



**SBCAG**

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS



# SBCAG Coordinated Plan

April 2024

SociusAmica

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## Executive Summary

This update to the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (“Coordinated Plan”) aims to make transportation more seamless for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and other people facing mobility challenges in Santa Barbara County.

This executive summary provides an overview of the Coordinated Plan, focusing on the key points from each chapter. It includes three sections:

- **Introduction** (Chapter 1): This section explains why this Coordinated Plan is important, who it serves, and sets the stage for subsequent chapters.
- **Taking Stock** (Chapters 2-4): This section summarizes existing transportation services, transportation needs and gaps, and related planning efforts.
- **Moving to Action** (Chapters 5-7): This section covers goals, strategies, implementation, potential funding streams, and future considerations when looking ahead.

## Background

For many people, getting from point A to point B can be a major barrier to living life fully, particularly for older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, people with low incomes who may not be able to afford a car, youth, and people who speak limited English.

How can we address transportation needs and fill gaps for these target population groups? Ultimately, answering this question is the purpose of this Coordinated Plan.

## Key Terms

What is a coordinated plan?

This document is the latest update of the Coordinated Plan for Santa Barbara County. To receive Federal Section 5310 funding, updates to coordinated plans must take place every 5 years, and every 4 years for those areas in non-attainment.

Coordinated plans aim to improve transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities, and other marginalized populations. They are more formally known as coordinated public transit-human service transportation plans, and have a specific legal context at the federal, state, and regional levels (see Chapter 1 for more information).

### **What is the Advisory Committee?**

The project Advisory Committee includes representatives of both transit and health and human service providers and optimizes the benefits of public transportation resources—including health and human service transportation resources— throughout the county. The Advisory Committee was specifically selected to provide guidance and oversight throughout the course of the plan update, and more specifically, they guide the project team that authored this report. The Advisory Committee is supported by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) as the lead agency for coordinated planning.

### **What is the role of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG)?**

SBCAG is recognized as an independent government agency that focuses on solutions for sustainable transportation, housing, and an equitable quality of life across Santa Barbara County. As designated by the California Transportation Agency, SBCAG is responsible for the multi-modal transportation planning, programming, and fund allocation required by state statutes.

### **What is the role of the Santa Barbara County Transit Advisory Committee (SBCTAC)?**

SBCTAC consists of eighteen members and provides input on transit issues affecting those who are transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, disabled, and persons of limited means. SBCTAC was provided with regular updates throughout the Coordinated Plan update process and was tasked with giving feedback where needed. SBCTAC functions as the social services transportation advisory council, as specified in the Transportation Development Act for SBCAG.

## Santa Barbara County Transportation Needs and Gaps

### *Demographic Characteristics*

The primary focus of this Coordinated Plan is to improve transportation and access for the following target population groups:

- Older adults (age 65 and older)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Youth (ages 10 to 17)
- Individuals living in poverty

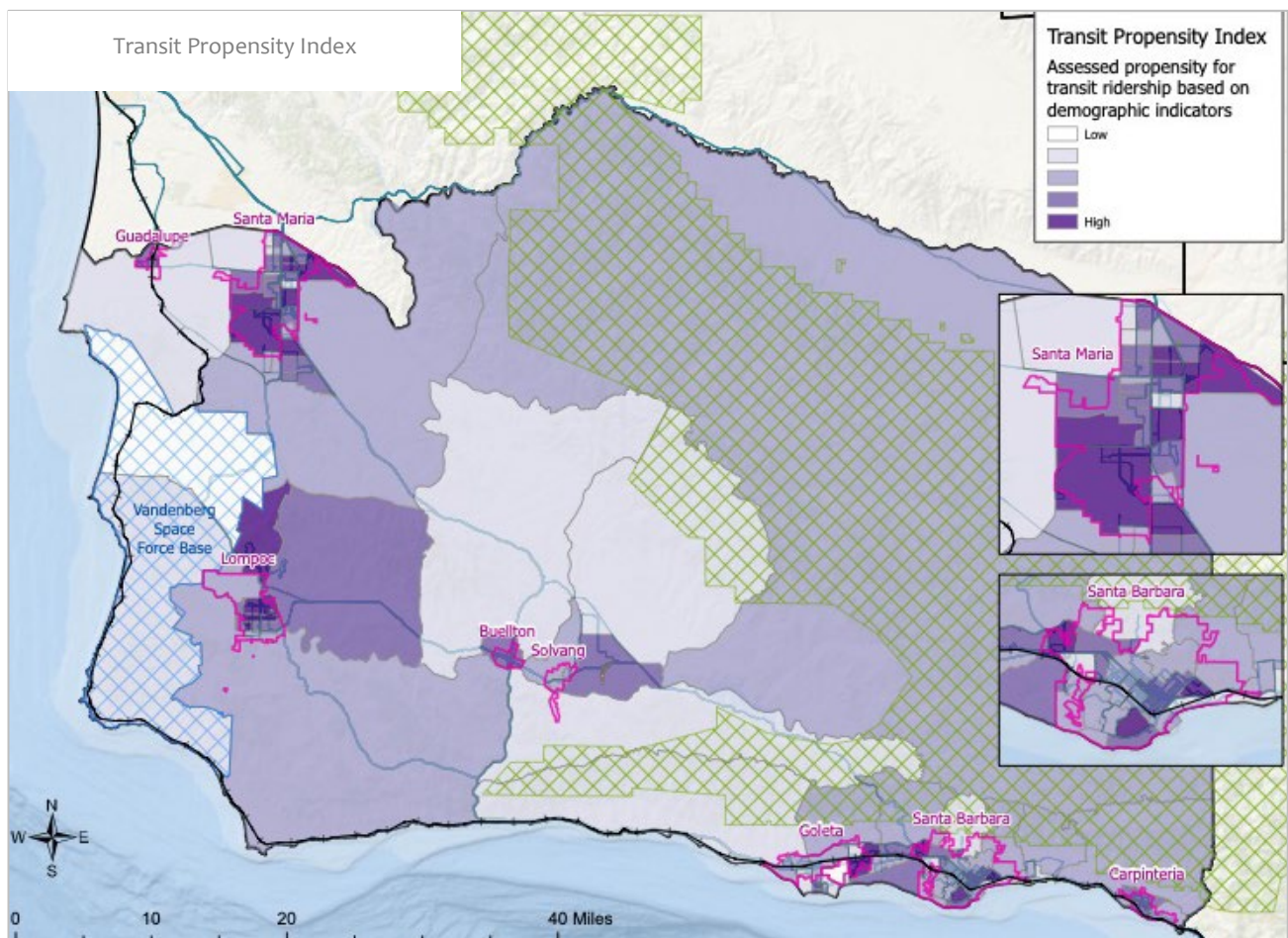
- Individuals with limited English proficiency
- Veterans

They represent between 5% and 11% of the total regional population and experience several common mobility challenges. More information, including demographic maps, is available in Chapter 3.

## Transit Propensity Index

The project team utilized the above listed demographic characteristics to create a transit propensity index (TPI) for the County. Transit propensity is a concept that seeks to identify potential (or likely) areas of increased transit need based on spatial geographic and socioeconomic factors. The map below illustrates the locations within the study area that likely have the greatest need for public transportation services. The transit propensity analysis identifies the cumulative densities of demographic populations most often associated with high transit need, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals living in poverty, and zero-vehicle households.

Figure ES-1 Transit Propensity Index



## Public and Stakeholder Engagement

A critical element of updating Coordinated Plans is extensive engagement from regional stakeholders and community members who rely on services. The contributions and perspectives of people and organizations who spend significant time in Santa Barbara County are reflected in this plan. Engagement specific to the plan update -- from April 2023 to November 2023 -- included the following efforts:






- Project Advisory Committee
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Santa Barbara County Transit Advisory Committee
- Virtual Office Hours
- Community Surveys
- Focus Group Meetings

Project feedback was collected in a variety of methods, including in-person, hybrid, and virtual meetings. The ability for the project team to collect input utilizing a hybrid approach offered more opportunity and flexibility for involvement of the stakeholders and public.

## Needs and Gaps Analysis

Through the demographic analysis and public and stakeholder engagement, key gaps and associated needs were identified in the overall functioning of Santa Barbara County’s coordinated transit system. These are fully discussed in Chapter 2 of the plan.

There were several common themes that the project team identified from public and stakeholder engagement. The main themes are highlighted as follows:

	<p><b>Need for more direct transportation to key destinations</b></p>
	<p><b>Off-peak service needs on evenings and weekends</b></p>
	<p><b>Inter-county service connections</b></p>
	<p><b>Transportation to social destinations</b></p>
	<p><b>Eligibility processes for paratransit</b></p>



## Coordinated Plan Goals

The project Advisory Committee took part in an in-person workshop to update and develop goals and strategies for the coordinated plan. The Advisory Committee was first asked to identify common themes around a Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats (SCOT) analysis for Santa Barbara County, as well as a discussion of how they see coordination currently and what the stakeholders would like to see from concerted coordination efforts. Based on the themes and discussion, the team was able to flesh out five goals for the next 5-year plan horizon.

### Goal 1

**Develop a Comprehensive Plan for Communication, Education, and Awareness Throughout the County**

### Goal 2

**Strengthen Provider Resources and Create Sustainable Funding Streams**

### Goal 3

**Establish a County-wide Plan for Coordinated Advocacy and Policy Development**

### Goal 4

**Support Ongoing Planning, Coordination, & Collaboration, while Creating New Community Partnerships**

### Goal 5




**Ensure Consistent Operation of Safe, Accessible, and Affordable Services for County Residents**



## Strategies and Strategy Prioritization

In January of 2024, the Advisory Committee met virtually to prioritize the strategies that had been aligned with each goal. The strategy prioritization aided the project team in assigning timelines to the individual strategies as well as potential funding sources. For each goal, the committee ranked the strategies from highest to lowest priority. Advisory Committee members included representatives from:










- CALTRANS District 5
- EasyLift
- Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
- Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District
- Santa Maria Regional Transit
- CALTRANS System Planning
- County of Santa Barbara
- Independent Living Resource Center
- Santa Barbara Transit Advisory Committee

Figure ES-2 Proposed Implementation Timeline & Priority Rankings

Goal / Strategy	Timeline	Priority	Overall Ranking
 <b>Goal 1</b> <b>Develop a Comprehensive Plan for Communication, Education, and Awareness Throughout the County.</b>			
<b>Strategy 1a:</b> Garner local participation through community meetings and support from younger populations	Short	High	2
<b>Strategy 1b:</b> Engagement Planning for local governments	Short	Low	5
<b>Strategy 1c:</b> Improve advertising and marketing of available transit jobs in the County	Short	Medium	4
<b>Strategy 1d:</b> Establish a formal marketing campaign on transportation resources in the county	Short	Medium	3
<b>Strategy 1e:</b> Develop transit information: how transit works, how to use public transit, and how transit is funded	Short	High	1
 <b>Goal 2</b> <b>Strengthen Provider Resources and Create Sustainable Funding Streams.</b>			
<b>Strategy 2a:</b> Increase resources for local match.	Medium	Low	3
<b>Strategy 2b:</b> Develop a System to Identify and Promote Funding Opportunities for regional providers and programs.	Short	High	1
<b>Strategy 2c:</b> Grant Writing Assistance Program.	Medium	Medium	2
<b>Strategy 2d:</b> Advocate for increased funding for transit at the state and county levels.	Medium	High	1
<b>Strategy 2e:</b> Support coordination amongst private and non-profit social service providers to streamline funding for contracted/coordinated services.	Medium	Medium	2
 <b>Goal 3</b> <b>Establish a County-wide Plan for Coordinated Advocacy and Policy Development.</b>			
<b>Strategy 3a:</b> Establish requirements for special events in the county to have a transportation policy.	Medium	Low	3
<b>Strategy 3b:</b> Lobby for a lower farebox recovery minimum.	Medium	High	1
<b>Strategy 3c:</b> Better utilize the SBCTAC for advocacy, change-making, and coordination implementation support.	Short	Medium	2

Goal / Strategy	Timeline	Priority	Overall Ranking
 <b>Goal 4</b> <b>Support Ongoing Planning, Coordination, &amp; Collaboration, while Creating New Community Partnerships.</b>			
<b>Strategy 4a:</b> Improve planning and design of county-wide commuter services.	Medium	Medium	3
<b>Strategy 4b:</b> Develop a plan for improved service and connectivity to social destinations.	Medium	High	1
<b>Strategy 4c:</b> Grow availability of premium senior services through public-private partnerships.	Long	Medium	4
<b>Strategy 4d:</b> Strengthen relationships between providers and public works for future planning and development.	Short	Low	5
<b>Strategy 4e:</b> Coordinate with Veterans Administration and Senior Service Organizations to Better Provide Consistent Transportation for those who Rely on the Service(s).	Medium	High	2
<b>Strategy 4f:</b> Consider microtransit (on-demand/app-based) to meet off-peak service demands.	Long	Medium	4
 <b>Goal 5</b> <b>Ensure Consistent Operation of Safe, Accessible, and Affordable Services for County Residents</b>			
<b>Strategy 5a:</b> Partner with Workforce development to help address the bus operator shortage.	Short	Medium	4
<b>Strategy 5b:</b> Recommend transit studies such as Comprehensive Operations Analyses and Transit Development Plans for all providers.	Medium	Low	7
<b>Strategy 5c:</b> Improve inter-county and inter-agency coordination and connectivity.	Long	High	1
<b>Strategy 5d:</b> Work with CALACT and CALTRANS to schedule regional P.A.S.S. Training.	Short	Low	6
<b>Strategy 5e:</b> Establish Universal real-time availability for buses throughout the county.	Long	High	2
<b>Strategy 5f:</b> Develop county-wide single-source/universal fare card program.	Long	Medium	3
<b>Strategy 5g:</b> Develop Plan for charging infrastructure county-wide (overnight and between shifts).	Long	Low	5

Based on the strategy rankings, the highest priority strategies for the region to tackle upon adoption of this coordinated plan are as follows (listed in priority order):

 Education & Advocacy	<b>Strategy 1e:</b> Develop transit information: how transit works, how to use public transit, and how transit is funded
 Sustainable Funding	<b>Strategy 2b:</b> Develop a system to identify and promote funding opportunities for regional providers and programs
 Sustainable Funding	<b>Strategy 2d:</b> Advocate for increased funding for transit at the state and county levels
 Policy Development	<b>Strategy 3b:</b> Lobby for a lower farebox recovery minimum
 Planning	<b>Strategy 4b:</b> Develop a plan for improved service and connectivity to social destinations
 Partnerships	<b>Strategy 5c:</b> Improve inter-county and inter-agency coordination and connectivity
 Education & Advocacy	<b>Strategy 1a:</b> Garner local participation through community meetings and support from younger populations
 Coordination	<b>Strategy 4e:</b> Coordinate with Veterans Administration and Senior Service Organizations to better provide consistent transportation for those who rely on the services
 Operations	<b>Strategy 5e:</b> Establish universal real-time availability for buses throughout the county

## Plan Implementation & Looking Ahead

Public engagement planning and stakeholder meetings, along with other considerations, will play a key role in this Santa Barbara County coordinated plan.

Future considerations include:

- **Annual Reporting on the Coordinated Plan:**
  - How will the advisory committee and SBCAG provide regular updates on Coordinated Plan progress?
- **Lead Agency(ies) for Implementation:**
  - Who will report on strategy progress?
  - How will this information be communicated?
- **Transit Development Planning & Comprehensive Operations Analyses:**
  - While future transit planning is mentioned in the strategy section, it's important to note that detailed transit plans for providers within the County will be needed to support future coordinated efforts.
- **Linking all mobility options in the County:**
  - SBCAG produces a variety of plans, including those related to comprehensive planning and active transportation. Ensuring these and future transit plans support one another is critical for County residents, particularly those who need better access to stops and transfer centers.



# Chapter 1. Introduction & Background

## What Are Coordinated Plans?

This Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Update—or “Coordinated Plan”—aims to make transportation more seamless for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and other people facing mobility challenges in Santa Barbara County.

This chapter explains why this Coordinated Plan is important, who it serves, and ultimately sets the stage for subsequent chapters. It contains the following sections:

- **Why a Coordinated Plan?** This section explains why this plan is important.
- **Who does this Coordinated Plan serve?** This section lists the target population groups for this Coordinated Plan.
- **Plan Structure.** This section describes the overall structure of this plan.

## Why a Coordinated Plan?

There is a common need to travel throughout Santa Barbara County in day-to-day life—whether that means getting to work, making it to a medical appointment on time, running errands, shopping for groceries, or visiting loved ones.

### Key Terms

#### *What is a Coordinated Plan Update?*

This document is the latest update of the Coordinated Plan for Santa Barbara County. Updates to coordinated plans must take place every 5 years.

Coordinated plans aim to improve transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities, and other marginalized populations. They are more formally known as coordinated public transit-human service transportation plans, and have a specific legal context at the federal, state, and regional levels.

#### *About Santa Barbara County*

The County of Santa Barbara is located in Southern California. The county seat is the city of Santa Barbara, and the largest city is Santa Maria. As of the 2020 census, the population was 448,229. The county has a large population of Older Adults and youth who rely on transit services daily. The transit goals for the community include reaching the underserved communities as well as increasing transportation accessibility for the workforce in Santa Barbara County. The Covid-19 Pandemic affected both the workforce in Santa Barbara County and contributed to staffing shortages within the transit industry. For more information on the target populations, see “who does this plan serve”, below.







For many people, getting from point A to point B can be a major barrier to living life fully: older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, people with low incomes who may not be able to afford a car, youth, and people who speak limited English. (More information on target population groups is available in Chapter 3.)

This is especially true in rural areas of Santa Barbara County, where distances between destinations can be very long, weather can present challenges, and public transit is less feasible. Even when destinations are nearby, invisible barriers like city limits can push places out of reach for reasons that aren't clear to most people. This is to say nothing of visible barriers like highways, railroads, and rivers that can have similar effects.

How can we address transportation needs and fill gaps for these target population groups? Ultimately, answering this question is the purpose of this Coordinated Plan.








## Who Does this Plan Serve?

The primary focus of Santa Barbara County's Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Update is to improve transportation options and access to services for the following target population groups:

						
<b>Older Adults</b> (Aged 65 and older)	<b>Youth</b> (Ages 10 to 17)	<i>Individuals with Disabilities</i>	<i>Individuals Living in Poverty</i>	<i>Individuals with Limited English Proficiency</i>	<b>Tribal Nations</b>	<b>Veterans</b>

Historically, these population groups have higher rates of transit dependency and lower access to personal vehicles. As described in Figure 1-1, these conditions make mobility a challenge, particularly in rural areas and in locations without access to public transit services. The following sections provide a further look into the socioeconomic characteristics of the target populations within the study area, as well as a discussion of major trip generators and employers in the region.

Figure 1-1 Mobility Challenges of Target Populations

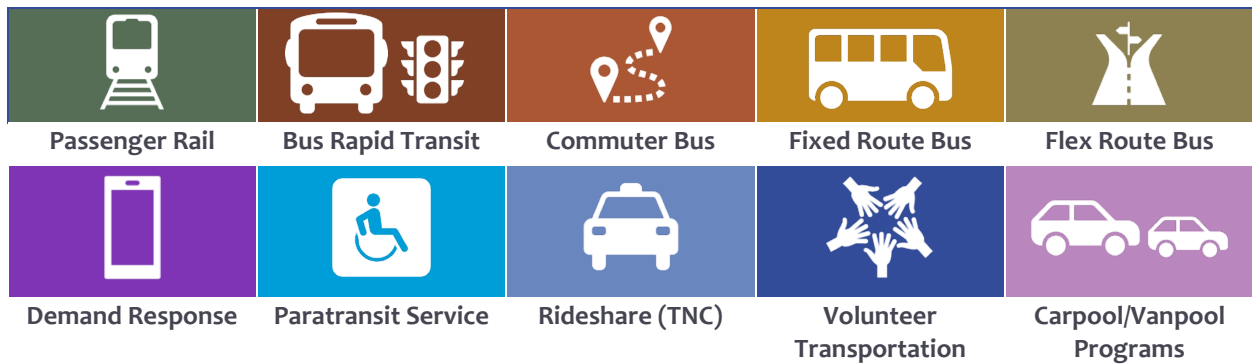
Target Population	Common Mobility Challenges
 <p><b>Older Adults</b> (aged 65 and older)</p>	<p>There are a variety of reasons older adults may drive less frequently or even at all, including health challenges, comfort behind the wheel, and the need to use or bring mobility devices. As such, older adults may need additional support for mobility, and transit can help meet that need.</p>
 <p><b>Youth Populations</b> (ages 10 to 17)</p>	<p>Youth populations, particularly those younger than 18, may have issues accessing key destinations like schools, after school care, or community centers, due in part to the fact that many cannot yet drive themselves; however, some families may have only one or no vehicle at all. Further, families may not live in a location where they have direct access to public transportation services.</p>
 <p><b>Individuals with a Disability</b></p>	<p>Individuals with disabilities may have physical or cognitive challenges that make it difficult to operate a vehicle, or to travel on their own without assistance from others. Individuals with disabilities may need additional support for mobility from caregivers or family members.</p>
 <p><b>Individuals Living in Poverty</b></p>	<p>Individuals living in poverty tend to use transit more frequently than the general public because they may not have the financial ability to purchase, own, maintain, or fuel a personal vehicle. However, even public transportation services may be cost-prohibitive for these populations.</p>
 <p><b>Indigenous Populations</b></p>	<p>Indigenous populations commonly live on tribal lands, often located in more “rural” and isolated areas of a given region or state. Transportation often is a challenge for tribal areas given limited access as that many individuals often fall under other target categories as well (i.e., may have a disability, be an older adult, or medically frail).</p>
 <p><b>Veterans</b></p>	<p>Veterans often face several barriers to receiving care and may have financial challenges that make travel costs for healthcare appointments burdensome. Veterans living in rural areas must travel longer distances and may not have immediate access to healthcare providers or specialists. Further, many Veterans need to access the Veterans Administration and/or hospitals, which may be long distances away and have a limited number of appointments.</p>
 <p><b>Limited English Speakers</b></p>	<p>Limited English speakers may face additional challenges accessing and understanding available transportation programs, including public transit. The needs of this demographic group are important to consider improving access to services such as healthcare, grocery shopping, and job access.</p>



Two additional target populations this plan focuses on are households with no vehicles and unhoused individuals. Individuals and families with no vehicle have limited mobility options when there is no direct access to transit services. Without transit, these individuals must rely on rides from friends and family members. Similarly, unhoused and transitional populations often struggle with limited access to transit and often have limited means to pay for public transit services. These populations significantly benefit when transit services are designed to provide access to government services, employment, and food access.


## What Transportation Modes are Included in Coordinated Plans?


Coordinated plans include all modes of transportation available in a given region, including those that connect from other areas into the region. For individuals that are new to transit, it is important to review these general modes of transportation. The following section gives an overview of all of these modes:




Details of each of these modes begins on the following page.

## Types of Public Transportation

 <h3>Passenger Rail</h3> <p>Moves many customers over long distances, usually with high frequencies.</p>		
<b>Service Area:</b> Large urban areas		<b>Service Schedule:</b> Fixed times and stops
<b>Sub-Types</b>	<b>Where Does it Operate?</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>
Heavy Rail	Older “legacy” city systems (e.g., Chicago / Boston)	Electric rail or diesel fuel trains
Commuter Rail	Cities with newer rail service (e.g., Austin)	
Light Rail	San Francisco and Dallas	Overhead electric catenary system

 <h3>Bus Rapid Transit</h3> <p>Implemented when fixed route bus service on a given corridor is overloaded.</p>		
<b>Service Area:</b> Major corridors in large cities.		<b>Service Schedule:</b> Fixed, with timed stops spaced to allow vehicles to move more quickly than traditional fixed routes.
<b>How does it operate?</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>	
Cities often dedicate a traffic lane to BRT, with signal queuing to allow the service to operate competitively when compared to traditional fixed route	Uses larger vehicles (40- to 60-foot articulated buses), that allow transit providers to move people quickly along major corridors.	

 <h3>Commuter/Express Bus Routes</h3> <p>Long distance service for passengers needing access to employment, education, medical, and shopping opportunities not otherwise available in their area.</p>		
<b>Service Area:</b> Operates from main transit centers or park-and-rides to designated stops within a given city.		<b>Service Schedule:</b> Fixed times, with limited stops.
<b>How does it operate?</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>	
Service is more frequent during “peak commute periods,” with limited scheduled service during the middle of the day.	Uses larger vehicles (40- to 60-foot articulated buses), allowing transit providers to move people quickly along major corridors.	



## Fixed Route Bus

Buses operating on predetermined routes with set schedules and stops; the most common form of public transportation in the U.S.

**Service Area:**  
Typically found in urbanized areas, but also in rural areas where such service is better suited to a community.

**Service Schedule:**  
Formal, posted schedules and designated stops allow passengers to plan ahead on when and where to catch the bus. Fixed-route bus service requires what the Federal Transit Administration calls “complementary paratransit” service, per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Complementary paratransit, also known more simply as “paratransit” service, is detailed in a dedicated type below.

**How does it operate?**

**Vehicles**

Service is more frequent during “peak commute periods” with limited scheduled service during the middle of the day.

Typically utilizes buses ranging in size from 25-40 feet; however, vans and other smaller vehicles may be utilized depending on ridership.



## Flex Route Bus

Also known as “deviated fixed-route,” this transit service operates on a scheduled fixed route where the bus may “deviate” off-route at the request and/or need of the customer(s).

**Service Area:**  
A good alternative for areas where fixed-route service may not be a good fit—for example, suburban and rural areas.

**Service Schedule:**  
Flexible routes are typically designed with enough “slack” in the schedule to allow for deviations, yet still allow the bus to run on time for scheduled stops. Complementary paratransit is not required with flex-route service, because the vehicle may deviate off route based on customer needs.

**How does it operate?**

**Vehicles**

Customers request real-time route deviations as needed.

Typically utilizes buses ranging in size from 25-40 feet; however, vans and other smaller vehicles may be utilized depending on ridership.



## Demand Response

Demand response transit service is “demand-based,” operating based on the needs or schedules of the customers. It is the second largest type of public transit service in the U.S.

**Service Area:**  
Found in low-density areas or ones that are geographically widespread.

**Service Schedule:**  
Usually schedule-based, with customers scheduling 2-24 hours in advance, or subscription-based, with customers having a standing reservation to use the service.

**How does it operate?**

**Vehicles**

Some models utilize technology that allows for real-time scheduling, but most providers require reservations in advance.

Utilizes small or medium sized vehicles, such as minivans, passenger vans, or larger “cutaway” buses, typically equipped with wheelchair spaces and wheelchair lifts in order to service all passengers, no matter their abilities.



## Paratransit Service

Paratransit (also known as complementary paratransit) service is designed to complement fixed-route transit services; the Americans with Disabilities Act (passed in 1990) requires that transit operators offering fixed-route services must offer “comparable” service to individuals with disabilities.

**Service Area:**

Wherever an agency provides fixed route(s), it must also offer complementary paratransit within ¼ mile of the fixed route.

**Service Schedule:**

Service must be provided during the same days and times as the fixed route service operation.

**How does it operate?**

This type of transit service may offer three main types of operations based on the policies of the provider and the needs of the customer: curb-to-curb, door-to-door, and door-through-door. Paratransit service is the costliest for a provider to offer and is offered by larger agencies in urbanized areas that provide fixed routes.

**Vehicles**

Paratransit service utilizes smaller vehicles (usually 25-foot “cutaway” buses) that have wheelchair lifts or ramps, with one or more spaces for wheelchairs where they can be safely ‘tied down.’



## Ride Share/Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)

Ride share, also known as ride-hailing, is a form of transportation service that is a hybrid between demand-response and taxi service.

**Service Area:**

TNCs are typically found in urbanized areas, though some may exist in rural settings.

**Service Schedule:**

Passengers request service through mobile phone apps, usually on-demand from a specific pick-up point. However, service may also be scheduled in advance. Passengers may also request a private or shared ride, depending on timing and cost.

**How does it operate?**

Typically not offered by a public provider, but a series of private providers, referred to as transportation network companies (TNCs). Since rides are often offered by private companies, price escalation may be a significant factor in whether a customer chooses to book a ride through this service.

**Vehicles**

Typically offered in cars or SUVs; some larger transit providers offer ride sharing service that is pre-coordinated within the agency, utilizing an agency vehicle, such as a car or van.



## Volunteer Transportation Program

Volunteer transportation operates a variety of ways, but centrally relies on volunteer drivers to drive passengers.

**Service Area:**

Volunteer transportation programs are great because they can be implemented in any setting: rural, urban, or suburban.

**Service Schedule:**

These types of programs typically have rides scheduled in advance, though some may operate on-demand service, depending on driver availability.

**How does it operate?**

These programs are typically the lowest cost for agencies to offer; however, insurance and liability provide challenges to implementation. During the pandemic, volunteer driver programs came to a halt, and many have yet to recover.

**Vehicles**

These programs may offer their own vehicles (cars or vans) or may ask that the volunteer provide their own vehicle in exchange for cost reimbursements for fuel, mileage, and other costs.



## Carpool/Vanpool Programs

Carpools and vanpools are another low-cost alternative to serve anywhere from 3-18 passengers.

**Service Area:**

These services are common in rural and suburban areas where a common group of individuals need to travel long distances, and where commuter transit is not a viable option.

**Service Schedule:**

Carpool and vanpool programs are typically designed around work schedules, i.e. 8-5pm. Expenses for the rider vary, based on trip distance and frequency of use, though these options are often less expensive than driving alone.

**How does it operate?**

These programs may be offered through a transit service provider or may be more organic, established by a group of individuals who need service to common locations, such as an employer or education institution.

**Vehicles**

Some providers offer cars, minivans, or passenger vans for those signed up for the service, and those vehicles are usually left overnight at a common location, such as a shopping center or park and ride.

## How Does this Coordinated Plan Fit into the Federal, State, and Regional Context?

### Federal

The Enhanced Mobility for Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310) is a federal source of transportation funding.

To receive funding under this program, projects must be part of a locally developed and approved coordinated public transit-human services plan— often simply called a coordinated plan.

Furthermore, coordinated plans must:

- Incorporate participation by older adults and individuals with disabilities, as well as other stakeholders, including representatives of public, private, and non-profit service providers.
- Be updated every 5 years—or every 4 years for areas that are in non-attainment.

### California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS)

CALTRANS is mandated by Federal and State law to facilitate, develop, and prepare the California Transportation Plan (CTP). Coordinated plans must:

1. Be locally developed. Evidenced by public participation that must include seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, non-profit and human services transportation providers, and other members of the public.
2. Include information on:
  - a. The community background
  - b. Inventory of local resources and services including duplicative or restrictive laws
  - c. Needs assessment
  - d. Gaps in service, and overcoming barriers
  - e. Strategies to ensure continuity in data collection, coordinated transportation and funding, improved cost reporting, and mobility management
  - f. Priority of Projects
  - g. The establishment of an entity with a clear, comprehensive mission to improve coordination
  - h. Signature page of participating agencies
3. Resolution from local governing body adopting the Plan
4. Must be updated every five years, but every 4 years for areas considered non-attainment.

## Plan Structure

This coordinated plan includes seven chapters and one appendix. Chapters 2 through 4 take stock of existing conditions and lay the groundwork for the rest of the document. Chapter 5 presents updated regional goals and objectives. Chapters 6 and 7 explain implementation strategies, timelines, and performance measures. Chapter 8 looks ahead to future considerations.

### Executive Summary

Summary of Coordinated Plan.

### Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter covers the Coordinated Plan’s background and purpose, populations served (and engaged), and plan structure.

### Chapter 2. Transportation Resources in the Region

This chapter provides a list of current transportation providers and planning agencies in Santa Barbara County.

### Chapter 3. Transportation Needs and Gaps

This chapter assesses the known transportation needs and gaps, with demographic maps and supporting geographic analysis.

### Chapter 4. Review of Existing Plans, Studies, and Reports

This chapter describes how this Coordinated Plan aligns with other municipal, rural, and statewide transportation planning efforts.

### Chapter 5. Goals and Strategies

This chapter articulates the goals and objectives (or “strategies”) of this Coordinated Plan.

### Chapter 6. Plan Implementation and Funding Sources

This chapter prioritizes strategies, and proposes an implementation plan—including priority rankings, lead organization(s), and support organization(s)—to put into action when the Coordinated Plan is approved.

### Chapter 7. Looking Ahead / Conclusions

This chapter includes annual reporting recommendations, public engagement planning, and future considerations related to census impacts and future transit plans.

### Appendices



# Chapter 2. Existing Conditions

## Demographics

This section summarizes the demographics of the target population groups in Santa Barbara County. The population of Santa Barbara County was 448,229 according to the most recent census.

In the figure below, these individual groups represent between 2% and 40% of the total population, respectively, in the region. Although the larger percentages show that Youth (Under the Age of 18) and Limited English Speakers comprise a larger portion of the population, the greatest transit needs are related to the Veteran, Older Adults, and populations of Individuals with Disabilities. It truly identifies the need for more transportation services and further coordination amongst the state and local providers.

Data for the maps representing existing conditions comes from the United States Census Bureau. The data is based on estimates collected as of July 1, 2022.

**Figure 2-1 Target Populations**

Population Group	2022	% of County Population
Older Adults (age 65+)	74,854	16.7%
Individuals with a Disability	30,480	6.8%
Limited English Speakers	178,843	39.9%
Native American Population	9,861	2.2%
Individuals Living in Poverty	68,131	15.2%
Youth (Under 18)	98,162	21.9%
Veterans	19,274	4.3%
Households with No Vehicles	8,647	5.8%
Total Population in Santa Barbara County	448,229	



## Older Adults

Older adults account for 16.7% of the population of the study area. The share of older adults in the region is higher than that of the state (15.8%) as noted in the table at right.

The distribution of older adults in the region can be seen in the map below.

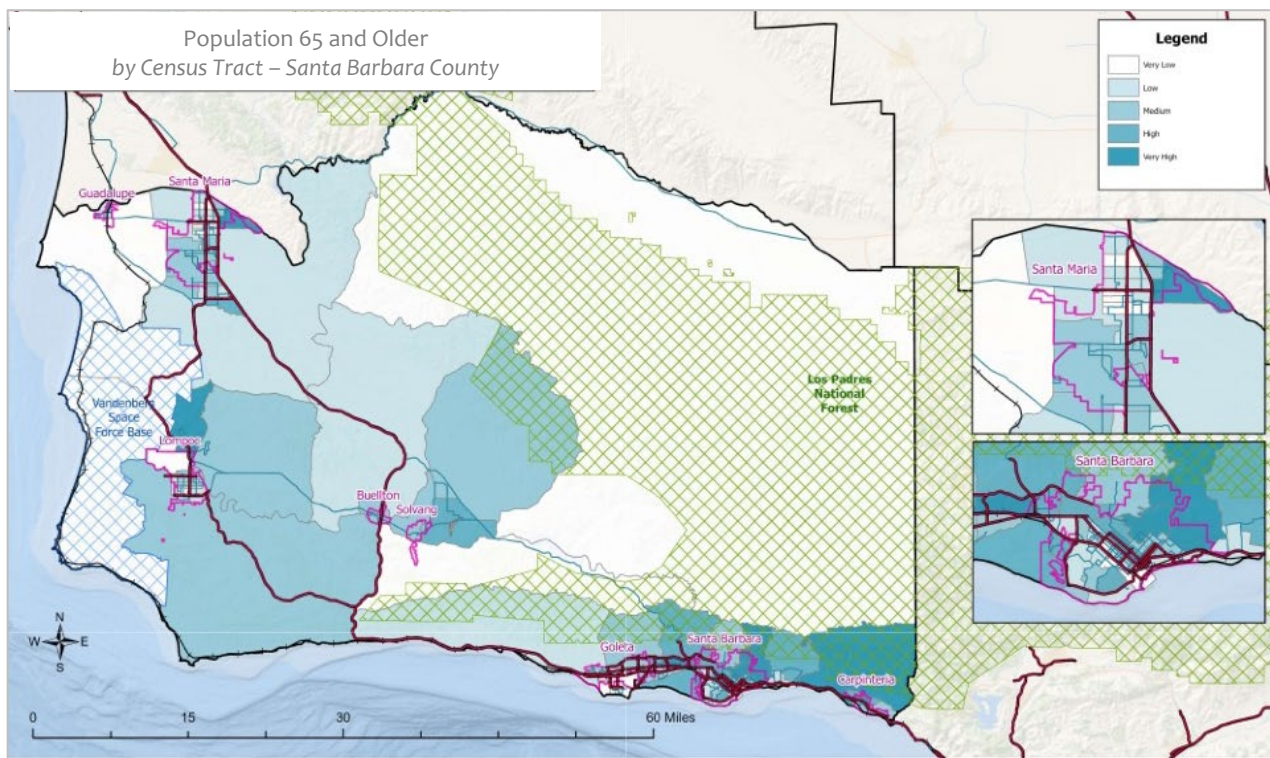
Concentrations of older adults can be found in the south-east portion of the county around the city of Carpinteria. There are also areas around the cities of Santa Barbara, Solvang, in the northern part of the county around Santa Maria, and around the city of Lompoc, east of Vandenberg Space Force Base.

**Figure 2-2 Older Adult Population – 65 and Older (County and State)**

	2022	% of Population
Santa Barbara County	74,854	16.7%
State of California	6,166,636	15.8%

Source: 2021 1-year ACS estimates; 2020 5-year ACS estimates

**Figure 2-3 Older Adult Population - 65 and Older**



## Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities account for 6.8% of the population of the study area. The share of individuals with a disability is the same as the population in the state (6.8%) as observed in the table at right.

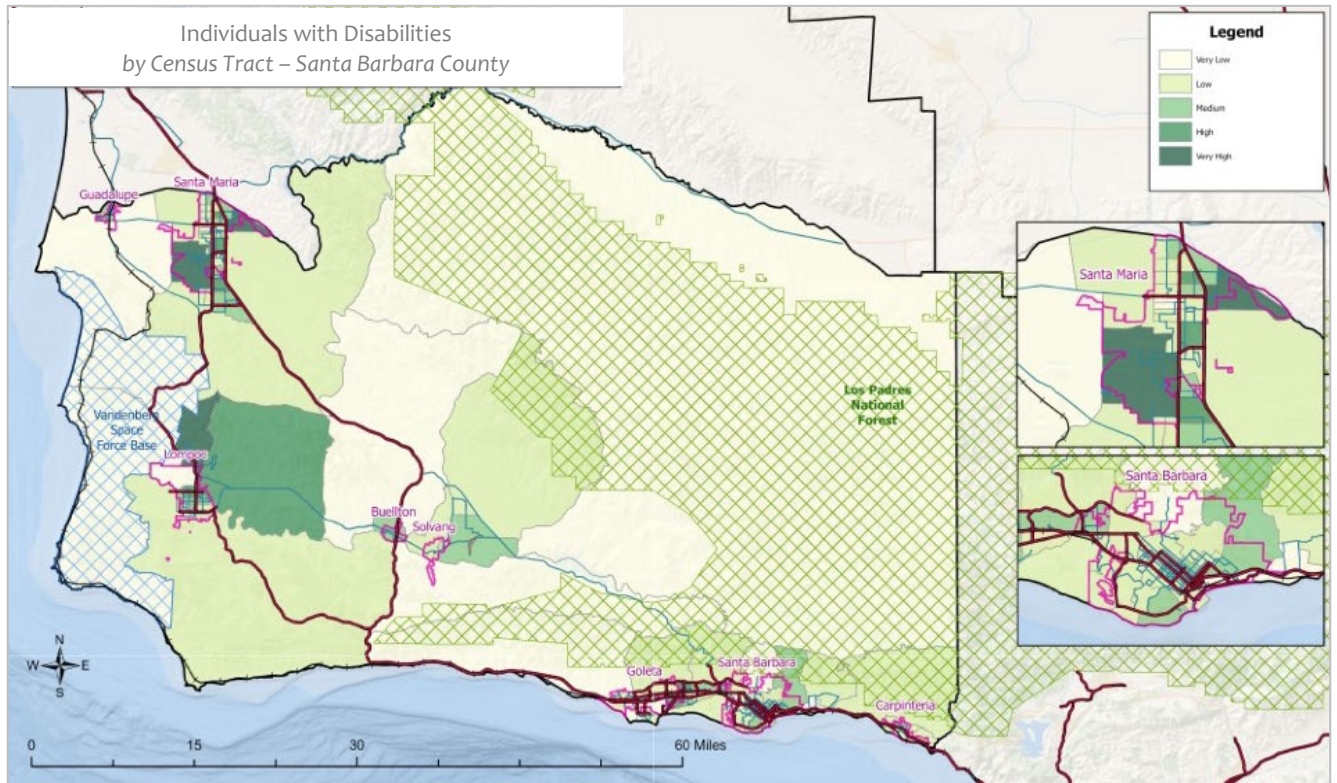
**Figure 2-4 Individuals with Disabilities (County and State)**

	2022	% of Population
Santa Barbara County	30,480	6.8%
State of California	2,653,995	6.8%

Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates

The distribution of individuals with disabilities in the study area is shown in the Individuals with Disabilities map below. Small concentrations of individuals with disabilities are found around Goleta and Santa Barbara, however, there is a significant concentration of individuals with disabilities in the Northwest area of Lompoc as well as the North and West areas of Santa Maria.

**Figure 2-5 Individuals with Disabilities**



## Limited English Speakers

Limited English speakers account for 39.9% of the population of the study area. The share of limited English speakers in the study area is slightly lower than the share at the statewide level (43.9%) as observed in the table at right.

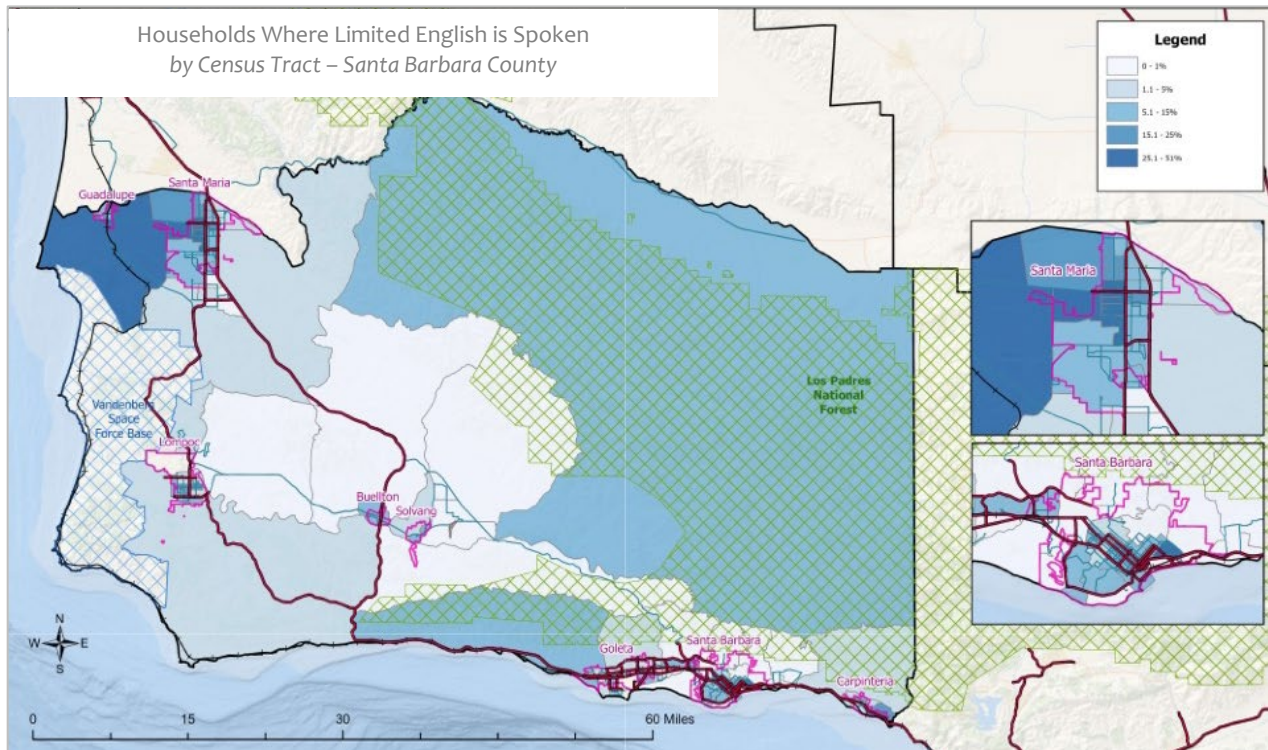
**Figure 2-6 Limited English Speakers (County and State)**

	2022	% of Population
Santa Barbara County	178,843	39.9%
State of California	17,133,881	43.9%

Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates

The map below illustrates that the distribution of limited English speakers in the study area is highest around the cities of Guadalupe and Santa Maria.

**Figure 2-7 Households Where Limited English is Spoken**



## Native American Population

The Native American Population accounts for 2.2% of the population of the study area. The share of Native American Population in the study area is slightly higher than the share at the statewide level (1.7%) as observed in the Figure at right.

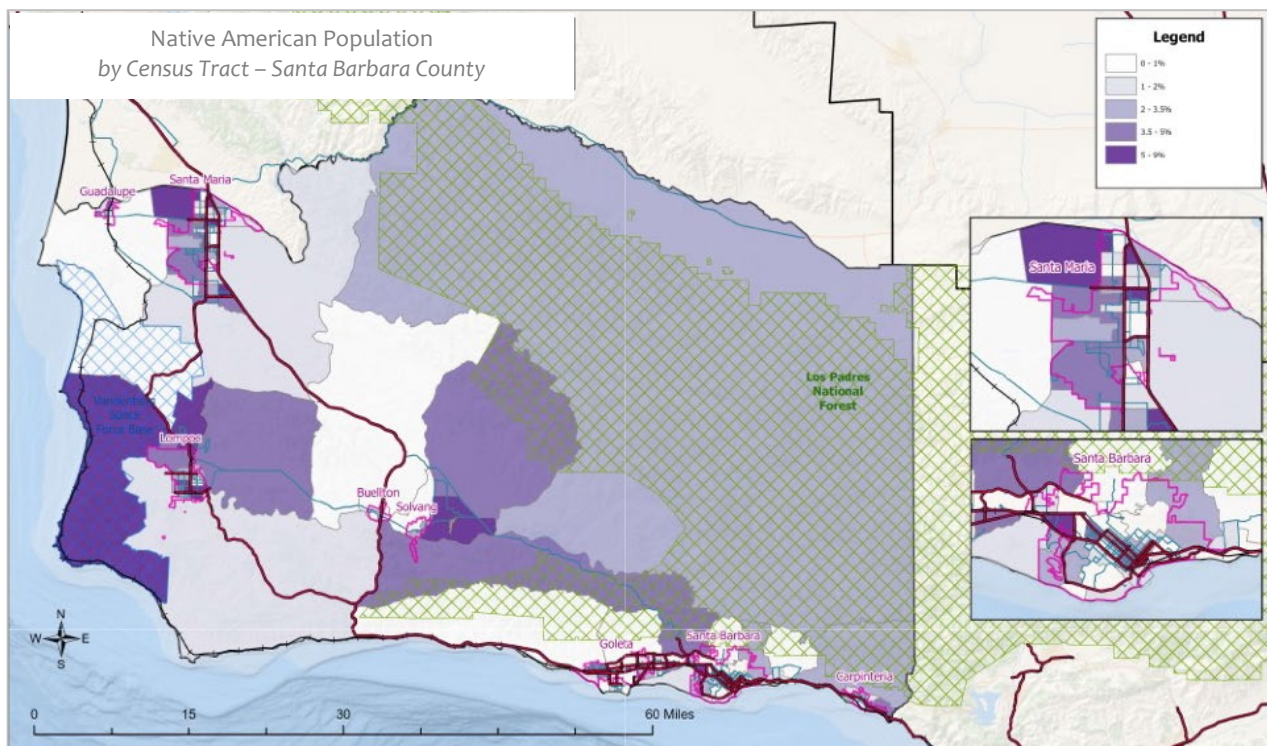
**Figure 2-8 Native American Population (County and State)**

	2022	% of Population
Santa Barbara County	9,861	2.2%
State of California	663,499	1.7%

Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates

The distribution of the Native American Population in the study area is shown in the map below. The highest concentrations are east of Solvang (the Santa Ynez reservation), north of Santa Maria, and north and east of Lompoc with a significant concentration in Vandenberg Space Force Base. This concentration is due to the protection of 14 sacred Chumash Indian Rock Art sites on the Base.

**Figure 2-9 Native American Population**



## Individuals Living in Poverty

Individuals living in poverty account for 15.2% of the population of the study area. The share of individuals living in poverty within the study area is higher than the share at the statewide level (12.3%) as observed in the table at right.

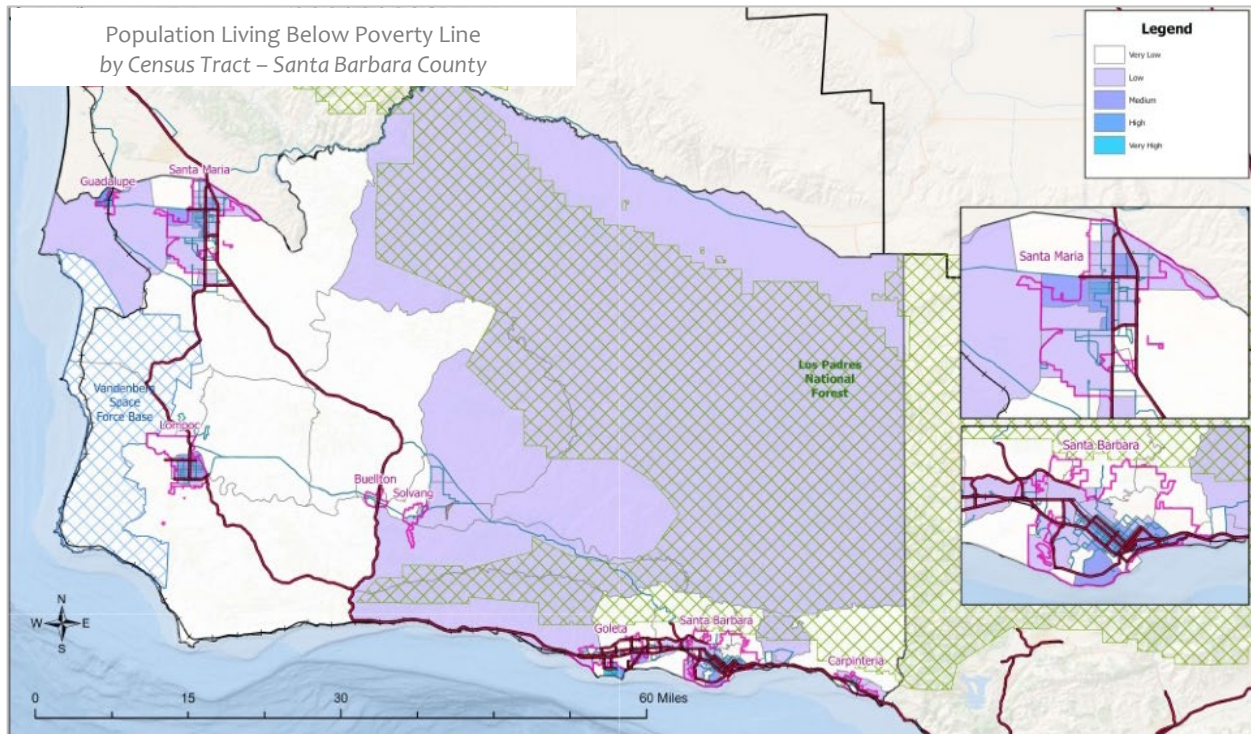
The distribution of individuals living in Poverty is highest around the city centers of Guadalupe, Santa Maria, Lompoc, Goleta, and Santa Barbara in concentrated areas.

**Figure 2-10 Individuals Living in Poverty (County and State)**

	2022	% of Population
Santa Barbara County	68,131	15.2%
State of California	4,800,609	12.3%

Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates

**Figure 2-11 Population Living in Poverty**



## Youth

Individuals under 18 years old account for 21.9% of the population of the study area. The share of the youth population is almost the same as the state (21.8%) as noted in the table at right.

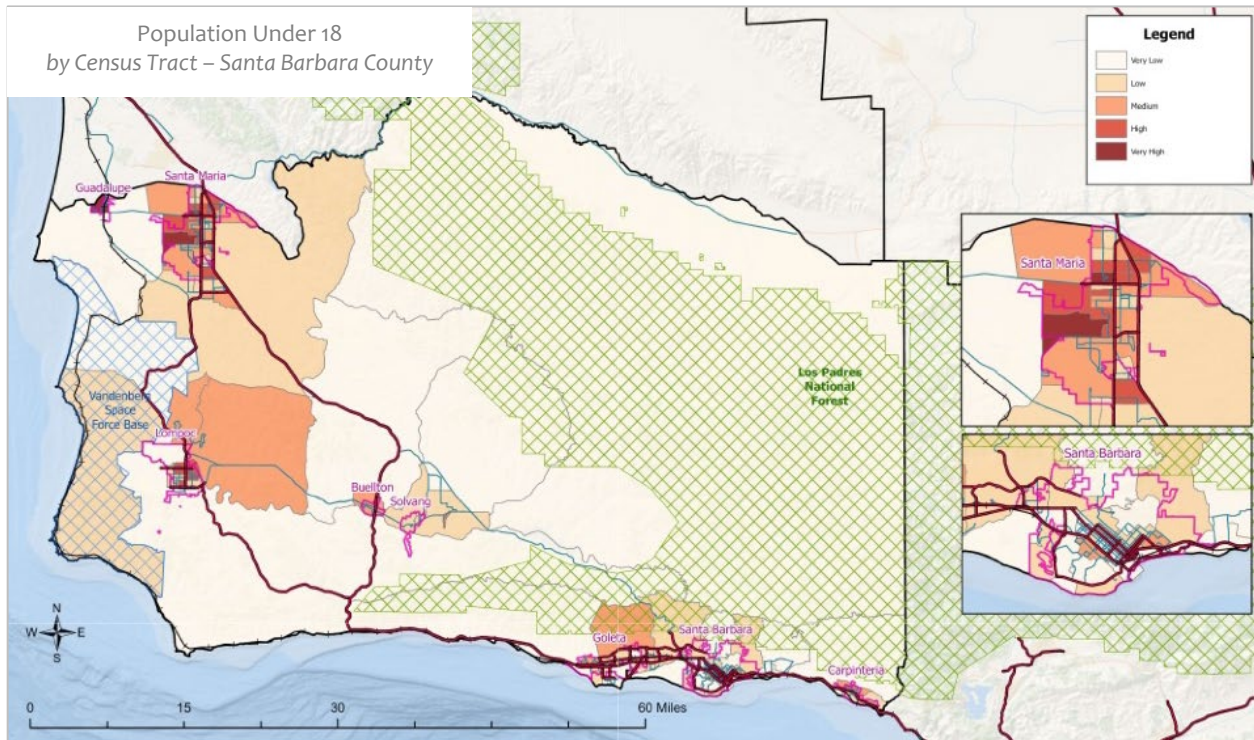
The distribution of Individuals under 18 years old in the region is shown in the map below. Concentrations of youth residents can be found in the largest population centers, primarily in and around Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and Lompoc.

**Figure 2-12 Youth Residents - Under 18 (County and State)**

	2022	% of Population
Santa Barbara County	98,162	21.9%
State of California	8,508,397	21.8%

Source: 2021 1-Year ACS Estimate

**Figure 2-13 Youth Population - Under 18**



## Veterans

Veterans account for 4.3% of the total population of the study area. The share of the Veteran population in the study area is higher than the state average (3.8%) as observed in the table at right.

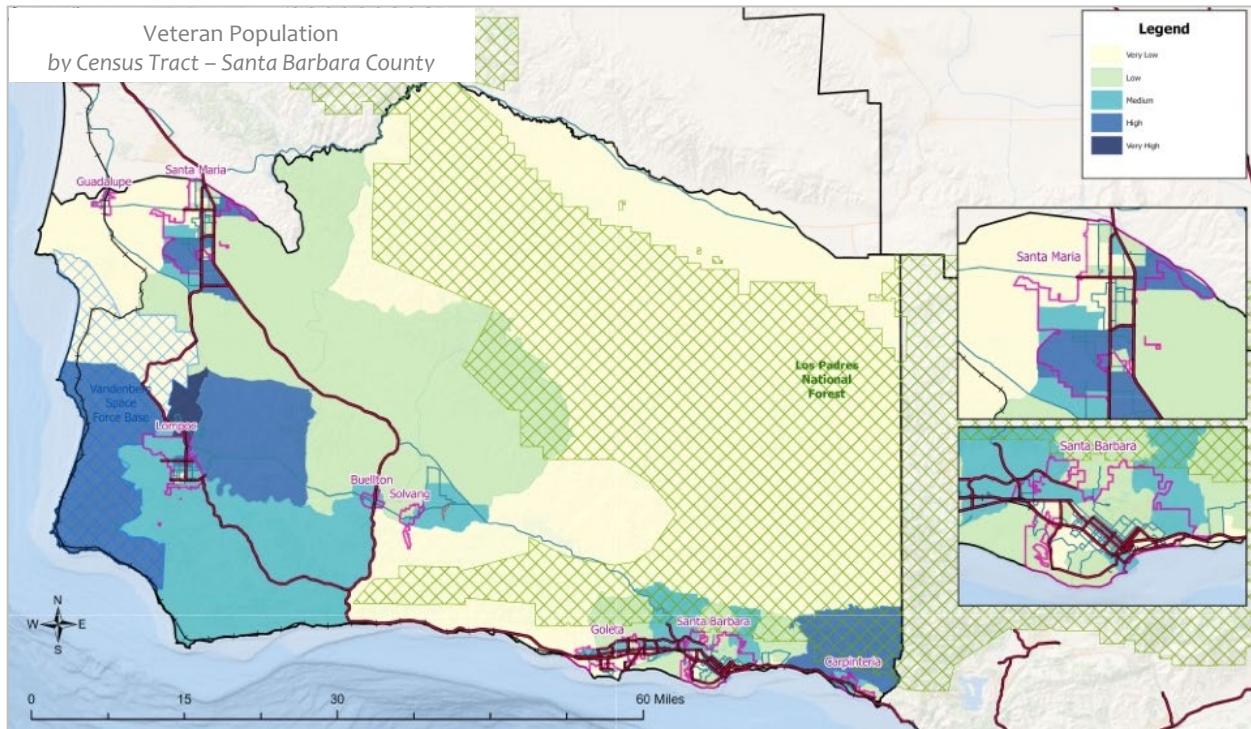
**Figure 2-14 Veteran Population (County and State)**

	2022	% of Population
Santa Barbara County	19,274	4.3%
State of California	1,467,026	3.8%

Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates

The highest distribution of veterans in the study area are seen South of Santa Maria, and on the north and eastern sides of the Lompoc area, directly outside of Vandenberg Space Force Base. There is a very small concentration in the city center of Santa Barbara.

**Figure 2-15 Veteran Population**



## Households with No Vehicles

Households with No Vehicles account for 5.8% of the population of the study area.

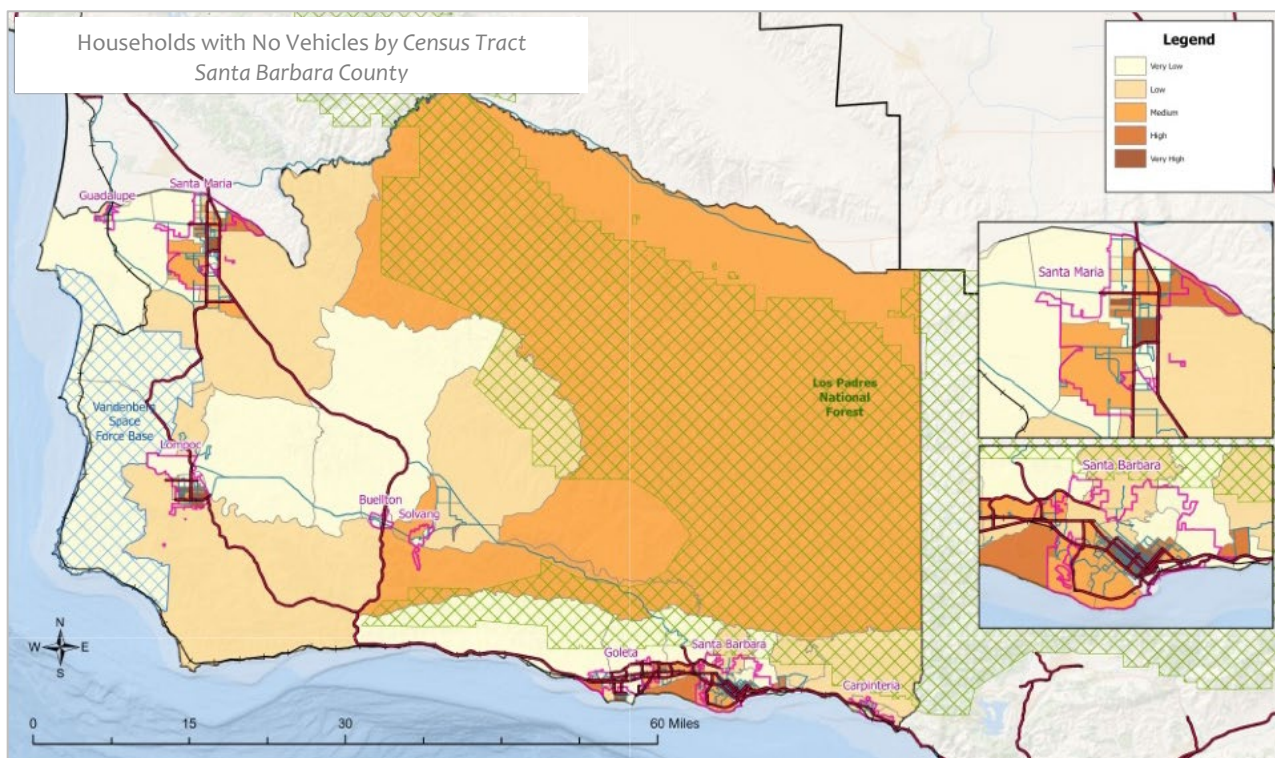
The distribution of Households with No Vehicles is most highly concentrated on the northeast side of Santa Maria as well as wider distributions along the coast south of Goleta and Santa Barbara.

**Figure 2-16 Households with No Vehicles (County)**

	2022	% of Population
Santa Barbara County	8,647	5.8%

Source: 2021 5-Year ACS Estimates

**Figure 2-17 Households with No Vehicles**



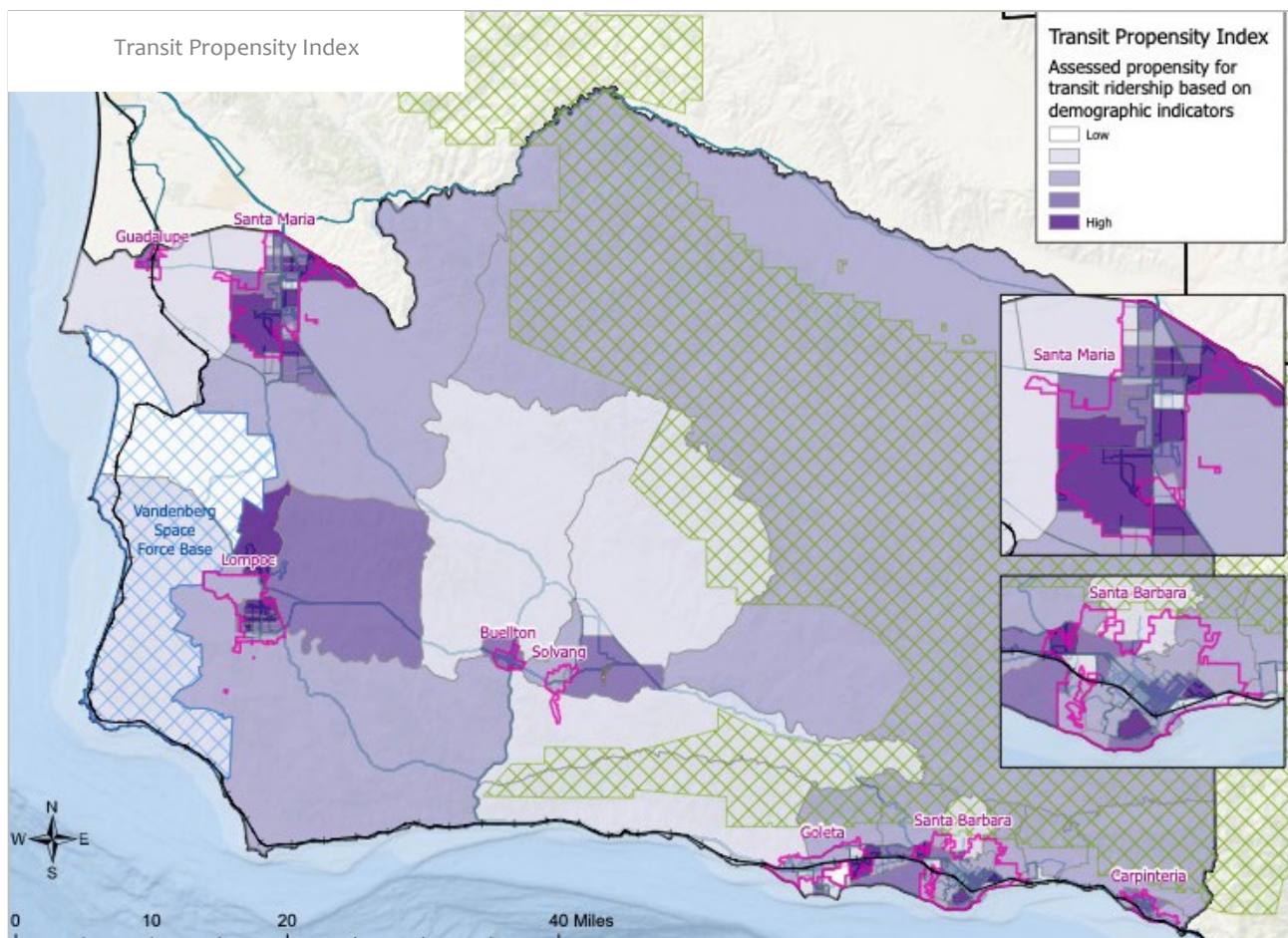


## Transit Propensity Index

Transit propensity is a concept that seeks to identify potential (or likely) areas of increased transit need based on spatial geographic and socioeconomic factors. The map below illustrates the locations within the study area that likely have the greatest need for public transportation services. The transit propensity analysis identifies the cumulative densities of demographic populations most often associated with high transit need, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals living in poverty, and zero-vehicle households.

The highest transit needs in Santa Barbara County are located South of Santa Maria, North of Lompoc, with smaller pockets east of Goleta and South of Santa Barbara. These areas have high concentrations of Individuals with Disabilities as well as a high concentration of Veterans and Older Adults north of Lompoc. There is also a concentrated population of Youth Under the Age of 18 on the Southwest side of Santa Maria who would benefit from increased transit availability.

Figure 2-18 Transit Propensity Index



## Review of Providers in the Region

Transit in Santa Barbara County is a major component of the overall transportation network; it is a contributor to quality-of-life in Santa Barbara County with the promise of safe journeys, cleaner air, and expanded accessibility and options for people who cannot -- or will not -- own or access an automobile.

Because it is a service provided in the public interest, transit is rarely profitable. To share the burdens and challenges of providing such a service, partnerships may be formed to ensure the funding, operating, and managing of transit. For example, a public agency could be responsible for funding and marketing a new bus route that serves the population, but they may contract private or non-profit entities to operate the service itself (including the hiring, training, and managing of drivers, fleet ownership/maintenance, governance, and customer service). The structure of such partnerships will depend on context and other factors, such as financial constraints, liabilities, and human capital. This chapter focuses on shared and mass transportation systems sometimes known as “community transit” or the “coordinated transportation system” as part of a larger network of transportation options. It is arranged primarily on the definition of the routes (fixed route vs. demand-response) and secondarily on the nature of the provider (public vs. private/non-profit). The available transportation systems and services all utilize websites to communicate schedules and fare information. Transit and transportation services might be more widely utilized if consumers were able to more clearly access the information on schedules and fares. With so many options available the information can easily overwhelm if not presented in the most concise manner.

### Fixed Route Transit

Fixed-route transit is the most commonly understood public transportation mode. By design, fixed route is intended to arrive and depart at predictable intervals at all its designated stops. Fixed-route transit is typically planned for maximum efficiency on public roadways. In an ideal transit network, fixed-route service would be provided at frequent intervals across much of the day. However, there are limitations to realizing an ideal fixed-route network, including:



- Financial constraints for transit capital and operations
- Timing of transfers to connecting fixed routes
- The extent to which sidewalks and bicycle facilities leading to and from transit stops are universally accessible, in acceptable condition, and designed for short and pleasant trips
- The availability of connecting transportation from one’s front door to the transit station/stop for circumstances in which one cannot safely or conveniently walk, roll, or bike to the transit stop Fixed-route transit can help provide relief to coordinated and human service transit in more circumstances than before - but it will vary by trip type and origin location.

## Public Transit and Commuter Service

### SBCAG Car/Van Pools

Carpool arrangements can be made by registering through SmartRide.org. SmartRide.org will send a message to interested carpoolers and facilitate the carpool process. Commuters can also save money with the Vanpool option. Vans that range from 7-15 seats can be rented on a month-to-month basis from CalVans and Commute with Enterprise. There are also vans available through SmartRide.org. TrafficSolutions is also available in Santa Barbara County to assist employees and employers in forming Vanpools.



### Clean Air Express

The Clean Air Express is a weekday commuter bus service that serves residents of Lompoc, Buellton, Santa Maria, Solvang, and other unincorporated areas in their transit needs to Goleta and Santa Barbara. The Clean Air Express has been serving the Santa Barbara area since 1990.



### New Cuyama Shuttle

The Cuyama Transit Bus offers service to Santa Maria from New Cuyama on Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment only.



### The Guadalupe Flyer

The Guadalupe Flyer is a transit service offered by the City of Guadalupe. The Guadalupe Flyer Express runs every hour between the Santa Maria Transit station and the Guadalupe Amtrak station. The Guadalupe Flyer local route runs every hour with the following stops:



- Meet up with the Guadalupe Flyer Express at the Guadalupe Amtrak station at the bottom of the hour
- Pasadera Development
- West Main and Montez Court

### San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA) Route 10

SLORTA provides inter-community public transportation in San Luis Obispo County as well as Santa Barbara County, with services such as Fixed-route buses, Paratransit, and Dial A Ride.



## Santa Maria Regional Transit (SMRT)

A fixed-route bus service operated by the City of Santa Maria. The services include SMRT, Breeze, and ADA Paratransit. The SMRT also services the City of Santa Maria, Orcutt, Tanglewood, New Cuyama, Lompoc, Vandenberg, Los Alamos, Buellton, Solvang, Santa Ynez, and the Chumash Reservation.



Fixed-Route bus services include 11 routes. and Breeze Weekday routes services include 2 routes.

## SMOOTH

Origin to destination transportation for Older adults (60 years and older) in Santa Maria and Orcutt. Rides can be scheduled Monday-Friday between 8am and 5pm. Services also include a Health Shuttle, and the Guadalupe Flyer, Guadalupe Shuttle, and Los Alamos Shuttle in the areas of Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Santa Ynez, Solvang to Santa Barbara.



## City of Lompoc Transit (COLT)

The City of Lompoc Transit includes 4 fixed-route bus services that serve Lompoc, Vandenberg Village, and Mission Hills. The 4 COLT routes operate 6 days a week, and connecting services include The Breeze, Clean Air Express, and Wine Country Express.



## Wine Country Express

The Wine Country Express runs 3 round trips a day with connections to Lompoc, Buellton, and Solvang. Buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts and bike racks.



## Santa Ynez Valley Transit (SYVT)

SYVT offers fixed-route bus services with connections in Solvang, Buellton, Santa Ynez, and Los Olivos with 13 Eastbound Express routes, and 11 Westbound routes. Additionally, the Los Olivos loop runs a clockwise route. SYVT also offers Dial-a-Ride services for Older adults (60 plus) and ADA services for all ages.



## Easy Lift Transportation (Dial-A-Ride)

Transportation services for those with cognitive or mobility limitations who are unable to ride MTD. Passengers pay \$3.50 for one-way services and schedule by calling the number on [www.easylift.org](http://www.easylift.org). Rides are scheduled on a first come, first served basis.



## Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (MTD)

MTD is a fixed-route bus service that offers 18 bus routes, 4 shuttle routes, 1 waterfront shuttle, and additional booster services for secondary schools. Routes service Santa Barbara (Eastside/Westside), and Mesa, as well as Goleta, Isla Vista, Ellwood, Montecito, and Carpinteria.



## San Luis Obispo (SLO) Regional Rideshare

SLO is a resource for transportation information with the goal of minimizing the need to drive alone. The service provides the following resources:

- 511 Trip Planning
- iRideshare
- Park and Ride Lots
- Emergency Ride Home



## Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC)

VCTC is a community based fixed-route bus service that also provides dial-a-ride services. There are 6 routes throughout Ventura County.

Serving Santa Maria, Orcutt and Tanglewood. Regular passes are \$1.25 (\$1 for students and only \$.60 for seniors and persons with disabilities). SMRT also provides ADA paratransit services: \$1.25 per ride, must be ADA eligible and submit application. For more information, call 805-928-5624.



The Coastal Express is a fixed-route bus service that falls under the umbrella of Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) with connections in Camarillo, Oxnard, Ventura, Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Goleta, and UCSB. There are 11 routes that run Northbound to Santa Barbara, and 12 routes that run Southbound from Santa Barbara.

## Amtrak (Pacific Surfliner)

The Pacific Surfliner is an Amtrak train that serves stations in San Diego, Orange, Ventura, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. The Pacific Surfliner offers daily round trips between San Diego and Los Angeles. Tickets can be purchased on the website, [www.pacificsurfliner.com](http://www.pacificsurfliner.com).



## Specialized and Private Transportation Service

### American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society offers the Road to Recovery program which assists in coordinating rides to and from treatment for cancer patients. Services are free and dependent on available drivers in the area of need.



### Central Coast Shuttle Services

Shuttle service connecting Santa Maria Public Airport and Los Angeles International Airport runs 7 days a week. Fares are dependent on the number of passengers and whether the trip is one-way or roundtrip. The Shuttle also offers Luxury Van, Charter, and Tour services.



## Chumash Casino Shuttle

A Shuttle service offered by the Chumash Casino resort. The shuttle travels from Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo. Reservations are not required, and the fee is \$40 per round trip.



## Greyhound Lines, Inc.

Greyhound Lines has 3 Bus Stops in Santa Barbara, The Santa Barbara Bus Stop, UC Santa Barbara, and the Oxnard Bus Stop. One way and round-trip services are available, and fares start at \$15.



## Community Partners in Caring

Community Partners in Caring (CPC) offers free, volunteer-provided, door-through-door transportation to seniors and adults with mild disabilities in Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Lompoc, Los Alamos, Goleta, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, and the Santa Ynez Valley. Volunteers are trained, screened and receive ongoing education. Services are available Monday-Friday with weekends available (dependent upon volunteer availability) to seniors who are alert and ambulatory and mildly disabled adults.



## Santa Barbara Public Health Clinic Transportation

Transportation assistance services are offered for medical, dental, and other appointments. Partners in service include COLT, SMAT, MTD, and Easy Lift. Available services are posted on the website [www.countyofsb.org](http://www.countyofsb.org).



## HELP of Carpinteria

HELP of Carpinteria is a volunteer, non-profit organization that assists Carpinteria residents with transportation services for doctors' visits and social service appointments in Carpinteria and as far as Santa Barbara. A \$10 donation fee is requested for Carpinteria residents and \$15 for outside residents.

## Roadrunner Shuttle

Shuttle, Limousine, and MiniBus service to Santa Barbara Airport, Burbank Glendale Pasadena Airport, and the Los Angeles Airport. Fees depend on the type of vehicle requested and the amount of people riding in the vehicle.

## Santa Barbara Airbus

The Airbus offers daily trips from Santa Barbara to LAX shuttle services as well as private charters for special events. The LAX Shuttle offers 16 different trips with various departure times. Fares range from \$45-\$60 per passenger. Reservations can be made on the website [www.sbairbus.com](http://www.sbairbus.com)

## EOS Transportation

Charter services for events or special occasions, wine tasting tours and LAX shuttle. Quotes may be requested from the website, [www.eossantabarbara.com](http://www.eossantabarbara.com); (805) 683-9636

## Guadalupe Shuttle

Included within the SMOOTH services. Monday-Friday rides anywhere within the city of Guadalupe. By reservation only. Regular fare: \$0.50. Senior, disabled, and student fare: \$0.25. 1(805) 922-8476

## People Helping People Santa Ynez Valley

Provider located out of Solvang, assists with providing social services to residents in need in Santa Ynez Valley, Los Alamos, and the surrounding areas. The application for transportation assistance is available on the website <https://www.syvphp.org/need-help/>

Phone: 805-686-0295

Fax: 805-686-2856

Email: [PHP@Syvphp.Org](mailto:PHP@Syvphp.Org)

## Program: Real Help

Center For Successful Aging COVID-19: Real Help offers referrals to services that assist Older Adults with grocery delivery and transportation assistance. [www.csasb.org](http://www.csasb.org) Phone: 805-965-1531

## Taxi Companies

**Beachside Taxi** (805) 966-5600 – Taxi service for Santa Barbara residents.

**Yellow Cab** (805) 966-6161 – 24 Hour Taxi service to residents of Santa Maria.

**Checker Cab Company** - (805) 964-6666 – Taxi service offered to anyone in Santa Barbara County. 24 Hour service as well as the option to schedule a reservation in advance.

**Crown Cab** (805) 689-0234 – Taxi service for Santa Barbara.

**Fly By Night Taxi Co** (805) 965-6222 or (805) 745-8294 – Services Santa Barbara County and surrounding areas.

**Gold Cab** (805) 685-9797-Taxi company located in Goleta, CA and offering services to Santa Barbara County, including Buellton.

**Liberty Cab** (805) 957-2066 – Taxi service located in Santa Barbara. Offers 24 hour service to Santa Barbara residents. Quotes available on the website [https://Liberty-Cab.Business.Site/?Utm\\_Source=Gmb&Utm\\_Medium=Referral](https://Liberty-Cab.Business.Site/?Utm_Source=Gmb&Utm_Medium=Referral).

**Lompoc Taxi** (805) 736-3636-Taxi service available in Lompoc City. The service offers to and from the Amtrak station, hotel, and other destinations.

**Lucky Cab** (805) 968-5020 (805) 564-8500- 24 hour taxi and Limousine services for Santa Barbara County.

**Rose Cab** (805) 564-2600 – Taxi and Shuttle services for Santa Barbara County.



**Rock Star limousine & charter trollies** airport (805) 882-9191- Wide range of transportation services including shuttles, Town Cars, limousines, Shuttles, and Trolleys. Quotes can be obtained on the website <https://www.rockstarsb.com/index.php>.

**United Taxi** (805) 698-9820- Private rides in and around Santa Barbara including Los Angeles International Airport, Santa Barbara Airport, and the Chumash Casino.

**805 Taxi Cab Services** (805) 325-3787 – Transportation services to and from Santa Ynez, Los Alamos, Solvang, Buellton, Ballard and Los Olivos.





## Chapter 3. Review of Existing Plans, Studies, and Reports

This overview surveys a comparison of state and local transportation plans affecting Santa Barbara County.

Plans (In reverse chronological order)	Plan Type
<b>County Plans</b>	
<b>SYVT Transportation Development Plan 2023</b> ( <i>Santa Ynez Valley Transit</i> )	Transit
<b>SB Active Transportation Plan</b> ( <i>County of Santa Barbara One Climate</i> ) (2022)	Active Transportation
<b>Santa Barbara MTD Short Range Transit Plan</b> (2022)	Transit
<b>US 101 SB Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan</b> ( <i>Santa Barbara County</i> ) (2022)	Transit
<b>Housing Affordability in the South Coast</b> (2022)	Housing
<b>Short Range Transit Plan 2021 Addendum</b> ( <i>City of Santa Maria</i> ) (2021)	Transit
<b>Connected 2050</b> ( <i>Santa Barbara County Assoc. Of Governments</i> ) (2021)	Other
<b>SBCAG Transportation Emergency Preparedness</b> (2020)	Other
<b>North County Transit Plan</b> (2016)	Transit
<b>Transportation Connections</b> ( <i>Coordinated Public Transit Human Services</i> ) (2007)	Coordinated Plan
<b>SMAT Short Range Transportation Plan</b> ( <i>Santa Maria Area Transit</i> ) (2007)	Transit
<b>State Plans</b>	
<b>California State Rail Plan</b> ( <i>March 2023</i> )	Rail
<b>CAPT: Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure</b> ( <i>July 2021</i> )	Other

A detailed plan-by-plan review (in Appendix A) summarizes the relevant plans, including the various goals and recommendations (as available) from the plans. Some plan reviews include appropriate

tables or maps as well as funding information and information on the demographic equity of the plan.

## Common Themes

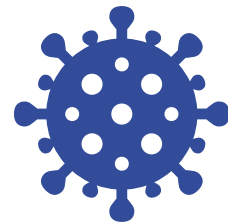
The plans highlighted at right reveal some common themes and needs that must be considered and addressed in the future.

Two driving factors for change are:

- Staffing shortages due to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- The need to comply with future Zero Emissions goals of Governor Newsom’s Executive Order and EO-N-19-19.

## COVID-19 Staffing Shortages

The COVID-19 Pandemic left the transit industry with multiple staffing shortages. These shortages have forced the state and local transportation sectors to adjust their transportation schedules to maximize staffing, limiting the availability of some public transportation. The public has also been less likely to take advantage of public transportation, and more likely to use personal vehicles due to pandemic related health concerns. The scale back of transit availability continues to affect already underserved communities.



Many of the plans include feedback from the community to better meet the needs of these underserved communities. The communities include older adults and youth who rely on transit services daily. Equity in transportation services is another common goal.

Recommendations for increasing equity include:

- Increasing accessibility to service
- Focusing on safety
- Providing affordable fares

Staffing shortages resulting from the Covid-19 Pandemic affected the entire Transportation industry. For this reason, the City of Santa Maria Short Range Transit Plan (October 2021) lists a reduction in total drivers needed as a primary objective. Fewer available drivers are a direct result of the staffing shortages. The Santa Barbara MTD Short Range Transit Plan (November 2022) also references a reduction in workforce due to staff shortages. Resulting service design adjustments indicate that some changes due to COVID-19 have actually been beneficial, leading to necessary reevaluation of some service models.

Such shortages shaped revised service designs that have included:

- Strengthening Core routes
- Optimizing alignments for operations and passengers
- Ideas to speed up buses

- Collaboration in prioritizing bus priority treatments

Staffing shortages have also occurred due to a shortage of affordable housing in the region, as noted in the Housing Affordability in the South Coast (May 2022). Employees in the South Coast can no longer find affordable homes where they work, which in turn puts more reliance on public transportation and the transportation infrastructure.

## Zero Emissions Goals

A crucial common goal for all the reviewed plans is compliance with Governor Newsom’s Executive Order to meet the Zero-Emissions goals of EO-N-19-19, which empowers the State to leverage discretionary funds to help meet climate goals. This zero-emissions goal has changed goals throughout the Transportation Industry, forcing the reevaluation of transit schedules, and the transition to clean and zero-emission technology.



The Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (July 2021) requires CalSTA to utilize \$5 Billion in annual transportation funding to help meet the zero-emissions goal. The Connected 2050 Plan explores travel patterns and demographic growth and details a plan to assist in meeting the State’s greenhouse gas reduction goals. Another collateral objective is improvement of the existing infrastructure through the reduction of environmental impacts, as referenced in the County of Santa Barbara Active Transportation Plan. Transit providers in the State of California will reach zero-emissions goals through a combination of transit schedule adjustments, state funding, exploration of existing patterns and demographics, and the improvement of current infrastructure.

Existing plan recommendations that assist in meeting these goals include:

- Leveraging emerging clean technologies,
- Maximizing transit schedules to decrease environmental impact, and
- Transitioning fleets to Zero-emission technology.

## Underserved Communities

The goal of accessibility to transit services for all South Coast Residents appeared in multiple plan documents. Equity among the community is a high priority. The demographics that have been identified as “underserved” include persons with low income, students, and older adults. The Short Range Transit Plan has the objective of adding service areas to increase the effectiveness of transit coverage for these population groups. The City of Santa Maria Short Range Plan references recent changes in population demographics with specific increases among older adults and youth. These specific population increases can potentially be linked to the shortage of affordable housing. Students and retirees are less likely to be working full time, and unable to afford housing with the increased demand in the market. The lack of affordable housing has pushed many residents to live in locations that are further



from work, shopping, and healthcare causing residents to need to rely on transit services to assist them in their daily lives if they do not own personal vehicles or cannot afford transportation costs due to rising fuel prices.

## Jobs and Housing Balance

The lack of affordable housing has had an impact on job access for much of the population. Residents have been forced to move further away from their job locations, and this has increased reliance upon transit services as well as impacted the main highway corridors with increased congestion. The Connected 2050 Plan (August 2021) states that changes must be incorporated that resulted in an increase in determined housing that would confront the job/housing imbalance. The Housing Affordability in the South Coast (May 2022) lists the barriers to affordable housing:



- The scarcity of developable land
- Lack of water technology and infrastructure
- Community opposition

This plan notes that modest policy changes could lead to significant strides in incentivizing new housing development, therefore, increasing housing supply and affordability. In the interim, The Santa Barbara U.S. 101 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (July 2022) aims to find long term solutions for congestion relief by providing more transportation choices and collaboration with state, regional, and local partners.



## Chapter 4. Public & Stakeholder Engagement Summary

For the 2023 update of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan), Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) sought to ensure the plan was locally developed with feedback and contributions from project partners at the community, city, county, and state scopes.

### Stakeholder Interview Summary

The contributions and perspectives of people and organizations who spend significant time in Santa Barbara County are reflected in this plan. Engagement specific to the Coordinated Plan -- from April 2023 to November 2023 -- included the following efforts:

- Project Advisory Committee
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Santa Barbara County Transit Advisory Committee
- Virtual Office Hours
- Community Surveys
- Focus Group Meetings

Project feedback was collected in a variety of methods, including in-person, hybrid, and virtual meetings. The ability for the project team to collect input utilizing a hybrid approach offered more opportunity and flexibility for involvement of the stakeholders and public.



## Project Advisory Committee

Core to the coordinated planning effort is the Project Advisory Committee (PAC). The advisory committee met regularly throughout the project; on average once every two months. Through these meetings, policy partners and organizational representatives provided input and support throughout the planning process.



Members of the committee represented the following organizations:

- CALTRANS District 5
- EasyLift
- Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
- Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District
- Santa Maria Regional Transit
- CALTRANS System Planning
- County of Santa Barbara
- Independent Living Resource Center
- Santa Barbara Transit Advisory Committee

The PAC met five times throughout 2023 and a final time in 2024. All PAC members were informed about PAC meetings, public virtual office hours, and written components of this plan. Their input was sought to capture their respective organizational Strengths Challenges Opportunities and Threats (SCOT), and for the prioritization of plan strategies.

## Public Outreach

### Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to PAC meetings, the project team facilitated stakeholder interviews to provide a candid forum for organizations to provide their perspectives, ideas, and feedback for transportation challenges and priorities going forward. The following table summarizes the individual interviews held with representatives of community organizations and government agencies (“stakeholders”) held related to this project. Meetings were facilitated by the Socius Amica team. These interviews helped to shape the needs and gaps analysis as a part of the planning process.



Agency/Organization	Date(s) of meetings
Project Advisory Committee	February 13, 2023; April 26, 2023; July 17, 2023; September 6, 2023; November 29, 2023; January 12, 2024
Santa Barbara Transit Advisory Committee	September 6, 2023
Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District	April 28, 2023
Santa Barbara County Association of Governments	May 1, 2023; May 2, 2023
CalTrans	May 5, 2023
Independent Living Resource Center	May 8, 2023
EasyLift	May 31, 2023
Santa Maria Transit	July 20, 2023

## Virtual Office Hours

The project team facilitated virtual “office hours” for stakeholders and the general public to offer a flexible opportunity wherein attendees had the opportunity to learn about the project, ask questions, and provide feedback on lived experiences in Santa Barbara County. English-speaking and Spanish-speaking office hours were offered online via Zoom throughout October 2023.



Following these meetings, attendees and invitees were asked to respond to an online survey which individuals could provide additional feedback on specific challenges to transit and mobility access throughout the County.

Though the office hours had a smaller turnout on Zoom, the feedback received was high quality, with multiple perspectives from individuals with a variety of mobility challenges. The meetings allowed the team a more intimate setting in which to gather invaluable feedback that echoed what was collected in the stakeholder interviews. These responses helped the project team validate needs and gaps throughout the County.

## Community Surveys

The project team conducted a comprehensive survey throughout the month of October offered in both English and Spanish. The purpose of the survey was to identify how community members utilize public transportation in the county as well as challenges and limitations to accessing employment, shopping, recreation, and health appointments. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide written responses relative to their transit experiences in Santa Barbara County. Full survey responses and narratives will be found in the appendix of this technical memo, and supportive quotations from those surveys will be included in the final plan. Highlights of the overall key findings are profiled in the common themes section and will be further discussed in the needs and gaps analysis document.



## Community Focus Groups

In-person community focus groups were scheduled as a part of the onsite team visit to Santa Barbara County. The team decided on focus groups as they are typically smaller in number (usually between 5-15 people;). Two focus groups were scheduled for the week of November 27th: one session with the Braille Institute Santa Barbara Center and the Independent Living Resource Center. The purpose of these in-person meetings is to gather feedback from community members on project findings and proposed strategies.



## Common Themes from Engagement & Outreach

There were several common themes that the project team identified from the public and stakeholder engagement. The main themes are highlighted as follows and will be further discussed in the needs and gaps analysis.



- Need for more direct transportation to key destinations
- Off-peak service needs on evenings and weekends
- Inter-county service connections
- Waterfront access
- Eligibility processes for paratransit
- These themes will be discussed in detail in the needs and gaps analysis document.

## Workshop & Survey Summary

In the month of October 2023, the planning team launched a survey for locals across the county of Santa Barbara regarding perspectives on transit. Residents were asked to fill out online surveys to share their priorities and suggestions for transit improvements. A link for completing the online survey was provided in both English and Spanish. In total, the team received responses from 9 zip codes in Santa Barbara County, and members of the public completed 56 questionnaires. Additionally, residents provided their verbal comments and learned about the role Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) and partnering organizations in providing public transportation to the target populations of this plan. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix B.



## Survey Results

From October-November 2023, the project team conducted a public survey of Santa Barbara residents, with specific emails about the survey going out to target project populations. The survey was created in both English and Spanish and received 57 responses overall. This section discusses interesting findings from the survey; the full survey and collected responses may be found in the appendices of this plan.

- One of the more interesting items of note is that the survey received multiple responses from all age groups. Typically, coordinated plan surveys receive the most responses from older age groups; however, this survey had responses representing each age group, from 18-85+, which tells the project team that the needs in Santa Barbara County are wide-ranging.
- The survey asked if individuals were unable to travel to certain types of destinations over the past year. The highest number of responses for this question (over 50%) indicated that individuals needed access to social destinations they could not get to, followed by medical appointments (44%).
- Respondents were asked if they depended on another driver or service for transportation. The majority (40%) indicated they depended on a spouse or domestic partner while the second



highest response rate (37%) was that the respondent depended on public transit (fixed route; paratransit).

- Though over 50% of respondents said that they are able to drive a vehicle; approximately 55% said they also take advantage of public transportation.
- Approximately 65% of respondents stated that they anticipate needing transportation to medical appointments over the next 1-3 years.

In addition to the survey data the team analyzed, respondents were given space in the survey to leave open comments regarding transportation needs in Santa Barbara County. Items of note included the following:




- Many individuals would like public transit access to State street and connectivity to the waterfront in Santa Barbara.
- Respondents have stated that transit county-wide needs higher frequencies
- Respondents indicated the need for more education: how does one access services? What services are available?
- First/last mile service is needed from commuter services to local public transit options and to final destinations
- Respondents indicated a need for public transportation in unincorporated areas



Detailed survey results are in Appendix C.

## Feedback Themes – Needs and Gaps

Throughout the course of public and stakeholder engagement, five key system level gaps were identified. Four are service focused, addressing people’s ability to access destinations and the overall transit system. One is client focused, related to eligibility processes for special services, such as paratransit. The following section will look in greater detail at regional gaps.

There were several common themes that the project team identified from public and stakeholder engagement. The main themes are highlighted as follows:

	<p>Need for more direct transportation to key destinations</p>
	<p>Off-peak service needs on evenings and weekends</p>
	<p>Inter-county service connections</p>

	Transportation to social destinations
	Eligibility processes for paratransit

## System Level Gap 1 Direct Transportation to Key Destinations

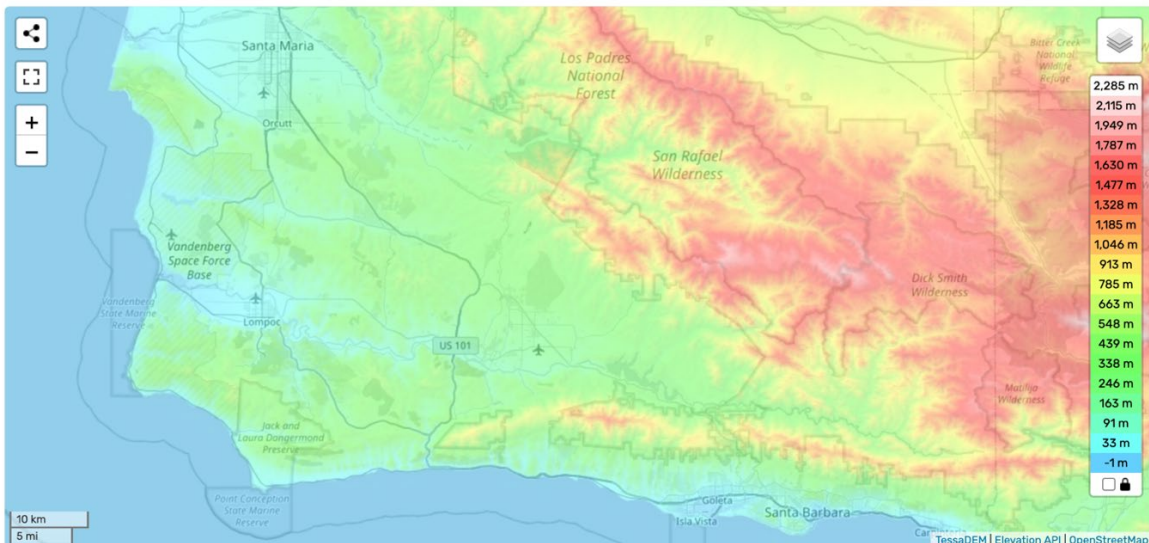
Geography plays a large role in access and mobility in and around Santa Barbara County.

The county itself is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Santa Ynez mountains to the east. Additionally, much of the county is wilderness—the San Rafael Wilderness and Los Padres National Forest.



In one of the stakeholder interviews, a provider summed up the big picture: “Geographically, they’re pinned in by mountains and oceans, so things just aren’t that far apart. There’s not a lot of sprawl, but the freeway really divides people.” As seen in the following topographic map, Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, and Goleta are depicted along the coast, south of the mountains, with Lompoc, Santa Maria, and Guadalupe on the western and northern sides of the county, respectively.

Figure 4-1 Geographic Location



Map source: <https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/map-s3b3q/Santa-Barbara/?center=34.68953%2C-120.01911&z=10>

*“The county building is really tough to get to, and the Santa Barbara board of education is*

In addition to restrictive topography, highways do indeed play a role in how individuals access various destinations throughout the County. U.S. Highway 101 is the “main vein” through the County, running from Santa Barbara to Santa Maria, intersecting the south and western portions of the county, in addition to the Pacific Coast Highway, 1.

*also difficult to access. There are a few sites that individuals with developmental disabilities need to access and they're not on regular routes. Hospice is another one, too, for people with developmental disabilities; it's very tough for the families to come to patients”.*

As a result of geography, traveling within the county can be a challenge. Stakeholders and members of the public alike addressed various issues with accessing medical appointments, employment, and social opportunities. Much of the center of activity and medical facilities are located in the south side of the county. While there is commuter service that operates during peak periods, midday service is non-existent to these activity centers.

In speaking with members of the public who use public transportation, getting around their cities isn't so difficult, but moving between cities proves to be a challenge. Several individuals mentioned the need to have more connectivity between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara for a variety of reasons. Some live in Santa Maria and work in Santa Barbara, while others live in Santa Barbara and need to access Santa Maria for shopping and recreation purposes.

*“I use a mobility device for long distances and crutches for short distances. Being in north County, it is very difficult to get to Santa Barbara; MTD and paratransit do not go that far.”*

## What Is Needed

- **Resume the Lompoc shuttle for individuals needing inter-city connectivity.**
- **Resume service from Santa Ynez valley.**
- **Establish accessible inter-city on-demand service that is requires eligibility for seniors**
- **Multi-modal hubs are needed throughout the County**
- **Smaller communities need access to services: Los Alamos, Camelia, and Tanglewood**
- **Accessible rideshare and taxi services**

*To meet the needs of the region, the project partners should:*

- *Consider more frequent meetings of the SBTAC.*
- *Have transparent discussions about current funding silos.*
- *Invite additional mobility partners (i.e. transportation network companies and taxi providers) to SBTAC meetings*

## System Level Gap 2 Off-Peak Service

**Transit service is often designed around the needs of commuters, especially when significant changes occur, both controlled and unplanned.**



When cuts are needed to a system (due to budget limitations or otherwise), the responding agency will often focus on peak service for those individuals who need to commute during “typical” work and school periods, often ranging from 5am to 9am and then again from 3pm to 6pm. During the pandemic, many transit providers cut service significantly, responding to lack of demand and dramatic changes in ridership patterns. While much of the ridership in Santa Barbara County has returned to pre-pandemic levels, the service needed to address these levels has been, in some cases, slow to match demand. Throughout the course of stakeholder and public outreach, much of the feedback centered around changes to service that were made as a result of the pandemic—service cuts to modes in the mid-day and on evenings and weekends, leaving transit-dependent riders in a lurch. Several passengers as well as agencies that represent riders lamented about needing to travel to destinations throughout the County and being unable to make it work, due to limited or non-existent service. Additionally, the survey conducted by the project team depicts demand by passengers needed throughout the week, not just during peak travel periods.

Over half of the survey respondents stated they were able to drive; however, 43% of those respondents stated that they were not comfortable driving at night. Additionally, 55% of the survey respondents stated that they also regularly use public transit. Of those respondents, 37% said that service was unavailable during the times they wanted to travel. Details of the survey may be found in the corresponding appendix to this document.

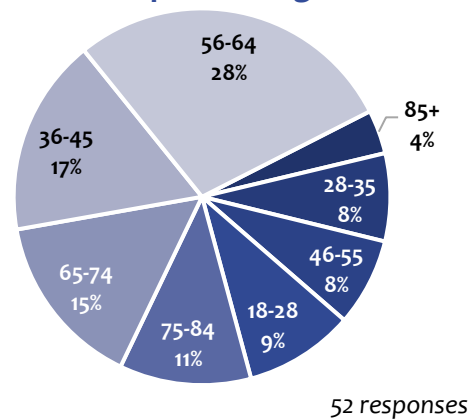
*“As an ally for people with mobility challenges, I would like to see more services for people who have difficulty with night driving”.*

Multiple interviewees mentioned the Clean Air Express commuter service. However, the Clean Air Express services are limited to peak periods, and passengers also expressed concerns about inconsistent wheelchair lift operations; making the vehicles either inaccessible, and/or making passengers feel unsafe.

While there were a variety of respondents by age on the survey (see chart at right), the largest percentage of respondents were between the ages of 56-64. Several respondents mentioned that they weren’t transit dependent—yet—but that they took the survey in hopes to better plan for future transit dependency.

As evidenced by age groups, Santa Barbara County has a larger percentage of aging population that will soon become more transit dependent, and service should be planned accordingly.

**Figure 4-2 Respondent Age**



## What Is Needed

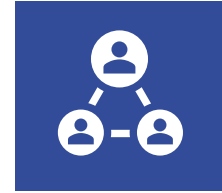
- **Mid-day transit service should be restored throughout the County.**
- **Transit providers should develop a longer-range plan to address the needs of an aging community.**

*To meet the needs of the region, the project partners should:*

- *The regional partners should work together to ensure accessible off-peak service throughout the county. Whether the service is run through Clean Air Express or group of providers, many residents need access to off-peak service for quality of life.*
- *Clean Air Express should ensure that all of their vehicles have working, accessible mobility device systems.*

## System Level Gap 3 Intercounty Service

**Coordinated public transit-human service plans should, by design, look at coordination between agencies in a given region.**



The singular flaw with many planning regions, however, is that despite the best efforts given to coordination, invisible boundaries get in the way. Whether these boundaries are transit service areas, city limits, county boundaries, or simply the boundaries designated for a planning region, invisible boundaries hamstring what otherwise would be consistent, coordinated planning efforts.

Santa Barbara County is no different than other planning regions in that individuals do not live nor work within a certain set of boundaries. In hearing from stakeholders and the public, several anecdotes were shared wherein individuals live in one county and work in another. For example, one stakeholder stated that they live in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County, but work in Santa Barbara County. Other members of the public work in SLO County but live in Santa Maria, for example. In stakeholder interviews with SBCAG, the project team found that coordination between Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties is working fairly well; however, there is limited coordination between San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara for a variety of reasons. Regardless, clients and would-be passengers do not view transit usage through a “county boundary” lens, wishing to travel freely between cities and counties.

### What Is Needed

- **Greater transportation coordination between Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County.**

*To meet the needs of the region, the project partners should:*

- *Work with transportation providers in SLO County to build more meaningful connections for residents of both counties.*

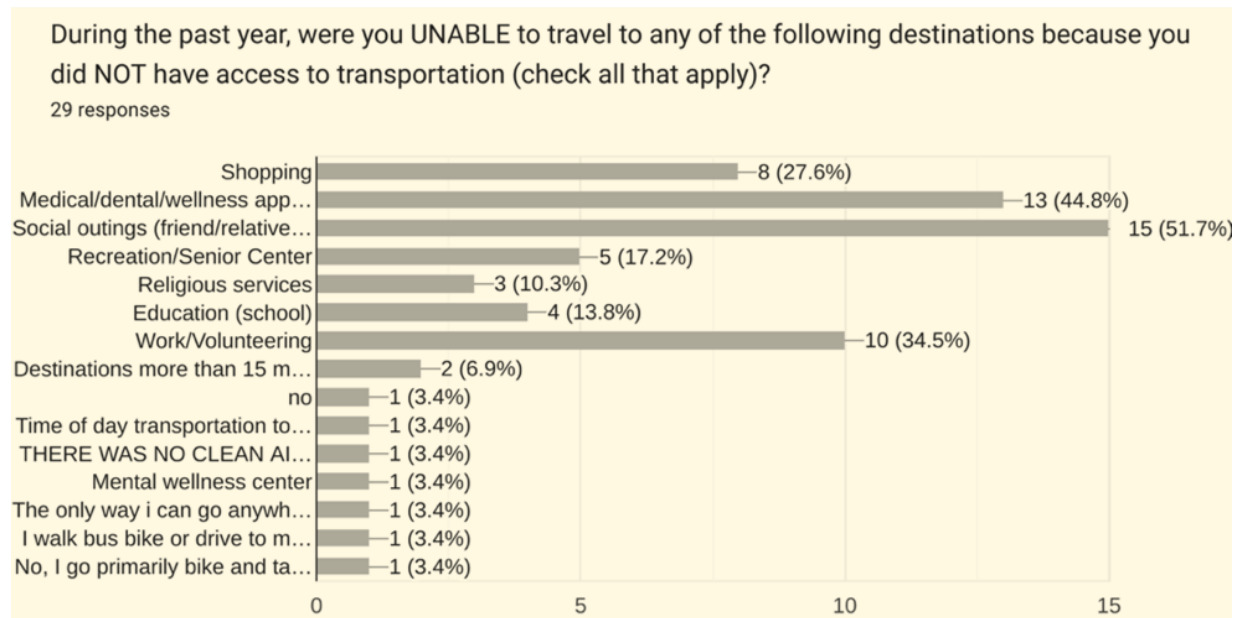
## System Level Gap 4 Transportation to Social Destinations

The project team conducted a public survey as a public engagement component. The purpose of the survey was to better understand if individuals were utilizing public transit services, and if so, how?



Additionally, the project team was seeking to understand what perceived limitations of public transit service in Santa Barbara exist. One of the most fascinating findings from the public survey was the number of individuals who responded needing transportation to social outings. In fact, the majority of respondents on one question stated that social outings were a priority need where they were unable to access transportation. The survey question and corresponding responses are depicted in the next figure.

Figure 4-3 Inability to Access Transportation



Throughout the course of office hours, the project team heard from both stakeholders and the public that transportation to social opportunities is lacking throughout the County. For example, one stakeholder mentioned the need to better coordinate transportation to the Chumash Casino Resort for a variety of reasons. While the casino itself offers some manner of private transportation, stakeholders expressed desire to coordinate transportation to the resort for employees, casino- and concertgoers alike, especially in off-peak periods, i.e. to performances on the weekend.

“You can imagine being a tourist and coming from out of the area on the train and you’re in a wheelchair and arrive at an accessible train station, but how do you get to your hotel?”

Multiple interviewees discussed the need to have access to the Lower State Street / waterfront area of Santa Barbara. This area is central to tourism and a social destination in the county. When

designing and planning transit around areas that are tourism-centric, planners must consider the individuals who work in the tourism industry, not just visitors. People who work in the hotel and restaurant industry often work non-traditional hours, so shift times should be considered. Offering some mode of public transit in this area could help support social outings, employees, local businesses, and tourism alike. Currently, the rail system terminates near lower State Street and there is no “last mile” mode offered for locals and tourists wishing to access this area.

## What Is Needed

- **Providers should better understand residents’ social needs and preferred social destinations for future service planning.**
- **The advisory committee should work with local stakeholders to plan for connectivity in the waterfront area.**
- **The stakeholders should work with the Chumash Tribe to consider alternative modes to the casino for off-peak travel options.**

*To meet the needs of the region, the project partners should:*

- *Consider conducting a survey of service industry businesses and their employees.*



## System Level Gap 5 Consistent Eligibility & Training Processes for Individuals with Disabilities

**Transit agencies that provide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complimentary paratransit are required to have an eligibility determination process.**



Per National RTAP, eligibility for paratransit should be based on an individual's functional ability, specifically whether they are able to use the fixed route system independently. Eligibility is not intended to be based on a medical diagnosis or type of disability.

For those individuals who choose to (or are able to) utilize fixed route transit but use a mobility device, like a wheelchair, drivers must be able to operate functional lifts or ramps for the vehicle and must also correctly strap in any mobility devices appropriately. Through the course of office hours, the project team heard from multiple members of the public about the challenges of accessing fixed route transit when drivers are not appropriately trained. Some passengers discussed the attitude of drivers and how it is sometimes negative towards individuals utilizing wheelchairs to get around. Others spoke of how drivers were not properly trained in wheelchair securement.

### What Is Needed

- **Sensitivity training for all operators throughout the county.**
- **Consistent eligibility standards for passengers who may need them.**

To meet the needs of the region, the project partners should:

All transit operators should mandate Passenger Assistance, Safety, and Sensitivity (PASS) training for drivers, which is the industry standard.

A centralized/coordinated eligibility assessment center would benefit not only the passengers, but the operators. This type of system can enhance client access and assessments and improve overall efficiency of eligibility approvals. It will also affirm a system-wide orientation and improve communication and collaboration between providers.



## Chapter 5. Goals and Strategies

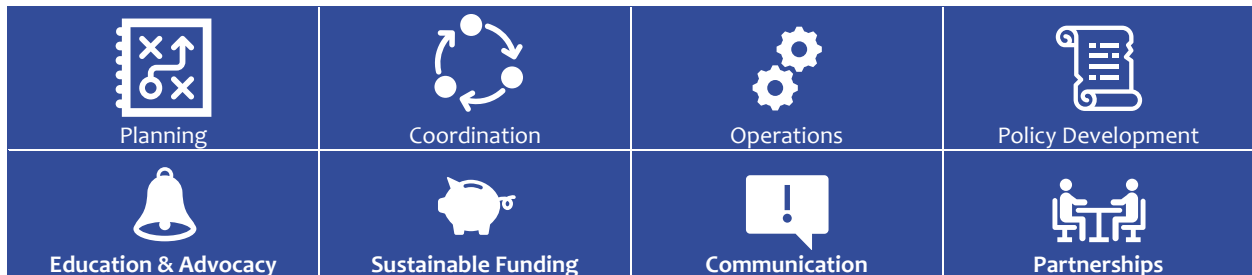
It is important to understand the specifics of the goals and strategies developed by the Advisory Committee for SBCAG’s Coordinated Plan update, in order to appreciate their purpose in relation to the overall plan.

### Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are statements that describe what the coordinated plan will accomplish as well as the overall value that coordination contributes to transportation in region. Goals are a critical component to coordinated planning, providing overall context for what the plan is working to accomplish from a regional perspective, while operating as guideposts for strategy implementation and the ongoing activities of the coordinating committee (whether a function of SBCTAC or otherwise).

The project Advisory Committee took part in an in-person workshop in November 2023 to update and develop goals and strategies for the coordinated plan. The Advisory Committee was first asked to identify common themes around a Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats (SCOT) analysis for Santa Barbara County, as well as a discussion of how they see coordination currently and what the stakeholders would like to see from concerted coordination efforts. Based on the themes and discussion, the team was able to flesh out five goals for the next 5-year plan horizon.

**The themes** captured from the workshop are:



The project team used these themes to develop goals. The goals and their descriptions are captured in the following section. The goals are listed as follows, *in no particular order, though they are numbered for easy reference.*

### Goal 1

## Develop a Comprehensive Plan for Communication, Education, and Awareness Throughout the County

Santa Barbara County is large; greater than 2,700 square miles. Additionally, the County’s unique geography means that despite being home to multiple cities, individuals must travel long distances between municipal areas for goods and services. Due to the vast geographic nature of the County, there’s a need to continually educate regional partners on coordination efforts made to date and how the partners (stakeholders) work together to problem solve County-wide. Additionally, there is a continuing need to educate the public on services (transportation and human service) available to them and how to access those services.



### Goal 2

## Strengthen Provider Resources and Create Sustainable Funding Streams

Advocacy groups in the state of California have recently fought (and won) more funding for public transit, especially in light of the need for agencies to transition to zero-emissions vehicles and green infrastructure. Despite this huge funding “win” for transit in California, funding needs for agencies still remain, especially to support continued coordination needs. Additionally, regional growth emphasizes need for service planning to meet the needs of the population.



### Goal 3

## Establish a County-wide Plan for Coordinated Advocacy and Policy Development

Public transit benefits local communities and regions as a whole, improving quality of life and overall access, and also playing a significant role in a community’s health, equity, economic development, and sustainability. With many competing interests in Santa Barbara County, advocacy for public transit is important for success in planning, implementation, and coordination projects. Additionally, developing policies that require public transit plans for cities, towns, and special events will further support the goals of access, economic development, and traffic reduction overall.

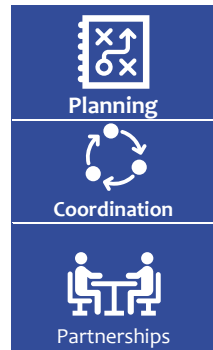


## Goal 4

### Support Ongoing Planning, Coordination, & Collaboration, while Creating New Community Partnerships

Links and connections must be made throughout the region regardless of the “invisible barriers” that the county lines, city limits, and transit service areas make up. Project partners, such as those members of the advisory committee, have made huge strides to address connectivity, but with continued growth, will need to continue to work together to close gaps in service for target populations, both within the county and between neighboring counties.

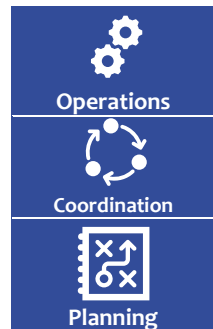
Needs in the County include those for the providers: ongoing maintenance, operations, and capital planning; and subsequent needs of the public. Providers have worked together to develop services and programs in probable “gaps” throughout the region; however, with continued growth and an aging population, the gaps not only grow and change, but some may move. Additionally, partners should work together to clearly understand where service gaps may be within agency service areas.



## Goal 5

### Ensure Consistent Operation of Safe, Accessible, and Affordable Services for County Residents

Given the wide geographic expanse of Santa Barbara County, providers and stakeholders need to work together to plan for services that are safe, accessible, and affordable for the residents therein. Considerations should be made for safety and accessibility at stops (shelters, walking paths, lighting, etc.), and programs should be offered for target populations for whom cost is a barrier in using public transportation services.



## Strategy Development

The development of strategies happened organically prior to the goals development at the advisory committee workshop. The consulting team first presented a list of strategies from the previous plan, and the group discussed which ones had been implemented, with the opportunity to determine if a strategy should be retained from the previous plan. The stakeholder group was then asked to discuss ideas and strategies they would like to implement if money were no object, with consideration for those strategies needed related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

By way of “looking back”, it’s important to review the goals and strategies from the previous coordinated plan for Santa Barbara County, entitled “Transportation Connections”, which was completed in 2007. The goals established for this plan are outlined as follows:

- **Improve the mobility of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes** in Santa Barbara County by increasing coordination between Social Service Agencies and Transit Operators in Santa Barbara County.
- **Promote efficiency and productivity** in the delivery of Human Services Transportation

The strategies from the 2007 plan were categorized under the umbrellas of “coordination” and “expansion of transit services”, and written in priority order:

### Coordination Strategies

- Increase awareness of Social Service Agencies and non-profits about existing transportation services provided by CTSAs and local transit operators in Santa Barbara County. As resources permit, expand the role of CTSAs and transit agencies in coordinating services to include bi-lingual services in Santa Barbara County so they become mobility managers/transportation clearinghouse for social services transportation in their regions.
- Promote exchange or brokering of client transportation needs between agencies to consolidate the provision of transportation services.
- Develop programs that provide multiple benefits and improve the information flow between transit providers and social service providers.

### Expansion of Transit Services Strategies

- Improve the access of persons of low income to health care
- Address interregional transit needs
- Target low income individuals in job access programs
- Provide low income seniors and the disabled with new access opportunities
- Promote use of CTSAs in providing and coordinating social services transportation as resources permit

## Strategies for the 2024 Coordinated Plan

Though the strategies developed in the 2007 are limited in number, there is overlap with the strategies developed for the 2024 plan. The project team worked with the Advisory Committee to establish more detail in the development of these updated strategies, and included feedback received through the extensive public and stakeholder engagement process in the strategy framework.



### Goal 1

#### Develop a Comprehensive Plan for Communication, Education, and Awareness Throughout the County.

##### *Strategy 1a: Garner local participation through community meetings and support from younger populations.*

This strategy may be a component of a more formal marketing campaign, in strategy 1d, but is called out because it can be implemented immediately, with or without a specific marketing campaign. Younger populations play a role in public transit usage and advocacy. Recent articles published through outlets like NPR discuss the desire for younger generations to use public transit, but also have a variety of options available for travel, like active transportation modes and the use of mobility as a service.

- Stakeholders can collaborate with partner organizations, non-profits, and social services to identify opportunities for coordinated engagement and production of educational materials.
- Given the number of colleges and universities in the County, there are many opportunities to present to younger populations on public transit options.

##### *Strategy 1b: Engagement Planning for local governments.*

Elected officials can be helpful advocates for public transit plans and funding; however, these positions often turn over frequently, as do positions within municipalities. There is a continual need to educate municipal staff, elected officials, and other official positions on the purpose and value of public transportation options.

- Santa Barbara County stakeholders identified the need to develop messaging on how the local community and its citizens benefit from public transportation.
- This strategy will include an additional objective that stakeholders identified during the workshop: “compiling return on investment information for elected officials and strategy makers.” Stakeholders feel it’s important to pull together data related to return on investment in transit.



***Strategy 1c: Improve advertising and marketing of available transit jobs in the County.***

A continued challenge amongst transit providers is recruitment and retention of employees as well as succession planning. Nationally, providers are struggling to recruit and retain drivers, and when drivers are limited, service is constrained. The project Advisory Committee feels a strategy related to the advertisement and marketing of the many available jobs in transit in Santa Barbara County.

***Strategy 1d: Establish a formal marketing campaign on transportation resources in the county.***

People who reside in, work in, and visit Santa Barbara County may be unaware of both what transit services are available and for which services they may be eligible. The distribution of consumer-friendly, accessible educational materials can help to increase public awareness of services.

- Some of the service providers already distribute educational materials through various forms of media, but a next step may involve a coordinated public awareness campaign targeting at-risk populations in the region.

***Strategy 1e: Develop transit information: how transit works, how to use public transit, and how transit is funded.***

This strategy is focused on educating the public not just on available transit options but moreso HOW transit works and is funded. This strategy also includes developing programs on how to use public transit are important for citizens as well. Travel training programs are designed to teach people with disabilities, older adults, youth, veterans, and/or low-income populations to travel safely and independently on the range of services available within a given area.

- Developing information on how transit operates and is funded will help the public (and stakeholders) better understand the need for future funding initiatives and the value that transit provides to their local communities.
- Travel training can include information on communicating with drivers, technology training and a review of eligibility requirements for different services.
- Teaching people to use transportation services safely and independently can reduce the barrier of personal transportation to access resources as well as reduce congestion and traffic safety risk on the roadways.
- Travel training can dispel misconceptions and concerns about public transportation services among youth and caregivers of youth, including youth with special needs and/or that speak languages other than English, and build confidence in how independent travel can increase youth access to opportunity such as before/after school programs and employment.



## Goal 2 Strengthen Provider Resources and Create Sustainable Funding Streams.



Planning



Sustainable  
Funding

### **Strategy 2a: *Increase resources for local match.***

As the region continues steady growth and the demographics continue to change, providers will not only need to re-evaluate the funding they are eligible for, but how local match is allocated.

- In larger and growing urban areas, local match for federal funding streams is typically contributed through the municipality that is being served, and sometimes with a vote for a portion of tax (sales, gas, or other).
- More funding is coming from the state to support transit providers' transition to zero-emission vehicles; however, funding is still limited for coordinated transportation initiatives.
- In order to better sustain and coordinate transit in rural and suburban areas that are not served by large providers, it's important to evaluate creative sources for local match.

### **Strategy 2b: *Develop a System to Identify and Promote Funding Opportunities for regional providers and programs.***

Stakeholders expressed a need to better understand funding opportunities available to them. It would be helpful to have a lead agency, like the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, establish a database for available funding streams, application processes, and timelines for securing funding for current and new public transit and mobility projects.

### **Strategy 2c: *Grant Writing Assistance Program.***

Grant writing is a skilled activity that requires technical knowledge as well as storytelling ability. It is a time-intensive activity that generally occurs in cycles. It is harder for under-resourced agencies to respond to grant opportunities or submit competitive applications because of the investment of time and resources needed to do so.

- SBCAG could develop a grant writing technical assistance program for under-resourced agencies to support the development of competitive applications, such as support with crash analysis, mapping/GIS analysis, graphics, and proposal narratives.
- Build (and/or support) agency capacity to respond to grant opportunities themselves and through offering trainings on grant program requirements, statutes, cycles, and analysis processes for local partners.



***Strategy 2d: Advocate for increased funding for transit at the state and county levels.***

The state of California has recently increased funding to support zero-emissions transitions; however, agencies are still being asked to provide more service with fewer resources. To add insult to injury, the national bus shortage is limiting how providers can expand new services. More than ever, transit agencies need fiscal support that comes from outside of federal funding sources. It's important to work closely with the state transit association, CalAct, to continue to lobby for new funding sources at the state level and educate local governments as to the benefits of transit.

***Strategy 2e: Support coordination amongst private and non-profit social service providers to streamline funding for contracted/coordinated services.***

Often, non-traditional service providers, such as non-profits entities, can coordinate to better leverage funding for transportation services. Private providers can also provide support in a variety of ways as well. Stakeholders emphasized interest in better coordinating agreements between entities, such as non-profit social service providers and private providers to streamline services and funding in order to provide more service to the populations that need those services.

- These more formal agreements not only signify a willingness to coordinate and collaborate but allow for exchange of ideas and agency resources (and potentially funding) for transit planning and services.



**Goal 3**  
**Establish a County-wide Plan for Coordinated Advocacy and Policy Development.**

**Strategy 3a: *Establish requirements for special events in the county to have a transportation policy.***

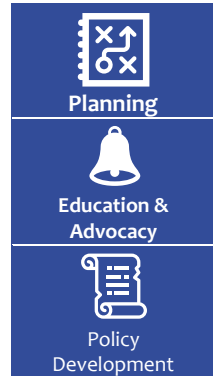
Santa Barbara County is home to a myriad of annual special events and things for locals and tourists alike to see and do. At this time, there are no requirements for special events to provide any measure of transportation services, events at which traffic bottlenecks and parking challenges have become the norm. The Advisory Committee emphasized the importance of establishing transportation policies for future events so that coordinated public transportation service is provided. These types of services can be seen in places like Austin, Texas, where Capital Metro provides service during Austin City Limits and to “Trail of Lights” in Zilker Park.

**Strategy 3b: *Lobby for a lower farebox recovery minimum.***

California established standards for performance some years ago with one of the standards being farebox recovery ratios for providers. What makes this metric unique is that it’s the only one in the nation. Farebox recovery ratios are a challenge because each service provider and service area is unique. The challenge for transit providers is that many have to adhere to a standard that is outdated and impossible to achieve in many instances. One way California could help to build transit would be to remove farebox recovery ratios from funding formulas entirely. In California, transit is expected to be many things: it’s not just supposed to carry passengers, but benefit the environment, meet climate goals, provide equitable mobility, be affordable, safe, and provide a lifeline to the unhoused. Farebox recovery standards merely hinder, and often flies in the face of, these many goals.

**Strategy 3c: *Better utilize the SBCTAC for advocacy, change-making, and coordination implementation support.***

Currently, SBCTAC formally operates as the social services transportation advisory council (per the Transportation Development Act). While the SBCTAC is in need of new membership to fill spots, the eighteen-member committee provides an additional layer of input on transit issues affecting those who are transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, disabled, and persons of limited means. If the County can utilize SBCTAC to further coordinated planning efforts set forth in this plan, it would eliminate the need to establish a separate coordinating committee.





## Goal 4

### Support Ongoing Planning, Coordination, & Collaboration, while Creating New Community Partnerships.

#### ***Strategy 4a: Improve planning and design of county-wide commuter services.***

A number of stakeholders expressed a need for improved commuter services throughout the County. Clean Air Express does operate throughout the County; however, COVID-related service cuts impacted service availability. In addition, public interviews revealed that Clean Air Express vehicles are not reliable, particularly for individuals who rely on mobility devices. Interviewees expressed concern over broken wheelchair lifts and those lifts that did not feel safe. As such, some members of the public would wait for a Clean Air Express vehicle only to find that the lift to access said vehicle was inoperable. In addition to inconsistent equipment availability, stakeholders and members of the public expressed a need for more service in general between county hubs, (i.e. Santa Maria to Santa Barbara, to and from Lompoc, Solvang, and the like).

#### ***Strategy 4b: Develop a plan for improved service and connectivity to social destinations.***

A significant finding from the public survey that was conducted as a part of this plan update was the number of individuals who responded needing transportation to social outings. Social outings and opportunities have become a priority for individuals, likely coming out of a years-long pandemic. The project team heard through multiple stakeholder interviews, provider discussions, and public meetings that there is a great need to have access to the Lower State Street / waterfront area of Santa Barbara. This area is central to tourism and a social destination in the county. Additionally, there is an interest to travel to entertainment and tourist destinations throughout the County, such as to the Chumash Casino for special events, and to areas like Solvang, for cultural events and wine tastings.

#### ***Strategy 4c: Grow availability of premium senior services through public-private partnerships.***

Santa Barbara County does have a few options for non-emergency medical transportation services (NEMT); however, stakeholders discussed the need for additional premium-type of services for highly infirm senior population. With the growing aging population in the county, providers feel that a partnership for premium-type gurney service is becoming a necessity.



Planning



Coordination



Partnerships

***Strategy 4d: Strengthen relationships between providers and public works for future planning and development.***

As demand for service continues to grow, particularly in cities like Santa Maria, providers discussed a need for better partnerships between transit and relative public works departments. Strengthening these relationships can help support current and future planning efforts, particularly in reference to capital projects, like transfer centers and shelters, and accessibility. Additionally, stronger relationships between transit providers and Caltrans would be beneficial as providers examine new locations for park and rides that could potentially be located near state highways.

***Strategy 4e: Coordinate with Veterans Administration and Senior Service Organizations to Better Provide Consistent Transportation for those who Rely on the Service(s).***

Santa Barbara County has a couple of Veteran’s offices located in Santa Barbara and south of Santa Maria, respectively, with the main service organization located just outside of Vandenburg Space Force Base in Lompoc. While a large percentage of the county’s veteran population does reside in Lompoc, there are still many veterans living in other areas of the county. Stakeholders expressed a desire to better connect these populations, who also overlap with the “older adults” category, to much-needed veterans services. Strengthening the connection between senior service and veterans organization would allow for better future service planning.

***Strategy 4f: Consider microtransit (on-demand/app-based) to meet off-peak service demands.***

The pandemic began to change the way service providers think about the provision of transit services universally. Many providers found that microtransit services were a more cost-effective way to provide transportation particularly in periods that would be considered “off-peak”, like evenings and weekends. In the last year, several successful microtransit pilots have been launched in urban and rural areas alike, offering app-based services to second and third shift workers in the evenings, those looking to attend social outings later in the evening, and individuals wishing access to entertainment and shopping on the weekends. Service providers in Santa Barbara county recognize the need to implement some type of microtransit service to meet the needs of the population where fixed route services may not be best or most cost-effective.



**Goal 5**  
**Ensure Consistent Operation of Safe, Accessible, and Affordable Services for County Residents.**

**Strategy 5a: Partner with Workforce development to help address the bus operator shortage.**

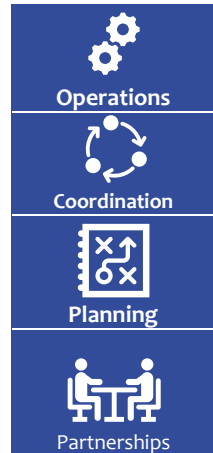
As noted earlier, Santa Barbara County is facing a shortage of drivers. Beyond the steps already taken by providers to incentivize recruitment, other considerations, such as cash referral bonuses, paid Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) training, and time retention bonuses may help support longevity. Transit operators can convene with other agencies and unions in the County and State to review existing pay, benefits, and licensing requirements to identify opportunities for improvement. Agencies and unions should also collaborate to find opportunities to add incentive pay not just for newly hired drivers, but for drivers willing and able to take on relatively more challenging assignments and routes or those who have been resilient and continued to drive throughout the pandemic.

**Strategy 5b: Recommend transit studies such as Comprehensive Operations Analyses and Transit Development Plans for all providers.**

Stakeholders have collectively expressed a need for updated transit plans throughout the County. Transit Development Plans (TDPs) can help regions plan for medium- and long-term transit needs, where Comprehensive Operations Analyses (COAs), can help urbanized systems with planning and scheduling updates for short- and medium-range improvements. Both plans can include passenger needs surveys, detailed ridership data collection and analysis, trip patterns and analysis. To continue to improve transit services county-wide, providers should consider updated planning studies like TDPs and COAs, and those that may not have the resources for such studies should consider funding opportunities through the state and grant programs to conduct plan updates.

**Strategy 5c: Improve inter-county and inter-agency coordination and connectivity.**

There is a wide range of travel patterns in Santa Barbara County by virtue of the region being geographically expansive. Collecting information related to travel and trip patterns within and between counties would help providers better plan for (and provide) much needed service and assist in “making the case” for more connector service and funding streams to support new services. There is definitively a need for greater transportation coordination between Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County. Stakeholders should work closely with providers in SLO county to create more connectivity for residents of both counties.



***Strategy 5d: Work with CALACT and CALTRANS to schedule regional P.A.S.S. Training.***

Multiple stakeholders and the public expressed a need for driver sensitivity training, and specifically stated that driver treatment is often inconsistent across the board—whether by agency or amongst the drivers themselves. National RTAP offers P.A.S.S. training ((passenger assistance safety and security) as a national standard for passenger sensitivity and securement. It is recommended that SBCAG work with CalAct and CalTrans to schedule P.A.S.S. training opportunities for all providers county-wide.

***Strategy 5e: Establish Universal real-time availability for buses throughout the county.***

It is nationally recognized that providing real-time “where’s my bus” information helps to increase transit ridership. When passengers know when to expect their vehicles, not just through schedules, but being able to know when a bus is delayed, reliability and trust are increased substantially. Advisory committee members and transit agencies alike discussed the importance of creating universal infrastructure for “where’s my bus?” notifications, at stops and through smart phone apps.

***Strategy 5f: Develop county-wide single-source/universal fare card program.***

According to an article by Bloomberg, the failure of transit systems to align their payment systems is more than a nuisance for travelers; it’s an incentive for them to forego transit entirely and instead use an alternative mode like ride hail or taxis that puts additional vehicles on the road. Santa Barbara County would benefit from establishing a universal fare card program, similar to what has been established in the Bay Area, with the Clipper card. The Clipper card works across 22 local transit agencies through an agreement process and is the first large-scale universal fare project on the west coast.

***Strategy 5g: Develop Plan for charging infrastructure county-wide (overnight and between shifts).***

This strategy is a recommendation for a larger infrastructure plan in Santa Barbara County that looks at green transportation infrastructure; specifically the ability to charge electric transit vehicles county-wide. While the state of California is supporting a transition to green infrastructure for public transit providers by the year 2028, the primary focus to date has been on providing infrastructure for charging personal vehicles. There are a variety of grant programs available to transit providers for the transition to electric vehicles, but stakeholders felt it was important to call out this strategy specifically given the push to transition to EV fleets within the decade. Stakeholders are supporting a strategy to implement county-wide universal charging stations for transit agencies throughout the county. Providers agreed there is a need to have the ability to charge current and future EVs overnight and between shifts, no matter where the vehicle is staged in the county.

## **Strategy Prioritization and Plan Implementation**

In January of 2024, the Advisory Committee met virtually to prioritize the strategies that had been aligned with each goal. The strategy prioritization aided the project team in assigning timelines to

the individual strategies as well as potential funding sources. For each goal, the committee ranked the strategies from highest to lowest priority. It is important to note that just because a strategy received a lower ranking does not mean that it is less important than the other strategies within that goal. Higher prioritization was given to those strategies that the committee wished to focus on first. Appendix D provides a review of the strategy prioritization that took place in real-time Menti poll at the January advisory committee meeting.



## Chapter 6. Plan Implementation and Funding Sources

The proposed strategies in Chapter 5 of this plan are intended to meet a series of needs uncovered throughout the engagement process; they also include implementation guidance. The strategies in this chapter are categorized by goals and also by prioritization tiers.

After listening to feedback from both the Advisory Committee and stakeholders, the proposed strategies were prioritized into three categories, with implementation timelines associated with each strategy. Some strategies may be ready for immediate implementation, whether ranked high or low priority. Other strategies, while ranked “high priority,” may take longer to implement. Project timelines range from short (1-2 years) to medium (3-4 years) to long (5+ years).

**HIGH PRIORITY** – To begin meeting project goals and closing needs, SBCAG should consider prioritizing several basic investments and programs in coordination with regional stakeholders. The measures included in the high priority tier are those which have been deemed important by the Advisory Committee in the next couple of years.

**MEDIUM PRIORITY** – The impacts of these strategies are also consequential, but they are not the highest priority. Some strategies under the Medium Priority tier may also benefit from High Priority strategies being implemented. For example, a pilot flexible transit route may be more successful if there is already an understanding of which communities would be most likely to ride such a service, along with more direct in-person marketing of transit options.

**LONG-TERM PRIORITY** – Included in the proposed strategies are proposed policies that address larger ongoing challenges, for example, the impacts of census changes and the legacy of systemic discrimination. These proposed policies are given a long-term timeframe, as they will require consideration in the context of all future transportation decisions.



The project team used the strategy rankings to create the implementation plan for the region. The implementation plan depicts strategies with their goals, proposed implementation agency (or team), proposed time to implement, and the priority assigned to the strategy.





Based on the prioritization activity captured in Chapter 5, strategies that were listed in the top two spaces are “high” priority, strategies in the 3rd and 4th spaces are “medium” priority, and strategies in the 5th ranked spot and greater are “low” priority.

Using the advisory committee rankings, the proposed timeline for implementation, and the ease of implementation, each strategy was then given an “overall ranking”, in numerical order, for implementation. Other factors, such as funding availability, may impact a strategy’s overall ranking and whether it will get implemented sooner rather than later.









**Figure 6-1 Proposed Implementation Timeline & Priority Rankings**

Goal / Strategy	Timeline	Priority	Overall Ranking
 <b>Goal 1 Develop a Comprehensive Plan for Communication, Education, and Awareness Throughout the County.</b>			
<b>Strategy 1a:</b> Garner local participation through community meetings and support from younger populations	Short	High	2
<b>Strategy 1b:</b> Engagement Planning for local governments	Short	Low	5
<b>Strategy 1c:</b> Improve advertising and marketing of available transit jobs in the County	Short	Medium	4
<b>Strategy 1d:</b> Establish a formal marketing campaign on transportation resources in the county	Short	Medium	3
<b>Strategy 1e:</b> Develop transit information: how transit works, how to use public transit, and how transit is funded	Short	High	1
 <b>Goal 2 Strengthen Provider Resources and Create Sustainable Funding Streams.</b>			
<b>Strategy 2a:</b> Increase resources for local match.	Medium	Low	3
<b>Strategy 2b:</b> Develop a System to Identify and Promote Funding Opportunities for regional providers and programs.	Short	High	1
<b>Strategy 2c:</b> Grant Writing Assistance Program.	Medium	Medium	2
<b>Strategy 2d:</b> Advocate for increased funding for transit at the state and county levels.	Medium	High	1
<b>Strategy 2e:</b> Support coordination amongst private and non-profit social service providers to streamline funding for contracted/coordinated services.	Medium	Medium	2

Goal / Strategy	Timeline	Priority	Overall Ranking
 <b>Goal 3</b> <b>Establish a County-wide Plan for Coordinated Advocacy and Policy Development.</b>			
<b>Strategy 3a:</b> Establish requirements for special events in the county to have a transportation policy.	Medium	Low	3
<b>Strategy 3b:</b> Lobby for a lower farebox recovery minimum.	Medium	High	1
<b>Strategy 3c:</b> Better utilize the SBCTAC for advocacy, change-making, and coordination implementation support.	Short	Medium	2
 <b>Goal 4</b> <b>Support Ongoing Planning, Coordination, &amp; Collaboration, while Creating New Community Partnerships.</b>			
<b>Strategy 4a:</b> Improve planning and design of county-wide commuter services.	Medium	Medium	3
<b>Strategy 4b:</b> Develop a plan for improved service and connectivity to social destinations.	Medium	High	1
<b>Strategy 4c:</b> Grow availability of premium senior services through public-private partnerships.	Long	Medium	4
<b>Strategy 4d:</b> Strengthen relationships between providers and public works for future planning and development.	Short	Low	5
<b>Strategy 4e:</b> Coordinate with Veterans Administration and Senior Service Organizations to Better Provide Consistent Transportation for those who Rely on the Service(s).	Medium	High	2
<b>Strategy 4f:</b> Consider microtransit (on-demand/app-based) to meet off-peak service demands.	Long	Medium	4
 <b>Goal 5</b> <b>Ensure Consistent Operation of Safe, Accessible, and Affordable Services for County Residents</b>			
<b>Strategy 5a:</b> Partner with Workforce development to help address the bus operator shortage.	Short	Medium	4
<b>Strategy 5b:</b> Recommend transit studies such as Comprehensive Operations Analyses and Transit Development Plans for all providers.	Medium	Low	7
<b>Strategy 5c:</b> Improve inter-county and inter-agency coordination and connectivity.	Long	High	1
<b>Strategy 5d:</b> Work with CALACT and CALTRANS to schedule regional P.A.S.S. Training.	Short	Low	6
<b>Strategy 5e:</b> Establish Universal real-time availability for buses throughout the county.	Long	High	2

Goal / Strategy		Timeline	Priority	Overall Ranking
	<b>Strategy 5f:</b> Develop county-wide single-source/universal fare card program.	Long	Medium	3
	<b>Strategy 5g:</b> Develop Plan for charging infrastructure county-wide (overnight and between shifts).	Long	Low	5

Based on the strategy rankings, the highest priority strategies for the region to tackle upon adoption of this coordinated plan are as follows (listed in priority order):

 Education & Advocacy	<b>Strategy 1e:</b> Develop transit information: how transit works, how to use public transit, and how transit is funded
 Sustainable Funding	<b>Strategy 2b:</b> Develop a system to identify and promote funding opportunities for regional providers and programs
 Sustainable Funding	<b>Strategy 2d:</b> Advocate for increased funding for transit at the state and county levels
 Policy Development	<b>Strategy 3b:</b> Lobby for a lower farebox recovery minimum
 Planning	<b>Strategy 4b:</b> Develop a plan for improved service and connectivity to social destinations
 Partnerships	<b>Strategy 5c:</b> Improve inter-county and inter-agency coordination and connectivity
 Education & Advocacy	<b>Strategy 1a:</b> Garner local participation through community meetings and support from younger populations
 Coordination	<b>Strategy 4e:</b> Coordinate with Veterans Administration and Senior Service Organizations to better provide consistent transportation for those who rely on the services
 Operations	<b>Strategy 5e:</b> Establish universal real-time availability for buses throughout the county

It is important to note that just because the strategies listed above were ranked highest priority, all the strategies established by the advisory committee are of equal importance for county-wide coordinated planning. The nine strategies above are simply those designated for priority

implementation by the committee, and are simply the highest-ranked initial steps the stakeholders must take to become better coordinated.

The project team worked with the advisory committee to discuss which agencies would support the implementation of each strategy once the plan is approved. Some agencies volunteered to lead the implementation of strategies; others offered general support toward the implementation of the strategy. The team created a table with a live online link so that agencies could “volunteer” by signing up to be a strategy champion. The stakeholders did not finish the sign-ups prior to the completion of this plan, so the Strategy Champions document will continue to be a working document on a shared drive for SBCAG and the advisory committee to continue to use for tracking and amendment purposes.

## Potential Funding Sources for Strategy Implementation

It is generally understood with Coordinated Human Service Public Transportation Plans that the purpose of developing and prioritizing strategies is to rank those coordination strategies that should receive Federal Formula 5310 funding for older adults and individuals with disabilities. However, coordinated plans are often written in such a way to benefit more marginalized populations than just older adults and individuals with disabilities, so there’s still a good deal of coordination that needs to occur—with limited 5310 funding. As such, it is important to point out that there are multiple possible funding sources entities could tap into for strategy implementation.

The next section highlights various types of funding sources at a high level, with a full listing of possible funding sources in the appendix of this plan.

### Federal Transportation Funding

On March 15th, 2022, President Joe Biden signed a \$1.5 trillion spending bill to fund the federal government for the remainder of fiscal year 2022, ending on Sept. 30. The following information was taken from the National Conference on State Legislatures, and includes funding appropriated for transportation programs:



Just over \$100 billion is designated for federal transportation programs—a total of \$140 billion, a 60% increase, when adding the FY 2022 appropriation provisions contained within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The omnibus fully implements program authorized levels in the infrastructure bill.

- **\$61 billion for federal highway investments**, along with \$9.5 billion from the infrastructure bill, for an FY 2022 total of \$70.5 billion—a 44% increase over 2021.
- **\$16.3 billion for public transit**, an increase of \$3.3 billion from FY 2021. When combined with the infrastructure bill, public transit funding totals \$20.5 billion in FY 2022, an increase of \$7.6 billion (58%).

The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) has allocated a significant amount of funding to public transportation planning, service, and operations. Some of those funding categories are

outlined in the state transportation funding section, below; however, it is important to note that these funding allocations should be tracked accordingly.

## State Transportation Funding

Caltrans administers state and federal transit funding to providers and operators within the legal requirements of the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA). DOTs typically align their funding allocations with the preparation of Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) and State Transportation Improvement Plans (STIPs), approved by planning organizations, such as MPOs.



The 2023 state and federal legislative program initiatives for Caltrans are as follows:

- **Protect existing state transit funds**—including the General Fund moneys appropriated in FY 22-23 Budget Act—are prevented from being eliminated, terminated, shifted or otherwise used for non-transit purposes.
- **Preserve the relative share of Cap & Trade revenues for public transit** established in 2014 legislation and explore flexibility regarding the use of existing Cap & Trade revenues.
- **Continue the work of the Transportation Development Act (TDA) Reform Task Force**, in response to a legislative request to review and suggest potential TDA reforms.
- **Advocate for additional state funding to address transit and rail agencies' operating needs**, and advocate for additional state funding to help transit agencies build back from the pandemic.
- **Advocate for additional state funding** from the Cap & Trade program.
- **Advocate for additional state funding to support the transition to zero-emission transit vehicles** across all modes.
- **Support new local government funding options** to support transit and infrastructure near transit.
- **Seek resources to assist transit agencies** in managing homelessness.
- **Advocate for resources to help transit agencies** recruit, retain, and train employees.

Fortunately for Santa Barbara County's coordinated efforts, much of Caltrans legislative initiatives align with priority strategies for the region. Despite this alignment, funding is still needed to implement the strategies for improved coordination. In addition to state funding initiatives, federal formula funding may be used for a variety of planning and coordination projects.

To provide a quick overview of the formulas, these federal formula transportation definitions are adapted from the FTA:

- **FTA Section 5307 - Mass transit apportionment to urbanized areas based on population, population density and operating performance.** The department has authority over the distribution of funds to urbanized areas with a population of less than 200,000. Once an area

becomes “urbanized”, the DOT may allocate funding through a local designated recipient, which would be responsible for reporting to the FTA.

- **FTA Section 5309** - Mass transit discretionary funds for capital projects only. Funds for the Capital Investment Program (49 U.S.C. 5309) – Bus and Bus Facilities provides capital assistance for new and replacement buses and related equipment and facilities. Eligible capital projects include the purchase of buses for fleet and service expansion, bus maintenance and administrative facilities, transfer facilities, bus malls, transportation centers, intermodal terminals, park-and-ride stations, acquisition of replacement vehicles, bus rebuilds, bus preventive maintenance, passenger amenities such as passenger shelters and bus stop signs, accessory and miscellaneous equipment such as mobile radio units, supervisory vehicles, fare boxes, computers and shop and garage equipment.
- **FTA Section 5310** - Provides federal funds to public and private nonprofit entities for the transportation of elderly individuals and/or individuals with disabilities. Allocation of funding is determined by locally-determined strategy prioritization in an adopted coordinated plan.
- **FTA Section 5311** - Provides funds for Rural Transit Programs. As with other states, 5311 funding is limited for rural transit operations in California. Rural agencies have a big job of providing services in sparsely populated areas, typically for individuals with a great transit need. 5311 funding is always in demand for rural transit provision.

## Other Funding Sources

### NADTC Funding and Community Grants

There are other funding sources available for transportation planning and services for marginalized populations at a national level. The National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC) issues annual RFPs for a variety of transportation grants for older adults and individuals with disabilities. In 2021, NADTC announced a new funding opportunity, Equity and Accessibility: Transportation Planning Grant Program. Grant opportunities through NADTC are typically announced in late Spring and awarded in August-September each year.



NADTC also offers community grants that are designed to support communities assess transportation needs. The grants can assist with the development and implementation of innovations and new models for increasing the availability of accessible transportation services for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Grants may also help make effective use of Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities funds.

### National Center for Mobility Management



The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) is funded by the FTA and housed at the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA). The NCMM operates as a national technical assistance center and provides grant opportunities to support



partnerships. The entity has provided multiple community planning grants to further the goals of the Transit and Health Access Initiative.

The following table, organized by goals for Santa Barbara County’s coordinated plan, highlight some proposed funding streams that could be utilized for strategy implementation. This list is by no means comprehensive and is subject to change through funding allocations. Additionally, the list should not be limited to the sources suggested. Other funding opportunities may be available, such as emergency planning and preparedness, and transportation funding for special populations, such as Veterans and Tribal Transit Programming.

Figure 6-2 Proposed Funding Streams

	<p><b>GOAL 1</b> Develop a Comprehensive Plan for Communication, Education, and Awareness throughout the County</p>
	<p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-kind agency assistance</li> <li>▪ 5310 funding</li> <li>▪ NCMM Grants</li> </ul>
	<p><b>GOAL 2</b> Strengthen Provider Resources and Create Sustainable Funding Streams</p>
	<p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5310 funding</li> <li>▪ In-kind agency assistance</li> <li>▪ 5303/5304 planning assistance</li> </ul>
	<p><b>GOAL 3</b> Establish a County-wide Plan for Coordinated Advocacy and Policy Development</p>
	<p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5310 funding</li> <li>▪ 5311 funding</li> <li>▪ In-kind agency assistance</li> <li>▪ NADTC planning assistance</li> </ul>
	<p><b>GOAL 4</b> Support Ongoing Planning, Coordination, &amp; Collaboration, while Creating New Community Partnerships</p>
	<p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5303 funding</li> <li>▪ 5310 funding</li> <li>▪ NADTC planning assistance</li> <li>▪ NCMM community grants</li> </ul>





**GOAL 5**  
**Ensure Consistent Operation of Safe, Accessible, and Affordable Services for County Residents**

- Potential**   ▪ 5307 funding
- Funding**   ▪ NADTC planning assistance
- Sources**   ▪ NCMM community grants



## Chapter 7. Looking Ahead / Conclusions

Public engagement planning and stakeholder meetings, along with other considerations, will play a key role in this Santa Barbara County coordinated plan.

Future considerations include:

### **Annual Reporting on the Coordinated Plan:**

- How will the advisory committee and SBCAG provide regular updates on Coordinated Plan progress?

### **Lead Agency(ies) for Implementation:**

- Who will report on strategy progress?
- How will this information be communicated?

### **Transit Development Planning & Comprehensive Operations Analyses:**

- While future transit planning is mentioned in the strategy section, it's important to note that detailed transit plans for providers within the County will be needed to support future coordinated efforts.

### **Linking all mobility options in the County:**

- SBCAG produces a variety of plans, including those related to comprehensive planning and active transportation. Ensuring these and future transit plans support one another is critical for County residents, particularly those who need better access to stops and transfer centers.

### **Next Steps:**

- As Santa Barbara County stakeholders begin implementing elements of the Coordinated Plan, there are several next steps to consider, including the continuance of advisory committee meetings, the development of appropriate performance measures, and the formation of working groups to help move strategies forward.

## Annual Reporting on The Coordinated Plan: State of Coordination In Santa Barbara County

### *Provide regular Coordinated Plan updates to stakeholders.*

Regular progress updates on the Coordinated Plan are important for stakeholders, including boards of directors, city councils, and health and human services leadership.

These updates should occur on an annual basis, providing a “state of coordination” report for the County. The update should include dashboards showing initial baseline performance metrics for the priority strategies for year one, with a performance metric for each year that follows. This will keep stakeholders apprised and build rapport and trust, leading to greater future investments.

## Lead Agencies Will Oversee Implementation

### *Lead and support organizations will be responsible for measuring performance.*

*The project advisory committee should continue to meet to discuss final strategy development and proposed lead organizations for each strategy.*

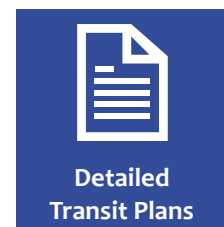
To assist strategy implementation, the project team created an online matrix for keeping track of the proposed lead and support organizations. Since this matrix is a fluid, working document, it is not included as a part of this report. Committee members, in conjunction with SBCAG, will continue to have access to the matrix as they establish implementation working groups.

During implementation, lead and support organizations can utilize performance measures to establish a baseline. The baseline may be as simple as a “yes, this item was completed” or “no, the item was not completed” or may be a number or percentage associated with the strategy itself. At this time, the lead and support agencies will be responsible for measuring performance, with SBCAG oversight for final reporting purposes.



## Transit Development Planning

Multiple plans impact travel throughout the county, from those developed for Santa Barbara County to statewide and surrounding regional plans), but none of these plans is specific to transit planning and development. Transit providers in the county could benefit from the development of consistent plans for their respective organizations, whether a Transit Development Plan or a Comprehensive Operations Analysis. It would benefit coordinated planning if providers have plans that address specific, realistic transit planning needs, as well as market analyses, and transit implementation scenarios coupled with costs. Some transit providers are currently in the process of putting together funding for plans, yet others may need additional support at the county level to put together an appropriate plan for their agency(ies).



## Linking County-Wide Mobility Options

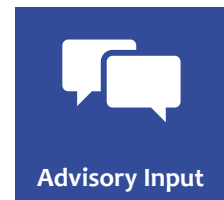
SBCAG leads a variety of transportation plans and studies throughout the county. Some projects are independent, while other projects take place as a part of a larger regional plan. In any given region, it is helpful when plans and studies support shared mobility goals for the county. Previous transportation plans are highlighted in the plan review in Chapter 3. As additional plans and studies are conducted, whether through local levels, through SBCAG, or the state, it is helpful to ensure that transit stakeholders are involved in the planning processes, whether it is a feasibility study for a new rail station or an updated active transportation plan. As a further step, it would benefit the county to be involved in transit planning updates for neighboring counties, Ventura and San Luis Obispo.



## Next Steps

### Advisory Committee Meetings

SBCAG, in conjunction with the Advisory Committee members, should consider the most appropriate means for moving strategy implementation forward. With most coordinated plans, project advisory committees (or technical committees) continue to meet at frequent intervals to discuss steps for funding and implementation of recommended coordination strategies. As referenced in Chapter 5, the advisory committee and SBCAG are considering better utilizing SBCTAC as a stakeholder group to continue moving the coordinated plan forward. Whether the project Advisory Committee or SBCTAC takes the lead on plan implementation, it's important to establish consistent meeting intervals, whether bi-monthly or quarterly.



### Performance Metrics

Performance measurement allows agencies to measure the effectiveness of their coordinated planning implementation projects through established parameters that provide a means to gauge achievement of goals and strategies. Lead agencies must measure performance because it is used to determine the effectiveness of the plan update as well as strategy implementation.



Performance measurement became a federal legislative requirement in 1993, when the Government Performance and Accountability Act was passed. Performance measurement is also an integral component of outcome evaluation and renders several benefits. These benefits include insights into the outcomes of investment in public programs, managerial efficiency, and administrative accountability. Additionally, performance measurement, as it relates to coordinated planning allows for consistent reporting and clear delineation on whether the strategies were accomplished.

Moving forward, it will be helpful to establish baseline metrics for the strategies through the implementation process. As strategies are implemented and the lead agencies for those strategies

report out, SBCAG can not only have a baseline for implementation, but also a means to measure the success of each strategy.

## Working Groups

As a subset of the larger advisory committee, it would be beneficial to form working groups for plan implementation. Working groups are smaller, consisting of a few advisory committee members with shared interests focusing on specific strategy implementations. Working groups have the ability to be nimble—often meeting with more frequency than the advisory committee.



Working group designations can be based on the plan goals—for example, one focused on funding and finance, one focused on communication and education, and so forth. Working groups can bring proposals and suggestions back to the larger group, or implementation and reporting updates.