

Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan

As required under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient
Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users

Final: July 2010

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Tulare County

Coordinated Transportation Plan

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Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) prepared the 2007 Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan (Plan) to satisfy new requirements under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The Plan is being updated to meet Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements that the Plan be updated every 4 years, in conjunction with the Regional Transportation Plan. The 2011 Coordinated Transportation Coordination Plan will provide the latest information and goals of all Tulare County transit provider systems.

Purpose of the Plan

The development of this plan serves a number of purposes. This plan:

- Provides strategies to improve mobility and access to transportation for Tulare County's senior, disabled, and low-income populations;
- Feeds into Tulare County's regional planning process, to ensure that the transportation needs of the County's disadvantaged populations are reflected in the planning process; and
- Satisfies the requirements of federal funding sources for coordinated transportation and positions Tulare County to receive grant funds under SAFETEA-LU.

Elements of the Plan

This plan addresses all of the elements required of a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, including:

- A demographic profile of Tulare County, focusing on populations with special transportation needs;
- An inventory of transportation resources in Tulare County;
- A description of stakeholder involvement in the development of the plan;
- A 2007 analysis of common travel origins and destinations;
- A 2007 analysis of transportation needs and gaps; and
- A prioritized list of strategies to address the identified needs and gaps.

Highlights

Much of the County's population is in a demographic group that has a higher need for transportation services because they are potentially unable to drive due to age, a disability, or income status; approximately 9% of Tulare County's total population is 65 years of age or older, 13% of the total population has some type of a disability, and over 30% of the County's population is considered low-income. In addition, 8% of total households within Tulare County do not have access to a vehicle. Many of Tulare County's transportation-dependent residents live outside of the incorporated cities.

Transportation needs and gaps exist in the following areas:

- Spatial gaps – especially transportation to and from rural areas into the urban areas;

- Temporal gaps;
- Transportation costs; and
- Service awareness.

Implementation Strategies

Seven strategies were developed to address the identified needs and gaps of the County's senior, disabled, and low-income populations. These strategies are summarized and prioritized below. All proposed projects/applications submitted to TCAG under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310, 5316, or 5317 programs must address at least one of these strategies to be considered for funding.

Strategy		Priority Level
1	Provide rural commuter-oriented transportation service to and from outlying County areas into the urban areas – through new service, additional service/increased frequency, and/or expansion of service area.	High
2	Provide continued or improved mobility services designed specifically for the disabled (i.e. wheelchair routes).	High
3	Expand or enhance service within the Exeter, Farmersville, Tulare, Visalia metroplex.	Medium
4	Extend service hours for rural commuter-oriented transportation service to and from outlying County areas into the urban areas – through extension of morning, evening, and/or weekend service.	High
5	Develop a fare reduction program where possible to reduce fares for seniors, individuals with a handicap, and/or low-income individuals – through subsidies and/or pass systems.	Medium
6	Implement a transit training and awareness program to assist clients in determining their transit needs and to help them build their transit trips – including mobility training for agency personnel.	Medium
7	Develop user-friendly information systems that illustrate available services and trip options, including guides/brochures, kiosks, automated routing services, etc.	Medium

I. INTRODUCTION

The Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Agency (MPO) for Tulare County, and as such is responsible for matters related to transportation planning within Tulare County. This includes reviewing and coordinating applications for programs utilizing federal funding. The completion of this document satisfies a mandate for TCAG to prepare a Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan, hereafter referred to as the Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan (Plan), as required under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

What is Coordinated Transportation?

United We Ride, an interagency Federal national initiative, defines coordinated transportation as individual human service transportation programs that make the most efficient use of limited transportation resources by avoiding duplication caused by overlapping individual program efforts and encouraging the use and sharing of existing community resources. Coordination efforts promote more extensive and higher quality service, lower costs, and easier access to transportation through more efficient use of limited funding and personnel resources.

Federal Background (SAFETEA-LU)

Executive Order 13330, signed by President Bush on February 24, 2004, established the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM). CCAM, comprised of 11 Federal departments was developed for the purpose of identifying and reducing transportation service duplication through coordination efforts. To that extent, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) created the *United We Ride* (UWR) initiative to “support States and their localities in developing coordinated human service delivery systems”.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), signed into law by President Bush on August 10, 2005, and codified in 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, provides \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for Federal surface transportation programs through fiscal year (FY) 2009, including \$52.6 billion for Federal transit programs - a 46% increase over transit funding guaranteed in the previous authorization, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (taken from FTA C 9070.1F). The enactment of SAFETEA-LU amended existing Department of Transportation laws and regulations, and modified special needs transportation requirements and funding mechanisms. These new requirements include the creation of coordination transportation plans at the state, regional, and local levels, that identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes, develop cost effective strategies to serve those needs, improve the quality and accessibility of services, and eliminate duplicative services through coordination. The house extended the bill that was set to expire in September of 2009 through March of 2010. On March 10, 2010, the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act was enacted which extended SAFETEA-LU through December 31, 2010.

The Mobility Action Plan was developed in 2005 with the assistance of transportation and human service agency providers throughout California. Caltrans' Mobility Action Plan (MAP) defines four goals intended to further coordination between transportation services furnished by transit and those provided through human service agencies. The impetus for the plan was provided by the February 2004 Executive Order signed by President Bush, and SAFETEA-LU. The MAP study will be completed by June 30, 2010.

Under SAFETEA-LU all projects funded through the following Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs must be selected through a competitive process, derived from this coordinated plan process:

- Section 5310** – Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program
- Section 5316** – Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC)
- Section 5317** – New Freedom Initiative

In May of 2007 the FTA issued final guidance for each of the above stated funding programs in the form of circulars. Each circular contains an identical chapter on the coordinated planning process, Chapter V (Coordinated Planning). This chapter states that projects selected for funding from each of these programs must be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be “derived through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public”. Chapter V (Coordinated Planning) is contained within Appendix A of this document.

Projects identified through the coordinated planning process and selected for FTA funding must be incorporated into both the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide Transportation Program (STIP). Furthermore, coordinated plans should be updated every four years, at a minimum, in cycle with metropolitan transportation plans.

State/Local Background

California has been incorporating coordination activities into its transportation planning process for almost three decades; In September of 1979 the California legislature passed AB 120, known as the “Social Service Transportation Improvement Act”. This law was enacted to promote the coordination and consolidation of transportation for social service agencies in order to improve the transportation available to social service recipients. AB 120 called for the identification and consolidation of all social service transportation services and funding, the creation of an action plan detailing the steps required to consolidate these services, and the designation of a consolidated transportation service agency in each region.

The first Social Services Transportation Action Plan for Tulare County was developed in 1981. The most recent update was authored in 2001 and was used as the basis for the 2007 Coordinated Transportation Plan. The *2001 Tulare County Social Services Transportation Inventory and Action Plan* (SSTIAP) analyzed the progress that had been made since the previous update, inventoried the existing Tulare County transportation services, identified the transportation needs of social service agencies within Tulare County, analyzed the locations of sensitive populations through the use of a geographic

information system (GIS), and presented a new action plan to promote the coordination and consolidation of social service transportation.

Overview of FTA Programs

The three FTA programs associated with this Coordinated Plan are designed to improve mobility for elderly individuals, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes. Program guidance and application instructions for these programs can be found on FTA's website at:

Section 5310 - http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html

Section 5316 – http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html

Section 5317 – http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html

Section 5310 – Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities

The Section 5310 program provides capital assistance for nonprofit agencies to provide transportation for elderly and persons with disabilities. Elderly individuals are defined as all persons 65 years of age or older (at a minimum), but grantees may use a definition that extends eligibility for service to younger persons. An individual with a disability means an individual who, because of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability cannot use effectively, without special facilities, planning, or design, public transportation service or a public transportation facility (49 U.S.C. 5302(a)(5)). Most funds are used to purchase vehicles, but acquisition of transportation services under contract, lease or other arrangements and state program administration are also eligible expenses.

Caltrans is responsible for the planning and administration of the Section 5310 program for the State of California. Agencies that apply for 5310 funds must submit an application, which is ranked and scored by both TCAG and Caltrans annually. Applicants that demonstrate that they meet the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Federal Clean Air Act are funded at 90% federal with a 10% local match. All other 5310 projects are funded at 80/20. The local share may be derived from Federal programs that are eligible to be expended for transportation, other than DOT programs, or from DOT's Federal Lands Highway Program.

The 5310 program will provide \$584 million through the life of SAFETEA-LU (2009). Funding is allocated to each State from the FTA by a formula based on the number of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in each state according to the latest U.S. census data. Each State then apportions out their share based on the same formula to qualifying regions and counties. Estimated California 5310 fund allocations are listed in Table 1. The Porterville Sheltered Workshop was the only Section 5310 grant recipient within Tulare County between FY 2005 to 2010.

Section 5316 – Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)

The JARC program provides formula funding to States and designated recipients to support the development and maintenance of job access projects designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment, including training and child care. Low-income individuals are defined as an individual whose family income is at or below 150% of the poverty line. Reverse commute grants are designed to develop transportation services to transport

workers from urbanized areas to suburban job sites. Eligible activities for JARC projects include capital and operation costs associated with providing these services.

JARC projects are awarded through a competitive selection process; agencies that apply for JARC funds must submit an application, which is ranked and scored by both TCAG and Caltrans annually. The program requires a minimum 20% local match for capital projects and a minimum 50% local match for net operating costs of the project. The local share may be derived from non-DOT federal funds. Ten percent (10%) of the project funds may be used for planning purposes.

The JARC program will provide \$727 million through the life of SAFETEA-LU (2009). The JARC program was originally authorized as a discretionary program under TEA-21, but changed to a formula program under SAFETEA-LU. Estimated California JARC fund allocations are listed in Table 1. JARC funding is allocated to States based on the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients in urbanized and non-urbanized areas. An urbanized area is defined by the FTA as an area encompassing a population of not less than 50,000 people that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an “urbanized area” by the Secretary of Commerce. A non-urbanized area is defined as an area outside of an “urbanized area”, including rural and urban areas under 50,000 that are not included in an urbanized area. JARC funds are allocated as follows:

- 60% to designated recipients in areas with populations over 200,000;
- 20% to designated recipients in areas with populations under 200,000; and,
- 20% to States for non-urbanized areas.

Section 5316 grant recipients between FY 2008 to 2008 include the Tulare County Association of Governments and the City of Visalia.

Section 5317 – New Freedom

The New Freedom Program is a new program under SAFETEA-LU. This new program is aimed at supporting new public transportation services and service alternatives beyond those required by the ADA that assist individuals with disabilities with transportation, including transportation to and from jobs and employment support services. Lack of adequate transportation is a primary barrier to work for individuals with disabilities; the 2000 Census showed that only 60% of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed. Section 5317 funds can be used for associated capital and operating costs.

New Freedom projects are awarded through a competitive selection process; agencies that apply for New Freedom funds must submit an application, which is ranked and scored by both TCAG and Caltrans annually. The program requires a minimum 20% local match for capital projects and a minimum 50% local match for net operating costs of the project. The local share may be derived from non-DOT federal funds. Ten percent (10%) of the project funds may be used for planning purposes.

The New Freedom program will provide \$339 million through the life of SAFETEA-LU (2009). Estimated California New Freedom fund allocations are listed in Table 1. New Freedom funds are allocated to States as follows:

- 60% goes to designated recipients in urbanized areas with a population of 200,000 or more in the ratio that the number of individuals with disabilities in each such urbanized area bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in all such urbanized areas;
- 20% is apportioned among the States in a ratio that the number of individuals with disabilities in urbanized areas with a population of less than 200,000 in each State bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in urbanized areas with a population of less than 200,000 in all States; and,
- 20% is apportioned among the States in the ratio that the number of individuals with disabilities in non-urbanized areas in each State bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in non-urbanized areas in all States.

To clarify, the FTA apportions 60% among designated recipients in large urbanized areas, 20% to the States for small urbanized areas, and 20% to the States for rural and small urban areas under 50,000 in population by formula. The formula is based on the ratio that the number of individuals with disabilities in each such area bears to the number of individuals with disabilities in all such areas. The latest available U.S. Census data for individuals with disabilities over the age of 5 is used to determine the number of individuals in an area.

As stated previously, an urbanized area is defined by the FTA as an area encompassing a population of not less than 50,000 people that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an “urbanized area” by the Secretary of Commerce. A non-urbanized area is defined as an area outside of an “urbanized area”, including rural and urban areas under 50,000 that are not included in an urbanized area.

Table 1 – Funds Received by California for Rural (less than 50,000) and Small Urban (50,000-199,999)

Fiscal Year	5310 Program*	5316 Program JARC	5317 Program New Freedom	Total
2007	\$12,398,851	\$4,467,118	\$2,339,499	\$19,205,468
2008	\$13,519,389	\$4,839,379	\$2,527,238	\$20,886,006
2009	\$15,100,000	\$5,680,164	\$2,913,097	\$23,693,261

Source: FTA

*amount of statewide grants recieved

TCAG’s Role

The chief executive officer of each State must designate a public entity to be the recipient of FTA funds. In the State of California, Caltrans is the designated recipient for

all 5310, 5316, and 5317 funds. The FTA defines a designated recipient as the entity responsible for conducting the competitive selection process in cooperation with the MPO and awarding grants to subrecipients.

As the designated MPO for Tulare County, TCAG is responsible for ensuring that projects selected are derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, conducting the competitive selection process in cooperation with Caltrans (as stated previously), administering grants, and programming all selected projects into both the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) prior to FTA grant awards. All funds received by Tulare County have been evaluated and ensured that each project has been compliant with the 2007 Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan.

Plan Approach

TCAG's approach for developing this Coordinated Plan followed strategies set forth by the FTA in Chapter V (Coordinated Planning) of the 5310, 5316, and 5317 program circulars – part d of section 2 – entitled “Tools and Strategies for Developing a Coordinated Plan”. See Appendix 1.

Inventory Existing Transportation Services

An inventory of existing transportation services was conducted to gather relevant information on agencies that currently either provide or purchase (for their clients) public transit or human services transportation within Tulare County. The inventory of services includes both public and private transportation providers. An update to the 2007 Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan provider contact list was updated in conjunction with transportation service inventory as provided in the 2010 Regional Transportation Plan Public Outreach Appendix G.

Seek Public/Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder involvement is the key component to any effort aimed at coordinated transportation. Efforts were made to contact special needs populations and generate public input through a series of community meetings held in various parts of the County. Surveys conducted at the 2009 Tulare County Fair collected information on all transportation in Tulare County and responses have been incorporated into this Plan.

Develop Strategies and Prioritize Needs

Coordination strategies to address the transportation needs of special populations within Tulare County were developed based on applicable state, operational and funding constraints, and the envisioned future of human services transportation within Tulare County. Needs were prioritized based on available resources and feasibility for implementation.

II. BACKGROUND DEMOGRAPHICS

Tulare County is centrally located within the State of California, lying in the Central San Joaquin Valley between the Coastal Range and the Sierra Nevada Mountains. See Figure 1 – Tulare County Location Map. The County covers 4,863 square miles with an average of approximately 78 people per square mile. The Eastern half of the County is

comprised primarily of public lands within mountainous terrains. Very few people live in this foothill/mountainous area east of the communities of Three Rivers and Springville.

Overview

The California Department of Finance estimated the January 2010 population of Tulare County at 441,481 persons. This is a 17% increase over the 2000 U.S. Census reported population of 368,021 persons. Tulare County’s largest city, and the County seat, is Visalia, with a 2010 estimated population of 123,670. Other incorporated cities include Tulare (58,506 persons), Porterville (52,056 persons), Dinuba (21,237 persons), Lindsay (11,684 persons), Exeter (10,665 persons), Farmersville (10,771 persons), and Woodlake (7,769 persons). Figures 2 and 3 depict Tulare County cities and unincorporated communities and Total Population by Census Tract respectively.

In Tulare County, individuals most likely to be dependent upon public transportation include seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals. These populations are shown below in Table 2.

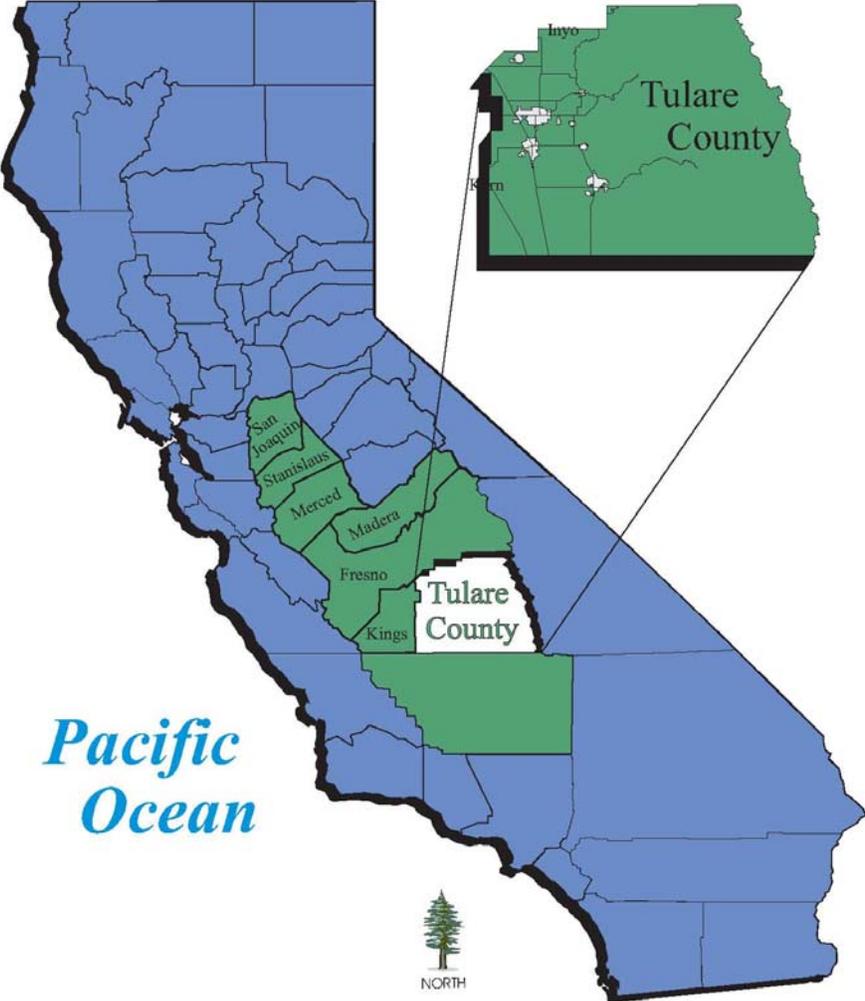
Table 2 – Demographic Comparison

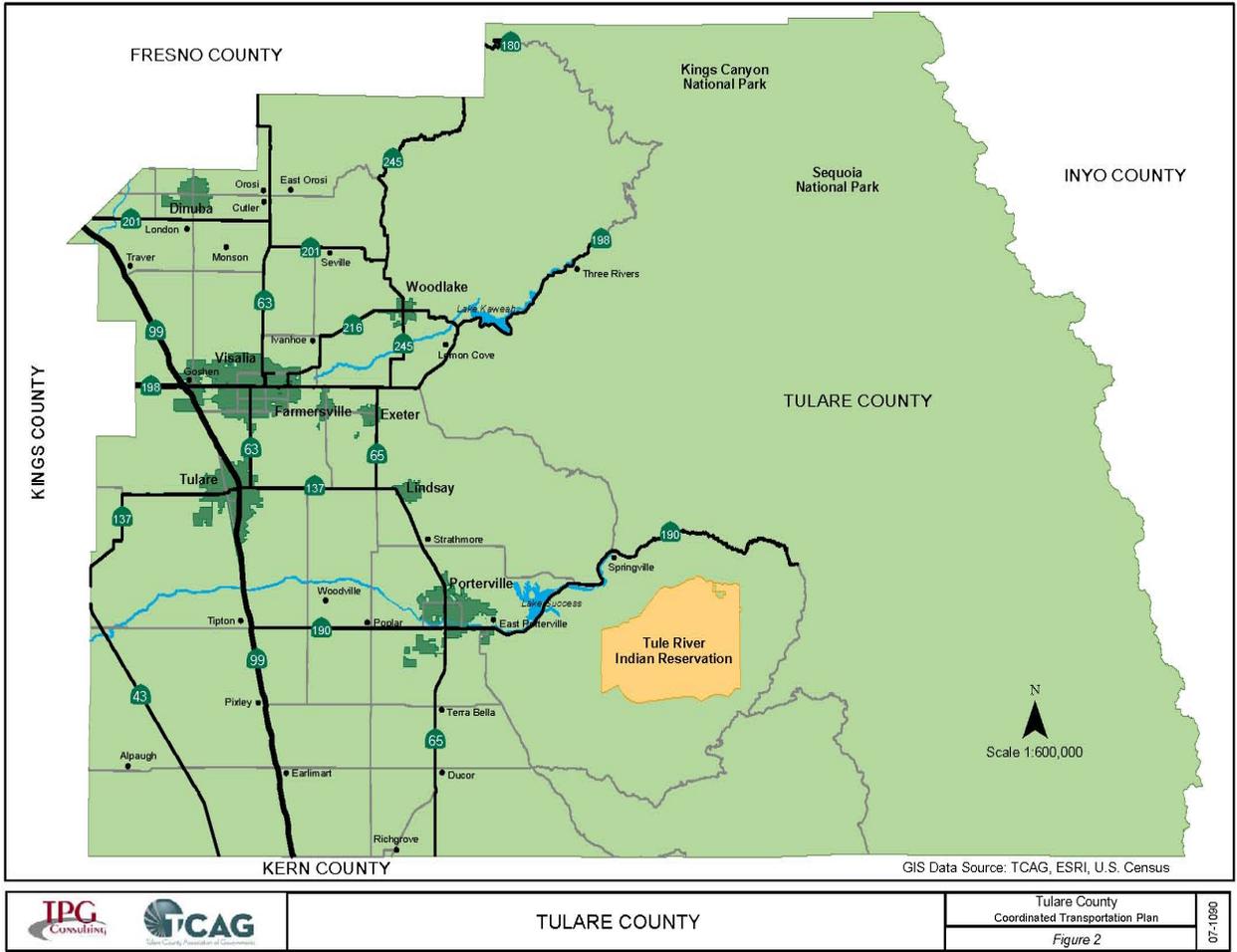
Percentage of Total Population			
	Tulare County	Statewide	Nationwide
Age 65+	9%	11%	12%
With a disability	13%	13%	15%
Below poverty level	23%	13%	13%

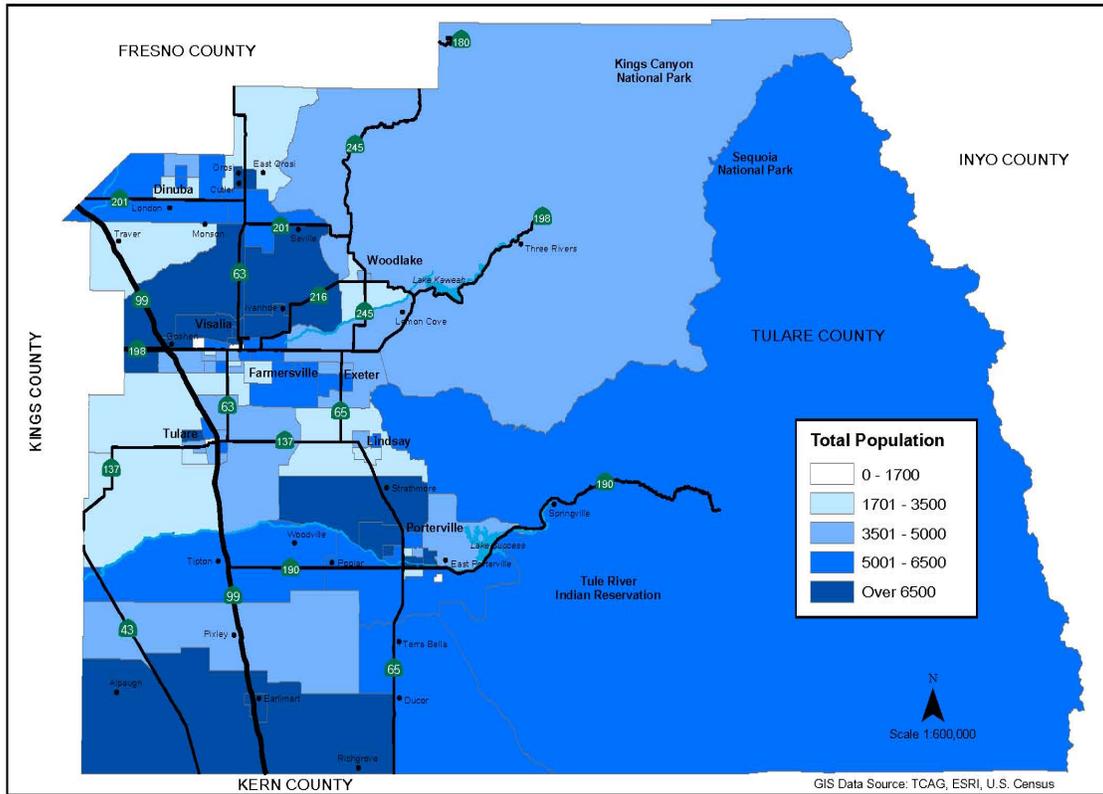
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2005 American Community Survey)

Across the State of California, the population is becoming more racially diverse with minority populations growing faster than the white population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 47% of the population of Tulare County spoke a language other than English at home in 2005. In addition, many community populations, such as that of the City of Tulare, are now dominated by minority populations; based on 2000 U.S. Census data, the plurality of the population within the City of Tulare in 2000 was Hispanic (46%), while Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) persons accounted for 44% of the City’s population. This trend contributes, in part, to Tulare County’s high poverty rate, as much of the Hispanic population within the County is employed as low-wage farm laborers.

Figure 1
Tulare County and the
San Joaquin Valley







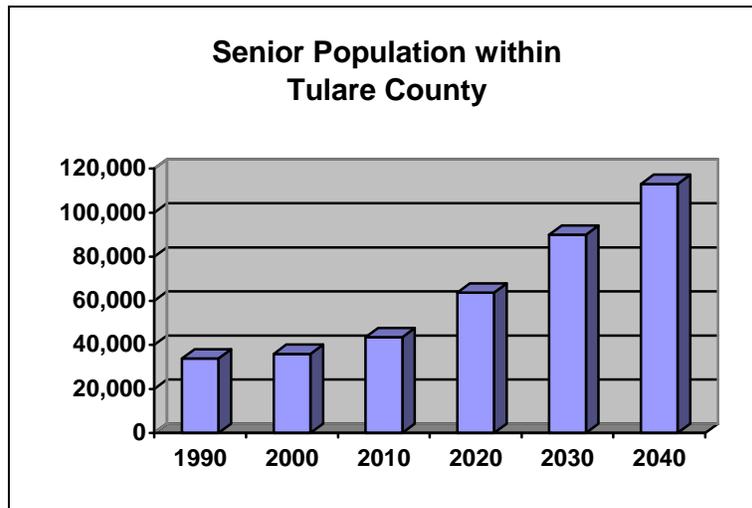
TOTAL POPULATION BY CENSUS TRACT
 NOTE: Very few people reside in the foothill/mountainous areas east of Three Rivers and Springville.

Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan Figure 3	07-1090
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Senior Population

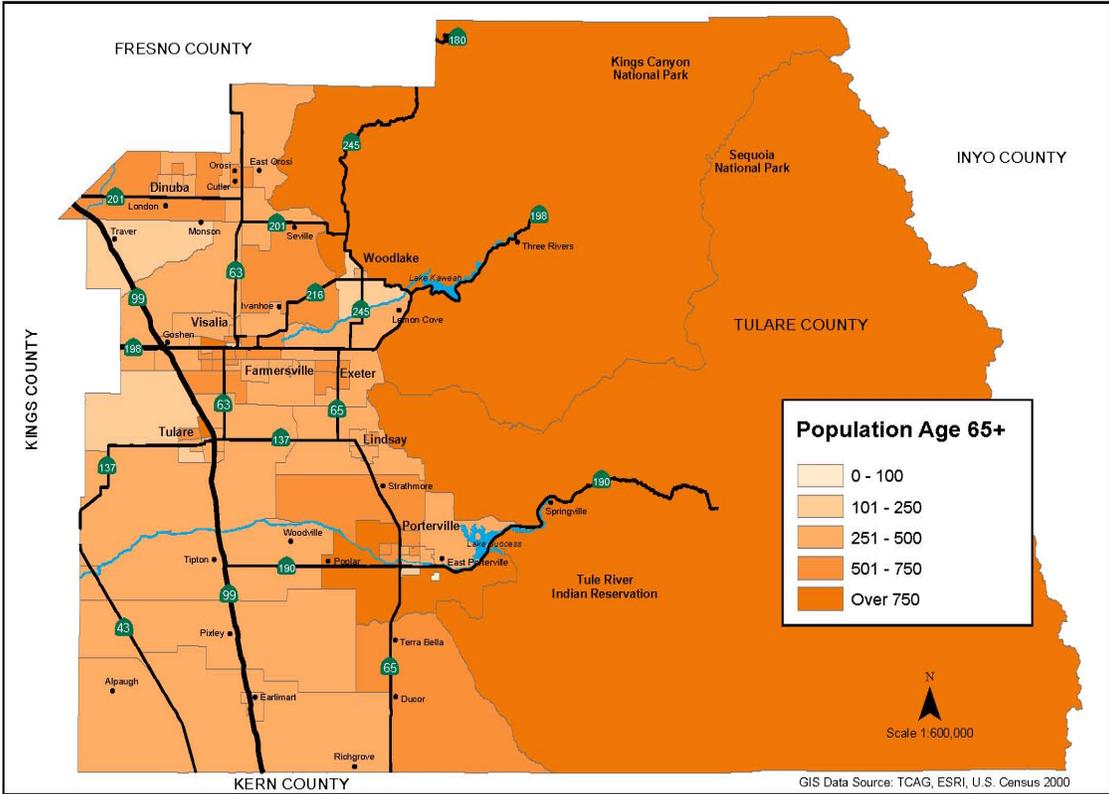
Although California as a whole has a greater proportion of people age 65 and older in comparison to the nation, Tulare County has a relatively low percentage (9%) of seniors in relation to total population (*California Association for Adult Day Services (CAADS) – California Long Term Care County Data Book, 2002*). In 2000, only one in ten people was over 65 years of age (U.S. Census). According to CAADS this trend can be attributed to the fact that the median age of California’s population is generally two years younger than the nation, with Tulare County’s median age being four years younger than the State average. This is mostly attributable to younger immigrants with children. However, as the current population ages, the need for transportation services that meet their needs will increase; currently 20% of the County’s population is between the ages of 45 and 64. Research indicates that one in five Americans age 65 and older do not drive, and more than 50% of non-drivers age 65 and older stay home on any given day due to lack of transportation resources.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were 35,917 persons age 65 or older in Tulare County. By 2010 that number is expected to grow to 43,471 persons. The senior population will grow to 12% of the total population by 2030, up from 9% in 2007. The following graph illustrates the estimated senior population within Tulare County over the next few decades.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and California Department of Finance

The following map shows the concentrations of seniors in the County (Figure 4 – Population Age 65 and Older by Census Tract). Figure 4 indicates that the senior population of Tulare County is dispersed throughout the urban and rural areas.



GIS Data Source: TCAG, ESRI, U.S. Census 2000

		<p>POPULATION AGE 65 AND OLDER BY CENSUS TRACT NOTE: Very few people reside in the foothill/mountainous areas east of Three Rivers and Springville.</p>	<p>Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan Figure 4</p>	<p>07-1000</p>
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Disabled Population

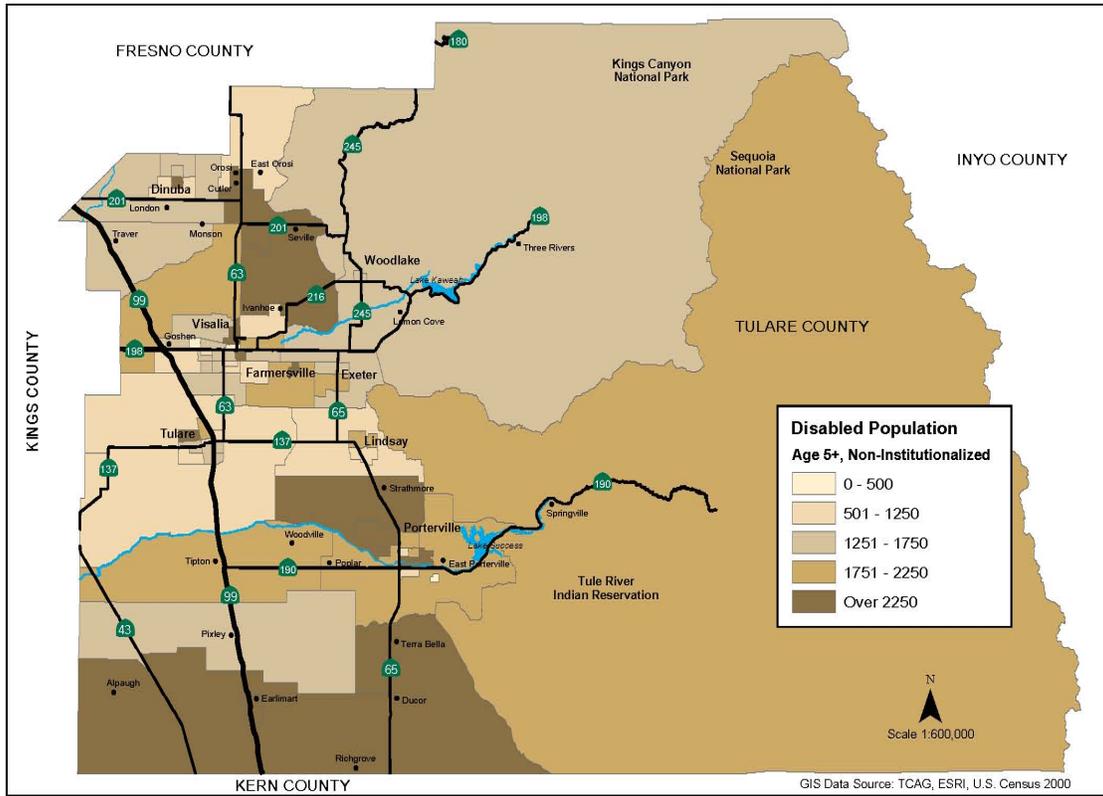
Census data indicates that 13% of the total population of Tulare County has some type of disability. The U.S. Census defines a disability as a significant limitation in sensory, physical, or mental functions, the ability to provide self-care, or the ability to function outside of one's home. In 2000, 66% of this population was comprised of working-age adults between the ages of 16 and 64, with almost 50% (over 20,000 people) in the work force. While the 2000 Census does not indicate the mobility requirements of individuals reporting disabilities, the numbers alone indicate the need for specialized transportation services. Table 3 shows the employment status of the County's disabled population.

Table 3 – Disabled Population and Employment Status (2000)

Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population of Tulare County	
Population 21 to 64 years of age	187,796
With a disability	45,909
Percent employed	49.5%
No Disability	141,887
Percent employed	67.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The following map shows the concentrations of persons with disabilities in the County (Figure 5 – Disabled Population by Census Tract). Figure 5 indicates that much of the County's disabled population lives in the southern portions of the County.



	DISABLED POPULATION BY CENSUS TRACT <small>NOTE: Very few people reside in the foothill/mountainous areas east of Three Rivers and Springville.</small>	Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan <i>Figure 5</i>	07-1090

Low-Income Population

Over 23% of Tulare County’s population lives below the poverty level according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This figure is 10% higher than the national average. The FTA defines low-income individuals as those individuals who earn at or below 150% of the poverty level. The U.S. Census defines the poverty level as an annual income of \$17,463 for a family of four (2000 figure). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, over 30% of the County’s population is considered low-income.

Table 4 – Economic Indicators

	Tulare County	California
Unemployment rate	8.6%	4.9%
Low-Income population	Approx. 33%	Approx. 21%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

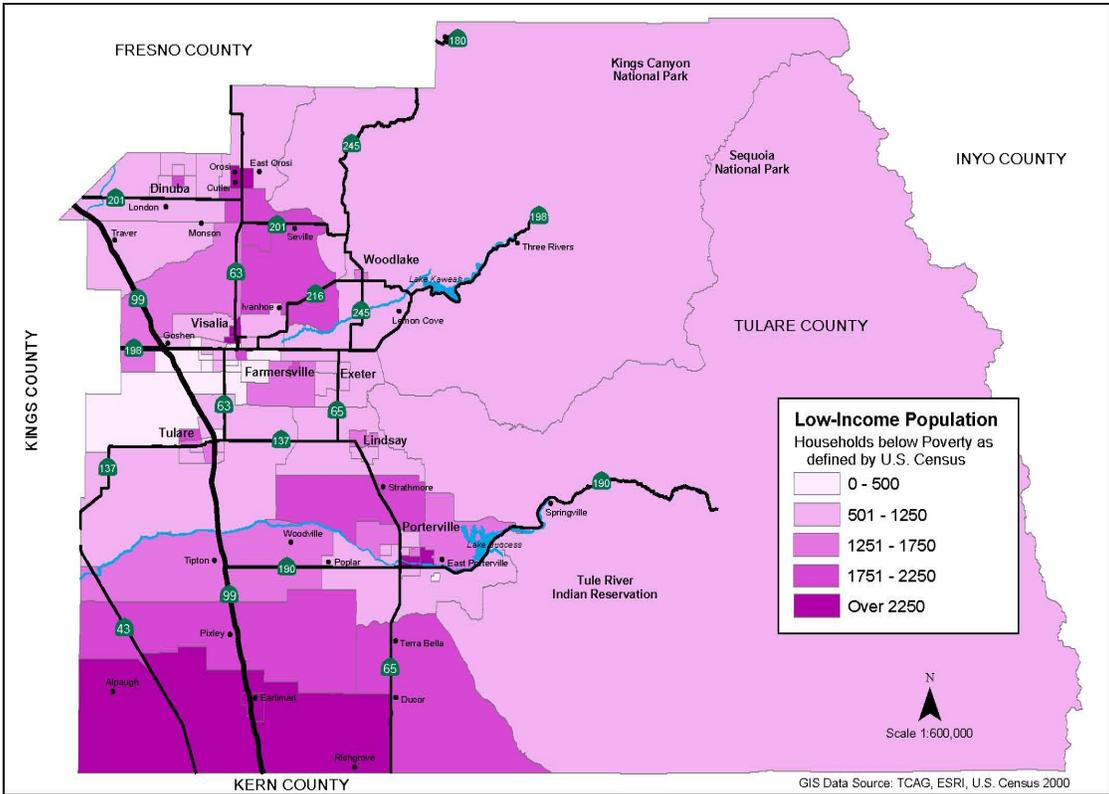
Figure 5 shows the concentrations of low-income individuals in the County (Figure 6 – Low-Income Population by Census Tract). Figure 6 indicates that many of the County’s low-income families reside in unincorporated areas.

Along with age and mobility, income and access to vehicles are key population characteristics to explore when determining transit-dependent populations within an area. These characteristics produce physical, financial, legal, and self-imposed limitations which generally preclude individuals from driving, leaving public transportation as a viable and necessary mode of transportation. Many low-income individuals are without a car (or at least a reliable car) to get them to and from jobs and or interviews, and without the financial means to change these cyclic circumstances. Approximately 8% of households in Tulare County do not have a vehicle available to them (see Table 4 below). Figure 7 depicts households without access to a vehicle within Tulare County (Figure 7 – Vehicle Access by Census Tract).

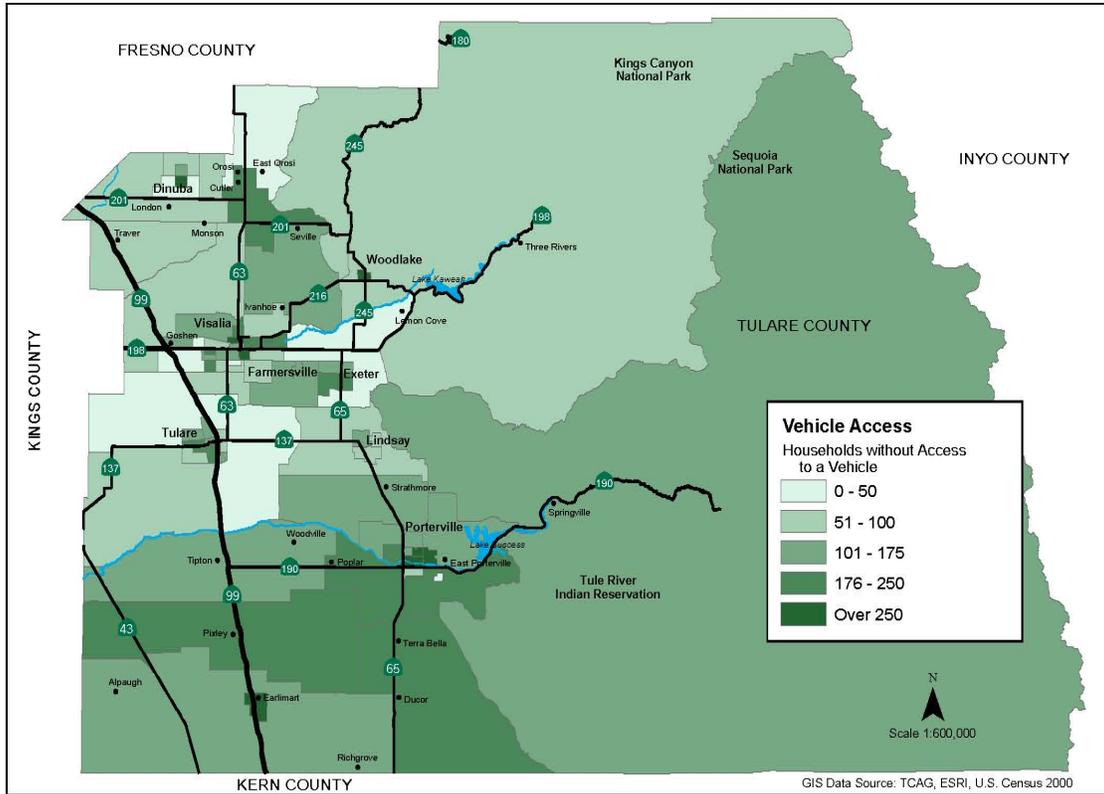
Table 5 – Households without a Vehicle (2005)

Tulare County	
Total Households	119,621
Households without a vehicle	9,808
Percent of Households without a vehicle	8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



	LOW-INCOME POPULATION BY CENSUS TRACT NOTE: Very few people reside in the foothill/mountainous areas east of Three Rivers and Springville.	Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan Figure 6	07-1050



	VEHICLE ACCESS BY CENSUS TRACT NOTE: Very few people reside in the foothill/mountainous areas east of Three Rivers and Springville.	Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan <i>Figure 7</i>	07-1050

III. EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The Tulare County area offers various resources to meet the transportation needs of its citizens, including general public transit (both fixed route and demand-response), nonprofit transit services that provide service to special needs populations, and private transportation providers, such as local taxi services and interregional bus service (Orange Belt Stages and Greyhound). In general, public transit service areas are delineated as follows: fixed routes in the populated urban areas, and demand-response (dial-a-ride) in rural areas. Social (human) service transportation is provided by local transit, demand-response operators, and special city/county programs for senior citizens, mental health organizations and disabled citizens programs.

Inventory Methodology

The methodology employed to gather information on current transportation resources was the dissemination of informational surveys to agencies that provide or purchase public transit or human services transportation within Tulare County. Surveys were developed based on the existing survey used in the *2001 Tulare County Social Service Transportation Inventory and Action Plan* and examples of other coordination surveys administered around the country. In 2007 for the preparation of the Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan, two distinct surveys were developed to generate specific information from both transportation providers and transportation purchasers.

Transportation Providers – Agencies whose primary mission is the provision of transportation using federal and/or state resources.

Transportation Purchasers – Agencies whose ancillary mission is the provision of transportation; agencies who purchase transportation for their clients.

As stated previously, the transportation provider list developed by TCAG and TPG Consulting for the *2001 Tulare County Social Service Transportation Inventory and Action Plan* was used as the basis for survey agency identification. That list was updated to reflect new transit and human services in Tulare County. One hundred forty-five agencies/organizations were identified by the project team. Surveyed agencies/organizations included both public and private transportation providers and human-service agencies.

Survey Summaries

Following is a brief summary of each survey received. These summaries were compiled from information gathered from the inventory surveys, and are thus not totally inclusive of all transportation providers in the County. Table 6 provides an overview of the organizations that participated in the inventory and the populations that they represent.

Transportation Providers

The **City of Dinuba** provides service to residents of Dinuba and the adjacent area through two flex routes (Dial a Ride and Fixed Route), Jolly Trolley and Dinuba Connection. The fixed route is provided by DART. There are approximately six vehicles owned by the City. In 2008/09 the ridership on the flex routes was approximately 37,146

and the demand response was 5,751. The Jolly Trolley served 64,455 people and Dinuba Connection served 7,437 people during fiscal year 2008/09. An adult must accompany children under the age of 5 or younger who wish to ride. Services are contracted out to MV Transportation. Revenues generated for transit in Dinuba come from Federal FTA 5311 funds, State STAF funds (through December 2010), Local LTF funds, Measure R, ticket revenue, and other income.

The **City of Porterville** provides local transit services to residents of Porterville and outlying areas. In FY 08/09, approximately 555,630 passengers used the fixed route service and 20,283 passengers used the dial a ride service. These figures include children, seniors, persons with disabilities and persons in wheelchairs. The City's demand-response system is aimed to service for seniors and persons with disabilities, but is open to all members of the public. Children under the age of 7 must be accompanied by an adult when using the fixed route service. Both services operate Monday through Saturday. The City owns 13 vehicles (16 to 28 passengers) with 8 vehicles in the active fleet and 5 in the back-up fleet, including a 2006 Classic American Trolley used for special seasonal events. All of the buses are wheelchair accessible. The operation of the service is contracted out to Sierra Management. Yearly expenditures total \$4,587,000 (including capital expenses). Revenues are generated through Federal FTA 5307 funds, State STAF funds, Local LTF funds, fare-box revenue, Measure R and other income.

The **City of Tulare** offers two methods of transportation for the disabled, seniors, and the general public. The Tulare InterModal Express (TIME) fixed route service operates within the developed areas of Tulare as well as to and from Visalia. The City also offers a dial-a-ride service within the City limits. Service is provided Monday through Saturday. The fixed route service provided approximately 326,497 rides in 2008/09. Children under the age of 5 should be accompanied by an adult, and ADA certification is required for reduced disabled fares. The service fleet consists of 8 buses, and 2-4 vehicles for the demand response service, depending on demand, all of which are ADA compliant, including wheelchair lifts and securement system to better serve passengers who are physically challenged. The fleet runs on CNG, LNG and gasoline. The operations and maintenance of the service are contracted out to MV Transportation. Revenues for TIME totaled \$1,610,000 in local funding, \$113,000 in State funding, and \$266,000 in Federal funding. Expenditures for the same year totaled \$2,646,000. Other funding sources include Measure R, Fare Box revenues, and state and federal grants.

The **City of Visalia** provides fixed route, demand-response, and downtown circulation trolley transportation services to residents within the city limits of Visalia, Goshen, Farmersville, and Exeter. Service is provided seven days a week to approximately 1,500,000 passengers each year. The demand-response service gives priority to ADA clients who have special certification that states they are unable to use the fixed route service. The Visalia Transit station was expanded in 2004, and again in 2010. The Visalia City Coach fleet consists of 30 buses, 6 demand-response vehicles, and 4 trolleys, which travel a total of 100,364 miles each month. All vehicles are ADA compliant. They use either CNG, gasoline or diesel fuel. The City contracts with MV Transportation to operate and service their vehicles. All services are run out of the City's new Operations and Maintenance Facility. Annual operating costs total \$4,040,000 and capital costs total \$8,000,000. The city receives approximately \$5,000,000 in Federal funding and \$3,100,000 in local funding annually, among other sources.

The **City of Woodlake** has been providing demand-response service to its residents for 12 years. The service is available Monday through Friday from 7am to 3:30pm. One full-time driver operates 1 bus that is wheelchair accessible. The bus travels approximately 1,300 miles per month. Annual expenditures include \$109,900 in operating costs and \$67,500 in capital costs. Annual funding includes \$54,000 from Federal funds, \$109,900 in State funds, and \$13,500 in local funding.

The **Porterville Sheltered Workshop** provides transportation for the developmentally disabled residents of Tulare County. Approximately 360,000 clients are transported each year to and from client services, which include medical appointments and school/educational training programs. The Sheltered Workshop assists seniors, and persons with mental and/or physical disabilities. All clients must be referred through the Central Valley Regional Center. Their 26 buses and 16 vans run on gasoline and diesel fuel, and are all wheelchair accessible. They employ 18 full-time drivers, 8 part-time drivers, 1 part-time dispatcher and 2 clerical staff. Expenditures, including mileage reimbursements, operating costs, administrative costs, and capital costs total \$1,653,000 annually. Porterville Sheltered Workshop receives \$1,676,000 annually in State and other funding.

Tulare County Area Transit (TCaT) contracts with MV Transportation to provide services countywide through both fixed route and demand-response services. TCaT provides transit service Monday through Saturday and two routes that operate twice a week. Approximately 105,000 passengers use TCaT services annually. Eight (8) buses running on a fixed route and one local dial a ride, all of which are ADA compliant and travel a total of 38,000 miles monthly on a fixed route. Annual expenditures include \$660,000 in contractor costs, \$1,200,000 in operating costs, \$85,000 in administrative costs, and \$360,000 in capital costs. TCaT receives approximately \$260,000 in Federal funds, \$85,000 in State funds, and \$500,000 through local funding each year.

Transportation Purchasers

The **Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)** provides health and human services to Tulare County residents. They provide transportation reimbursement to eligible clients. In Dinuba they also operate the Call 4 Cars program, which transports clients using County vehicles. Clients include prenatal, TB and HIV residents. Clients must participate in an approved HHSA activity to qualify for transportation benefits. HHSA receives \$60,000 in Federal, State and local funding annually.

The **Tulare County HHSA – Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging (KTAAA)** is a Tulare County HHSA program designed to empower seniors. KTAAA purchases public transportation services for their clients, and provides transportation reimbursements. Transportation is provided to seniors, and volunteers that work with seniors, to attend medical appointments and KTAAA sponsored events. Clients must participate in an eligible activity, be 55 years of age or older, or in some cases, have a physical disability to qualify for transportation services. KTAAA spends approximately \$5,000 annually for mileage reimbursements and tokens/passes, which is paid for through Federal funds.

The **Tulare County HHSA – Department of Mental Health** provides mental health services for Tulare County residents. They purchase transportation services for their clients and encourage them to use public transportation. Clients must participate in an approved activity at one of the agency's five clinics to be eligible for transportation assistance. Clinics are located in Dinuba, Tulare, Visalia and Porterville.

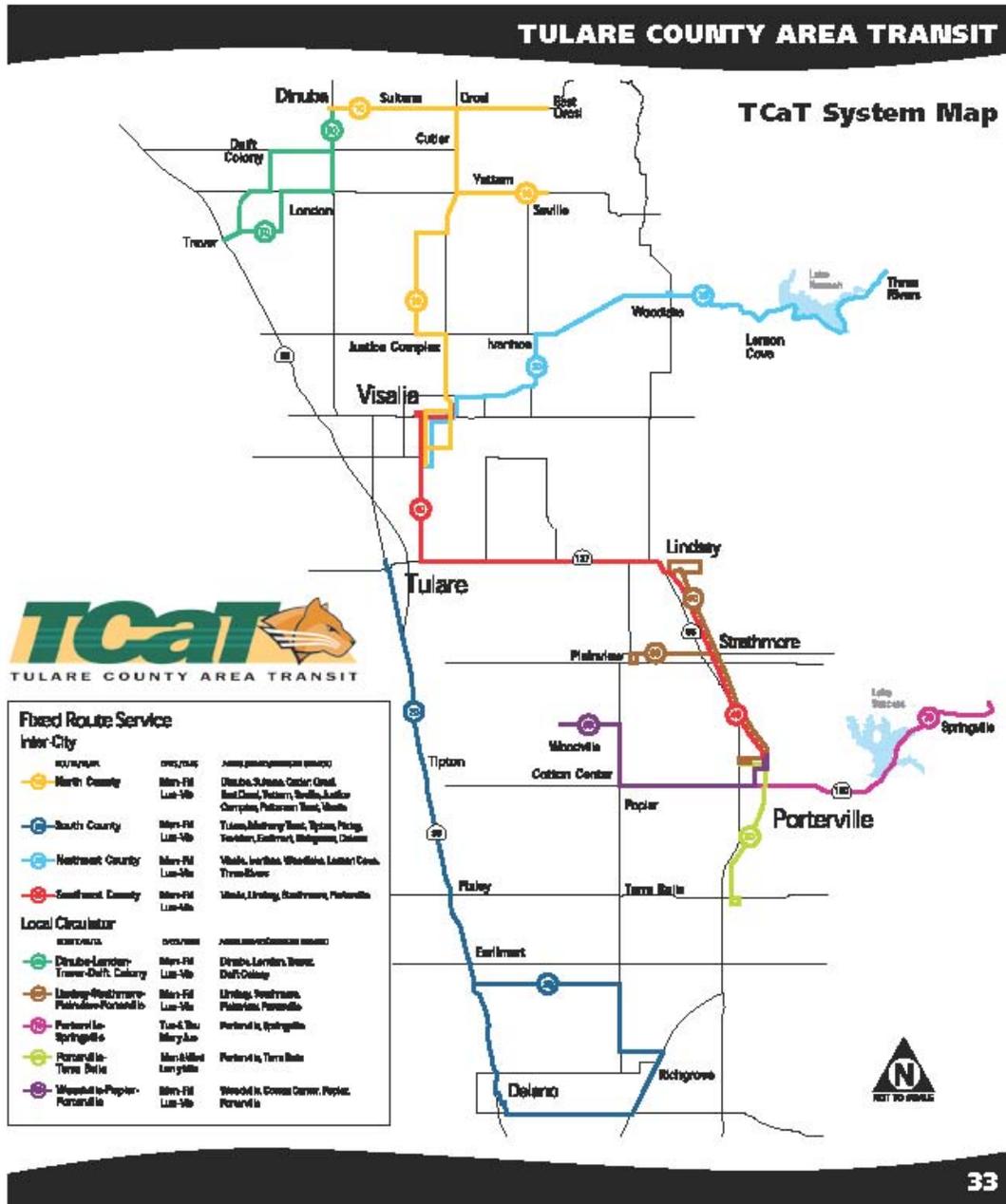
The **Tulare County HHSA – TulareWORKS** provides services for CalWORKS participants within Tulare County. Transportation reimbursement is provided to low-income, the homeless, youth, and persons with disabilities to access services designed to help support themselves and their health care needs. Clients must participate in approved activities to be eligible for reimbursements. TulareWORKS spends approximately \$11,436 annually on bus tokens and passes.

Table 6 – Respondents and Eligible Populations

Respondent	Type of Transportation Service	Area Served	Seniors	Disabled	Low-Income	General Public
City of Dinuba	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
City of Porterville	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
City of Tulare	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
City of Visalia	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
City of Woodlake	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	X
Porterville Sheltered Workshop	Provider	Citywide	X	X	X	
Tulare County Area Transit	Provider	Countywide	X	X	X	X
Tulare County HHSA	Purchaser	Countywide	X		X	
Tulare County HHSA – Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging	Purchaser	Kings and Tulare Counties	X	X	X	
Tulare County HHSA – Dept. of Mental Health	Purchaser	Countywide	X	X	X	
Tulare County HHSA – Tulare WORKS	Purchaser	Countywide	X	X	X	

System Maps

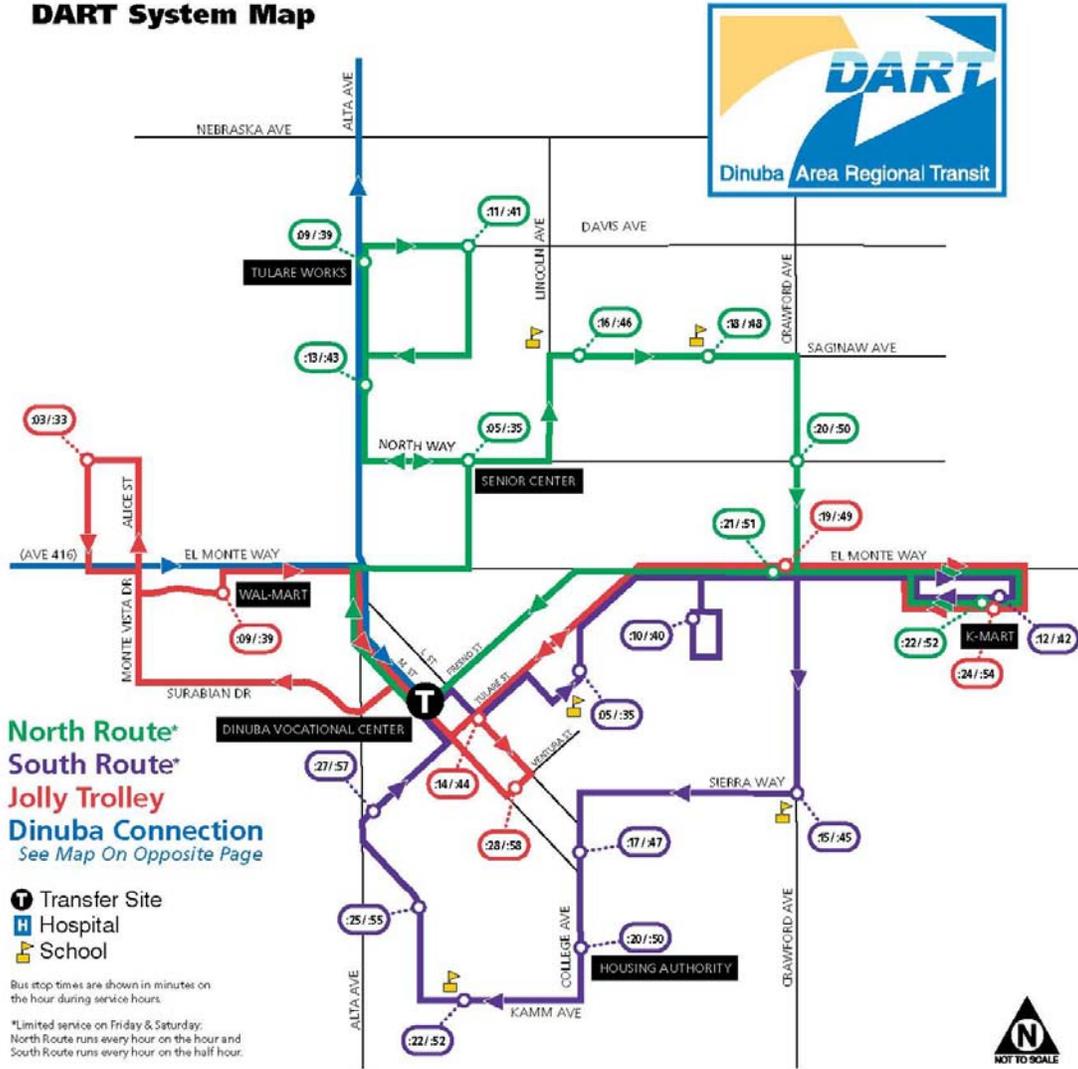
The following maps illustrate the areas within Tulare County served by existing public transportation providers. City operated local public transit service areas are identified geographically, and individual fixed route system maps are also provided. Kings Area Rural Transit (KART) provides fixed route service into Visalia from Kings County. A map of this route is also included. A comparison of senior, disabled and low-income population concentrations to current service coverage was used to help identify the transportation needs of these sensitive populations.



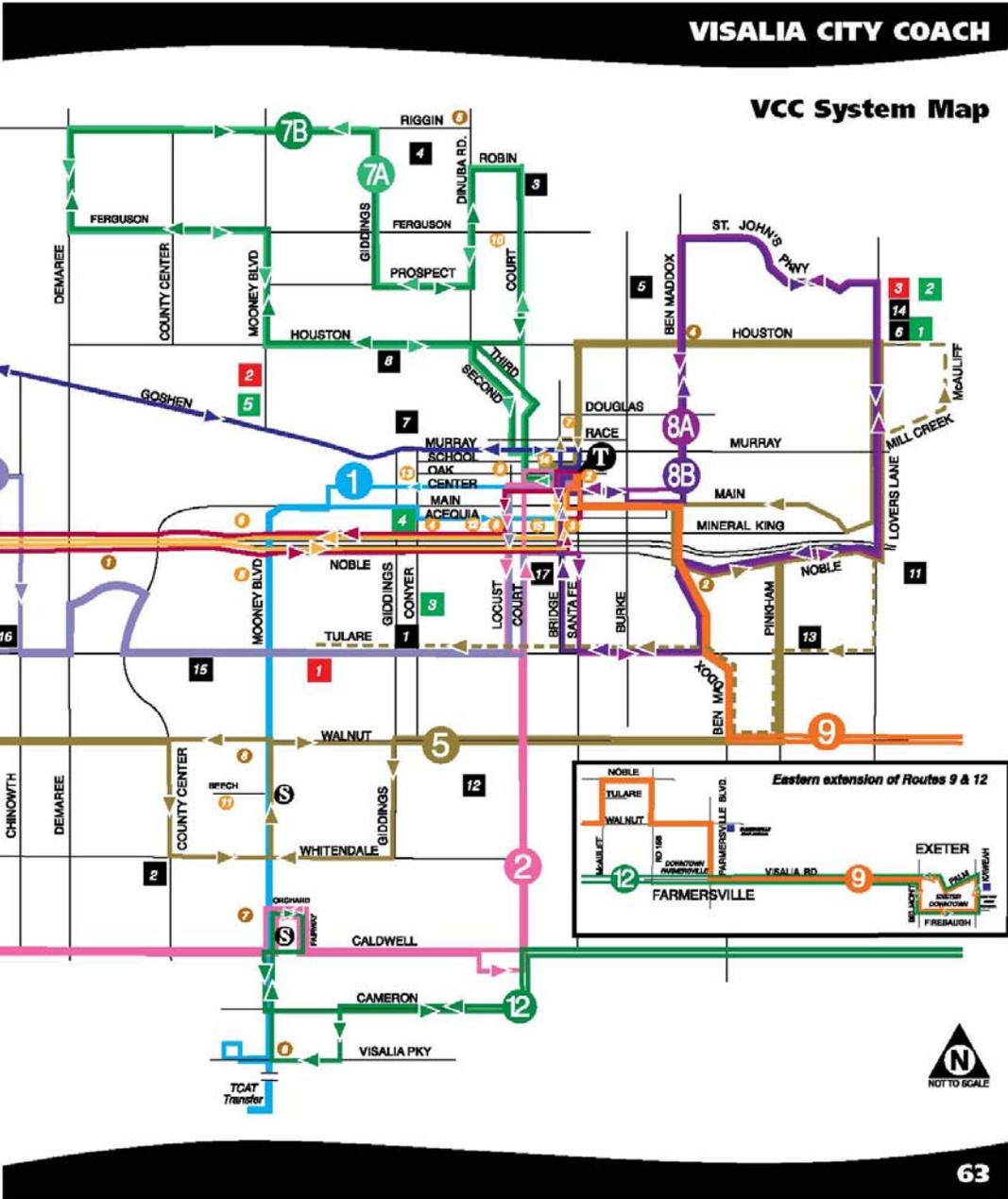
Source: January 2010 Tulare County Transit Guide

DINUBA AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT

DART System Map



Source: January 2010 Tulare County Transit Guide



Source: January 2010 Tulare County Transit Guide

IV. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholder involvement is critical to the successful coordination of transportation services. Therefore, early project efforts focused on identifying, educating, and garnering input from affected public transportation service providers, transportation stakeholders, community leaders, non-profit human services agencies, health providers, large employers, and users of transportation. Participation by representatives of the Coordinated Plan's targeted populations, including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes was encouraged through a series of community meetings and transportation surveys.

Stakeholder Meetings

TCAG holds transit forums quarterly where transit providers in the county gather to discuss and exchange information with each other and TCAG on transit happenings and opportunities. Stakeholder meetings and where information for this Plan is located in Appendix G of the 2011 Tulare County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The input that was collected at these meetings was used in both the RTP and this Plan.

Tulare County Transportation Needs

As a part of the 2011 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update, a survey regarding transportation issues in Tulare County was distributed at the Tulare County Fair in September of 2009. A total of 417 people filled out at least a portion of the survey. The survey was available to all fair goers over the age of 16 in both English and Spanish.

Respondents' ages were broken into age categories which consisted of 46% 26-45 year olds, 29% of 16-25 year olds, 22% of 46-65 year olds, and 3% of survey takers were 66+ years of age. The majority of survey takers were female (62%). The race/ethnicity of those who responded, 46% were Caucasian and 43% were Hispanic, and the other 11% consisted of Other, Native American, Asian, and African American – which generally make up the County's population.

Various aspects of the transportation system were listed and rated from very unsatisfied to very satisfied with a scale from 1 to 4. Road maintenance was rated the most poorly (2.24) while bridge safety was rated the highest (2.81). The overall opinion of the transportation system was rated at 2.81. Satisfaction with public transit facilities was rated at 2.75 while public transit services were rated at 2.80 (second highest).

The survey showed that some of the most important transit projects included road maintenance, road safety, and buses. The survey results showed that 14% of the County's population commuted to school or work using the bus.

In response to the question "To what extent would changes to the bus system affect how much you drive?" the most common responses were "I would take the bus to work if it came more often" and "I would take the bus if there were a stop closer to my house". Out of the people who responded to this section over 25% said they would never take the bus.

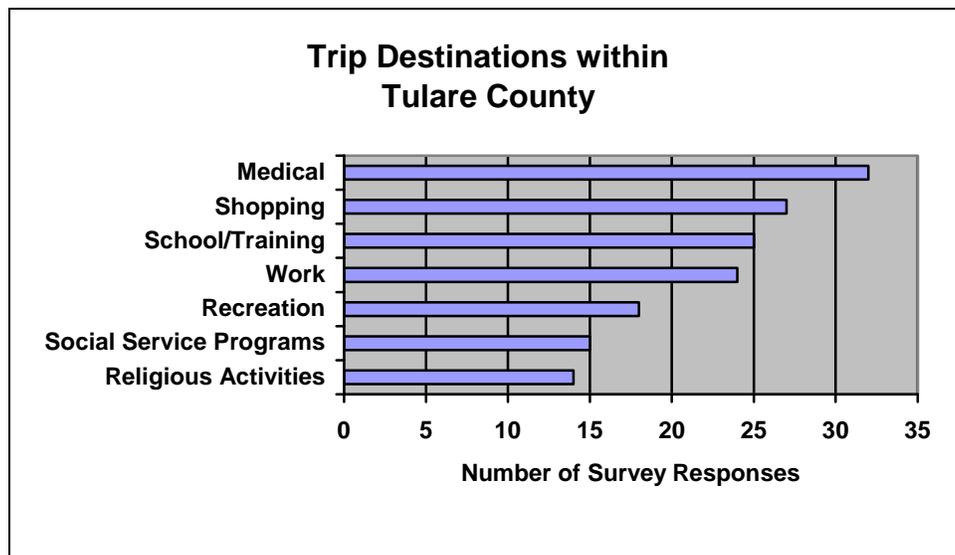
V. TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND GAPS

Transportation needs and gaps in Tulare County were developed through a careful geographic analysis of target populations in relation to existing services, discussions with transportation service providers and purchasers, and public input generated through community meetings. The needs identified in this chapter draw from data included in previous chapters of this document.

Origins, Destinations and Travel Patterns

While many trips involving seniors and persons with disabilities originate from their homes (private residence or care facility), almost all who are able to travel without special assistance enjoy the freedom of using fixed route service. Medical trips involving transportation between facilities require accessible door-to-door service.

Survey responses indicate that the majority of trips within Tulare County are to destinations within the urban areas, including medical facilities, shopping centers, school and training programs, and work or job related activities. Other destinations include agency programs, recreational outings, and religious activities. Survey responses related to travel destinations are presented in the following graph.



Source: 2007 Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan

Transportation Needs

Among the three groups targeted in the planning process (seniors, disabled, and low-income), their respective transportation needs were essentially identical. Despite the provision of accessible public and non-profit transportation services, the need exists for increased levels of service. Identified needs emerged in the following main areas related to both limited mobility and service issues:

1. Spatial Gaps
2. Temporal Gaps

3. Transportation Costs
4. Service Awareness

Spatial Gaps

The most common transportation need expressed by the stakeholders involved in the development of this Coordinated Plan, was the need for more commuter-oriented transportation service to and from outlying County areas into the four largest cities (Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare, Visalia). Typically, operational costs limit the scope of public transit agencies to service within the more densely populated urban areas, leaving people in outlying rural communities little or no access to transit services. While TCaT currently provides both fixed route and demand-response service between Tulare County cities and communities, there was an expressed need for additional service in all rural areas of the County, to ensure that rural residents have adequate access to services within the urban areas. Areas with noted gaps in service include the North County areas of London, Traver, Monson and Seville, Central County areas of Poplar, Woodville, Springville and Tipton, and the South County areas of Alpaugh, Richgrove and Terra Bella.

Specific responses included the need for additional/expanded routes in the rural areas to provide more access to jobs and training in the urban areas of the County, and to provide youth and adults access to services and recreational activities not available in the rural areas. One Social Service agency expressed the direct need for service between Alpaugh and their client service programs in Porterville. There is currently no bus system serving the community of Alpaugh.

Temporal Gaps

As noted in the 2007 Coordinated Transportation Plan, extended hours for transit service, and weekend service were a necessity in the community. Transit agencies including Dinuba, Porterville, Tulare County Area Transit, Tulare Intermodal Express, and Visalia Transit offer fixed route service on Saturdays with some agencies offering weekday service as late as 9:00 p.m. Visalia Transit offers Sunday service.

Tulare County Transit services shall continue to attempt to provide extended service and hours for their riders so long as the farebox ratio is maintained as required by the Federal Transit Administration.

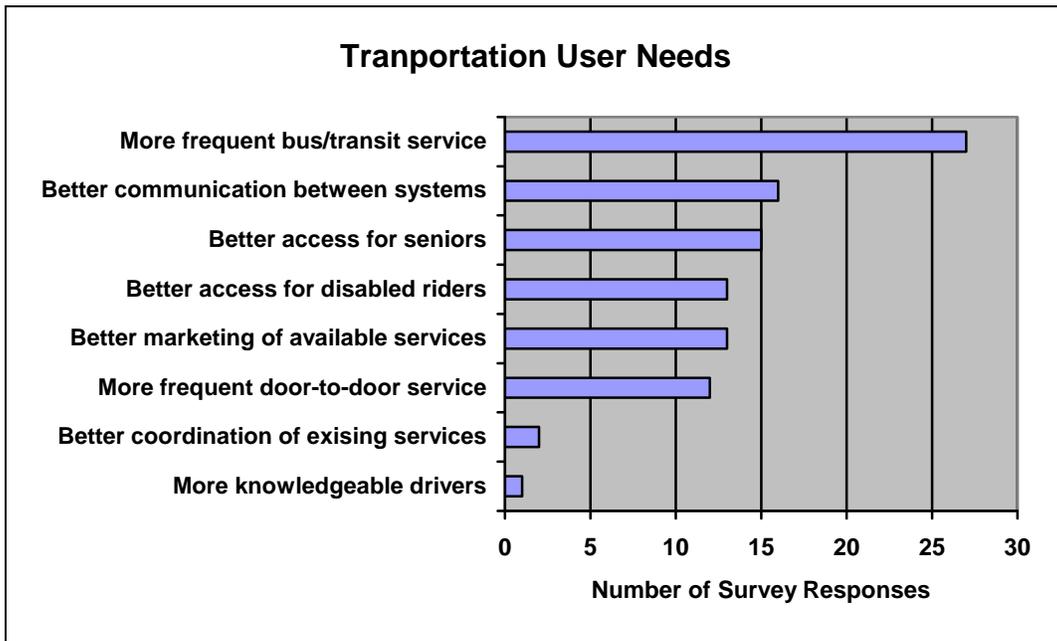
Transportation Costs

Transportation costs can be a financial burden for individuals living on a fixed income, especially if they need to purchase multiple fares for children or other family members. Public transit providers echoed the concern about limiting cost factors, but noted that State farebox ratio requirements limit their ability to provide lower fares. The lack of affordable transportation between the urban and rural areas of the County was perceived as one of the greatest transportation barriers for the senior, low-income, and disabled populations of Tulare County in the 2007 Coordinated Transportation Plan. Tulare County in collaboration with TCAG started the T-Pass which is a month long unlimited pass accepted on all fixed transit systems in the county.

Service Awareness

In 2009 TCAG redesigned the Tulare County Transit Guide. The guide was designed in a more compact, easy to read booklet. Each transit services hours, fares, schedules, and information on the Greenline were provided in both English and Spanish. The Greenline is a toll-free Countywide transit information system that was established in 2009 making riding transit in Tulare County user-friendly. With travel training and passenger education being noted high priority need in the past, Greenline in conjunction with TCAG and TCaT did a Countywide outreach effort to provide transit information and resources in 2009/10. The outreach efforts attempted to make passengers more aware of the transportation resources available to them.

TCAG continues to provide information on all Tulare county transit services and conducts the annual unmet transit needs to receive input on how Tulare County transit services can be improved.



Source: 2007 Tulare County Coordinated Transportation Plan

VI. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

Based on discussions with identified Tulare County transportation stakeholders, the project team developed strategies to address the region's transportation problems and prioritized these strategies for implementation of the Coordinated Plan. The strategies and priorities presented are intended to address the needs of the County's senior, disabled, and low-income populations using Section 5310, JARC, or New Freedom funding.

Strategies for Improved Service and Coordination

The following strategies were developed to guide the development of transportation projects related to the needs of seniors, the disabled and low-income individuals within Tulare County. Proposed projects will need to address at least one of these strategies to be considered for FTA funding under the Section 5310, 5316, or 5317 programs.

Strategies were prioritized based on the professional experience of the project team and transportation providers regarding feasibility of implementation. Available resources and perceived needs were taken into account. Table 7 (on the following page) indicates the priority assigned to each strategy.

Spatial Gaps

Strategy 1: Provide rural commuter-oriented transportation service to and from outlying County areas into the urban areas – through new service, additional service/increased frequency, and/or expansion of service area.

Strategy 2: Provide continued or improved mobility services designed specifically for the disabled (i.e. wheelchair routes).

Strategy 3: Expand or enhance service within the Exeter, Farmersville, Tulare, Visalia metroplex.

Temporal Gaps

Strategy 4: Extend service hours for rural commuter-oriented transportation service to and from outlying County areas into the urban areas – through extension of morning, evening, and/or weekend service.

Transportation Costs

Strategy 5: Develop a fare reduction program where possible to reduce fares for seniors, individuals with a handicap, and/or low-income individuals – through subsidies and/or pass systems.

Service Awareness

Strategy 6: Implement a transit training and awareness program to assist clients in determining their transit needs and to help them build their transit trips – including mobility training for agency personnel.

Strategy 7: Develop user-friendly information systems that illustrate available services and trip options, including guides/brochures, kiosks, automated routing services, etc.

Table 7 – Implementation Priorities

Strategy	Priority Level
Strategy 1	High
Strategy 2	High
Strategy 3	Medium
Strategy 4	High
Strategy 5	Medium
Strategy 6	Medium
Strategy 7	Medium

Federal Funding Match Sources

The local share of selected coordination projects may be derived from other Federal transportation programs other than those provided by the DOT. Potential program sources include employment training, aging, community services, and vocational rehabilitation services. CCAM has developed a list of programs provided by Federal transportation programs. This list is included as Appendix B, and describes what transportation expenses are broadly eligible for funding under each Federal program.

VII NEXT STEPS

Funding Selection Process

Projects funded under the Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom programs are awarded through a competitive selection process. TCAG, as the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency scores projects from Tulare County and sends a scored list of projects on to Caltrans. Section 5310 projects are scored utilizing the California Transportation Commission's (CTC) adopted project-scoring criteria. Final selection is conducted by a Caltrans statewide review committee and a final statewide-prioritized list is adopted by the CTC.

All proposed projects/applications submitted to TCAG for Section 5310, 5316, or 5317 funding, must be derived from the strategies developed within this Coordinated Plan.

Coordinated Plan Updates

For transportation coordination efforts to be successful they must respond to change. FTA guidance states that "At a minimum, the coordinated plan should follow the update cycles for metropolitan transportation plans (i.e., four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and five years in air quality attainment areas)." The Coordinated Plan process for Tulare County has been designed to be reviewed and updated at least once every four years to respond to changes in requirements and perceptions. This four year cycle will align Coordinated Plan updates with updates to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The next update will occur in 2015.