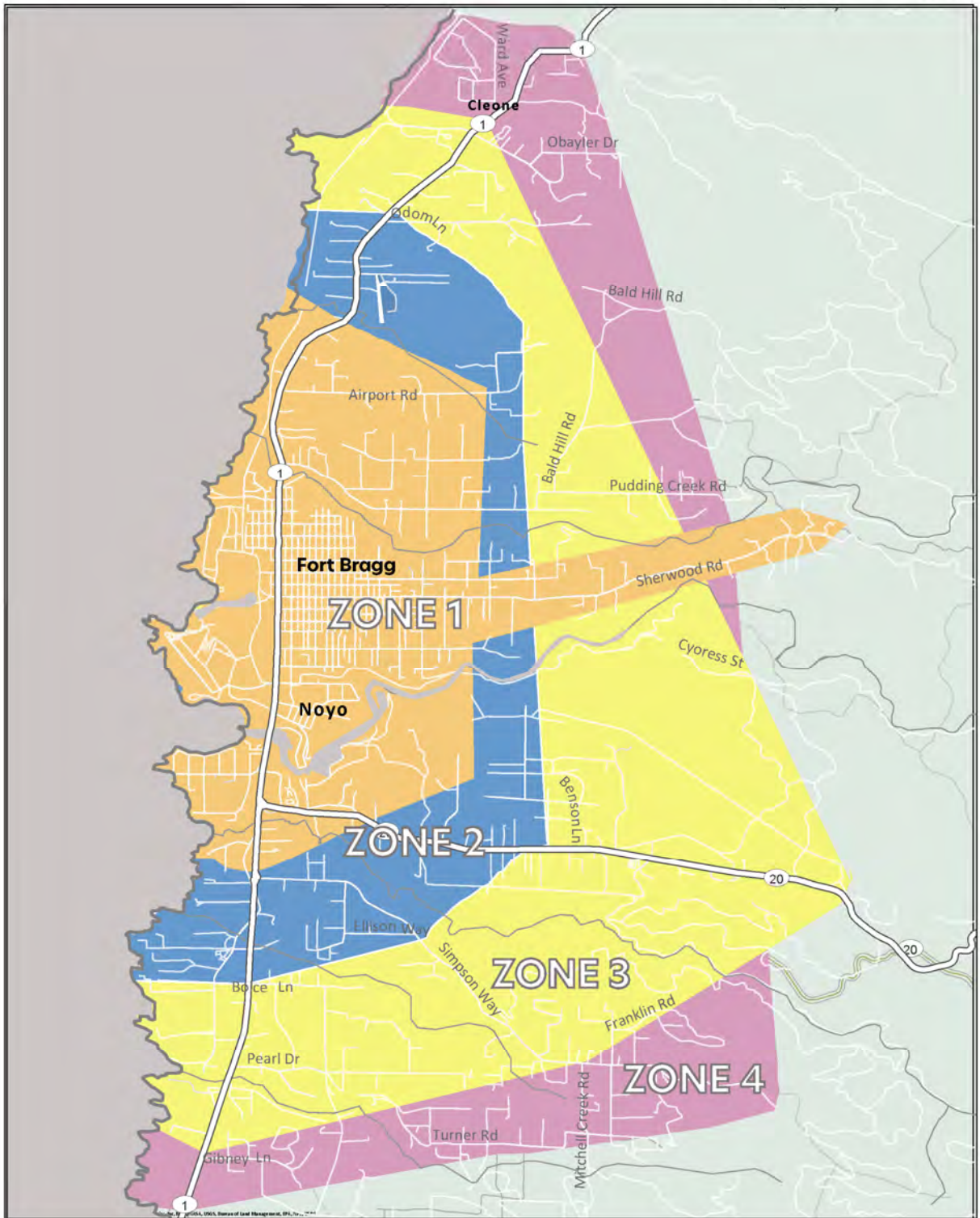




Figure 8
Fort Bragg Dial-a-Ride



Redwood Coast Regional Center Contract Service

The Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) is one of twenty-one private, non-profit regional centers across the State of California dedicated to serving people with disabilities. The MTA has a contract with the RCRC to provide a door-to-door ride service for clients in Ukiah who need additional mobility assistance to get to appointments and programs. The MTA provides RCRC clients with rides Monday through Friday using paratransit vehicles in the morning and in the afternoon.

Transfer Opportunities

MTA routes and services extend throughout Mendocino County, resulting in an expansive public transit network. Some key MTA transfer locations, and the routes served at each, include:

- Fort Bragg Boatyard & Mendocino College Coast Center – Routes 5, 60, and 65
- Navarro River Junction – Routes 60 and 75
- Point Arena & Anchor Bay – Routes 75 and 95
- Pear Tree Center – Routes 9, 20, and 65
- Walmart (Ukiah) – Routes 9, 20, and 75
- Babcock Park & Alder Lane (Lumber Jacks) – Routes 1, 20, and 65

Transfers to other regional transit providers are also possible. Other regional services that MTA passengers can transfer to are listed below, as well as the stops where these transfers are possible:

- Lake Transit Authority – Mendocino College, Pear Tree Center, Ukiah Valley Medical Center, and the Ukiah Airport
- Amtrak San Joaquins – Pear Tree Center
- Greyhound – the Ukiah Airport, Taco Bell (Willits)
- Golden Gate Transit – 2nd St Transit Mall (Santa Rosa)
- Santa Rosa CityBus – 2nd Street Transit Mall, Sonoma County Airport, Coddington (Santa Rosa)
- Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit – SMART Train Terminal (Santa Rosa)
- Sonoma County Airport Express – Sonoma County Airport (Santa Rosa)
- Sonoma County Transit – 2nd Street Transit Mall, Sonoma County Airport, SMART Train Terminal, Coddington (Santa Rosa)

MTA CAPITAL ASSETS

Facilities and Maintenance

The MTA has facilities in Ukiah, Willits, Fort Bragg, and Point Arena. In Ukiah, the Bruce Richard Maintenance Facility is located at 241 Plant Road. Completed in 2012, the facility was built to Silver Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standards and is powered by solar panels, which help to mitigate electric costs and offset the impacts of fuel emissions produced by the buses. Other energy features



include heated floors and electric vehicle (EV) charging. The Bruce Richard Maintenance Facility is the main operations base for the inland routes. It also houses the MTA’s administrative and maintenance staff and centralized dispatch. Twenty-four vehicles are typically stored in Ukiah.



The other MTA facilities are smaller, serving as the operations bases for the regional services. The MTA regional facilities also store vehicles to minimize “dead head” time, or time the bus is operating with only the driver on-board. The Willits facility is located at 380 Commercial Street and stores four vehicles. The Diana Stuart Fort Bragg Division of the MTA is located at 190 E. Spruce Street and stores eight vehicles. The Fort Bragg facility has a small office in addition to the bus barn. Lastly, the MTA also has a facility at 282 Lake Street in Point Arena, where three vehicles are stored.

Fleet Inventory

The MTA has a fleet of thirty-nine vehicles as of May 2023 (Table 9). Vehicles range in size from fifteen-passenger cutaways to forty-passenger low-floor Gilligs. Twenty-five of these vehicles will be due to be replaced within the five-year planning period. Vehicle replacement needs will require the MTA to secure a large amount of funding to meet local match requirements for capital grants.

The California Air Resources Board’s Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation will come into effect during this planning period. Beginning in 2026, the ICT regulation will require that 25 percent of vehicles purchased each year by small transit agencies, such as the MTA, be zero emissions vehicles (ZEVs). By 2029, all new vehicles will need to be ZEVs. The MTA has already begun to convert its fleet to ZEVs; the MTA purchased two electric cutaways in 2022 that it has since used to operate Route 1 (Willits). The MTA also has plans to purchase three more electric cutaways and one electric coach bus in the next few years. These buses will be used to operate Route 5 in Fort Bragg and Route 9 in Ukiah.

Passenger Amenities

Passenger amenities include features such as benches and shelters that enhance a person’s experience while waiting for the bus. Benches and shelters are located at stops all throughout the MTA system, with more concentrated at highly trafficked stops in the denser community centers. Most stops also have signs. The MTA has not, at this point, undertaken a bus stop inventory study or bus stop facilities plan to assess the quality and distribution of signs, benches, and shelters.

Currently, the MTA does not have a central transit center. The Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) and MTA initiated the *Ukiah Transit Center Feasibility Study* in 2022 to assess the feasibility and optimal design of a new transit center in Ukiah. This study will be completed in 2023. Progress so far is summarized in Appendix B.

Table 9: MTA Vehicle Fleet

Agency ID	Make	Model	Year	Mileage	Capacity	Est. Retirement Date
620	Ford	E350	2011	69,263	15	FY 25/26
621	Ford	E350	2011	115,661	15	FY 25/26
622	Ford	E350	2011	125,053	15	-- --
623	Ford	E350	2011	140,671	15	FY 26/27
624	Ford	E350	2013	91,445	15	FY 26/27
625	Ford	E350	2013	102,813	15	-- --
626	Ford	E350	2013	123,881	15	-- --
627	Ford	E350	2013	93,015	15	-- --
628	Ford	E350	2013	139,370	15	-- --
723	Ford	E450	2010	218,359	24	FY 24/25
727	Ford	E450	2011	262,203	24	FY 23/24
728	Ford	E450	2011	154,311	24	FY 22/23
729	Ford	E450	2013	162,727	24	FY 25/26
730	Ford	E450	2013	235,195	24	FY 22/23
731	Ford	E450	2013	293,089	24	FY 22/23
732	Ford	E450	2015	317,990	24	-- --
733	Ford	E450	2015	152,570	24	FY 25/26
734	Ford	E450	2015	160,294	24	FY 25/26
735	Ford	E450	2015	230,951	24	FY 26/27
736	Ford	E450	2015	126,492	24	FY 26/27
737	Ford	E450	2018	116,749	24	-- --
738	Ford	E450	2018	115,176	24	-- --
739	Ford	E450	2018	54,462	24	-- --
740	Ford	E450	2019	140,734	24	-- --
741	Ford	E450	2019	65,493	24	-- --
742*	Ford	E450	2022	15,068	24	-- --
743*	Ford	E450	2021	18,037	24	-- --
805	Ford	Trolley	2008	66,180	30	-- --
808	Freightliner	S2C	2016	326,464	34	FY 24/25
809	Freightliner	S2C	2016	251,953	34	FY 25/26
810	Freightliner	S2C	2016	291,515	34	FY 26/27
910	Gillig	Low Floor	2013	242,353	36	FY 24/25
911	Gillig	Low Floor	2013	272,652	36	FY 24/25
912	Gillig	Low Floor	2013	186,504	36	FY 24/25
913	Gillig	Low Floor	2013	233,158	36	FY 25/26
914	Gillig	Low Floor	2013	257,799	36	FY 25/26
915	Gillig	Low Floor	2013	238,024	36	FY 25/26
916	Gillig	Low Floor	2013	221,151	36	FY 26/27
917	Gillig	Low Floor	2013	227,414	36	FY 26/27

Source: Mendocino Transit Authority

Note 1: Information accurate as of 5/19/2023

Note 2: Electric vehicles noted with *.

MTA FARE STRUCTURE

The MTA has a complicated fare structure with varying prices depending on a passenger’s age, disability status, and trip length. A simplified summary of the fare structure is presented in Table 10. Generally, the regular, one-way fare for a local trip is \$1.50, and the discounted fare is \$0.75. Fares grow progressively with the trip length, with the most expensive regular one-way fare being \$23.00 for a trip from Fort Bragg to Santa Rosa on Route 65. DAR fares increase by zone, with one-way trips in the central zones in both Ukiah and Fort Bragg costing \$3.00 and one-way trips to or from destinations in the outer zones costing \$6.00.

Passengers can pay for fares with cash or passes. Passes are sold by drivers onboard and at the MTA offices in Ukiah and Fort Bragg. The monthly passes offer a significant discount for passengers who ride the bus frequently. The MTA also offers specialized pass products, such as the Youth Summer Pass.

Fare Type	Regular (7 -61)	Discounted ¹	Students ²	Children ³
One-Way Fares				
Inland Services (Routes 1, 7, 9, and 20)	\$1.50 - \$3.00	\$0.75 - \$1.50	--	Free
Coastal Services (Routes 5, 60, and 75)	\$1.50 - \$6.75	\$0.75 - \$3.35	--	Free
Route 65	\$1.50 - \$23.00	\$0.75 - \$11.50	--	Free
Route 95	\$1.50 - \$8.25	\$0.75 - \$4.10	\$1.05 - \$6.00	Free
Monthly Passes				
One-Zone Pass	\$35.00	\$17.50	--	Free
Two-Zone Pass	\$57.00	\$28.50	--	Free
Three-Zone Pass	\$85.00	\$42.50	--	Free
Other Passes				
Youth Summer Pass ⁴	--	--	--	\$45.00
16-Ride Punch Pass	\$17.00	--	--	--
Ukiah DAR⁵				
Zone 1	--	\$3.00	--	--
Zones 2-4	--	\$4.00	--	--
Zone 5	--	\$6.00	--	--
Fort Bragg DAR⁵				
Zone 1	\$6.00	\$3.00	--	\$1.25
Additional Zones	\$6.00	\$6.00	--	\$6.00
<p><i>Source: MTA</i></p> <p>Note 1: Discounts are for seniors (62+), and disabled with a valid ID card.</p> <p>Note 2: Mendocino College students are eligible for free fares with a student ID. Other students are eligible for discounted fares on Route 95.</p> <p>Note 3: Children 6 and under ride for free with a fare-paying caretaker.</p> <p>Note 4: The Youth Pass is available for all youth 18 years old and younger.</p> <p>Note 5: ADA Attendants can accompany DAR passengers for free. ADA Companions can ride for the discounted fare.</p>				

MTA MARKETING

Effective marketing can improve current passenger satisfaction as well as recruit new people to the transit system. This section briefly discusses MTA's current marketing tools.

Online Materials

The MTA website has information on its entire system. The main page shows a map of all MTA routes and includes a trip planner window. Service alerts, transit news, and MTA Board meeting packets are also linked. Each fixed route then has its own page with schedule information in both webpage and PDF formats. The specific fixed route pages include map details for all local stops served by said route. The webpages for Routes 65 and 95 also have information on possible transit connections that could be made in Santa Rosa. There is a separate page dedicated to the DAR services.

The MTA website has other pages with information on fares, rider policies, holiday schedules, and connecting services. There are pages for the customer service line, how to advertise, planning documents, the Title VI program, and career postings, among other topics. The website is overall informative and generally easy to navigate, with only a few updates needed to make information more accurate and easier to understand.

Print Materials

Printed route guides and service information are very important for passengers without devices that can access the internet. There are PDFs available of each route that can be printed by those who prefer or need physical copies of transit information.

Phone Information

Passengers with limited internet access can also get transit information by phone. The MTA has a customer service line that passengers can call to ask questions or for trip planning assistance. There is also a phone number for Spanish-speaking passengers to call if they need transit information.

Social Media

Social media has become an important tool for transit outreach. Platforms such as Twitter and Facebook can be used to share information on real-time service updates, public input opportunities, upcoming promotional events, and future schedule changes. The MTA has a Facebook account with over 1,600 followers that is used to notify the public of service changes (holiday schedules, temporary bus stops, etc.), promotional events, and chances to provide public comment. The MTA also has an Instagram account with 390 followers where it posts rider alerts.

Outreach Activities and Events

The MTA occasionally organizes or supports events for the purpose of public outreach. One recent example was tabling at the Ukiah Farmer's Market in April 2023 to gather feedback for the *Ukiah Transit Center Feasibility Study*. The MTA's ability to organize outreach events is limited by staff availability and funding capacity.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

There are multiple other transportation providers that operate in Mendocino County besides the MTA. These services are described below.

Regional Providers

Amtrak San Joaquins

Amtrak San Joaquins Route 7 provides "Thruway" bus service between Arcata in Humboldt County and Martinez in Contra Costa County, passing through Mendocino County along the way. Local stops in Mendocino County include Willits, Ukiah, Laytonville, and Leggett. Southbound departures from Ukiah leave the stop, which is north of the McDonalds, at 11:20 AM and 2:05 PM each day. Northbound buses then arrive in Ukiah at 2:10 PM and 5:20 PM. One-way fares range from \$10 for short trips (such as between Leggett and Ukiah) to upwards of \$20 for longer trips (such as from Ukiah to Martinez). The previous requirement to purchase a train ticket along with the Route 7 bus ticket has been eliminated, allowing passengers to purchase just bus tickets if desired.

Greyhound

Greyhound operates a line along US 101 between the Bay Area and Arcata which also provides service to Mendocino County. Passengers can board Greyhound at the Ukiah Airport or the Taco Bell in Willits. Destinations served by the Greyhound line to the north include Eureka and Arcata. Destinations served to the south include Santa Rosa and San Francisco. Southbound Greyhound buses depart Ukiah at 12:45 PM, arriving in San Francisco at 4:15 PM. A one-way ticket to San Francisco tends to cost around \$26. Northbound buses arrive in Ukiah at 4:00 PM, before traveling onwards to Humboldt County, arriving in Eureka at 8:00 PM. Tickets from Ukiah to Arcata tend to cost around \$39. Currently, Greyhound serves Mendocino County Thursday through Monday.

Humboldt Transit Authority

The Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) is the primary public transit provider in Humboldt County, to the north of Mendocino County. The HTA operates multiple local and intercity services entirely within the county. In January 2024, the HTA will also begin operating a new service between Crescent City in Del Norte County and Ukiah. The service will be called the Redwood Coast Express, and it will operate one roundtrip a day, four to five days per week. The Redwood Coast Express schedule will be designed so passengers can transfer between the new service and MTA Routes 9, 20, and 65. Exact details on fares and schedule timing have not yet been determined.

Lake Transit Authority

The Lake Transit Authority (LTA), or Lake Transit, is the public transit provider for Lake County, Mendocino County's neighbor to the east. The LTA's Route 7 provides intercounty service between the Cities of Lakeport and Ukiah, operating four roundtrips on weekdays and three roundtrips on Saturdays. Each round trip from Lakeport to Ukiah and back takes about three and a half hours. Mendocino County residents can board Lake Transit's Route 7 at the Ukiah Airport, Ukiah Valley Medical Center, Pear Tree Center, and Mendocino College. Once passengers arrive in Lakeport, they can transfer onto other LTA

services that can take them to destinations such as the City of Clearlake. Route 7 fares to Lake County are \$5 for a one-way ticket, but MTA passengers transferring to the LTA receive a \$1.00 discount.

Social Service Providers

Anderson Valley Senior Center

The Anderson Valley Senior Center provides transportation assistance on a reservation-basis to and from the Center's lunch program on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Anderson Valley Senior Center also provides rides on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays on a reservation-basis to destinations around the Anderson Valley to help people get to medical appointments or errands. The transportation service is available to senior adults and low-income people. On Fridays, the Center provides trips to Ukiah to help people get to medical appointments. Special trips are sometimes planned based on client feedback. It is suggested that passengers donate \$1 for rides within the valley and \$5 for rides to Ukiah. The Anderson Valley Senior Center receives TDA funding from the MTA.

Coastal Seniors

Coastal Seniors is a nonprofit organization in Point Arena that provides programs to promote the well-being of seniors in Mendocino County's coastal region. Coastal Seniors' services are available for seniors ages 60 or older and their spouses or caregivers, regardless of age. Disabled people who live with seniors can also use Coastal Seniors programs. On Tuesday, Coastal Seniors provides a reservation-required transportation service to and from senior lunches and for errands trips. One-way fares range from \$1.00 to \$4.00 depending on the trip length. On Thursdays and Fridays, Coastal Seniors also provides trips on a reservation-basis to Santa Rosa, Fort Bragg, and Ukiah for errands and other appointments. Round-trip fares for out-of-town trips are \$10.00. The Coastal Seniors transportation service is funded in part through a contract with the MTA.

Consolidated Tribal Health Project

The Consolidated Tribal Health Project (CTHP) is a nonprofit community health clinic governed by eight federally recognized tribes in the Mendocino County region. CTHP offers transportation assistance for eligible patients either by providing arranged rides or reimbursing travel costs. Patients can determine their eligibility for transportation assistance with CTHP staff.

Mendocino County Department of Social Services

The Mendocino County Department of Social Services (DSS) provides transportation from Fort Bragg to the Ukiah Veterans Affairs (VA) Clinic on Mondays and Wednesdays. The bus leaves Fort Bragg at 7:30 AM and arrives at the VA clinic at 10:00 AM. The bus then leaves the clinic at 2:00 PM in the afternoon and arrives back at the DSS office in Fort Bragg at 4:00 PM.

Redwood Coast Regional Center

As previously mentioned, the Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC) is dedicated to serving persons with disabilities. In addition to its contract with the MTA, the RCRC also assists clients with transportation by providing financial aid to help pay for both public and private transportation to and from the center.

Redwood Coast Senior Center

The Redwood Coast Senior Center (RCSC) is located in Fort Bragg. The RCSC provides a door-to-door demand response service for seniors ages 60 and older and disabled persons in Fort Bragg between Cleone and Gibney Lane, extending four miles inland. Rides can be scheduled weekdays between 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Fares range from \$1.00 to \$4.00 for a one-way trip depending on the distance. The RCRC also receives TDA funding through a contract with the MTA.

Round Valley Indian Health Center

The Round Valley Indian Health Center, located in Covelo, provides free rides to patients for diabetes-related appointments, homebound seniors over the age of 55 with no means of transportation, and for children with no other means of transportation to immunization appointments. Whether a ride can be scheduled depends on staff and vehicle availability. The Round Valley Indian Health Center will also occasionally provide out-of-town rides for dialysis depending on capacity. Patients can schedule rides Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Rides must be scheduled at least 72 hours in advance.

Ukiah Senior Center

The Ukiah Senior Center provides demand response services on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Eligible riders include seniors ages 55 and older and persons with disabilities. The Ukiah Senior Center can occasionally accommodate same-day trip requests but recommends clients schedule rides further in advance. Rides can be requested to destinations in Ukiah, Forks, Calpella, Rogina Heights, Deerwood, Talmage, and the Redwood Valley. One-way fares range from \$3.00 to \$6.00 depending on the trip length. The Ukiah Senior Center is another one of the local senior centers that receives TDA funding through a contract with the MTA to provide more specialized door-through-door demand response service to seniors.

Veterans Affairs Shuttle

The Veterans Affairs (VA) Department runs shuttles throughout northern California to help patients get to the San Francisco VA Clinic. Four roundtrips are made between the Ukiah and San Francisco VA Clinics each weekday. The first morning trip is direct, while the other three trips stop in Santa Rosa. The Shuttle leaves Ukiah at 7:00 AM, 8:50 AM, 10:30 AM, and 2:30 PM. Veterans must reserve their rides in advance.

Willits

The Willits Harrah Senior Center provides a door-through-door DAR service for adults ages 55 and older and disabled people in the City of Willits. The service is available Monday through Friday, 8:15 AM to 3:30 PM. Rides can be scheduled to destinations in Willits, Brooktrails, and Pine Mountain. Fares vary depending on trip length. Passengers can also schedule out-of-town rides to Ukiah, Santa Rosa and other

destinations in Lake, Sonoma, Napa, Marin, and San Francisco Counties for additional costs. The Willits Harrah Senior Center provides services using two vans, one of which has a wheelchair lift. The program is funded through a contract with the MTA.

Private Providers

Mendocino Wine Tours & Limousine

Mendocino Wine Tours & Limousine offers private limousine services as well as non-emergency medical transportation and general ride services, depending on availability. Mendocino Wine Tours & Limousine is available throughout the North Coast region of California, including Mendocino, Lake, southern Humboldt, and northern Sonoma counties. Rates range from \$65 to \$105 per hour depending on the vehicle, with a three-hour minimum.

Obar 11 Enterprises

Obar 11 Enterprises (Obar 11) is a private ride service available 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays and from 8:00 AM to 12:00 AM on Fridays and Saturdays. Obar 11 operates primarily in Fort Bragg and along the Mendocino Coast, but rides can be scheduled to further destinations such as Santa Rosa if needed. Rates depend on the ride.

Redwood Taxi

Redwood Taxi provides taxi, non-emergency medical transportation, and delivery services in Ukiah and Willits. Services are available seven days per week. Rides can be scheduled both via phone as well as by phone application.

Taxi 707

Taxi 707 provides on-demand taxi services 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Rates start at \$3.00, and then increase by \$3.00 per mile traveled. Rides can be scheduled both locally as well to out-of-county destinations such as the San Francisco and Sacramento International Airports.

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RECENT TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, MTA's recent operational and financial histories are discussed, revealing the clear impacts of both the pandemic and driver shortage on the MTA as well as the evident recovery of ridership post-pandemic. The operations data is then used to conduct a performance assessment of the MTA as a whole as well as by service.

MTA OPERATIONS

Ridership

Annual Ridership

Much like other transit systems, MTA's ridership was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As seen in Table 11, MTA had been carrying upwards of 260,000 passenger-trips annually prior to the pandemic. The pandemic began in March 2020, causing Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 ridership to decrease by 25 percent over the previous FY as people were forced to stay home and social distance (Table 11). Ridership then decreased another 66 percent from FY 2019-20 to FY 2020-21, reflecting the continuing impacts of the pandemic on activities that normally drive transit use such as work, school, recreational travel, and medical appointments.

As pandemic restrictions began to lift in FY 2021-22, MTA ridership began to significantly rebound, increasing 50 percent over the previous year (Table 11). While it is unlikely that systemwide ridership will reach the levels seen in FY 2018-19 in the near future due to the increased prevalence of remote/hybrid work and schooling, FY 2022-23 ridership has continued to trend upwards, indicating the continued importance of MTA to local residents. Based on ridership levels from July through April, it is projected that MTA will carry 35 percent more passenger trips in FY 2022-23 compared to the previous year.

Ridership by service information is shown in both Table 11 and Figure 9. While the MTA has been experiencing a rebound in ridership as a whole, Figure 9 makes it evident that not all routes have seen the same relative return of ridership. Ridership projections indicate that Routes 5, 9, 60, 65, and 95 will see annual ridership numbers in FY 2022-23 that are 40 to 80 percent greater than FY 2021-22 levels, a greater rate of increase than the overall MTA system. Comparatively, Routes 1, 20, 75, Ukiah DAR, and Fort Bragg DAR ridership in FY 2022-23 rebounded at a slower rate compared to the overall system. Route 9 (Ukiah Local) is the most utilized MTA service, accounting for approximately 40 percent of MTA's total annual ridership each year (Route 9 ridership is projected to be 42 percent of total ridership in FY 2022-23).

Ridership by Month

Many transit systems experience fluctuations in ridership throughout the year. Figure 10 depicts MTA monthly ridership by route from May 2022 through April 2023. While monthly ridership totals fluctuated in the year considered, the figure also shows an obvious upwards trend in ridership as people returned to transit post-pandemic; the MTA has completed over 10,000 passenger-trips per month ever since August 2022. Ridership had been continuously increasing through December 2022 before experiencing increased variability during the first months of 2023. Based on Figure 10, MTA monthly ridership may be somewhat impacted by student travel patterns as ridership is lowest from May to July. However, it is likely that ridership is still stabilizing into more consistent patterns post-pandemic and monthly trends will be more discernable in FY 2023-24.

Table 11: MTA Historical Ridership

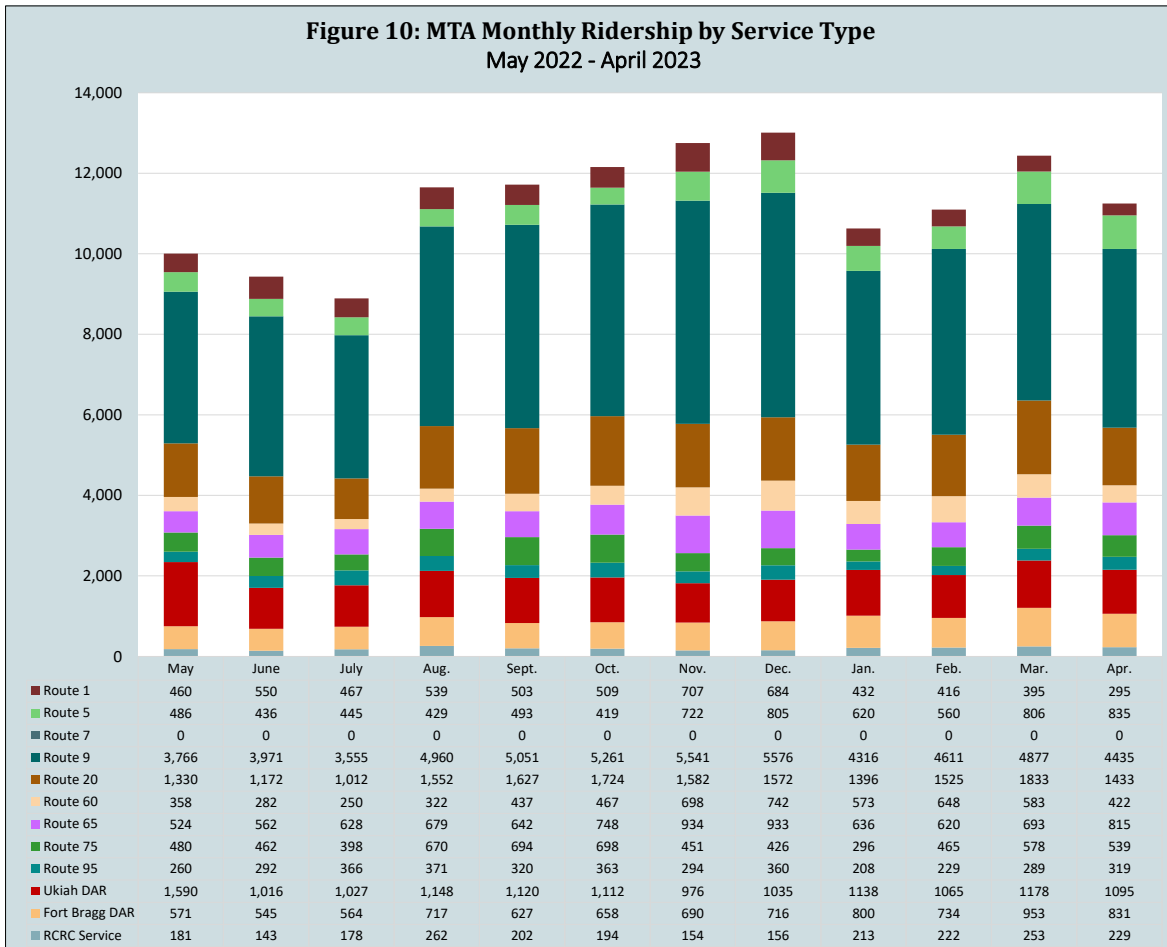
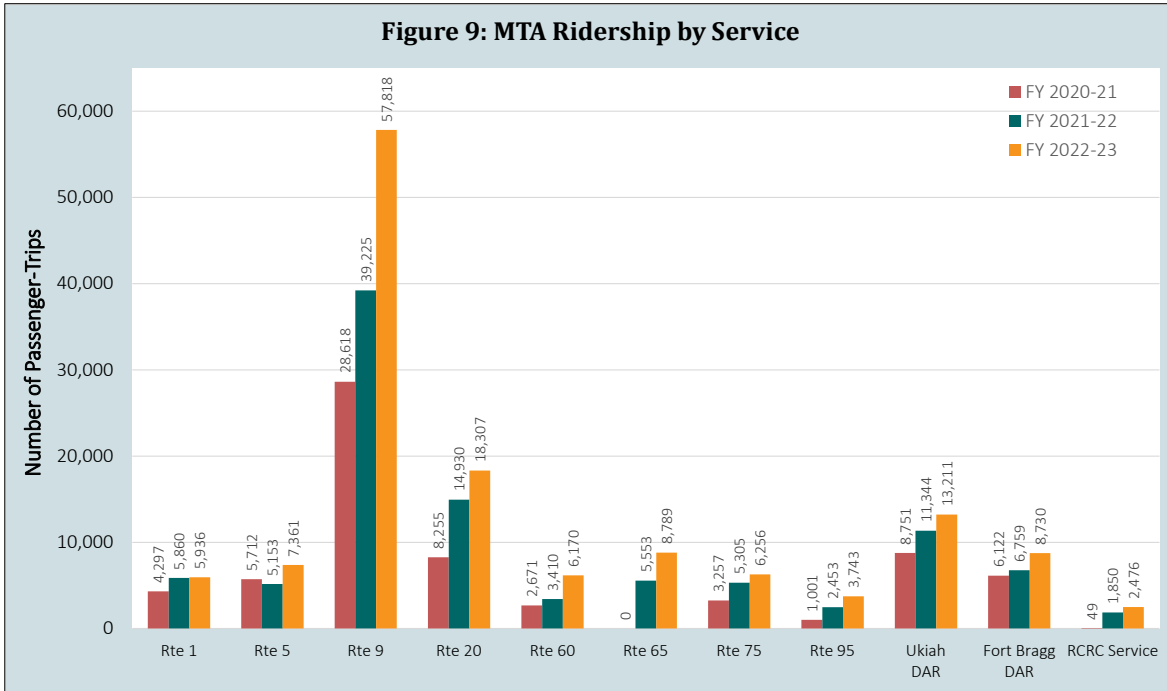
FY 2018-19 - FY 2022-23

Routes ¹	Fiscal Year					Change (2018-19 to 2022-23)	
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 ²	#	%
Route 1- Willits	10,286	9,729	4,297	5,860	5,936	-4,350	-42.3%
Route 5 - Fort Bragg	17,416	13,238	5,712	5,153	7,361	-10,055	-57.7%
Route 7 - Ukiah (Jitney)	3,537	921	0	0	0	-3,537	-100.0%
Route 8 - Ukiah (Evening)	12,510	9,170	0	0	0	-12,510	-100.0%
Route 9 - (Local)	116,386	88,865	28,618	39,225	57,818	-58,568	-50.3%
Route 20 - Ukiah / Willits	30,958	25,292	8,255	14,930	18,307	-12,651	-40.9%
Route 60 - The Coaster	11,433	7,941	2,671	3,410	6,170	-5,263	-46.0%
Route 65 - Cross County	11,367	9,410	0	5,553	8,789	-2,578	-22.7%
Route 65a - New Route	7,146	4,068	0	0	0	-7,146	-100.0%
Route 75 - South Coast / Ukiah (Wkdys)	8,517	6,942	3,257	5,305	6,256	-2,261	-26.6%
Route 95 - South Coast / Santa Rosa	4,911	3,456	1,001	2,453	3,743	-1,168	-23.8%
Ukiah Dial-a-Ride	16,576	11,590	8,751	11,344	13,211	-3,365	-20.3%
Fort Bragg Dial-a-Ride	14,879	10,927	6,122	6,759	8,730	-6,149	-41.3%
RCRC Contract Service	3,065	3,065	3,065	3,065	2,476	-589	-19.2%
<i>Fixed Route Subtotal</i>	<i>234,467</i>	<i>179,032</i>	<i>53,811</i>	<i>81,889</i>	<i>114,380</i>	<i>-120,087</i>	<i>-51.2%</i>
<i>DAR Subtotal</i>	<i>31,455</i>	<i>22,517</i>	<i>14,873</i>	<i>18,103</i>	<i>21,941</i>	<i>-9,514</i>	<i>-30.2%</i>
Total Systemwide	268,987	201,549	68,684	103,057	138,797	-130,190	-48.4%

Source: MTA

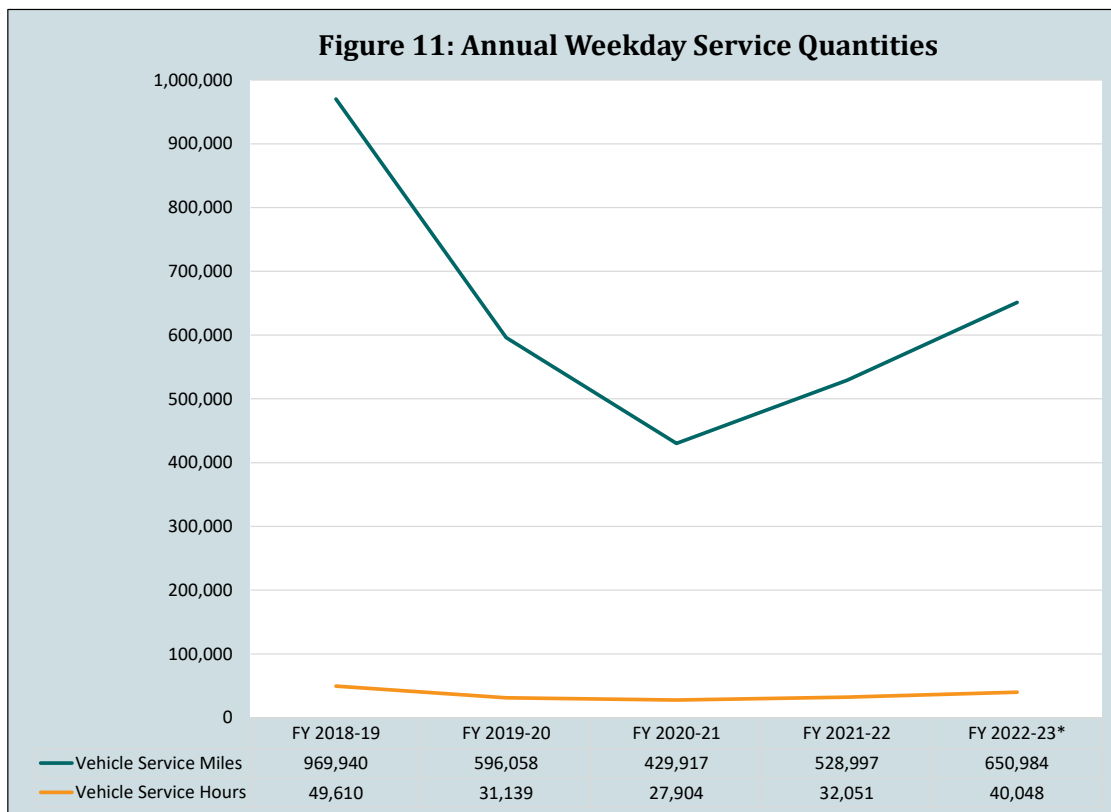
Note 1: Routes 7, 8, 64, and 65a were suspended in FY 2020-21 and have not resumed since. Route 97 was suspended and then temporarily resumed, but has since been suspended again. Route 65 was temporarily suspended but operations have since resumed.

Note 2: FY 2022-23 fully year data is projected based on ridership from July through April.



Vehicle Service Miles and Hours

Recent years have seen the MTA’s service levels impacted by schedule changes due to the pandemic and driver shortage. In the last five years, weekday service levels were highest in FY 2018-19, when the MTA was operating additional services such as Route 8 (Ukiah Evening) and Route 64 (Ukiah to Fort Bragg) (Figure 11). MTA operated 56 percent less vehicle service miles and 44 percent less vehicle service hours in FY 2020-21 compared to FY 2018-19 due to widespread schedule reductions during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since FY 2020-21, service levels have been increasing as MTA has resumed more routes and recruited more drivers; MTA is projected to operate 23 percent more vehicle service miles and 25 percent more vehicle service hours in FY 2022-23 compared to FY 2021-22. Besides annual fluctuations, Figure 11 also shows the consistently large number of vehicle service miles operated by MTA as it provides service to Mendocino County’s dispersed population. High mileage routes often result in vehicles needing to be maintained and replaced more frequently.



MTA TRAVEL TIME ANALYSIS

Research has found that after fares, there are three trip characteristics that influence passenger’s opinions of fixed route bus rides: travel time, frequency of service, and whether or not a transfer is needed. This section explores travel time on MTA services, and then compares transit travel times to auto travel times for the same trips.

Travel Time Matrix

Table 12 shows an analysis of trips between six bus stop locations, representing different areas within Mendocino County. The fastest travel time for each trip pair was determined using existing bus schedules. LSC then recorded the service frequency and whether a transfer would be required based on what routes serve each trip pair the fastest. 10-minute penalties were added to the overall travel times if a transfer is required to reflect the inconvenience.

Note that actual travel times for each trip would likely vary from the times shown in Table 12 based on when someone actually began their trip; for instance, leaving early for the bus would increase the amount of time a passenger has to wait and add to their overall travel time. It is also important to recognize that Table 12 presents the fastest transit travel time between each origin/destination pair assuming optimal conditions and no traffic. Findings from Table 12 include:

- Trip times range from 20 minutes to 635 minutes, or over 10 hours.
- Trips that require transfers are on average almost two times longer than trips without transfers.
- Unsurprisingly, intercity trips take longer. The longest intercity trips are either to or between communities along the Mendocino County coast (average trip time of 3 hours and 44 minutes).
- Transfers are required for most trips, indicating a need for central transfer points.
- The average trip time to the Sonoma County Airport is only 2 hours and 31 minutes due to the express nature of the MTA's intercounty services.

Table 12: MTA Sample Trips: Travel Times, Transfers, and Frequency

		Destination Stop					
		Pear Tree Center (Ukiah)	Mendocino College (Ukiah)	Integrated Service Center (Willits)	Denny's (Fort Bragg)	Point Arena Pharmacy	Sonoma County Airport
Origin Stop	Pear Tree Center (Ukiah)		20	63 T	136	165 T	64
	Mendocino College (Ukiah)	25		48	190 T	195 T	144 T
	Integrated Service Center (Willits)	78	51		130 T	331 T	147
	Denny's (Fort Bragg)	105	135 T	93		635 T	168
	Point Arena Pharmacy	153 T	195 T	263 T	153 T		195
	Sonoma County Airport	99	115 T	146	235	200	

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Comparison of Auto and Travel Times

The long transit travel times in Table 12 are simply due in large part to the long distances covered by each trip. Therefore, it is valuable to compare the transit and auto travel times to see how much additional time traveling on MTA requires. Table 13 presents a comparison of auto and transit travel times for the same trips analyzed in Table 12. The top portion of each cell shows the auto travel time for that trip during off-peak hours as calculated by Google Maps.

The transit travel times shown in Table 12 were divided by the auto travel times to calculate a ratio. Low ratios, such as 1.6 for the trip between Denny’s in Fort Bragg and the Pear Tree Center in Ukiah, are preferred as it indicates the transit trip does not take much more travel time compared to traveling by car. High ratios, such as 9.9 for the trip between Denny’s in Fort Bragg and the Point Arena Pharmacy, indicate the trip is far less convenient by bus, making transit the least desirable mode for those with travel options.

		Destination Stop					
		Pear Tree Center (Ukiah)	Mendocino College (Ukiah)	Integrated Service Center (Willits)	Denny's (Fort Bragg)	Point Arena Pharmacy	Sonoma County Airport
Origin Stop	Pear Tree Center (Ukiah)	10 2.0	10 2.0	27 2.3	80 1.7	87 1.9	55 1.2
	Mendocino College (Ukiah)	8 3.1		28 1.7	80 2.4	92 2.1	60 2.4
	Integrated Service Center (Willits)	27 2.9	29 1.8		57 2.3	113 2.9	78 1.9
	Denny's (Fort Bragg)	64 1.6	80 1.7	57 1.6		64 9.9	132 1.3
	Point Arena Pharmacy	86 1.8	92 2.1	114 2.3	65 2.4		122 1.6
	Sonoma County Airport	57 1.7	63 1.8	81 1.8	137 1.7	125 1.6	

Source: LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.
Note 1: Typical auto travel times calculated by using Google Maps

MTA FINANCIAL REVIEW

The sustainability of transit services is dependent on the balance between revenues and costs. The MTA’s budget is reviewed in this section, and then a cost model is developed to analyze performance by service.

Revenue Sources

The MTA earns revenues from a number of sources (Table 14). Local revenue sources include fares, the MTA’s contract with the RCRC, the MTA’s contract with Sonoma County to operate Route 95 between Mendocino County and Santa Rosa, and advertising, among others. Local revenues were the most substantially impacted by ridership declines during the pandemic. The MTA is expecting only 4 percent of its total revenues to be from fares in FY 2023-24.

MTA Revenues	Fiscal Years		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Operating Revenues	\$702,200	\$706,000	\$541,000
Farebox Revenue	\$460,000	\$460,000	\$295,000
Redwood Coast Regional Center Contract	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000
Sonoma County Contract	\$177,200	\$181,000	\$181,000
Other Local Revenues	\$206,000	\$182,000	\$173,000
Advertising Contract	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$125,000
Ag. Van Leases	\$45,000	\$0	\$0
Senior Center Administration	\$26,500	\$26,500	\$26,500
Maintenance Fuel Revenue	\$23,000	\$24,000	\$0
Investment Income	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
Other (Fuel Rebates, etc.)	\$4,000	\$14,000	\$14,000
State Revenues	\$3,979,512	\$4,695,462	\$5,115,353
STA	\$455,221	\$967,375	\$1,443,571
LTF & LTF Unmet Needs	\$3,434,291	\$3,728,087	\$3,671,782
LCTOP	\$90,000	For Capital	\$0
Federal Revenues	\$1,502,134	\$1,342,774	\$1,442,774
CARES - 5311	\$550,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
CARES - 5311 (f)	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
FTA 5310	\$0	\$150,000	\$150,000
FTA 5311	\$552,134	\$717,774	\$717,774
FTA 5311 (f)	\$300,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
Total Revenues	\$6,389,846	\$6,926,236	\$7,272,127

Source: MTA FY 23/24 First Draft Budget

The majority of MTA’s operating revenues come from state sources (\$5.1 million or 76 percent). State funding has also been the only revenue category to increase over the last three years, increasing by 29 percent from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. State transit funding in CA is primarily derived from two sources of formula funding, both of which are generated by provisions of the Transit Development Act (TDA): the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) (sales tax) and State Transit Assistance (STA) funds (fuel tax).

Another CA funding source is the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). LCTOP funds are grant awards intended to provide operational and capital assistance to transit agencies for projects that will ultimately lower greenhouse gas emissions, with a focus on helping disadvantaged communities. In FY

2023-24, MTA plans to use their allocation of LCTOP funds to help finance the transition of the vehicle fleet to Zero Emission Vehicles.

Revenues from federal sources such as Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants and the Coronavirus Air, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Acts represent approximately one-fifth of MTA's operating revenues. These funding sources are available for both operations and capital needs. It should be noted, however, that CARES Act funding will no longer be available after FY 2023-24. Overall, federal revenues are expected to decrease by 4 percent in FY 2023-24 from FY 2021-22, even with some CARES act funding still available.

Expenses and Cost Allocation

Over the last three years, MTA's operating budget has grown from \$5.8 to \$6.9 million, representing a 19 percent increase (Table 15). The increase has been in part due to the high rates of inflation experienced in recent years, as well as the need to offer competitive job offers to recruit more employees.

The top annual expense for MTA is salaries and benefits. The last three fiscal years, salaries and benefits for operators, maintenance and facilities staff, and administrative employees have been over 70 percent of MTA's annual operating expenses. Materials and supplies are expected to be 11 percent of MTA's operating expenses in FY 2023-24, with most funds going to fuel, tires, and lubricants (8 percent of total budget). Service/user fees account for 7 percent of MTA's budgeted FY 2023-24 operating expenses.

To develop a cost model for FY 2022-23, each MTA operating expense was allocated to the service quantity (VSHs or VSMs) upon which it is most dependent. The costs not dependent on service levels, such as printing or legal counsel, were designated as fixed costs. The cost model divided these costs by the expected annual service quantity levels for FY 2022-23 based on operations through April 2023. Table 16 details how the cost model was developed, with the resulting formula being:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{FY 2022-23 MTA Operating Cost Model} = & \$72.06 \times \text{annual vehicle service hours} + \\ & \$2.43 \times \text{annual vehicle service miles} + \\ & \$2,393,361 \text{ in fixed costs} \end{aligned}$$

The cost model is used to calculate the marginal and fully allocated operating costs of each MTA service in Table 16.

Table 15: MTA Operating Expenses

MTA Operating Expenses	Fiscal Years		
	2021/22 Final	2022/23 Approved	2023/24 Draft
Salaries & Benefits	\$4,391,663	\$4,839,094	\$5,046,061
Salaries - Operators	\$1,756,789	\$1,888,549	\$1,964,089
Salaries - Maintenance & Facilities	\$475,299	\$510,946	\$531,384
Salaries - Administrative	\$702,744	\$765,808	\$796,440
Benefits - Operators	\$872,058	\$995,072	\$1,042,873
Benefits - Maintenance & Facilities	\$235,935	\$269,216	\$282,149
Benefits - Administrative	\$348,837	\$403,503	\$422,886
Longevity Bonuses	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,240
Service/User Fees	\$305,530	\$487,100	\$471,300
Vehicle Technical Services, Towing	\$17,500	\$13,700	\$12,400
Property Maintenance & Facility Security System	\$4,250	\$6,000	\$6,000
Legal Counsel	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Purchased Transportation (Willits ADA)	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,400
Marketing, Advertising, & Legal Notices	\$26,000	\$52,000	\$60,000
Accident/Incident Payables	\$15,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Professional & Technical Services, IT, Outside Labor	\$164,380	\$290,000	\$282,000
Computer & Software Maintenance	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$45,000
Drug & Alcohol Services	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$8,500
Materials & Supplies	\$621,000	\$944,750	\$773,125
Fuel, Tires, & Lubricants	\$460,000	\$727,000	\$577,000
Vehicle Maintenance & Repair Parts	\$50,000	\$62,500	\$62,500
Expense Parts, Tools, Shop Supplies	\$24,000	\$30,000	\$16,625
Facilities Maintenance & Janitorial	\$35,000	\$43,750	\$45,000
Computer & Office Supplies/Programs, Printing	\$36,500	\$57,000	\$47,000
Safety & Emergency Supplies	\$1,500	\$7,000	\$5,000
Other Materials & Supplies	\$14,000	\$17,500	\$20,000
Utilities	\$86,700	\$118,000	\$121,500
Casualty & Liability Costs	\$360,000	\$365,000	\$375,000
Taxes	\$2,300	\$2,300	\$2,300
Leases & Rentals	\$2,400	\$9,000	\$9,000
Miscellaneous (Travel, Training, etc.)	\$55,500	\$97,500	\$115,000
Total Operating Requirements	\$5,825,093	\$6,862,744	\$6,913,286

Table 16: MTA FY 2023 Operating/Admin. Cost Model

Expense Category	FY 22/23	Variable		
		Hour	Mile	Fixed
Salaries - Operators	\$1,888,549	\$1,888,549		
Salaries - Maintenance & Facilities	\$510,946		\$510,946	
Salaries - Administrative	\$765,808			\$765,808
Benefits - Operators	\$995,072	\$995,072		
Benefits - Maintenance & Facilities	\$269,216		\$269,216	
Benefits - Administrative	\$403,503			\$403,503
Longevity Bonuses	\$6,000			\$6,000
Service/User Fees	\$471,000			\$471,000
Vehicle Technical Services, Towing	\$13,700		\$13,700	
Purchased Transportation (Willits ADA)	\$2,400	\$2,400		
Fuel, Tires, & Lubricants	\$727,000		\$727,000	
Vehicle Maintenance & Repair Parts	\$62,500		\$62,500	
Other Materials & Supplies	\$155,250			\$155,250
Utilities	\$118,000			\$118,000
Casualty & Liability Costs	\$365,000			\$365,000
Taxes	\$2,300			\$2,300
Leases & Rentals	\$9,000			\$9,000
Miscellaneous (Travel, Training, etc.)	\$97,500			\$97,500
Total	\$6,862,744	\$2,886,021	\$1,583,362	\$2,393,361
Annual Service Quantity		40,048	650,984	--
Cost per Unit by Variable (Cost Model)		\$72.06	\$2.43	\$2,393,361

Source: MTA 2023/24 Draft Budget

Note 1: Total costs are based on approved values for FY 2022-23.

Note 2: Annual service quantities estimated based on average monthly service levels from July through April.

MTA PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

To analyze MTA’s performance for FY 2022-23, the cost model was applied to operations data to calculate metrics such as passenger-trips per hour and subsidy per passenger-trip. Annual ridership and service quantities were determined by taking actual data from July 2022 through April 2023, calculating monthly averages, and then projecting full year values. The service parameters used in the performance analysis are summarized in Table 17.

The FY 2022-23 performance analysis looks at the MTA system as a whole, five service categories, and each specific MTA service. The performance analysis is shown in Table 18 and Figures 12 through 17.

Table 17: Projected MTA Service Parameters FY 2022-23

Routes	Service Parameters					
	Passenger-Trips	Service Hours	Service Miles	Fully Allocated Operating Cost	Marginal Operating Cost ²	Fare Revenue
Local Routes	71,116	15,898	203,764	\$2,556,377	\$1,688,189	\$234,602
1 Willits	5,936	3,024	31,952	\$469,251	\$304,101	\$19,583
5 Fort Bragg	7,361	1,988	23,936	\$315,861	\$207,273	\$24,282
7 / 9 Ukiah	57,818	10,885	147,875	\$1,771,266	\$1,176,815	\$190,736
Intercity Routes	30,733	7,970	175,034	\$1,463,858	\$1,028,635	\$111,100
20 Willits / Ukiah	18,307	4,310	78,793	\$751,960	\$516,593	\$66,180
60 The Coaster	6,170	1,642	34,151	\$296,807	\$207,142	\$22,306
75 South Coast / Ukiah	6,256	2,018	62,090	\$415,091	\$304,900	\$22,614
Intercounty Routes	12,532	6,643	199,278	\$1,353,684	\$990,927	\$226,301
65 Crosscounty	8,789	4,132	124,871	\$844,279	\$618,650	\$31,771
95 South Coast / Santa Rosa	3,743	2,511	74,407	\$509,405	\$372,277	\$194,530
DAR Services	21,941	9,537	72,908	1,410,151	889,329	63,017
Ukiah DAR	13,211	5,924	49,294	\$885,888	\$562,401	\$37,943
Fort Bragg DAR	8,730	3,614	23,615	\$524,263	\$326,928	\$25,074
RCRC Contract Service	2,476	862	5,898	\$125,766	\$78,674	\$65,000
Fixed Route Total	114,380	30,511	578,076	\$5,373,918	\$3,707,751	\$572,003
MTA Total	138,797	40,048	650,984	\$6,862,744	\$4,675,755	\$700,020

Sources: MTA, LSC

Note 1: Projections were made based on operations data from July 2022 through April 2023.

Note 2: Marginal operating costs are based on the calculations shown in Table 16 and do not include fixed costs.

Table 19 details MCOG’s most recently adopted performance standards for the MTA and compares FY 2022-23 performance to these standards. The values in Table 19 were calculated according to the route categories used by MCOG and the MTA. The performance of the local senior center paratransit services is discussed in more detail towards the end of this chapter. The current transit goals and performance standards used by MCOG and the MTA will be further evaluated as a part of *Technical Memorandum Three* in coordination with the Project Advisory Committee. The evaluation will result in the goals and standards being revised as appropriate.

Passenger-Trips per Hour

The relative productivity of a transit service can be assessed by calculating the average number of passenger-trips completed per vehicle service hour. Based on this metric, the most productive MTA service is Route 9 in Ukiah, a local route with high ridership that carried 5.3 passenger-trips per hour on average in FY 2022-23 (Table 18). Other routes that carried high numbers of passengers per hour include Route 20 (4.2 passenger-trips), Route 60 (3.8 passenger-trips), and Route 5 (3.7 passenger-trips) (Figure 12). The routes that carried the least passenger-trips per hour were the inter-county routes. The DAR services carried an average of 2.3 passenger-trips per hour in FY 2022-23, which is typical for paratransit services. As seen in Table 19, none of the service categories met the MCOG standards for passenger-trips per vehicle service hour in FY 2022-23.

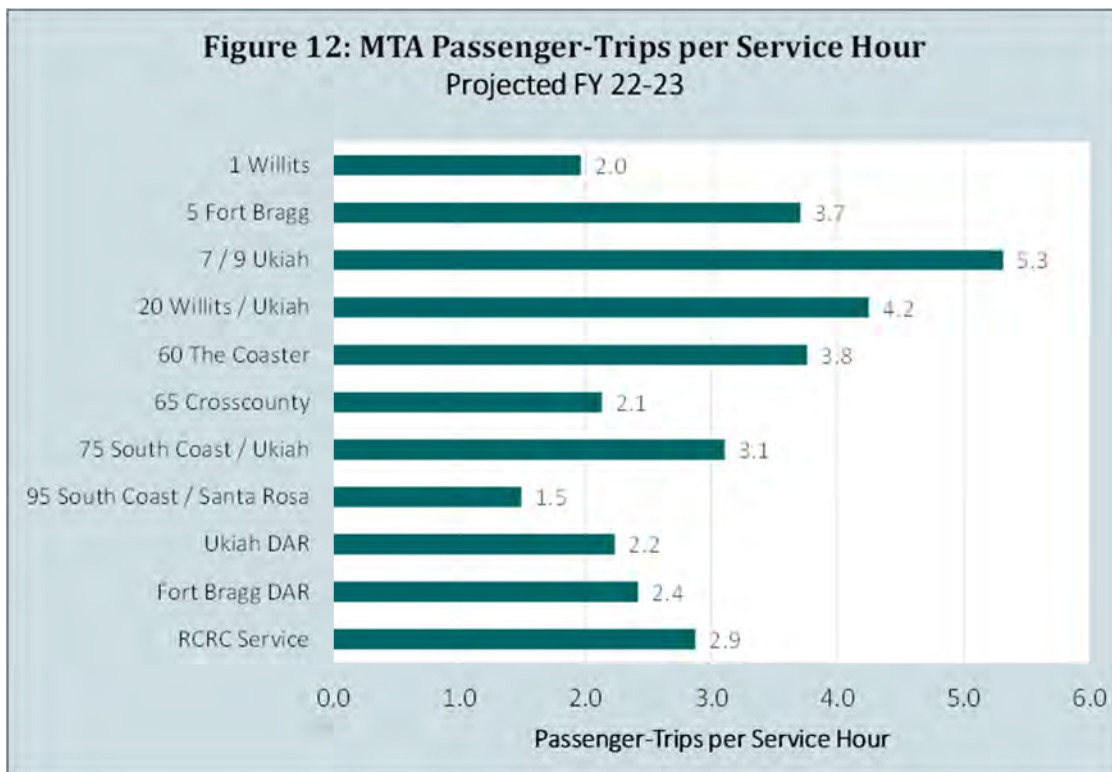
Table 18: Projected MTA Performance FY 2022-23

Routes	Service Performance					
	Passengers per...		Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip	Operating Subsidy per Passenger-Trip	Operating Cost per Service Hour	Farebox Ratio ²
	Hour	Mile				
Local Routes	4.5	0.35	\$35.95	\$32.65	\$160.80	9.2%
1 Willits	2.0	0.19	\$79.05	\$75.75	\$155.17	4.2%
5 Fort Bragg	3.7	0.31	\$42.91	\$39.61	\$158.85	7.7%
7 / 9 Ukiah	5.3	0.39	\$30.63	\$27.34	\$162.72	10.8%
Intercity Routes	3.9	0.18	\$47.63	\$44.02	\$183.68	7.6%
20 Willits / Ukiah	4.2	0.23	\$41.07	\$37.46	\$174.47	8.8%
60 The Coaster	3.8	0.18	\$48.10	\$44.49	\$180.77	7.5%
75 South Coast / Ukiah	3.1	0.10	\$66.36	\$62.74	\$205.72	5.4%
Intercounty Routes	1.9	0.06	\$108.02	\$89.96	\$203.78	16.7%
65 Crosscounty	2.1	0.07	\$96.06	\$92.45	\$204.34	3.8%
95 South Coast / Santa Rosa	1.5	0.05	\$136.10	\$84.13	\$202.86	38.2%
DAR Services	2.3	0.30	\$64.27	\$61.40	\$147.86	4.5%
Ukiah DAR	2.2	0.27	\$67.06	\$64.19	\$149.55	4.3%
Fort Bragg DAR	2.4	0.37	\$60.05	\$57.18	\$145.08	4.8%
RCRC Contract Service	2.9	0.42	\$50.80	\$24.55	\$145.84	51.7%
Fixed Route Total	3.7	0.20	\$46.98	\$41.98	\$176.13	10.6%
MTA Total	3.5	0.21	\$49.44	\$44.40	\$171.36	10.2%

Sources: MTA, LSC

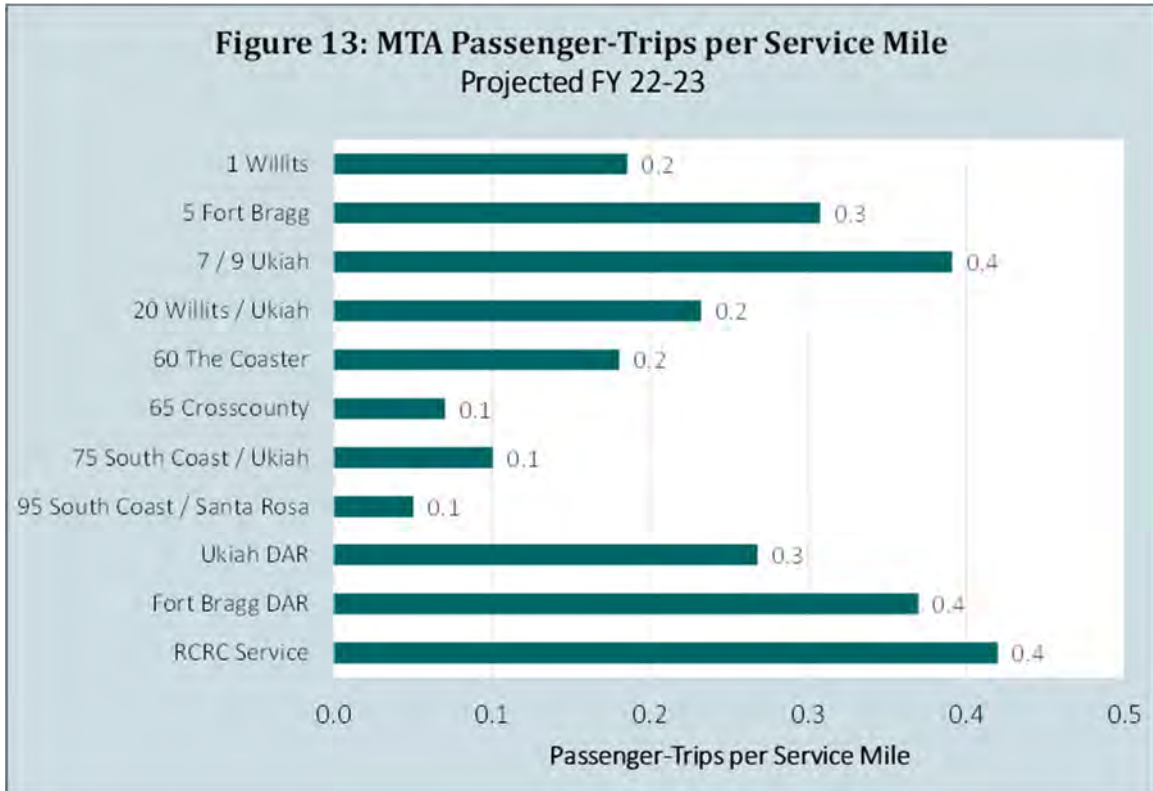
Note 1: Projections were made based on operations data from July 2022 through April 2023.

Note 2: Farebox calculations do not represent official calculations for TDA eligibility.



Passenger-Trips per Mile

The number of passenger-trips carried per vehicle service mile is another indicator of transit productivity. Low mileage services, such as the local routes, tend to carry more passenger-trips per mile compared to high mileage services, such as the intercity or intercounty routes (Table 18). On average, the local routes carried 0.35 passenger-trips per mile in FY 2022-23, with Route 9 carrying the most passengers per mile out of any fixed route (0.39 passenger trips) (Figure 13). Route 9 also carried over six times more passenger-trips per mile compared to the intercounty routes, which only carried an average of 0.06 passenger-trips per mile.



Operating Cost per Passenger-Trip

One of the metrics monitored by MCOG is the operating cost per passenger-trip. Each year, MCOG evaluates this metric to see how MTA financial performance has changed in comparison to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The standards in Table 19 are CPI Adjusted Rolling Averages that were calculated with data from calendar years 2020, 2021, and 2022 (not FYs). These values will therefore be higher once inflation for 2023 is also considered. The operating cost per passenger-trip includes not only direct operating costs such as driver salaries and fuel, but also the other fixed costs included in Tables 15 and 16 such as marketing, computer supplies, and legal counsel, etc. The additional costs are allocated to each route based on the proportion of the total systemwide vehicle service hours operated by said service.

Table 19: MCOG Performance Standards for the MTA

Does Not Meet Standard
Meets Standard

Passengers Per Vehicle Service Hour		
Service Type	Standard	FY 22-23 Performance
Short Distance Bus Routes	10.2	4.5
Long Distance Bus Routes	3.2	3.0
Senior Centers	2.2	1.4
Dial-a-Ride	3.3	2.3

Cost Per Vehicle Service Hour		
Service Type	Standard	FY 22-23 Values
Short Distance Bus Routes	\$176.53	\$160.80
Long Distance Bus Routes	\$194.76	\$192.82
Senior Centers	\$86.02	\$51.44
Dial-a-Ride	\$124.08	\$147.86

Cost Per Passenger-Trip		
Service Type	Standard	FY 22-23 Values
Short Distance Bus Routes	\$38.65	\$37.04
Long Distance Bus Routes	\$60.86	\$66.78
Senior Centers	\$46.03	\$36.53
Dial-a-Ride	\$37.60	\$64.27

Farebox Recovery Ratio		
Service Type	Standard	FY 22-23 Performance
Short Distance Bus Routes	10%	9.2%
Long Distance Bus Routes	10%	12.0%
Senior Centers	10%	13.7%
Dial-a-Ride	10%	4.4%

Note 1: FY 2022-23 performance data represents projections based on operations from July through April.

Note 2: Short distance routes include Routes 1, 5, 7, and 9.

Note 3: Long distance routes include Routes 20, 60, 65, 75, and 95.

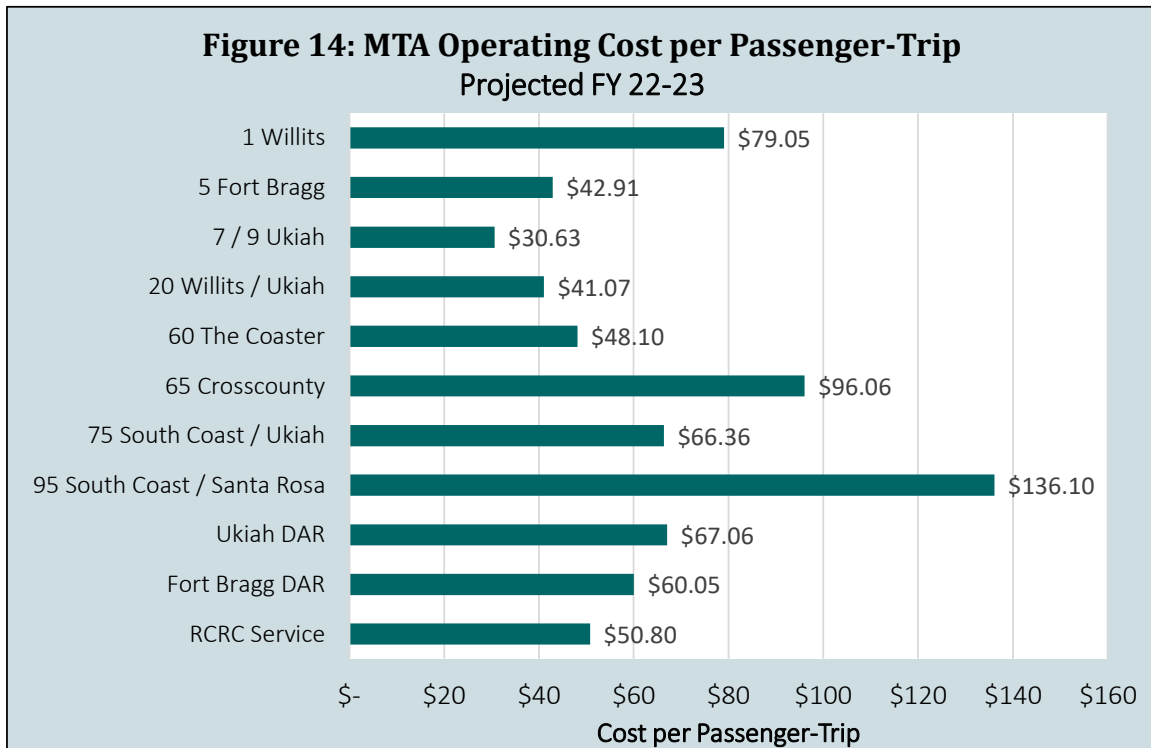
Note 4: Senior Centers refers to the paratransit services operated by local senior centers using TDA funding.

Note 5: MCOG uses "CPI Adjusted Rolling Average" figures for financial performance standards. The CPI Adjusted Rolling Average is calculated using the Consumer Price Index Annual Average, All Urban Consumers, California. In this table, the standards for the cost per vehicle service hour and cost per passenger-trip include inflation data through December 2022.

Note 6: The cost per passenger-trip was calculated by dividing the fully allocated cost for each service category for FY 2022-23 by total projected annual ridership.

Source: MCOG, MTA

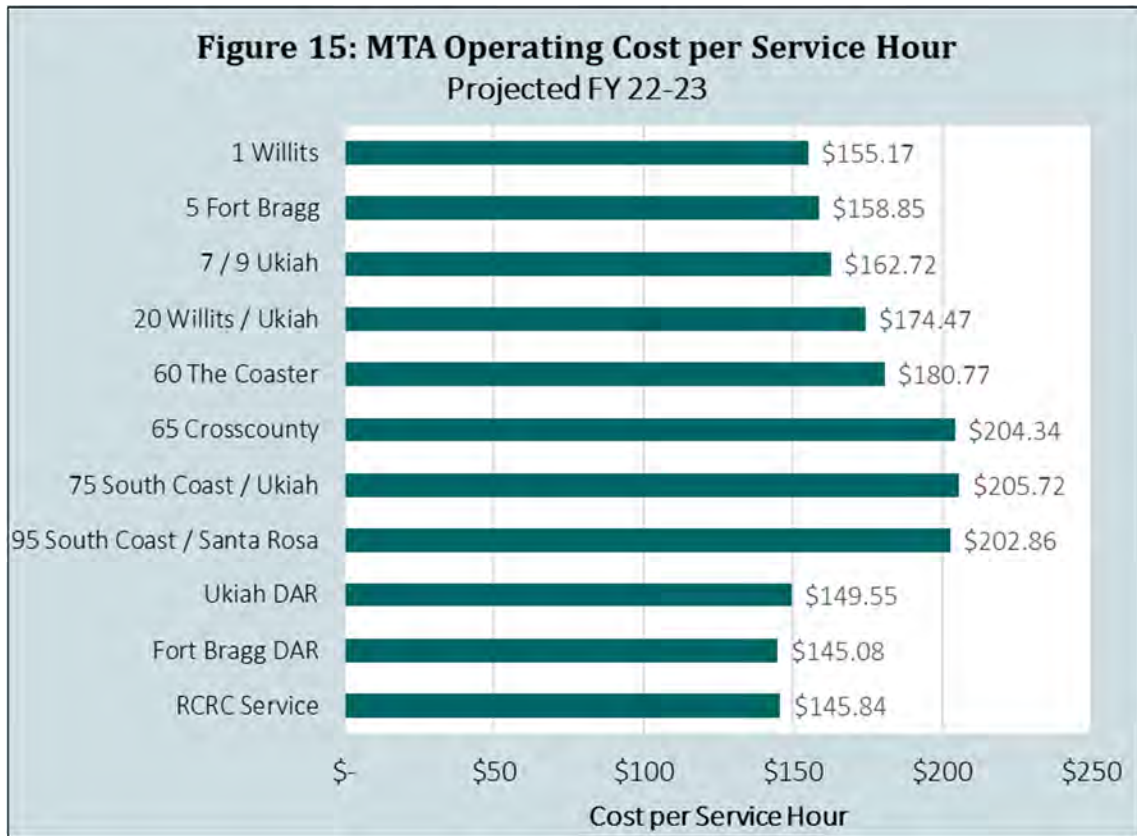
Systemwide, the operating cost per passenger-trip in FY 2022-23 was \$49.44. The lowest average operating cost per passenger-trip was seen on the local routes (\$35.95), however performance was not consistent among these services; Route 9 had the lowest cost per passenger-trip of any MTA service (\$30.63), but Route 1 had one of the highest (\$79.05). Operating cost per passenger-trip was higher on the intercity services (\$47.63), and even higher on the intercounty routes (\$108.02) (Figure 14). This trend is largely due to the longer distances operated by the intercity and intercounty routes. The two DAR services had an average operating cost of \$64.27 per passenger-trip. In FY 2022-23, the short distance, or local routes, are projected to meet MCOG’s most recently adopted performance standards. Using MCOG’s system, a service meets the standard if its operating cost per passenger-trip is below the CPI Adjusted Rolling Average.



Operating Cost per Hour

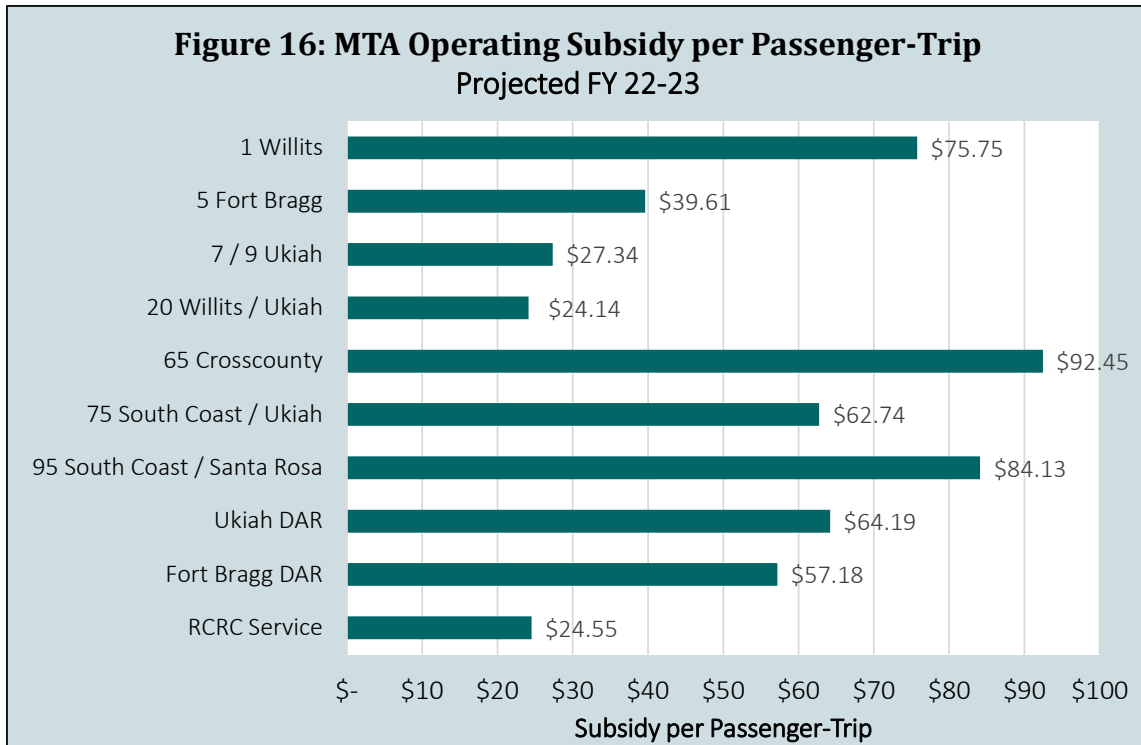
Another metric traditionally monitored by MCOG when evaluating MTA transit performance has been the total operating cost per vehicle service hour (Table 19). Similar to the total costs per passenger-trip, the operating costs per vehicle service hour were calculated using the total MTA operating expenses for FY 2022-23. Based on these calculations, the total operating cost per service hour for MTA was \$171.36 (Table 18). The DAR and RCRC services had the lowest cost per service hour (near \$145), while the intercounty routes had the highest (\$203.78). For the fixed routes, the total cost per service hour ranged from \$155.17 on Route 1 to \$204.34 on Route 65. As evidenced by Figure 15, the operating cost per vehicle service hour is influenced by the service type; the routes within each service category saw similar costs per hour. Both the local and long-distance routes are projected to meet the MCOG performance standard in FY 2022-23 based on the CPI Adjusted Rolling Average calculated through December 2022.

MCOG considers a service to have met the performance standard if the operating cost per vehicle service hour is lower than the CPI Adjusted Rolling Average.



Operating Subsidy per Passenger-Trip

The operating subsidy (operating costs minus fare revenue) per passenger-trip represents the amount of tax-payer subsidy per passenger-trip required to operate the transit system and is an excellent measure of cost efficiency. The MTA averaged an operating subsidy of \$44.40 per passenger-trip in FY 2022-23 (Table 18). The local routes saw the lowest operating subsidy per passenger-trip (\$32.65) and the intercounty routes saw the highest (\$89.96) (Figure 16). Route 9 had the lowest subsidy per passenger trip of any MTA service given its high ridership (\$27.34). On the other end of the spectrum, Route 65 had the highest operating subsidy per passenger trip of all the MTA services (\$92.45). While also an intercounty route, Route 95 cost less than Route 65 because it is partially paid for by Sonoma County. For the RCRC contract service, the subsidy per passenger trip represents the cost per passenger trip after the RCRC funds are applied. Based on FY 2022-23 performance and costs, the operating subsidy per trip is \$24.55 on the RCRC contract service.



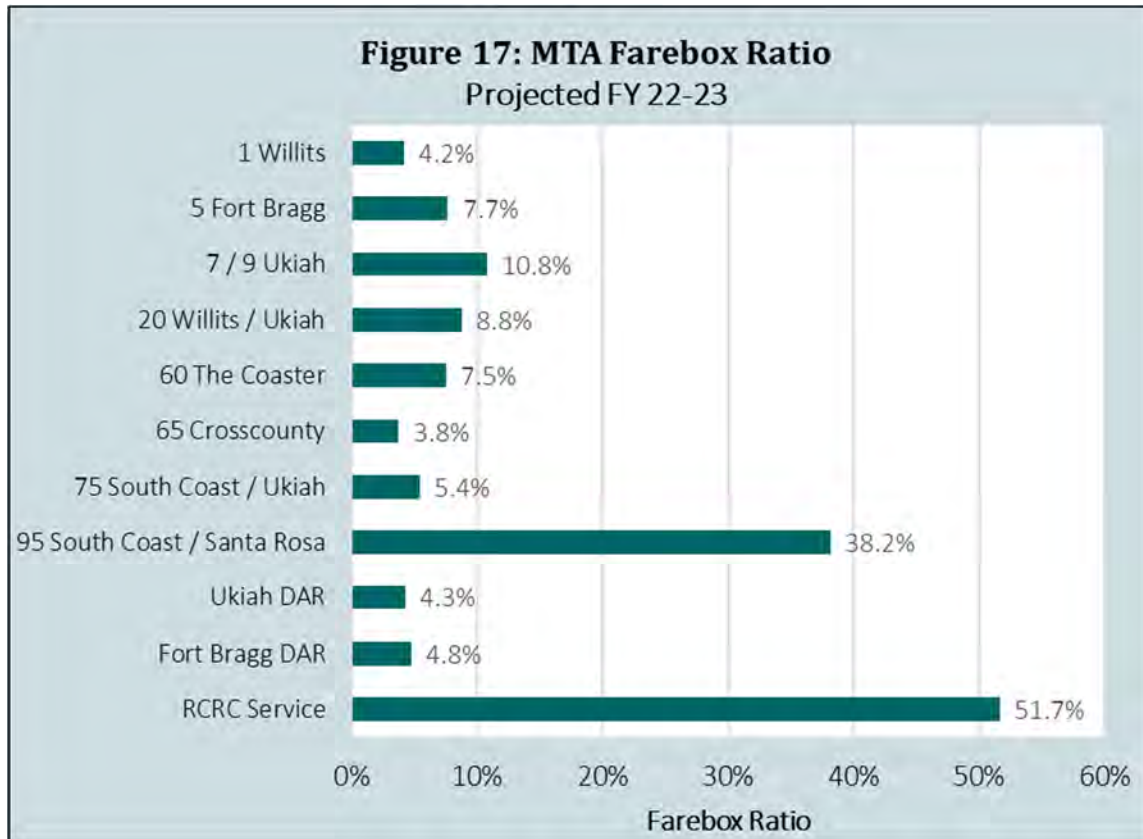
Farebox Ratio

The farebox ratio represents the proportion of operating costs paid for by fare revenues. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the California Transportation Development Act (TDA) required rural transit agencies (such Mendocino County) to have a farebox ratio of at least 10 percent (or to make up the difference using local funds). If the 10 percent farebox ratio were not attained, the difference between the amount of actual fare revenue collected and the required amount of fare revenue needed to meet the 10 percent ratio would be assessed as a penalty. One grace year is allowed per TDA.

During COVID in FY 2019-20, transit operators who do not meet the required minimum farebox recovery ratio requirement could not be penalized (per Assembly Bill 90). This temporary relief was extended through FY 2022-23, per Assembly Bill (AB) 149. AB 149 also set forth additional allowances for calculating the official farebox ratio. These include categorizing federal funds as "local funds" to boost the revenue side of the equation and adding several exemptions on the cost side of the equation. Although farebox ratio may have less significance going forward in terms of TDA eligibility, the simple ratio of fare revenues to operating costs is still useful for transit planning purposes and therefore discussed here. MCOG standards state all service categories should have farebox ratios of at least 10 percent (Table 19). The long-distance routes are the only MTA service category projected to meet this standard in FY 2022-23.

The MTA systemwide farebox ratio in FY 2022-23 is projected to be 10.2 percent (Table 18). This farebox would meet the TDA requirements without the new allowances on both the revenue and cost side discussed above. The RCRC service and Route 95 have the highest farebox values due to being subsidized in part by contracts with other agencies. Of the routes only collecting local passenger fares, Route 9 has been the best performing route in terms of farebox (10.8 percent), followed by Route 20 (8.8 percent)

and Route 5 (7.7 percent). Both the Fort Bragg and Ukiah DAR services have farebox ratios around 4.5 percent, which is on par for paratransit. It should be noted that according to the estimated farebox value, the RCRC contract is only paying for approximately half of the total operating cost of the MTA service provided for its clients. This is shown in Figure 17.



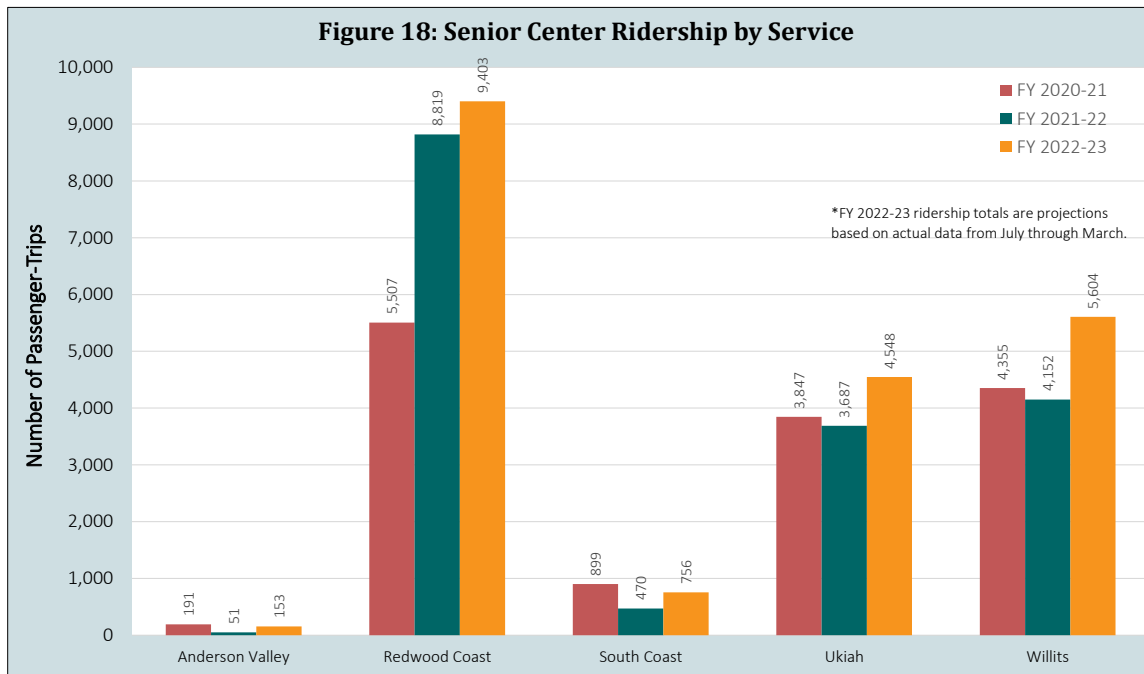
SENIOR CENTER TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS PERFORMANCE

MTA contracts with five local senior centers to operate door-to-door transportation services within their communities: the Anderson Valley, Redwood Coast, South Coast, Ukiah, and Willits Senior Centers. The senior centers receive a portion of MTA's TDA funding for their transportation programs through contracts with the MTA. The details of the specific programs are discussed in Chapter 3 in the section describing social service transportation providers.

MCOG and the MTA approved a new TDA funding formula for the senior center programs in 2021 to be implemented beginning in FY 2022-23. The agreement distributes funding to the various senior centers based on their operations levels, with 40 percent of funding being distributed based on the number of passenger-trips, 30 percent based on the number of vehicle service hours, and 30 percent based on the number of vehicle service miles. The formula will be updated every three years to reflect changes in operating levels. According to the current version of the formula funding agreement, the South Coast and Ukiah Senior Center each receive 27 percent of the TDA funds allocated for the senior centers, the Willits Senior Center receives 24 percent, the Redwood Coast Senior Center receives 16 percent, and the Anderson Valley Senior Center receives 6 percent. It should be noted that the senior centers do not rely

exclusively on the TDA funding allocated to them by MCOG and the MTA, but they are also able to generate revenues from other sources such as fares, donations, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 grants.

Ridership for the senior center programs is shown in Figure 18 for the last three FYs. FY 2022-23 ridership totals were projected based on operations data from July through March. The Redwood Coast Senior Center’s transportation program serves the most riders annually and is expected to complete over 9,000 passenger-trips in FY 2022-23. The Ukiah and Willits Senior Centers both serve upwards of 3,500 passenger-trips annually. The Anderson Valley and South Coast Senior Centers carry fewer passenger-trips per year compared to the other three centers.



A performance analysis was conducted for the senior center transportation programs similar to the analysis for the MTA. The parameters used for this analysis are shown in Table 20. Full year FY 2022-23 data was projected based on operations from July through March. Operating costs are based on the actual costs recorded by the senior centers during the first nine months of the FY. Subsidy values represent the total amount of funding the senior centers received from MCOG and the MTA (or TDA funds), insurance, and FTA Section 5310. Revenues represent how much funding the senior centers received from fares, donations, and other locally generated sources.

The performance analysis is shown in Table 21. The senior centers’ performance is also summarized in Table 19 compared to the performance standards set by MCOG. Overall, the senior center transportation programs perform well. In FY 2022-23, the average performance across the five senior centers met the MCOG standards for operating cost per vehicle service hour, operating cost per passenger-trip, and farebox recovery ratio. The only standard the services are not projected to meet is for passenger-trips per hour.

Table 20: Projected Senior Center Transportation Programs Service Parameters FY 2022-23

Senior Center	Service Parameters				
	Passenger-Trips	Service Hours	Service Miles	Operating Costs	Revenues ²
Anderson Valley	153	543	8,503	\$33,593	\$3,045
Redwood Coast	9,403	7,669	32,297	\$200,593	\$18,337
South Coast	756	1,145	14,200	\$164,700	\$56,799
Ukiah	4,548	2,891	23,505	\$214,615	\$11,356
Willits	5,604	2,284	20,160	\$134,053	\$13,169
Senior Center Total	20,464	14,532	98,666	\$747,554	\$102,706

Sources: MCOG, MTA, LSC

Note 1: Projections were made based on operations data from July 2022 through March 2023.

Note 2: Fare revenues include passenger fares, agency contributions, donations, and other local revenues.

Table 21: Projected Senior Center Transportation Programs Performance FY 2022-23

Senior Center	Service Performance				
	Passengers per...		Cost per Passenger-Trip	Cost per Service Hour	Farebox Ratio ²
	Hour	Mile			
Anderson Valley	0.3	0.02	\$219.09	\$61.87	9.1%
Redwood Coast	1.2	0.29	\$21.33	\$26.16	9.1%
South Coast	0.7	0.05	\$217.86	\$143.82	34.5%
Ukiah	1.6	0.19	\$47.19	\$74.24	5.3%
Willits	2.5	0.28	\$23.92	\$58.69	9.8%
Senior Center Total	1.4	0.21	\$36.53	\$51.44	13.7%

Sources: MCOG, MTA, LSC

Note 1: Projections were made based on operations data from July 2022 through March 2023.

Note 2: Farebox calculations do not represent official calculations for TDA eligibility.

The best performing programs in terms of productivity (passenger-trips per hour and passenger-trips per mile) are the Willits, Ukiah, and Redwood Coast Senior Centers. The Willits Senior Center was the most productive, meeting the MCOG performance standard of 2.2 passenger-trips per hour in FY 2022-23 (2.5 passenger-trips), and carrying 0.3 passenger-trips per mile. The Anderson Valley Senior Center was the least productive of the senior center transportation programs, carrying only 0.3 passenger-trips per hour and 0.02 per mile.

The operating cost per passenger-trip ranged from nearly \$20 on the Redwood Coast and Willits services to upwards of \$215 on the Anderson Valley and South Coast services. The Redwood Coast, Willits, and Ukiah senior centers all had lower operating costs than the MTA DAR services, even though they provide more specialized services. The operating cost per passenger-trip is influenced by each program's funding levels. The majority of funding for the senior center transportation programs come from MTA's contract, however some centers contribute other funding, and some receive FTA 5310 funds.

For the senior center programs, the farebox ratios are the percentages of the senior centers' operating costs paid for by local revenues. While the senior centers together meet the MCOG performance standard of a farebox ratio of at least 10 percent, the only senior center that actually exceeded the 10 percent standard is the South Coast Senior Center (34.5 percent). The Anderson Valley, Ukiah, Redwood Coast, and Willits Senior Centers all had farebox ratios just below the MCOG standard.

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INTRODUCTION

This report, *Technical Memorandum One: Existing Conditions*, discussed Mendocino County demographic and economic characteristics likely to influence transit demand. Then, existing transit services were reviewed, with a focus on those services operated by the MTA. This Chapter summarizes important findings from this initial review of the current transit environment in Mendocino County that will be used in future Technical Memoranda to identify potential service improvements to be implemented over the next five years.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC FINDINGS

Important takeaways regarding Mendocino County's demographics and economy include:

- Mendocino County's population size is expected to stay rather stagnant during upcoming years, however the number of senior adults over the age of 65 will increase significantly.
- Mendocino County has a greater proportion of potentially transit dependent residents compared to the State of California. These residents are concentrated in Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Willits.
- Most Mendocino County residents commute within the county. The top out-of-county destinations that people commute to or from are in Sonoma and Lake Counties.
- The majority of Mendocino County's major activity centers are located in Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Willits.

TRANSIT FINDINGS

Key trends from the analysis of MTA operations and performance include:

- MTA ridership recovery post-pandemic has been consistent, but slow; ridership in FY 2022-23 is expected to be almost double the systemwide low seen in FY 2020-21 but will still represent a 50 percent decrease from FY 2018-19.
- Route 9 is the best performing MTA service across numerous standards. Other highly performing routes include Routes 5 and 20. However, these routes do not carry more than 5 passengers per hour, which does not meet MCOG standards and is on the low side for rural transit services.
- In FY 2022-23, the local routes generally performed better than the intercity and intercounty routes, primarily due to the long distances the intercity and intercounty routes must travel.
- MTA long-distance routes and DAR services did not meet MCOG operating cost per standards.

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DETAILED DEMOGRAPHIC MAPS

A large proportion of transit riders belong to what is known as the transit dependent population. The following demographic maps provide additional context about where transit dependent persons live in Mendocino County, building on the discussion presented in Chapter 2 of this Short Range Transit Development Plan (SRTDP). The subpopulations reviewed in this Appendix include:

- Figure A-1, Youths under 18 years of age – most children are unable to drive or do not have a parent/guardian to give them a ride, yet still have commitments outside of the home. Those who can drive may not have a car available.
- Figure A-2, Senior population ages 65 and older – senior adults need to travel to attend medical appointments, go grocery shopping, or do other errands, but many are either not comfortable driving or not able to drive anymore.
- Figure A-3, Individuals with a disability – disabled persons may be unable to drive due to medical concerns.
- Figure A-4, The population living below the poverty level – there are many financial barriers preventing people from owning a private vehicle. The low-income population is defined by factors such as household income and the number of dependent children.
- Figure A-5, Households without a vehicle available – public transit may be the best alternative for traveling longer distances for those who live in homes without vehicles.



Figure A-1
Mendocino County Youth Population (16 and Under)

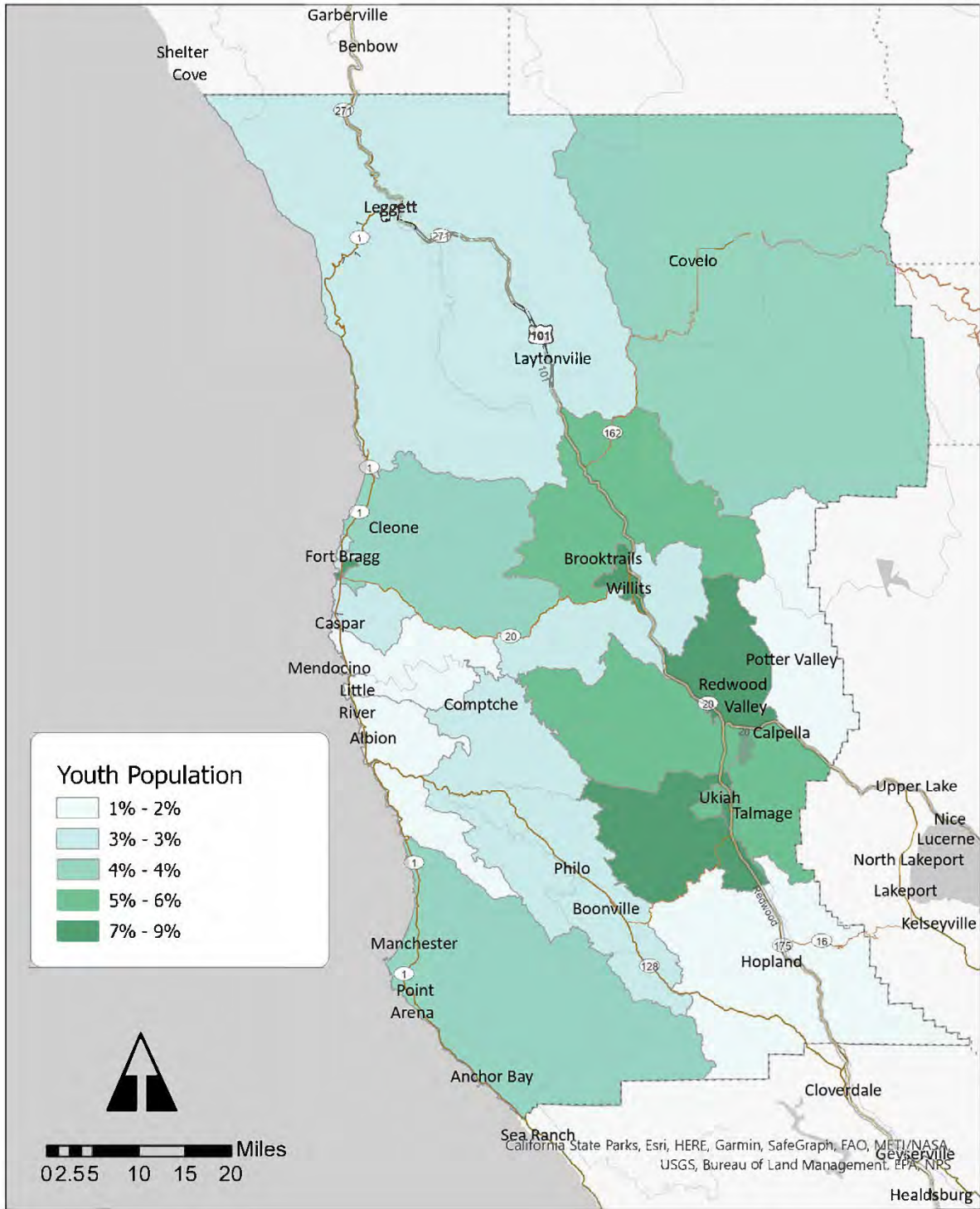




Figure A-2
Mendocino County Senior Population (65 and Over)

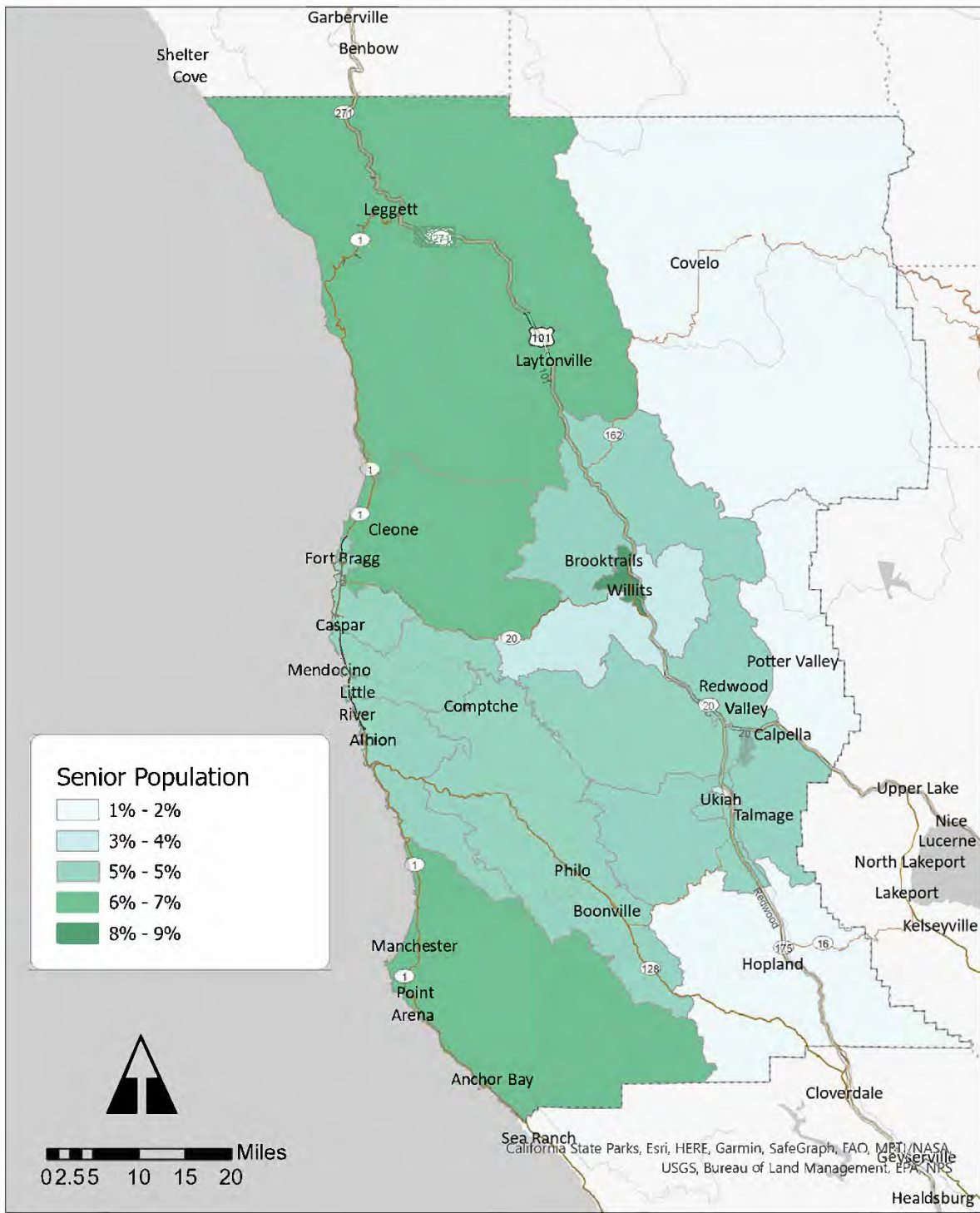




Figure A-3
Mendocino County Population with a Disability

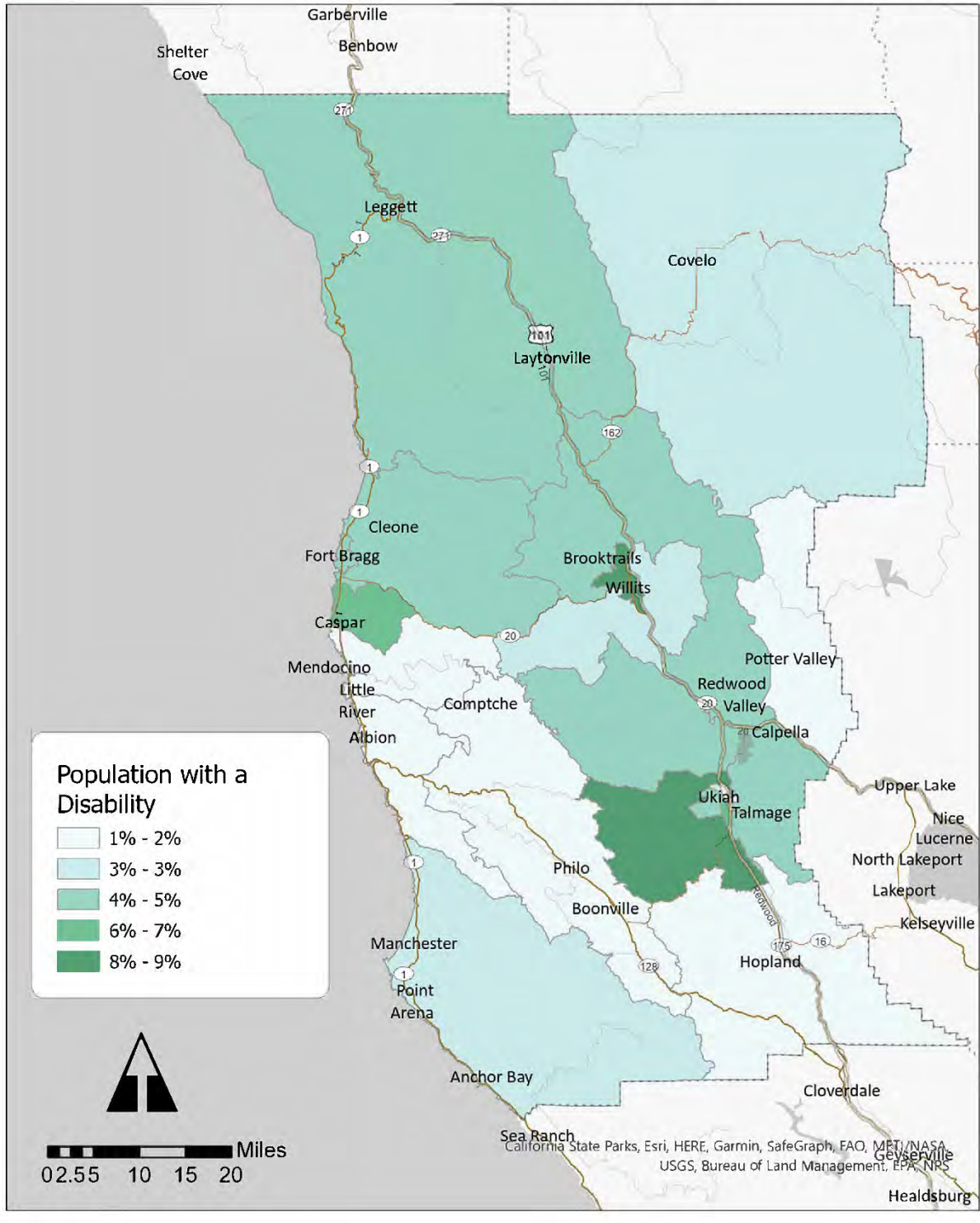
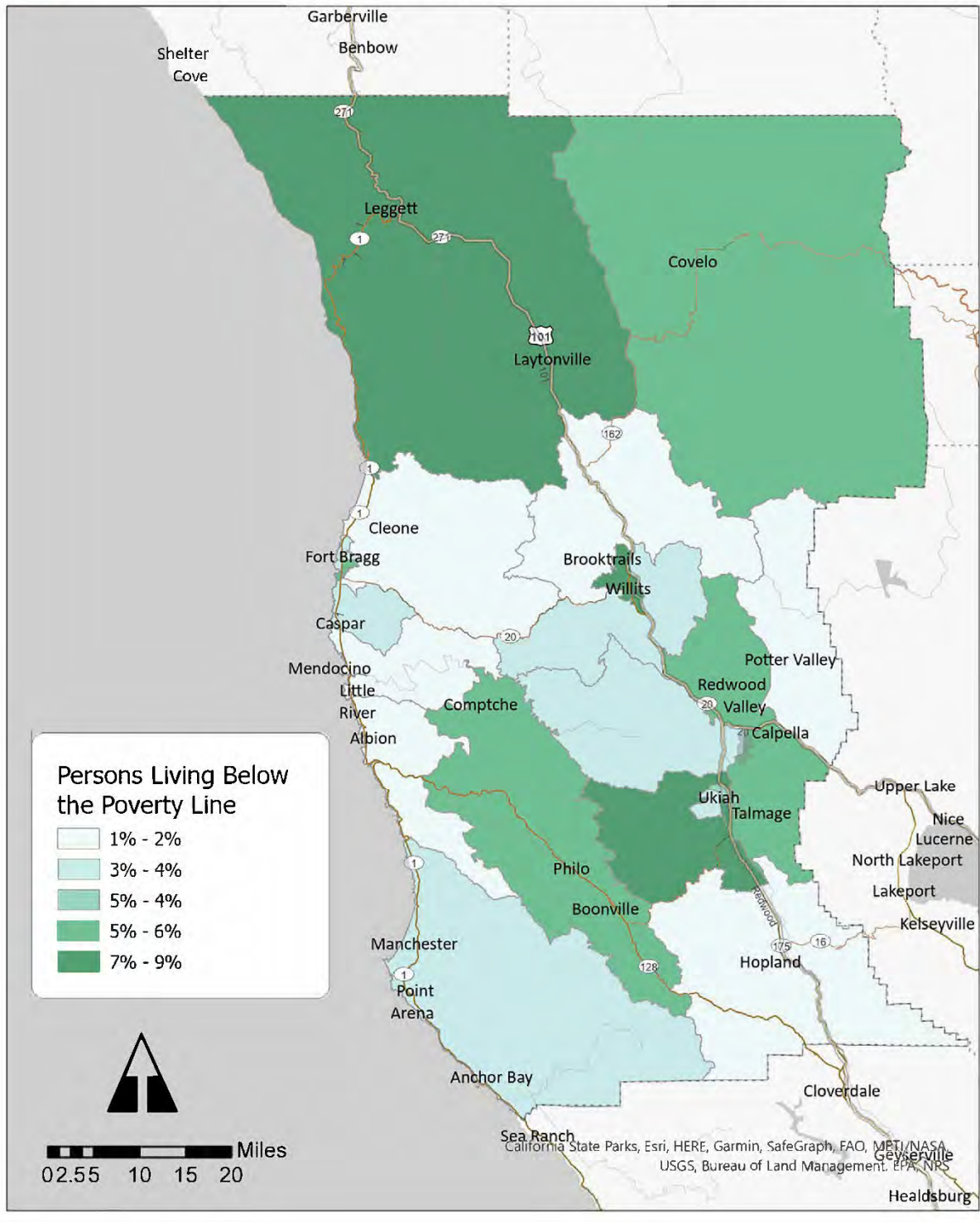




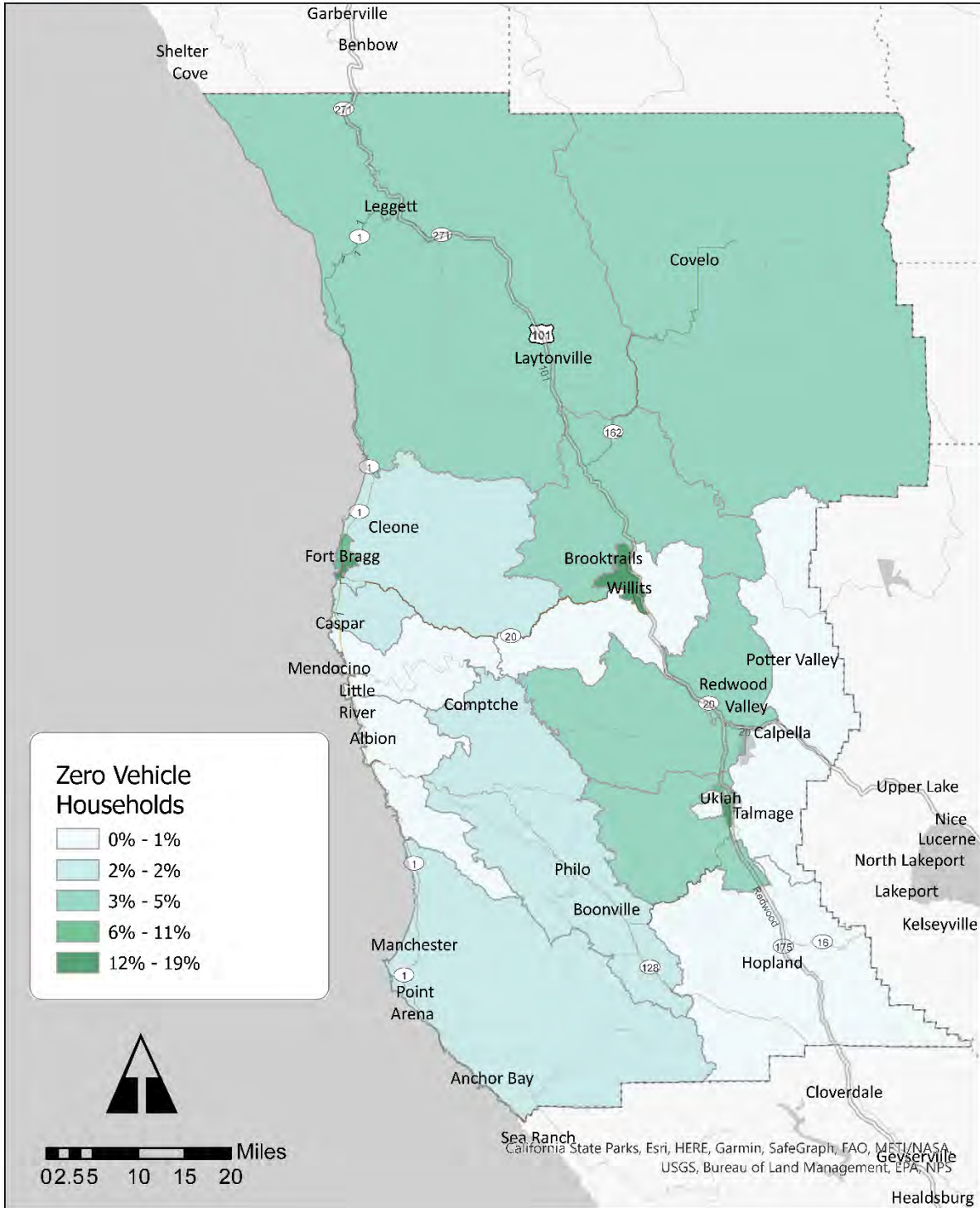
Figure A-4

Persons Living Below the Poverty Line in Mendocino County





**Figure A-5
Mendocino County Zero Vehicle Households**



Appendix B

REVIEW OF RECENT PLANNING STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

There have been multiple recent studies completed across Mendocino County and nearby regions that are relevant to the Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) Short Range Transit Development Plan (SRTDP) update. This Appendix only discusses the aspects of these other studies that directly relate to public transit. The plans reviewed in this Appendix are referenced in the main text of the SRTDP when pertinent.

LOCAL PLANS

Ukiah Transit Center Feasibility Study (In Progress)

The City of Ukiah is the largest community in Mendocino County and the county seat. Ukiah is also a major center for business, education, government, and culture for the county, making it the obvious location for a regional transit center. The Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) and MTA have discussed constructing a transit center in Ukiah since 1991. In late 2022, MCOG initiated the *Ukiah Transit Center Feasibility Study* (Feasibility Study) to assess different sites within the City of Ukiah that could be the location of a future transit center. The study will ultimately select a preferred site for the transit center and include illustrative site plans, cost estimates, and renderings for the proposed facility. While this study is still ongoing, it is important to consider the final findings in the SRTDP, as MTA routes may need to be realigned to effectively serve the new facility.

Mendocino County Rural Inland Mobility Solutions (In Progress)

MCOG commissioned the *Mendocino County Rural Inland Mobility Solutions* study to analyze the transit options available to residents in the in-land region communities of Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, and Hopland. The study team first assessed the mobility needs within each community. Then, potential solutions were developed to address the transit needs found in the first portion of the study. The most feasible solutions have since been identified. The final stage of the study will propose solutions for implementation based on feasibility, community support, and funding. Options being considered at this time for implementation include:

1. Hybrid dial-a-ride/shuttle to Ukiah
2. Community van for Laytonville and Potter Valley
3. Scheduled fixed route service between Brooktrails and Willits
4. Expanded dial-a-ride for Brooktrails
5. Work transportation for Ukiah-Hopland trips
6. Volunteer driver mileage reimbursement program for all communities
7. Community ride board
8. App-based car share

Unmet Transit Needs (2022)

MCOG is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Mendocino County. Per the California Transportation Development Act (TDA), RTPAs are required to hold an annual hearing to

determine unmet transit needs in the region. TDA funding must be spent on any unmet transit needs deemed through the hearing process to be reasonable to meet before the RTPA can allocate any TDA funding to other types of transportation projects. MCOG established a Local Transportation Fund (LTF) Reserve in 1999, so technically MCOG does not need to hold unmet transit needs hearings since excess TDA funds are never allocated to other projects. MCOG continues to hold the hearings, however, to gather public input on transit services. MCOG uses the following definitions for unmet transit needs:

1. “Unmet Transit Need: Wherever a need to transport people is not being satisfied through existing public or private resources.
2. Reasonable to Meet: It is reasonable to meet a transit need if all of the following conditions prevail:
 - a. Service will be capable of meeting the TDA fare revenue/operating cost requirements and established MCOG criteria for new services
 - b. Transit services designed or intended to address an unmet transit need shall not duplicate transit services currently provided either publicly or privately
 - c. The claimant that is expected to provide the service shall review, evaluate and indicate that the service is operationally feasible, and vehicles shall be currently available in the market place
 - d. Funds are available, or this is a reasonable expectation that funds will become available.”

Based on feedback received at the FY 2023-24 Unmet Transit Needs Workshop, the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) identified six needs. Six additional needs were considered and endorsed based on public input heard throughout the year. The twelve unmet needs are as follows, with needs designated as high priority indicated with an asterisk:

1. Affordable public transit link to Humboldt County, stopping in Piercy, Leggett, and Laytonville *
2. Fixed route timing that coincides with retail workforce shifts in the Fort Bragg/ Mendocino coast area *
3. Mobility Solutions/transit/microtransit service for Covelo, Laytonville, Brooktrails, Hopland, and Potter Valley
4. Saturday service for Route 1 (Willits)
5. Brooktrails connection for commuters AM and PM
6. Westport/North Coast limited service
7. Restoration of evening service in the Ukiah Valley for people to get to/from work
8. Anderson Valley service to the coast with same-day return
9. Wednesday Service for Ukiah Senior Center transportation
10. Saturday service between Ukiah and Willits, round trip

11. Bus stop at Waugh Lane and Talmage Avenue, for both northbound and southbound Route 9 (Ukiah Local) service
12. Address fare pricing issues

Based on further analysis of the twelve needs, the MTA found that two were reasonable to meet per the MCOG definitions:

1. Affordable public transit link to Humboldt County, stopping in Piercy, Leggett, and Laytonville
2. Fixed route timing that coincides with retail workforce shifts in the Fort Bragg/ Mendocino coast area

At this point in time, the new Redwood Coast Express service, operated by the Humboldt Transit Authority, will address the first unmet need. This service is discussed further in the section about the *Humboldt County Transit Development Plan* (in progress). To better serve workers along the coastal area, the MTA is planning to operate an additional roundtrip of Route 65 in the evening hours, departing Mendocino at 7:30 PM. The MTA included the anticipated cost of the additional Route 65 service in its FY 2023-24 budget. The MTA will continue to consider solutions to address unmet needs 3 through 10 throughout FY 2023-24.

Regional Transportation Plan and Active Transportation Plan (2022)

One of MCOG's responsibilities is to prepare updates to the *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) every four years so Mendocino County can qualify for federal and state transportation funding. An RTP is a long-range transportation planning document that outlines strategies and projects to improve state highways, local roads, public transit, tribal transportation, and aviation in the study area during the upcoming twenty years. The most recent update to Mendocino County's RTP was completed in 2022 in tandem with an update to the county's Active Transportation Plan (ATP). The ATP component focuses on projects that will increase rates of walking and bicycling.

The Public Transit Service Element of the RTP is the most relevant to the SRTDP. The Public Transit Service Element describes both short-range and long-range projects to improve MTA services and capital. A short-range project identified in the RTP that has since been undertaken was to update the MTA SRTDP. Another short-range project that was recommended was to prepare a Transit Hub Location Plan for the City of Ukiah. This project has also been initiated and will be completed by the summer of 2023 (the *Ukiah Transit Center Feasibility Study*, described later). Other short-range projects included implementing a pilot rural mobility project, improving bus stops according to the *Bus Stop Review Study*, revamping MTA's solar canopy, and acquiring replacement vehicles for the transit fleet. The RTP also recommended constructing a new MTA administration and operations building as a long-term project.

City of Ukiah 2040 General Plan (2022)

The *City of Ukiah 2040 General Plan* is a comprehensive, long-range plan that guides and prioritizes future development and city projects. The study consists of multiple elements that are focused on specific topics such as land use, economic development, mobility, sustainability, agriculture, and housing, among others. Each element outlines goals, policies, and implementation programs for its specific focus. Ukiah residents had multiple opportunities to provide public input to ensure the plan's goals and policies accurately

reflect residents' values and concerns. The *2040 General Plan's* Mobility Element discusses topics related to the SRTDP.

One of the overall goals of the *2040 General Plan* is to enhance multimodal transportation infrastructure within the City of Ukiah. Goals presented in the Mobility Element related to the SRTDP include reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by reducing parking and encouraging transit use, requiring new development to include transit facilities or transit access, supporting funding and incentives to increase transit ridership, and supporting the development of the Ukiah Transit Center.

California Intercity Bus Study (2022)

The *California Intercity Bus Study* (CIBS) is a statewide, interagency effort to design and ultimately initiate a statewide, intercity bus network. The intentions are for the final CIBS network to increase transportation options for California residents, improve the experience of passengers using public transit for longer trips, and reduce auto congestion. The planned structure of the CIBS network is to have smaller, regional networks coordinate to allow for longer trips. The regional networks were designed based on stakeholder input, network analyses, and Caltrans capacity. If implemented, Mendocino County would be included in the North Coast network, with Ukiah serving as an important stop for passengers traveling east to access other regions of the statewide network. As designed, the CIBS would require 120 new miles of bus routes in the North Coast region, resulting in more people having access to transit services. The CIBS services would provide additional transit options for Mendocino County residents.

The Steer Group (Steer) presented an evaluation of the potential CIBS network to stakeholders in July 2022. Steer, a consulting firm specializing in issues relevant to cities, transportation, and infrastructure, analyzed the benefits and drawbacks of the CIBS network using the business case approach. They developed a high-level projection of ridership and costs for each corridor of the CIBS network based on different capture rates of possible passengers. Steer found that the CIBS network would increase equity and benefit the environment, but that it would have to capture 10 to 12 percent of possible riders in order for the benefits to exceed the costs over a 10-year operating period. In regard to future management and implementation, Steer recommended that Caltrans focus on managing the CIBS network and contract out operations and fleet management responsibilities. Steer also recommended that Caltrans optimize the services after analyzing more data; for instance, the CIBS recommended that service between Ukiah and Marysville operate on 2-hour frequency, however if ridership is lower than expected then Caltrans would need to reduce the service frequency.

MCOG & MTA Triennial Performance Audit, FY 2018/19- FY 2020/21

The California Public Utilities Code requires that all recipients of TDA funding undergo an independent performance audit every three years. The most recent Triennial Performance Audits (TPA) of MCOG and the MTA were completed in 2022 and analyzed FY 2018-19 through FY 2020-21. The MCOG TPA recommended that going forward the current balances of reserve accounts be included in MTA's annual fiscal audits, including information on any deposits and reasons for withdrawals. The MTA TPA recommended that future State Controller Reports are submitted on-time, that MTA is able to meet the TDA farebox ratio requirements by FY 2023-24, and also to include the current balance of any reserve accounts in the agency's annual fiscal audit. This SRTDP will evaluate service changes with the potential to improve MTA's cost efficiency to ensure farebox ratio requirements are met.

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan: Mendocino County (2021)

Mendocino County's *Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Plan* (CPTHSP) was last updated in 2021. The CPTHSP meets Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning requirements to ensure Mendocino County organizations are eligible to receive FTA Section 5310 funding. The CPTHSP also serves as a guide for improving transportation specifically for persons with disabilities, senior adults, and persons with low incomes. The CPTHSP outlines the following priority strategies for coordinating transportation services, addressing unmet transit needs, and improving transportation for those in need in Mendocino County:

- Maintain the current level of transportation services
- Expand demand response services
- Establish a non-emergency medical transportation service and increase paratransit services
- Expand intercity services, especially between Fort Bragg and Ukiah
- Expand weekend services
- Multi-organizational approach to solutions
- Increase mileage reimbursement rates for volunteer drivers and caregivers
- Replace vehicles and other capital equipment in accordance with the Capital Replacement Program

Mendocino County Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) and Alternative Fuels Readiness Plan Update (2019)

MCOG completed the original *Mendocino County ZEV Regional Readiness Plan* (ZEV Readiness Plan) in 2013 in anticipation of the future growth of the ZEV market. The *ZEV Readiness Plan* presented a strategy for implementing a countywide network of publicly accessible charging stations. In 2015, MCOG completed the *ZEV Readiness Plan Phase 2 – Feasibility Report*, which consisted of evaluations of potential sites for charging stations and described recent public outreach. MCOG undertook another update to the *ZEV Readiness Plan* in 2019. This most recent *ZEV Readiness Plan Update* (2019) includes a framework to guide the implementation of ZEV-related infrastructure within the context of other regional planning efforts related to alternative fuels.

The *ZEV Readiness Plan Update* reviews the *North Coast and Upstate Fuel Cell Vehicle Readiness Project*, which outlined pathways for eight northern California counties, including Mendocino County, to introduce hydrogen fuel cell vehicles into their transit fleets. At the conclusion of the North Coast study, MCOG staff made recommendations for how to deploy hydrogen fuel cell technology in Mendocino County. Staff found hydrogen fuel cell technology offers near-term potential for public and private transit operators in Mendocino County, but not for use by the general public. Given this potential, the SRTDP should consider capital investments into hydrogen fueling infrastructure at MTA facilities.

Since the *ZEV Readiness Plan Update* was adopted, the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation has been passed, making it a requirement for public transit agencies to transition their vehicle fleets to 100 percent ZEVs. Small transit agencies such as MTA are required to have a ZEV Rollout Plan approved by July 1, 2023. The ICT Regulation will then require that 25 percent of

buses purchased by small transit agencies are ZEVs by 2026 and that 100 percent of bus purchases are ZEVs by 2029. MTA has already begun to procure ZEVs in advance of the regulatory requirements.

The *ZEV Readiness Plan Update* also describes an example building code for ZEV charging. One of the requirements of this code would be for new transit projects to service 2 percent of the total parking spaces with ZEV infrastructure. If this code was implemented, it would impact the need for ZEV charging at MTA's various facilities.

Mendocino Countywide Transit Ridership Survey (2015)

The MTA retained LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. (LSC) to conduct several surveys in 2014: an onboard passenger survey of all MTA transit services in both the summer and the fall, a general public telephone survey, and a survey of social service program clients. The information gathered from these surveys was used by the MTA to set goals and objectives, better respond to customer needs, assess awareness of the MTA, improve marketing, remove barriers preventing transit use, and develop potential service improvements.

The top service improvements that were requested by onboard survey participants were Saturday service in Fort Bragg, service along the ridge east of Gualala, Saturday service to Mendocino, additional bus shelters, and service to Laytonville. Among the phone survey participants, the top factors that would encourage non-riders to ride the bus more frequently were for "routes to go where you want to go" and "buses go when you want to go," suggesting that service area and span of service alternatives would be the most likely to encourage increased ridership.

Mendocino Transit Authority Short Range Transit Development Plan (2012)

The previous update to the SRTDP was completed in 2012 and included plan elements to be implemented through 2016. Not all of the recommendations included in the 2012 TDP are still relevant today, especially given the changed transportation setting in Mendocino County post-pandemic. However, the previous TDP's recommendations reveal important themes and focus points that have fueled ongoing conversations about potential MTA service improvements for years. Service changes that were recommended are listed below. Changes that have since been implemented are indicated with a star. Service changes for routes that are no longer operating are excluded from this list.

- Expand Route 1 in Willits to cover more area and operate more frequently. *
- Discontinue Route 7 except for the most productive runs. The two most productive runs would be operated as Route 20 Express trips.
- Convert Route 7 into a school tripper service.
- Provide direct service to the Ukiah Valley Medical Center on Route 9. *
- Market the Route 9 evening service to improve performance. If performance does not improve, shorten the Route 9 evening service to end at 8:00 PM.
- Modify the Route 9 schedule to serve Plowshares with one roundtrip around lunch. *
- Add Sunday service on Route 9 using the Saturday schedule.
- Provide Saturday service on Route 20, operating a total of four roundtrips daily.

- Provide subscription-based dial-a-ride service to the Consolidated Tribal Health Clinic two days per week.
- Limit the Ukiah DAR service area to no more than 0.75 miles from Route 9.
- Include in the Ukiah DAR policies that non-ADA passengers may be bumped from their trips to prioritize ADA passengers. *
- Provide service to Fort Bragg High School on Route 5.
- Extend Route 5 service an additional hour in the evening.
- Restore Saturday service on Route 5.
- Implement a two-zone fare structure for Route 60. *
- Restore Saturday service on Route 60.
- Clarify the policies for the Santa Rosa Bus Circulation option and improve the marketing of the service.
- Depending on financial resources, increase service frequency between the coast and Ukiah by either:
 - Providing service to Santa Rosa five days per week and two roundtrips a day between Fort Bragg and Ukiah at least two days per week. *
 - During the summer, provide two roundtrips between Gualala and Ukiah on Saturdays and eliminate Route 75 service on Mondays.
 - Modify existing schedules so that the coastal routes (Route 60, Route 75, Route 95) meet at Navarro Junction once in the morning and once in the afternoon at the same time to provide easier opportunities for transfers.
- Integrate MTA DAR services with Senior Center Transportation Programs where feasible. *
- Implement travel training for social service agency clients.
- Explore potential partnership with the Ukiah Unified School District.
- Increase the mileage reimbursement for the e-ride volunteer driver program.
- Gatekeep outreach and travel training.
- Targeted Willits marketing program.
- Targeted Mendocino College marketing program.

OTHER REGIONAL PLANS

Humboldt County Transit Development Plan (In Progress)

The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is in the process of preparing an update to the countywide *Transit Development Plan (TDP)*, which will be completed during the summer of 2023. Currently, there are no intercounty public transit services between Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. This will change soon, however, as the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) has received grant funding to begin operating a new, intercounty service between Eureka in Humboldt County and Ukiah. This new service will be known as the Redwood Coast Express and is set to begin in January 2024, with plans to operate one roundtrip daily, four to five days per week. Transfers between the Redwood Coast Express and the MTA's Route 9, Route 20, and Route 65 will need to be optimized. The Redwood Coast Express

will address one of the unmet needs from the FY 2023-24 Mendocino County Unmet Transit Needs Hearing, “Affordable public transit link to Humboldt County, stopping in Piercy, Leggett, and Laytonville.”

The HTA is also leading efforts to implement standardized fare collection systems on all transit vehicles in Humboldt, Del Norte, Lake, and Mendocino Counties. The standardized fare payment methods would make it easier for passengers to travel between the various transit systems and complete longer trips. This SRTDP will consider the steps and costs necessary for the MTA to install new fareboxes capable of accepting more forms of payment, including pass products and transfers from nearby counties.

Lake County Transit Development Plan (2023)

The Lake Area Planning Council recently updated the *Transit Development Plan* (TDP) for both the Lake Transit Authority (LTA) and Lake Links. The Lake Transit Authority’s (LTA) Route 7 is a fixed route that operates between Lakeport and Ukiah, completing four roundtrips daily. In Ukiah, Route 7 stops at Mendocino College, the Pear Tree Center, and the Airport. LTA passengers can transfer to MTA for free within the MTA bus fare zone where the passenger transfers, and MTA passengers can transfer to LTA for a \$1.00 discount from normal fares. Also operating in Lake County, the non-profit organization Lake Links provides non-emergency medical transportation through its Medi-Links program to out-of-county destinations, including Ukiah, Santa Rosa, and Willits.

Throughout the development of the TDP, a number of people requested more transit services to Mendocino County to attend medical appointments, go shopping, and for other personal business. Based on this feedback, two alternatives were evaluated that would either modify or increase LTA’s services to Mendocino County: alter the Route 7 schedule to be earlier in the day or begin a new intercity service to Santa Rosa by extending either LTA’s Route 7 or Route 3, the intercounty service to Napa County. Neither of these alternatives were recommended for inclusion in the final TDP, so for the time being LTA’s services to Mendocino County will remain unchanged.

While the Lake County TDP did not evaluate potential schedule changes that would result from the new Redwood Coast Express service or the construction of a new Transit Center in Ukiah, LTA will likely modify its Route 7 service to improve the transfer opportunities between LTA and the Redwood Coast Express and to better service a new Ukiah Transit Center, which would serve as a new transfer point for LTA passengers to MTA as well as Greyhound and Amtrak. Additionally, LTA has committed to pursuing farebox technology that will allow passengers traveling on public transit from Del Norte, Humboldt, or Mendocino Counties to easily transfer to LTA. Procuring and installing the new fareboxes will require ongoing capital investments from the LTA.