



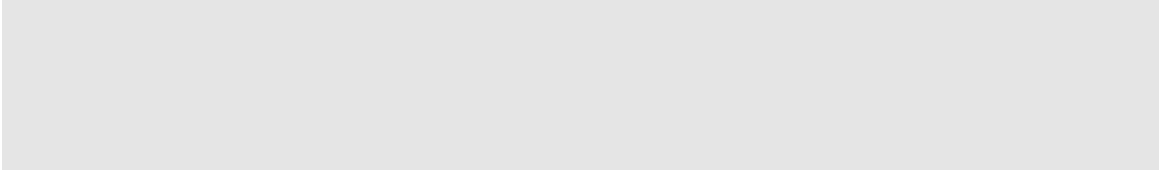
**The Santa Cruz County Elderly &  
Disabled Transportation Advisory  
Committee**

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**2007 Annual Report**



*Presented to the Santa Cruz County Regional  
Transportation Commission  
May, 2008*



*An Annual Review of the Work and Accomplishments of the  
Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory  
Committee*

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Contents

(1) Transportation-Related Projects ..... 4

(2) Funding Oversight ..... 4

(3) Monitoring Specialized Transportation  
Needs in Santa Cruz County ..... 6

(4) Regional Issues and Concerns ..... 9

(5) Internal Committee Issues ..... 11

(6) Unmet Transportation Needs Summary ..... 11

(7) List of Unmet Specialized Transportation/Transit  
Needs ..... 12

# The Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee's Regional Role

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee -- also known as the Social Services Advisory Committee -- is a group of transportation providers, social service agencies, and members of the public who meet every two months to determine planning, funding, and policy for specialized transportation that serves Santa Cruz County's seniors and people with physical and/or economic disabilities.

One of the essential functions of this advisory committee is to provide broad and significant insight to the Regional Transportation Commission on countywide transportation issues and policies that are likely to affect the growing population of older and disabled residents of Santa Cruz County. Members of this committee have direct and personal experience with quality-of-life concerns related to being elderly or disabled, and among their concerns are the current and future availability of transportation services that critically affect the quality of their lives. As this population group continues to grow, it becomes more important to plan for the expansion and improvement of specialized transportation services throughout this region.

## *(1) Transportation-Related Projects*

**The Committee supported the City of Santa Cruz Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding request for pedestrian improvements at the San Lorenzo River trestle bridge, as well as paving improvements for the West Cliff Drive pedestrian and bicycle path.**



**The E/D TAC continued to follow public project proposals, actively encouraging safety, mobility, and advocating adherence to ADA requirements for all public projects.**

## *(2) Funding Oversight*

**Members advised the Regional Transportation Commission on prioritizing projects funded by the Regional transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP) and other funding sources. Four specific projects were endorsed by the E/D TAC: The Chanticleer Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge; Rideshare Program; Santa Cruz Area Transportation Management Association (TMA); Pajaro Valley TMA.**



**Members endorsed TDA funding to the City of Santa Cruz for implementing the Safe Routes to Schools Program.**



**The Committee continued to participate in the countywide Transportation Funding Task Force, providing representation for seniors and people with disabilities, as well as insight into issues that directly affect mobility. E/D TAC remained supportive of the TTF, and was regularly represented at all meetings. In Committee discussions, members identified the Mobility Management Center concept as the most relevant to the transportation needs of elderly and disabled persons, and agreed that the RTC should be the implementing agency for this mobility strategy.**

**Members discussed a broad range of legislative and funding issues, expressing support for Medicaid funding for transit and Medi-Cal transportation reimbursement. They also supported a competitive allocation process for the Section 5310 Program (rural transportation assistance), and considered that Mobility Management Centers could be funded from a variety of sources.**

**Metro's application for 5311 Federal Transit funds was reviewed and recommended for approval by the RTC, contingent upon the completion of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.**

### ***(3) Monitoring Specialized Transportation Needs in Santa Cruz County***

Meeting the specialized transportation needs of diverse populations in a mixed rural and urban county can be extremely challenging, and the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee is actively engaged in monitoring existing services, from public and non-profit to private, for-profit services. Committee members share much expertise over this broad spectrum of services.

Among the specialized transportation service providers in Santa Cruz County are: the Americans With Disabilities Act -Mandated Paratransit program, *ParaCruz*, operated by Metro; the countywide *Lift Line* transportation by Community Bridges, the designated Consolidated Transportation Services Agency; various private operators, including *taxi* companies and for-profit medical transport service; a collection of informal and volunteer efforts to provide vital and personal transportation services to individuals whose mobility needs would otherwise be unmet.



**Members noted the importance of including elderly and disabled individuals' perspectives in the planning and development of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail, to ensure that these populations of users would not be excluded from enjoying this**



public amenity. The Committee specifically requested that the lead agency, AMBAG, include representatives of senior and disabled groups in the early planning stages so that all design decisions would at least take into consideration the special access needs of elderly and disabled persons, including appropriate signage. A member of the E/D TAC was designated to serve on the Sanctuary Scenic Trail committee.

**Committee members also requested that Metro involve E/D TAC and other shareholders in any discussions about policy changes in the ParaCruz eligibility and appeals process.** Discussion of this topic focused on the best way to serve recipients of ParaCruz service.

**Changes in Title 22, for medical transport services for low income individuals in Santa Cruz County, were discussed,** and it was agreed that the Committee would continue to monitor any changes in Medi-Cal transportation services, since these services often meet critical needs of senior and disabled individuals, whose economic options may be limited.



**Transportation Development Act claims were reviewed for the Volunteer Center's important transportation services.** The Volunteer Center sponsors and organizes a program that covers insurance and a mileage reimbursement for volunteers who offer transport services with their own vehicles. The E/D TAC provides in-depth review of this claim for these critical funds to ensure that the funding is used in an efficient manner.

**The Committee also reviewed Community Bridges' CTSA Transportation Development Act claim.** The claim was analyzed in detail, including targeted ride category goals, the degree to which unmet needs were addressed, and overall administration costs for the agency. The E/D TAC offered encouragement and guidance in restating that the community's transportation funding priorities placed special emphasis on providing necessary medical appointment rides.

**The E/D TAC provided input to Community Bridges on the development of a new Mobility Outreach and Education Program,** a program funded by a Caltrans grant. The focus of this project is extensive outreach to the elderly and disabled community, with the intent of comprehensively identifying the mobility needs of these individuals. Community Bridges will be seeking the assistance of community groups in evaluating a broad range of transportation needs.

**Members continued their discussions, from the previous year, on the subject of taxi regulation inconsistencies, and directed a letter of concern to local jurisdictions stating a greater need for clarity and consistency in the regulation of commercial taxi cab service, especially as it relates to the needs of elderly and disabled persons. Committee members also continued to refine their interest in countywide reform of existing taxi regulation, favoring a regional approach, and expressed great interest in the outcome of Monterey County's ongoing taxi regulation study, prior to formulating their own action plan. Members and staff began work on strategies to implement their highest priorities in regard to countywide taxi regulation.**



**E/D TAC members encouraged, as one of their highest priorities, transportation services for non-emergency medical appointments, and welcomed to the community**



Jesus Soto, owner of a new non-emergency medical transport service called *Medical Rides Made Easy*, which currently contracts with Community Bridges.

#### ***(4) Regional Issues & Concerns***

**The Committee continued to provide input into the Coordinated Human Services-Transportation Plan, with the intention of contributing to the assessment of specialized transportation needs, as well as the needs of low-income individuals.**



The purpose of this plan is to satisfy federal funding requirements, to identify unmet transportation needs, seek implementation strategies and ultimately compete for federal funds available for transportation programs to meet these needs. The E/D TAC formed a subcommittee to work on the draft plan and bring the community into the overall process. Members specifically requested that AMBAG allow whatever time was necessary to ensure that community participation would be comprehensive.

**Members brought to the attention of Metro Transit**



**planners examples of how transit route changes can negatively impact elderly and disabled individuals.** They noted, in particular, how changes in transit routing produced the negative impact of isolating a large senior population at La Posada, in Santa Cruz, from convenient bus service, and forcing them to walk a great distance to the nearest bus stop, which required crossing a major arterial. Metro representatives agreed to include these concerns in their long-range planning process.

**Related to the above action, the E/D TAC also encouraged Metro to solicit input from the E/D TAC on the development of the five-year transit service improvement plan,** including restoration of bus service to the La Posada senior housing complex on Frederick Street.

**Committee members participated in developing an outreach plan for the countywide Pedestrian Access Report,** a pedestrian hazards reporting tool for public use. Suggestions on how to increase public participation in identifying sidewalk and related hazards include: distribution of this printed form through the RTC's Interagency Technical Advisory Committee and through public institutions, as well as inclusion of the form on public websites.

**The Committee agreed to support and participate in a seniors’ “Solutions Summit,”** a one-day event originating with the Area Aging Advisory Council, and intended as an



opportunity for individuals and seniors organizations to exchange ideas and formulate action plans for solving critical needs. Members formally endorsed the event, scheduled for March, and nominated a representative to attend the event.

**At the request of the community organization, Mission Pedestrian, the Committee began discussions on the topic of integrating bicyclist and pedestrian needs,** given that issues affecting these

groups were often overlapping concerns of the elderly and disabled communities.

### *(5) Internal Committee Issues*

**The 2006 E/D TAC Annual Report was approved unanimously.** This report described the activities and accomplishments of the Committee over the previous calendar year.

**Members elected a Chairman and Vice-Chairman,** John Daugherty (representative from Metro), and Tom Crain (Potential Transit User-Disabled). Officers are elected annually.

## ***(6) Unmet Transportation Needs***

**The E/D TAC evaluated, amended and finalized its list of Unmet Specialized Transportation and Public Transit Needs, acknowledging the importance of this list in establishing funding priorities for transportation spending.**

**In cooperation with the Metro Board, the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee evaluated and prioritized the unmet specialized transportation needs of Santa Cruz County.** The Committee reached the following conclusions:

- That the highest funding priorities in the General Category be given to publicizing and informing the public of specialized transportation services, as well as ensuring the safety and mobility of the senior and disabled populations of the county.
- In the Paratransit Category the highest priorities were assigned to addressing funding shortages for all paratransit services, meeting the need for these services outside the ADA paratransit service area, and coordinating specialized transportation services in the form of a central Mobility Management Center.
- For Transit in general, high emphasis was on the completion of the MetroBase facility, on better meeting the needs of low-income and senior users in the South County area, providing transit service on holidays, and ensuring the availability of transit stops near senior housing facilities.





***(7) List of Unmet Specialized Transportation/Transit Needs***



**(See other item in this packet)**



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