Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study

Implementation Plan

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mta

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) engaged HDR Engineering, Inc. to analyze the commute travel needs of residents of Mendocino County's inland communities located in the Inland Area and develop a commute service plan to effectively and efficiently meet these needs. Communities included in the study scope are Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Anderson Valley, Talmage, Laytonville, Covelo, Ukiah, and Willits. The study focuses on intra county travel between Inland Area communities as well as regional travel to neighboring Sonoma and Lake Counties.

The key theme objectives of the Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study were to:

1. Assess and develop commute strategies to complement existing MTA fixed route and demand response services.
2. Identify travel alternatives to meet needs that regular MTA services cannot effectively or efficiently serve.

The study was initiated in 2009 in response to the current, approved Mendocino Transit Short Range Transportation Development Plan (SRTDP) recommendation to:

> "Recommendation 23: Establish a Mobility Manger Function within MTA."

The purpose of the proposed MTA Mobility Manager was to develop and coordinate travel alternatives to meet the travel needs of Mendocino County's dispersed population that cannot be effectively or efficiently served by regular transit services. Example markets identified in the SRTDP included Leggett and Round Valley Indian Reservation residents, farm workers, hotel shift workers along the Mendocino Coast, Brooktrails residents and commuters working at dispersed work sites around Santa Rosa and Petaluma. Potential travel alternatives identified in the SRTDP included volunteer driver programs, employee sponsored and/or operated shuttles, social service agency transportation services, and vanpools or lifeline transit services. The MTA Mobility Manager was to implement and coordinate a range of travel alternatives in conjunction with the delivery of MTA's fixed route and demand response services.

MTA hired a **Mobility Management Coordinator** and launched the implementation of the Mendocino Farmworkers Transportation Program (MFTP) in the spring of 2010. The Mobility Management Coordinator will manage the implementation and coordinate the ongoing delivery of the travel alternatives identified in this document and approved for implementation by the MTA Board of Directors.

The development and coordination of travel alternatives by MTA's Mobility Management Coordinator is critical to ensure that the travel alternatives complement MTA's regular transit services and do not compete with MTA's services for riders. It is critical to follow a "transit first" philosophy in the delivery of a "family" of travel services to Mendocino's population. That is, the Mobility Management Coordinator will steer those seeking travel alternatives to available transit services (where appropriate to the needs) before developing travel alternatives.

1.2 MENDOCINO COUNTY COMMUTE TRANSPORTATION STUDY APPROACH

The Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study scope included the review of existing transportation alternatives and MTA services within the County, commute travel demand forecasting and analysis, the identification of travel needs through community outreach, the development of potential service strategies to meet the identified needs, the development of a conceptual service plan, and the development of a detailed Mendocino County Commute Transportation Implementation Plan.

Findings from the travel demand forecasts and analysis were documented in the Task 4 Technical Memorandum: Travel Demand Forecasts (February 2010). The findings provided a quantified foundation for the consultant team in the development of service strategies. The demand forecasts clearly illustrated where there was and was not sufficient demand for MTA's fixed route services. It also indicated where alternative commute services such as carpools, vanpools, community shuttles, taxi voucher programs, taxi jitney services, and volunteer driver reimbursement programs might be more appropriate for dispersed trip origins and destination pairs, and in areas where the density of travel demand was not sufficient to support traditional public transit.

The Task 3 Technical Memorandum: Community Outreach Summary (April 2010) provided a summary of the Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study community outreach process and findings. Outreach findings provide the human or qualitative expression of commute needs in the Inland Area that are not or cannot be efficiently and effectively served by MTA's fixed route or demand response services. While demand forecasts can indicate service capacity needs, outreach tells planners the kind of travel to be served and the type of service needed. Task 3 findings are critical to the understanding of travel needs and to the development of alternative service strategies that will effectively mix with MTA's other transit services to meet the travel needs of Inland Area residents. Community outreach included:

- On-board passenger survey (346 completed questionnaires)
- On-line household survey (90 completed questionnaires)
- Mendocino Community College (MCC) Outreach including an information booth drop-in and a presentation to the Associated Students of Mendocino College (ASMC).
- Community meetings in Laytonville (four participants) and Covelo (eight participants).

- Stakeholder interviews with major employers, medical service providers, social service agencies, the Ukiah Chamber of Commerce, a Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) representative, and MTA management staff.

A conceptual service strategy was developed from the analysis of the demand forecasting and community outreach findings. The conceptual strategies were reviewed with MTA management in April 2010, prior to the development of the Mendocino County Commute Transportation Implementation Plan.

1.3 MENDOCINO COUNTY COMMUTE TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN REPORT ORGANIZATION

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the travel needs and demand findings. Chapter 3 provides a summary of vehicle types appropriate to the proposed travel alternatives. Chapter 4 details the *Action Plan* for the phased implementation of the proposed travel alternative strategies. Chapter 4 identifies potential applications as well as organizational details (roles and responsibilities, costs and potential funding, and an implementation timeline.

2.0 TRAVEL NEEDS AND DEMAND

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the findings from the Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study Community Outreach (Task 3) and the Demand Analysis (Task 4).

2.1 TRAVEL NEEDS

Inland Area commute travel needs were determined through community outreach including an on-board passenger survey conducted on MTA's fixed routes operated in the Inland Area, a more general household travel survey available on-line (MTA website) and distributed at the Mendocino Community College information booth, community meetings held in Laytonville and Covelo, and stakeholder interviews (conducted in-person and by telephone). Feedback from the outreach placed a "human face" on travel needs – where, when, and why people need or choose to travel. The findings from each outreach element provided separate snapshots of commute travel needs within the Inland Area. The community outreach strategy and findings are documented in Task 3 Technical Memorandum: Community Outreach Summary (April 2010).

ON-BOARD PASSENGER SURVEY

The on-board survey questionnaire was designed by the consulting team with input from and approval by MTA management. A total of 500 surveys were distributed by MTA bus operators during the week of June 15th, 2009. A total of 346 completed surveys were returned by the deadline. Completed surveys were to be returned to bus operators by no later than July 17th, 2009.

Key findings included:

- Majority of the surveyed fixed route passengers live in Ukiah, within ¼ of a mile from an MTA bus stop.
- Route 9 Local is the most popular route.
- Majority of the surveyed passengers do not have to transfer; but of those that do, the majority transfer to Route 9 Local.
- Most have a regular destination less than ¼ of a mile from an MTA bus stop; however, a regular destination over one mile from an MTA bus stop followed right behind.
- Majority of passengers were using MTA to get to school.
- Most popular destination is to school in Ukiah (60% of those are to Mendocino College).
- Majority use MTA for regular commute trips two to five times per week, with five or more (5+) times per week following right behind.

- The majority of passengers do not have access to a private vehicle; of those that do, about half have one car per household.
- If MTA was not available, the majority would have been driven by someone else or not made the trip.
- MTA scheduling scored *very well* to *well* with most riders.
- Most riders are within the general range of 18 to 34-years old.
- Slightly more females use MTA than males.
- MTA fixed route transit meets those travel needs in Ukiah not met using a private vehicle.
- ***Additional alternatives are not needed for commute travel within Ukiah.***

ON-LINE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

An online household survey was developed in an effort to target a broader audience within Mendocino County and to supplement the data collected through targeted outreach (e.g., onboard surveys, stakeholder interviews, stakeholder meetings, etc.). The 20-question survey, utilizing the user-friendly Survey Monkey software, was available online between September 14, 2009 and November 21, 2009 through a link on MTA's home page. The link and surveys were also translated into Spanish. The survey and study were promoted through MTA's Website, discussions with stakeholders and community members, information booth at Mendocino College, and through press releases distributed to local media outlets. Respondents were offered the opportunity to be included in a prize drawing as incentive, two winners were selected for a Wii game and an iPod.

During the survey period, 90 respondents answered questions about demographics, travel purposes, and other general transportation questions. In analyzing the open-ended answers of the survey, irrelevant responses were not factored into the results; therefore the total percentages may not always equal 100 percent. It is also important to note that approximately half of the online survey responses were generated from Mendocino Community College students.

Based on the survey results, the key findings are as follows:

- More than half the respondents live in Ukiah, while the second largest concentration of respondents lives in Willits.
- Ukiah, followed by Willits, are the key communities for employment, medical care, education, and other regular travel. *Throughout the study, the common theme has been the need for improved connections between Ukiah and Willits.*
- Of those who commute to work, most (26 respondents or 65%) commute five days a week.

- Most work shifts generally begin before 9:00AM (26 or 65%) and end at or before 6:00PM (25 or 62.5%).
- The majority of respondents who commute to work (17 or 42.5%) travel more than six miles to work, 11 (or 27.5%) of those commuters travel more than 11 miles to work.
- Nearly half of respondents live and work in different communities.
- Despite the fact that nearly all respondents (95.6%) were of working-age (18-to-64-year-old), less than half the respondents (35 or 42.2%) commute to work. This is likely due to the fact that nearly half the respondents commute for education (42 or 49.4%).
- 90.4% of those who commute for education attend Mendocino Community College, and likely do not have an off-campus job or full- or part-time job.
- A small fraction (14 or 16.3%) of respondents travels for regular medical or therapy appointments; however, those who do travel for medical care tend to receive care in Ukiah (8 or 44.4%). Other locations include Willits, Lakeport, and Fort Bragg. Many travel less than six miles for care (5 or 27.8%) or more than six miles (5 or 27.8%). The majority of care is on a one day per week basis (7 or 38.9%) and time for care varies.
- Approximately one-third of respondents travel on a regular basis for other trip purposes. Of those traveling for other purposes, respondents travel equally (11 or 32.4%) one to two times per week or three to five or more times per week. Their main destination is Ukiah (15 or 44.1%) and 17.6% travel less than six miles while 38.2% travel more than 20 miles.
- Although 81.2% of respondents own one or more vehicles, 72 out of 83 respondents indicate their willingness to consider an alternative to driving their vehicles for regular travel. Most (83.8%) stated that MTA bus service would likely work best for their regular commute travel needs, many citing the cost efficiency of traveling by bus. Other options they would consider include carpooling (47.3%), vanpooling (27 %), or employer shuttles (16.2%).

Findings from the on-line household survey covered a broader range of commute travel needs than the on-board survey that focused on transit users. ***The findings also suggested a consideration of other commute alternatives for those trips that regular transit could not effectively serve.***

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Two public meetings were held in the communities of Laytonville and Covelo. These communities were selected because of the potential of Laytonville losing daily transit service and because of Covelo's isolation and lack of transit service. ***It is important to emphasize that the findings from the public meetings in Laytonville and Covelo have parallel implications or relevance for the smaller communities of Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Talmage and Hopland – especially for work, school, shopping and medical trip purposes.***

Approximately 30 stakeholders were invited to participate in the Laytonville focus group meeting that was held at Laytonville Healthy Start from 5:30PM to 7:00PM. Four members of the community participated, all of whom were well aware of the transportation issues facing Laytonville residents. In general, the feedback received indicates a strong need for service between Laytonville and Willits with connections to Ukiah. Commute transportation that would be most ideal for Laytonville residents would include driver reimbursement programs, especially for seniors, and a vanpool program. Specific feedback is detailed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Summary of Laytonville Stakeholder Meeting Feedback

Element	Input
Key Travel Needs (Reasons to Travel)	• School/training • Medical care • Social services • Shopping • Recreation/entertainment • Dining • Work

Key Destinations	• Ukiah
	  o School (Mendocino College)
	  o Training (Job Alliance)
	  o Work
	  o Dining
	  o Recreation/entertainment (movie theatre, library)
	  o Shopping (Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Food 4 Less, Canned Food Store)
	  o Social Services
	  o Medical Care
	
	• Willits
	  o School (Mendocino College Extension, charter school, adult school, night school)
	  o Training (Job Alliance)
	  o Work
	  o Dining
	  o Recreation/entertainment (skate park)
	  o Shopping (Safeway)
	  o Social Services
	  o Medical Care (basic care, MRIs, x-rays, family planning)
	
	• Santa Rosa
	  o Shopping (Costco)

Table 2.1: Summary of Laytonville Stakeholder Meeting Feedback (Continued)

Element	Input
Frequency of Travel	• School: 2-4 times per week (note: some high school seniors take one or two classes at Mendocino College but the days vary) • Work: 5 days per week • Dining: 3-4 times per week • Recreation/entertainment: 3-4 times per week (skate park), varies for entertainment • Shopping: major shopping 1 time per week, minor shopping 2 times per week, some shopping planned around the first of the month (pay day) • Social Services: varies • Medical Care: varies
Critical Travel Times	• Generally mid morning to late evening, although some go to Willits in the morning to drop their children off at school and then return to Laytonville, and then go back to Willits to pick the children up and then back to Laytonville.
Travel Mode	• Mostly by car • Teachers and parents carpool
Travel Barriers	• Money – limited income relative to high costs to own and operate a private vehicle • Weather – winter (snow and fog) • License restrictions – suspension of driver's licenses
Notes	• Because there is limited housing in Laytonville, teachers commute to the school in Laytonville. • Healthy Start is willing to help advertise and coordinate people for medical needs and medical services. • The elderly have difficulty getting around due to the lack of a car or lack of assistance; as a result, they do not get appropriate medical care or take care of other needs. The closest senior center is in Willits. • The VA has a bus that originates in Eureka and goes to San Francisco but does not stop in Laytonville, even though there are a number of veterans who live in Laytonville and Willits.

Approximately 20 stakeholders were invited to participate in the Covelo focus group meeting that was held at Covelo Fire Station from 2:00PM to 3:30PM. Eight members of the community participated, all of whom were well aware of the transportation issues facing Covelo residents. In general, the feedback received indicates a strong need for service between Covelo and Willits with connections to Ukiah. Specific feedback is detailed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Summary of Covelo Stakeholder Meeting Feedback

Element	Input
Key Travel Needs (Reasons to Travel)	• Medical care including dialysis treatment up to three (3) days per week. • Dental work for children – cannot anesthetize children at the Round Valley Health Center in Covelo • Some high school students travel outside Covelo for classes • Residents must travel outside Covelo for driver training and license testing • Employment • Social service programs and appointments
Key Destinations	• Ukiah – medical, employment, MCC classes, training, medical care including dialysis, social service programs, and shopping • Willits – medical, employment, high school, medical care and shopping
Frequency of Travel	• Employment – up to five (5) days per week (fewer days for part-time) • Education – up to five (5) days per week during school seasons or active semesters • Medical – dialysis can be up to three (3) days per week. Other treatment or appointments as required • Social service travel – depends on program requirements (number of days per week and duration of program, or appointment schedule
Critical Travel Times	• Weekday mornings and afternoons (standard commute hours)

Table 2.2: Summary of Covelo Stakeholder Meeting Feedback (Continued)

Element	Input
Travel Mode	• Covelo residents must travel by car – no public transportation service • Residents with cars drive themselves or drive others
Travel Barriers	• No transit service to/from Covelo • Money – to purchase and operate an automobile • Single vehicle households – vehicle not always available for all household members • Lack of driver's licenses • Distance from Willits • Highway driving conditions
Notes	• Covelo travel needs are typical of a small isolated rural community – residents generally need to travel to higher order centers such as Willits and Ukiah for a broader range of goods, services and activities. • Without public transportation service, residents are reliant on private vehicles (as driver or as a passenger) to travel beyond Covelo. • Private vehicles are not always available to all residents when they need to travel for non-discretionary trips such as medical appointments and treatment, MCC classes or social service programs. • Stakeholders suggested carpools or vanpools for regular commute trips, community shuttle for medical appointments, shopping etc., or a volunteer driver reimbursement program for non-commute trips into Willits or Ukiah.

Because of small populations, regular transit cannot efficiently meet commute travel needs in smaller communities like Laytonville, Covelo, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Talmage, and Hopland. Other alternatives are needed to meet these needs.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

At the onset of the study 28 stakeholders were identified as potential interviewees, including community leaders, large employers, tribal groups, schools, and social services. Eleven stakeholders were selected for interviews based on their representation and relevance to the study's focus of commute travel needs for work, school, training, or medical care. The purpose of the interviews was to gather data on travel needs and issues both within and beyond the Inland Area. A total of 10 interviews (not including those conducted with MTA management) were conducted between October 20, 2009 and November 30, 2009, either by phone or in-person.

A set of nine questions were used (and slightly modified to suite the interviewee). The questions focused on the stakeholder's particular client group, employees, or community. Questions included the following:

1. Please describe the nature of commute needs.
2. How many clients do you serve or represent?
3. Please describe how your clients get to your programs.
4. Do your clients have problems commuting?
5. Please list the communities that your clients commute from.
6. Where are your program facilities located?
7. What are the key program days of week and times of day?
8. What type of realistic transportation mode or program would best meet the commute needs of your clients? *What would be the key characteristics of the ideal commute service?*
9. Other thoughts or comments?

Feedback received varied from each stakeholder; however, general consensus is that improved access to from smaller communities to Willits and Ukiah is critical. It is important to note that interviewees are excited about the prospect of new programs or improved service and have volunteered to help with MTA's implementation plan such as conducting interest surveys, assisting with program coordination, and/or helping with promotional activities for the new programs or services. A summary of input provided by each stakeholder is detailed in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Interview Summary of Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder	Input Summary
Retech Systems, LLC.	• Employs 107 people. • 93% commute via private vehicle, 7% carpool. • 73% of employees live in Mendocino County, 12% Sonoma County, 9% Lake County (58 from Ukiah, 11 from Willits, 5 from Boonville, 5 from Redwood Valley, 3 from Hopland, 2 from Potter Valley, 1 from Boonville. Sonoma County: 10 from Cloverdale, 2 from Healdsburg, 1 from Windsor. Lake County: 5 from Kelseyville, 4 from Middleton, 3 from Nice, 2 from Lakeport, 1 from Upper Lake.) • Work shifts are Monday through Friday from 7:30AM to 3:30PM, but if we have a heavy workload then start time could be as early as 5:00AM, Management works from 8:30AM to 5:30PM or 6:00PM. • Van or carpool may be feasible.
Mendocino County Office of Education	• Serve 13,500 students countywide, 30 to 60 ROP students per day, 90 students at the main location and others are dispersed throughout the county. • 200 employees countywide, 100 at main location. • ROP students mostly rely on their own transportation, employees rely on their personal vehicles, and students take district buses. • Students rely on school transportation. • Most employees live in Ukiah, some are from Willits or other towns. • Students generally attend the school that is closest to them; however, they have a choice (some parents take their child from their home in Willits, for example, to school in Ukiah or some go from Potter Valley to Ukiah). • Schools are located countywide, ROP is at 2244 Old River Road but some classes are held at 1000 Low Gap Road. • Main office hours are 7:30AM to 5:30PM Monday through Friday (many employees participate in a flex schedule). ROP is from 8:00AM to 5:00PM Monday through Friday. • School hours are roughly 6:30AM to 8:30PM (including before/after school programs). • ROP program would benefit from a special service.

Table 2.3: Interview Summary of Stakeholder Input (Continued)

Stakeholder	Input Summary
Ukiah Chamber of Commerce	• There are approximately 12,000 employees citywide (Ukiah) of which (more than 500 are chamber members). • Key communities are Ukiah, Willits, and Lakeport. • Retail work shifts are generally 9:00AM to 6:00PM (Wal-Mart and Kohl's are open much later), food-service work shifts are generally from 10:00AM to 7:00PM and 3:00PM to 11:30PM. • Van or carpool programs peak my interest.
Ukiah Valley Medical Center	• Employ 647 people plus 100 physicians – approximately 62% of employees live in Ukiah and the remaining 38% live in surrounding communities. • There are approximately 35 in-patients per day and approximately 500 out-patients per day. • Approximately 75% of patients are from the Inland Area area. • The Hospital operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The nursing shifts are from 5:00AM to 5:00PM (visa versa). Administrative shifts are 8:00AM to 5:00PM Monday through Friday. The rural health center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, the lab is open from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, and outpatient hours are from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. • NOTE: Adventist hospital, sundown Friday to sundown Saturday is Sabbath, so it is quite. • Carpool program may work for employees • Hospital has been trying to get MTA to put a stop in front of the hospital. The closest bus stop is a block and a half away on a very busy road, not ideal.
Mendocino County Sheriff	• 160 employees. • 90 employees work in Ukiah, and of the 90 employees 20 live in Willits. Some live in Hopland and some live in western Lake County. • 100% of employees commute to work by individual car. • If there was a vanpool or other transportation program that would benefit my employees, I would change our shifts at the jail to accommodate the program. I want employees at work safe and on time. My objective is to use whatever resources possible to offer benefits to employees as well as savings of personal mileage/time. I know that Southern California sheriffs have van/carpool programs. • Work shifts are from 7:00AM to 7:00PM, but I would be willing to adjust the shifts to make commuting easier.

Table 2.3: Interview Summary of Stakeholder Input (Continued)

Stakeholder	Input Summary
Mendocino County (Human Resources)	• There are 1,276 County employees who are mainly concentrated in Ukiah and Willits. • People mostly commute by individual car. • Not aware of problems commuting. • Most employees live in and around the Ukiah area. • Listing of all County facilities and their locations is available. • Office hours are from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, but public safety is 24 hours a day, seven (7) days per week. • Need to offer more incentives for carpooling or alternative transportation. • I have not seen informational flyers or any programs or anything that encourages carpooling or using public transit, so education and outreach will be important when any new programs or services are implemented.
Mendocino County (Health and Human Service Agency)	• There are approximately 600 employees. • Most employees commute with individual car. • The agency serves thousands of residents throughout the county. • Work shifts are from 7:30AM to 5:30PM Monday through Thursday, while the programs run from 7:30AM to 6:00PM. • Residents need more targeted transportation routes, something that targets specific commutes and hubs of people (e.g., improved connections between Willits and Ukiah). • Recommend a vanpool from Willits to Ukiah that arrives between 7:30AM and 8:00AM and then leaves at 5:30PM or 6:00PM o NOTE: County offices are also close to the hospital and other medical buildings, so there could be a service at mid-day for Ukiah/Willits for those who need services or healthcare but do not want to stay in Ukiah the entire day. • It is important to note that people who used to get services in Willits are now going to Ukiah because of cut backs in Willits; this affected the Integrated Service Center. • County looked into coordinating a vanpool program and purchased software (enter commute patterns), but furloughs and cutbacks created too much variation in schedules, so nothing came of it. • Recommend contacting each individual program manager to identify other specific needs.

Table 2.3: Interview Summary of Stakeholder Input (Continued)

Stakeholder	Input Summary
Mendocino County (Health and Human Service Agency—Continued)	<u>General Services</u> • General assistance serves approximately 100 people. • Clients are mostly from Ukiah, but anyone in the County can receive services. Some services are also available in Willits, but there is not a shelter there. • Many do not have access to a vehicle. • Most walk or receive bus passes (only to be used for medical care or for jobs). • Commute needs include training at the resource center on Orchard Avenue, job interviews, Plowshares (meals and homeless services), and shelter (Ford Street Project/Buddy Eller Center). • NOTE: Plowshares is approximately one mile from the center of town (1346 South State Street), shelter (201 Brush Street) is one mile away and check-in is at 5:00PM, disabled have a difficult time getting to places on time. Buses from Plowshares and to other homeless/low-income places are not timed well, from 4:00PM to 8:00PM need more frequent services. • Children should not be charged full price for bus service, it makes it difficult on low-income families. • Resource center is open Monday through Thursday 8:00AM to 5:00PM and the County office is open 7:00AM to 5:00PM. • A van or service from the shelter to the Food Bank and Plowshares would be beneficial. The shelter is full now at about 70 people and most would probably use the service for the clinic, too. <u>Adult Services</u> • Approximately 100 clients live in Ukiah and 25 live in Willits. • Facilities are located in Ukiah and Willits (there is also a Ft. Bragg location). • Approximately 63% of clients commute by individual car, others commute by carpool, foot, bike, or bus. • Two programs are based in Ukiah that draw clients in from surrounding areas, the criminal justice system mandates where the clients goes for services. The Willits location has concentration of clients from Willits and from nearby surrounding areas such as Covelo and Laytonville. • Key service times are Monday through Thursday 8:00AM to 7:30PM. Clients also have individual appointments throughout the day with a morning cluster at 9:30AM and an evening cluster at 5:00PM. • During the peak "cluster" times, a vanpool option might work. It appears that many clients tend to live in the same apartment complex or near one another. • Need better connections to/from Willits and Ukiah.

Table 2.3: Interview Summary of Stakeholder Input (Continued)

Stakeholder	Input Summary
Consolidated Tribal Health Project, Inc.	• Central health facility located at 6991 N. State Street, Redwood Valley. • Currently 4,000 registered patients making 17,500 patient visits/year (each patient averages 4 to 6 visits per year). • 400 additional patients expected in the near future. • Provides medical, dental, and behavioral health services. • Clients include children, adults and elders. • Operates Monday – Friday. • There are no peak appointment times - generally spread out over the day. • 90% of patients come from Laytonville, Willits, Redwood Valley, Ukiah and Hopland. • Consolidated Health makes referrals for specialists, x-rays, etc., with 90% of referrals to Ukiah Valley Medical Center and Frank A. Howard Memorial Hospital and 10% outside the County (including Santa Rosa and San Francisco). • Consolidated Health has two (2) full time drivers and four (4) cars available for patient transportation (to/from clinic and referrals). Transportation services budget runs between $100K and $140K annually. • 60% of patients either drive themselves or are driven by family or friends. • 40% use the Consolidated Health transportation services. • MTA use is minimal. • Consolidated Health tried to work a contract with Hey Taxi but could not negotiate an acceptable cost/trip. • Executive Director is interested in exploring coordination of services with MTA.

Table 2.3: Interview Summary of Stakeholder Input (Continued)

Stakeholder	Input Summary
Mendocino County Organization of Governments	<u>Brooktrails</u> • Discussion focused on the Brooktrails community and the population currently living in the area immediately outside Willits. Approximately 5,000 reside in the low density areas outside Willits. • Most area residents have access to a household vehicle for work, shopping, medical trips etc. • Private cars facilitate the flexibility to make multi-destination trips. • Willits and Ukiah are key destinations for work, education, shopping and medical trips. • Those without access to a car need to get into Willits for goods and services and MTA regional transit connections. <u>Future Concentration of Activities</u> • Regional growth will be concentrated in Ukiah increasing its importance as a destination and activity hub. <u>Potential Travel Alternatives</u> • Car pools for work and UCC would be more flexible than transit for lower density populations for work and MCC trips. • Small group car pools would facilitate more travel flexibility (some multi-destination trips on return commute trip). • Zipcar interest expressed in Willits – cooperative sharing of a car loan fleet. <u>Other Sources of Commute Data</u> • Public meetings and online travel survey (MCOG Website) are being conducted in conjunction with Mendocino t Regional Transportation Plan update.

2.2 DEMAND

DEMAND FORECASTING APPROACH

The goal of the demand forecast analysis (Task 4) is to provide relevant origin, destination, and travel time data for the greater Inland Area of the County (centered on Ukiah). This data was used by consultant team members in the development of service strategies. The forecast provides data for 2008-09 as a baseline based on the Greater Ukiah travel model prepared for Mendocino County. The growth assumptions for the forecast used the "preferred" land use alternative used in the Ukiah Valley Transportation Model updated in late 2009 (but yet to be incorporated into the General Plan).

The forecast used existing data on:

- Activity centers and likely trip generation
- Origin-destination trip pairs (largely in the greater Ukiah area)
- Current ridership by route
- Current vehicle counts on the current roadway network

To identify key commute demand corridors and an estimate of current and future commute travel times by mode. Travel time forecasts used sample origin-destination pairs for the key service corridors based on current GPS-based drive times and current average transit speeds. Typically, these travel times would be adjusted for the study for the horizon year, based on agreed improvements in average transit speeds and subject to average speed reductions/improvements for relevant segments of the roadway network. There appear to be no corridors in the County where transit confers a travel time advantage over the automobile, even with future increases in congestion-related delay; therefore conservative assumptions were made with regard to congestion-driven mode shift to transit. The demand forecast identified the thresholds of travel activity which could be served by various types of transit/mobility solution in the AM and PM peak.

The data sources used in developing the demand forecast included:

- Study on-board survey from Fall 2009
- Greater Ukiah travel model (developed for the Ukiah Fee Study, Fehr & Peers, 2007)
- MTA agency existing ridership data (2009)
- County and Caltrans traffic counts at select locations
- MCOG Wine Country Origin-Destination survey

DEMAND FORECAST CONCLUSIONS

1. Overall commute travel demand in the County is likely to remain automobile driven, lending itself to vanpool and ride share programs or subscription transit service. There are several governing factors:
    a. Major employer/college destination patterns are likely to change only slightly over the coming two decade (based on the current transportation[1]/land use model).
    b. Demographics favor a relatively stable employee commute level, with only modest growth.
    c. Travel time savings from transit are not a major factor in future attraction of trips to transit, due to relatively low congestion and the absence of (or need for) dedicated transit lanes on the highway network.
2. Within the Inland Area, a threshold of demand to support transit exists within the City of Ukiah (local circulation) and along the Ukiah-Willits corridor supporting commuter transit service between Willits and Ukiah.
3. Based on current ridership on Route 65 CC Rider and Lake County Transit's Route 7, there is insufficient demand to provide a higher level of scheduled inter-county commute service. Given the dispersed nature of employment nodes in Santa Rosa and Petaluma and the lack of demand between Ukiah and Lake County, Inland Area residents commuting to these locations would be better served through a shared ride car/vanpool initiative, which more efficiently and effectively serves dispersed travel patterns.
4. Within the Inland Area there is an insufficient threshold of demand to support efficient transit serving the population living in communities outside Ukiah or the Ukiah-Willits corridor. This includes travel demand from smaller communities such as Laytonville, Covelo, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Anderson Valley, and Talmage. The commute demand to and from the smaller communities or generated by the dispersed rural population would be more efficiently and effectively served by carpools, vanpools, community shuttles, taxi jitneys or volunteer driver reimbursement programs, depending on the trip purpose.

[1] Model did not provide inter-county data; updates with inter-county data to come in 2010.

2.3 COMMUTE ALTERNATIVES OVERVIEW

A series of potential commute travel alternatives were developed in response to the community outreach feedback and the demand analysis. At the conceptual planning stage, consideration was given to realistic and proven alternatives that have been developed elsewhere *to accommodate travel needs in smaller communities or rural areas where there is not sufficient travel demand to support efficient transit service or where transit cannot effectively serve travel patterns.* The range of alternatives identified at the conceptual stage included carpools, vanpools, volunteer driver reimbursement programs, taxi jitneys, and community shuttles. Tables 2.4 through 2.8 provide a description of these alternatives and lists potential applications in Mendocino County.

Table 2.4: Carpool Program

Alternative	Description	Potential Applications in the Inland Area	Positive Aspects	Potential Negative Aspects or Challenges
Carpool	A group of two or more people traveling to a specific destination in one vehicle. The group can decide to have one designated driver, with the other passengers splitting the cost of fuel, ware and tare on the car, tolls, and parking for the trip or the members of the group can chose to alternate days to drive, hence splitting the cost equally and eliminating the need to exchange money.	Work or MCC student trips from or to dispersed locations outside Ukiah or the Ukiah-Willits corridor. Employees sharing common shift times and students sharing common class start and finish times. Employees living or working in rural areas or smaller communities - Laytonville, Covelo, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, and Hopland. Employees & MCC students living on Sherwood Valley, Round Valley, Redwood Valley, Coyote Valley, Laytonville, Hopland and Pinolville Rancherias. Inland Area residents commuting outside the Valley to jobs on the coast or neighboring counties. MCC students living in rural areas or smaller communities - Laytonville, Covelo, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, and Hopland.	100% of costs are shared between participants. Reduced carbon footprint per passenger trip through ridesharing. Reduced traffic congestion. Lower transportation costs for participants. No capital costs. No ongoing operating costs for MTA.	Maintaining interest of participants and employer sponsors. Accommodating multi-destinational trips on return trip from work or classes. Consistency in work force or work situation.

Table 2.5: Vanpool Program

Alternative	Description	Potential Applications in the Inland Area	Positive Aspects	Potential Negative Aspects or Challenges
Vanpool	Consists of a driver and 4 to 14 passengers per van who commute to a specific destination and split the total cost of the vehicle, fuel, maintenance and service, and any addition fees, such as parking and tolls, if applicable. The more people involved, the lower the monthly fare will be. The cost of the vanpool is far less than the cost of driving an individual vehicle and saves on the wear and tare of the car that would normally be used for commute purposes. The driver picks the other passengers up at their place of residence or a designated pick-up spot and they all travel to one destination (usually their place of business). At the end of their day, everyone loads into the van and is returned to their place of residents or the designated drop-off spot. The driver is in charge of storing the van for the evening, which usually entails taking it home for the night or leaving it at a designated park-and-ride lot. The King County Metro Van Program (Washington State) is an example of a successful vanpool program.	Work or MCC student trips from or to dispersed locations outside Ukiah or the Ukiah-Willits corridor. Employees sharing common shift times and students sharing common class start and finish times. Employees living or working in rural areas or smaller communities - Laytonville, Covelo, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Talmage, and Hopland. Employees & MCC students living on Sherwood Valley, Round Valley, Redwood Valley, Coyote Valley, Laytonville, Hopland and Pinolville Rancherias. Inland Area residents commuting outside the Valley to jobs on the coast or neighboring counties. MCC students living in rural areas or smaller communities - Laytonville, Covelo, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, and Hopland.	100% of operating and vehicle capital costs are shared amongst vanpool group members. Reduced carbon footprint per passenger trip through ridesharing. Reduced traffic congestion. Lower transportation costs for participants. No capital cost. No ongoing operating costs for MTA. Potential tax incentives for employers and employees	Maintaining interest of participants and employer sponsors. Accommodating multi-destinational trips on return trip from work or classes. Consistency in work force or work situation.

Table 2.6: Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program

Alternative	Description	Potential Applications in the Inland Area	Positive Aspects	Potential Negative Aspects or Challenges
Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program	Informal Volunteer Driver Networks Informal volunteerism is a part of most communities. It is mainly based on family members taking care of their own or neighbors taking care of neighbors (informal network). Arrangements are made on an individual basis between drivers and individuals needing a ride. With informal arrangements, drivers may or may not receive a reimbursement. Payment for service is between the passenger and driver. Reimbursements to cover costs can range from the passenger purchasing gas or paying a cash honorarium to help cover fuel, time, and general car expenses. Formal Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Programs Volunteer drivers are recruited and organized into a driver pool. Agencies match the travel requests of their clients with the availability of volunteer drivers. It is common to reimburse the driver through gas vouchers or at a per mile rate. Gas voucher values can be based on the amount of gas used to travel to and from a center such as Willits or Ukiah (reasonable to base on midsize sedan mileage ratings). Current IRS per mile travel costs rates are generally used for mileage based reimbursements. In some examples, passengers are required to pay a contribution (fare) for the ride. Mature examples of volunteer driver reimbursement programs have been successfully implemented and operated in Riverside, Trinity, Tehama, and Glenn Counties. Volunteer driver programs are often targeted for the elderly or non-emergency medical trips. Operating funding could come from TDA, passenger fares, local contributions including donations or local fund raising initiatives. For a more detailed outline of volunteer driver programs refer to Volunteer Divers - A Guide to Best Practices*.	Medical, personal business and shopping trips for persons without access to a private vehicle living in dispersed rural areas or communities without MTA transit service such as Laytonville, Covelo, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Talmage, and Hopland or living on area Rancherias such as Sherwood Valley, Round Valley, Redwood Valley, Coyote Valley, Laytonville, Hopland and Pinolville. Trips could be focused on either Willits or Ukiah where individuals could get access to a wider selection of goods, services, and activities, and make connections with MTA's regional transit services. Social services could utilize for program related trips or appointments for their clients. Could be administered by MTA's Mobility Management Coordinator. Ride matching could be coordinated by MTA Dial-A-Ride dispatch. Based on a service between Laytonville and Willits, driver reimbursement costs could be: • Reimbursement set at $0.50 per mile and allowable mileage set at 25 miles one-way trip between Laytonville and Willits. • Cost per passenger could be as low as $4.80 per one way passenger trip (assuming current Route 15 productivity or as high as $12.50 (assuming no ride sharing). • Annual costs could be as high as $16,600 with no ridesharing. • Assuming current Route 15 ridership levels and loads per trip the operating budget for this program will be $6,400 net passenger contributions.	Increased community participation. Relatively low cost to ensure mobility for small community residents without transit service. Reduced travel costs for volunteer drivers through passenger contributions and/or reimbursements. Reduced carbon footprint through ride sharing. No capital costs. Costs are kept lower through coordinated ridesharing.	Potential fraud. Potential risk management issues. Maintaining a qualified driver and vehicle pool. Availability of drivers when passengers need to make critical trips for medical treatment or appointments. Compatibility issues between passengers and drivers. Long term sustainability.

*Agency Council on coordinated Transportation, Volunteer Drivers – A Guide to Best Practices, (2003).

Table 2.7: Community Shuttle Service

Alternative	Description	Potential Applications in the Inland Area	Positive Aspects	Potential Negative Aspects or Challenges
Community Shuttle	Community shuttles are organized in the individual communities lacking transit service to provide access to goods, services, and activities within small communities or to larger centers for medical, shopping or personal business. A wheelchair accessible passenger van (12 passenger minimum) provided to a local volunteer organization. The local organization assumes responsibility for the administration of the service, vehicle maintenance, budgeting, and recruitment of a volunteer driver pool. Intercommunity service can be provided on a lifeline service basis (1 or 2 times a week). Service levels would be a function of funding levels and the size of the volunteer driver pool. The Cambria Community Bus is an example of a successful volunteer community bus program in California. Capital cost funding could come from FTA 5310, Social Services Block Grant (Title XX of the Social Security Act), Older Americans Act Title III, TDA, or from local contributions. Operating funds could come from TDA, passenger fares, local contributions including donations or local fund raising initiatives.	Service into Willits or Ukiah (which ever is closest) from small communities like Laytonville, Covelo, Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Talmage, and Hopland or Rancherias such as Sherwood Valley, Round Valley, Redwood Valley, Coyote Valley, Laytonville, Hopland and Pinolville. Based on a service between Laytonville and Willits, Community Shuttle costs could be: • Annual operating budget could range from $20,000 to $25,000 to cover fuel, insurance, maintenance, and overheads. • A new WC accessible van will cost approximately $55,000. • Assuming current Route 15 ridership volumes and productivity, the cost per one-way passenger trip could range from $15.00 to $19.00. • Program operating costs could be reduced to limiting the service to 2 or 3 days per week. Capital costs could be reduced if MTA provides a surplus vehicle. However maintenance costs will increase and reliability will decrease with an older vehicle.	Costs are kept lower through volunteer administration and driver pool and by limiting the service to 2 or 3 days per week. Promotes community development.	Long term sustainability (need for strong local champion to administer and promote). Maintaining a qualified driver and vehicle pool. Vehicle maintenance and back up.

Table 2.8: Taxi Jitney Service

Alternative	Description	Potential Applications in the Inland Area	Positive Aspects	Potential Negative Aspects or Challenges
Taxi Jitney	Local taxi service contracted to provide a lifeline jitney (shuttle) service from communities lacking transit service to provide access to goods, services and activities within small communities or to larger centers for medical, shopping or personal business. Although the service would be scheduled for specific days and times, the service would only operate in response to advance trip requests. Costs would be based on a negotiated flat rate per vehicle trip based on distance for longer distance trips or on the actual meter charge for shorter distance trips.	Service between Ukiah and Talmage. Ukiah's Hey Taxi charges a meter rate of $3.00 flag drop charge and $3.00 per mile. A one way taxi jitney trip from Talmage to downtown Ukiah would cost about $14.00. As trip distances increase a flat rate could be negotiated, but would have to reflect deadheading costs out and back from the community. Based on meter charges, a one-way taxi jitney trip from Redwood Valley to Ukiah would be approximately $30. and from Hopland to Ukiah would be approximately $50. In Inland Area program could be administered by MTA's Mobility management Coordinator and trips requests coordinated by MTA's Dial-A-Ride dispatch.	No capital costs. Potentially lower operating costs if operated on a scheduled basis and only operated if there were requests for the scheduled service. Ridesharing would also lower the cost per passenger trip.	High operating cost to serve communities further away from Ukiah such as Laytonville, Brooktrails, Covelo, and Potter Valley because of long deadhead travel from Ukiah. Maintaining long term interest of local taxi operator. Taxi fleet capacity and availability to provide contracted jitney service as scheduled. Vehicles in current taxi fleet may be too small to meet capacity requirements between communities.

3.0 VEHICLE TYPES

A range of appropriate vehicles are described for the potential alternatives described in Chapter 2 – carpool, vanpool, volunteer driver reimbursement program, community shuttle and taxi jitney. Capital costs are given for the vanpool and community shuttle alternatives. For both these alternatives require securing program-specific vehicles whereas the other alternatives will use existing vehicles provided by program participants or the local taxi provider.

3.1 Carpool Vehicle Choices

Carpools utilize the vehicles operated by carpool members. These can range from two-passenger sport cars or pick up trucks through to four-seat sedans, mini-vans, sport utility vehicles to full size passenger vans. Vehicle selection amongst carpool participants will depend on operating cost economies, dependability, availability, capacity requirements, driver preference and comfort. Vehicle age is not a critical factor. However all vehicles registered for a carpool must be registered and insured in the State of California and should at a minimum:

- Have functional heating and ventilation systems.
- Be clean.
- Have accessible and functional seatbelts, as well as functional doors and windows.
- Have windows that are crack free.
- Have functioning interior lights, two side mirrors, safe tires, winter chains (if required), and fully functional head lights, turn signals and windshield wipers.

3.2 Vanpool Vehicle Choices

The Mendocino Farmworkers Transportation Program (MFTP) van spec. provides a good model for a vanpool vehicle. The current MFTP spec-van is a 15 passenger Ford E-350 Superduty with a life expectancy of approximately 150,000 miles. In the case of a vanpool, the sponsoring agency either purchases or leases the required number of vans with capital or lease costs blended with operating costs into a monthly rate charged each vanpool group member.

Current capital cost for a MFTP spec-van is $26,360. Lease fees for a comparable van range from $350 to $500 per van per month.

3.3 Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Vehicle Choices

Volunteer driver reimbursement programs use the vehicles of the participant drivers. Vehicle requirements tend to be somewhat more stringent than those for a cooperative carpool. In

order to facilitate ridesharing, vehicles should have a minimum capacity of three passengers in addition to the driver. All vehicles must be registered and insured in the State of California. As with carpools, vehicle age is not a critical issue. The emphasis will be on comfort, mechanical soundness, and safety. At a minimum, vehicles must:

- Have functional heating and ventilation systems.
- Be clean.
- Have a functioning speedometer and odometer.
- Have accessible and functional seatbelts, as well as functional doors and windows.
- Have windows that are crack free.
- Have functioning interior lights, two side mirrors, safe tires, winter chains (if required), and fully functional head lights, turn signals and windshield wipers.

Participating vehicles will be subject to MTA inspection. Car seats for young children will be required and will be provided by the passenger.

3.4 Community Shuttles

Vehicles for a community shuttle can range from a passenger van to a small cut-away minibus. A minimum capacity of 12 seated passengers, or 8 seated passengers and up to two wheelchairs is recommended. Vehicle size should not exceed the maximum limit for a regular class C driver's license (GVWR of 26,000 lbs. or less). All vehicles must be wheelchair accessible and have functional seatbelts for all seated passengers. The maximum vehicle age should not exceed seven years. A new WC accessible van will cost approximately $55,000.

Vehicles will be subject to CHP inspection. Car seats for young children will be required and will be provided by the passenger.

3.5 Taxis Jitneys

Vehicles used in taxi jitneys generally come from the existing local taxi fleet. To facilitate ridesharing vehicles should have a minimum capacity of three passengers in addition to the driver. The ideal vehicle for a taxi jitney would be either a mini-van (5 passengers) or passenger van (12 passengers). While age is not a critical issue in acceptance of taxi vehicles for public funded transportation programs, dependability, comfort and safety are. At a minimum, vehicles must:

- Have functional heating and ventilation systems.
- Be clean.
- Have a functioning speedometer and odometer.
- Have accessible and functional seatbelts, as well as functional doors and windows.
- Have windows that are crack free.

- Have functioning interior lights, two side mirrors, safe tires, winter chains (if required), and fully functional head lights, turn signals and windshield wipers.

Participating taxi vehicles will be subject to MTA inspection. Car seats for young children will be required and will be provided by the passenger.

4.0 ACTION PLAN

4.1 OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVES AND APPLICATIONS

The conceptual strategies were reviewed with MTA management in April 2010, prior to the development of the Mendocino County Commute Transportation Implementation Plan. The alternative strategies included: carpools, vanpools, a volunteer driver reimbursement program, community shuttle services, and taxi jitneys. Summaries of these alternatives are provided in Tables 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8.

The core intent of the Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study was to:

1. Assess and develop commute strategies to complement existing MTA fixed route and demand response services.
2. Identify travel alternatives to meet needs that regular MTA services cannot effectively or efficiently serve.

Because of current transit funding limitations and rising transit operating costs, MTA is facing revenue shortfalls and must make service cuts in FY 2010/11. In light of this situation, lower cost or no cost alternatives[2] were selected for recommendation from the Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study findings. These included potential consideration of a Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program, a Carpool Program, and possibly a Vanpool Program. Both the community bus and taxi jitney alternatives were eliminated during the preliminary assessment of alternatives. The community bus was eliminated due to the capital costs of service vehicles and backups, as well as operating costs such as fuel, insurance, and maintenance. The taxi jitney was eliminated due to the high operating costs, which reflected the taxi operator's costs to deadhead out from or back to Ukiah. The local taxi operator, Hey Taxi no longer operates service in Willits due to low ridership. Company representatives indicated that they were not interested in serving the outlying communities beyond Willits because of the limited demand north of Ukiah.

The Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study recommends a phased approach to the implementation of the three commute travel alternatives. A phased or stepped approach recognizes the work load of the Mobility Management Coordinator and a prioritization in addressing the more crucial commute needs of those losing transit service (Laytonville) and remote location of Covelo.

If implemented the proposed Volunteer Driver Reimbursement, Carpool, and Vanpool Programs would be implemented by MTA's Mobility Management Coordinator.

[2] "No cost" alternative refers to an alternative such as carpooling that does not require ongoing operating funding from MTA. However, there would be administration costs in marketing and facilitating the actual implementation by participant employers or in the case of MCC, implementation by the ASMC. Under the recommended carpool and vanpool framework, the Mobility Management Coordinator would serve as a technical and planning advisor to those setting up site specific car or vanpools.

4.2 KEY ROLE OF THE MOBILITY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

The Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study recommendations recognize a lead role for the Mobility Management Coordinator in the implementation of the proposed commute travel strategies. In the case of the Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program, the Study proposes an ongoing administration role for the Mobility Management Coordinator.

To be successful, community-based initiatives like volunteer driver reimbursement, carpool, and vanpool programs need consistency in leadership. Each program will require a "champion" or leader who assumes the responsibility to promote, organize, enthusiastically motivate new and existing participants, and provide administrative oversight. The assignment of these roles to MTA's Mobility Management Coordinator will enhance overall sustainability including ongoing participation and community interest, as well as meeting program goals. The implementation and ongoing support of the proposed commute travel alternatives will complement the Mobility Management Coordinator's role in the implementation and administration of the Mendocino Farmworkers Transportation Program.

The implementation of the proposed Volunteer Driver Reimbursement, Carpool and Vanpool Programs will expand the range of mobility alternatives that MTA offers to meet the diverse range of travel needs in Mendocino County that cannot be effectively or efficiently served with regular fixed route or demand response services.

The Mobility Management Coordinator is currently implementing the Mendocino Farmworkers Transportation Program. The successful implementation is expected to take an additional six months. This is a new program for Mendocino County and during the initial implementation phase requires the 100% focus and concentration of the Mobility Management Coordinator. The Mobility Management Coordinator should be able to begin the phased implementation of the Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study's proposed commute travel strategies in November- December 2010.

4.3 VOLUNTEER DRIVER REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

WHO BENEFITS

The proposed Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program is intended as a lifeline transportation service for Mendocino County communities that are not or cannot be served by MTA fixed route or demand response services. As a lifeline service the intent is to accommodate medical, shopping, personal business, social service agency appointment, and recreation/social trip purposes. The Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program is not intended for reoccurring commute work or education trips. The proposed Carpool and Vanpool Programs are intended for work and school trips.

Based on the feedback from the study outreach, the communities of Laytonville and Covelo have been identified for the initial implementation of a Volunteer Driver Reimbursement

Program. Implementation of this program for these communities should be on a demonstration project basis. If successful, affordable, and manageable, the Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program could be expanded County-wide to serve the population not served by MTA fixed route or demand response service. Other possible communities in the Inland Area include Brooktrails, Potter Valley, Redwood Valley, Talmage, and Hopland, as well as Sherwood Valley, Round Valley, Coyote Valley, Laytonville, and Pinolville Rancherias.

4.4 LAYTONVILLE AND COVELO VOLUNTEER DRIVER REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

> **Recommendation 1**- **Implement a Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program** as a two year demonstration project to evaluate suitability of the concept in Mendocino County.

A Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program for the communities of Laytonville and Covelo could be implemented in parallel. Both communities are remote and need a transportation alternative for residents who do not have access to a private vehicle. The following implementation model can be applied to other communities in Mendocino County.

In the case of the Laytonville and Covelo Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Programs, service would be limited to and from destinations within Willits. For trips beyond Willits, program participants would need to make MTA regional service connections or other arrangements.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Table 4.1 provides a summary of participant roles and responsibilities.

Table 4.1: Participant Roles and Responsibilities: Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities
MTA Board of Directors	Review and approve demonstration project for Laytonville and Covelo including budget and proposed work plan for Mobility Management Coordinator. Review evaluation of demonstration project and if program is successful approve continuation of Laytonville and Covelo programs. If program is successful, approve expansion of program to other Mendocino County communities based on MTA management recommendations.
MTA Management	Provide necessary supervisory and administrative support to Mobility Management Coordinator. Set farebox recovery policy for individual community members and social service agency sponsored users. Approve reimbursement policy and parameters - whether mileage reimbursement or fuel voucher and set maximum value per vehicle trip. Approve service efficiency standards and service quality performance standards. Process volunteer driver reimbursement claims approved by Mobility Management Coordinator on a bi-weekly cycle and invoice sponsoring social service agencies or medical providers. Maintain insurance coverage including Comprehensive General Liability, Business Auto Liability (as a secondary policy to the volunteer driver's primary coverage), and Umbrella/Excess Liability. In the case of an accident or injury claim, the volunteer driver's insurance provides the initial coverage and the MTA's insurance acts as a secondary policy to cover any claims above the volunteer driver's coverage. Coverage should be based on current MTA coverage levels. Non-profit Insurance Alliance of California provides agency coverage for non-profit agency volunteer driver programs.

Table 4.1: Participant Roles and Responsibilities: Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program (Continued)

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities
Mobility Management Coordinator	Initial outreach to Laytonville and Covelo stakeholders to establish interest and to help establish volunteer driver pool and user list. Prepare volunteer driver and user information and responsibility brochures. Develop driver and user application forms. Maintain hard copies of driver's licenses, vehicle registration, and insurance policies. Develop and maintain driver pool, user registrant and participating social service agency/medical provider participant data bases. Monitor service performance and investigate complaints. Monitor volunteer driver compliance with insurance requirements and vehicle condition requirements. This can be accomplished through database updates (notices to update information based on recorded expiry dates), quarterly vehicle inspections, and spot inspections. Review and approval of driver reimbursement claims. Prepare monthly lists of sponsoring agency/medical provider charges (by client and trip date) for invoicing purposes. Prepare monthly service performance reports and prepare quarterly demonstration project evaluation reports. Conduct ongoing community outreach to refresh driver pool and to ensure those in need are aware of program.

Table 4.1: Participant Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities
MTA Dial-A-Ride Dispatch	Process trip requests from individual registrants and/or social service agencies. (Based on a one to two day advance notice). Contact drivers to establish availability and willingness to accommodate the trip request. Assign trips to available drivers. Where possible, assign trips on a ride share basis. Record trip booking and assignment data on daily basis. Information to include: trip origins and destinations, appointment times, driver and passenger names and the number of persons carried on each trip. Record cancellations.
Volunteer Drivers	Drivers would need a valid California driver's license and vehicle registration, and be fully insured to operate a private vehicle in California. Any vehicles provided would have to meet minimum standards including functional heating and ventilation systems, clean, accessible seatbelts, functional doors and windows, an accurate speedometer, windows that are crack free, functioning interior lights, two side mirrors, safe tires, winter chains (if required), and fully functional head lights, turn signals and windshield wipers. Maintain a trip log with passenger signatures to verify authorization of payment and provide trip logs with invoice claims. Invoices and documentation can be submitted by FAX, electronic scans or hard copy. Collect and record passenger fares. Fares collected will be net from driver invoices. Notify MTA Dial-A-Ride dispatchers of cancellations at door or no shows. Efforts should be made to recruit a pool of bilingual drivers.

Table 4.1: Participant Roles and Responsibilities: Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program (Continued)

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities
Passengers	Register and demonstrate no or limited access to a private vehicle. Book trip requests one to two days in advance of trip requirement. Provide advance cancellation notice to MTA Dial-A-Ride dispatch (at least one hour before scheduled pick up time). Sign driver log sheet and pay approved portion of trip costs. Behave in accordance with MTA rider policies.
Social Service Agencies and Participant Medical Providers	Register clients or patients they wish to sponsor. Book trip requests one to two days in advance of trip requirement. Provide advance cancellation notice to MTA Dial-A-Ride dispatch (at least one hour before scheduled pick up time). Agree to pay for invoiced trips within 30 days of invoice date.

DIRECT OPERATING COSTS

Although there are examples of volunteer driver programs[3] where volunteers do not receive any reimbursement for their volunteer efforts, most volunteer driver programs operate with some reimbursement compensation as an incentive to involvement and to help offset vehicle related costs of a trip. In Mendocino County, some form of volunteer driver reimbursement is strongly recommended; not only as an incentive to encourage driver enrollment, but also to allow members of middle to lower income households to participate in the program. Reimbursements are an incentive to longer term program participation.

[3] Volunteer drivers recruited for the Orinda Seniors Around Town and Rides for Seniors programs are not reimbursed. Given the income levels of this community, this is not surprising.

The two forms of reimbursement commonly used include: a reimbursement on a per mile basis; and fuel vouchers.

1. **Per Mile Reimbursement** is usually based on the IRS rate allowable for income tax purposes. This is currently set at $0.50 per mile. This rate is adjusted periodically to reflect changes in vehicle operating costs. The IRS rate is set to cover a wide range of vehicle operating costs including fuel, maintenance, insurance and vehicle amortization. In rural areas, maximum mileage claims are established based on the distance between centers (for example the round-trip distance between Laytonville and Willits can be set at 45 miles and the round-trip distance between Covelo and Willits can be set at 84 miles) . This is critical to cost control and budgeting. In some cases a maximum number of trips per month are established for individual volunteers to discourage involvement on a commercial level.

2. **Fuel Vouchers** are offered to volunteers on a per trip basis. The vouchers are redeemable at local participating fuel venders. The value of fuel vouchers can be set to cover fuel only based on average vehicle mileage per gallon. Based on an average vehicle fuel economy of 26 miles per gallon and a fuel cost of $3.20 per gallon, a fuel voucher value for a round trip between Laytonville and Willits could be set at $6.00 and between Covelo and Willits could be set at $10.50. Gas vouchers are set to cover fuel costs and not the wider range of vehicle operating costs that per mile reimbursements cover. Given the fluid nature of fuel prices, voucher values would be subject to frequent change.

Table 4.2 provides a cost comparison for volunteer driver trips between Laytonville and Willits and between Covelo and Willits. Two options are given for both the per mile reimbursement and gas voucher methods. The most expensive is the IRS rate of $0.50 per mile. A lower per mile reimbursement rate of $0.35 is presented for comparative purposes. The two gas voucher options include a bare bones fuel only option and a fuel plus a per vehicle trip premium to make the gas voucher option more attractive to perspective volunteer drivers.

As the reimbursement to the volunteer driver increases, the subsidy cost per trip increases, unless offset through ridesharing or an increase in passenger fares.

Table 4.2 Cost Comparison for Volunteer Driver Trips between Laytonville and Willits and between Covelo and Willits (Cost per vehicle round trip)

	Round Trip Distance (miles)	Per Mile Reimbursement		Fuel Voucher	
		$0.50 per mile	$0.35 per mile	$3.20/gal	$3.20/gal Plus $4.00 Premium
Laytonville and Willits	45	$22.50	$15.75	$5.54	$9.54
Covelo and Willits	84	$42.00	$29.40	$10.34	$14.34

INDIRECT OVERHEAD COSTS

Indirect costs include MTA overheads and other costs associated with community outreach. The critical indirect costs will be with the administration of the program by the Mobility Management Coordinator. It is assumed that the administration of the Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program will not require additional resources beyond those currently budgeted for; the same holds true for day-to-day trip coordination and invoicing. No additional Dial-A-Ride dispatch or accounting resources will be required beyond what is currently budgeted in MTA's annual operating budget.

FAREBOX RECOVERY

A fare structure for the Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program assumes the application of a cash fare payment by the passenger. MTA discount tickets or passes would not be useable. The passenger contributions could range from a one-way passenger trip charge based on a Route 15 cash fare of $2.75[4] to a full 100% reimbursement of the trip cost based on the approved per mile reimbursement rate or a gas voucher value for the trip. The driver would be responsible to collect the fares from passengers. In the case of a fare structure based on a percentage less than 100% of the reimbursable trip cost, the fares collected per passenger would be net by MTA from the volunteer driver's invoice.

Tables 4.3 through 4.5 illustrate a range of fare recovery levels. Table 4.3 illustrates the impact of a $2.75 one way fare level on the net operating cost of a round-trip. In the Table 4.3 calculations a round-trip fare of $5.50 was applied to the round-trip costs. Table 4.4 illustrates the impact of a 50% fare recovery policy. Table 4.5 illustrates the impact of a 100% fare

[4] Assumes approval on May 29, 2010 of a Route 15 fare of $2.75 for a one-way trip between Laytonville and Willits. Current fare is $2.50.

recovery policy. As the fare increases the passenger pays more and the public subsidy per trip is reduced.

With a fare structure based on a percentage of farebox recovery from the passenger, the importance of ridesharing to the passenger increases because it will reduce their cost per trip.

Table 4.3 Fare Recovery Impact on Round-Trip Subsidy at $2.75 per One-Way Passenger Trip

	Round-Trip Distance (miles)	Per Mile Reimbursement				Fuel Voucher			
		$0.50 per mile		$0.35 per mile		$3.20/gal		$3.20/gal Plus $4.00 Premium	
		Full Cost	Cost Net $2.75 Fare[5]	Full Cost	Cost Net $2.75 Fare	Full Cost	Cost Net $2.75 Fare	Full Cost	Cost Net $2.75 Fare
Laytonville and Willits	45	$22.50	$17.00	$15.75	$10.25	$5.54	$0.04	$9.54	$4.04
Covelo and Willits	84	$42.00	$36.50	$29.40	$21.15	$10.34	$4.84	$14.34	$8.85

Table 4.4 Fare Recovery Impact on Round-Trip Subsidy at a 50% Farebox Recovery Policy

	Round-Trip Distance (miles)	Per Mile Reimbursement				Fuel Voucher			
		$0.50 per mile		$0.35 per mile		$3.20/gal		$3.20/gal Plus $4.00 Premium	
		Full Cost	Cost Net With 50% Cost Recovery	Full Cost	Cost Net With 50% Cost Recovery	Full Cost	Cost Net With 50% Cost Recovery	Full Cost	Cost Net With 50% Cost Recovery
Laytonville and Willits	45	$22.50	$11.25	$15.75	$8.88	$5.54	$2.77	$9.54	$4.77
Covelo and Willits	84	$42.00	$21.00	$29.40	$14.70	$10.34	$5.17	$14.34	$14.34

[5] Costs are calculated on a round trip basis. The fare recovery calculation in Table 4.3 is based on the doubling of the $2.75 one way passenger fare to $5.00 to account for a two way passenger trip or round trip.

Table 4.5 Fare Recovery Impact on Round-Trip Subsidy at a 100% Farebox Recovery Policy

	Round-Trip Distance (miles)	Per Mile Reimbursement				Fuel Voucher			
		$0.50 per mile		$0.35 per mile		$3.20/gal		$3.20/gal Plus $4.00 Premium	
		Full Cost	Cost Net With 100% Cost Recovery	Full Cost	Cost Net With 100% Cost Recovery	Full Cost	Cost Net With 100% Cost Recovery	Full Cost	Cost Net With 100% Cost Recovery
Laytonville and Willits	45	$22.50	$0.00	$15.75	$0.00	$5.54	$0.00	$9.54	$0.00
Covelo and Willits	84	$42.00	$0.00	$29.40	$0.00	$10.34	$0.00	$14.34	$0.00

RECOMMENDED REIMBURSEMENT AND FARE STRUCTURE

The spirit of volunteerism exists in most communities. In rural communities with longer travel distance between centers, volunteer reimbursement helps volunteer participants to offset the high distance-driven costs of travel and encourages longer participant commitments. ***Meaningful reimbursement reinforces program sustainability.***

Fare structure should be set at an affordable level for the programs target market while reducing the public subsidy for the trip cost. ***High fares will discourage use and in the case of those needing transportation in Laytonville and Covelo, will reinforce isolation and negatively impact access to goods, services, and activities in Willits.***

A balance is recommended that encourages volunteer participation, provides affordable transportation for those in need, and minimizes public subsidy. A reimbursement based on the IRS rate of $0.50 per mile will make the costs of the trip too high for rural travel, while reimbursement based only on the mileage based fuel voucher may not be sufficient to attract and maintain a pool of willing volunteers.

> **Recommendation 2 - Reimbursement Policy for Laytonville Service:** A maximum fuel voucher paid per vehicle trip based on a maximum round trip distance of 45 miles divided by vehicle fuel economy of 26 miles per gallon times current local cost per gallon for regular gasoline plus a $4.00 premium for serving the requested trip.

Recommendation 3 - Reimbursement Policy for Covelo Service: A maximum fuel voucher paid per vehicle trip based on a maximum round trip distance of 84 miles divided by vehicle fuel economy of 26 miles per gallon times current local cost per gallon for regular gasoline plus a $4.00 premium for serving the requested trip.

Recommendation 4 - Fare Recovery Policy for Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program: Assuming adoption of the recommended reimbursement policies, establish a fare recovery policy of 50% of the cost for the vehicle trip.

A fare policy tied to the cost of a vehicle trip verses a passenger trip encourages ride sharing to reduce the cost to the passenger and the public subsidy per passenger.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS AND TIMELINE

Table 4.6 provides a critical path for the implementation timeline for the proposed Laytonville and Covelo Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Demonstration Project. Project timeline assumes some pre-implementation preparations and approval in the fall of 2010 and the implementation in the communities beginning in November 2010. The demonstration project is scheduled to end in November 2012.

Table 4.6 Implementation Plan Timeline for Laytonville and Covelo Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Demonstration Project

	Year	2010				2011												2012											
	Month	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	Set Fare and Reimbursement Policy																												
2	Prepare Budget and Finalize Action Plan																												
3	Board Approval of Fare and Reimbursement Policies and Demo Project Budget																												
4	Establish Trip Booking Procedures, Driver and User Application Forms, Invoicing and Payment Procedures, Program Database, Driver Screening Criteria, Efficiency Standards and Performance Measures																												
5	Community Outreach, Driver Recruitment and User Registration - Create Program Database																												
6	Establish Participation of Interested Social Service Agency and Medical Provider Participants - Register Sponsored Clients																												
7	Start Service																												
8	Ongoing Administration and Monitoring																												
9	Program Evaluation																												
10	Submit Demonstration Evaluation Report with Board Recommendations																												
11	End Demonstration or Continue Service Based on Evaluation Findings and Board Approval																												
12	Initiate Carpool Demonstration																												
13	If Demonstration Project was Successful, Expand Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program to Other Communities In Mendocino County																												

4.5 CARPOOL PROGRAM

The proposed MTA Carpool Program is intended for reoccurring commute trips such as work or MCC class trips. The program proposed in Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study recognizes MTA's limited service funding base and staff resource pool. The proposed program suggests a minimal role for MTA in the implementation and ongoing support of a carpool program. MTA will act as a facilitator providing technical advice on the organization of employer or organization sponsored carpools. If at the time of initial outreach MTA finds there are enough rideshare participants to support a vanpool, MTA could initiate a limited Vanpool Demonstration Program in parallel with the Carpool Demonstration Project.

A second approach to a Carpool Program in Mendocino County would require the direct involvement of MTA in the ongoing recruitment and coordination of carpool participants. This would involve more staff resource time and overhead costs regarding the costs for rideshare of software use and the maintenance of a participant database. Given MTA's current funding shortfall, an approach that requires a significant MTA staff commitment and indirect operating funds is not recommended at this point.

WHO BENEFITS

Carpool programs are organized to reduce single occupant vehicle use to and from a single point of employment or activity. Carpools are organized and maintained by an employer, employer group, or college/university student association. They are also organized to transport employees or students from residential areas not served by public transit or at shift/class times that are outside normal transit service coverage hours.

The Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study outreach identified the following possible carpool applications:

- **Associated Students of Mendocino College (ASMC**) – Students living outside Ukiah and Willits/Ukiah transit service corridor.
- **Mendocino County Health & Human Services** – Employees outside Ukiah and Willits/Ukiah service corridor.
- **Mendocino County Employees** – Employees outside Ukiah and Willits/Ukiah service corridor.
- **Mendocino County Office of Education** – Employees at Talmage facility.
- **Mendocino County Sherriff** – Ukiah office employees living outside of Ukiah.
- **Ukiah Chamber of Commerce** – For member employees living outside Ukiah.
- **Retech** - Employees.
- **Ukiah Valley Medical Center** – Employees living outside of Ukiah.
- **Consolidated Tribal Health Project** – Employees

4.6 MTA CARPOOL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Recommendation 5 – Implement a Carpool Demonstration Project with One or Two Interested Employers in Ukiah Valley: Mobility Management Coordinator will provide technical assistance to up to two interested employers and/or the Associated Students of Mendocino College (ASMC) to organize site- based carpool programs.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The proposed model and structure are simple. Table 4.7 summarizes participant roles and responsibilities.

Table 4.7 Carpool Demonstration Project Roles and Responsibilities

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities
MTA Board of Directors	Review and approve demonstration project proposal and proposed work plan for Mobility Management Coordinator. Review evaluation of demonstration project and if program is successful approve continuation of and possible expansion of Carpool Program to other Employers or Organizations.
MTA Management	Finalize Carpool Demonstration Project Scope and Evaluation Criteria. Provide necessary supervisory and administrative support to Mobility Management Coordinator. Maintain insurance coverage including Comprehensive General Liability, Business Auto Liability (as a secondary policy to the carpool driver's primary coverage), and Umbrella/Excess Liability. In the case of an accident or injury claim, the carpool driver's insurance provides the initial coverage and MTA's insurance acts as a secondary policy to cover any claims above the driver or employer's coverage. Coverage should be based on current MTA coverage levels.

Table 4.7 Carpool Demonstration Project Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities
Mobility Management Coordinator	Initial outreach to employers who expressed initial in employee carpooling and/or ASMC to explain roles and responsibilities for demonstration project. Provide interested sponsors with implementation manual. Help interested organizations set-up the rideshare software[6]. Provide ongoing organizational and planning advice[7]. Conduct ongoing evaluation and prepare monthly management reports. Prepare demonstration evaluation report.
Employer/ASMC Sponsors	Encourage and recruit carpool participants (offer incentives). Assist in ride matching through simple index card filing system or electronic database. Maintain participation rate records and provide to MTA for evaluation.
Carpool Participants	Drivers would have to have a valid California license and vehicle registration and be fully insured to operate a private vehicle in California. Each carpool would consist of at least two (2) people. Each carpool would then determine: **1.** Driver: one person could be the designated driver every day or they could trade off days. **2.** Meeting spot: they could either meet at a designated location or the driver could pick-up the passenger(s) at their place of residence. **3.** Pick-up and return times, as well as how long they wait for tardy parties. **4.** Cost: if one person is the designated driver, then the other people pay for the cost of the trip or a set price. A designated type and day for payment should be determined at this point. If carpool members equally share the number of days to drive, then the cost of the trip is split equally and there is no need to exchange money.

[6] The cost of the rideshare software (such as AlterNetRides, has a $500 start-up fee and $100 annual renewal fee).
[7] King County Metro has a well established carpool program. More information about this program can be found at http://www.kingcounty.gov/employees/Transportation/Carpool.aspx

POTENTIAL COSTS

The only potential cost to MTA would be the overhead expense for the Mobility Management Coordinator to help an organization set-up the rideshare software and carpool program and conduct the demonstration project evaluation. It is assumed that these costs are already covered in the Mobility Manager Coordinator budget. The sponsoring organization would be responsible for the ongoing administration and maintenance of their carpool. The potential costs for the carpool sponsor could include:

- The cost of the rideshare software (such as AlterNetRides which has a $500 start-up fee and $100 annual renewal fee).
- The overhead expense for an employee to set-up and maintain the rideshare software.
- The overhead expense for an employee to answer any questions and concerns regarding the rideshare software and the carpool program.

POTENTIAL CARPOOL PARTICIPATION INCENTIVES

Potential carpool participation incentives could include:

- Organization could reserve a certain number premium parking spots for carpools with designated placards.
- Potential free ride home by taxi program, so the carpoolers know they will never be stranded without a ride.
- Employers could receive the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Standard of Excellence as *Best Employer for Carpooling*.
- Good public relations for the promotion of ridesharing.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS AND TIMELINE

Table 4.8 provides a critical path for the implementation timeline for the proposed MTA Carpool Demonstration Project. A reduced evaluation period of one year is recommended for the Carpool Demonstration Project. During the demonstration project period, MTA may have to involve new sponsors if the original two are not able to sustain an ongoing program. At the end of the Demonstration Project, MTA will be able to apply any lessons learned to the facilitation of other employer or organization sponsored carpool initiatives.

Table 4.8 Implementation Plan Timeline for the MTA Carpool Demonstration Project

	Year	2011				2012												2013											
	Month	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	Finalize Carpool Demonstration Project Scope and Mobility Management Coordinator Workplan																												
2	Board Approval of Demo Project Scope and Mobility Management Coordinator Workplan																												
3	Conduct Outreach with Employers and ASMC Identified as Interested Through Study Outreach																												
4	Select Demonstration Project Participants (Carpool Sponsors)																												
5	MTA Provide Planning Assistance to Sponsor Participants on Carpool Organization and Administration																												
6	Sponsors Recruit Carpool Participants																												
7	Carpool Sponsor Conduct Ongoing Administration and Monitoring																												
8	MTA Conduct Ongoing Evaluation and Make Program Adjustments																												
9	Conduct Program Evaluation and Prepare Evaluation Report																												
10	Submit Demonstration Evaluation Report with Board Recommendations																												
11	Based on Board Approval Offer Carpool Start up Advisory Assistance to Other Potential Sponsors - Apply Lessons Learned																												

4.7 VANPOOL PROGRAM

The proposed MTA Vanpool Program is intended for reoccurring, longer distance commute trips. Similar to the organization of the Carpool Program, there are two potential levels of involvement for MTA. MTA can either act as a technical advisor to willing employer or organization sponsors, or they can directly deliver and administer the Vanpool Program. Given MTA's current funding shortfall, an approach that requires a significant MTA staff commitment and indirect operating funds is not recommended at this point.

WHO BENEFITS

Vanpools are organized for longer distance regional commutes serving a larger group of participants commuting to a common destination. Vanpool groups can range from a driver plus a minimum of four (4) people, to a maximum of 14. The costs of leasing and operating a van are split amongst the participants. The larger the vanpool group, the smaller the individual's monthly fee.

The Mendocino County Commute Transportation Study outreach identified one possible application at this time. The Mendocino County Sherriff expressed interest in the potential organization of a vanpool for staff commuting from the north county to Ukiah. MTA fixed route service did not effectively serve the Sherriff Department shift hours.

4.8 MTA VANPOOL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

> **Recommendation 6 – Implement a Vanpool Demonstration Project with One or Two Interested Employers in Ukiah Valley:** Mobility Management Coordinator will provide technical assistance to up to two interested employers to organize a site-based vanpool programs.

The Demonstration Project scope could be as small as one active vanpool group sharing a single van. While suited to longer commute trips to regional job centers in Santa Rosa or Petaluma, the Mendocino County Sherriff expressed an interest in exploring the concept for his employees. This may provide a demonstration project opportunity for MTA to test the concept.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The proposed model and structure are similar to the one proposed for the Carpool Demonstration Project. Table 4.9 summarizes participant roles and responsibilities.

Table 4.9 Vanpool Demonstration Project Roles and Responsibilities

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities
MTA Board of Directors	Review and approve demonstration project proposal and proposed work plan for Mobility Management Coordinator. Review evaluation of demonstration project and if program is successful approve continuation of and possible expansion of the Vanpool Program to other Employers or Organizations.
MTA Management	Finalize Vanpool Demonstration Project Scope and Evaluation Criteria. Provide necessary supervisory and administrative support to Mobility Management Coordinator. Maintain insurance coverage including Comprehensive General Liability, Business Auto Liability (as a secondary policy to the vanpool sponsors primary coverage), and Umbrella/Excess Liability. In the case of an accident or injury claim, the carpool driver's insurance provides the initial coverage and MTA's insurance acts as a secondary policy to cover any claims above the vanpool sponsor's coverage. Coverage should be based on current MTA coverage levels. Vanpool lease costs can include the appropriate insurance coverage.
Mobility Management Coordinator	Initial outreach to the Mendocino County Sherriff's Department or other interested parties to review roles and responsibilities for demonstration project. Provide interested sponsor(s) with implementation manual. Provide ongoing organizational and planning advice[8]. Conduct ongoing evaluation and prepare monthly management reports. Prepare demonstration evaluation report.
Employer Sponsor(s)	Encourage and recruit vanpool group participants (offer incentives). Assist with van leasing agreement and participant responsibilities. Maintain participation rate records and provide to MTA for evaluation.

[8] Solano Transportation Authority and King County Metro both have well established vanpool programs. For additional information, a great source would be the King Count Metro Van Program Manual (http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/van-car/vp-starterkit.html).

Table 4.9 Vanpool Demonstration Project Roles and Responsibilities (Continued)

Participant	Roles and Responsibilities
Vanpool Participants	Drivers would have to have a valid California license. Each vanpool group would consist of 4 (minimum) to 14 (maximum) Each vanpool would then determine: 1. Drivers: at least 2 designated drivers. 2. Meeting spot: they could either meet at a designated location or the driver could pick-up the passenger(s) at their place of residence. 3. Pick-up and return times, as well as how long they wait for tardy parties. 4. Cost distribution amongst group participants - lease and operating costs. Lease costs can range from $350 to $500 per month. Cost of leasing the vanpool program through a leading provider (such as Enterprise Rent-a-Car http://www.vanpool.com/) costs approximately $90-$160/month per person depending on size of van—this cost would ultimately be covered by the riders). The Enterprise Rent-a-Car Vanpool package includes: a reliable van, maintenance and service program, 24-hour roadside assistance, insurance, administrative support for any questions or problems that may arise, month-to-month flexible leasing, and an optional guaranteed ride home program (for an extra $30-$45/van per month).

POTENTIAL COSTS

The only potential cost to MTA would be the overhead expense for the Mobility Management Coordinator to help a sponsor set-up the vanpool program and conduct the demonstration project evaluation. It is assumed that these costs are already covered in the Mobility Manager Coordinator budget. The sponsoring organization would be responsible for the ongoing administration and maintenance of their vanpool. Operating costs (van lease and operating costs) are split amongst the vanpool group participants. Maintenance and insurance can be included in vanpool lease programs. Fuel costs will depend on the distance driven.

POTENTIAL VANPOOL PARTICIPATION INCENTIVES

Potential vanpool participation incentives could include:

- Sponsor could reserve a premium parking spot for vanpools with designated placards.
- Potential free ride home by taxi program, so the vanpoolers know they will never be stranded without a ride.
- Employer could subsidize vanpool lease or operating costs
- Good public relations for the promotion of ridesharing.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS AND TIMELINE

Table 4.10 provides a critical path for the implementation of the proposed MTA Vanpool Demonstration Project. A reduced evaluation period of one year is recommended for the Vanpool Demonstration Project . During the demonstration project period, MTA may have to involve a new sponsor if the original is not able to sustain an ongoing program. At the end of the Demonstration Project, MTA will be able to apply any lessons learned to the facilitation of other employer or organization sponsored vanpool initiatives. Because of the van lease and operating costs, a vanpool may be difficult to organize and sustain. Carpools may prove more successful for work commute trips within the Inland Area and successful vanpool program implementation may proof to be a longer term alternative for longer distance regional commutes along the HWY 101 corridor

Table 4.10 Implementation Plan Timeline for the MTA Vanpool Demonstration Project

	Year	2011				2012												2013											
	Month	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	Finalize Vanpool Demonstration Project Scope and Mobility Management Coordinator Workplan																												
2	Board Approval of Demo Project Scope and Mobility Management Coordinator Workplan																												
3	Conduct Outreach with Employers Identified as Interested Through Study Outreach																												
4	Select Demonstration Project Participants (Vanpool Sponsors)																												
5	MTA Provide Planning Assistance to Sponsor Participants on Vanpool Organization and Administration																												
6	Sponsors Recruit Vanpool Participants and Coordinate Lease Arrangements and Vanpool Group Participation Agreements																												
7	Vanpool Sponsor Conduct Ongoing Administration and Monitoring																												
8	MTA Conduct Ongoing Evaluation and Make Program Adjustments																												
9	Conduct Program Evaluation and Prepare Evaluation Report																												
10	Submit Demonstration Evaluation Report with Board Recommendations																												
11	Based on Board Approval Offer Vanpool Start up Advisory Assistance to Other Potential Sponsors - Apply Lessons Learned																												

4.9 CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND LONGER RANGE POSSIBILITIES

The Mendocino Commute Transportation Implementation Plan identified three possible demonstration projects:

1. Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program Demonstration Project
2. Carpool Demonstration Project
3. Vanpool Demonstration Project

The consultant has recommended the testing of the three alternative commute programs under a demonstration project framework in order to evaluate the feasibility of and appropriateness to Mendocino County commute needs. The consultant has also recommended program delivery frameworks that minimize MTA subsidy and staff commitment. The phased program implementation timeframe considers the current workload of the Mobility Management Coordinator and the more immediate near term focus on the successful implementation of the Mendocino Farmworkers Transportation Program. Upon the implementation of this program, the Mobility Management Coordinator, along with MTA Management, will be able to focus on the implementation of the commute alternatives proposed in the Mendocino Commute Transportation Implementation Plan.

The successful implementation of the Mendocino Farmworkers Transportation, the Volunteer Driver Reimbursement, the Carpool, and the Vanpool Programs, along with MTA's fixed route and demand response services, will establish a strong and diverse foundation to address the near term and long term travel needs of Mendocino County residents. MTA's emerging "family of services" will offer a cost efficient and flexible alternative to single occupant vehicle use for a broader range of travel needs.