STAFF REPORT
Business Agenda Item

DATE: October 5, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Kaylyn Stainbrook, Parks & Recreation Director

SUBJECT: **Public Hearing for Unmet Transit Needs**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Hold a public hearing on unmet transit needs in collaboration with the Humboldt County Association of Governments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is a Joint Powers Agency composed of the County of Humboldt and Cities of Fortuna, Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, and Rio Dell. HCAOG is responsible for allocating specific public funds for transportation improvements.

Each year, HCAOG evaluates the adequacy of local transportation services by asking local agencies to conduct public hearings on unmet transit needs. HCAOG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) then evaluates the public comments and other input received. If the SSTAC determines that an identified need meets the applicable criteria, HCAOG must allocate funding to address that unmet transit need before allocating eligible funds to other local non-transit projects, such as street and road projects. If no unmet transit needs meet the criteria, agencies may use excess funds for allowable non-transit purposes.

Attached is HCAOG's synopsis of the Unmet Transit Needs Assessment, including the complete assessment process and criteria.

Fortuna Transit, the City of Fortuna's curb-to-curb paratransit service, currently serves city residents who are age 50 or older or have a disability. Pre-scheduled rides are available Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., subject to availability. Fortuna Transit staff are working closely with the Humboldt Transit Authority, RideCo, and the Customer Elation Answering Service to expand service to the general public by the end of fall 2026.

In addition to operating Fortuna Transit, the City of Fortuna compensates the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) to provide several Fortuna stops along Redwood Transit System (RTS) fixed routes.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2036

This action supports the following areas of the City of Fortuna Strategic Plan 2026–2036.

CORE VALUES:

Quality of Life: Family, Nature & Neighbors
Community Connection & Care
Committed Service

PRIORITIES:

Priority 8: Youth, Recreation & Community Life
Priority 9: Building A Communication Culture & Fortuna's Voice

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The recommended action has no immediate financial impact. Any future service changes resulting from identified unmet transit needs would require separate evaluation and could be funded through fares, transit subsidies, grants, or other available revenue sources.

ALTERNATIVE TO STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council may choose not to hold the public hearing. If the recommended action is not approved, the City may not provide residents with a local opportunity to identify unmet transit needs for consideration through HCAOG's annual assessment process. Public input may therefore not be included in HCAOG's evaluation, potentially limiting the City's ability to document qualifying unmet transit needs and seek available transit funding. This alternative is not recommended.

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION:

1. Receive staff presentation and review Council questions with staff.
2. Open the Public Hearing.
3. Close the Public Hearing.
4. No further Council action is required.

ATTACHMENTS:

- HCAOG's Synopsis: Citizen Participation Process for Transit Needs Assessment