MEASURE Q TRANSIT INVESTMENT PLAN

For Seniors, Veterans, and People with Disabilities

2015-2030

February 2016

NELSON
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MST
MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT

Measure Q
Transit Investment Plan
Executive Summary

PROTECTING SERVICES FOR VETERANS, SENIORS, AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In November 2014, the voters of Monterey County approved Measure Q, a new countywide 1/8-cent sales tax measure for public transit to be used solely to protect transportation programs that serve veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities, and to identify new programs that will meet the mobility needs of these communities.

The Measure Q Transit Investment Plan provides guidance on how to invest the approximately $7.5 million per year that is anticipated to be generated by this tax over the next 15 years.

What is this Plan?

The Plan includes a Five-Year Program of Projects and a Long-Term Vision Plan. This report provides a summary of demographic trends in Monterey County, documents existing transportation options, and summarizes mobility gaps that need to be addressed. Feedback solicited from stakeholders and a prioritized list of projects in which to invest to improve mobility for these communities throughout the county is provided.

Estimated Percent of Population of Seniors, People with Disabilities, and Veterans

	2013			2030	
Seniors	11%			15%	
People with Disabilities		8%			10%
Veterans			7%		8%

■ Seniors ■ People with Disabilities ■ Veterans
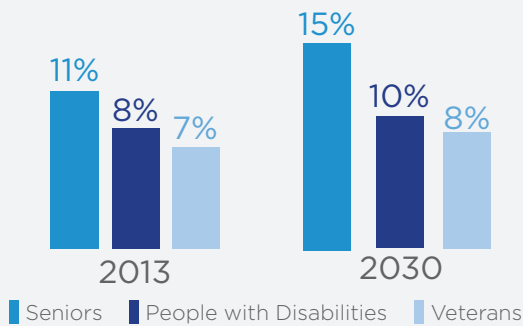
Note: 2030 senior population estimates calculated by AMBAG; 2030 population estimate for veterans and people with disabilities assume the same growth rate as the overall population

Measure Q will protect existing transportation programs serving veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities, and provide funding for new services over the next 15 years.

The Plan's highest priority is to preserve existing services,

including fixed-route capital and technological needs, RIDES ADA paratransit service, senior- and veteran-focused shuttles, taxi vouchers, and bus stop accessibility improvements. Funding will also be set aside in a reserve fund to ensure long-term stability of these services and programs. In addition, MST's mobility management department staff and volunteers will continue to be maintained and expanded upon. For guidance beyond the preservation of existing services, the MST and consultant team developed over twenty strategies for review and prioritization by the project steering committee. The committee prioritized the list based on community interests and support, transportation benefits, financial viability, and implementation feasibility.

New Projects Proposed for the Next Five Years

Six new projects are planned for implementation in the next five years:

- **Expand the MST Navigators program** to serve more passengers who need assistance navigating the transit system.

- **Pilot a flex voucher program** that will allow residents to use vouchers for transportation options in addition to MST's taxi voucher program

- **Nominate veterans for free passes** to honor veterans for their outstanding service or simply to provide extra help

- **Launch a veterans-helping-veterans program** that will include training of veterans to help other veterans use public transit.

- **Assist families and friends with volunteer driver reimbursements** to encourage use of informal mobility support networks

- **Purchase a Paratransit Emergency Response Module** to allow MST to dynamically manage ADA paratransit service disruptions due to local or regional emergency situations

Long-Term
Projects

The Long-Term Vision Plan includes worthy projects that will be considered as additional funding becomes available. Some may be implemented on an incremental basis depending on additional grants or other funding availability.

Projects include:

- **Taxi Voucher Program expansion to veterans**
- **Paratransit Easy Wallet** that can offer passengers the ability to prepay fares at the time of booking using a virtual account
- **Weekly medical transportation pilot program outside of Monterey County**
- **Community transportation services grant program funding**

Long-Term projects will be implemented when funding becomes available

Acknowledgements

Monterey-Salinas Transit would like to acknowledge those who have contributed to the completion of this Plan:

- MST Board of Directors
- Project Steering Committee
- Mobility Advisory Committee
- Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MST would like to acknowledge the overwhelming support of Monterey County voters in passing the Measure Q sales tax to protect transit services for veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities.

This Measure Q Transit Investment Plan benefited from the generous amount of time and thoughtful contributions of many caring community members and MST staff. We would like to acknowledge these individuals here.

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1 STUDY OVERVIEW

On November 4, 2014, the voters of Monterey County approved Measure Q, a new countywide 1/8-cent sales tax measure for public transit to be used solely to protect transportation programs that serve veterans, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Beginning in July 2015, Measure Q will raise approximately $7.5 million per year for 15 years.

To protect existing programs and services as well as guide new investments in programs and services, the Monterey-Salinas Transit District (MST) developed this Measure Q Transit Investment Plan. The Plan includes a 5-year program of projects and a Long-Term Vision Plan. This report summarizes an assessment of mobility needs among veterans, seniors, and persons with disabilities who travel in Monterey County, feedback from constituents and stakeholders, and a prioritized list of projects in which to invest to improve mobility for these communities throughout the county.

2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The objective of this chapter is to present the context for the development of the Measure Q 15-Year Expenditure Plan. The chapter examines demographic information for seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities for Monterey County based on projected population increases by 2035.

CURRENT POPULATION

Seniors

Compared to the rest of the Monterey Bay Area, which includes Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties, Monterey County's senior population is similar, with 11% of the population aged 65 years or older. Approximately two-thirds (63%) of Monterey County's senior population live in Census-designated cities, with most seniors living in Salinas (23% of the County's senior population) and Monterey (11%). The highest concentrations of seniors (as a percentage of total population) live in Carmel-by-the Sea (31%) and Pacific Grove (21%). Figure 2-1 provides a summary of Monterey County's current population by age bracket. Figure 2-2 illustrates the county's population distribution geographically. Figure 2-3 and Figure 2-4 illustrate the county's senior population geographically.

Figure 2-1   Population of Monterey County Cities by Senior Age Brackets

	Overall Population	Age 55-59	Age 60-64	Age 65 and older	Percent of Monterey County's over 65 population	Percent over 65
California	37,659,181	2,259,551	1,920,618	4,443,783	-	11.8%
Monterey Bay Area	741,492	46,624	40,882	83,025	-	11.2%
Monterey County	420,569	23,131	21,449	46,683	-	11.1%
Cities in Monterey						
Carmel-by-the-Sea	3,769	256	403	1,183	2.5%	31.4%
Del Rey Oaks	1,779	149	107	347	0.7%	19.5%
Gonzales	8,252	322	289	355	0.8%	4.3%
Greenfield	16,494	808	429	792	1.7%	4.8%
King City	12,996	312	312	858	1.8%	6.6%
Marina	19,966	1,318	1,258	2,556	5.5%	12.8%
Monterey	27,939	1,788	1,648	5,141	11.0%	18.4%

	Overall Population	Age 55-59	Age 60-64	Age 65 and older	Percent of Monterey County's over 65 population	Percent over 65
Pacific Grove	15,241	1,463	1,570	3,246	7.0%	21.3%
Salinas	152,340	6,703	5,332	10,664	22.8%	7.0%
Sand City	307	13	12	17	0.0%	5.6%
Seaside	33,402	1,503	1,503	2,772	5.9%	8.3%
Soledad	26,039	1,302	1,120	1,562	3.3%	6.0%
Other	102,045	7,194	7,467	17,190	36.8%	16.8%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2008-2013. Table S0101.

Figure 2-2   Monterey County Overall Population Density (residents per acre by Census Tract), 2013
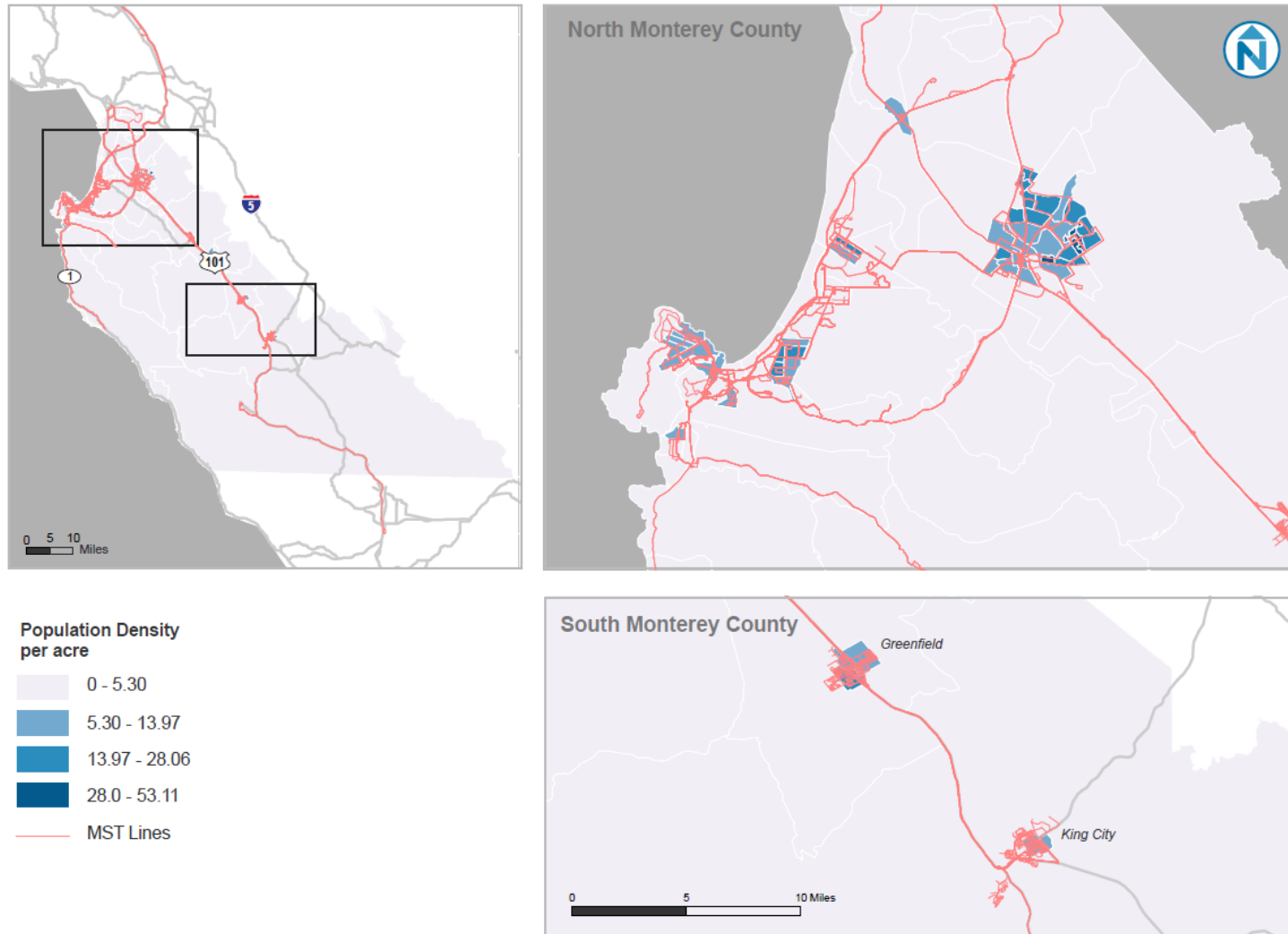
Population Density per acre

- 0 - 5.30
- 5.30 - 13.97
- 13.97 - 28.06
- 28.0 - 53.11
- MST Lines

Data Source: American Community Survey 2013

Figure 2-3   Monterey County Senior Population Density (age 65 and older per acre by Census Tract), 2013
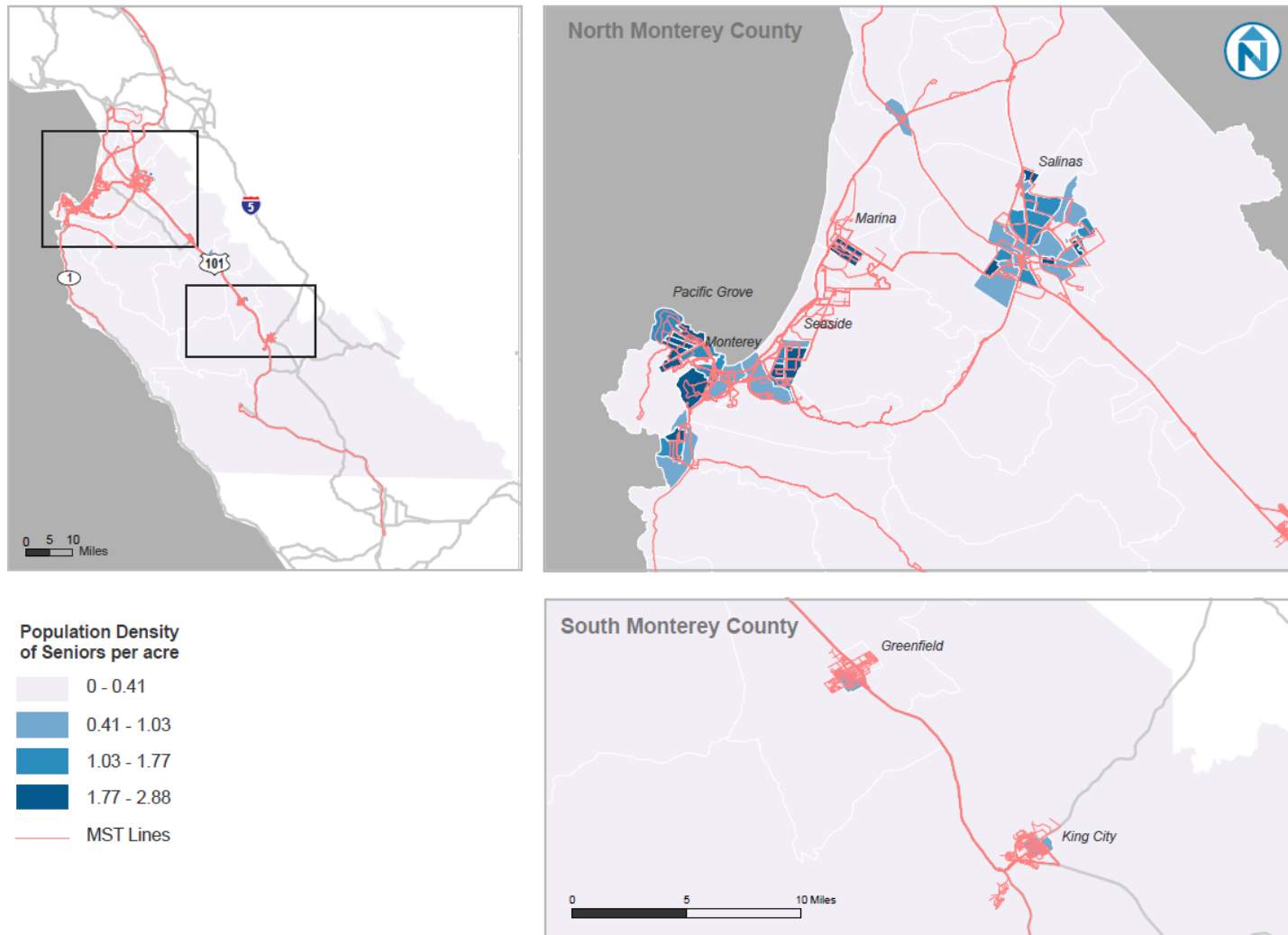
Data Source: American Community Survey 2013

Figure 2-4 **Monterey County Senior Population Distribution (percent of population by Census Tract), 2013**
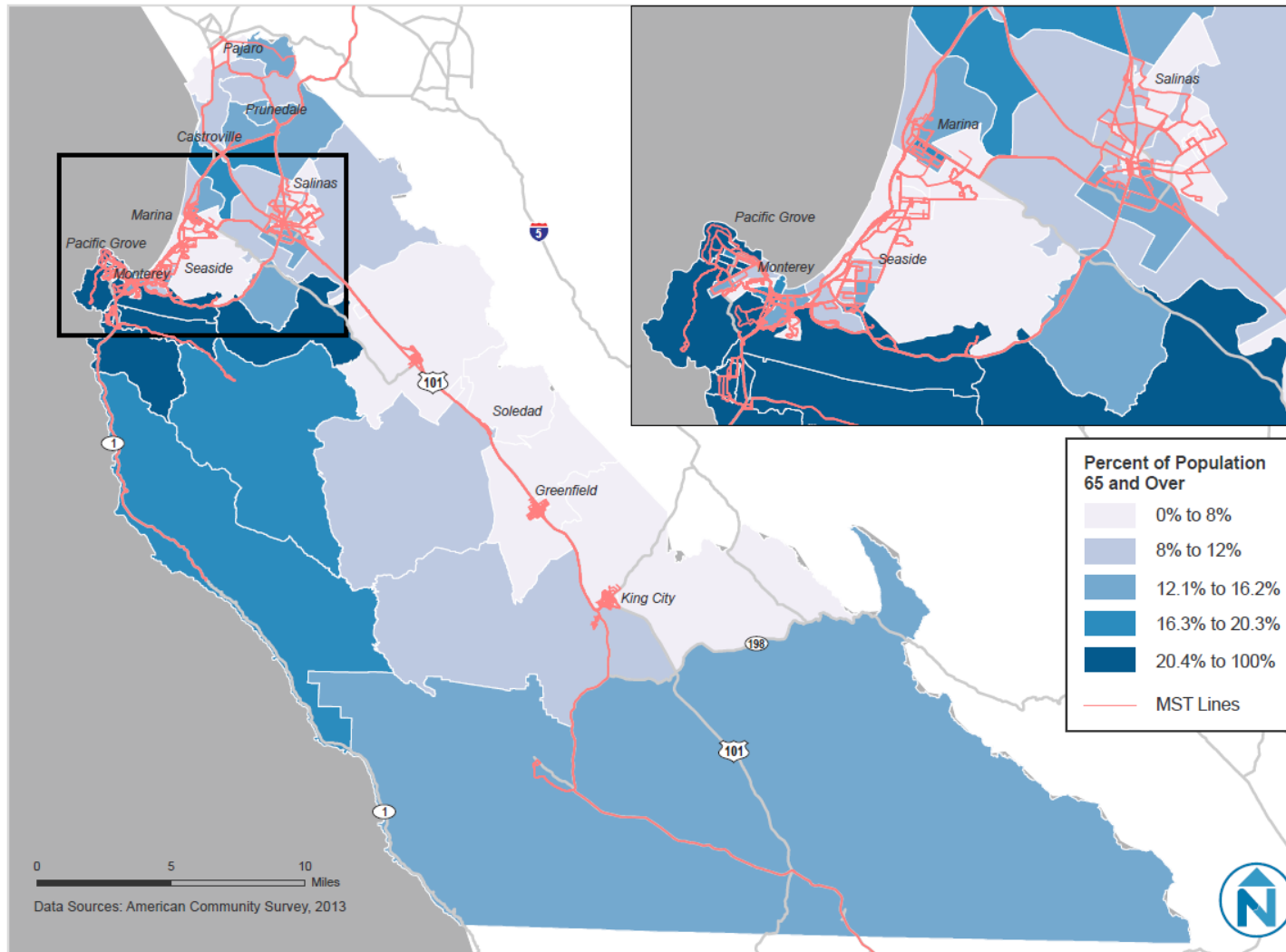
Data Source: American Community Survey 2013

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Veterans

Compared to the rest of the Monterey Bay Area, Monterey County's veteran population is similar, with 7% of the population with veteran status in the county. The majority of veterans in Monterey County are male (93%) and most served during the Vietnam War (38%). Approximately a quarter of veterans in Monterey County have some disability (25%) and a small percentage of veterans were below the federal poverty level in the past 12 months (7%).

As a percentage of each city's total population, the highest concentrations of veterans are in Monterey (13%), Pacific Grove (13%), Marina (12%), Del Rey Oaks (12%), and Carmel-by-the-Sea (11%). Figure 2-5 provides a summary of Monterey County's veteran population. Figure 2-6 and Figure 2-7 illustrate the distribution of the veteran population across the county. As reported by MST staff, most veterans with secure housing and living in incorporated areas are Fort Ord retirees; still, 32% of the county's veteran population lives in unincorporated areas of the county.

Figure 2-5   Population of Veterans in Monterey County Cities, 2013

	Overall Population 18 years and older	Veterans	Percent of Monterey County Veteran population	Veterans as a Percent of City Population
California	28,275,343	1,893,539	-	6.7%
Monterey Bay Area	552,192	36,758	-	6.7%
Monterey County	302,399	21,572	-	7.1%
Cities in Monterey				
Carmel-by-the-Sea	3,070	342	1.6%	11.1%
Del Rey Oaks	1,441	169	0.8%	11.7%
Gonzales	5,202	31	0.1%	0.6%
Greenfield	10,718	306	1.4%	2.9%
King City	8,137	151	0.7%	1.9%
Marina	15,445	1,832	8.5%	11.9%
Monterey	21,648	2,798	13.0%	12.9%
Pacific Grove	12,689	1,603	7.4%	12.6%
Salinas	103,374	4,334	20.1%	4.2%
Sand City	211	8	0.0%	3.8%
Seaside	23,047	2,008	9.3%	8.7%
Soledad	20,835	1,109	5.1%	5.3%
Other	76,582	6,881	31.9%	9.0%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2008-2013. Table S2101.

Figure 2-6   Monterey County Veterans Population Density (veterans per acre by Census Tract), 2013
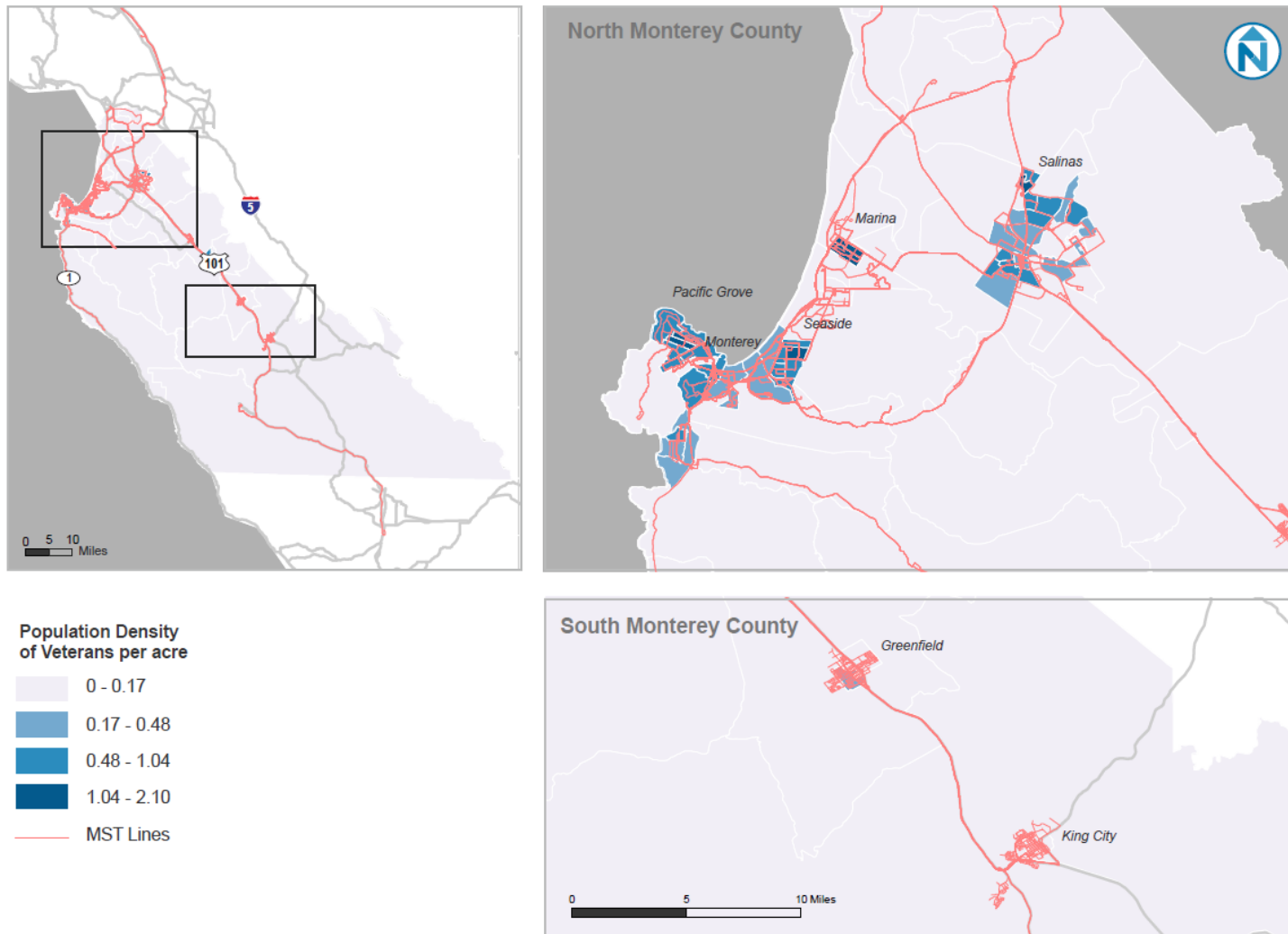
Population Density of Veterans per acre
- 0 - 0.17
- 0.17 - 0.48
- 0.48 - 1.04
- 1.04 - 2.10
- MST Lines

Data Source: American Community Survey 2013

Figure 2-7   Monterey County Veteran Population Distribution (percent of population by Census Tract), 2013
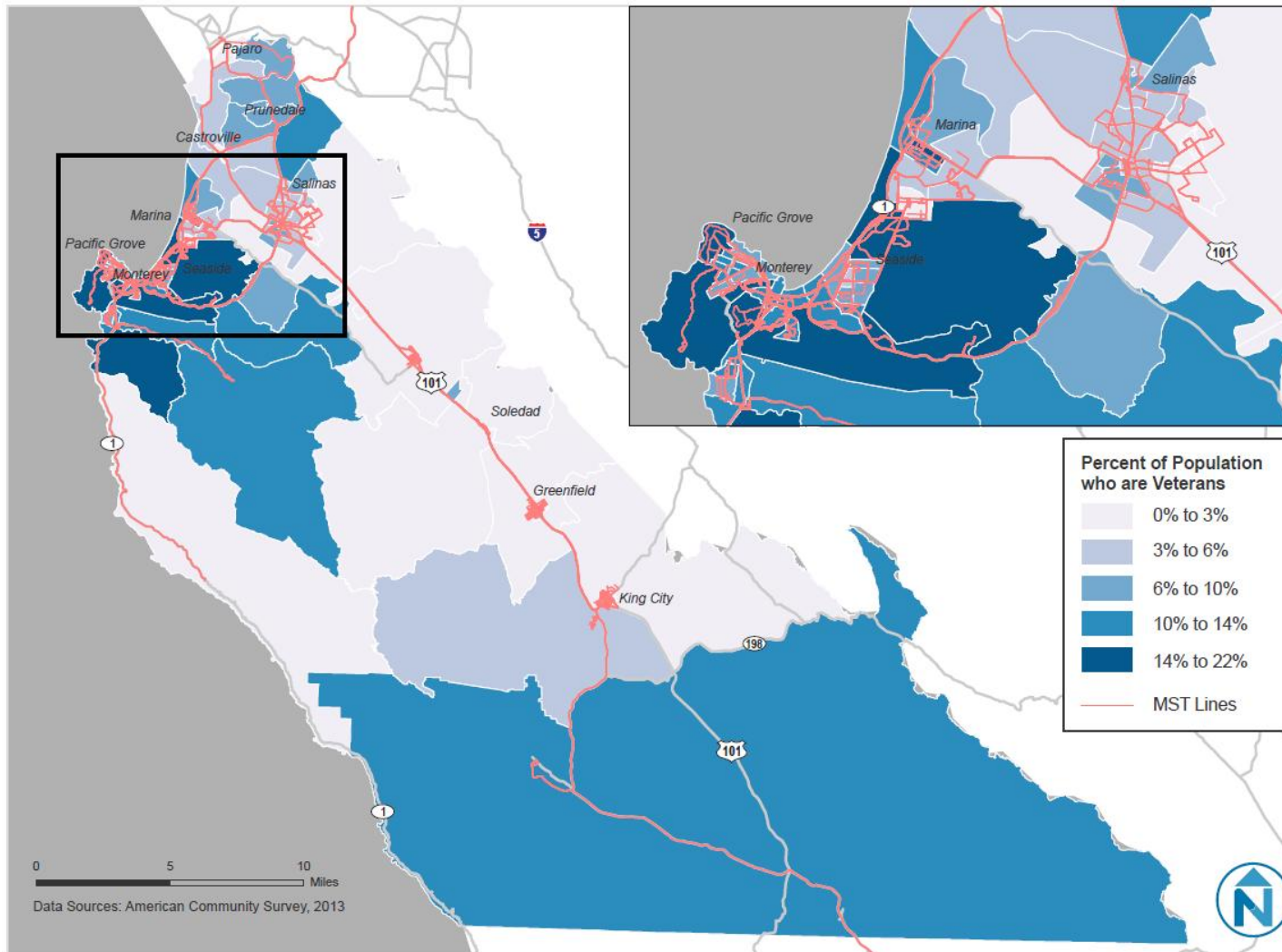
Data Source: American Community Survey 2013

Persons with Disabilities

Approximately 8% of Monterey County's population reports a disability, which is comparable to the Monterey Bay Area as a whole.[1] The most common disabilities in the county are ambulatory (26%), independent living (19%), and cognitive disabilities (19%). Nearly half of all persons with disabilities are also seniors age 65 and older (44%) and 64% of RIDES-certified customers are at least 65 years old.[2] Figure 2-8 provides a summary of Monterey County's population of people with disabilities. Figure 2-9 and Figure 2-10 illustrate the distribution of people with disabilities across the county.

Figure 2-8   Population of People with Disabilities in Monterey County Cities, 2013

	Overall Population	People with Disabilities	Percent of Monterey population	Percent with Disabilities
California	37,130,876	3,762,239	-	10.1%
Monterey Bay Area	721,024	61,626	-	8.5%
Monterey County	401,788	33,610	-	8.4%
Cities in Monterey				
Carmel-by-the-Sea	3,760	248	0.7%	6.6%
Del Rey Oaks	1,762	204	0.6%	11.6%
Gonzales	8,252	311	0.9%	3.8%
Greenfield	16,482	1,276	3.8%	7.7%
King City	12,918	904	2.7%	7.0%
Marina	19,860	2,258	6.7%	11.4%
Monterey	25,948	2,635	7.8%	10.2%
Pacific Grove	14,781	1,765	5.3%	11.9%
Salinas	150,534	10,862	32.3%	7.2%
Sand City	299	28	0.1%	9.4%
Seaside	32,086	2,798	8.3%	8.7%
Soledad	15,767	1,114	3.3%	7.1%
Other	99,339	9,207	27.4%	9.3%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2009-2013. Table S1810.

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[1] Note: the U.S. Census tracks six disability classifications—hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficultly

[2] As reported by MST staff

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Figure 2-9   Monterey County Persons with Disabilities Population Density (people per acre by Census Tract), 2013
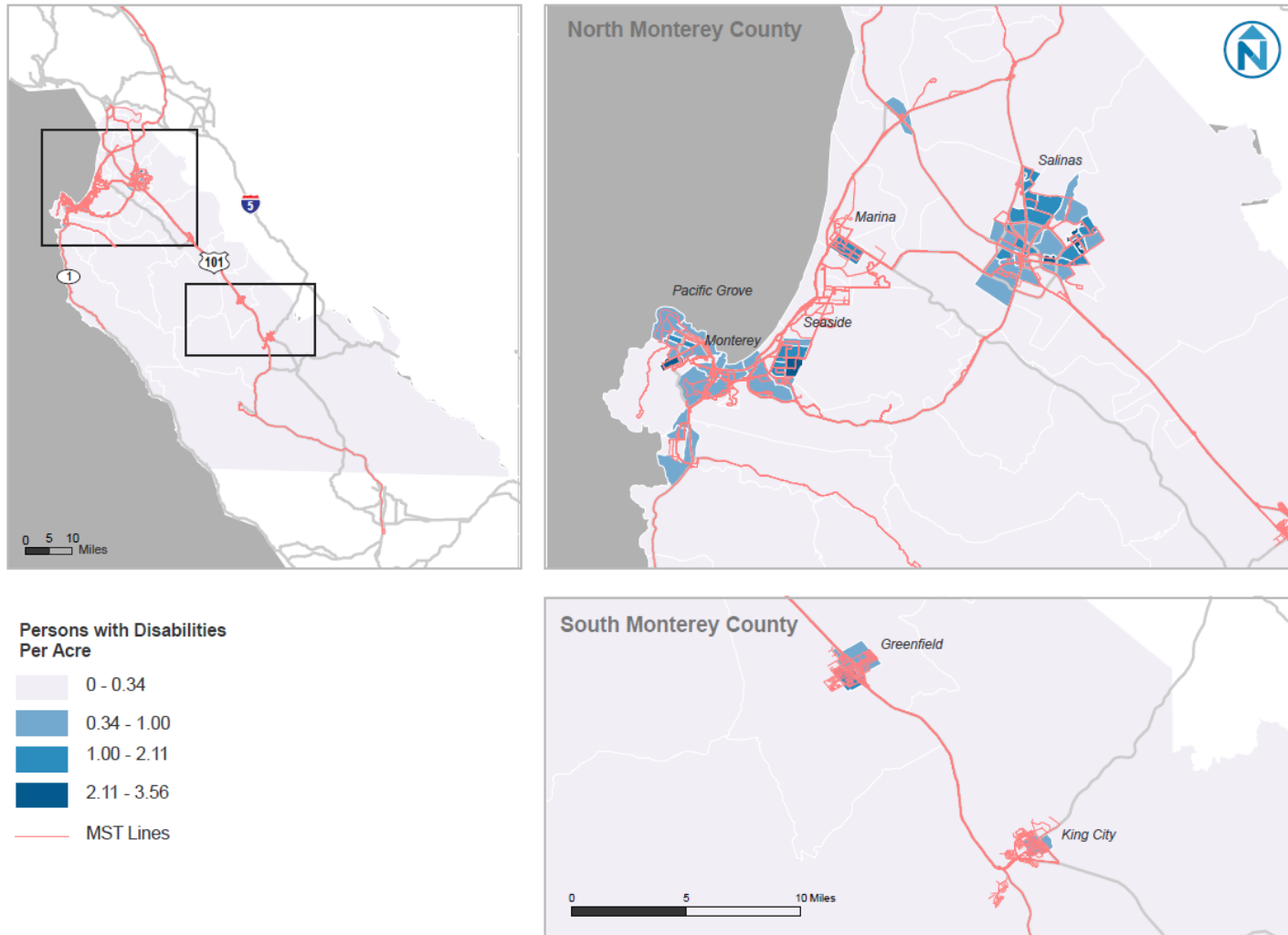
Persons with Disabilities Per Acre

	0 - 0.34
	0.34 - 1.00
	1.00 - 2.11
	2.11 - 3.56
——	MST Lines

Data Source: American Community Survey 2013

Figure 2-10   Monterey County Persons with Disabilities Population Distribution (percent of population by Census Tract), 2013
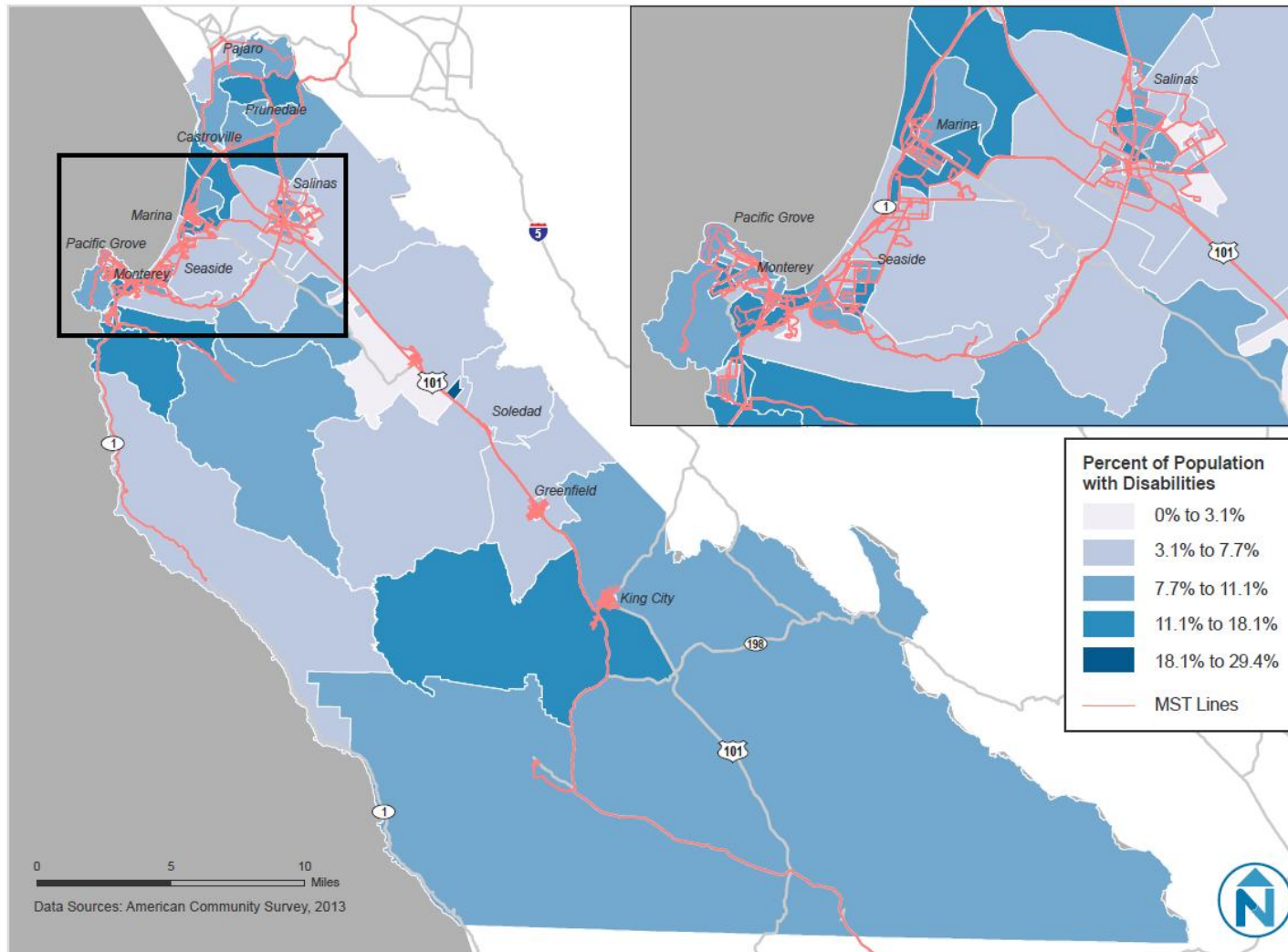
PAST TRENDS[3]

Between 1960 and 2000, Monterey County as a whole experienced slower population growth compared to the rest of the Monterey Bay Area. In the 1990s, the county as a whole grew, but 6 of the county's 13 jurisdictions experienced a decline in population (Carmel-by-the-Sea, Del Rey Oaks, Marina, Monterey, Pacific Grove, and Seaside). Salinas' population grew by nearly 34,000 residents during the same decade. Soledad also experienced population growth largely due to the establishment of the Salinas Valley State Prison in 1996. The prison has a maximum capacity of 4,400 and as of 2010, housed 3,630 individuals.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments—the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO)—projects the Monterey County population to increase nearly 20% between 2010 and 2035. The senior population--age 65 and older--is expected to increase by more than 60%.

Despite this growth, the Monterey Bay Area is projected to grow more slowly than the state and nation over the same time period. The Monterey Bay Area's below average concentration of high-growth job sectors like information and professional services accounts for its slower population growth. According to AMBAG, the area's growth will occur in the agriculture and tourism sectors and at higher rates than the state as a whole. In general, the Monterey Bay Area has more residents per job than the national average because many residents commute to jobs outside the region, particularly to Santa Clara County. This trend is expected to continue to 2035.

Figure 2-11 and Figure 2-12 show the growth of Monterey County's older adult population from AMBAG's 2014 Regional Growth Forecast. Figures 2-13 and 2-14 illustrate population density for the county in 2010 and the projected population density in 2035. As the figures show, the senior population is growing more rapidly than the overall population.

Figure 2-11   Older Adult Population Growth in Monterey County, 2010-2035

	Monterey County Population				Monterey County Cumulative Percentage Increase by Category			
Year	Overall	55-59	60-64	65+	Overall	55-59	60-64	65+
2010	415,057	23,558	19,660	44,422	-	-	-	-
2020	447,567	24,583	22,639	57,127	7.8%	4.4%	15.2%	28.6%
2025	464,619	22,962	21,538	63,491	11.9%	-2.5%	9.6%	42.9%
2030	480,355	22,156	20,912	70,177	15.7%	-6.0%	6.4%	58.0%
2035	496,092	23,641	20,977	71,740	19.5%	0.4%	6.7%	61.5%

Source: AMBAG 2014 Regional Growth Forecast – Technical Documentation

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[3] http://ambag.org/sites/default/files/documents/FINAL%20Adopted%20Forecast%20and%20Documentation.pdf

Figure 2-12   Growth of Monterey County's Older Adult Population, 2010-2035
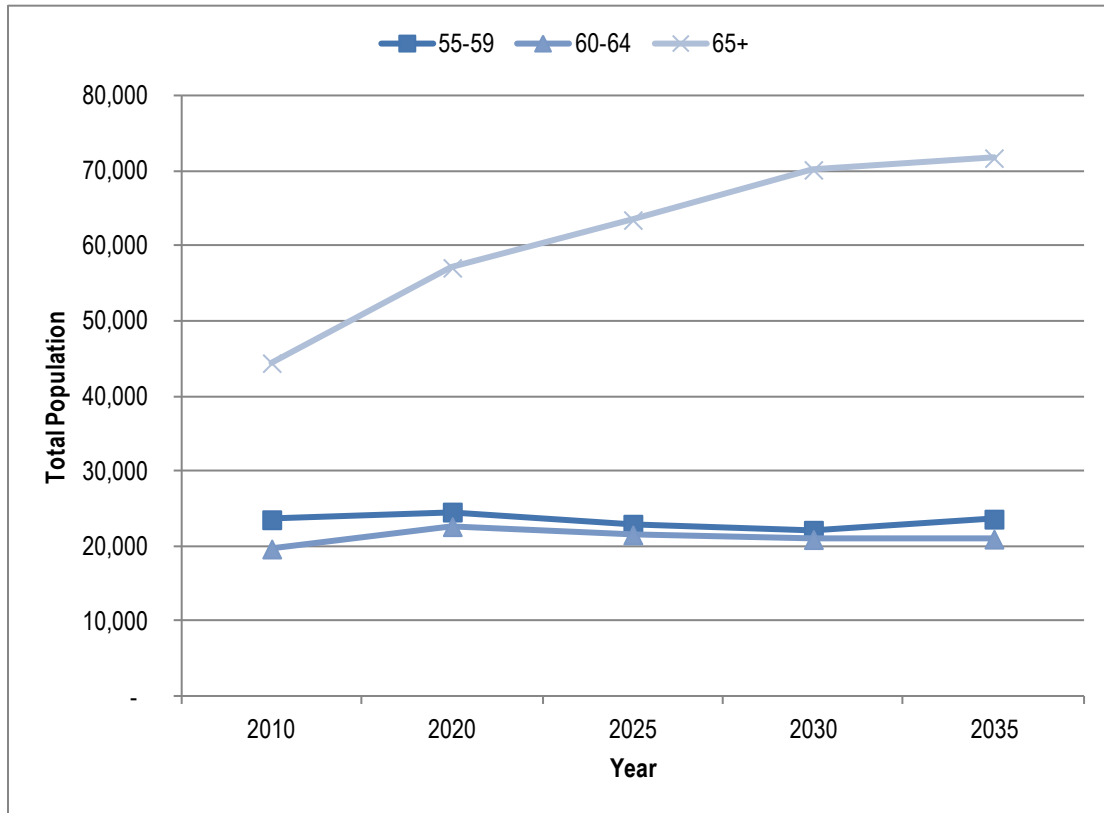
Source: AMBAG 2014 Regional Growth Forecast – Technical Documentation

Figure 2-13   2035 Population Density by Census Tract (households per acre), Monterey County

**Projected Population Density
of Households per acre in 2035**

- 0 - 2.46
- 2.46 - 6.63
- 6.63 - 14.02
- 14.02 - 35.27
- MST Lines
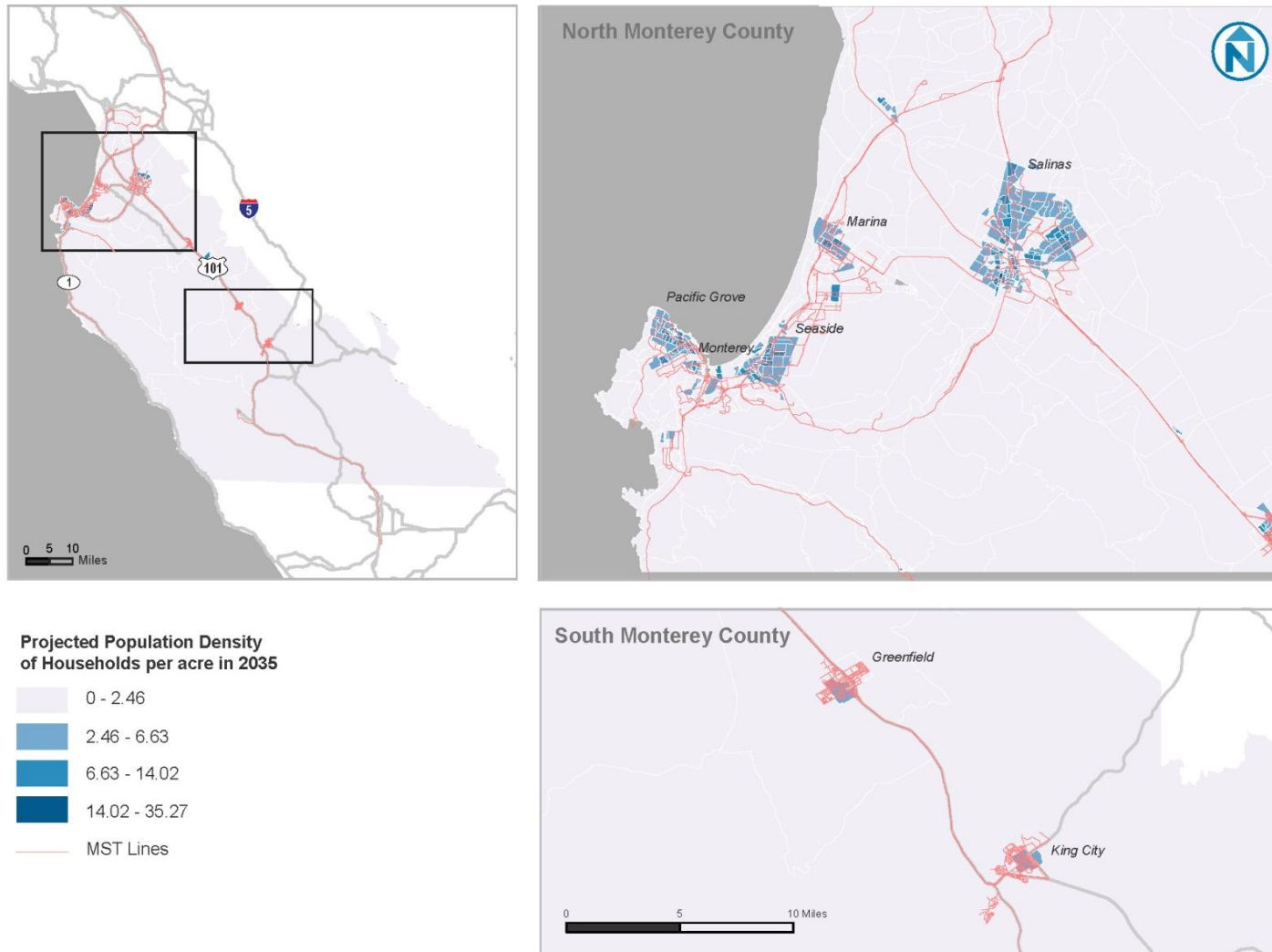
Source: AMBAG 2014 Regional Growth Forecast – Technical Documentation

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SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Existing Population

- Salinas is the most populous city in the county by almost a factor of 10; it is also home to 23% of the county's senior population and 20% of the county's veteran population
- Carmel-by-the-Sea is small, but a large percentage of its residents are over age 65
- Almost a third of the county's veteran population lives outside of Census-designated cities
- Approximately a quarter of Monterey County veterans have a disability
- The City of Monterey is home to 13% of the county's veteran population
- Ambulatory, cognitive, and independent living difficulties are the most common disabilities in the county; 26% of the county's population of people with disabilities has an ambulatory disability
- Nearly half all people with disabilities are age 65 or older
- Recent declines in the county's population were largely due to the closure of Fort Ord in 1994; simultaneously, the county's population began to concentrate in Salinas, which opened the Salinas Valley State Prison in 1996 in nearby Soledad.

Future Growth

- Like elsewhere in the state and country, growth in the senior population in Monterey County is expected to far outpace growth in the overall population
- Current and future population in Monterey County is highly concentrated in the northern half of the county; outside of that, the population is concentrated in smaller cities along the U.S. 101 corridor
- Overall population in the Monterey Bay Area (including Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties) is expected to increase by 20% between 2010 and 2035

3 EXISTING TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

This chapter presents an overview of existing transportation services provided throughout Monterey County, ranging from fixed-route bus services to subsidized taxis and agency-specific transportation services.

EXISTING SERVICES

MST Transportation Services

Fixed-Route Bus

MST provides fixed-route bus service to the greater Monterey and Salinas areas—as far south as Paso Robles and Big Sur and as far north as Santa Cruz and San Jose. Service originates from two primary service hubs—the Monterey Transit Plaza (in downtown Monterey) and the Salinas Transit Center (in downtown Salinas). From these hubs, 59 routes branch out like spokes on a wheel.

Fixed-route fares range from $1.50 for local services, $2.50 for primary services, $3.50 for regional services, and $12.00 for commuter buses. A 50% discount is available to people age 18 or younger or age 65 or older; individuals with disabilities; Medicare Card holders; or veterans. Free bus passes are available to active duty military personnel and Department of Defense civilians who qualify under the federal government's transit benefit program.[4]

Figure 3-1 shows the fleet mix operated by MV Transportation and used for MST fixed-route and paratransit services. The hybrid vehicles and trolleys are used for fixed route service; the El Dorados are used for paratransit. This table shows the vehicle requirements effective August 1, 2015; it does not show spares.

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[4] http://mst.org/fares/passes/military/

Figure 3-1   MST Fixed-Route and Paratransit Vehicle Fleet

Bus Type	Count
Hybrid (fixed-route)	4
El Dorado (fixed-route)	22
Trolley (fixed-route)	6
On-Call vehicle	6
Paratransit vehicle	27
Total	**65**

RIDES ADA Paratransit

MST RIDES serves most of the same geographic area as the fixed-route system in the portion of the county between Prunedale and Watsonville in the north and San Lucas in the south (within ¾ of a mile from any of MST's regular bus routes). Outside that area, MST has received a waiver from the FTA that allows the agency not to operate paratransit service in very remote areas in the south part of the county along Highway 1 down to Big Sur.

RIDES Special Transportation (RIDES ST)

Limited service is available in parts of unincorporated North and South Monterey County that are outside MST's ADA service area for the purpose of traveling into the ADA service area. Once inside the ADA service area, certified RIDES customers may take full advantage of the RIDES program.

The MST RIDES Special Transportation (ST) service is a non-ADA, locally funded transportation program. The service area for North Monterey County includes unincorporated areas within Prunedale, Castroville, and Aromas. The MST RIDES ST service area for South Monterey County extends one mile on either side of Highway 101 from Salinas to Bradley, including the unincorporated community of San Ardo.

Passengers must be ADA Paratransit certified and may use the service for any reason; however, the point of departure must be within specified ST service areas. This service accounts for about 2% of all paratransit rides. There is a $2.00 surcharge (on top of the RIDES fare) for trips originating or ending in the ST zones(s).

Senior Shuttles

MST has four Senior Shuttles—community routes that are meant to deliver service for seniors with no transfers required, but with slightly more circuitous routes than other fixed-route lines. These MST lines (91, 92, 94, and 95) are operated daily on fixed routes and schedules and are open to the general public. They serve important shopping, medical, and residential locations.

Special Medical Trips

MST RIDES also provides out-of-county medical trips twice monthly to facilities in Santa Clara County and San Francisco. This service is available to the general public on a first-come/first-served basis and must be scheduled at least a day in advance. The fare is $40 and no discounts are available to seniors, people with disabilities, or veterans, but personal care attendants can travel free of charge.

On-Call (Marina, South County)

The MST On-Call, or dial-a-ride, services operate year-round and provide public dial-a-ride in designated service corridors in commercial and residential areas within the Cities of Marina, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, and King City. On-Call replaced the fixed-route in places where there was very low ridership in Marina, and MST's South County On-Call system primarily replaced municipally operated general public dial-a-ride services in King City, Greenfield and Soledad while providing new service to the city of Gonzales.

The Marina On-Call service operates seven days a week between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays; all other On-Call services operate weekdays only beginning as early as 6:30 a.m. and ending as late as 6:30 p.m. Standard fare is $1.50; a 50% discount is available for people under age 18 or over age 65, Medicare Card holders, and people with disabilities.[5,6]

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[5] http://mst.org/wp-content/media/ONCALLMARINA.pdf

[6] http://www.mst.org/wp-content/media/ONCALLSOUTHCOUNTY.pdf

Figure 3-2   MST On-Call Marina Service Map
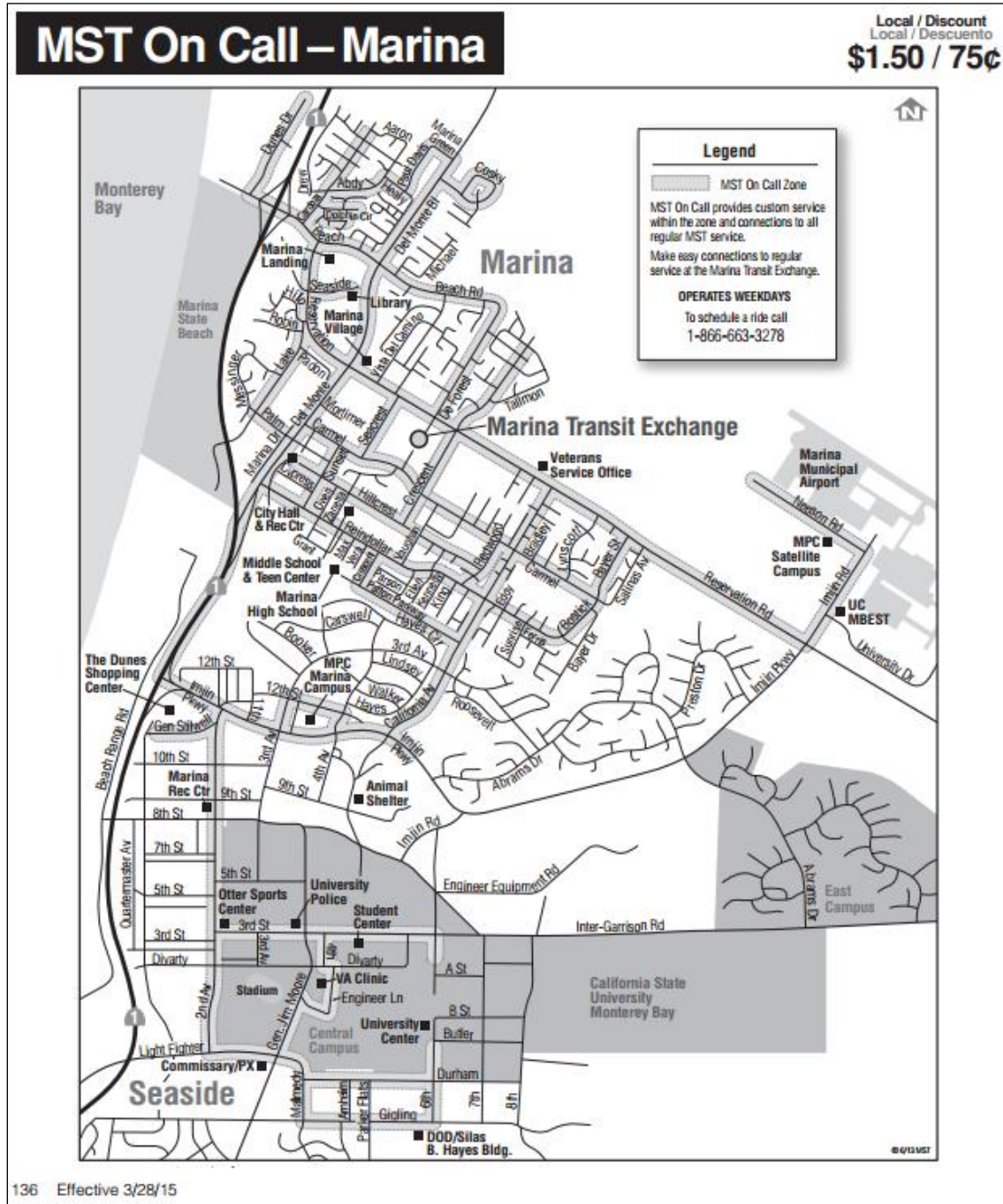
Source: MST

MST Transportation Programs

Taxi Voucher Programs

MST offers two taxi voucher programs; one for people certified with MST RIDES and one for people age 65 or older residing within participating cities (currently Salinas, Carmel, Del Rey Oaks, Marina, Monterey, Pacific Grove, San City, or Seaside). Taxi trips using vouchers must be taken on one of three approved taxi providers:

- Central Coast Cab
- Sal's Cab
- Yellow Cab

Eligible seniors can obtain vouchers free of charge through their city's participating agency. Each voucher covers up to $17 worth of taxi fare, but voucher users must pay a $3 co-pay and any amount above $17 total fare. When using a voucher, an individual must present photo identification. Qualifying seniors are currently limited to four vouchers per month.

MST RIDES customers can obtain vouchers directly through the Mobility Department and are currently limited to 10 vouchers per quarter.

So that this program is available to all qualifying seniors regardless of their disability, MST purchased nine wheelchair-accessible vehicles and has leased them to local taxi providers. Disabled persons have a higher priority for usage of these wheelchair-accessible taxis; however they usually require advanced reservation.

Travel Training

Travel training is a program to increase individuals' confidence in using the fixed-route transit system independently. MST's program is available to any individual, including seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans. Training is available on how to use the fixed-route system, how to access specific destinations, and how to use transit with mobility devices. The service is offered free of charge. Mobility Specialists also provide annual VTT and new hire training to MST coach operators.

Navigators

MST offers a unique program with its Navigators. Navigators are interns and volunteers that provide general assistance to individuals in using the transit system. Navigators help process taxi vouchers, attend community events, assist frail passengers, provide education, and visit senior centers. The program not only assists people in need, but also helps individuals develop empathy for these populations. Individuals in need of assistance by a Navigator can contact MST's Mobility Specialists by phone or email.

Other Transportation Services

ITN Monterey County

As part of a national network, Independent Transportation Network (ITN) Monterey County is a local non-profit affiliated with the National ITN that offers mobility services to dues-paying members. Anyone who is age 60 or over or is an adult with visual impairments is eligible to become a member. Transportation is provided primarily by volunteers in private vehicles and the

cost to riders is sometimes less than an equivalent non-subsidized taxi ride. The service is designed to operate like getting a ride from a friend or family member. Drivers will carry packages and provide a steady hand if assistance is needed. Volunteers earn credit toward future trips for friends and family members, which is a strong incentive to provide service in one's free time. Rides are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for any purpose, and any destination within the service area can be served.

Individual dues are $50 per year for an individual or $75 for a family; scholarships are available to assist low-income riders and shared rides are offered at a 20% discount. Rides are paid for through rider and driver accounts; no cash is exchanged. Each ride costs $4 per trip plus $1.50 per mile; the average trip cost is $11.

Ten local communities are served by ITN:

- Carmel
- Monterey
- Pacific Grove
- Pebble Beach
- Seaside
- Salinas
- Toro Park
- Carmel Valley
- Marina
- Castroville

American Cancer Society Road to Recovery

The America Cancer Society's Road to Recovery program is a volunteer-driver based mobility program for cancer patients going to and from treatment. Patients must be ambulatory, able to walk unassisted to and from the vehicle, or be accompanied by an assistant. All ages are welcome, but people under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Requests for transportation must be made at least four days in advance. Transportation is available Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The local office is based in Oakland.

Veterans Affairs Office Transportation

The Monterey County Military and Veterans Affairs Office provides transportation for veterans to Palo Alto and San Jose VA clinics. Several other transportation programs are also available to veterans in Monterey County, coordinated through the Veterans Affairs Office:

- Assistance in purchasing and retrofitting wheelchair-accessible vehicles
- Assistance with vehicle repairs and the purchase of used vehicles[7]
- Mobile medical clinics[8]

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[7] http://goldenboymobility.com/useful-information/veterans

[8] http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=133 and
http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=135

MST RIDES PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Ridership

Ridership on MST's two main services for seniors and people with disabilities—RIDES and taxi service—has remained relatively flat since the beginning of FY13. This ridership trend is in line with MST's fixed-route services. The taxi program was implemented in early FY13; since that time, its use grew until the beginning of FY15. During that time, it shifted an increasing number of trips from the RIDES program to taxis, either through vouchers or subcontracting of services—typically (but not always) a more cost efficient mode. During the 2015 fiscal year, however, taxi ridership has remained flat and the share of all trips provided by taxis decreased due in part to limitations placed on the number of taxi vouchers made available to program participants.

Figure 3-3   MST RIDES Monthly Boardings, FY13 – FY15 (through April 2015)
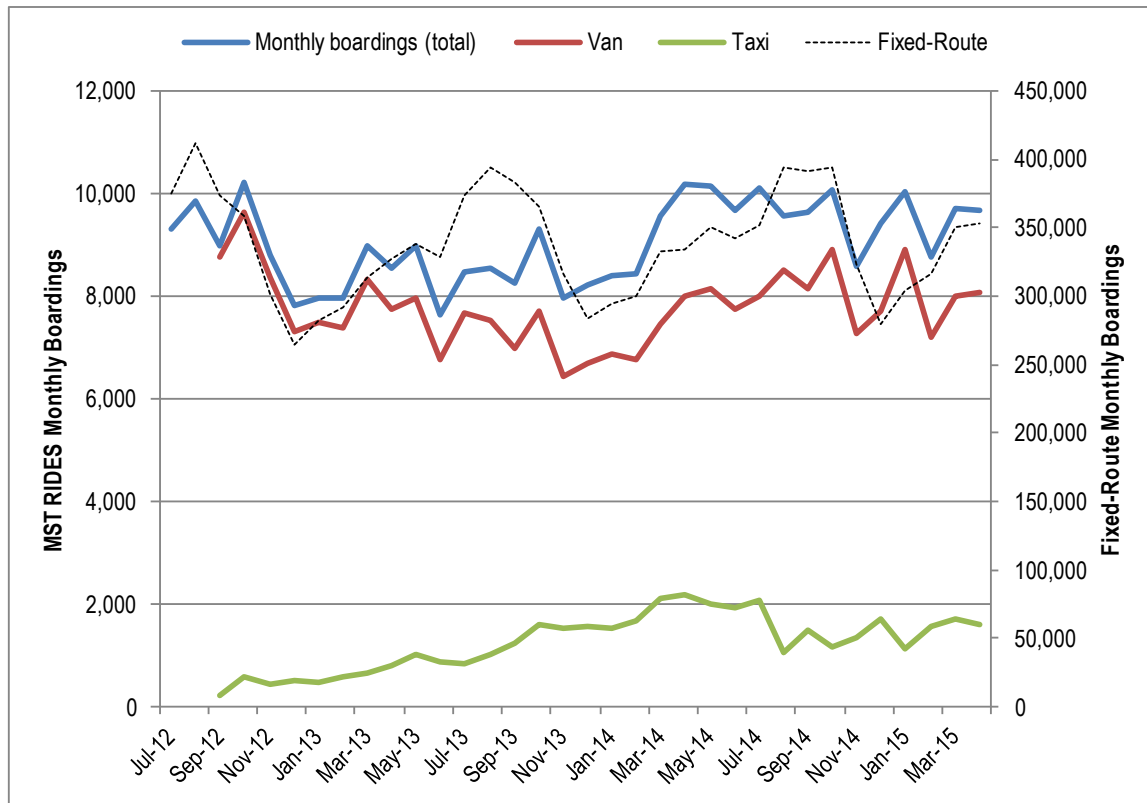
Sources: MST, National Transit Database (NTD)

Operating Costs

Operating costs for MST's paratransit services differ for minibus and taxi service. On average for the 2015 fiscal year (through April 2015), minibus service costs $29.48 per one-way trip and MST subsidizes 86% of that cost; taxi service costs $27.76 per one way trip with an 86% subsidy. See Figure 3-4.

Figure 3-4   MST RIDES Cost per One-Way Trip (FY15 through April 2015)
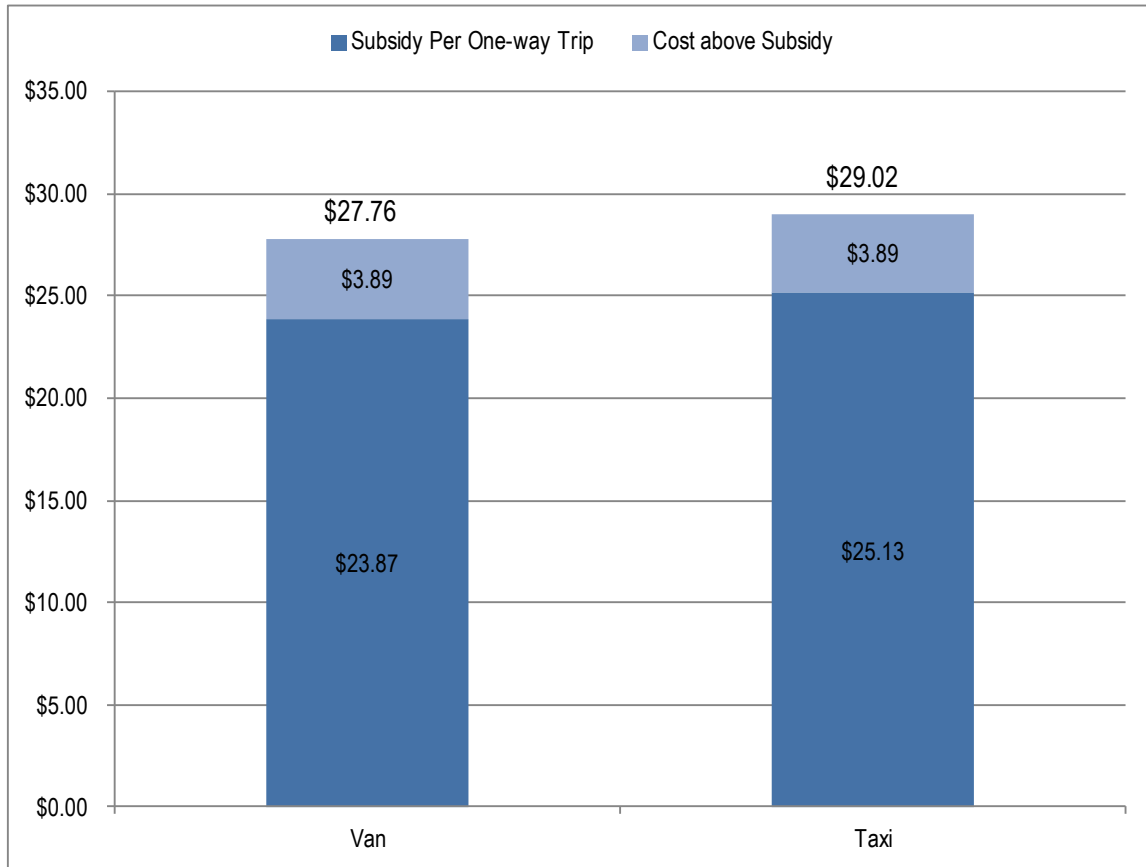
Source: MST

Using the average operating cost per one-way trip, total operating cost net of fares can be calculated. According to this calculation, through April 2015, MST van and taxi paratransit service cost the agency just over $2.3 million to provide. The FY16 budget for MST RIDES is $3,751,164. Figure 3-5 provides the FY15 costs through April 2015 in detail.[9]

Figure 3-5   MST RIDES and Taxi Program Operating Costs (FY15 through April 2015)

Mo.	Taxi Boardings	RIDES Boardings	Taxi Subsidy per One-way Trip	RIDES Subsidy per One-way Trip	Operating Cost (Taxi)	Operating Cost (RIDES)
Jul-14	2,078	8,021	$25.13	$23.87	$52,220.14	$191,461.27
Aug-14	1,051	8,501	$25.13	$23.87	$26,411.63	$202,918.87
Sep-14	1,503	8,142	$25.13	$23.87	$37,770.39	$194,349.54
Oct-14	1,171	8,915	$25.13	$23.87	$29,427.23	$212,801.05
Nov-14	1,340	7,260	$25.13	$23.87	$33,674.20	$173,296.20

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[9] Note: total costs are calculated based on rides provided multiplied by unit costs; they are not official MST costs

Mo.	Taxi Boardings	RIDES Boardings	Taxi Subsidy per One-way Trip	RIDES Subsidy per One-way Trip	Operating Cost (Taxi)	Operating Cost (RIDES)
Dec-14	1,697	7,724	$25.13	$23.87	$42,645.61	$184,371.88
Jan-15	1,124	8,924	$25.13	$23.87	$28,246.12	$213,015.88
Feb-15	1,561	7,213	$25.13	$23.87	$39,227.93	$172,174.31
Mar-15	1,729	7,988	$25.13	$23.87	$43,449.77	$190,673.56
Apr-15	1,597	8,092	$25.13	$23.87	$40,132.61	$193,156.04
FY15 Subtotal (through April)					*$373,205.63*	*$1,928,218.60*
FY15 Total (though April)						*$2,301,424.23*

Source: Operating cost calculated as total boardings X total subsidy per one-way trip (MST)

Productivity (passengers/hour)

RIDES minibus service has provided a slightly decreasing amount of service (measured as vehicle revenue hours) between FY13 and FY15. Over this period of time, productivity (measured as passengers per vehicle revenue hour) has exhibited a slightly increasing trend, meaning more passengers are being served in fewer hours. As of April 2015, MST RIDES minibus service served just under two passengers per revenue hour (Figure 3-6).

Figure 3-6   MST RIDES Passengers per Vehicle Revenue Hour (excluding taxis), FY13 – FY15 (through April 2015)
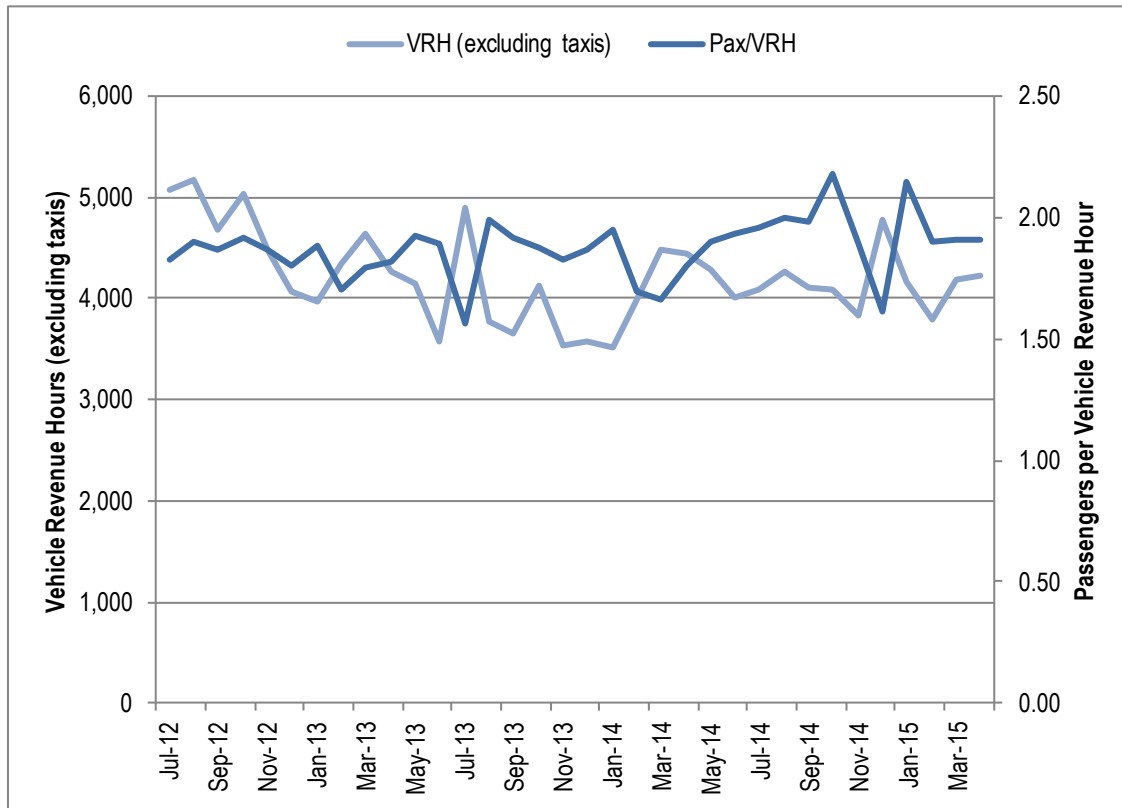
Source: MST

On-Time Performance

Vehicles are expected to arrive between 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time at least 90% of the time. Between FY 13 and FY15, MST's contractor (MV Transportation) has not met this goal. The beginning of FY15 saw the worst on-time performance, with as little as 75% of monthly trips served within the target window. According to staff, on-time performance has improved in recent months.

Figure 3-7 **MST RIDES On-Time Performance, FY13 – FY15 (through April 2015)**
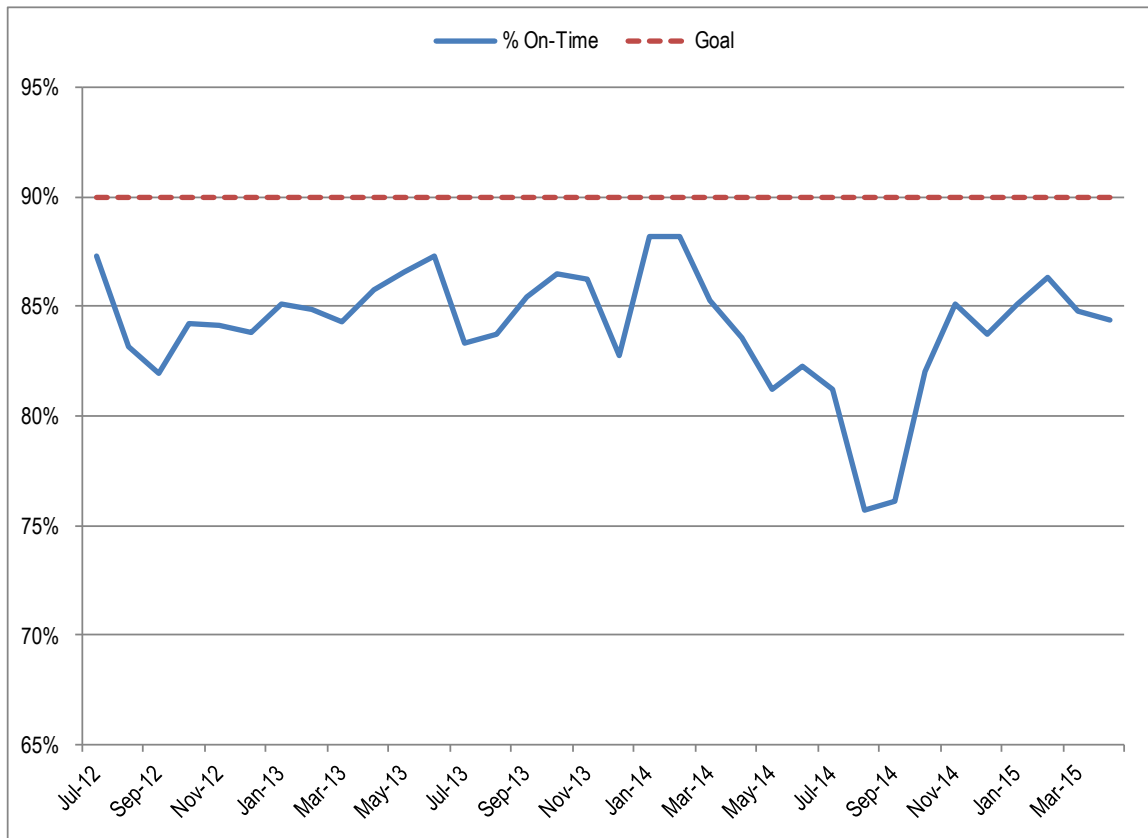
Source: MST

In the month of April 2015, the on-time performance target was met 6 of 30 days. Overall, performance in the month of April was below target. See Figure 3-8.

Figure 3-8   MST RIDES On-Time Performance (April 2015)
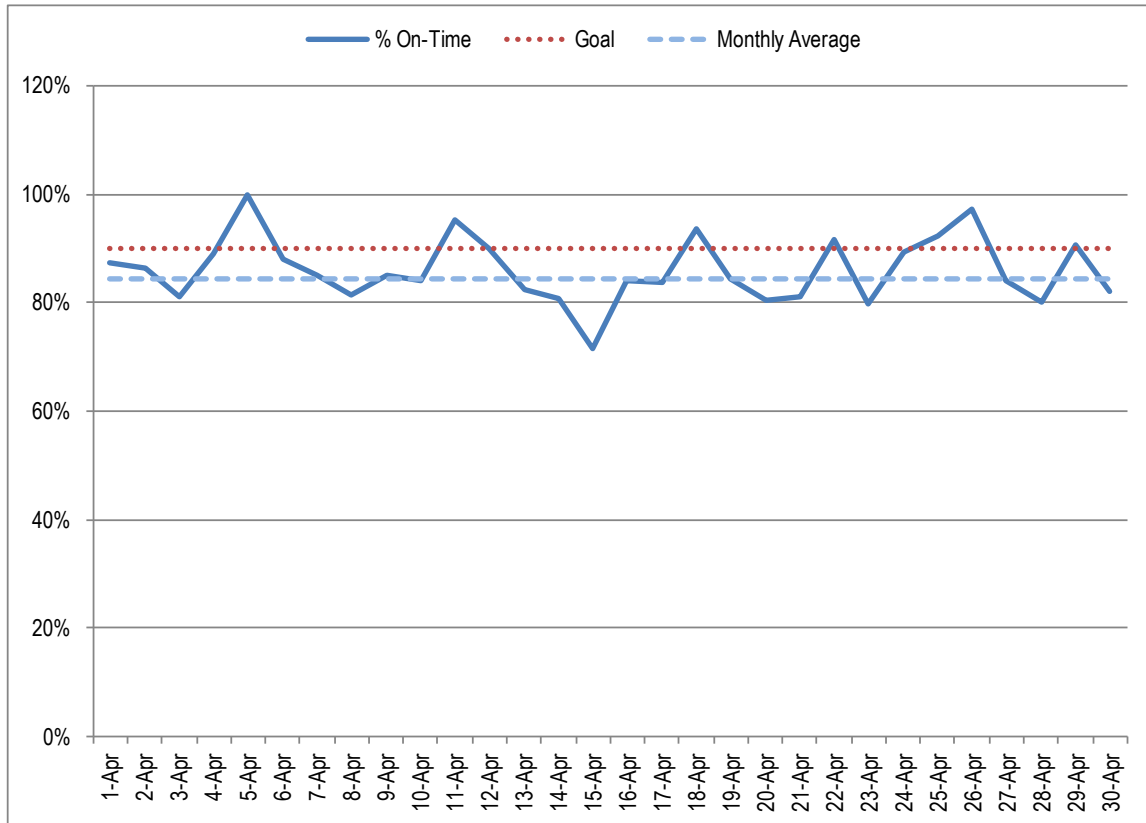
Source: MST

Note: % On-Time does not include early trips

No-Shows and Late Cancellations

In the last fiscal year, MST RIDES service saw an elevated percent of scheduled rides resulting in no-shows—when a passenger schedules a ride but does not show up for boarding—during the winter months. At other times of year, about 7% to 9% of scheduled rides resulted in no-shows. There was a slight increase in the percent of scheduled rides with late cancels (when a passenger cancels after the required window), but performance recovered in the month of April, with just over 5% of rides being canceled late. While the no-show rate is relatively high compared to other paratransit agencies, the combined rate of no-shows and late cancellations is within industry standards.

It should be noted that, in 2014, MST increased the late cancellation window from one to two hours prior to a scheduled trip, meaning that more cancellations would be counted as late. This may account for some of the increase in FY15.

Figure 3-9   **Percentage of No-Shows and Late Cancellations (FY15 through April 2015)**
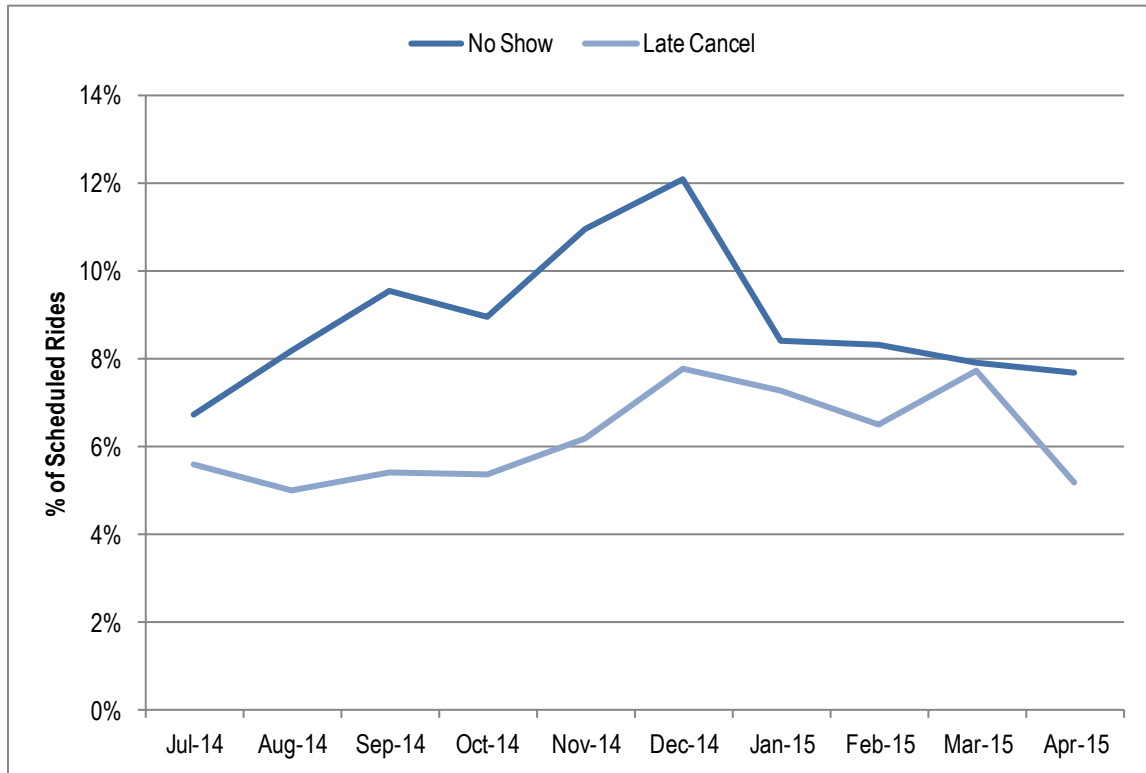
Source: MST

Call Statistics

Reservation Telephone Hold Times

MST's service agreement with MV requires that telephone "wait" time (time between when the call is placed and when it is answered) shall not exceed three minutes on 95% of all calls and "on hold" time (time between when the call is answered and when the caller is taken off hold) shall not exceed five minutes on 99% of all calls.

MST met its goal for the four most recent months for which data was available (January through April 2015). More than 5% of callers were required to wait longer than 3 minutes and more than 1% were on hold longer than 5 minutes between August and December 2014.

Figure 3-10   MST RIDES Wait and On-Hold Telephone Times (FY15 through April 2015)
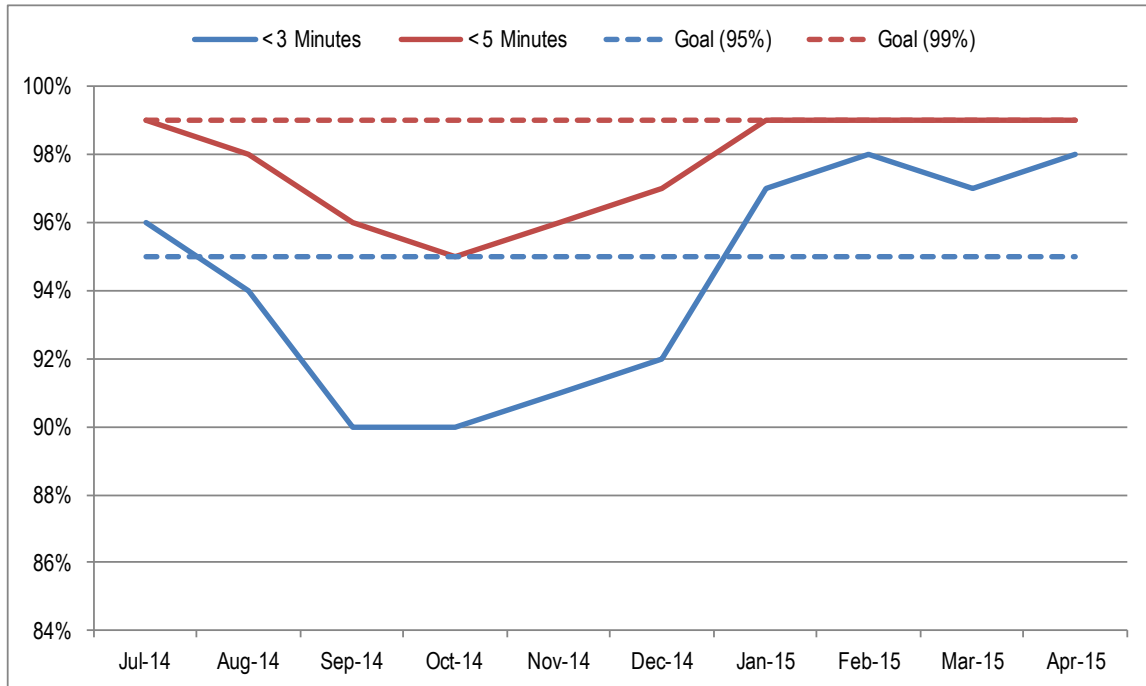
Source: MST

Figure 3-11 takes a closer look at the data from Figure 3-10 by focusing on one single month—April 2015. In this month, MST's call center met both wait and on-hold time goals with almost 98% of calls answered within three minutes and more than 99% of calls answered within five minutes. The call center received over 14,000 calls in April; about 9,700 boardings on RIDES and taxis occurred.

Figure 3-11   MST RIDES Telephone Call Summary (April 2015)

Summary	Calls	Notes
Total Calls Received	14,380	--
Total Calls In	7,915	--
Total Calls Abandoned By The Caller	1,186	--
Total Calls Abandoned By The Caller < 180 (s)	1,107	--
Total Calls Abandoned By The Caller > 180(s) & <300(s)	59	Penalty
Total Calls Abandoned By The Caller > 300(s)	20	Penalty
Adjusted Calls Answered < 180(s)	7,745	**97.85%**
Adjusted Calls > 300(s)	41	**0.52%**

Source: MST

Excessively Long Trips

Excessively long travel times on MST RIDES paratransit services are defined as those that exceed the travel times on MST's fixed-route bus service for the same trip (origin to destination). MST

currently does not track this number, however there have been very few complaints received concerning excessively long trip length. When such a complaint is received, MST staff compares the RIDES trip duration with that of the fixed-route service. To date, none of these complaints was associated with a trip that exceeded travel time for an equivalent trip on MST's fixed-route service.

Missed Trips

MST defines denied trips as those that are not accommodated within either one hour prior to or one hour after the passenger's requested pick up time.[10] The contractor's corporate policy (MV Transportation) prohibits trip denials and requires that all trips be accommodated. As a result, there have been no trip denials for this fiscal year.

Complaint Ratio

In FY15 through April 2015, MST received 1.10 complaints per 1,000 trips, on average. This rate is well within industry standards.

OTHER SERVICES' PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

At the time of this writing, no additional performance data were available for the taxi voucher, travel training, Special Transportation (ST), or other programs.

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[10] In the event that a denied trip occurs, it is counted as two denied trips to account for the return trip.

4 COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND FEEDBACK

To gather insights from the local community, an online and paper-based survey was administered during the existing conditions research phase of this project.

The Monterey-Salinas Transit Measure Q survey was open from June 20 through July 8, 2015. It was advertised on MST's website, through a local press release, on MST's social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter (Figure 4-1), and via MST's senior (101 individuals) and veterans (90 individuals) email lists. Paper copies of the survey were distributed to Meals on Wheels of Salinas Valley, Meals on Wheels of Monterey, the Prunedale Senior Center, the Salinas Senior Program, and the Sally Griffin Center. The survey was available in both English and Spanish.

The survey effort resulted in a total of 187 responses – 70 English and 17 Spanish written responses; 99 English and one Spanish online response. Not all respondents answered every question; skipping questions was allowed. Therefore, in the analysis summarized below, percentages represent the *percent of respondents who answered that question*, unless otherwise noted. The count of respondents for each individual question (N) is provided where appropriate.

Figure 4-1   MST Social Media Survey Announcements
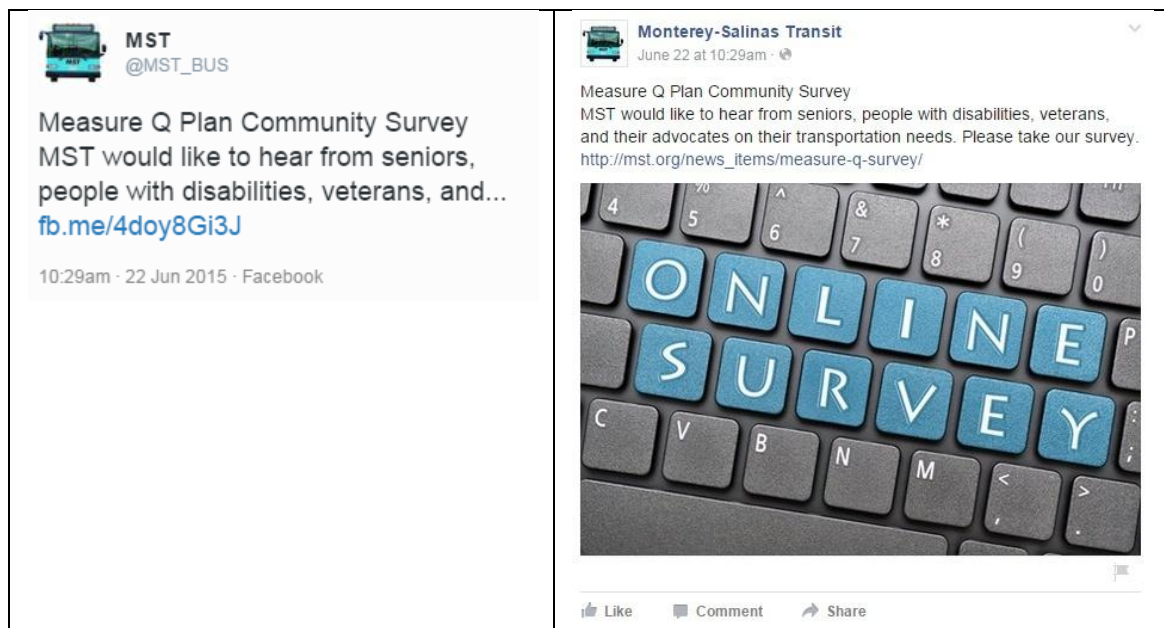
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Overall, respondents represent an older adult population that is not eligible for RIDES paratransit, although most are aware of the MST bus service and almost half report riding the bus (N=167). Only one respondent is on active duty. Eighty-one percent of respondents are over age 60 (N=162) and 64% report being retired (N=160). A higher percentage of respondents indicate having a disability (22%, N=159) than the percentage of respondents indicating eligibility for RIDES (9%, N=159), suggesting a significant number people with disabilities who are either still able to use transit or have not yet applied for RIDES.

Key characteristics of respondents include:

- Very few have an MST Courtesy Card, which provides access to discounted fares and passes (12 total respondents)
- 64% are retired (N=160)
- 15% are veterans (N=161); the older the respondents the more likely they are to be veterans (13% of people age 60+ are veterans whereas only 1% of people age 19 to 59 are; N=161)
- About half of respondents who answered a question about the use of mobility aids indicated using one, the most common of which is a cane (N=75); however, this represents only 20% of respondents overall (N=187)
- About 22% report having a mental or physical disability that prevents them from using public transit some or all of the time (N=159), which is noteworthy given the low RIDES registration rate
- About 9% report being eligible for MST's RIDES service (and 33% say they don't know whether they are eligible) (N=159)
- One respondent is on active duty

Figure 4-2   Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Percent of Respondents	Count
18 or under	0%	0
19-59	19%	30
60-64	15%	24
65+	67%	108

Source: MST Measure Q Online and Written Survey Reponses (English and Spanish)

AWARENESS AND USE OF EXISTING SERVICES

Overall, MST's fixed-route buses and RIDES are the most well-known and well-used transportation services serving veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities in Monterey County. However, almost half of all respondents indicated they do not commonly use *any* of the programs or services specified, suggesting that they either have viable alternatives or that those programs and services do not meet their needs. It is notable that approximately a quarter of respondents are aware of the VA transportation service (N=171) given that only 15% of respondents are veterans; a lower percentage of respondents are aware of countywide programs for a broader audience, such as senior shuttles, travel training, and the Navigators program. See Figure 4-3.

Figure 4-3   Awareness and Usage of Transportation Services

Service	Awareness (% of Respondents)	Usage (% of Respondents)
MST Bus	90%	44%
MST RIDES	64%	9%
Senior taxi vouchers	60%	12%
MST Senior Shuttles	24%	5%
MST Special Medical Trips	22%	1%
MST On Call Marina	18%	3%
MST On Call South County	18%	1%
ITN Monterey	19%	4%
MST Travel Training	20%	3%
MST Navigators	18%	2%
American Cancer Society Road to Recovery	12%	2%
Veterans Affairs Office transportation to Palo Alto and San Jose VA clinics	26%	2%
None of the above	7%	46%
Count (N)	*171*	*167*

Source: MST Measure Q Online and Written Survey Reponses (English and Spanish)

Among people who report using at least one of the transportation services listed in Figure 4-3 currently (N=89), the three most common trip types are for shopping (55 %), recreation (47%), and non-dialysis medical needs (43%); each respondent could report multiple trip types.[11] About three-fifths of respondents know that discounted fares are available to seniors, youth, people with disabilities, and Medicare card holders (N=167). It is notable that nearly a third of respondents are aware of the Department of Defense's free bus pass program for active duty personnel and their families even though only one of the respondents is actively serving in the military (N=164).

COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

When asked how well existing services meet their needs, respondents generally report that they are well served; responses from service providers indicate the same. However, there are some specific limitations as noted in open-ended comments. For example, for shopping and recreational trips, people are comfortable relying on public transportation, but for an event with a specific start time—such as a doctor's appointment or a strict work schedule—people are hesitant to rely on it. This is generally consistent with the statistics presented above—that shopping and recreation are two of the most common trip types among people who commonly rely on one of Monterey's existing transportation services. Still, 43% indicated commonly relying on them for

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[11] The services considered include MST bus, MST RIEDS, Senior Taxi Vouchers, MST Senior Shuttles, MST Special Medical Trips, MST On-call Marina, MST On-call South County, ITN Monterey, American Cancer Society Road to Recovery, and VA Office transportation

medical appointments, and the most commonly used mode to access those appointments is the MST bus.

Other challenges discussed in the open-ended comments include:

- Schedules
  - Services ending too early (e.g. 5 p.m. from Ryan Ranch, service after 7pm to Lovers Point, Route 55 from San Jose not late enough to spend a full day in San Jose)
- Lacking connections
  - From Pebble Beach to other transit services
  - From Salinas to Monterey Airport; generally connections to/from Salinas
  - To/from South County
  - Responsiveness of MST in adding service to new points of interest (e.g. past service to Dunes Shopping Center)
- Lacking frequency
  - Medical connections: CHOMP and Ryan Ranch service too infrequent (requested at least hourly)
  - Infrequent access to San Jose (for medical, educational, airport, or other regional transit connections) or San Francisco
  - Infrequent service to/from Carmel
- Span of service limitations
  - Early morning needed
  - Evening/late night needed
- Resource scarcity
  - Conflicts between Soledad DaVita schedule and school schedule, affecting King City residents
- Trip types that are difficult (note that these are also the most common trip types taken by people who use one of the county's existing public transportation services)
  - Medical
  - Shopping
  - Recreational

Despite these limitations, several respondents indicated benefits of existing programs that would be important to maintain and promote.

- Riding public transit means individuals do not have to drive during heavy tourist season
- With the taxi voucher program, individuals can take the bus to shopping destinations and use a taxi to get home with their purchases
- Transportation services provide a break for the caregivers of seniors and people with disabilities
- Providers generally say existing transportation resources serve clients well

Respondents representing providers report that travel training has been particularly helpful for people with developmental disabilities and for seniors (e.g. in partnership with the Sally Griffin Active Living Center in Pacific Grove), though most respondents have not participated in this program. Similarly, when Navigators have been used, they have been helpful in coordinating

monthly trips or individual training sessions for seniors, but only one provider commented on this service.

PREFERENCES AND IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

When asked to rank several potential improvements to service, the highest priority among respondents was more frequent bus service; however, there was no clear "winner" among responses. Preferences are split between service improvements/additions and price changes. See Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4   Ranked Preferences for Transportation Improvement

Potential Improvement	% of Points Received[12]
More frequent bus service	23%
Less expensive public transit fares	18%
Transit service to new destinations	14%
Increased subsidy per taxi trip	14%
Later transit service	11%
More frequent special transportation services to medical appointments outside Monterey County	11%
Earlier transit service	9%
Count (N)	*75*

Source: MST Measure Q Online and Written Survey Reponses (English and Spanish)

In free-form comments, respondents were also asked to suggest specific improvements they would like to see. These include:

- Add veterans to the class of individuals receiving free or reduced cost transit passes (note: this strategy was implemented on December 5, 2015)
- More targeted marketing of MST's suite of programs and additional outreach to senior centers, resource fairs, and through targeted mailings
- Ensure on-time performance for On Call and RIDES services
- Taxi voucher program
    - Increase the number of rides allowed per month
    - List the approved taxi vendors on vouchers
- Bring back line 42 serving Westridge and Laurel West Shopping Centers
- Provide longer service hours to/from San Jose
- Use smaller vehicles that run more frequently
- More King City-specific service
- Add bus stop amenities like benches and shelters
- Reinstate a free transfer policy

[12] Respondents were asked to rank each option on a scale of 1 to 7. All top ranking votes were assigned 7 points and last ranking votes a score of 1. These were totaled to calculate the percentages above.

- Publish real-time bus information at stops
- Improve connections to Caltrain in Gilroy and San Jose
- Make sanitary wipes available to boarding passengers
- Create a bonus system for MST drivers who do a great job. Passengers can nominate favorite drivers online.

OTHER FEEDBACK

In addition to online survey responses, MST staff provided relevant feedback discussed at two recent MST board meetings. At the March 2015 board meeting, the following feedback from members of the public was received:

- Buses had been passing by waiting passengers
- Specific stops where seniors and people with disabilities are likely to board are lacking amenities such as benches and shelters
  - Senior Center in Carmel
  - JAZZ line bus stops
- Del Monte Center lacks an accessible entrance when Macy's is closed; all buses should stop at both the bus stop on the upper level by PF Chang's as well as those on the lower level by Macy's (note: this change has been implemented as of December 2015)
- Westland House, which houses seniors, is not served adequately by transit; the bus stop location at the foot of the facility's driveway requires riders to walk approximately one mile along their driveway
- Service to CHOMP is insufficient

Secondly, MST conducted a community stakeholder survey in January 2015.[13] Only 56 responses were received, but this was a near doubling of previous years. The survey response, which included both multiple choice and open-ended comments, corroborates many of the findings from this study's survey:

- Many people are aware of the travel training program
- There is a desire for additional service to San Jose and San Francisco
- There is concern about the termination of free transfers
- The current fare structure can be confusing (based on route type rather than on zones)
- There is concern about driver sensitivity and that they lack customer service skills
- There is concern about MV Transportation's management practices and the reliability of service (contracted paratransit and fixed-route service)

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[13] http://mst.org/wp-content/media/Agenda_MST_March2015.pdf

5 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

In addition to the individuals and stakeholders reached through the summer 2015 public surveys, the project team conducted interviews with several stakeholders throughout the planning process. The initial stakeholder interviews, summarized first below, were conducted on-site and in-person in the early stages of this project. After initial project ideas had been developed and refined with the help of MST staff, additional outreach meetings (*Outreach Meetings*, below) were conducted by Nelson\Nygaard and MST staff. Some of these interviews happened in person and some were conducted over the phone. Lastly, at a meeting on October 14, 2015, Nelson\Nygaard and MST staff (and a community representative) reconvened to prioritize the project ideas based on the results of the community feedback and other considerations, such as financial impacts and ease of implementation. This prioritization process is described in *Meetings to Review Potential Service Alternatives*, below.

INITIAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

On July 28th and 29th, 2015, Nelson\Nygaard conducted a site visit to the MV paratransit facility and Mobility Management office in Salinas and the Mobility Management office in the City of Monterey. The purpose of the site visit was to observe the paratransit operations and gain insight into the functions of the two Mobility Management offices. The following are some of the highlights from that visit:

Paratransit operations have undergone a significant improvement in recent months after a lengthy period of poor performance in terms of on-time schedule adherence, productivity, drivers out of uniforms, and other customer related services. To address some of these deficiencies, new dispatch staff has been added and staff was trained on trip time negotiations. June was a significant milestone for RIDES as it was the first time in many months that the program exceeded both the on-time performance and productivity goals. Morale has reportedly improved significantly among MV staff after a series of management changes.

To address performance issues at two very high activity adult day center locations, **MV assigned staff to help with the assignment of riders to vehicles and with boarding and alighting.** This has reportedly led to a reduction in complaints from these facilities. In addition to a significant proportion of trips being consumed by adult day health centers, an estimated 35% of total trips are provided to dialysis clinics. This is significantly higher than industry standards and is expected to grow given national trends.

Since the site visit, MV has terminated its contract with Serra, leaving Salinas Yellow Cab as the sole provider of these taxi trips. While MV is able to divert trips to taxis to meet the 20% trip diversion goal, in recent months trips have only been diverted to Yellow Cab because of poor performance by Serra, particularly with regard to wheelchair accessible trips. **Overall**

productivity has improved as MV has taken back some of the trips that were previously provided on taxis.

The presence of a Mobility Management Center in Salinas is valuable given the demographic trends in the county, but the present space has some limitations, such as the lack of privacy due to the absence of a ceiling. However, the route that is used for ADA paratransit eligibility assessments (from the Mobility Management office to the transit center) is excellent, containing all the required elements of a model eligibility screening functional assessment. While registration declined significantly after in-person eligibility assessments were introduced, the number has recently started increasing. This trend should be closely followed as plans are made for the five year horizon.

Some of the **fixed-route limitations** that have been identified elsewhere in the Needs Assessment and also were raised during the site visit include:

- Challenges of serving Marina riders due to capacity constraints
- Lack of On Call weekend service in four out of five cities that have general public dial-a-ride
- Need for refurbishment of most of the wheelchair lifts on the trolleys, which are now 11 years old and are scheduled for a mid-life rebuild.

OUTREACH MEETINGS

In the Measure Q Steering Committee meeting held on September 10, 2015, Nelson\Nygaard and MST staff were directed to conduct interviews with the following nine stakeholder organizations:

- Silver Kings and Queens
- South County Outreach Efforts (S.C.O.R.E)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service
- San Andreas Regional Center (SARC)
- VA Medical Clinic of Monterey
- Monterey Veterans Resource Center
- HOPE Services
- Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association (CHISPA)
- CSUMB Office of Disability Services

During the course of mid-September to mid-October 2015, the team was successful in completing five of these nine interviews and received e-mail input from a sixth (Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services). Repeated attempts were made to reach VA Medical Clinic, CHISPA and Silver Kings and Queens, but without success. In order to secure an additional veteran organization's perspective, an interview was conducted with Veterans Transition Center (VTC) Monterey. The team found that due to the specificity of the strategies directed towards veterans, these interviews proved to be the most comprehensive and informative, but some insights were gained from all of the interviews. Following are the highlights of the interviews grouped by target population groups:

People with Disabilities

San Andreas Regional Center (SARC), based in Santa Clara County, serves people with developmental disabilities in Monterey County

- Flex vouchers would be very helpful to the families of SARC clients who often experience challenges getting their children with developmental disabilities to needed assessments
- A significant gap for SARC is the ability to provide travel training to its clients, many of whom would have the ability to shift from paratransit to fixed route services if they were trained, so they look positively at the local funding strategy that would allow for grants in the hope that this could fund a travel training program

California State University of Monterey Bay (CSUMB) Disability Services

- Approximately 64 students on campus have disabilities, but most of them drive or are driven to classes
- Accessible service used to be provided on two minivans until it was discontinued by the University based on the understanding that it was not required under the ADA
- Students who don't have access to a car (which is a small number, less than 10) are expected to rely on the MST fixed-route bus service, ADA paratransit, or the Marina on-call service, but these do not always work given the 10 minute break between classes. Some students have had to change their schedules and postpone taking mandatory classes because of their transportation challenges
- CSUMB tried generating interest among taxi providers to serve these trips, but the remote location and lack of intense demand made it financially non-viable for these drivers, even with a guaranteed $18 per trip fare
- CSUMB would be interested in a hybrid pilot program in which a dedicated vehicle could be available for subscription service for both students and other individuals in the community, rather than taking one of the limited number of accessible taxis in the County out of service for the general disability community. Under this scenario students would have direct contact with the driver, and could use the service for "one-off" trips in addition to class attendance

HOPE Services

Serves people with developmental disabilities

- Bus Stop improvements -- Since some clients have to walk about 1 to 2 miles to get to a bus stop, enhancing amenities by adding benches and lights would make it easier for them to use transit.
- Taxi Vouchers should be offered to clients with disabilities who may not be ADA eligible.
- Discounts or free bus passes would be very beneficial to the minority of their clients who are not eligible for San Andres Regional Center services (e.g. aged out of the program). Almost all of their clients are low-income and would benefit a lot from those passes.

Veterans

Monterey County Veterans Resource Center Director and the Santa Cruz County Military and Veterans Affairs Officer

- Top three priorities are free or discounted bus passes, a veteran-oriented shuttle, and more frequent medical transportation to the Bay Area. (Note: discounted bus passes for veterans has since been implemented)

- Great demand for free or half-price bus fares, which would save agencies like theirs money that they could otherwise put into housing and counseling. Discussed a possible hybrid model where veterans could ride free during off peak hours and half-fare during peak demand hours. (Note: discounted bus passes for veterans has since been implemented)

- The Veterans Resource Center could serve as a screening and application site where veterans could meet new veterans and also be introduced to their other agency services

- Increased frequency on the Special Medical Trips program would be well used if coupled with ample marketing with veteran services agencies.

- Also interested in "first and last mile" transportation, perhaps via taxi vouchers, to veteran shuttles and other fixed-route services. And, for areas where taxi vouchers are not available, a mileage reimbursement program would be a good substitute.

- Suggested hiring a military veteran staff member to provide outreach to other veterans programs (e.g. VTCLI) and market veteran transportation options, provide travel training, and coordinate MST mobility programs with other veteran service organizations on a day-to-day basis.

Veterans Transition Center (VTC) Monterey

VTC serves homeless veterans and their families in Monterey County. Interview reflected the needs of veterans both in general and those who are homeless.

- Key challenge for homeless veterans is getting to shops, appointments, relatives—critical to regaining connections with the community

- VTC gives people advice (e.g. bus routes, who to call) and transports some veterans with their own vans and truck

- Some of the key destinations that present challenges are: VA Clinic; Palo Alto Hospital; Housing appointments to go look at possible apartments for rent; store; temporary job opportunities

- VTC has very limited budget (annual - $24k) for distributing bus passes, for which there is high demand (50-60 vets at any given time)

- Disabled veterans most in need of transportation

- Driver reimbursements for driving to medical care
  - VA trying to get civilian care in the area where veterans live (in response to criticism that the agency takes too much time to serve medical needs of veterans)

The following are specific responses to each of the projects under consideration:

Expand Taxi Voucher Program to Veterans

- Certification process: most veterans have a retiree ID, active duty ID, or disabled veteran ID
- Key question: will veterans be able to bring dependents?

"Flex Voucher" System

Transportation services for veterans traditionally have been provided by agencies and organizations that serve veterans specifically. Part of the reason for this is the extra comfort provided to veterans by traveling with other veterans with similar life experiences. A flex voucher allows veterans to choose the transportation solution that is most comfortable.

Veteran-Focused Shuttle Routes

Specific origin-destination pairs not currently well-served by MST:

- Monterey County to Palo Alto Hospital
  - Currently County VSO offers volunteer drivers (vans) from VA Clinic to take people there once a day (5-10 riders per day)
  - Disabled American Veterans (DAV) provides volunteer drivers (using DAV van) to drive veterans around locally daily, but very limited

Veteran-specific Travel Training Program

- This model has been discussed in the past by MST (tablet-based training)
- Could be a good way of generating work for VTC constituents

Improvements to Bus Stops

Specific stops used by veterans that need attention:

- Stop in front of VTC – they are a hub of veteran activity
- Currently difficult to find VTC from the stop (Imjin/3rd)
- Salvation Army
- New VA Clinic
- DOD-VA Hospital
- Improved path of travel to bus stops needed

South County Residents

South County Outreach Efforts (SCORE)

South County network of human service agencies and other groups that meet on a monthly basis and networks to increase knowledge of all services provided in the region

- The TRIPS volunteer mileage reimbursement model (from Riverside County) would work very well for south county residents, many of whom currently have to pay exorbitant amounts to neighbors to transport them. One of the 50 agencies within the SCORE network would be a good source for recruitment of volunteer drivers and overall coordination of a volunteer driver program, or else working through the churches.

- There is a significant need for medical trips to other locations within the county and also to the Bay Area. The proposed increase in frequency in the Special Medical Trip program would be very well received as many residents cannot afford to pay private doctors in the valley and need access to public facilities such as Natividad Hospital.

- A small percentage of senior residents in South County have access to the internet. Many of these residents were farm workers, without internet access so a one-click system would likely not work well for them.

- MST should explore the possibility of a deviated service that would serve the needs of San Ardo and San Lucas residents, as those who do not have a car are very mobility challenged.

Tour of Monterey County

On September 20, 2015, the consultant team took a guided tour of communities along the U.S. 101 corridor south of Salinas—Chualar, Gonzalez, Soledad, and Greenfield—with Roberto Garcia. Mr. Garcia summarized local transportation services—both formal and informal—as well as specific challenges and opportunities for each of these communities. The key takeaways from this tour include:

- A major source of employment for residents are the agricultural fields near these communities and along the U.S. 101 corridor

- There are some social services available in even the smallest communities, primarily centered around the church, most of which are concentrated in a walkable district

- There are informal networks of volunteer drivers, sometimes organized by the church, but often centered around family connections

- There are some small taxi companies serving this area

MEETINGS TO PRIORITIZE POTENTIAL SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

On October 14, 2015, the consultant conducted a workshop with the project Steering Committee to prioritize the project ideas that had been developed as a result of initial public outreach, stakeholder feedback, and MST review. The committee consists of MST staff and a community representative, and all nine members participated in this meeting.

The prioritization approach is described in the next chapter.

6 FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM OF PROJECTS

METHODOLOGY FOR PRIORITIZATION OF PROJECTS

During the October 14, 2015 Steering Committee meeting, the following method was used to prioritize mobility project ideas.

The consultant presented a series of evaluation criteria that can be applied to each of the strategies, and that have been used extensively in other communities. Once all of the project ideas (or "strategies") had been voted upon, using these criteria, they were categorized into three groups depending on their ranking. The highest group are proposed to be included in the Five-Year Program of Projects, and the remainder were considered longer term projects.

Four main categories of evaluation criteria were used to compare and evaluate each project: Community, Transportation Benefits, Financial, and Implementation. The criteria, as described below, are intended to be flexible, so that differences among different communities in Monterey County can be taken into account. The order of presentation does not correspond to order of importance—no one category is considered more important than the others.

Criteria

Community Criteria

Community support: Community support may take the form of formal endorsement by organizations and individuals, support by elected governing bodies, a potential project sponsor ("champion") with staff or vehicles, and connections to adopted plans to carry out the strategy. Input from community outreach and stakeholder interviews conducted in September and October 2015 will be taken into account.

Acceptability: While a strategy may look good "on paper," there may be more subtle reasons – for example, cultural, practical, or financial – that would result in it not being successful if implemented. The strategy must be acceptable to the target population. That is, will the target population actually use this service being offered?

Acute needs: The importance of needs will normally be reflected in community support, but also in priority designation in locally-adopted plans or policies. Acute needs may include needs of small groups who have been left unserved by other programs due to expense or other difficulties.

Unserved groups: Identifiable groups that are not able to use existing services may include people who face language and cultural barriers.

Transportation Benefits Criteria

Number of problems and trip types: Strategies that address multiple problems and serve multiple customer groups and trip purposes are preferred.

Number of beneficiaries: In general, improvements that benefit many people are preferred to those that benefit few. However, the needs of relatively small groups might be considered particularly critical based on criteria under the heading "Community." This criteria is measured in total ridership on a monthly or annual basis.

Unserved needs: Projects are preferred that address gaps left by other services rather than duplicating, overlapping with, or competing with other services. Note that the relative importance of various needs is a matter for local priorities as addressed under "Community."

Measurable benefits: As much as possible, there should be ways to measure how a strategy is benefiting target groups (seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities), whether in terms of numbers of people served, numbers of trips provided, improved measures of service quality, etc.

Financial Criteria

Cost: Is the overall cost within a range that can realistically be funded with available sources, taking into account Measure Q funds, grants from the private or public sector or user fares/fees? Measurement: cost of program/project relative to costs of other programs and projects.

Cost per beneficiary: A broad range of a small to a large number of beneficiaries is compared to the cost of a program. Even though a program's total cost is low, if it reaches very few people it might still have a high cost per beneficiary. This would not necessarily eliminate a project from consideration if it ranked highly on other criteria including those listed under "Transportation Benefits Criteria" and "Community Criteria." Similarly, even though a program's total cost is high, if it reaches many people it might still have a low cost per beneficiary.

Funding availability and sustainability: To the degree possible, strategies and related projects should have stable sources of funding to cover match requirements. In the case of pilot, demonstration, or capital projects, there should be reasonable likelihood of continued funding for operations. It is recognized that continued funding can never be guaranteed, as it is subject to budget processes, as well as decisions and priorities of funders.

Leveraging resources: It is desirable for strategies and projects to help tap into other funding sources, especially new sources not previously available. Displacing existing funding is discouraged.

Implementation Criteria

Implementation time-frame: Strategies that will produce results quickly are preferred, as long as they are also sustainable. Projects with long-term payoffs should have some form of measurable accomplishments in the short run.

Staging: Can the improvement be implemented in stages?

Coordination: Strategies that involve coordination, for example multiple organizations working together to address a need, may be desirable.

Scoring

To operationalize the process of prioritizing the project ideas based on these criteria, points were assigned by all meeting attendees and then summed to create a ranking score. All participants voted in all rankings.

Figure 6-1   Project Scoring Rubric

Evaluation Category	Definition
COMMUNITY	
Level of community support, serves greatest need, serves needs of diverse community, accepted by target population	
High ranking (3 points)	High community support and serves greatest need
Medium ranking (2 points)	Moderate community support and serves greatest need
Low ranking (1 points)	Low community support
TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS	
Number of beneficiaries, number of problems solved, measurable solutions	
High ranking (3 points)	Large number of residents benefit, addresses multiple concerns, growth potential
Medium ranking (2 points)	Moderate number of residents benefit, addresses multiple concerns
Low ranking (1 points)	Small number of residents benefit, addresses one concern
FINANCIAL	
Overall cost, cost per beneficiary, funding availability and sustainability (operating and capital)	
Highest ranking (5 points)	Lowest cost to implement (under $50,000), most cost effective and financially feasible
High ranking (4 points)	Low cost to implement ($50,000 to $100,000), cost effective and financially feasible
Medium ranking (3 points)	Medium cost to implement ($100,000 - $250,000), moderately cost effective and feasible
Low ranking (2 points)	High cost to implement ($250,000 to $750,000), high cost per beneficiary
Lowest ranking (1 point)	Highest cost to implement (over $750,000), highest cost per beneficiary
IMPLEMENTATION	
Implementation time-frame, staging, and coordination	
High ranking (3 points)	Short term (1-2 years), or capable of being implemented in stages, potential for coordination increases likelihood of implementation
Medium ranking (2 points)	Medium term (3-4 years), less coordination potential
Low ranking (1 point)	Long term (5+ years), may require large upfront fixed costs, least coordination potential

FULL SET OF PROJECTS CONSIDERED

This list of ideas was refined with the help of Measure Q Steering Committee feedback received on September 10, 2015. It represents the *full list* of projects considered in the prioritization exercise. The final section of this chapter outlines the projects prioritized for inclusion in the Five-Year Program of Projects.

Program ideas fall into five main categories: capital and technology needs; expanding eligibility of existing programs; improving links between existing programs; upgrading existing programs; and new programs for the county. Each project is categorized as either a short- or long-term project; short-term projects will be incorporated into the Draft Five-Year Plan and long-term projects considered for the Long-Term Vision Plan (6-15 years).

Capital and Technology Needs

Concept 1: Capital Needs

MST's fleet of paratransit vehicles and senior and veteran shuttles reach a useful life and need replacing after 150,000 miles or 5 years. Additionally, the increased demand on services that serve the elderly, people with disabilities, and veterans will increase as the population ages over the next 15 years. This demand could further increase with the implementation of other potential projects—such as reducing reliance on the taxi vouchers program.

MST currently has a fleet of 27 vehicles for paratransit services. Based on current projections, MST anticipates that 32 paratransit vehicles will be required by 2020 (including a 20% spare vehicle ratio).

This strategy will provide funding for replacement of ADA-associated equipment on the fixed-route fleet and expansion of the paratransit fleet for 15 years. The typical cost of a RIDES vehicle in current year dollars is $72,000.

Concept 2: Technology Needs

MST's fixed-route and paratransit fleet is equipped with security cameras, a fare collection system, an advanced communications and automatic vehicle locating system (AVL), and mobile data terminals. As the capital needs grow, additional technology will be needed to support the expansion. Technology will help MST to transition from paper to paperless taxi vouchers with lower administrative costs. Additionally, a website update of MST's route schedules and maps is needed for usability by people who are blind or visually impaired. Other technology features are likely to arise over the next 15 years, and this type of expense would be eligible for Measure Q funding.

Concept 3: Paratransit Easy Wallet™

There are technologies that offer a cashless fare solution for demand-response organizations to set-up a program where they can offer passengers the ability to prepay fares at the time of booking using a virtual account. A paratransit easy wallet also allows transit agencies to utilize the web-based client portal to deposit and record the fund transfer. The upfront capital cost associated this technology is $190,000. In addition, there is an annual $9,500 maintenance fee.

Concept 4: Paratransit Emergency Response Module

This technology allows transportation organizations to dynamically manage ADA paratransit service disruptions due to localized emergency events or regional situations. The software enables automatic rerouting of vehicles. The upfront capital cost associated with this Response Module is $90,000. In addition, there is an annual $6,200 maintenance fee.

Concept 5: Reduce or Eliminate Reliance on Local Taxi Companies for RIDES Service

According to recent calculations, for the RIDES program to become completely independent and not rely on local taxi companies, MST would have to expand its fleet by six vehicles (26% growth), including a 20% spare ratio. This calculation is based on FY14/15 ridership figures, during which 16% of RIDES trips were handled by taxis.

The main reason to consider this option would be for MST to have full control over the RIDES ridership experience. However, reliance on taxis can be useful to serve peak periods or other unforeseen circumstances.

Expanding Eligibility

Concept 6: Expand Taxi Voucher Program to Veterans

MST's current taxi voucher program is available to seniors and people with disabilities. A simple rule change to include veterans as eligible participants would expand this valuable resource to an important target population identified in Measure Q. As part of this concept and others, eligibility requirements for veterans would have to be determined.

Improving Program Links

Concept 7: Transition Taxi Voucher Program to a "Flex Voucher" System

A "flex voucher" system avails any local transportation service to participants of the program—local taxis, non-emergency medical transportation providers, ITN services, local volunteer driver programs, and others would be eligible to accept vouchers for eligible participants. It could help MST cover areas of the county not currently served by MST-specific services (e.g. areas of South County).

Further, transportation services for veterans traditionally have been provided by agencies and organizations that serve veterans specifically. Part of the reason for this is the extra comfort provided to veterans by traveling with other veterans with similar life experiences. A flex voucher allows veterans to choose the transportation solution that is most comfortable.

Transitioning to a flex voucher program could also provide an opportunity to "go voucher-less" through the use of electronic smartcards and mobile applications. MST is pursuing a paperless taxi voucher system in FY16 with the help of a $70,000 grant.

Concept 8: Develop Veteran-Focused Shuttle Routes

Model the development of veteran-focused shuttle routes after Senior Shuttles route planning, in which MST worked closely with senior services and retirement communities to plan routes that meet the specific needs of seniors. These new veteran shuttles would be open to the public—as are

the Senior Shuttles—but serve places commonly accessed by veterans at times most convenient for veterans.

Concept 9: Expand Senior Shuttles

Several requests have been made by passengers for MST to expand its Senior Shuttles to serve the areas of Cass Street, Ryan Ranch, CHOMP, and Imjin Parkway and for vehicles to be more accessible (e.g. low-floor). In addition, ridership on MST's Senior Shuttles continues to increase. Some of the expansion would require increased frequencies of existing shuttles and others would require new shuttle routes. New senior shuttles are also intended to serve people with disabilities and veterans (as well as other members of the general public). Additionally, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities use MST's fixed-route system, using the wheelchair lifts and benefiting from a reduced fare. Surveys from MST passengers show that 7.5% of those riding MST routes are seniors.

Upgrading Existing Programs

Concept 10: Expand MST's Mobility Management Capability through the creation of a "One-Click" Service

MST's existing team of mobility managers serves as the county's "one-call" system—a service to help participants navigate the many programs and transportation options available to them, and to tailor a solution specific to a particular person's needs and situation.

A "one-click" system expands this capability by creating a web-based mobility management function. In addition, the one-click system can support upgrades to the one-call system by providing a service matching, trip planning, and trip booking system for mobility managers to use when called.

The one-click system can be implemented offering various levels of support to users. The continuum of services includes:

Figure 6-2   One-Click System Example

1. Central repository of information, including a provider portal for updates to service information
2. Service matching assistance
3. Trip planning assistance
4. Trip booking assistance
5. Direct trip booking
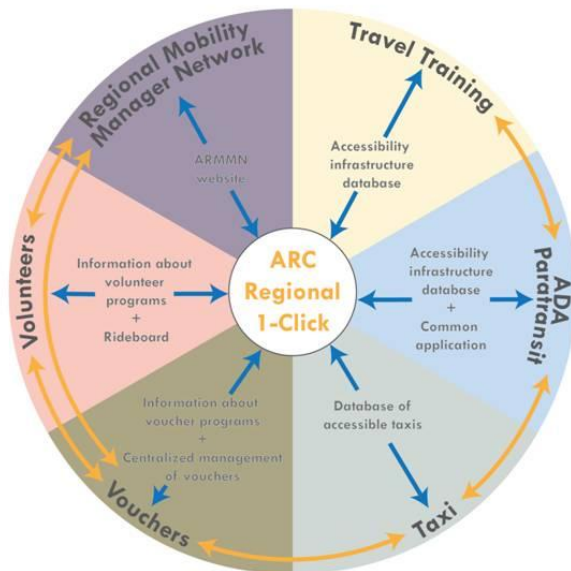
There is precedent for developing this type of resource specifically for veterans using funds from a Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) grant. It was implemented as "2-1-1 Vetlink" by the Inland Empire United Way and by LA Metro at VetsGo511.com. MST has a VTCLI grant partnership with VTA (San Jose) and Marin Transit to implement a similar program; the primary short-term need is additional staffing or a contracted provider to operate the one-call/one-click system.

Concept 11: Initiate a Veteran-specific Travel Training Program

For reasons mentioned previously, there may be a need for a veteran-specific travel training program. In many cases, veterans have unique travel needs that might not be covered in a travel training program designed more broadly around seniors and people with disabilities. This type of program could be offered in partnership with the Monterey County Military and Veterans Affairs Office and the Veterans Transition Center. A similar program has recently been implemented in San Mateo County. It should be noted that in the prioritization exercise described previously, this strategy was included in the "Veterans helping Veterans" project.

Concept 12: Invest in Improvements at Bus Stops to be utilized by Seniors, People with Disabilities, and Veterans

Bus stop improvements, such as benches with backs, pedestrian-scale lighting, and shelters to protect waiting passengers from weather could be a valuable use of Measure Q funds. This investment could help attract ridership from transportation disadvantaged populations.

Concept 13: Use Measure Q to expand ST Zones and Cover RIDES Costs

Using Measure Q funds, MST ST zones could be expanded to Spreckles, Las Palmas Ranch, East Garrison, and Bolsa Knolls. These funds could also support additional funding sources for the RIDES program—particularly if other projects significantly increase RIDES demand.

Concept 14: Enhance Volunteer Driver Recruitment (Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program)

A big challenge in Monterey County is serving rural populations in South County. One of the effective strategies in serving populations in areas like this is a volunteer driver program. The biggest hurdle to establishing such a program is the recruitment of a critical mass of volunteer drivers. As members of the community currently engaged in improving transportation, MST Navigators are in a good position to help recruit volunteer drivers from the community. Navigators can also train riders to recruit friends and family. Other partners could include local community organizations and churches that could help recruit volunteers and market the program.

The concept of ride boards could be extended as a driver recruitment tool as well. Web-based ride boards—websites where people in need of trips post requests to be accepted by members of the community—can facilitate the connection between riders and drivers as well as promote volunteer driving to a wider audience. This concept could include the establishment of a reimbursement program to encourage individuals to participate as volunteer drivers.

Concept 15: Hire New Mobility Department Staff

There is currently only one person funded to administer the RIDES eligibility service, but in practice other Mobility staff, funded from non-RIDES sources, have provided about 60 hours per week in support of RIDES. Also, one of the travel trainers has been shifted to managing the taxi voucher and lease programs. Further, there is currently no staff support for the VTCLI one-call/one-click grant, nor staff availability for anticipated services dedicated to veterans transportation. Lastly, MST Navigators currently are required to perform normal office tasks, but their time should be reserved for direct program delivery. This strategy was not included in the prioritization exercise as it is addressed separately based on an analysis of staffing needs.

Concept 16: Create Navigator Incentive Program

Currently, Navigators are rewarded with monthly bus passes. However, some already receive passes through their college or university. Consider establishing a broader incentive program whereby Navigators could receive gas reimbursements, a monthly drawing, or other benefits, including a part time, limited-term, MST position. This could help expand the pool of Navigators and increase the total number of hours per month of transit assistance.

New Ideas

Concept 17: Initiate a "Veterans Helping Veterans" Transportation Program

Ride Connection in Portland, Oregon, provides one example of a program operated by veterans and serving only veterans. Such a program ensures passenger and driver sensitivity to veteran-specific challenges. Initial set-up for this concept is part of MST's existing VTCLI grant funding (e.g. purchase of tablets for trainers and tying them into a regional one-click system). Funding could be used for on-going travel training services.

Concept 18: Pilot a Weekly Medical Appointments Service to Destinations outside Monterey County

There has been limited use of existing inter-county medical transportation services, but this may be due to the infrequency (twice per month) or pick-up location (Salinas only) of existing service. A weekly pilot with multiple pick-up points in communities along U.S. 101 could help gauge actual demand. The pilot should be available to the general public and should include a marketing campaign to target those most in need of medical services outside the county.

San Benito County operates a similar out-of-county service that should be examined in order to determine if there are any program elements that are replicable; fares are outlined in Figure 6-3.

Figure 6-3   Peer Fares for Pilot Medical Appointments Service

Zone	Miles from Hollister	Cities in Zone	One-Way Fare
1	0 - 15	Gilroy	$2
2	16 - 30	Watsonville, Salinas, and Morgan Hill	$3
3	31 - 45	Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Jose	$4
4	45 - 65	Palo Alto	$5
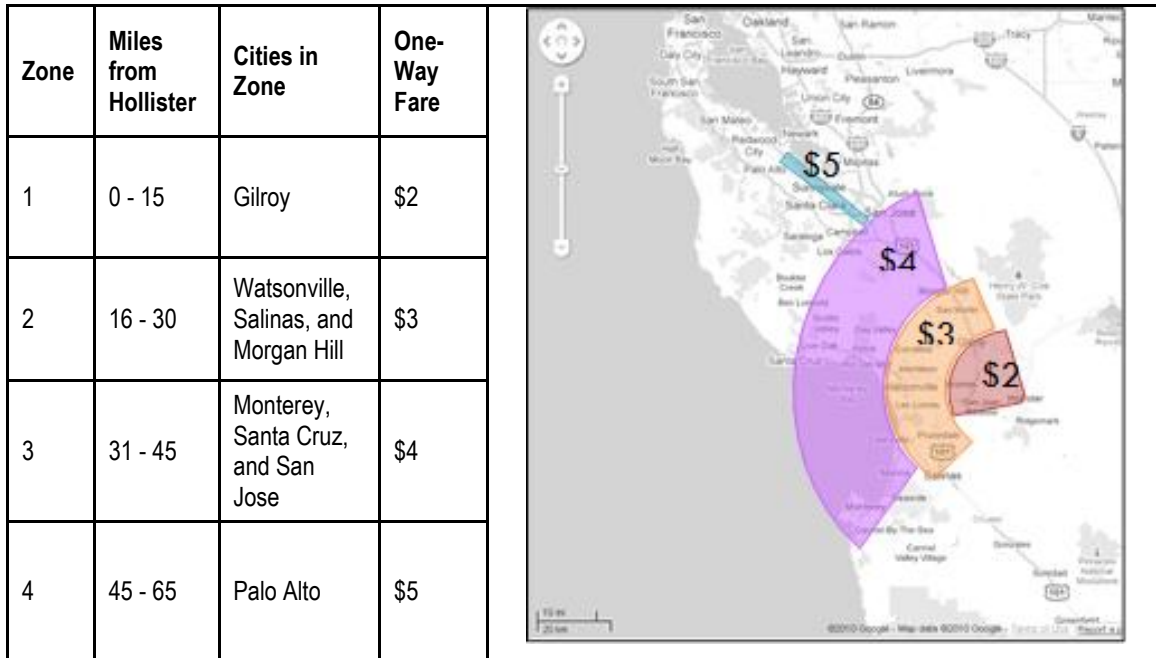
Concept 19: Establish a Grant Program to Fund Community Transportation Services

Such a grant program might extend funding to local services that support the goals of MST, such as ITN, United Way 211, CSUMB, and others. The grant process could be competitive and available to any local non-profits or public entities providing transportation assistance to seniors, people with disabilities, or veterans.

Concept 20: Establish Reserve Fund

Set aside 15% of Measure Q fund expenses for reserve in addition to state administrative fees associated with the distribution of the state sales tax.

Marketing Programs

Concept 21: Nominate Veterans for a Free Annual Bus Pass

This concept engages a wide community audience and raises awareness about veterans' transportation needs. Further, it provides a subsidy to a small set of veteran travelers and encourages the use of public transportation. Fort Walton Beach, Florida is one example of a community that administers a similar program.

Low-to-no Cost Programs

- Re-focusing outreach and marketing to target veterans
- Ensure that ITN is included in mobility managers' menu of options
- Reduced fares (includes fixed-route and On Call) for veterans, same as current "discount" fare

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RESULT OF PRIORITIZATION

The Measure Q Steering Committee extensively reviewed the complete list of concepts above and ranked the new concepts only. The existing services currently provided by MST were not ranked in the Summary of Project Prioritization Exercise below:

Figure 6-4   Summary of Project Prioritization Exercise

Strategy	Benefits and Considerations (Community Support, Transportation Benefits, Financial Considerations, Ease of Implementation)	Average Points Scored Across all Four Categories
Create Navigator Incentive Program	This is a low-cost strategy for expanding the reach of existing programs.	● (30.0)
Create Pilot Flex Voucher System	Allows access to multiple programs, makes it more convenient and does not have significant costs.	● (27.3)
Nominate Veterans for Free Annual Bus Pass	Very low cost strategy that raises the visibility of veterans' mobility needs.	● (27.0)
Initiate "Veterans Helping Veterans" Program (including travel training program)	Not viewed as serving significant number of people, but important to expand options for veterans.	● (26.3)
Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program	This would follow the TRIPS model from Riverside County, and would be a cost-effective way of addressing the mobility needs in South County, which would be costly to serve with transit options.	● (25.3)
Expand Taxi Vouchers to Veterans	This would benefit veterans directly and should not be difficult to implement because it would involve expansion of an existing program.	◑ (24.8)
Paratransit Easy Wallet	Allows caregivers to better manage RIDES accounts for their clients.	◑ (24.0)
Pilot Weekly Out-of-County Medical Trips	Attractive strategy that had much support among stakeholders, but unclear how much of these needs would be served if just provided on a weekly basis.	◑ (24.0)

Strategy	Benefits and Considerations (Community Support, Transportation Benefits, Financial Considerations, Ease of Implementation)	Average Points Scored Across all Four Categories
Establish Grant Program to Fund Community Transportation	Assume grant cap, with multiple grants. Low score on implementation.	◑ (23.0)
Paratransit Emergency Response Module	Limited community support and transportation benefits. After the Steering Committee ranked the projects, this Response Module was moved to the short term for safety and emergency preparedness reasons.	◑ (22.3)
Create "One-Click" Transportation Information Service	Not likely to have widespread community support, and no significant improvement over existing services.	○ (16.3)
Reduce/Eliminate Reliance on Local Taxi Companies for RIDES service	Not viewed as having significant community support or transportation benefits.	○ (13.5)

Legend:

● = high ranking (25+ points)

◑ = mid ranking (20-25 points)

○ = low ranking (<20 points)

PROTECT EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

Measure Q funding was intended to protect transit services for veterans, seniors, and persons with disabilities. The projects below identify those services which MST currently provides for seniors and persons with disabilities. These projects and programs will see incremental cost increases over time to meet the demands associated with growth in the overall population as described in Chapter 2: Demographic Profile. Additionally, these services will see modifications to capture the veterans' population as promised in the Measure Q ordinance. These services will continue to be offered as a part of MST's mobility options for veterans, seniors, and persons with disabilities:

- **Capital Needs** – MST's fleet of paratransit vehicles and senior shuttles reach a useful life and need replacing after 150,000 miles or 5 years. This concept will provide funding for replacement and repair of ADA-associated equipment on the fixed-route fleet and expansion of the paratransit fleet for 15 years. This item also includes rebuilding wheelchair lifts, periodic upgrades to vehicle based equipment (e.g., security cameras, communications systems, etc.), and other associated repairs to paratransit vehicles. There will likely emerge other capital items which benefit the targeted population over the life of the 15-year Measure Q tax.

- **Technology Needs** – MST's fixed-route and paratransit fleet is equipped with cameras, fare boxes, and an advanced communications and automatic vehicle locating system (AVL). As the capital needs grow, additional technology will be needed to support expansion. Technology will help MST to transition from paper to paperless taxi vouchers with lower administrative costs. Additionally, a website update of MST's route schedules and maps is needed for usability by people who are blind or visually impaired. Other technology features are likely to emerge over the next 15 years, and this type of expense is eligible for Measure Q funding.

- **Paratransit and Special Transportation Services** – Paratransit and Special Transportation services will continue to be available to eligible MST RIDES passengers as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Over time, the ST zones may be expanded to include areas such as Spreckles, East Garrison, Las Palmas Ranch, and Bolsa Knolls.

- **Senior and Veteran Focused Shuttles** – MST developed senior focused routes with the help of senior living centers and senior advocates. Several passengers have requested that MST expand Senior Shuttle routes to Cass Street, Ryan Ranch, CHOMP, Glenwood Circle, and Imjin Parkway; in recognition of seniors and veterans in Salinas and South County, these areas might be considered for expansion in the future. Customers have requested that vehicles used on the senior routes are more accessible (e.g. low-floor). In addition, ridership on MST's Senior Shuttles continues to increase. Some of the expansion would require increased frequencies of existing shuttles and others would require new shuttle routes. New senior shuttles are also intended to serve people with disabilities and veterans (as well as other members of the general public). The veteran-focused shuttles would be open to the public—as are the Senior Shuttles—but serve places commonly accessed by veterans at times most convenient for veterans. Additionally, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities use MST's fixed-route system, using the wheelchair lifts and benefiting from a reduced fare. Surveys from MST passengers show that 7.5% of those riding MST routes are seniors.

- **Taxi Vouchers** – Limited taxi vouchers are available to seniors and MST RIDES qualified passengers. The vouchers will continue to be available at a sustainable basis.

- **Invest in Improvements to Bus Stops Utilized by Seniors, People with Disabilities, and Veterans** – Bus stop improvements, such as benches with backs, pedestrian-scale lighting, and shelters to protect waiting passengers from weather could help attract ridership from transportation disadvantaged populations.

- **Mobility Department** – The Mobility Department focuses their efforts on serving seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities. This program includes miscellaneous items that support the department including but not limited to building rent, utilities, and mailings. As demand increases, new Mobility Department staff may be needed to help administer and manage these and new programs outlined in the List of New Projects below.

- **Reserve Fund** – MST's policy is to carry a 15% reserve of budgeted expenditures in case of financial hardship and/or economic downturn. This reserve for Measure Q-eligible expenditures would be used to maintain appropriate levels of service.

LIST OF NEW PROJECTS

After prioritizing the projects in Figure 6.3 above, 6 projects were prioritized for the short-term, five-year implementation plan. These projects include:

- **Create Navigator Incentive Program** – to assist in the recruitment of new Navigators, offer incentives beyond free bus passes, such as gas reimbursements, a monthly drawing, or other benefits. The Navigator program trains volunteers to help new passengers use the MST fixed-route system.

- **Create Pilot Flex Voucher System** – expands voucher access to multiple transportation providers, such as medical providers, ITN, and other commercial drivers.

- **Nominate Veterans for Free Annual Bus Pass** – engages a broad community and offers opportunity to honor a veteran or group of veterans.

- **Initiate "Veterans Helping Veterans" Program** – ensures passenger and driver sensitivity to veterans unique needs.

- **Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Programs** – to incentivize individuals to participate in volunteer driver programs and ensure that transportation programs are available in a geographically equitable manner.

- **Paratransit Emergency Response Module** – allows transportation organizations to dynamically manage ADA paratransit service disruptions due to localized emergency events or regional situations. The software enables automatic rerouting of vehicles. The upfront capital cost associated with this Response Module is $90,000. In addition, there is an annual $6,200 maintenance fee.[14]

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[14] Note: though this strategy received fewer points during the prioritization exercise than others included in this list, public safety is MST's number one priority. The agency is committed to adequately serving individuals with access and functional needs in times of disaster.

POST-IMPLEMENTATION PERFORMANCE EVALUATION CRITERIA

To determine if each strategy meets its objective, MST should establish a set of evaluation criteria to be collected and measured throughout the life of each strategy. Developing a system of recurring and regular evaluation is essential to understanding how and if users are benefiting from the strategies, as well as the challenges they face. Generally, the recommended approach involves pre-implementation metrics tracking, with 6- and 12-month follow ups for the first year; thereafter, programs would be tracked on an annual basis.

By determining the variables needed to evaluate these criteria before implementation, MST can build in data collection and evaluation at each level of strategy process, including annual or more frequent evaluations to answer the following questions:

- Is the strategy improving transportation for the target users? If not, how can it be modified to do so?
- Is the strategy meeting the results expected by MST? If not, how can it be modified to do so?
- Is the strategy cost effective? If not, how can cost efficiencies be captured?

Evaluation criteria should be established during the initial development of each strategy, prior to implementation. Creating criteria at this stage, rather than after the strategy is complete, allows MST to start collecting evaluation metrics at an early stage. Below is a description of evaluation criteria recommended for each of the top six priority projects. MST's existing Mobility Activities Records System (MARS) is a tool that will facilitate ongoing evaluation. MARS is described in detail at the end of this chapter.

Priority Projects and Evaluation Criteria

Create Navigator Incentive Program

The objective of the navigator incentive program is to boost recruitment and retention of Navigators. Currently, volunteer Navigators are provided free bus passes for participating in the program; however, since many young volunteers already receive bus passes through their college or university, recruitment and retention of Navigators with this current incentive program is challenging for MST.

Therefore, the Navigator incentive program will be deemed a success if the incentives both attract and retain additional volunteers and if those volunteers are able to complete more of their assigned tasks.

Below is a list of metrics to track progress. These metrics should be tracked prior to implementation (for before and after comparison), at the six month point, and at the annual anniversary of implementation. If the incentive program continues, metrics should be tracked once per year going forward.

- Number of new Navigators recruited (and number of veteran Navigators recruited)
- Number of Navigators completing the application process (vetting)
- Number of Navigators who resigned
- Cost of additional incentive dollars spent per new Navigator recruited

- Total program cost per new Navigator recruited versus paying staff to perform those functions
- Number of taxi vouchers processed by Navigators
- Number of community events attended by Navigators
- Number of passengers assisted and/or educated by Navigators
- Number of senior centers visited

To operationalize the evaluation, the MARS system would be used to capture Navigator hours, task locations, tasks by type, and number of community contacts. Navigators are able to enter this information directly into MARS through a log-in portal. A survey would also be administered within six months and one year of implementation to gather feedback from both Navigators and customers on how the program is working and any recommendations for changes. Since many individuals who benefit from the assistance of Navigators will not be logged in MARS (customers could be occasional transit riders or tourists seeking information on-the-go), postcards with survey links or other mobile surveying techniques could be used to gather feedback from these customers. After the first year, the survey would be administered annually.

Create Pilot Flex Voucher System

The proposed pilot flex voucher system would expand voucher access to multiple transportation providers—such as medical providers, ITN, and other commercial drivers—in addition to its current use for taxicab service. Program success would be measured primarily by the number of trips taken with the new flexible voucher providers as compared to trips taken with taxicabs and/or paratransit services for each program participant (if the taxi voucher system is maintained as a separate program). This comparison would identify whether the flexible vouchers provide trips that are preferable to taxicabs and are thus creating a more affordable and more convenient option for users. To minimize administrative overhead and avoid separate negotiations with individual providers, reimbursement for flex vouchers would likely be at the same rate as taxi vouchers.

Below is a list of metrics that should be measured prior to implementation (for before and after comparison) and at the six month and annual anniversary of implementation for the duration of the pilot.

- Number of trips taken with flex vouchers versus number of trips taken with taxicabs
- Program cost per person using the voucher program
- Number of trips by provider type (taxi company, friends/family, private operator, TNC, etc.)
- Number of voucher dollars used versus unused
- Number of requests for new riders (granted, not granted, eligible, not eligible)
- Program administrative costs per week, month, quarter, year, by participant, by provider
- Instances of lost vouchers or fraud
- Feedback from participants and/or referring agencies and transportation operators
- Number and type of complaints
- Instances of special cases or additional voucher distribution

MARS currently tracks vouchers by customer, provider, and issuer (i.e. MST, Monterey County, participating cities, and other entities). Current vouchers are identified by an individual tracking number and distributed in blocks to each issuer, which means that voucher activity by city can also be tracked. ITN, medical providers, and other providers can be added into MARS as issuers. Other information collected on each voucher that is returned to the program administrator for processing can also be tracked in MARS. Additionally, it is recommended that participants, referring agencies, and transportation operators receive a survey requesting feedback on the program six months after implementation and at the first year mark. Since the program would initially operate as a one-year pilot, after a year has passed, MST would be able to evaluate its success and determine if the program continues. If the program is extended indefinitely, evaluation would occur annually.

Nominate Veterans for Free Monthly/Annual Bus Pass

This strategy provides a small subsidy for veterans to be given free bus passes and encourages public transportation use. Of particular interest is increasing access to health care for veterans, which can also be measured with the proposed metrics.

Similar to the above strategies, this strategy requires the development of a survey at the six month, one year, and future annual anniversaries of project implementation, which would collect information on how the bus pass program improves the recipient's quality of life. The survey should also be sent to participating veterans prior to starting the program to collect a baseline of information for comparison. The survey would ultimately collect the following information:

- Number of bus trips per month (average) taken with the bus pass
- Number of bus trips per month (average) before having a bus pass
- Primary reason for taking the bus
- Number of medical appointments accessed via bus
- Mode of accessing medical appointments prior to the program
- Quality of life changes due to having transportation access

The survey would be administered by a new MST Mobility Department employee position, the veteran travel trainer/coordinator (discussed further in Chapter 8). This staff person will track relevant data by entering information about the veteran, number of passes issued, and pass type into the MARS system. With this data, the coordinator can track:

- The number of veterans participating in the program per month or year
- The number of free monthly/annual passes distributed per month or year
- The cost of the free bus passes per month or year

Initiate "Veterans Helping Veterans" Program

The primary objective of this strategy is to teach veterans (those who are physically and cognitively able, but require extra assistance) to have greater mobility and access to services through using public transit.

MARS can track the number of trainings, date/time, trainer, and other general information, which can be used to calculate the following:

- Number of trainees per month/year
- Number of trainees per trainer

- Program cost per veteran trained

Additionally, a survey would be sent to the veteran trainees--both pre-and post-training--to gather information on their public transit use. The survey sent prior to training would gather information about how the veteran currently travels (e.g. rides with friends, uses paratransit, etc.). Unlike other program monitoring, the veterans-helping-veterans program survey would be sent one, three, six, and twelve months after completing travel training to gauge the program's success in encouraging greater public transit use. More frequent surveying is desirable as immediate behavior change is the objective. The post-training survey sent one month after completing the program would also request feedback on the program and the trainer's performance.

Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program

The goal of the volunteer driver reimbursement program is to be a cost-effective, low maintenance transportation option for addressing the mobility needs of residents in South County (and potentially other parts of the County). Its evaluation should measure its progress toward this goal. In similar peer agency programs, at the end of each month, participants of the volunteer driver reimbursement program send in their mileage requests for reimbursements; these requests include the following information:

- Dates of travel
- Reasons for travel
- Origin and destination
- Miles driven
- Driver identification
- Length of trip

These details are entered into the program software, which calculates the amount needed for reimbursement (which facilitates a cost effectiveness metric). The above data would be entered into MST's MARS, collected through the mileage requests submitted by the volunteer drivers. The following information would be tracked and analyzed through the MARS system:

- Number of trips taken
- Number of miles traveled
- Reason for traveling by type
- Reimbursements provided
- Trip origins and destinations

If further evaluation is desired—such as to demonstrate progress toward associated program goals--the program administrator can track additional information through surveys to volunteers and participants and with general program data (recorded in MARS), such as:

- Number of requests for new riders (granted, not granted, eligible, not eligible)
- Number of ride requests (granted, not granted)
- Number of accessible vehicles (owned by volunteers)
- Number of new volunteers recruited
- Number of volunteers who left the program

- Number and type of complaints
- Feedback from participants and volunteer drivers (e.g. desirability and feasibility of a paperless voucher system)
- Program costs by participant, trip, and mile

Paratransit Emergency Response Module

The Paratransit Emergency Response Module allows transportation agencies to handle ADA Paratransit service disruptions and civil evacuations during local or regional emergencies or natural disaster. MST shall implement a series of simulation events (table top exercises) to test the software's effectiveness in managing the Paratransit fleet during emergency operations.

Two years after implementation--either with data from real world or simulated event(s) — the program administrator shall complete an analysis to determine if the Response Module created any qualitative benefits during an emergency.

After each emergency or simulated event, the program administrator should distribute a survey to collect feedback on the program from users.

Overall, the program evaluation would collect the following information (based on actual or simulated emergency events):

- Number of emergency trips during the two year period (if any).
- Program costs and reimbursements received (FEMA, FTA etc.).
- Number of registered paratransit passengers safely evacuated from impacted areas.
- Number of non-registered paratransit passengers with access and functional needs safely evacuated from impacted areas.
- Number of registered paratransit passengers safely diverted away from impacted areas
- Number of Paratransit passengers (registered and non-registered) safely delivered to the appropriate emergency shelter.
- Number of responders transported into impacted areas.
- Feedback on the paratransit and other users' experiences during the emergency.

Mobility Activities Records System (MARS)

The Mobility Activities Records System (MARS) is an online record keeping system utilized by MST Mobility Department employees and other registered users that will be instrumental in recording and tracking data required for evaluation. Currently, the database houses a variety of records and data including: information on mobility applicants, taxi voucher use, travel training activities, Navigator activities, and other MST employee activities. Other data needs for mobility management strategies can be easily added into MARS for data tracking and analysis. The MST Mobility Department website is also maintained and updated through MARS.

MARS is a web-based program that can be accessed remotely via an internet connection and log-in credentials. In addition to MST staff and volunteers, MARS is available to taxi operators for entering taxi voucher information for trips provided by their organization, as well as data regarding accessible taxi trips. Participating cities also have access to view how taxi vouchers distributed by their city are used.

7 LONG-TERM VISION PLAN

As a result of the prioritization exercise in Chapter 6, five projects were prioritized for inclusion in the five-year plan. The remaining projects are included in this Long-Term Vision Plan, to be considered as additional funding becomes available or needs become apparent. For those projects that are scalable, partial implementation may be possible in the short-term depending on additional grants or other funding availability. Projects are listed in terms of priority.

LIST OF MOBILITY CONCEPTS

- **Expand Taxi Voucher Program to Veterans** – MST's current taxi voucher program is available to seniors and people with disabilities. A simple rule change to include veterans as eligible participants would expand this valuable resource to an important target population identified in Measure Q. As part of this concept and others, eligibility requirements for veterans would have to be determined.

- **Paratransit Easy Wallet** – There are technologies that offer a cashless fare solution for demand-response organizations to set-up a program where they can offer passengers the ability to prepay fares at the time of booking using a virtual account. A paratransit easy wallet also allows transit agencies to utilize the web-based client portal to deposit and record the fund transfer. The upfront capital cost associated with this technology is approximately $190,000. In addition, there is an annual $9,500 maintenance fee.

- **Pilot a Weekly Medical Appointments Service to Destinations outside Monterey County** – A weekly pilot with multiple pick-up points in communities along U.S. 101 could help gauge actual demand. The pilot should be available to the general public and should include a marketing campaign to target those most in need of medical services outside the county.

- **Establish a Grant Program to Fund Community Transportation Services** – Such a grant program might extend funding to local services that support the goals of MST. The grant process could be competitive and available to any local non-profits or public entities providing transportation assistance to seniors, people with disabilities, or veterans.

8 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This Implementation Plan for the five-year program of projects focuses on the operational details of mobility strategies beyond the maintenance of existing MST programs. It is MST's goal to maintain all existing programs prior to making new investments. Therefore, the implementation of any projects listed in this plan would only occur if Measure Q funding—and MST staff capacity—is available after existing programs are fulfilled. This program of projects incorporates feedback from members of the public, community organizations and stakeholders, and MST staff; a summary of stakeholder feedback is provided in Chapter 5.

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Figure 8-1   New Projects Implementation Details and Funding

Project	Estimated Operating Cost (Annual)*	Service Area (if applicable)	Leading Organization	Capital Requirements	Potential Funding Sources (in addition to Measure Q)
Create Navigator Incentive Program	$40,000-$60,000 depending on level of incentives provided and number of Navigators desired. Assumes these will be part-time interns hired who receive stipends.	Countywide	MST	Not applicable	Section 5310 grants, sponsorships from non-profit organizations or other local businesses for in-kind donations
Create Pilot Flex Voucher System	Nominal increase for additional administrative time (less than $10,000), assuming continuation of paper-based voucher program. Substantial increase in ongoing program costs will result from expansion in use of options on new modes, such as ITN or volunteer driver programs.	Countywide	MST would lead as the program administrator; partnerships with local transportation providers (e.g. ITN, taxi companies, volunteer driver programs) and referring agencies (e.g. area non-profits)	Revised paper vouchers to reflect new services eligible; if a paper-less system is preferred, capital requirements could include the development of a smartphone- or electronic debit card-based system. Significant increase for paperless option, but implementation in short-term time-frame unlikely.	Section 5310 grants, sponsorships from non-profit organizations or religious organizations
Nominate Veterans for Free Annual Bus Pass	Nominal	Countywide	MST with outreach partners in the veterans community	Not applicable	Sponsorships from non-profit organizations
Initiate "Veterans Helping Veterans" Program	$75,000 to $80,000 for new full-time veteran staff person to oversee travel training program, recruit Navigators, implement VTCLI grant, and conduct outreach to veterans	Countywide	MST with outreach partners, particularly in South County	Not applicable	Sponsorships from non-profit organizations

Project	Estimated Operating Cost (Annual)*	Service Area (if applicable)	Leading Organization	Capital Requirements	Potential Funding Sources (in addition to Measure Q)
Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program	Subsidy can be set at any level by MST, but $40,000 - $80,000 is recommended for reimbursements, plus $20,000 administration	Countywide, with a focus on South County	Typically managed by a county department (such as the Department of Social Services) or non-profit human service and outreach organizations, such as SCORE or local churches.	Not applicable (drivers furnish own vehicles)	Sponsorships from non-profit organizations
Paratransit Emergency Response Module	$6,200	Countywide	MST; partnerships with emergency response shelter locations	$90,000	
*Note: cost estimates provide a basic guideline, but will vary depending on the level of service and specific program parameters that go into implementation					

Implementation Details

Create Navigator Incentive Program

The Concept

MST's Navigators provide a unique community asset. However, under the current program structure, Navigators can be underutilized. An incentive program can help recruit and maintain a group of highly motivated and appropriately skilled Navigators that assist Monterey County residents and visitors with navigating their public transportation options.

Potential incentives include:

- Monthly stipends
- Free transit passes
- Mileage reimbursement
- Branded jackets or vests
- Gift certificates to local restaurants, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, or grocery stores
- Quarterly or bi-annual drawings for larger gifts, such as tablets or e-readers
- Paid, part time, limited term, internship for a college or university student to provide organization and leadership for Navigators

Because Navigators gain skills on the job, it is a good idea to incentivize Navigators to stay with the agency. An incentive structure that builds over time can help encourage people to stay. This might include:

- Adding an entry into the drawing for each quarter of service, with a bonus entry for four consecutive quarters
- One free transit pass during first year of service; two free transit passes (one for a companion, spouse, relative, or friend) during second year
- Opportunity to be named "Navigator of the Year"

Implementation of such a program should not involve much additional work beyond the existing Navigator program. It is recommended to have a formal "kickoff" of the program—a meeting of all Navigators to announce the program and describe its purpose and rules. At this meeting, existing Navigators could also be asked to help market the program to friends and family.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

Limited supply of Navigators; desire to sustain relationships with Navigators

Expected Benefits

- Increased supply of Navigators with appropriate skills
- Increased community outreach capacity for MST
- Higher satisfaction among Navigators

Potential Obstacles

- Identifying the appropriate incentives
- Sufficient advertisement of Navigator incentives

Create Pilot Flex Voucher System

The Concept

A flex voucher program can utilize a system of vouchers with dollar amounts that are provided to eligible participants to "purchase" a ride on the transportation service that they choose. This can be implemented using a paper (traditional) or paper-less (smart card or smartphone app-based) voucher system. The following describes how the program would work:

- The MST program administrator/staff serves as the point person/organization to manage the program. This involves client and trip eligibility determination, working with partnering/referring organizations, issuing flex vouchers, and reimbursing service operators.
- The customer arranges for the particular mode of travel and provides vouchers to an eligible service operator.
- The eligible driver accepts the voucher as payment for the rides provided and redeems the voucher for the cash value from the MST program administrator.

To implement such a program, several forms should be developed to manage partnerships, eligibility, and trips. These include participant eligibility, intake, and consent forms and a transportation operator intake form. In addition, a training checklist for referring agencies (e.g. senior centers—organizations that might refer customers to the flex voucher program) and for the transportation operators could be developed. An electronic flex voucher database would track each participant's use and provide an overall summary of program participation; this database and associated forms could be MARS, Microsoft Word-, Excel-, or web-based.

Intended as a pilot program to start, paper-based vouchers might only be accepted by one or two partnered transportation providers to facilitate system testing. Additional countywide providers could be added once the mechanics of program administration and operation are established. An evaluation of the program following the evaluation metrics discussed in Chapter 6 should be conducted after one year to determine whether the program will continue and if so, what changes might be desired.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

Need to consolidate a variety of transportation options in one fare medium; need for low cost (to consumer) option where transit is not viable; desire for demand-responsive service on shorter timelines than ADA paratransit

Expected Benefits

The strategy is designed to:

- Allow the participant to retain their independence and ability to choose the transportation service that best suits their needs
- Offset/reduce the cost of a ride on any applicable mode of transportation that has a fare or requested donation (e.g. inter-city bus, local transit, paratransit, taxi, ITN, senior van service)
- Reimburse volunteer drivers, friends, family members or neighbors for rides in private vehicles
- Volunteer drivers will be vetted by the customer rather than MST

Potential Obstacles

- Time needed to establish partnerships and negotiate appropriate subsidies
- Staff time needed for program administration
- Significant development costs if a paperless option is pursued

Nominate Veterans for Free Annual Bus Pass

The Concept

MST would hold a community contest to solicit nominations for a local veteran to receive a free annual bus pass. Okaloosa County Transit (OCT, doing business as Emerald Coast Rider) recently held such a contest. An initial announcement of the contest was made on OCT's Facebook page on Veterans Day of 2014. In early January, a winner was selected and surprised with a full press conference when boarding his bus. Four other nominees received month-long passes.

MST could arrange with veterans organizations in the County to nominate a different individual each month to receive an annual pass and veterans who complete a travel training course might also be made eligible. These individuals could be recognized at an annual event celebrating County veterans and/or at an MST Board meeting. Alternatively, an event similar to that conducted by OCT could be orchestrated in Monterey County using the agency's active Facebook account and established relationships with veterans organizations throughout the county.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

Visibility of MST services among the veteran population

Expected Benefits

- Showcases MST and the community's appreciation for veterans' service to the country
- Provides free mobility to one or more veterans for a year
- Promotes MST services to the veteran community
- Strengthens MST relationship with veteran community

Potential Obstacles

- None foreseen

Initiate "Veterans Helping Veterans" Program

The Concept

There is significant flexibility in shaping a Veterans Helping Veterans transportation program, but the proposed strategy would involve hiring a veteran as a Mobility Department staff member to oversee a variety of activities in the veteran community, including travel training, recruiting veteran Navigators, and conducting outreach in the veteran community to promote the use of MST services. The program could also include a *volunteer driver program* in which veterans volunteer to provide trips in their own vehicles to veterans and their families.

The volunteer-driver-program-for-veterans model has been implemented in Oregon by Ride Connection and is referred to as the Veterans Transportation Program. Ride Connection relies heavily on its partners to co-market the program to their constituents. As with any volunteer driver program, its viability relies heavily on driver recruitment. Outreach partners included County departments on aging, military support networks, local city governments, and existing Ride Connection participants.

San Mateo County, California has a veterans-specific travel training program called the Veterans Mobility Corps. This program recruits and trains volunteer veterans who then become travel trainers for other veterans. Such a program has significant overlap with the administration and procedures currently in place for MST's Navigator and travel training programs, which could be leveraged to implement a program similar to the Veterans Mobility Corps in San Mateo County.

Like the potential Navigator Incentive Program or Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program, the Veterans Helping Veterans Program could also consider implementing incentives—mileage reimbursement or otherwise—to increase the appeal of volunteering. Potential sources of volunteers include:

- Recently returned veterans
- Veterans service organizations
- Veteran members of the public who enjoy volunteering

Volunteers will need to be able to document their veteran status and pass a criminal background check. Training of the trainers and of the participants would be jointly developed by MST and representatives from partnered organizations that work directly with veterans (such as the County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs or the Veterans Transition Center). Training should be offered at a variety of venues, such as VA clinics, MST properties, or other veterans-oriented organizations. Participants must have the capacity to travel independently, and would be trained individually or in groups.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

Insufficient volunteer driver programs in the County; veteran mobility and independence; social and employment opportunity for veterans when they return from service

Expected Benefits

- Increased employment and social opportunities for veterans
- Increased independence among veterans
- Improved access to veterans' medical services
- Strengthened relationships between MST and Monterey County's large veteran community

Potential Obstacles

- Volunteer recruitment
- Mobility Management staff capacity limitations

Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Programs

The Concept

- Implementation of a volunteer driver program based on a model that allows for volunteer incentives and/or reimbursement in the recruitment of drivers for people with mobility needs

Implementation of a new volunteer driver program that includes driver reimbursement incentives is an appropriate element of a comprehensive coordination effort in an area with limited transportation services. A small and tightly controlled pilot project should be initially operated directly by MST to determine the feasibility and cost of expanding the program to other areas and customers. To start, the program would simply reimburse individuals for miles traveled up to a

predetermined monthly limit. The individual city or organization would take full responsibility for vetting participating volunteer drivers, including verifying driver's license and insurance information. Local cities or nonprofits would serve as contact points for driver and participant application distribution. Local staff would verify eligibility by examining photo identification, verifying residence, age, or any other criteria set by MST.

Key objectives identified for such a program would be to provide a service to riders who are otherwise unreachable by other services and/or are too costly to serve; offer a transportation option for isolated seniors, veterans, and ambulatory people with disabilities; provide a new option for making longer-distance specialized trips; and possibly establish a transportation link from smaller communities in Monterey County to MST fixed routes.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

Few transportation options for people with limited mobility; need for lower cost (to consumer) option where transit is not viable; need for personalized or door-through-door service

Expected Benefits

- Provides much needed additional transportation option for residents of rural areas, particularly in South County
- Links people with the greatest need to a basic lifeline service
- Offers a low-cost way to address some transportation needs
- Facilitates a connection to social services and other programs for people who need it most

Potential Obstacles

- Funding may be required to incentivize volunteers (this could potentially be funded through Measure Q)
- Insurance coverage for volunteer trips
- Limited number of people who can be served by volunteer transportation, especially in the short-term timeframe (reservations must be made in advance)
- Potential for unnecessary and/or fraudulent use of driver incentives
- Volunteer driver programs are one element of a comprehensive set of transportation programs, but rarely serve as the primary mode
- Challenges in recruiting drivers

Paratransit Emergency Response Module

The Concept

To enhance Monterey County's ability to respond to emergency situations, such as national disasters or regional situations that significantly disrupt transit service, the paratransit emergency response module would be integrated into MST's existing dispatch capabilities and enable automatic re-routing of existing paratransit resources. It is also intended to; facilitate the civil evacuation of those with access and functional needs from impacted areas, divert pre-scheduled Paratransit trips away from impacted areas, transport responders into impacted areas, and transport passengers to and from emergency shelters during and after an event.

Implementation of the emergency response module would involve working with the vendor, MST's Paratransit contractor, and the Monterey County Office of Emergency Services to integrate

the software with MST's existing technology platforms, Monterey County's Mass Transportation and Evacuation Plan, and other emergency response partners.

Needs Addressed by Strategy

- Enhance the District's ability to respond to and recover from regional disasters or other emergencies
- Mitigate risks to public health, safety, and mobility as a result of significant local or regional disasters or other emergencies

Expected Benefits

- Supports MST's emergency response planning efforts
- Automates communication and logistical processes during times of disaster
- Protects Monterey County residents health, safety, and mobility

Potential Obstacles

- Staff training
- Successful interface / integration with MST's existing CAD and IVR system