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R3. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of the fiscal year 21-22, Madera County Probation and Department of Corrections investigate an outsourcing option for mental Health services.

Response: Madera County Department of Corrections received an award of 19 million for Behavioral Health Treatment Facility to address the Mentally ill in Madera County that are incarcerated. We are currently in the pre-design review, being nearly completed. January 08, 2021 with Probation and law enforcement partners. A meeting was initiated in regards to applying for SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) Grant.

R4: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22 MCDC and Madera County Probation Department work cooperatively to seek employment opportunities in the local area.


Response: Madera County Department of Corrections with cooperation with our food vendor Aramark, provide a Food preparation and food service certificate to address employment opportunities when out of custody. Madera County Department of Corrections also with cooperation with Grid Solar Company provide training for inmates in the field of solar to assist when they leave the jail. We also work closely with Workforce Development Agencies to help address recidivism. Probation has been a great partner with Community Corrections Partnership and I will continue to work closely on this issue to address future opportunities for the jail population.

R5: The MCGJ recommends that the MCDC continue to work cooperatively with inmates to provide work opportunities to increase a financial support system for released inmates.

Response: Madera County Department of Corrections also provides educational tablets that have a large sort of subjects and learning topics that can assist the inmate population if they chose to. For example: section in the automotive repair, teaches the students how to service and repair carburetors. MCDC will continue to be innovative and seek out more resources to assist the jail population.

R6: The MCGJ recommends that the MCDC continue their working in providing open communication to the MCGJ.

Response: I will always do my best to be available for any questions or tours, and to be transparent on my direction to staff on how the facility stays affected in providing the highest level of service and keeping Public Safety a priority.

Director of Corrections
Madera County

Manuel L. Perez

JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

SUMMARY:

Madera County Grand Jury visited the Madera County Juvenile Detention Center (MCJDC) on October 2, 2019. The visit included observing the interior and exterior of the facility. Access was provided to all requested locations.

OVERVIEW:

This facility is for juvenile residents. The Madera County Juvenile Hall is a medium to low-security detention center that is operated locally by the Juvenile Justice Department and holds youth awaiting the determination of punishment for the crimes of which they are accused. Most of the adolescents are detained for less than two years. The Probation Department is also responsible for operation and administration of the Juvenile Hall. Juvenile Hall is a place of detention for juvenile offenders taken into custody within the provisions of Section 602 of the Juvenile Court Law. These young people are detained for their protection or the protection of the community pending and/or serving final disposition of their cases. Programs include temporary detention pending court disposition, holding for other agencies, and varying lengths of residential care. Treatment programs include full-time school within the Juvenile Hall for continuation of education.

FINDINGS - MADERA COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER (MCJDC)

- F1.** The MCGJ finds the Correctional Academy Program to be successful for the positive development of the youth who take part in the Academy.
- F2.** The MCGJ finds the staff and teachers within the Program at MCJDC highly capable, dedicated, and compassionate.
- F3.** The MCGJ finds that a delay of a 96-hour physical screening endangers the health of other residents and staff.
- F4.** The MCGJ finds the wards face a lack of choices after release.

RECOMMENDATIONS - MADERA COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER (MCJDC)

- R1.** The MCGJ commends CAP as a successful program and recommends that the MCJDC continue to provide this highly structured program thus enabling youth to recognize their personal potential.
- R2.** The MCGJ commends the staff and teachers within the Program for their attention to the mental, physical, and educational needs of the youth and encourage providers to continue in their positive responsiveness.
- R3.** The MCGJ recommends that immediately upon admission wards shall be screened for any communicable diseases.
- R4.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the MCJDC connect wards with meaningful community service organizations.



**MADERA COUNTY
PROBATION DEPARTMENT
Administration**



STEPHANIE STOECKEL
Deputy Chief Probation Officer

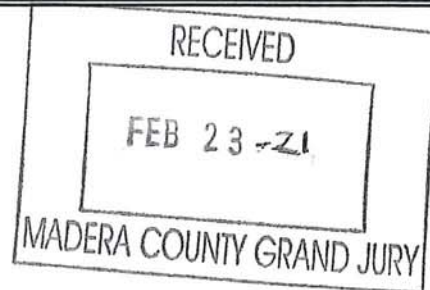
CHRIS CHILDERS, Chief Probation Officer

209 W. Yosemite Ave
Madera, CA 93637
Phone (559) 675-7739
Fax (559) 673-0521

February 19, 2021

Madera County Grand Jury Foreperson
PO Box 534
Madera CA 93637

Attention: Madera County Grand Jury Foreperson



This letter is to serve as a response to the (MCGJ) Madera County Grand Jury findings and recommendations released on December 21, 2020, regarding Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility.

Madera County Probation Department would like to thank the Madera County Grand Jury for their recommendations and comments. The group that toured our facility showed great interest in the education, rehabilitation, and medical efforts that were on display when visiting with the teachers, wards, facility staff and medical staff.

The Probation Department acknowledges the Grand Jury's recommendations and will strive to adopt them into our plan to improve both public safety and rehabilitation efforts of justice involved individuals.

The report noted two (2) findings for Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility and provided two (2) recommendations to address the reported findings. Below you will find both Grand Jury findings and recommendations, and the department's response pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.

1) Finding, Recommendation and Response:

F3. The MCGJ finds that a delay of a 96-hour physical screening endangers the health and safety of other residents and staff.

R3. The MCGJ recommends that immediately upon admission wards shall be screened for any communicable diseases.

Madera County Probation Department Response:

The Madera County Probation Department partially agrees with the finding and will explain the reasons. The physical screening is a full health assessment conducted by a physician soon as possible and no later than 96-hours of the ward's arrival. Equally, upon arrival to the facility, a ward is also screened by a qualified health care professional between 7am-7pm and no later than the following morning if the

"The mission of the Madera County Probation Department is to encourage positive change in the lives of offenders through collaborative partnerships, evidence based practices, and corrective services."

ward arrived after 7 pm. Further, if a ward exhibits any signs of illness, the facility or medical staff will immediately contact the on-call physician who is available 24/7.

The recommendation has been further implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action. The facility policies and procedures were updated in response to communicable disease priorities identified by the local health officer in March of 2020, at the start of the COVID pandemic. Facility administration, along with medical administration, developed a "COVID response plan" to prevent a communicable disease outbreak. Wards are still screened during the intake process by health care professionals for communicable diseases with the addition of the CDC screening tool and daily health screenings for the first (10) ten days after a ward's arrival.

Lastly, the Madera County Juvenile Detention operational policies and procedures are inspected bi-annually by the Madera County-Public Health Officer and the (BSCC) Board of State Community Corrections to ensure the facility meets Local and State standards set for the in California Title 15 Standards for Juvenile Facilities. Please note the facility meets or exceed those standards with the last inspection occurring in November 2019. A report of that inspection is public and accessible on Board of State Community Correction's website.

2) Finding, Recommendation and Response:

F4. The MCGJ finds the wards face a lack of choices after release.

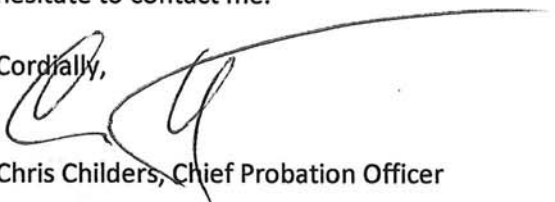
R4. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the MCDJC connect wards with meaningful community service organizations.

Madera County Probation Department Response:

The Probation Department agrees with the finding. However, the department's recommendation also requires further analysis and additional resources. Community based programs for wards and their rehabilitation have associated costs. The department has recently applied for additional grant funding through Senate Bill 823 for fiscal year 21-22. If awarded, the grant award will be used to augment evidenced-based treatment programs for wards housed in local juvenile detention facilities, as well as wards participating in re-entry programs following their release from custody.

In Closing, Madera County Probation appreciates the effort and time of the Grand Jury to provide the recommendations to the operation of the Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility. Madera County Probation Department Management and Staff will continue to follow all state and county procedures in the daily operation of the Juvenile Detention Facility. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cordially,



Chris Childers, Chief Probation Officer

cc: Judge Michael Jurkovich

VALLEY STATE PRISON (VSP)

SUMMARY:

The Madera County Grand Jury visited the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), located in Chowchilla, California on December 6, 2019. The MCGJ toured the prison facility and was provided guided access to many areas.

OVERVIEW:

The VSP is operated by the CDCR. The prison opened in April 1995 as a women-only prison, and the prison began receiving inmates immediately thereafter. The CDCR began converting the prison into a facility for low-risk male inmates in 2012. The conversion was completed in January 2013 with the last female inmates in the facility transferred to the nearby Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) in Chowchilla and California Institution for Women in Chino, California. Some inmates nearing the end of their sentence were transferred to various county jails.

The MCGJ inspected the prison using a checklist developed for grand jury prison inspections by the California Board of State and Community Corrections. Additional information was requested by the MCGJ prior to making the inspection. The check list included the general safety and security of the facility, food services, medical services, job training, and educational programs for inmates, and a housing unit.

FINDINGS - VALLEY STATE PRISON (VSP)

- F1.** The MCGJ finds that the inmate population exceeds state mandates.
- F2.** The MCGJ finds there are adequate educational and vocational opportunity programs for inmates.
- F3.** The MCGJ finds there is a lack of mental health treatment options available for inmates.
- F4.** The MCGJ finds that the inmates were well behaved, polite, proud of their accomplishments, and willing to answer questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS - VALLEY STATE PRISON (VSP)

- R1.** The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue to work at the state level, specifically the California State Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), to assist in resolving overcrowding issues. <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4186>
- R2.** The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue providing well-rounded offerings of educational and vocational training with post release employment opportunities.
- R3.** The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR investigate an outsourcing option for mental health services or jointly utilize the mental health services available at the Central California Women's Facility.
- R4.** The MCGJ commends the CDCR staff for maintaining a positive and supportive environment.

VALLEY STATE PRISON

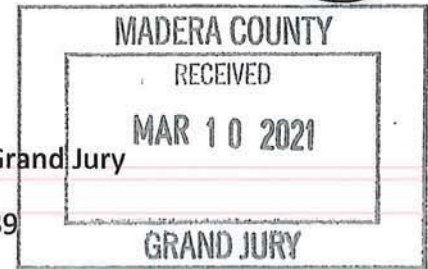
P.O. Box 99
Chowchilla, CA 93610-0099



March 3, 2021

Presiding Judge Michael Jurkovich
Madera County Superior Court
300 S. G. Street
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 534
Madera, CA 93639



This is in response to your Findings and Recommendations contained in the 2019-2020 Madera County Grand Jury report, dated December 21, 2020, regarding Valley State Prison (VSP).

Findings:

1. The MCGJ finds the inmate population exceeds state mandates.

I disagree with this finding.

2. The MCGJ finds there are adequate educational and vocational opportunity programs for inmates.

I agree with this finding.

3. The MCGJ finds there is lack of mental health treatment options available for inmates.

I disagree with this finding. Inmates are provided access to Mental Health Services Delivery System (MHSDS) at any time by submitting a referral for services. Inmates that are part of the MHSDS at the level of Enhanced Outpatient Care (EOP) and Correction Clinical Case Management System (CCCMS) level of care are provided adequate care consistent with their severity of mental illness and overall functioning. In addition, VSP is currently fully staffed in the Mental Health Department. There are regular audits to ensure quality care is being provided for the inmates. VSP has routine treatment team meetings to ensure that inmates are at the appropriate level of care.

4. The MCGJ finds the inmates were well behaved, polite, proud of their accomplishments, and willing to answer questions.

I agree with this finding.

Recommendations:

1. The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue to work at the state level, specifically California State Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), to assist in resolving overcrowding issues.

This recommendation has been implemented in 2019. The inmate population was 2906 however, with the Implementation of Propositions 47, 57 and AB 109 the population has continued to reduce the number at VSP to 2755.

2. The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue providing well-rounded offerings of educational and vocational training with post release employment opportunities.

This recommendation has been implemented with advanced education with Merced College and educational, vocational job placement, which has led to 157 AA degrees, 240 GED's and 37 high school diplomas between, 2017-2020.

3. The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR investigate an outsourcing option for Mental Health Services or jointly utilize the Mental Health Services available at the Central California Women's Facility.

As mentioned above, VSP's Mental Health Department is fully staffed to provide services to the inmate population in all levels of care.

4. The MCGJ commends the CDCR staff for maintaining a positive and supportive environment.

Thank you.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact David Barksdale, Administrative Assistant/Public Information Officer, at (559) 665-6500, extension 5509.


R. FISHER, JR.
Warden
Valley State Prison

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA WOMEN’S FACILITY (CCWF)

SUMMARY:

The Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF), in Chowchilla, California, is part of the California State Prison system. A mandated responsibility of the MCGJ is to inspect the condition of all facilities within the County of Madera. The MCGJ toured this facility on January 9, 2020 after experiencing delayed, and limited scope access.

OVERVIEW:

The Madera County Board of Supervisors gave the prison its current name in 1989, prior to opening in October 1990 at a cost of \$141 million to construct.

The MCGJ inspected the prison using a checklist developed for grand jury prison inspections by the California Board of State and Community Corrections. The check list included the general safety and security of the facility, food services, medical services, job training, and educational programs for inmates, and a housing unit. The MCGJ toured the prison facilities pre-determined by the CCWF staff. The MCGJ were are not permitted access to many areas requiring inspection.

FINDINGS - CENTRAL CALIFORNIA WOMEN’S FACILITY (CCWF)

- F1.** The MCGJ finds that access was severely limited during the tour.
- F2.** The MCGJ finds that the inmate population exceeds State mandates.
- F3.** The MCGJ finds Firehouse 5 to be a valuable opportunity for inmates to learn marketable post incarceration skills and to serve the public while incarcerated.
- F4.** The MCGJ finds administrators attending job fairs on behalf of inmates is a questionable practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS - CENTRAL CALIFORNIA WOMEN’S FACILITY (CCWF)

- R1.** The MCGJ recommends that, during the fiscal year 21-22, the CCWF provide the Grand Jury with access to all areas on the checklist and those frequented by inmates.
- R2.** The MCGJ recommends that, beginning immediately, the CDCR continue working at the state level, specifically the California State Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) to assist in resolving overcrowding issues. Ref; <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4186>
- R3.** The MCGJ recommends that, immediately, CCWF administrative personnel provide equitable compensation for on-call services provided by firefighter inmates working from Firehouse 5.
- R4.** The MCGJ recommends that, immediately, the CCWF provide onsite job fairs for inmates nearing parole, enabling the inmate to personally participate and interact with potential employers

DIVISION OF ADULT INSTITUTIONS
 Central California Women's Facility
 P.O. Box 1501
 23370 Road 22
 Chowchilla, CA 93610-1501
 (559) 665-5531



March 22, 2021

Presiding Judge Michael Jurkovich
 Madera County Superior Court
 300 S. G. Street
 Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Grand Jury
 P.O. Box 534
 Madera, CA 93639

This is in response to your Findings and Recommendations contained in the 2019-2020 Madera County Grand Jury report, dated December 21, 2020, regarding Central California Women's Facility (CCWF).

Findings:

1. The MCGJ finds that access was severely limited during the tour
 I agree with this finding.
2. The MCGJ finds the inmate population exceeds state mandates
 I disagree with this finding.
3. The MCGJ finds Firehouse 5 to be a valuable opportunity for inmates to learn marketable post incarceration skills and to serve the public while incarcerated.
 I agree with this finding.
4. The MCGJ finds administrators attending job fairs on behalf of inmates is a questionable practice.
 I disagree with this finding.

Recommendations:

1. The MCGJ recommends that during the fiscal year 21-22, the CCWF provide the Grand Jury with access to all areas on the checklist and those frequented by inmates.
 CCWF agrees with this recommendation.
2. The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue to work at the state level, specifically California State Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), to assist in resolving overcrowding issues.

This recommendation has been implemented in 2019. With the implementation of Propositions 47, 57 and AB 109 the population has continued to reduce the number at CCWF to 2147 inmates.

3. The MCGJ recommends that immediately, CCWF provide equitable compensation for on-call services provided by firefighter inmates working from Firehouse 5.

CCWF follows California Code of Regulations Title 15 Section 3041.2; Inmate Pay Rates, Schedule and Exceptions. Pay rates can only be revised by the Secretary pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act.

4. The MCGJ recommends that immediately, the CCWF provide onsite job fairs for inmates nearing parole, enabling the inmate to personally participate and interact with potential employers.

Job Fairs have been provided in the past for the inmate population which was organized with the Department of Rehabilitation Program (DRP). CCWF continues to offer job fairs for the inmate population and work with the Fresno Regional Workforce Connection to encourage a successful transition back into society.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact Gene Norman, Administrative Assistant/Public Information Officer, at (559) 665-5531, extension 5012.



M. PALLARES
Warden (A)
Central California Women's Facility

1920-02 Unmet Transit Needs: Riders Without Routes, Unmet

SUMMARY:

The 2019-2020 Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) was prompted to review the Madera County Public Transportation (MCTC) services after reviewing the MCGJ 2017 report. That report found the “*Madera County Transportation Commission efforts in obtaining public input are insufficient.*” The MCGJ also considered the Unmet Transit Needs FY 2019/2020 Report published by the Madera County Transportation Commission. In addition, in July 2019 the County awarded a five-year contract to the Fresno County EOC (FCEOC) for Madera County Connection (MCC) transportation services. The change to the new service provider would have given the County the opportunity to review the routes and connections but improvements were not considered. The only changes were cosmetic: a new logo, different uniforms, and a new name attached to the service provider. This MCGJ report reviews the improvements to secure public input and develop route improvements to meet needs geographically, demographically, economically while addressing the needs for all communities in the County of Madera.

BACKGROUND:

The MCTC publishes an annual report provided to them by the Social Services Technical Advisory Council (SSTAC) “Unmet Transit Needs FY 2019/2020 Report.” SSTAC serves as a citizen advisory committee to the MCTC on matters related to public transportation needs of the Madera County community. SSTAC holds two to three meetings per year, including the Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing.

The function of SSTAC, which is comprised of MCTC staff and public volunteer representatives, evaluates public comments, holds public workshops, public hearings, and makes recommendations to the MCTC Board to aid the MCTC Policy Board in its review of public transit.

The composition of the SSTAC is set forth in statute and consists of representatives of the following groups; One representative of potential transit users who is 60 years of age or older, one representative of potential transit users who have a disability, two representatives of the local service providers for seniors, including one representative of a social service transportation provider if one exists, two representatives of local social service providers for those with disabilities, including one representative of a social service transportation provider, if one exists, one representative of a local social service provider for persons of limited means, and two representatives from the local consolidated transportation services agency. The volunteer representatives of SSTAC have not been filled since 2018. The administrative role of the MCTC is to foster intergovernmental coordination. By conducting meetings with Caltrans, undertaking comprehensive regional planning with the region’s public transportation operators, providing a forum for citizens input with citizen forums held once a year, and providing technical services to its member agencies.

The MCGJ's focus was on this annual report, and on the following items:

- MCTC efforts made to further engage and obtain public input
- MCTC efforts made to meet unmet transit needs
- MCTC efforts made to develop strategies to increase ridership and alleviate challenges of unmet transit needs
- MCTC efforts made to provide new or additional public transportation services routes
- MCTC efforts made to provide a public transportation service that services all communities in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Based on the findings presented in the MCJG 2017 report and the Unmet Transit Needs 2019/2020 Report, the MCGJ 19-20 revisited the agency and its operation.

FINDINGS:

F1. The MCGJ finds that the definition of unmet transit needs is vague and fails to consider the geography, the demographics, and the economic inequity of Madera County.

F2. The MCGJ finds that bus schedule information is not readily available.

F3. The MCGJ finds that bus schedules are difficult to read and understand.

F4. The MCGJ finds that there is inadequate public outreach to secure community input for transit needs from low income, senior citizens, and from rural mountain communities.

F5. The MCGJ finds that there continues to be unmet transit needs throughout the county which will only increase in outlying areas as the population increases and ages.

F6. The MCGJ finds that MCC LaVina, Fairmead, Berenda, Madera Dial a Ride, Chowchilla Dial a Ride, Senior Bus and Medical Escort are underused.

F7. The MCGJ finds that when referencing the hours and the bus schedules, transit services do not provide adequate hours or diverse route schedules.

F8. The MCGJ finds that there are several volunteer unfilled positions on the SSTAC committee. This limits the input from the underserved populations in the community.

F9. The MCGJ commends the County on the consolidated contract agreement and, cost savings of \$500,000 per year over five years with the selection of FCEOC as the bus service provider under a single operator contract.

F10. The MCGJ finds that little is being done to market public transportation within the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The MCGJ recommends that, by the of beginning fiscal year 21-22, the MCTC redefine the definition of "unmet transit needs" to be clearly outlined in layman terms.

R2. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, bus schedules be posted at bus stops, inside buses, and be made available at local businesses.

R3. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, bus schedules should be easier to read to promote ridership and ensure the clarity of transit availability.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, SSTAC increase Unmet Transit Needs Workshops and Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearings to four times per year to promote community involvement from other County locations outside of the City of Madera.

R5. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, an incentive programs, including FREE ridership days once a month for Seniors, Disabled and Persons with Limited Means, be introduced.

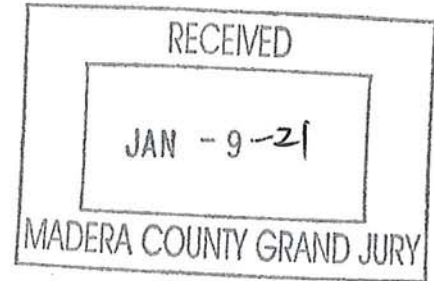
R6. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the Senior Bus, Dial-a-Ride, and Medical Transport County service be reviewed and expanded within Eastern Madera County, LaVina, Fairmead, and Berenda.

R7. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, additional bus routes be added for Fairmead, LaVina, Berenda, Raymond, North Fork, and Eastern Madera County.

R8. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, a concerted effort be made by SSTAC to recruit volunteers to serve on the SSTAC committee.

R9. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the annual \$500,000 savings be utilized to increase transit service routes in outlying areas; Eastern Madera County, La Vina, Fairmead, Berenda, Raymond, and North Fork.

R10. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the County Public Works Department proactively seek additional funding, either through grants or minimal fare increases, to brand themselves and actively market their services to improve community outreach and increase ridership.



January 5, 2021

Judge Michael Jurkovich
Madera County Supervising Judge
300 South G Street
Madera, CA 93637

RE: Madera County's Unmet Transit Needs in Madera: Riders without Riders
Report Dated December 21, 2020

The Honorable Michael Jurkovich,

I write this letter as my required response to the above references Grand Jury Report.

While the Madera County Economic Development Commissions (MCEDC) does have a significant interest in transportation, our focus is on goods movement and access to key commercial and industrial areas throughout Madera County. The transit needs in this report are generally addressed in required environmental documents as conditions of development.

Unmet transit needs in Madera County is not an issue MCEDC tracks, as that falls in the purview of the Madera County Transportation (MCTC) and is a very complex issue that is expensive and generally not cost effective.

Our interaction with MCTC and their staff is limited. We assist with letters of support for their grant applications when appropriate and occasionally provide input regarding major transportation corridors.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further question in which I may be of assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

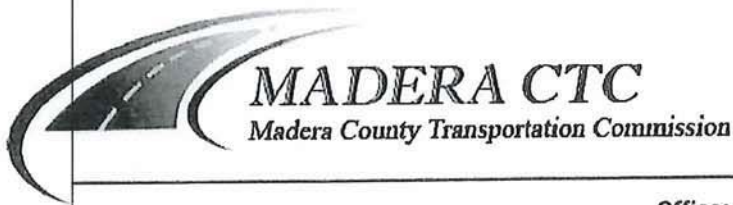
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bobby Kahn'.

Bobby Kahn
Executive Director

Cc: Madera Grand Jury

"Madera County, The Perfect Location"





2001 Howard Road, Suite 201
Madera, California 93637

Office: 559-675-0721 Facsimile: 559-675-9328
Website: www.maderactc.org

February 17, 2021

Judge Michael Jurkovich
Supervising Judge of the Grand Jury
Madera County Superior Court
200 S. G Street
Madera, California 93637

Madera County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 534
Madera, California 93639

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report – Final Report 1920-02, entitled “Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County: Riders without Routes,” December 21, 2020

Honorable Supervising Judge Jurkovich:

Pursuant to California Penal Code 933.05(a) and (b), the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) submits this response to the findings and recommendations in the Grand Jury Report – Final Report 1920-02, entitled “Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County: Riders without Routes,” December 21, 2020.

As a preliminary matter, Penal Code Section 993(b) requires that “the governing body of the public agency shall comment...on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters *under the control of the governing body.*” MCTC respectfully notes that Findings 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10, and the associated recommendations, pertain to matters that are not under the control of MCTC. MCTC is a public agency that is distinct and separate from the County of Madera and has a separate governing board. As such, MCTC is not the entity who would be able to provide a response to those items, nor would it have authority to implement the associated recommendations as further noted below. In an effort to facilitate comments, MCTC has forwarded a copy of the Grand Jury report to the County of Madera (see attached cover letter dated January 15, 2021).

FINDINGS:

Finding 1: The MCGJ finds that the definition of unmet transit needs is vague and fails to consider the geography, the demographics, and the economic inequity of Madera County.

Finding 1 Response: Agree. However, neither the Transportation Development Act (TDA) nor the California PUC provide guidance on the definition for “Unmet Transit Needs” or “Reasonableness to Meet”.

PUC-99401.5(c)

The definition adopted by the transportation planning agency for the terms “unmet transit needs” and “reasonable to meet” shall be documented by resolution or in the agency’s minutes.

The MCTC legally complies with the TDA and California PUC requirements – Sections 99400-99408.

There is no statute for these definitions related to the geography, demographics, and economic inequity in a region.

The Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) is comprised of a diverse group of representatives of social service and transit providers representing the elderly, disabled, and persons of limited means. An essential responsibility of the SSTAC is to advise the transportation planning agency on any major transit issues, including coordinating and consolidating specialized transportation services for those they represent. This responsibility includes considering the definition that guides the Unmet Transit Needs process related to problems or concerns with the region’s transit operations.

Finding 2: The MCGJ finds that bus schedule information is not readily available.

Finding 2 Response: MCTC respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to Finding 2 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the County of Madera, who is responsible for bus schedule information. MCTC has provided a courtesy copy of the Grand Jury report to the County of Madera, noting that this finding appears to be within the County’s jurisdiction. As this matter does not pertain to a matter under MCTC’s control, it is unable to respond regarding agreement or disagreement to the same [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Finding 3: The MCGJ finds that bus schedules are difficult to read and understand.

Finding 3 Response: MCTC respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to Finding 3 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the County of Madera, who is responsible for bus schedule development. MCTC has provided a courtesy copy of the Grand Jury report to the County of Madera, noting that this finding appears to be within the County’s jurisdiction. As this matter does not pertain to a matter under MCTC’s control, it is unable to respond regarding agreement or disagreement to the same [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Finding 4: The MCGJ finds that there is inadequate public outreach to secure community input for transit needs from low income, senior citizens, and from rural mountain communities.

Finding 4 Response: Disagree. Pursuant to TDA regulations, MCTC is required to conduct at least one public hearing to receive potential unmet transit needs from the public. MCTC also makes accommodations for interested individuals to remotely access and participate in public hearings online.

PUC-99401.5 (c)

The transportation planning agency shall hold at least one public hearing pursuant to Section 99238.5 for the purpose of soliciting comments on the unmet transit needs that may exist within the jurisdiction, and that might be reasonable to meet by establishing or contracting for new public transportation or specialized transportation services or by expanding existing services.

MCTC receives comments and input on potential unmet transit needs throughout the entire year. MCTC has discussed unmet transit needs at workshops and provided opportunities for interested individuals to provide comments or feedback during these functions.

Public hearing and workshop information has been noticed in local newspapers, made available on public transit vehicles for riders, distributed to local social service agencies, distributed to businesses, distributed to online email groups, and posted on websites and social media in both English and Spanish.

Finding 5: The MCGJ finds that there continues to be unmet transit needs throughout the county which will only increase in outlying areas as the population increases and ages.

Finding 5 Response: MCTC respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to Finding 5 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the County of Madera. MCTC has provided a courtesy copy of the Grand Jury report to the County of Madera, noting that this finding appears to be within the County's jurisdiction. As this matter does not pertain to a matter under MCTC's control, it is unable to respond regarding agreement or disagreement to the same [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Finding 6: The MCGJ finds that MCC LaVina, Fairmead, Berenda, Madera Dial a Ride, Chowchilla Dial a Ride, Senior Bus and Medical Escort are underused.

Finding 6 Response: MCTC respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to Finding 6 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the County of Madera, who is responsible for the operation of transit service. MCTC has provided a courtesy copy of the Grand Jury report to the County of Madera, noting that this finding appears to be within the County's jurisdiction. As this matter does not pertain to a matter under MCTC's control, it is unable to respond regarding agreement or disagreement to the same [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Finding 7: The MCGJ finds that when referencing the hours and the bus schedules, transit services do not provide adequate hours or diverse route schedules.

Finding 7 Response: MCTC respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to Finding 7 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the County of Madera, who is responsible for bus and route schedule information. MCTC has provided a courtesy copy of the Grand Jury report to the County of Madera, noting that this finding appears to be within the County's jurisdiction. As this matter does not pertain to a matter under MCTC's control, it is unable to respond regarding agreement or disagreement to the same [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Finding 8: The MCGJ finds that there are several volunteer unfilled positions on the SSTAC committee. This limits the input from underserved populations in the community.

Finding 8 Response: Agree, there are two volunteer unfilled positions on the SSTAC committee. This limits the input from underserved populations in the community.

Finding 9: The MCGJ commends the County on the consolidated contract agreement and, cost savings of \$500,000 per year over five years with the selection of FCEOC as the bus service provider under a single operator contract.

Finding 9 Response: MCTC respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to Finding 9 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the County of Madera, who is responsible for transit operator contract agreements. MCTC has provided a courtesy copy of the Grand Jury report to the County of Madera, noting that this finding appears to be within the County's jurisdiction. As this matter does not pertain to a matter under MCTC's control, it is unable to respond regarding agreement or disagreement to the same [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Finding 10: The MCGJ finds that little is being done to market public transportation within the County.

Finding 10 Response: MCTC respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to Finding 10 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the County of Madera, who is responsible for marketing public transportation within the County. MCTC has provided a courtesy copy of the Grand Jury report to the County of Madera, noting that this finding appears to be within the County's jurisdiction. As this matter does not pertain to a matter under MCTC's control, it is unable to respond regarding agreement or disagreement to the same [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, the MCTC redefine the definition of "unmet transit needs" to be clearly outlined in layman terms.

Recommendation 1 Response: The MCTC definition of "unmet transit needs," is concise. "Unmet Transit Needs," includes all essential trip requests by transit-dependent persons for which there is no other convenient means of transportation.

MCTC staff will include an item on the next SSTAC meeting agenda, scheduled for April 1, 2021, to discuss and take action to accept or amend the definition. If a recommendation is made to amend the definition, it would initiate a process that would ultimately require action from the MCTC Policy Board.

MCTC staff will initiate a fixed quarterly SSTAC meeting, and report quarterly to the MCTC Policy Board.

Recommendation 2: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, bus schedules be posted at bus stops, inside buses, and be made available at local businesses.

Recommendation 2 Response: As explained above, MCTC respectfully notes this matter is outside the control of MCTC. As such, MCTC does not have the legal authority to respond regarding the implementation of the recommendation as requested [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Recommendation 3: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, bus schedules should be easier to read to promote ridership and ensure the clarity of transit availability.

Recommendation 3 Response: As explained above, MCTC respectfully notes this matter is outside the control of MCTC. As such, MCTC does not have the legal authority to respond regarding the implementation of the recommendation as requested [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Recommendation 4: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, SSTAC increase Unmet Transit Needs Workshops and Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearings to four times per year to promote community involvement from other County locations outside of the City of Madera.

Recommendation 4 Response: MCTC's process is compliant. MCTC has never had nor will be limited to fixed in-person participation. There are various opportunities and methods for interested individuals to participate throughout the year. Expansion of the process is discretionary and based on the availability of resources. MCTC will schedule additional workshops as resources allow. During this unprecedented time with COVID-19 restrictions, MCTC will schedule, and advertise a GoToWebinar. The webinar(s) will be recorded and available on MCTC's website.

Recommendation 5: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, incentive programs, including FREE ridership days once a month for Seniors, Disabled and Persons with Limited Means, be introduced.

Recommendation 5 Response: As explained above, MCTC respectfully notes this matter is outside the control of MCTC. As such, MCTC does not have the legal authority to respond regarding the implementation of the recommendation as requested [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Recommendation 6: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, the Senior Bus, Dial-a-Ride, and Medical Transport County service be reviewed and expanded within Eastern Madera County, LaVina, Fairmead, and Berenda.

Recommendation 6 Response: As explained above, MCTC respectfully notes this matter is outside the control of MCTC. As such, MCTC does not have the legal authority to respond regarding the implementation of the recommendation as requested [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Recommendation 7: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, additional bus routes be added for Fairmead, Berenda, Raymond, North Fork, and Eastern Madera County.

Recommendation 7 Response: As explained above, MCTC respectfully notes this matter is

outside the control of MCTC. As such, MCTC does not have the legal authority to respond regarding the implementation of the recommendation as requested [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Recommendation 8: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, a concerted effort be made by SSTAC to recruit volunteers to serve on the SSTAC committee.

Recommendation 5 Response: MCTC staff, in January 2021, advertised the SSTAC vacancies in Madera's local newspapers and on MCTC's social media accounts. Flyers are posted on transit buses from all three providers that service the Madera County area. Also, MCTC staff reached out to social service providers, requesting to post vacancy flyers. The announcement of vacancies has also been sent to community members included on MCTC's email list. The following is a more detailed list of the outreach efforts completed:

- Advertisement in print and online newspapers of general circulation;
- Facebook post with a boost that reached 3,259;
- Emails sent to MCTC Agenda recipient list;
- Emails sent to SSTAC recipient list with the announcement of SSTAC vacancies and requesting the announcement to be posted. The list includes: Bass Lake Chamber, Oakhurst Chamber, Coarsegold Chamber, North Fork Chamber, Madera Chamber, Chowchilla Chamber, Madera County Economic Development Commission, Madera Farm Bureau, Chukchansi Tribe, North Rancheria of Mono Indians, Camarena Health, California Rural Legal Assistance, Madera County Action Partnership, Leadership Counsel, Madera Workforce Development, and Fairmead Community and Friends; and
- Emails sent to libraries, senior centers, and public health providers, requesting to post flyers in their facilities and social media.

Recommendation 9: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, the annual \$500,000 savings be utilized to increase transit service routes in outlying areas; Eastern Madera County, LaVina, Fairmead, Berenda, and North Fork.

Recommendation 9 Response: As explained above, MCTC respectfully notes this matter is outside the control of MCTC. As such, MCTC does not have the legal authority to respond regarding the implementation of the recommendation as requested [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

Recommendation 10: The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of Fiscal Year 21-22, the County Public Works Department proactively seek additional funding, either through grants or minimal fare increases, to brand themselves and actively market their services to improve community outreach and increase ridership.

Recommendation 10 Response: As explained above, MCTC respectfully notes this matter is outside the control of MCTC. As such, MCTC does not have the legal authority to respond regarding the implementation of the recommendation as requested [see Penal Code Section 933(b)].

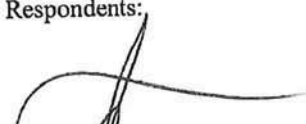
The Madera County Transportation Commission would like to thank the Madera Grand Jury's review and time involved in this matter and appreciates the opportunity to respond to the findings and recommendations. MCTC would like to offer the following clarifications to the content of the report:

- Page 5: *Filed annually, the Unmet Transit Needs Report is required in order to receive Transportation Development Act (TDA) Funds.* The main purpose of the Unmet Transit Needs process is to ensure that all the unmet transit needs reasonable to meet are fully funded before Local Transportation Funds can be released to fund street and road expenditures.
- Page 5: *Local Transportation Fund: As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Madera County, MCTC is responsible for the administration of the Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds also known as Local Transportation Funds. TDA or Local Transportation Funds are funded through 25 percent of the statewide sales tax that is remitted back to the County of origin and is the primary funding source for most transit systems. The Local Transportation Fund (LTF) is derived from ¼ cent of the 1.25 cent local rate of the general sales tax collected in each county and then returned to that county.*
- Page 13: *Based on the definition of unmet transit needs which is: to create routes that are feasible, serve the community, service a significant number of the population at an economical cost with effectiveness, the MCTC is failing to meet the needs of Madera County. This results in increased single vehicle use with resulting negative environmental impacts.* From MCTC's perspective, this statement can be addressed from both a "reasonable to meet" TDA needs standard and a general interpretation of "...failing to meet the needs of Madera County." MCTC is mandated to comply with the TDA unmet transit needs requirements and has an established compliant process with an adopted definition of unmet transit needs. Based on MCTC's current definition of unmet transit needs, MCTC has responded to County-wide feedback in full compliance with the TDA. As noted in Recommendation #1, MCTC will closely coordinate with the SSTAC in evaluating the efficacy of MCTC's current definition of unmet transit needs, taking into consideration factors needed to demonstrate reasonably meeting unmet needs, something explicitly required of the SSTAC members who ultimately are responsible for forwarding a recommendation to the MCTC Board.


From a more general interpretation of the definition of "needs," the Grand Jury Report's statement "*MCTC is failing to meet the needs of Madera County,*" does not delineate areas of need and can be interpreted as all-encompassing without specificity. Although there certainly may be transit needs in the County, they may not be considered feasible to address based on performance considerations. Through quarterly SSTAC meetings, as noted in Recommendation #1, and effective community outreach, MCTC looks forward to improving its understanding of specific needs throughout Madera County and working closely with local transit operators to address feasible unmet transit needs.

- Page 14: *There is only one reasonable connection with YARTS and none with other general service providers.* There are three possible connections between MCC and YARTS.

Respondents:



Council Member Jose Rodriguez, MCTC Policy Board Chair
 Madera County Transportation Commission
 2001 Howard Road, Suite 201
 Madera, California 93637



Patricia Taylor, Executive Director
Madera County Transportation Commission
2001 Howard Road, Suite 201
Madera, California 93637



January 20, 2021

Honorable Judge Michael Jurkovich
Madera County Supervising Judge
300 South G Street
Madera, CA 93537

SUBJECT: Responses to Madera County Grand Jury Final Report 1920-02 (December 21, 2020) "Unmet Transit Needs in Madera County: Riders without Routes"

Dear Honorable Judge Michael Jurkovich:

The Madera County Public Works Department would like to acknowledge and express appreciation for extensive efforts undertaken by the Grand Jury to review the County's transit services. This review certainly will benefit the County's efforts to provide efficient and effective levels of mobility for residents throughout Madera County.

In accordance with California Penal Code §933 and §933.05, this letter addresses all the Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations that address subjects under the jurisdiction and control of the Public Works Department--F2/R2; F3/R3; F5/R5; F6/R6; F7/R7; F9/R9; and F10/R10. The Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) will address those Findings and Recommendations under their jurisdiction and control--F1/R1; F4/R4; and F8/R8. We hope our responses are helpful to future pursuits of the Grand Jury and to the community at large.

A. RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS

F1 The MCGJ finds that the definition of unmet transit needs is vague and fails to consider the geography, the demographics, and the economic inequity of Madera County.

The County respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to F1 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the MCTC.



F2 The MCGJ finds that bus schedule information is not readily available.

The County disagrees with this finding as information for all Madera County transit services—MCC, Madera Dial-A-Ride, Chowchilla Dial-A-Ride, Senior Bus and Medical Escort, is readily available through a variety of ways.

- A dedicated, comprehensive County transit website is available at www.mcctransit.com and provides information on all County services with real-time MCC bus location updates by stop, and links with other key transit operators, including YARTS, Madera Metro, CATX, and FAX.
- Google Maps Transit at www.google.com/transit provides on-line access to MCC routing and real-time MCC bus location updates by stop.
- Brochures/schedules are accessible on the Madera County website at www.maderacounty.com/government/public-works/transit and at the Madera County Transportation Commission website at www.maderactc.org.
- Brochures/schedules are available at the following key locations throughout the County:
 - County Transit Administration Building, 201 W. Almond Avenue, Madera
 - Madera County Transportation Commission, 2001 Howard Road, Suite 201, Madera
 - Downtown Intermodal Center, 123 E. Street, Madera
 - Camarena Health Services, Madera and Chowchilla
 - Madera Community Hospital
 - Madera Senior Centers
 - City of Chowchilla City Hall
- Brochures/schedules are available on all MCC buses and Medical Escort van.
- Madera County Transportation Commission periodically publishes a County-Wide Transit Guide.

The County will review other potential opportunities for wider distribution and increased accessibility of information on its transit services at key locations throughout the County.

F3 The MCGJ finds that bus schedules are difficult to read and understand.

The County partially agrees with this finding with the understanding that it appears to refer to MCC fixed-route schedules. The County has five different transit services each with its own brochure/schedule. The MCC fixed-route brochure provides detailed information on its services including bus schedules for three MCC routes—Eastern Madera County; Chowchilla-Fairmead; and Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-La Vina. The County therefore assumes that this finding refers to MCC bus schedules. The Madera Dial-A-Ride, Chowchilla Dial-A-Ride, Senior Bus and Escort brochures provide detailed information on these services and how to make a demand-response trip reservation.

Although the County has received mostly positive feedback on the format of the MCC schedule, the County is receptive to evaluating alternative approaches to make it easier to

read and understand the brochure/schedule and will review other transit service information for ease of use.

F4 The MCGJ finds that there is inadequate public outreach to secure community input for transit needs from low income, senior citizens and from rural mountain communities.

The County respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to F1 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the MCTC.

F5 The MCGJ finds that there continues to be unmet transit needs throughout the county which will only increase in outlying areas as the population increases and ages.

The County partially agrees with this finding given that no specific needs by location are identified; the phrase "unmet transit needs" is very broad and undefined; and there are reasonable limits to meeting needs. For clarification purposes, the phrase "unmet transit needs" frequently is used in transit planning by the MCTC and County with a strict definition developed by the MCTC and in compliance with the Transportation Development Act (TDA). The County's response to this finding will address how the County meets both the formal MCTC definition and informal meaning that encompasses operating and capital needs.

As stated above, the MCGJ finding refers to unmet transit needs throughout the County without identifying specific unmet transit needs by location. Given the County's large geographic area, the County's mission has been to provide, at a minimum, lifeline services to those areas and residents that have been identified as being in greatest need of transit services, including seniors, disabled, persons of limited means, students and other general public.

Like many rural transit operators, the County faces many challenges in providing successful transit services and infrastructure to rural communities with low population densities and diverse needs such as those found in Madera County. The County spans over 2,100 square miles and has a population of 157,000 residents served by five different transit services, one fixed-route and four demand-response services—MCC fixed-route; MCC Madera Dial-A-Ride; MCC Chowchilla Dial-A-Ride; Senior Bus; Medical Escort. These services collectively serve an area stretching from Oakhurst-Bass Lake to the north, Valley Children's Hospital to the east, Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-La Vina to the south, and Chowchilla-Fairmead to the west. Inter-county medical trips also are provided from Madera County to Fresno County.

One of the key purposes of the MCTC Unmet Transit Needs process is to determine whether any unmet transit needs may exist and may be reasonable to meet before street funds can be distributed. MCTC has a well-established annual public outreach process and utilizes its Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) to review all testimony received from the MCTC Board Public Hearing and advises the MCTC Board. The County actively participates in MCTC's annual Unmet Transit Needs process and is a member of the SSTAC

which provides the County with informed insight into transit needs throughout the region from a broad spectrum of the public.

It is important to note that through the County's proactive participation in MCTC's public participation process, the County has expeditiously addressed many transit needs throughout the County. For example, a dedicated MCC route was added to Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-La Vina, and additional service was expanded to the communities of Raymond and Yosemite Lakes Park. Levels of service also were enhanced to and from Fairmead, Chowchilla, Valley Children's Hospital, and Madera Community College with additional round trip service.

Beyond the MCTC Unmet Transit Needs process, the County initiated and continues to undertake many transit service and capital improvements. Most recently, on-time performance, dispatching and fleet maintenance have improved and a new dedicated Transit Administration Office completed. Bus shelters and benches have been installed at key MCC bus stops throughout the County. All vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Service reliability is high given the procurement of seven new buses and a van over the past two years and the County's goal of adhering to its Fleet Replacement Plan. Consolidation of transit operations from four contracts to one was undertaken beginning in FY2019/20. This effort has led to streamlined operations, management, and administrative oversight, seamless services and dispatching, and more cost-efficient services.

The County's transit services are funded by a variety of federal, State, and local funds. Integral to each funding source are stringent requirements. Implementation of services must be carefully evaluated for effectiveness in meeting service and cost-efficient performance measures. The County, at a minimum, must strive to achieve a ten percent (10%) farebox recovery, where fares cover 10% of transit operating costs, and to maintain transit costs that do not exceed specific Consumer Price Index metrics consistent with State TDA requirements. These requirements do not exclusively guide County transit improvements but must be considered.

While the County recognizes the need for effective transit services throughout the County, including outlying rural communities, warranted operating and capital improvements have been and will continue to be undertaken. The ability to operate transit services while meeting key performance metrics remains key to successful long-term sustainability.

F6 The MCGJ finds that MCC La Vina, Fairmead, Berenda, Madera Dial a Ride, Chowchilla Dial a Ride Senior Bus and Medical Escort are underused.

The County partially agrees with this finding but does not currently provide direct service to Berenda. The MCGJ provides a general statement about underuse collectively of all County transit services. The County agrees that ridership on its services could increase both by incentivizing current riders and attracting non-riders. New residential and commercial

developments, an aging population, and an increasing transit-dependent population also will help generate increased ridership.

The County understands the importance of developing increased public outreach and trust in its transit services, particularly with the dramatic changes in transit rider behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic and declining transit ridership. Marketing efforts will be undertaken as described in greater detail in R10.

F7 The MCGJ finds that when referencing the hours and the bus schedules, transit services do not provide adequate hours or diverse route schedules.

The County disagrees with this finding and would like to clarify that while the finding is general in nature, it appears to reference MCC fixed-route schedules and routes. Assuming this interpretation is correct, the County agrees that MCC has the potential to increase its hours of operation. The service is designed to provide a high level of service justified by demand and that is cost-effective for long-term sustainability.

As described in F5, the County offers diverse services with operating challenges faced by many rural transit operators. Improvements to County transit services, whether through an MCTC Unmet Transit Needs process or informal request, are considered based on a specific defined need and on many operational performance measures, including potential ridership, days and hours of operation, vehicle requirements and cost. Each request is carefully considered and responded to on a timely basis, and as warranted, improvements are initiated.

For clarification purposes, the MCGJ report states that “there have been no new service routes or expanded services in Madera County since the YARTS expansion in 2000 and the addition of MCC routes in 2002/03 to Eastin Arcola, Ripperdan and La Vina.” The County would like to note that MCC services were expanded to the Chukchansi Gold Casino in 2005; Yosemite Lakes Park in 2010; and mid-morning and mid-afternoon trips to Chowchilla-Fairmead, and an early-morning run to the College-Hospital route and additional Eastern Madera stops were added in 2016. Further, two trips were added to Eastin Arcola-Ripperdan-La Vina in July 2020 but discontinued in December 2020 due to low ridership. MCC schedules are continuously monitored for on-time performance and undergo changes as needed due to route changes, transfers, addition or deletion of bus stops, traffic changes, etc.

Six new MCC bus shelters also were installed in 2015 in Fairmead, Chowchilla, Oakhurst, Coarsegold, and La Vina. There are plans for additional shelters at other locations, including in Fairmead through close coordination with community leaders and the organization Fairmead Community and Friends.

F8 The MCGJ finds that there are several volunteer unfilled positions on the SSTAC committee. This limits the input from the underserved populations in the community.

The County respectfully responds that this finding does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to F1 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the MCTC.

- F9 The MCGJ commends the County on the consolidated contract agreement and, cost savings of \$500,000 per year over five years with the selection of FCEOC as the bus service provider under a single operator contract.**

The County agrees with this finding and notes that cost savings through consolidation of contracted services have proven beneficial from both an operational as well as financial perspective. For clarification, however, the cost savings are estimated at \$340,000 annually from FY2019/20 to FY2023/24.

- F10 The MCGJ finds that little is being done to market public transportation within the County.**

The County partially agrees with this finding, and will undertake proactive marketing as described in greater detail in R10.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning fiscal year 21-22, the MCTC redefine the definition of “unmet transit needs” to be clearly outlined in layman terms.**

The County respectfully responds that this recommendation does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to F1 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the MCTC.

- R2 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, bus schedules be posted at bus stops, inside buses, and be made available at local businesses.**

The County partially agrees with this recommendation and already provides bus schedules and brochures on all vehicles. The County will post bus schedules at key bus stops and broaden its distribution of schedules and brochures to more businesses/sites.

- R3 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, bus schedules should be easier to read to promote ridership and ensure the clarity of transit availability.**

The County agrees with this recommendation and will review the MCC bus schedules and other service brochures and identify alternative approaches to make them easier to read and understand.

- R4 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, SSTAC increase Unmet Transit Needs Workshops and Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearings to four times per year to promote community involvement from other County locations outside of the City of Madera.**

The County respectfully responds that this recommendation does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to F1 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the MCTC.

- R5 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, an incentive programs, including FREE ridership days once a month for Seniors Disabled and Persons with Limited Means be introduced.**

The County partially agrees with this recommendation but proposes to undertake a more comprehensive approach for marketing system-wide. The County will evaluate the feasibility of an incentive program targeting free-ride days for seniors, disabled, and persons with limited means as part of a more comprehensive marketing and outreach campaign to increase overall ridership as described in greater detail in R10.

- R6 The MCGJ recommends that by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the Senior Bus, Dial-A-Ride, and Medical Transport County service be reviewed and expanded within Eastern Madera County, La Vina, Fairmead, and Berenda.**

The County partially agrees with this recommendation and will review the feasibility of expanding the Senior Bus, Madera Dial-A-Ride, and Medical Escort services within Eastern Madera County, La Vina, Fairmead, and Berenda before final determination is made to expand services. The County does not initiate additional services or bus routes outright without comprehensive evaluation of key performance metrics, including potential ridership, days and hours of operation, vehicle requirements, projected costs, and transit budget and farebox recovery impacts of each service improvement component. Services may be expanded as warranted by County performance findings and carefully monitored for long-term sustainability.

- R7 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, additional bus routes be added for Fairmead, La Vina, Berenda, Raymond, North Fork, and Eastern Madera County.**

The County partially agrees with this recommendation and will review the feasibility of adding routes to the identified communities before final determination is made to add bus routes. This effort will be undertaken as described in R6. Routes may be added and maintained as warranted by County performance findings and carefully monitored for long-term sustainability.

- R8 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, a concerted effort be made by SSTAC to recruit volunteers to serve on the SSTAC committee.**

The County respectfully responds that this recommendation does not pertain to a matter under its control. Instead, matters pertaining to F1 are believed to be within the jurisdiction and control of the MCTC.

- R9 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the annual \$500,000 v savings be utilized to increase transit service routes in outlying areas; Eastern Madera County, La Vina, Fairmead, Berenda, Raymond, and North Fork.**

The County partially agrees with this recommendation but wishes to clarify that consolidation of transit contracts resulted in approximately \$340,000 in annual cost savings. As noted in R6, additional bus routes are not increased outright without comprehensive evaluation of key performance metrics, including potential ridership, days and hours of operation, vehicle requirements, projected costs, and transit budget and farebox recovery impacts of each service improvement component. Routes may be added and maintained as warranted by County performance findings and carefully monitored for long-term sustainability.

- R10 The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the County Public Works Department proactively seek additional funding, either through grants or minimal fare increases, to brand themselves and actively market their services to improve community outreach and increase ridership.**

The County agrees with this recommendation and will proactively seek and/or utilize grant funding or minimal fare increases, as recommended, and will undertake marketing and branding strategies in an effort to increase ridership.

The County believes that this effort will help establish a more structured marketing approach to reach out to the general public and targeted groups. Effective marketing and outreach also provide an opportunity to capture greater market share to assure residents that the County is undertaking protective health safety measures in response to unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic impacts on transit ridership in Madera County and throughout the country.

County residents will be informed of the many options available to access transit service information and of specific safety health measures implemented in transit operations. As noted in R5, the County will evaluate the feasibility of an incentive program with free-ride days targeting seniors, disabled, and persons with limited means as part of a more comprehensive marketing campaign to increase overall ridership. The County will coordinate marketing efforts with MCTC, as appropriate.