

# Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, 2025-2029

Tuolumne County Transit Agency (TCTA)

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Prepared by:



# Executive Summary

## Purpose and Requirements of the Coordinated Plan

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), under Circular 9070.1G, requires that each regional transportation agency update its Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) every four years. The plan must be locally developed through an inclusive process involving transit providers, human service agencies, and representatives of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and other transportation-disadvantaged populations. The Coordinated Plan must include an inventory of existing transportation services, an assessment of mobility needs and gaps, and strategies to improve coordination and access. All projects funded under Section 5310 must originate from this plan, ensuring compliance and alignment with federal funding requirements.

## Relationship between the Coordinated Plan and the Short-Range Transit Plan

The Tuolumne County Transportation Council (TCTC) has updated its Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan and Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) concurrently to maximize efficiency and ensure alignment between the two planning efforts. Both plans rely on similar demographic and transit service data but serve distinct purposes: the SRTP focuses on broader transit service planning and financial forecasts, while the Coordinated Plan addresses mobility needs for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and other transportation-disadvantaged populations. Developing these two plans together reduces duplication, promotes consistency, and results in a more comprehensive and integrated approach to meeting community transportation needs.

## Recovering from COVID-19

The last Coordinated Plan for Tuolumne County Transit Agency (TCTA) was prepared in 2020, right as the Newsom administration began issuing stay-at-home orders to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan was 90 percent complete prior to the California stay-at-home order issued on March 19, 2020. On March 23, 2020, Tuolumne County Transit (TCT) removed its fixed-route services from operation and instituted a general public demand-response service, for essential trips only and without a fare. As such, the description of services and assessment of needs reported through the summer and fall of 2019 reflected only pre-COVID-19 realities. To finalize the Plan document, strategies were modified to reflect the March, April and May 2020 operating experience of TCT's general public Dial-A-Ride. Transit operators across the nation experienced significant ridership changes resulting from the COVID pandemic. Since then, TCT has made a series of changes, including resumption of fixed route operations, promoting its Dial-A-Ride service alongside its ADA paratransit service, and rolling out a multimodal trip planning app

(Transit app). This 2025 Coordinated Plan provides significant updates to the 2020 Coordinated Plan, and the associated SRTP provides up-to-date performance data for the transit system, as well as proposed new services.

## **Available Transportation Resources in Tuolumne County**

The Tuolumne County Transportation Agency (TCTA) provides the core network of public transit services within the County. While TCTA's fixed-route transit service, Dial-a-Ride service, and other specialized programs offer essential transportation options, its coverage is not comprehensive of all Tuolumne County communities, leaving some residents—particularly those populations targeted by the Coordinated Plan—without adequate access. The Coordinated Plan requires an inventory of existing transportation resources, including public transit and specialized services, to outline key service characteristics. Table 1 in Chapter 2 summarizes the categories of services available to the target population groups as of December 2025, including services that are contracted or directly operated as public transit, specialized transportation, or private-sector services. This inventory serves as a valuable resource, with a key goal of the Coordinated Plan aiming to enhance and build upon these resources to address mobility gaps and needs.

## **Demographics**

Tuolumne County is a rural county with dispersed population centers and an aging population. More than one-quarter (28 percent) of the population is seniors (65+); approximately 21% of residents have a disability, with one third of those individuals living outside the Dial-a-Ride/ADA paratransit service area; and 10% of residents live in poverty. Roughly 9% of residents are veterans, and just over 5% of those veterans are living in poverty. American Indian/Alaska Native residents comprise almost 2.5% of the county's total population.

## **Mobility Needs and Gaps**

A key objective of the Coordinated Plan is to identify current mobility gaps and needs to foster stronger collaboration among public transit agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community partners, paving the way for a more coordinated, accessible, and responsive transportation network. Mobility needs and gaps are identified by:

1. Reviewing progress made since the last Coordinated Plan and determining which needs remain unmet;
2. Incorporating insights gathered through extensive outreach efforts conducted during the planning process
3. Assessing the transportation needs of priority populations; and
4. Discussing the mobility gaps and needs.

Together, these activities and the accompanying analysis establish the foundation for shaping the Coordinated Plan's goals and strategies.

## Proposed Goals

The goals of the Coordinated Plan collectively aim to improve transportation access and service quality for Tuolumne County's older adults, people with disabilities, low-income residents, veterans, and tribal community members. Specifically, the plan sets seven goals:

1. Expand and adjust fixed-route TCT bus service to improve operational efficiency and rider convenience, including extended hours and weekend coverage;
2. Expand and adjust demand-response service — including on-demand microtransit and Dial-a-Ride — to reach underserved communities and populations;
3. Enhance data monitoring, reporting, and transparency to support better-informed decision-making;
4. Improve access to key destinations in isolated communities and for out-of-county trips;
5. Increase transit awareness and ridership through coordinated communications, engagement, and community outreach;
6. Address infrastructure needs for TCTA to improve rider experience and meet state fleet electrification requirements; and
7. Similarly address infrastructure needs for compliance with state electrification mandates.

## Priority Strategies for the 2025-2029 Coordinated Plan

The strategies supporting the seven goals span service expansion, demand-response improvement, fare and data modernization, access programming, outreach, infrastructure, and emergency planning, and they include the following:

- Under Goal 1 (fixed-route service), strategies call for extending weekday hours to cover early-morning school schedules and late-evening casino and work shifts, adding Sunday service, increasing route frequency to reduce wait times currently as long as three hours, and reintroducing seasonal and event-based transit.
- Goal 2 (demand-response) strategies include launching app-based on-demand microtransit in more developed areas like Sonora, extending Dial-a-Ride to currently unserved communities, maintaining ADA-compliant Dial-a-Ride capacity, and expanding Dial-a-Ride operating hours into early mornings and late evenings.
- Goal 3 (data and transparency) strategies focus on re-establishing a short-term fare policy with passes and discounts for seniors, students, veterans, and low-income riders (including a zero-fare program for Columbia College and high school students), benchmarking peer agency fare practices post-COVID, and introducing mobile fare payment.
- Goal 4 (access to isolated communities and out-of-county destinations) strategies include coordinating with Calaveras County on GoGo Grandparent, promoting WAVE service and volunteer driver programs, and expanding marketing, nonprofit enrollment, and trip-purpose eligibility for the TRIP mileage reimbursement program.

- Goal 5 (outreach and education) strategies involve targeted marketing for Dial-a-Ride and app-based booking, regular stakeholder meetings on travel training, and broader awareness campaigns through community organizations.
- Goal 6 (zero-emissions bus infrastructure and fleets) strategies include coordinating with regional agencies to reduce battery-electric bus costs, supporting regional CDL training programs to address the driver shortage, and coordinating active transportation infrastructure investments with TCTC.
- Goal 7 (emergency and electrification planning) strategies call for identifying transportation providers and volunteers for evacuation planning and updating emergency protocols with the County Office of Emergency Services.

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# 1. Introduction and Context

## Purpose and Requirements of a Coordinated Plan

The purpose of a Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) is to improve transportation access for individuals who face mobility challenges, particularly those who rely on specialized services. Specifically, Coordinated Plans aim to:

1. Identify transportation needs and gaps for populations such as older adults, people with disabilities, low-income individuals, veterans, and tribal communities;
2. Coordinate resources among transit providers and human service agencies to reduce duplication of services and improve efficiency;
3. Develop strategies and priorities for expanding and enhancing transportation options for these populations;
4. Ensure compliance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements; and
5. Promote collaboration between public transit agencies, non-profits, and other stakeholders to create a more integrated and accessible transportation network.

FTA Circular 9070.1G establishes specific requirements for Coordinated Plans to ensure their effective planning and delivery. These plans must be locally developed through an inclusive process, engaging public, private, and nonprofit transportation providers, human service agencies, and representatives of the populations served.

A key component is an inventory of existing transportation resources, including public transit and specialized services, to identify gaps, overlaps, and opportunities for improved coordination. The plan must also include an assessment of transportation needs for the target populations. Based on this assessment, agencies are required to develop strategies and priorities to address identified gaps and enhance service coordination.

Importantly, all projects funded under Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) must originate from the Coordinated Plan, ensuring alignment with federal funding requirements. Finally, to maintain compliance and eligibility for funding, the plan must be updated at least every four years.

## Population Groups Served

The 2025–2029 Coordinated Plan focuses on identifying mobility needs and service gaps for key populations within Tuolumne County, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, military veterans, and members of tribal communities. As described in more detail in [Chapter 3](#), Tuolumne County is characterized as a rural geography with dispersed population centers and an aging population. The proportion of older adults (age 65 and older) consists of 28% of total residents—almost double the state average. Approximately 21% of residents identify as having a disability, twice the statewide rate, and 34% of those individuals live outside the Dial-a-Ride service area. In addition, 10% of Tuolumne County residents live in poverty,

and about one in five county residents (20%) live within 150% of the federal poverty threshold, a common threshold used by social service agencies to determine financial need. Roughly 9% of Tuolumne County residents are veterans, double the 4-5% statewide average, and just over 5% of those veterans are living in poverty.

Tuolumne County also has a notable Native population, with American Indian and Alaska Native residents comprising almost 2.5% of the county's total population. Based on 2024 population estimates, this equates to roughly 1,290 individuals. The County is home to the Tuolumne Band of Mi-Wuk Indians, a federally recognized tribe whose reservation—the Tuolumne Rancheria—covers nearly 800 acres near the community of Tuolumne City. Historical data indicates that the Tribe had 200 residents on the Rancheria and 485 enrolled members as of 2015,<sup>1</sup> though current enrollment may differ. The County is also home to the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Mi-Wuk Indians, another tribal community in Jamestown as well as other, non-recognized tribes. Tribal members contribute significantly to the cultural, economic, and social fabric of the region, and many Native residents in the county may belong to other tribes. Understanding the needs of tribal communities is essential to ensuring equitable access to transportation services, as tribal members are more likely to rely on public transportation relative to the county population at large.

Although most of the Coordinated Plan's target populations, including older adults, people with disabilities, low-income households, veterans, and members of tribal communities are at least partially served by existing services, fixed-route service coverage remains limited. Only about 12% of county residents live within walking distance of a fixed-route stop, while the remainder depend on Dial-a-Ride or other specialized transportation programs. Concentrated ridership and stop activity within the City of Sonora contrasts with the limited access to transit in outlying communities. This pattern illustrates the need for service models that better address geographic isolation and variable travel patterns, such as expanded Dial-a-Ride or coordination with non-profit transportation providers, to the extent feasible.

## **A Heightened Focus on Tuolumne County**

The previous Coordinated Plan (2020 Plan) addressed transportation needs within Tuolumne County, while also incorporating a broader regional perspective that included Tuolumne, Calaveras, and Amador counties. That approach acknowledged the importance of inter-county travel for many people and the role of multiple human service agencies serving clients across the three-county region. In contrast, this updated 2025-2029 Coordinated Plan places a stronger emphasis on addressing transportation needs within Tuolumne County itself, focusing on rebuilding and strengthening local mobility resources that were significantly impacted during the COVID years.

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<sup>1</sup> Testimony of Kevin Day, Tribal Chairman Before the House Resources Committee: Hearing before the House Resources Committee, U.S. House of Representatives (2015).  
<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/II/II24/20151104/104164/HHRG-114-II24-Wstate-DayK-20151104.pdf>.

## **The Collaborative Planning Approach**

As Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Tuolumne County, the Tuolumne County Transportation Council (TCTC) has chosen to update its Coordinated Plan and Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) concurrently to maximize efficiency and ensure alignment between the two planning efforts, including public engagement efforts (Appendix 1). Both plans rely on similar demographic, socioeconomic, and service data, including population trends, travel patterns, and transit performance metrics. However, they serve distinct purposes: the SRTP provides a comprehensive framework for transit service planning, operational and capital improvements, and financial strategies, while the Coordinated Plan focuses on services and programming to address mobility needs for older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, veterans, and tribal communities. Updating these plans in tandem reduces duplication of effort, promotes consistency in goals and strategies, and ensures that service planning and human services coordination are integrated. This approach also strengthens funding eligibility by aligning Section 5310 projects with broader transit objectives, resulting in a more cohesive, efficient, and community-focused transportation system for Tuolumne County.

## **An Enhanced Focus on Human Services Transportation**

Because the Coordinated Plan and the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) are being developed concurrently, this 2025–2029 Coordinated Plan update places a heightened emphasis on the human services component of transportation planning. Traditionally, the Coordinated Plan has included detailed transit planning elements; however, those technical aspects are now addressed in the SRTP. This division of responsibilities allows the Coordinated Plan to concentrate on strategies that improve mobility for older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, veterans, and tribal communities, while the SRTP focuses on system-wide service planning and financial sustainability. By clearly defining the scope of each plan, Tuolumne County achieves a more comprehensive, streamlined, and specialized approach that reduces duplication, strengthens coordination, and ensures that both general transit and human services transportation needs are effectively met.

# **2. Available Transportation Resources**

The Tuolumne County Transportation Agency (TCTA), through its transit operator Tuolumne County Transit (TCT), provides the core network of public transit services within the County. While TCT's fixed-route transit service, Dial-a-Ride service, and other specific programs offer essential transportation options, the service area does not cover the entire County, leaving some residents—particularly those populations prioritized by the Coordinated Plan—without adequate access. This section presents a high-level overview of current TCT services, with additional detail available in the 2025–2030 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP).

The subsequent sections detail additional transportation resources currently available in Tuolumne County, with particular attention to specialized services provided by non-profit organizations. These resources represent a critical element of the Coordinated Plan, as they help address mobility needs that public transit alone cannot fully meet.

## Tuolumne County Transit (TCT) Services

Fixed-Route: As shown in **Figure 1**, Tuolumne County operates three (3) fixed-route services in its 75-square-mile service area:<sup>2</sup>

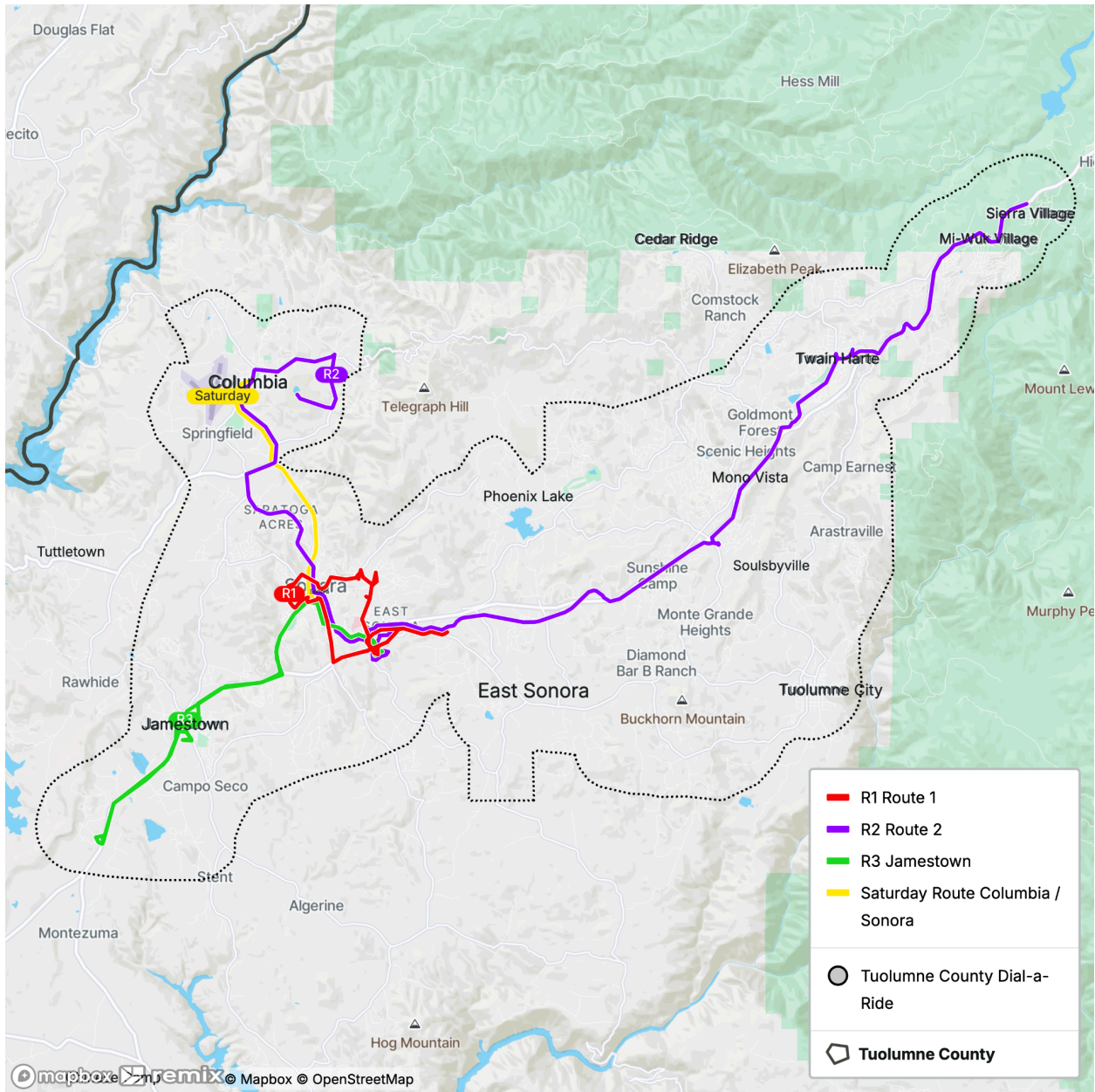
- **Route 1 (Sonora Loop)**, which runs a clockwise loop from the East Sonora Transit Center (12879 Justice Center Drive), operating through the county's most densely populated neighborhoods and key destinations, such as the Crossroads and Junction shopping centers, Adventist Health Sonora, and the Transit Center.
- **Route 2 (Sierra Village–Sonora–Columbia)**, which operates longer, bidirectional rural services with fewer population clusters, but serving key destinations on the northwest and northeast segments of the service area, including Columbia College, the Airport, and Sierra Village, and using Hotel Lumberjack and Walmart in Sonora (at Crossroads shopping center) as key transfer points to Route 1.
- **Route 3 (Jamestown–Sonora)**, which links the Chicken Ranch Casino Resort in southeast Tuolumne County to the East Sonora Transit Center, also using Hotel Lumberjack and Walmart in Sonora as key transfer points to Route 1.

Routes 1, 2, and 3 feature timed transfers at the Walmart in Sonora, enabling connections between services. The 2025-2030 SRTP provides detailed information on operating hours, service frequency, annual ridership, productivity, and cost per ride for each existing route.

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<sup>2</sup> TCT operated a fourth route, the Groveland Connector, between 2022 and 2025. The Groveland Connector was operated as a single round-trip cycle between Mary Laveroni Park in Groveland and Columbia College, with intermediate stops in Sonora and Jamestown. The route was cancelled in October 2025 due to low ridership and high operating cost per passenger trip.

**Figure 1. Tuolumne County Transit Network, 2025**



## Dial-a-Ride

TCT's Dial-a-Ride program operates as both a traditional ADA paratransit service and as a general-public demand-response program, providing weekday and Saturday coverage across the same 75-square-mile service area shown in Figure 1. In FY 2025, the Dial-a-Ride program delivered approximately 2,200 rides per month, with demand peaking during morning and mid-afternoon hours. Approximately 93% of trips are recurring reservations made one to two weeks in advance, with 5% booked through the new mobile app.

Trip patterns indicate strong reliance on Dial-a-Ride for essential travel, including access to healthcare, retail, and employment destinations such as Adventist Health Sonora, Walmart, and Black Oak Casino. Most trips originate and end within Sonora and East Sonora, where population density and service availability are highest. The service plays a critical role in supporting mobility for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and residents without access to fixed-route transit service.

## Other TCTA Programs

In addition to TCT's fixed-route and Dial-a-Ride services, TCTA operates several supplemental programs that address unique community mobility needs.

- The SkiBus provides weekend and holiday service between Jamestown and Dodge Ridge Ski Resort during the winter season.
- The Tuolumne TRIP volunteer driver reimbursement program enables eligible residents—primarily older adults, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and low-income riders—to recruit their own volunteer drivers for trips that are difficult or impossible to make via fixed-route or Dial-a-Ride. Between January and August 2025, 13 active participants logged over 18,000 miles, demonstrating the program's key role in providing long-distance travel for isolated residents.
- The Golden Years Transit program, launched in 2024 in partnership with the Area 12 Agency on Aging, provides fare-free non-emergency medical transportation for adults aged 60 and older within the greater Sonora area. The program shares operations with Dial-a-Ride, maximizing fleet utilization while expanding access to critical healthcare services.

These supplemental TCTA programs enhance the county's transportation network by serving trip purposes and populations that would otherwise lack reliable mobility options, particularly in rural or medically underserved areas.

## Other Public Transit and Specialized Transportation Services by Non-Profits, For-Profits, and Public Agencies

In addition to the TCT services described above, other transportation resources, including regional public transit services provided by other operators, as well as specialized non-profit, for-profit, and public agency services, are currently available in Tuolumne County.

### **Public Transit**

- **The Yosemite Area Rapid Transit System (YARTS)** provides public transit to Yosemite National Park and nearby communities, including the Highway 120 route from Sonora operated during summers (typically Memorial Day to Labor Day).
- **Calaveras Connect** provides public transit services for residents and visitors in Calaveras County, including a shuttle to and from Columbia College in Tuolumne County on weekdays when school is in session.

### ***Specialized Transportation Services***

- **Southside Community Connections / Wheels:** The Wheels program provides door-to-door for disabled and aging adults who are unable to drive due to recent surgery, illness, or age, for shopping and errands in the Groveland/Big Oak Flat area. Wheels is supported by volunteer drivers.
- **Southside Community Connections / WAVE:** The WAVE program picks passengers up at Mary Laveroni Park in Groveland and takes them to Sonora and Modesto for medical appointments, shopping, and errands several times a week, and to out-of-county locations like Fresno, Stockton and Sacramento for medical appointments, as scheduling and staffing allow. WAVE is funded through FTA Section 5310 grants administered by TCTA.
- **Tuolumne County Behavioral Health Services Department:** The Behavioral Health Department provides rides for its clients to and from appointments for behavioral health and substance use disorder services, including Crisis, Assessment & Intervention, and Outpatient Mental Services.
- **Sonora VA Health Clinic/Veterans Administration Clinic/Northern California Health Care System Shuttle:** The Sonora VA Health Clinic provides shuttle services each weekday to transport veterans to the Central Valley and connections to the Palo Alto Veterans Administration Medical Center (the Sonora VA Clinic is part of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System).
- **Tuolumne County Veterans Service Office:** The Tuolumne County Veterans Service Office provides door-to-door service for veterans to travel to and from medical, dental, and legal appointments within and outside Tuolumne County

### ***Private Sector Transportation Services***

- **Frontier Cab:** This private taxi company provides services in and beyond Tuolumne County.
- **Courtesy Cab:** This private taxi company provides services in and beyond Tuolumne County.
- **Mother Lode Adventure Charter Services:** This private charter company provides charter shuttle services to events, meetings, airports, weddings, trailheads, and custom tours.
- **Blue Mountain Transit Charter Services:** This private charter company provides professional transportation services, including shuttle or van services to banquets, wedding venues, group outings, and other needs.

### ***Other Agency-Provided Transportation***

An additional group of agencies reported that they purchase or provide funding for transportation or directly provide transportation through staff in staff-owned or agency-owned vehicles:

- **Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal TANF:** Through its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, the Tuolumne Me-Wuk Social Services Department provides transportation to Native American families with children as part of their supportive services offering.

- **Tuolumne County Adult Protective Services (APS):** APS functions to serve all dependent and elder adults with a protective need in Tuolumne County. A “dependent” adult is any person 18 through 64 years of age who has physical or mental limitations which restrict his/her ability to carry out normal activities. An “elder” adult is any person 65 years of age and older.
- **Tuolumne County Public Guardian:** The County’s Public Guardian investigates referrals for conservatorship and serves as the court appointed conservator for individuals substantially unable to care for themselves or their financial affairs, when there are no other alternatives.

## **Inventory of Transportation Resources**

The Coordinated Plan requires an inventory of existing transportation resources, including public transit and specialized services, to outline key service characteristics. The table below summarizes the categories of services available to the target population groups as of December 2025, including services that are contracted or directly operated as Public Transit, Specialized Transportation, or Private Sector Services.

**Table 1. Providers Inventory**

Service Type	Service Description	Area Served	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Reservations/ Contact Information	Fare	Vehicles in Fleet	Annual Ridership
Public Transportation Service	<b>TCT: Fixed-route service on Routes 1, 2, 3:</b> Provides fixed route bus service on the Sonora Loop, from the Sierra Village to Sonora, and from Jamestown to Sonora	Tuolumne County	Monday to Friday, 6am - 8pm	General Public	Reservations not required  209-532-0404 <a href="http://www.tuolumnetransit.com">www.tuolumnetransit.com</a>	Free	4	56,900
Public Transportation Service	<b>TCT: Dial-a-Ride (ADA Paratransit):</b> Offers demand-responsive curbside pick-up and drop off services to persons with disabilities with ADA Certification and persons who are 60 years of age or older  <b>TCT: Dial-a-Ride (General Public):</b> Offers demand-responsive curbside pick-up and drop off services to the general public Tuolumne County.	Tuolumne County	Monday to Friday, 6am - 8pm, Saturday 11am - 4pm	Seniors 60+, people with disabilities	Reservations required, day before, or in real time through the app  209-532-0404 Download the app via Google Play or Apple App Store	Free	18	26,050
Public Transportation Service	<b>TCT: SkiBus</b> (seasonal service): Provides fixed route bus service from Sonora to Dodge Ridge and all points in between	Sonora to Dodge Ridge Ski Resort	Weekends and holidays, 6:45am departures, 4:30pm returns, winter season (Nov-April, conditions permitting)	General Public	Reservations suggested  209-532-0404 <a href="http://www.tuolumnetransit.com">www.tuolumnetransit.com</a>	\$10 round-trip per person	1	N/A
Specialized Transportation Program	<b>TCT: Tuolumne TRIP - A Volunteer Driver Reimbursement Program:</b> Provides a transportation alternative for isolated and home-bound individuals who	Tuolumne County (trips must begin and end in Tuolumne	Normal service hours of Tuolumne County Transit, unless	Residents of Tuolumne County who are seniors (60+), persons with disabilities,	Rider-coordinated. Examples of eligible drivers include: Uber, Lyft, Taxi Service(s), Social Service Provider, Family	N/A. <sup>4</sup>	N/A (Volunteers use personal vehicles)	13 users over January - August 2025, traveling

<sup>4</sup> Reimbursements based on standard mileage allowances at the Federal Rate of \$ 0.70 per mile for participants within 10 miles of the City of Sonora (30 miles per one-way trip, 300 miles per month). For others, reimbursements include 38 miles per one-way trip, 375 miles per month. Reimbursement for out-of-county travel determined on a case by case basis, but should not exceed 300 miles per round trip.

Service Type	Service Description	Area Served	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Reservations/ Contact Information	Fare	Vehicles in Fleet	Annual Ridership
	cannot use TCT Dial-A-Ride; medical transportation to and from Sonora to select Veteran's medical facilities; and seniors that use the Southside Community Connections, Wheels program, or are current ADA Certified Dial-A-Ride users wishing to substitute more convenient travel options by providing them with the tools to connect with available and new community resources.	County), with out-of-county medical trips preapproved on a case-by-case basis	approved in advance. Tuolumne TRIP participants are responsible for recruiting their own drivers and arranging their travel schedules.	persons of limited means, or veterans that are isolated and homebound who cannot use current services (see website for more details) or are current ADA Certified Dial A Ride users wishing to substitute more convenient travel options.	Members, friends and/or neighbors. <sup>3</sup>  209-533-5603 - to apply <a href="http://www.tuolumnetransit.com">www.tuolumnetransit.com</a>			18,274,24 miles (12,845 in-county and 5,430 out-of-county)
<b>Specialized Transportation Program</b>	<b>TCT: Golden Years Transit:</b> Provides non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) service to adults aged 60 and over, providing reliable transportation for health and wellness appointments in the greater Sonora area. Sponsored by the Tuolumne County Transportation Agency in partnership with the Area 12 Agency on Aging, this program shares vehicles with Dial-a-Ride.	Greater Sonora area, including Columbia, Jamestown, East Sonora, Phoenix Lake, Standard, Tuolumne City, and Crystal Falls	Monday to Friday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, and Saturday, 8:00 am to 12:00 pm	Seniors 60+, medical appointments	Reservations required, 2 days before  209-532-0404 <a href="http://www.tuolumnetransit.com">www.tuolumnetransit.com</a>	Free, donations accepted	2 wheelchair accessible Dodge Caravans	N/A, ridership is included under the TCT Dial-a-Ride service
<b>Public Transportation Service</b>	YARTS: Provides seasonal public transit to Yosemite National Park and nearby communities, including a route from Sonora.	Sonora (Hwy 120): Sonora/Jamestown to Groveland/Buck Meadows to Yosemite Valley	May - September	General Public	Reservations required 12 hours in advance for online reservations, or 4 hours in advance through dispatch  877-989-2787 <a href="http://www.yarts.com">www.yarts.com</a>	Distance-based, up to \$44 for general public and up to \$22 reduced rates for Seniors 62+, Veterans, ADA-eligible passengers,	Twenty three (23) 45 foot D4500 buses	20,000 annual passengers (all routes)

<sup>3</sup> Approved Social Service Agency Care Representatives, Social Service Coordinator or Mobility Coordinators may submit ride reimbursements on behalf of participants. The driver may also be reimbursed for deadhead travel.

Service Type	Service Description	Area Served	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Reservations/ Contact Information	Fare	Vehicles in Fleet	Annual Ridership
		Visitors Center				and children 6-17. Children under 5 ride free.		
<b>Public Transportation Service</b>	<b>Calaveras Connect:</b> Provides public transportation services for residents and visitors in Calaveras County, including a shuttle to and from Columbia College in Tuolumne County.	Columbia College Shuttle to Angels Camp	Monday - Friday (Spring/Fall semesters only)	General Public	Return trip reservations required; 3/4 mile route deviations require reservations 2 hours in advance  209-754-4450 <a href="mailto:dispatchcalaveras@att.net">dispatchcalaveras@att.net</a>	Free for Columbia College students with current ID; \$3 round-trip; Discounts for individuals with disabilities, seniors 65+, and veterans	11 vehicles, with two medium duty buses, seven light duty mid-sized buses and two mini vans	39,332 passenger trips systemwide, according to FTA reporting for FY24
<b>Specialized Transportation Program</b>	<b>Southside Community Connections / Wheels:</b> Provides Door to Door Transportation for Disabled and Aging Adults (Provides door-to-door transportation for shopping and errands in the Groveland/Big Oak Flat area to qualified individuals who are unable to drive due to recent surgery, illness or age.)	Southern Tuolumne: Big Oak Flat (Priest Grade), Groveland, Bucks Meadow areas to Sonora, Oakdale, Modesto, and areas beyond depending on need	Monday to Saturday, Sundays as requested	Seniors, people with disabilities; others needing transportation	Reservations required, two days-notice  209-962-6952 <a href="http://www.southsidecommunityconnections.org">www.southsidecommunityconnections.org</a>	\$30 per quarter/ waiver for low income	N/A (Volunteers use personal vehicles)	About 100 clients riding multiple times, for about 320 rides (increase of 50% over 2024)
<b>Specialized Transportation Program</b>	<b>Southside Community Connections / WAVE:</b> Picks passengers up at Mary Laveroni Park in Groveland and takes them to Sonora and Modesto for medical appts, shopping, and errands several times a week, and to out-of-county locations like Fresno, Stockton and the Sacramento area for medical	Southern Tuolumne: Big Oak Flat (Priest Grade), Groveland, Bucks Meadow areas to Sonora, Oakdale, Modesto,	Monday to Saturday, Sundays as requested	Any resident 18+ of Groveland or Big Oak Flat	Reservations required, two days notice  209-962-6952 <a href="http://www.southsidecommunityconnections.org">www.southsidecommunityconnections.org</a>	Fare-free, donations accepted	One 8-passenger bus with wheelchair access; one 5 passenger van	About 300 clients riding multiple times, for about 404 rides (increase of 60% since 2024)

Service Type	Service Description	Area Served	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Reservations/ Contact Information	Fare	Vehicles in Fleet	Annual Ridership
	appointments (as scheduling and staffing allow).	and areas beyond depending on need						
<b>Specialized Transportation Program</b>	<b>Tuolumne County Behavioral Health Services Department:</b> Provides rides to and from appointments for behavioral health and substance use disorder services, including Crisis, Assessment & Intervention, Outpatient Mental Services	Tuolumne County	Monday to Friday , 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Clients and Medi-Cal patients only	Reservations required  (209) 533-6245  <a href="http://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/220/Behavioral-Health">www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/220/Behavioral-Health</a>	Free	N/A	N/A
<b>Specialized Transportation Program</b>	<b>Sonora VA Clinic/VA Northern California Health Care System Interfacility Shuttle Bus:</b> Provides shuttle services each weekday to transport veterans to Modesto, Stockton, and Sacramento (Mather)	Sonora, Modesto, Stockton, Mather	Monday to Friday, Departure times from Sonora OPC at 5 a.m. and at 10:15 a.m.	Veterans 18+ (for medical appointments)	Reservations required, first-come, first-serve  209-588-2636  <a href="http://www.va.gov/northern-california-health-care/programs/shuttle-bus-schedule/">www.va.gov/northern-california-health-care/programs/shuttle-bus-schedule/</a>	Free	N/A	N/A
<b>Specialized Transportation Program</b>	<b>Tuolumne County Veterans Service Office:</b> Provides door-to-door service for medical, dental, and legal appointments within and outside Tuolumne County	Tuolumne County and additional locations outside of county when required	By appointment only	Veterans (for medical, dental, and legal appointments)	Reservations required, preferably 1-2 weeks in advance  209-533-6280 or 209-459-1457 to schedule door-to-door rides  <a href="http://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/447/Veterans-Service-Office">www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/447/Veterans-Service-Office</a>	Free	One four-door sedan	N/A
<b>Selected Private Sector Transportation</b>	<b>Frontier Cab:</b> Provides private taxi services in and beyond Tuolumne County	Tuolumne County	24 hours/day, 7 days/week, except Christmas	General Public	Bookings required  209-288-2900	Based on service requested	N/A	N/A
<b>Selected Private Sector Transportation</b>	<b>Courtesy Cab:</b> Provides private taxi services in and beyond Tuolumne County	Tuolumne County	24 hours/day, 7 days/week	General Public	Bookings required 209-533-2227	Based on service requested	N/A	N/A

Service Type	Service Description	Area Served	Days and Hours of Service	Eligibility	Reservations/ Contact Information	Fare	Vehicles in Fleet	Annual Ridership
<b>Selected Private Sector Transportation</b>	<b>Mother Lode Adventure Charter Services:</b> Provides charter shuttle services to events, meetings, airports, weddings, trailheads, and custom tours	Tuolumne County	Based upon request	General Public	Bookings required 209-677-3183	Based on service requested	N/A	N/A
<b>Selected Private Sector Transportation</b>	<b>Blue Mountain Transit Charter Services:</b> Provides professional transportation services, including shuttle or van services to banquets, wedding venues, group outings, and other needs	Tuolumne County, Amador County	Based upon request	General Public	Bookings required 209-223-5300 x2	Based on service requested, including 5-hour/\$500 minimum for bookings	Vans that accommodate up to 14 passengers, shuttles that seat 6, SUV's that sit 5, vehicles that accommodate wheelchairs	N/A

# 3. Demographic Profile and Key Destinations

## Geographic Distribution of Target Populations Across the County

Bounded by Calaveras County to the northwest, Alpine County to the north, Mono County to the east, Mariposa County to the south, and Stanislaus County to the west, the large majority of Tuolumne County consists of protected federal lands. These protected areas include the Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite National Park, both of which generate significant tourism, particularly in the summer peak season. Given the large portion of the county covered by these areas, most of the county’s roughly 55,000 residents reside in the southwest area of the county. This demographic distribution, coupled with the limited road network in the region, highlights the importance of continuing to build out a comprehensive, multimodal transit network that can serve residents in both more developed towns like Sonora and Jamestown as well as more rural communities that are harder-to-serve with traditional bus service.

## County Population Overview

**Table 2** below provides a summary of key demographic information pertaining to the Plan’s target populations. 5-Year Estimates from 2017 and 5-Year Estimates from 2023 in Tuolumne County from the American Community Survey (ACS) are compared alongside California statewide 5-Year Estimates from 2023.

**Table 2.** Coordinated Plan Target Population Groups and Demographics

<b>Coordinated Plan Target Populations in Tuolumne County</b>							
Seniors, Persons with Disabilities, Persons of Low Income, and Military Veterans							
Target Populations	American Community Survey 2013-2017, 5-Year Estimates		American Community Survey 2019 - 2023, 5-Year Estimates				
	Tuolumne County Estimates		Tuolumne County Estimates			Statewide Comparison	
	2017 5-Year County Estimate	% of Total County	2023 5-Year County Estimate	% of Total County	% Change 2017 - 2023	2023 5-Year California Estimate	% of Total State of California
<b>Total Population Estimate<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>53,899</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>54,873</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>38,421,464</b>	<b>100%</b>
Median Age <sup>6</sup>	48.6		48.8			35.8	
<b>Children and Youth Ages 0 - 17</b>	<b>9,047</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>9,428</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>8,722,158</b>	<b>22.7%</b>
Children with a Disability, Ages 5 - 17 <sup>7</sup>	396		524			317,879	0.8%
<i>% of Children Age 17 and under</i>	4.4%		5.5%			3.6%	
Children Living in Poverty Age 17 and under <sup>8</sup>	1,235	2.3%	912	1.6%		1,207,791	3.1%
<i>% of Children Age 17 and under</i>	13.7%		9.7%			13.8%	
<b>Adults 18-64<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>31,878</b>	<b>59.1%</b>	<b>27,812</b>	<b>50.7%</b>	<b>-12.8%</b>	<b>24,049,202</b>	<b>62.6%</b>
Low-income Adults, Ages 18-64, Below 100% Federal Poverty Threshold	4,435	8.2%	3,515	6.4%	-20.7%	2,642,887	6.9%
<i>% of Adults 18-64</i>	13.9%		12.6%			11.0%	
Disability (non-institutionalized) Ages 18-64	4,856	9.0%	4,792	8.7%	-1.3%	2,071,682	5.4%
<i>% of Adults 18-64</i>	15.2%		17.2%			8.6%	
<b>Seniors</b>	<b>12,974</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>15,199</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>5,994,486</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
Seniors, ages 65-74	7,578		9,088		19.9%	3,534,613	
<i>% of all Seniors 65+</i>	58.4%		59.8%			59%	
Seniors, ages 75-84	3,848		4,328		12.5%	1,721,957	
<i>% of all Seniors 65+</i>	29.7%		28.5%			28.7%	
Seniors, ages 85+	1,548		1,783		15.2%	737,916	
<i>% of all Seniors 65+</i>	11.9%		11.7%			12.3%	
Low-Income Seniors, Ages 65+,	<b>1,205</b>	2.2%	<b>1,120</b>	2.0%	-7.1%	666,273	

<sup>5</sup> B01001 Sex by Age, 2017 & 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>6</sup> B01002 Median Age by Sex, 2017 & 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>7</sup> S1810 Disability Characteristics, 2017 & 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>8</sup> S1701 Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2017 & 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>9</sup> S0101 Age and Sex, 2017 & 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Coordinated Plan Target Populations in Tuolumne County

Seniors, Persons with Disabilities, Persons of Low Income, and Military Veterans

Target Populations	American Community Survey 2013-2017, 5-Year Estimates		American Community Survey 2019 - 2023, 5-Year Estimates				
	Tuolumne County Estimates		Tuolumne County Estimates			Statewide Comparison	
	2017 5-Year County Estimate	% of Total County	2023 5-Year County Estimate	% of Total County	% Change 2017 - 2023	2023 5-Year California Estimate	% of Total State of California
Below 100% Federal Poverty Threshold							
<i>% of Senior Population</i>	9.3%		7.0%			11.3%	
<b>Veterans<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>4,938</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>4,713</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>-4.6%</b>	<b>1,355,918</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
Civilian Population 18 years and over	44,852	83.2%	45,445	82.8%		30,352,355	79%
Veterans' Period of Service							
Gulf War (9/2001 or later) veterans	458		729			338,127	
Gulf War (8/1990 to 2001) veterans	459		737			278,038	
Vietnam era veterans	2,259		1,969			463,517	
Korean War veterans	675		363			83,083	
World War II veterans	329		112			23,381	
Veteran population unemployment rate	N/A		N/A			5.6%	
Veteran population with income in the past 12 months below poverty level	480		250			103,809	
<i>% of Veteran Population</i>	9.7%		5.3%			7.7%	
<b>Income<sup>11</sup></b>							
Median Household Income	\$60,636		\$72,259		19.2%	\$96,334	
Per Capita Income - past 12 months	\$29,628		\$42,952			\$81,255	
Total Persons in Poverty	6,875		5,547		-19.3%	4,610,600	
<i>% of Population</i>	12.7%		10.1%			12.0%	
Persons age 16+ below 150% Poverty Level	10,988		9,379		-14.6%	7,554,796	
<i>% of Population Age 16+</i>	23.9%		20.2%			23.9%	

<sup>10</sup> S2101 Veteran Status, 2017 & 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>11</sup> S1901 Income in the Past 12 Months, 2017 & 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Coordinated Plan Target Populations in Tuolumne County

Seniors, Persons with Disabilities, Persons of Low Income, and Military Veterans

Target Populations	American Community Survey 2013-2017, 5-Year Estimates		American Community Survey 2019 - 2023, 5-Year Estimates				
	Tuolumne County Estimates		Tuolumne County Estimates			Statewide Comparison	
	2017 5-Year County Estimate	% of Total County	2023 5-Year County Estimate	% of Total County	% Change 2017 - 2023	2023 5-Year California Estimate	% of Total State of California
<b>Employment<sup>12</sup></b>							
Population 16 years and over	46,043		46,375		0.7%	31,545,603	
Population 16 years and over employed	20,397	44.3%	21,054	45.4%	3.2%	18,706,543	59.3%
Population 16 years and over in labor force	22,147	48.1%	22,863	49.3%	3.2%	20,157,640	63.9%
Population 16+ unemployment rate	7.9%		7.9%		0%	6.4%	

### Overall Tuolumne County Demographic Changes

This section compares demographic analysis of target populations for the Coordinated Plan from 2017, the period reported from the ACS datasets from the 2020 SRTP/Coordinated Plan, and in 2023, using the most recent equivalent datasets available. Key demographic changes occurring over the period between 2017 and 2023 include:

- **The overall County population grew** by 1.8% over the past five years, an increase of just under 1,000 people. This increase represents a reversal compared to the period between the years of 2012 and 2017, which saw a decrease of 2.4% of the population.
- **Children and youth (ages 17 and under) population increased** by roughly 4.2% from 2017 to 2023, which is a reversal from the previous decline of 5.9% in children and youth population between 2012 and 2017 observed by TCTA's previous SRTP/Coordinated Plan. The share of the children/youth population in the County is lower than that the average for the state of California, 22.7% of which is age 17 and under.
- **Population of working-aged adults, or adults aged 18-64, decreased** by 12.8%, which is almost double the rate of this population's decline between 2012 and 2017 (6.7% decline). The proportion of working-aged adults in the county is significantly lower than that in the state of California (50.7% vs. 62.6%, respectively).
- **People with disabilities** includes 5.5% of children aged 17 and under and 17.2% of working-age adults, both representing increases from the share of the population with

<sup>12</sup> S2301 Employment Status, 2017 & 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

disabilities in 2017. Shares of both children and working-age adults with disabilities are each well above the respective statewide averages of 3.6% and 8.6%, respectively.

- **Older adult population increased** by 17.1% overall, accounting for 27.7% of the County population. This is nearly twice the proportion of older adults in the state of California as a whole (15.6%). The relative increase in older adults in the county resulted in a slight increase in the median age in the county from 48.6 to 48.8 years.
- **Veteran population decreased** from 9.2% of the County population in 2017 to 8.6% of the county population in 2023. However, with this share, the County is still home to more than double the proportion of the state's population that are veterans (3.5%).

## Income

Demographic data related to income demonstrate declines in low-income households among children, working-aged adults, and older adults (65+), with low income defined as household incomes at or below 100% of federal poverty guidelines. Key patterns related to the low-income population include:

- **Total persons in poverty declined** by 19.3% over the years from 2017 to 2023, with 10.1% of Tuolumne County residents in poverty as of 2023. This share is about 20% smaller than the statewide average of 12%.
- **Rates of children in poverty declined** from 13.7% in 2017 to 9.7% of children in 2023. This is significantly lower than the percent of children living in poverty in the state of California as a whole (13.8%).
- **Working-age adults (ages 18-64) in poverty declined** by around 20.7% in the years from 2017 to 2023, an increased rate of decline relative to the decrease of 1.6% from 2012 to 2017. The percentage of working-age adults in poverty in the county (12.6%) is slightly above that of the state of California (11%).
- **Older adults in poverty decreased** by 7.1% from 2017 to 2023, representing around 7% of the County's older adult population, a share well below the statewide share of older adults in poverty (11.3%).
- **Roughly 5.3% of veterans are living in poverty** as of 2023, lower than the rates of children, working-age adults, and older adults living in poverty in the county. This share represents a 48% decline in total veterans living in poverty between the year 2017 and 2023.
- **The median household income increased** by 19.2% from \$60,636 in 2017 to \$72,259 in 2023. This is still significantly lower than the state median income of \$96,334.

## Employment

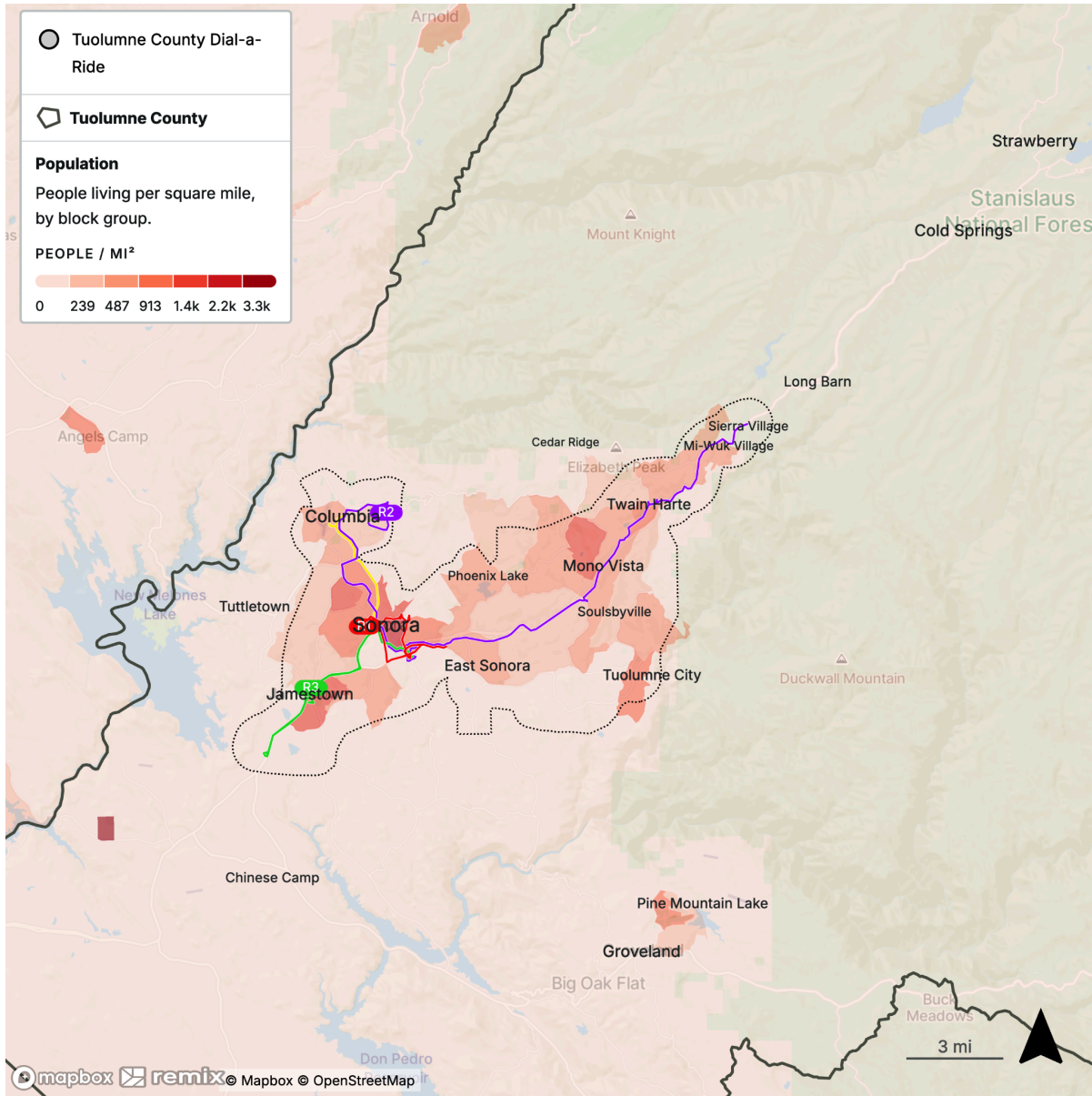
Both the total number of residents aged 16 years and over that are employed and that are in the labor force increased by 3.2%, respectively, from 2017 to 2023. The County's 2023 share of the 16+ population in the labor force, 49.3%, is well below the state average of 63.9% due to the significantly greater share of (non-working-age) older adults living in the County. The

unemployment rate of 7.9% in Tuolumne County is higher than that of the state of California, which is around 6.4%. County unemployment rates have not changed from 2017 to 2023, indicating a return to previous levels of unemployment after unemployment rates increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Population Density

Population density across the 2,275-square-mile County is around 24 people per square mile. Most of the county's population resides in towns like Sonora (1,100 people per square mile), Jamestown (1,030 people per square), Columbia (370 people per square mile), Mono Vista, and Tuolumne City, as shown in **Figure 1** below. The most densely populated areas of the County are linked through the existing bus network, though routes operate at low frequencies of 60 to 190 minutes on weekdays.

**Figure 1. Population Density in Tuolumne County**



## Employment Density

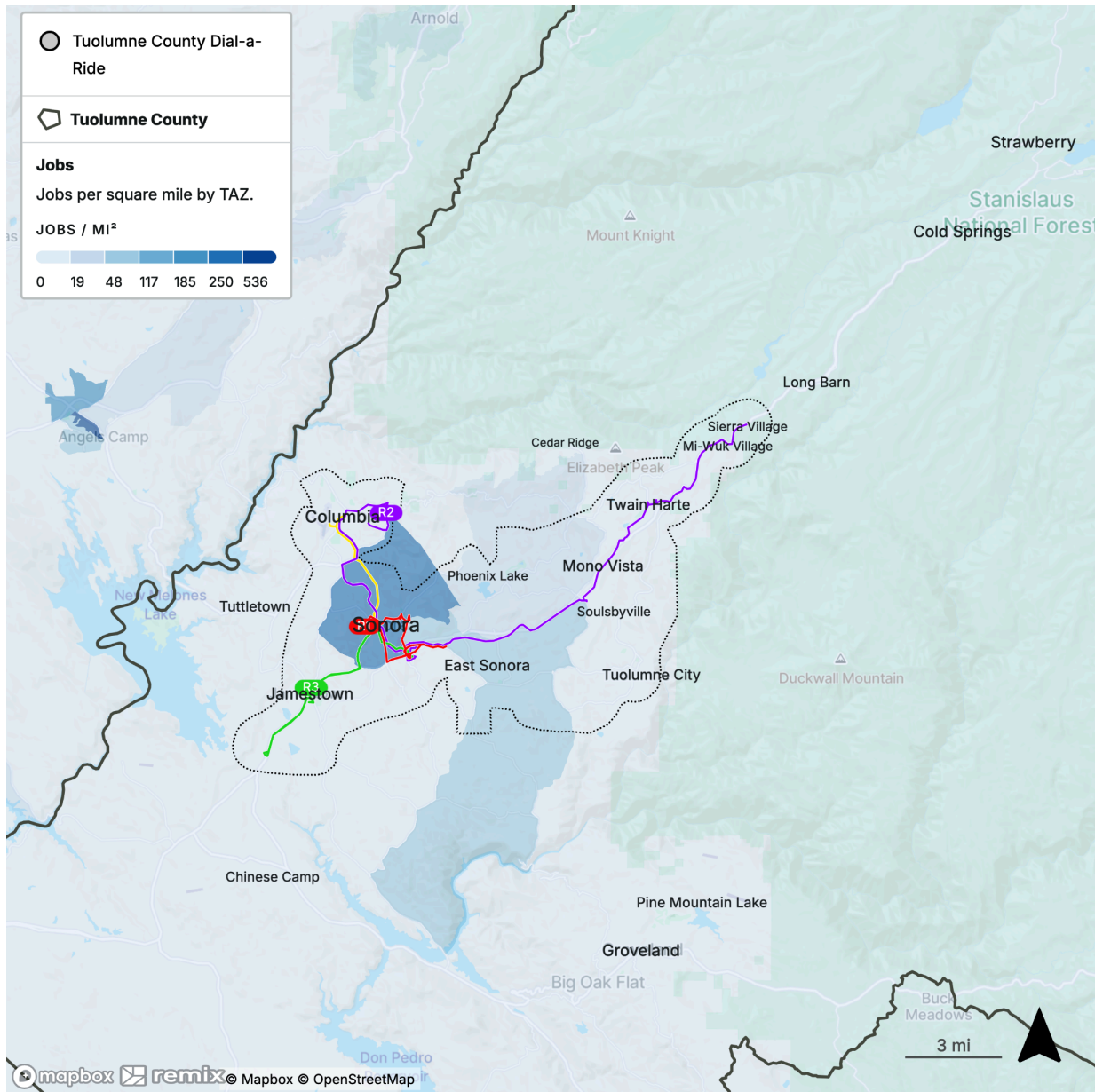
Tuolumne County has around 16,000 jobs as of 2021, with an employment density of roughly seven jobs per square mile. The largest employment sectors are in the tourism, healthcare, education, manufacturing, forestry, and retail industries. Large employers include:

- Adventist Health Sonora
- Black Oak Casino
- Chicken Ranch Casino
- Columbia College
- Hetch Hetchy Water & Power

- Lair of the Golden Bear campground
- Local retailers in Sonora (e.g. Walmart, Safeway, Save Mart, Kohl's, Lowe's)
- Local school districts (e.g. Jamestown School District, Sonora School District)
- Sierra Conservation Center (corrections center, home to more than 4,000 inmates)
- Sierra Pacific Industries
- Tuolumne County government agencies
- US Forest Service

Sonora is the main employment center in Tuolumne County, home to around 3,800 jobs or about one quarter (24%) of the county's total employment. About 30% of jobs in the county are within standard walking distance, or within a quarter-mile radius, of the nearest fixed-route bus stop.

**Figure 2.** Employment Density in Tuolumne County

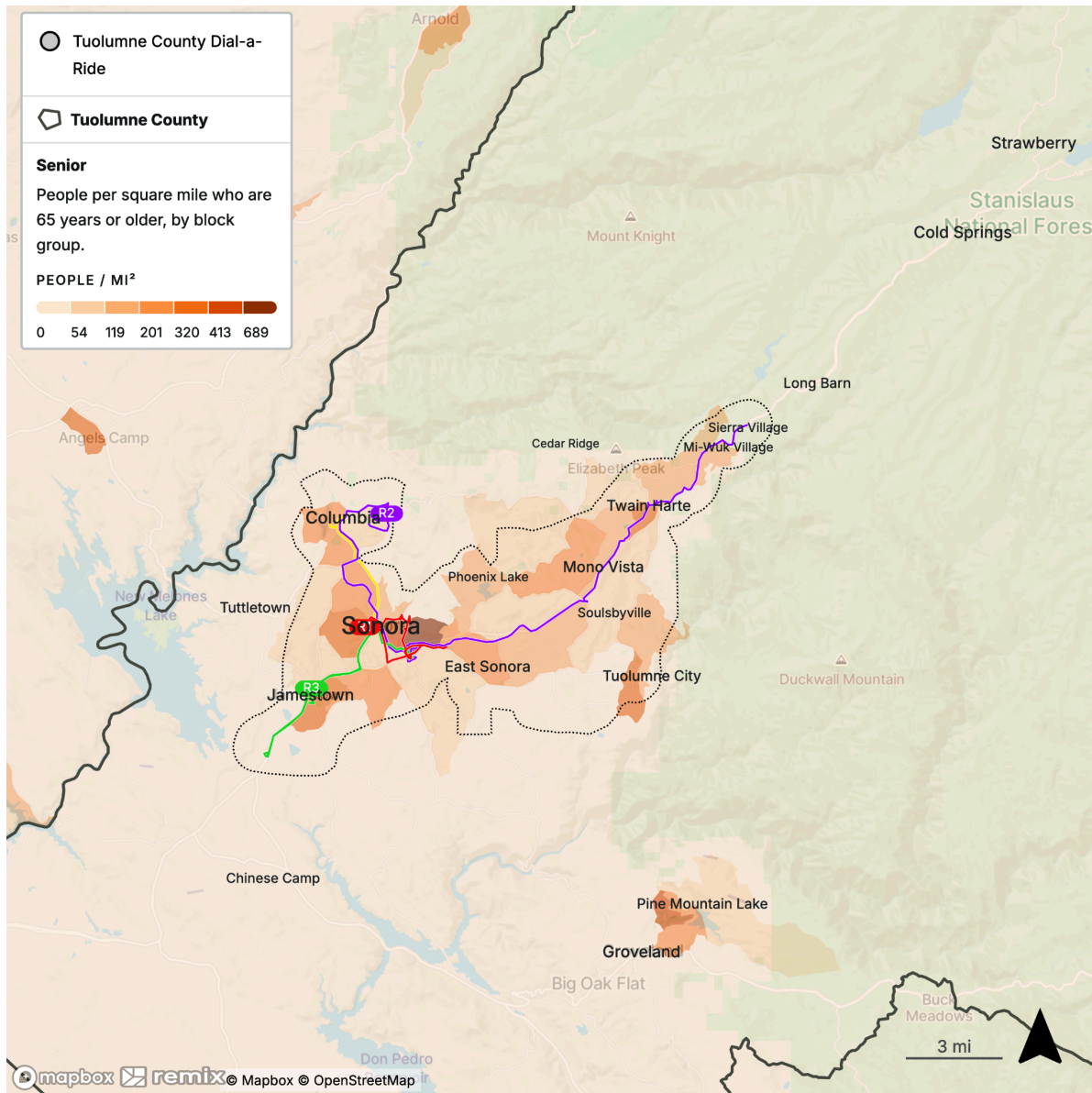


## Older Adults (Aged 65+)

Older adults typically ride public transit at higher rates relative to the general public, as they experience higher rates of mobility impairments that limit their ability to drive. Older adults comprise a significant portion of Tuolumne County population (roughly 28% of the population). The population of older adults has continued to increase over the last several years, with the percentage of older adults in the county now roughly double the percentage of older adults in California. This trend is largely attributed to the aging Baby Boomer cohort living in the region. The density of older adults in the county mirrors general population trends, with the highest density of older adults residing in Sonora. Relative to general population density, however, the density of

older adults is lower in more rural areas that are not as close to central Sonora, such as northeastern communities like Twain Harte and Mi-Wuk Village.

**Figure 3.** Older Adult Population Density in Tuolumne County

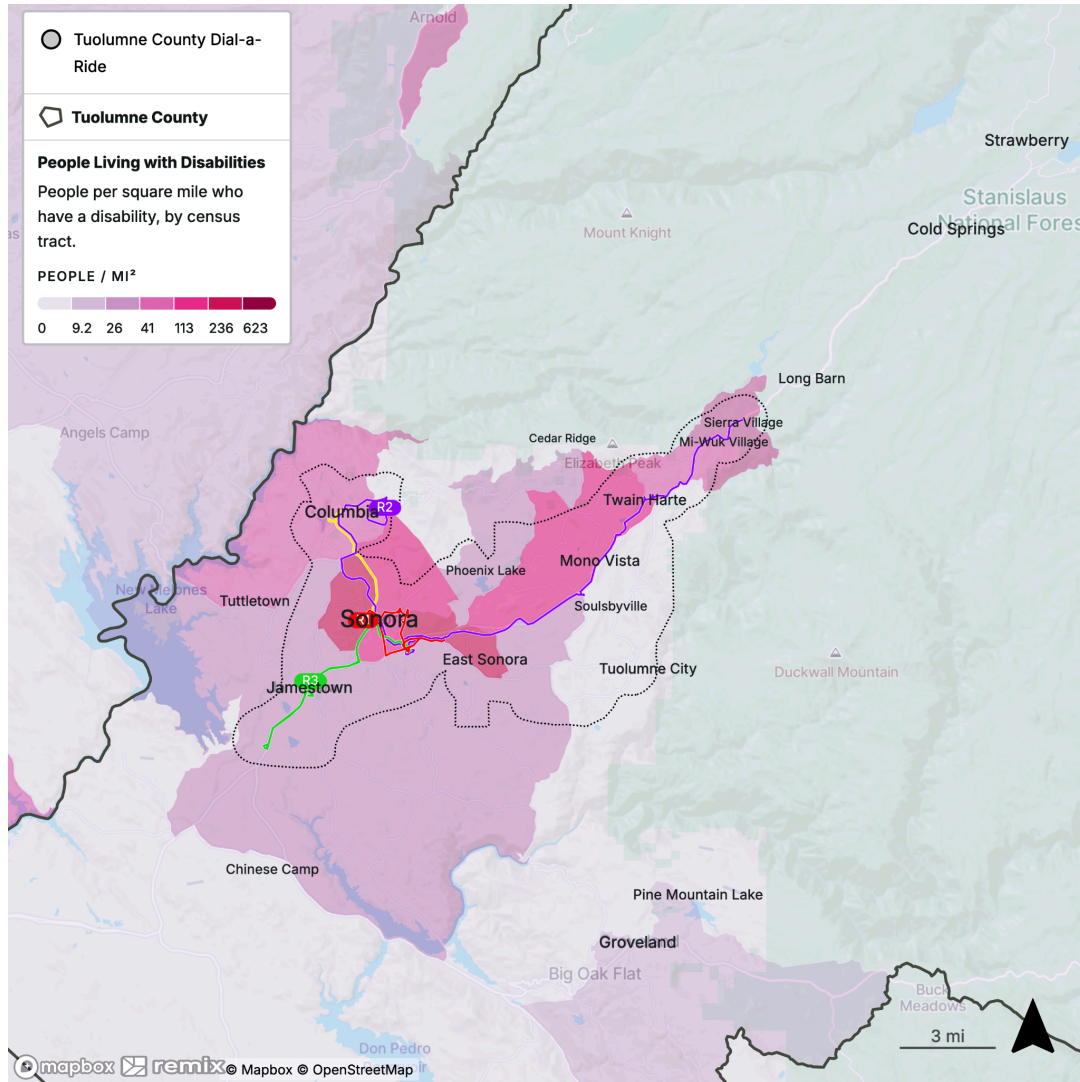


## People with Disabilities

The US Census defines disability status by whether an individual has limitations that hinder participation at school, work, home, or in the community more broadly. People living with disabilities tend to rely heavily on public transit, as the nature of many disabilities limits one’s ability to drive a private vehicle. Around 21% of Tuolumne County residents are living with disabilities, which is nearly double the statewide average. The density of people with disabilities is highest overall along SR-49 and SR-108, some of the more populated areas of the County. Around 66% of

Tuolumne County residents that are living with disabilities live within the Dial-a-Ride service area, which is somewhat below the share of all County residents living within the zone (72%). This pattern indicates that residents living in more remote areas outside the zone have higher rates of disability status compared to the county average. Further, 14% of residents with disabilities in the county live within a quarter-mile of a bus stop. While a majority of county residents have access to some form of public transportation, significant mobility gaps remain particularly for those with disabilities living outside of the Dial-A-Ride area.

**Figure 4. People Living with Disabilities in Tuolumne County**



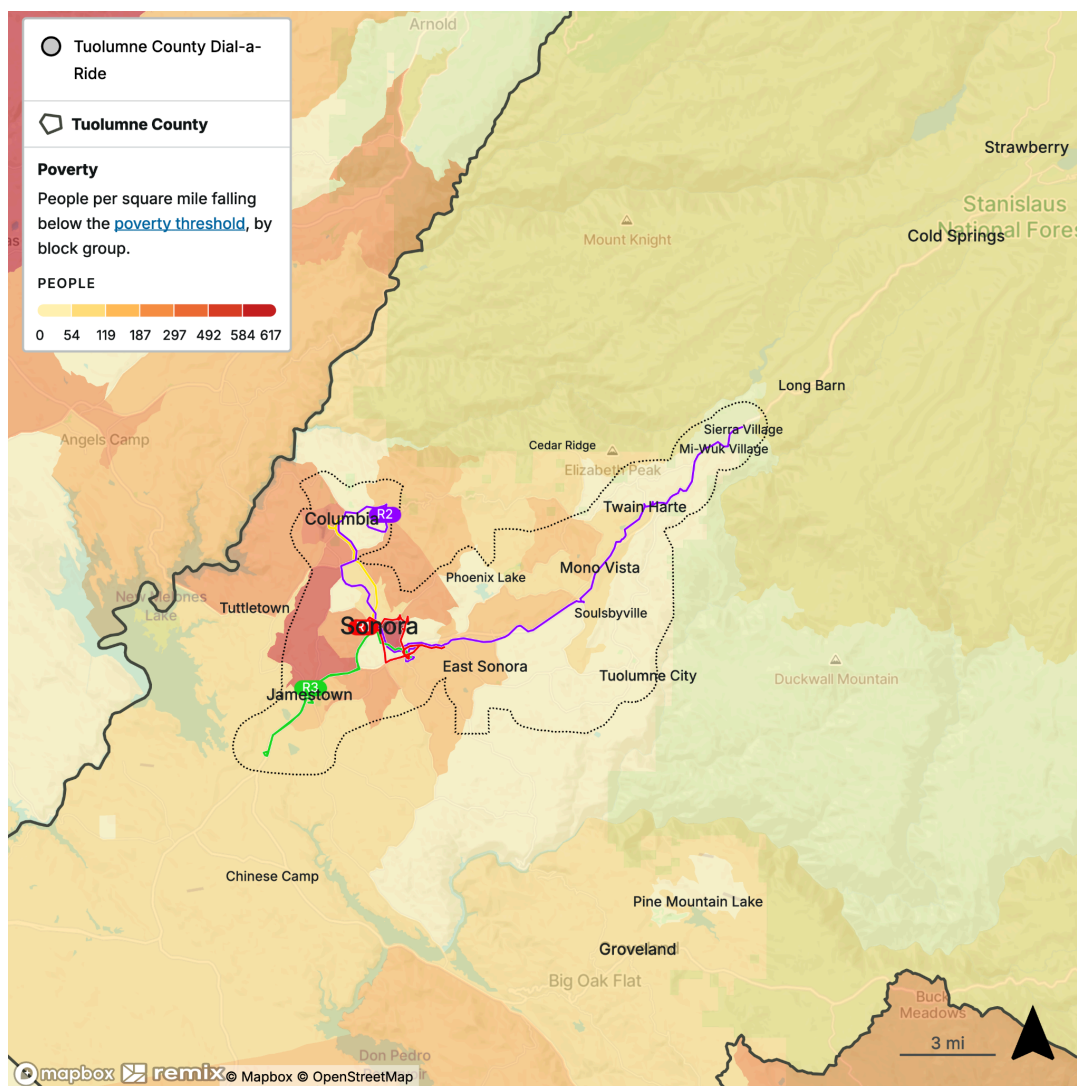
## People Living Below the Poverty Line

Low-income residents tend to be more likely to use public transportation than the general public because the significant cost of buying and maintaining a private vehicle is often burdensome for low-income households. While there are relatively few car-free households in Tuolumne County (about 1,100 or 5% of all households), larger shares of residents live near or below the federal

poverty level and face transportation cost burdens. According to the ACS 2023 Five-Year Estimates, around 10% of Tuolumne County residents were considered below the poverty line as of 2023, which is lower than the state of California as a whole (12%). About one in five county residents (20%) live within 150% of the federal poverty threshold, a common threshold used by social service agencies to determine financial need.

Sonora and its immediate surrounding areas have the highest density of residents living below the poverty line (295 people per square mile). About 18% of people living below the poverty line in the county are within walking distance of fixed-route service, indicating a need for more robust transit options to serve low-income residents in the county.

**Figure 5. People Living Under the Poverty Line in Tuolumne County**

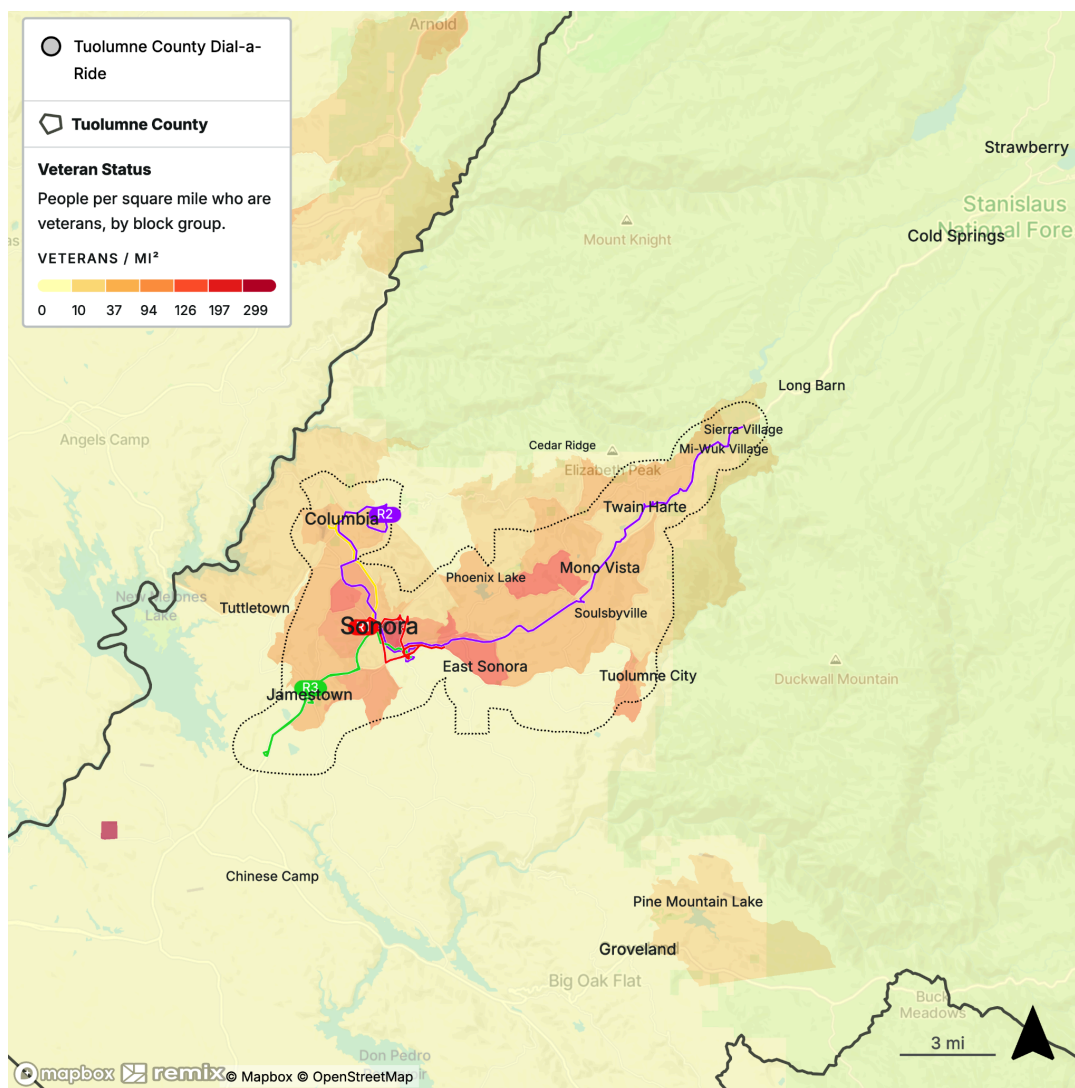


## Veterans

Roughly 9% of Tuolumne County residents are veterans, double the 4-5% statewide average. Density of veterans in the county is highest in the central Sonora region, with veteran density

patterns largely similar to those of the general population. A majority of veterans in the County (52%) are 70 years of age or older, having served in the Vietnam era or earlier wars.

**Figure 6. Veterans in Tuolumne County**



## Access to Transit Among Target Population Groups

The percent of target population groups that have access to existing transit options is an important indicator of the level of coverage that current transit service offers. As shown in Table 3 below, the majority of target population groups are covered by the Dial-a-Ride service area, but the large majority of target population groups are not within walking distance of a fixed-route bus stop, indicating gaps in frequent and conveniently-located and same-day transit service.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Dial-a-Ride service requires reservations the day before travel, with same-day ride requests served on a space-available basis.

**Table 3.** Target Population Access to Transit

Description	Population	Percent within walking distance (quarter-mile) of a bus stop	Percent within the Dial-a-Ride service area	Percent outside the Dial-a-Ride service area
Population	55,000	12%	63%	37%
Employment	16,000	30%	70%	30%
Older Adults (Aged 65+)	15,000	12%	63%	37%
People with Disabilities	12,000	14%	66%	34%
People Living in Poverty	6,000	18%	57%	43%
Veterans	5,000	12%	63%	37%

## Key Destinations

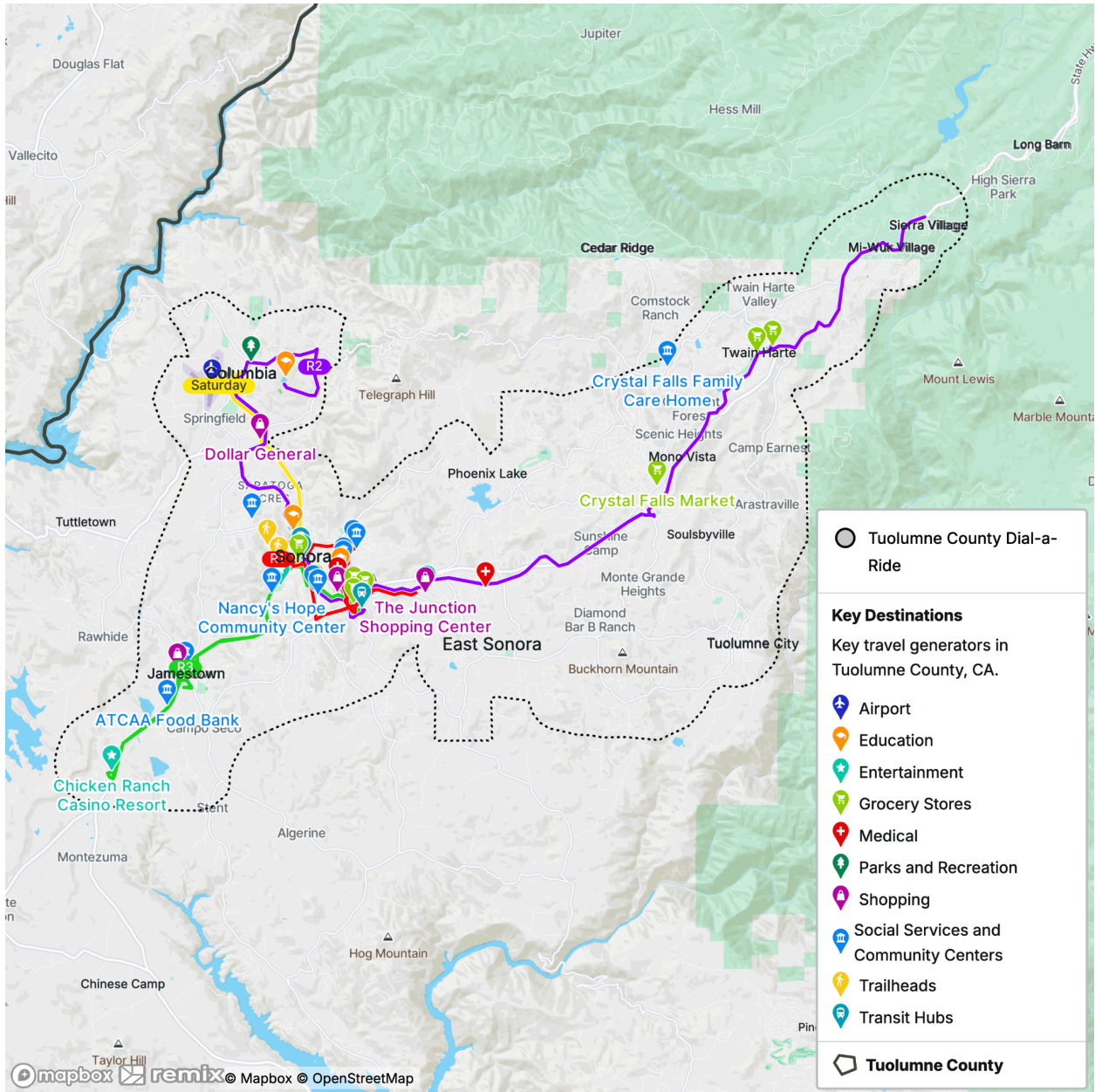
In addition to the county's socioeconomic characteristics, the project team has also evaluated and mapped key activity centers that currently generate and attract transit ridership, as well as those that have potential to generate and attract ridership in the future. The density and spatial distribution of key activity centers is highly relevant, as these locations often serve as important destinations within a public transit network. Ensuring that residents have access to these key destinations and resources is a primary goal of public transit in the region. **Table 4** and **Figures 7** and **8** below show an overview of the key activity centers in Tuolumne County and their mapped locations.

**Table 4.** Key Destinations in Tuolumne County, by municipality and type

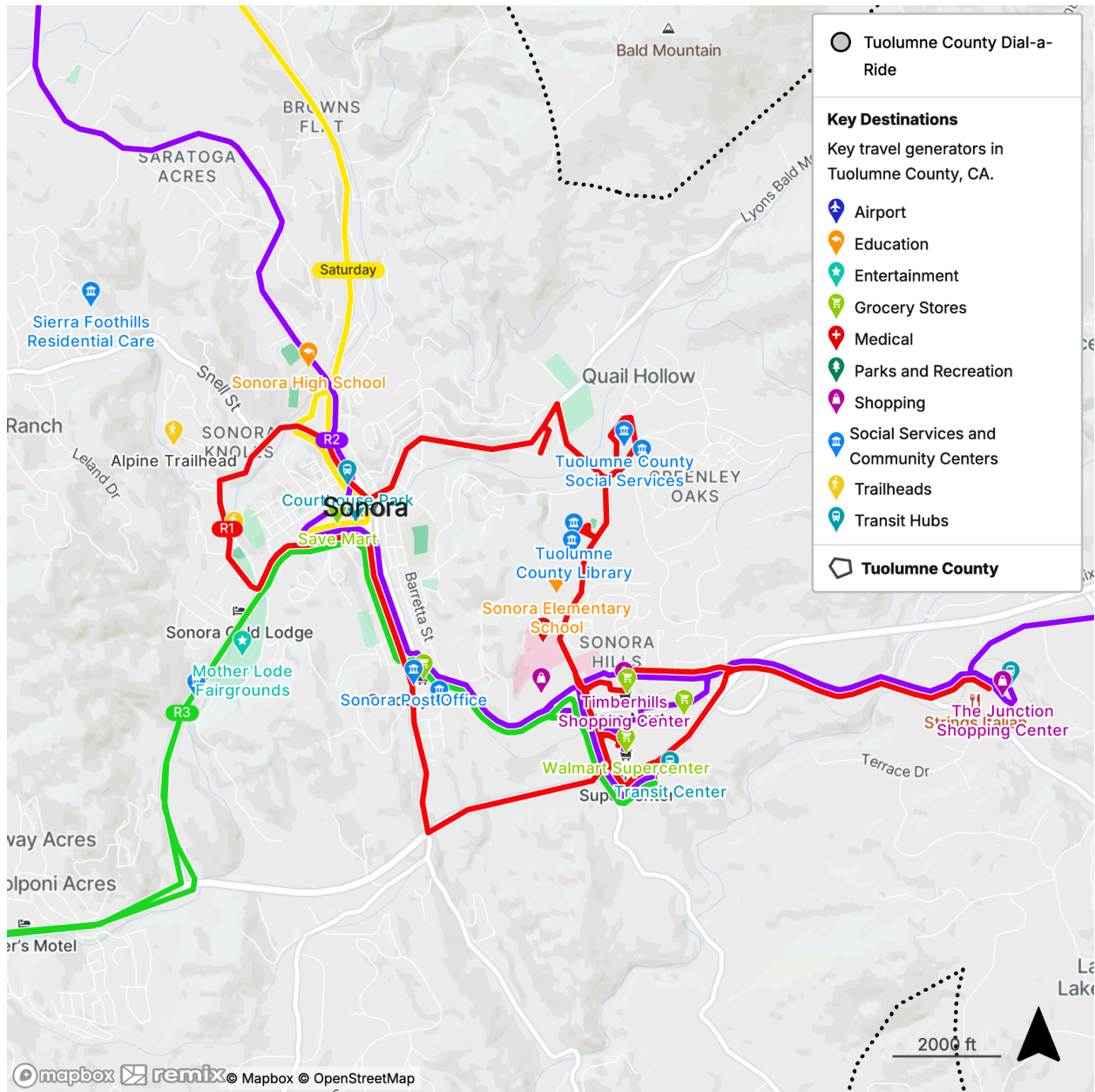
Name	Municipality / Community	Type
7-Eleven	Twain Harte	Grocery Stores
Adventist Health Sonora	Sonora	Medical
Alpine Trailhead	Sonora	Trailheads
ATCAA Food Bank	Jamestown	Social Services and Community Centers
Chicken Ranch Casino Resort	Jamestown	Entertainment
Columbia Airport	Columbia	Airport
Columbia College	Sonora	Education
Columbia State Historic Park	Columbia	Parks and Recreation
Courthouse Park	Sonora	Transit Hubs
Crystal Falls Family Care Home	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers
Crystal Falls Market	Mono Vista	Grocery Stores
Dodge Ridge Mountain Resort	Pinecrest	Parks and Recreation
Dollar General	Jamestown	Shopping
Dollar General	Sonora	Shopping
Dragoon Gulch Trail Head	Sonora	Trailheads
Grocery Outlet	Sonora	Grocery Stores
Heart 2 Heart Home Health Services	Sonora	Medical
Hotel Lumberjack	Sonora	Transit Hubs
Jamestown Post Office	Jamestown	Social Services and Community Centers
Junction Shopping Center (TJ Maxx)	Sonora	Transit Hubs

Name	Municipality / Community	Type
Mother Lode Fairgrounds	Sonora	Entertainment
Nancy's Hope Community Center	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers
Safeway	Sonora	Grocery Stores
Save Mart	Sonora	Grocery Stores
Save Mart	Sonora	Grocery Stores
Sierra Foothills Residential Care	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers
Sonora Elementary School	Sonora	Education
Sonora High School	Sonora	Education
Sonora Plaza Shopping Center	Sonora	Shopping
Sonora Post Office	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers
Sonora Senior Center	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers
The Junction Shopping Center	Sonora	Shopping
Timberhills Shopping Center	Sonora	Shopping
Transit Center	Sonora	Transit Hubs
Tuolumne County Library	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers
Tuolumne County Social Services	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers
Tuolumne County Veterans Services	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers
Twain Harte Market	Twain Harte	Grocery Stores
Walmart Supercenter	Sonora	Grocery Stores
WATCH Resources Inc.	Sonora	Social Services and Community Centers

**Figure 7. Key Destinations in Tuolumne County**



**Figure 8. Key Destinations, Sonora Inset**



All key destinations are covered by either fixed-route transit or Dial-a-Ride service, but several are only accessible via Dial-a-Ride service, with no fixed-route service available within walking distance. Dial-a-Ride service is likely sufficient to serve these destinations most of the time or in periods of low demand, but there may be peak periods, particularly during peak commuting hours, in which demand for rides exceeds available Dial-a-Ride seats. Other times, inclement weather may result in slowed service and, therefore, reduce capacity for existing transit service to meet demand. Additionally, rides must be prebooked on Dial-a-Ride service, making it more difficult to reach locations that are not in close proximity to fixed-route service when travel is more spontaneous.

In addition to the current key destinations that generate travel in Tuolumne County, three large affordable and market-rate housing developments are planned in the future, likely generating additional travel demand in the region:

- The Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians plans to build a 200-unit affordable project in three phases: 30 single-family rental homes, followed by another phase of 30 single-family homes, and a third phase with 140 apartment units and an 1,800-square-foot community center with a parking lot, half basketball court and a playground on the Westside property. The first phase is expected to be complete by December 2026.
- The Tribe is also in planning and redevelopment stages to build a 100-unit apartment complex off Tuolumne Road North, behind the vacant Tuolumne Market, for the public to rent, and an assisted living facility for elderly tenants in the same area.
- A separate 239-home affordable housing subdivision in Jamestown, Valley Vista, is also being developed. The development is located on Golf Links Road off of Golden Chain Highway and consists of a combination of single-family homes and age-restricted units.

## 4. Mobility Needs and Gaps

Mobility needs and gaps must be identified to foster strong collaboration among public transit agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community partners. This collaboration is needed to pave the way for a more coordinated, accessible, and responsive transportation network. This report uses the following methods for identifying Tuolumne County's current mobility needs and service gaps:

- Reviewing progress made since the 2020 Coordinated Plan and determining which needs remain unmet.
- Incorporating insights gathered through outreach conducted during the planning process—such as stakeholder interviews, community surveys, comment cards, and public meetings.
- Assessing the transportation needs of priority populations. These include:
  - Understanding the role of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) services provided by Medi-Cal and managed by ModivCare (which formerly operated as LogistiCare).
  - Organizing needs and gaps by trip purpose (medical, work or school, or shopping or other) and by population group (seniors, people with disabilities, low-income individuals, veterans, and tribal communities), and evaluating how well existing transportation resources identified in Chapter 2 address those needs for the affected population groups.
- Discussing the mobility gaps and needs, and how they inform the Coordinated Plan's recommended goals and strategies.

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of each method, detailing how they are applied and the insights they yield. Understanding these current mobility needs and service gaps is essential for shaping effective transportation solutions for older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, veterans, and tribal communities. These findings serve as the foundation for the recommended goals, strategies, and priorities presented in [Chapter 5](#).

## Progress Since the 2020 Coordinated Plan

The 2020 Coordinated Plan established five goals along with corresponding strategies and projects. In most cases, funding to implement these strategies becomes available only after competitive applications are submitted and awarded, or when staff capacity allows recommendations to advance through coordination efforts. **Tables 5-9** provide a summary of the 2020 recommendations and the actions taken since then.

### Summary of Actions Taken to Implement 2020 Coordinated Plan

#### **Goal 1 - Robust, Responsive Public Transit System:**

Continue to build a sustainable, responsive public transportation system for travelers in Tuolumne County.

**Table 5.** Recommended Strategies and Actions Taken for Goal 1

Number	Recommended Strategy	Actions Taken
1.1	<p><b>Towards growing ridership, develop Tuolumne Transit service improvements to frequency, hours, days of service and transfer timing within the system to improve riders' experience.</b></p>	<p>To enhance rider experience, TCT implemented several service improvements focused on increasing frequency, expanding service hours and days, and improving transfer coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In June 2025, TCT introduced the Saturday Columbia/Sonora Route, providing 45-minute headways between 8:00 AM and 1:45 PM to address weekend service gaps.</li> <li>• Weekday routes now operate from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM, offering longer service spans, with Routes 1 and 3 maintaining 60-minute headways and Route 2 continuing to serve rural areas with extended travel times.</li> <li>• Timed transfers between Routes 1, 2, and 3 at key hubs such as Hotel Lumberjack and Walmart were established to reduce wait times and improve connectivity.</li> <li>• Additional route realignments—such as Route 2 serving Hotel Lumberjack and Columbia State Park and Route 3 terminating at Crossroads Shopping Center—were made to better match rider demand.</li> </ul>

1.2	<b>Expand use of general public, on demand services – with app-based capabilities – to meet transportation needs in low-density areas, such as Phoenix Lake, Jamestown, and Tuolumne City.</b>	TCT expanded the use of general public, on-demand services to better serve low-density areas such as Phoenix Lake, Jamestown, and Tuolumne City by converting its Dial-a-Ride program from a seniors-and-ADA-only service to a general public demand-response option. Covering a 75-square-mile area, this service provides mobility where fixed-route coverage is limited or unavailable. To modernize access and improve convenience, TCT introduced a mobile app in late 2024, enabling riders to book trips digitally and track vehicles in real time, complementing traditional phone reservations. Although mobile app adoption remains low, the technology upgrade—along with enhanced scheduling and dispatch systems—has improved efficiency and reduced wait times. Riders can reserve trips up to 14 days in advance for ADA-eligible passengers and 7 days for the general public, with same-day service offered as capacity allows.
1.3	<b>Evaluate Columbia College schedules to improve enrolled students’ ability to take more classes, while maintaining good connectivity with Calaveras Connect buses.</b>	This recommended strategy was not implemented.
1.4	<b>Explore and develop intercity linkage to Oakdale and/or Modesto to support access to regional medical and shopping and to inter-city bus and rail services.</b>	While this recommended strategy was explored in FY23, SB125 funding was redirected to other projects, and the strategy was not implemented.
1.5	<b>Strengthen and extend customer-facing technology tools to support riders in making transit easy and building ridership.</b>	While TCTA has begun to strengthen customer-facing technology tools, particularly for Dial-a-Ride, these tools are still emerging, lightly used, and have not yet fully realized their potential to either make transit more convenient or measurably build ridership.
1.6	<b>Secure additional funding, including new and discretionary funding sources to support transit operations.</b>	TCTA has secured new discretionary funding (SB 125) and is actively leveraging and pursuing additional funds to support transit operations, service innovation, and system modernization. TCTA was awarded approximately \$1.96 million in FY 2025 under SB 125 to support both operational and capital enhancements, including the SRTP update, new Dial-a-Ride scheduling technology, vanpool expansion, zero-emission bus purchases, and preparation of a Zero-Emission Transit Plan. TCTA is also proposing an additional ~\$2.0 million for service

		innovation and expansion, including a microtransit pilot, Tuolumne City fixed-route expansion, and fleet replacement/modernization.
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**Goal 2 - Sustainable Partnerships to Address Isolated Communities and Out-of-County Trip Needs:**

Develop effective, sustainable partnerships for pilot services that meet mobility needs of residents living in isolated communities and/or traveling out-of-county, including for medical purposes.

**Table 6.** Recommended Strategies and Actions Taken for Goal 2

Number	Recommended Strategy	Actions Taken
2.1	<p><b>Strengthen or establish partnerships to develop pilots and innovative mobility responses for isolated communities or for longer distance trip needs, addressing operating and capital requirements.</b></p>	<p>Partnerships were strengthened or established in the following ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Golden Years Transit:</b> Launched in partnership with the Area 12 Agency on Aging, this program provides fare-free nonemergency medical transportation for older adults and shares vehicles with Dial-a-Ride—addressing both operating efficiency and capital constraints</li> <li>● <b>SkiBus:</b> Seasonal service to Dodge Ridge Ski Resort reflects collaboration with regional destinations to meet longer-distance, seasonal travel needs without year-round operating commitments</li> <li>● <b>YARTS (Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System):</b> TCTA coordinates with YARTS to provide seasonal long-distance regional service, addressing tourism-driven and out-of-county travel needs that TCT could not efficiently serve alone</li> <li>● <b>Calaveras Connect coordination:</b> Prior fixed-route service to Columbia College enabled transfers to Calaveras Connect, reflecting inter-county coordination to support regional mobility</li> <li>● <b>TRIP Mileage Reimbursement Program:</b> This program relies on partnerships with community members and social service networks to serve isolated residents needing long-distance trips that fixed-route or Dial-a-Ride cannot accommodate. The program logged over 18,000 miles in eight months, and it remains an important mobility option for trips that cannot be cost-effectively</li> </ul>

		served by TCT through other means.
2.2	<b>Expand TCT’s implemented mileage reimbursement TRIP program for both individuals and agencies to support cost-effective lifeline service for medical trip needs.</b>	TCTA continues to operate and rely on the TRIP reimbursement program as a cost-effective lifeline service, including for medical trips. However, the program was not expanded, either for individuals or for agencies.
2.3	<b>Research and develop strategies to improve the capacity and cost-effectiveness of human service transportation-providing organizations.</b>	TCTA participated in and relied on the 2020 Coordinated Plan, which assessed the capacity, gaps, and sustainability challenges of human-service transportation providers (public, nonprofit, and private). In particular, TCTA implemented Golden Years Transit (in partnership with the Area 12 Agency on Aging), demonstrating a strategy of vehicle sharing and operational integration with Dial-a-Ride to expand service while controlling capital and operating costs.

**Goal 3 - Active and Integrated Transportation Information:**

Utilize the mobility management function to establish an active and integrated transportation information network to increase awareness and use of available public transit and human service transportation options.

**Table 7.** Recommended Strategies and Actions Taken for Goal 3

Number	Recommended Strategy	Actions Taken
3.1	<b>Establish regular coordination between staff from Tuolumne, Calaveras and Amador agencies, as well as other key transportation providers.</b>	While regular coordination meetings were not scheduled between these providers, shared planning frameworks and strategic goals for collaboration were established.
3.2	<b>Conduct active, periodic outreach to gatekeepers for target audiences.</b>	TCTA conducted active outreach efforts for specific planning efforts.
3.3	<b>Ensure that complete, user-friendly information tools exist for all available transportation services.</b>	TCTA deployed a new journey planning app (Transit app) and made periodic updates to its website.

**Goal 4 - Emergency Services Coordination:**

Collaborate around local emergency transportation initiatives to support Coordinated Plan target group members during times of emergency.

**Table 8.** Recommended Strategies and Actions Taken for Goal 4

Number	Recommended Strategy	Actions Taken
4.1	<b>Identify the human-services programs and transportation providers that could be resources and develop strategic strategies for response, particularly in relation to evacuation of vulnerable populations.</b>	The 2020 Coordinated Plan identified human-services transportation providers, and the TCTA Evacuation Needs Assessment outlines response strategies for emergency coordination and evacuation planning for vulnerable populations, particularly wildfire emergencies.
4.2	<b>Expand and ensure participation of key human service stakeholders and human service transportation providers in tabletop exercises and other regional emergency planning activities to build upon and strengthen coordination.</b>	Although human-service transportation providers were identified and an Evacuation Needs Assessment was prepared, tabletop exercises, drills, or structured emergency planning sessions involving these stakeholders were not conducted.

**Goal 5 - Addressing Infrastructure Needs:**

Promote necessary infrastructure improvements that support mobility, including public transit use, facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists and compliance with zero emission vehicle (ZEV) rules.

**Table 9.** Recommended Strategies and Actions Taken for Goal 5

Number	Recommended Strategy	Actions Taken
5.1	<b>Promote and seek funding for Complete Street-type initiatives to support safe bicycle and pedestrian trips as first-mile/last-mile strategies for travel on TCT.</b>	The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update mentions priorities for expanded non-motorized transportation and equity-focused improvements for underserved communities and the SR-108/49 Multimodal Corridor Plan emphasizes active transportation projects as high-priority strategies. However, work remains to pursue specific grants, form partnerships, and implement projects under a Complete Streets framework.
5.2	<b>Actively explore coordinated responses among the region's public transit providers to comply with Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure requirements.</b>	While TCTA actively planned and sought funding for ZEV compliance, it did not coordinate responses among multiple regional public transit providers (e.g., Calaveras Connect, YARTS, Amador agencies) regarding California's Innovative Clean Transportation (ICT) regulation. The focus was on TCTA's compliance strategy rather than joint, regional efforts.

## Insights Gathered through Community Outreach and Public Participation Efforts

The public and stakeholder engagement process for the Coordinated Plan included three key activities designed to identify current mobility needs and gaps and gather input from the general public, the priority populations and their representatives, and both non-profit and for-profit transportation providers, as well as public agencies. These efforts consisted of community and passenger surveys, stakeholder interviews, and in-person events and workshops held in September and October 2025. A final public workshop was held in January 2026 to review the draft Coordinated Plan and draft Short Range Transit Plan, and to solicit public comments before the documents are presented to the TCTA Board for approval in Spring 2026. [Appendix 1](#) provides a detailed summary of the public engagement efforts and how the input received helped shape the plan.

### Community and Passenger Surveys

In mid-September 2025, TCT launched an online community survey to gather input for future transportation planning. The survey aimed to identify service gaps, explore options for potential new bus routes and Dial-a-Ride options, understand what might encourage non-transit riders to use transit, gauge awareness of Dial-a-Ride and the transit app, and assess reactions to the reintroduction of fares. It also collected demographic data to inform the Coordinated Plan and SRTP.

The survey was available in English and Spanish, both in hard copy and electronically via SurveyMonkey, with QR codes provided for easy access. TCTA and its consultant team promoted the survey extensively—at the Tuolumne County Community Roots Resource Fair on September 24 (see [In-Person Events and Workshops](#)), through ongoing e-blasts until the survey closed on November 21, 2025, and by requesting key stakeholders to provide the survey in print or electronically to their clients. Respondents were entered into a raffle for a \$100 gift card. By the close of the survey, TCTA received 168 community responses. Key themes are summarized below, with full responses in [Appendix 2](#).

During the same period, TCTA conducted an onboard passenger survey with similar objectives, with additional questions about rider's travel behavior within the TCT network. The survey was offered in English and Spanish, in hard copy and via QR code linking to SurveyMonkey. Flyers were placed on all buses, an ad was placed on the exterior of a TCT bus, TCT staff rode buses promoting the survey, and transit operators encouraged riders to participate. Respondents were entered into a \$100 gift card raffle, and operators who collected the most completed surveys were also eligible for a \$100 gift card. By the end of the survey period, TCT received 11 passenger survey responses. Key themes are summarized below, with full responses in [Appendix 3](#).

## ***Key Themes from the Community Survey***

- **Travel Patterns**
  - Nearly 70% of respondents primarily travel around Tuolumne County by car.
  - About 20% also use TCT bus service, rely on rides from family or friends, and walk or bike.
  - 15% use Dial-a-Ride, while 6% use taxis, Uber, or Lyft.
- **Transit Usage**
  - Around 70% rarely or never use TCT transit or Dial-a-Ride.
  - Among those who ride transit:
    - 10% ride occasionally
    - 10% ride 1–2 days per week
    - 8% ride 3–4 days per week
    - 4% ride daily or 5+ days per week
- **Barriers to Transit**
  - Common reasons for not using transit:
    - Long wait times
    - Bus stops that are located too far from home or destination
    - Limited service hours
    - No Sunday service
  - Additional comments: preference for personal vehicles, lack of awareness, and limited service in Groveland/Big Oak Flat.
- **What Would Encourage More Transit Use**
  - Top motivators:
    - Shorter wait times/more frequent service
    - Longer service hours
    - Better trip-planning tools (e.g., app with live tracking)
    - Faster, more direct routes
  - Additional suggestions: closer stops for disabled riders, more signage, and out-of-county connections.
- **Preferred Out-of-County Destinations**
  - Modesto, Pleasanton/Dublin, and Oakdale.
- **Awareness of Specialized Services**
  - Only 23% are familiar with local non-profit transportation services (highest awareness for WAVE and WHEELS through Southside Community Connections, Golden Years Transit, and medical ride services).
- **Dial-a-Ride Awareness**
  - 19% currently use Dial-a-Ride.
  - 50% know Dial-a-Ride service is available to the general public.
  - 38% know service expanded to Monday–Saturday.[GU1] [GU2] [CI3]
  - 70% are unaware they can schedule rides via the TCT app.
- **What People Like About TCT**
  - Wheelchair accessibility
  - Polite drivers and dispatchers
  - Free service
  - Clean, safe buses

- Dial-a-Ride for seniors
- Online arrival tracking
- Access to college
- **Suggested Improvements**
  - Flag stops for visibility
  - Greater Dial-a-Ride capacity
  - Smaller, lighter vehicles
  - More outreach and media presence
  - Walmart as a hub
  - Replace empty buses with smaller vans
  - Airport/train station service
  - Better access to schools and colleges
  - Bring back Tuolumne route
  - Workforce bus
  - Later service for late-shift employees
  - Sunday service and extended hours
  - Round-trip fares when fares return
  - More service to reduce DUIs
  - Increased frequency to college
- **Demographics**
  - Nearly 70% of respondents are seniors; 47% have disabilities; 9% are active military or veterans.
  - 54% work or study full/part-time; 33% are retired.
  - Over 90% use a smartphone.
  - Education:
    - 14% have a high school diploma
    - 40% completed some college or have an associate's degree
    - 23% hold a bachelor's degree
    - 18% have a graduate/professional degree
  - Over 70% have access to a personal vehicle.

### ***Key Themes from the Passenger Survey***

- **Routes and Frequency of Use**
  - Among those surveyed onboard TCT buses, 55% of respondents were riding Route 1 Sonora Loop, 27% on Route 2 Sierra Village, and 18% on Route 3 Jamestown–Sonora.
  - None of the respondents were using **Dial-a-Ride**.
  - Nearly 75% ride TCT transit 3–4 days per week or more, with many riding 5+ days per week.
- **What Would Encourage More Transit Use**
  - The top improvements riders want:
    - Sunday service
    - Faster, more direct routes
- **Current Satisfaction**

- A vast majority said the bus takes them where they need to go.
- **Preferred Out-of-County Destinations**
  - Most respondents would prefer service to Oakdale and Modesto, with fewer selecting Sacramento or Pleasanton/Dublin.
- **Awareness of Services**
  - Over 90% are unaware of specialized transportation services offered by local nonprofits.
  - High awareness of Dial-a-Ride:
    - 90% know it's available to the general public
    - 70% know it operates Monday–Saturday
    - 80% know rides can be scheduled via the TCT app
- **Fares**
  - 60% would continue riding as normal if fares were reintroduced, provided half-fare discounts for veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, and students.
- **Demographics**
  - 57% are individuals with disabilities; 43% are seniors over 60.
  - Almost 70% have annual household incomes of \$35,000 or less, with 27% earning under \$10,000.
  - 64% have a high school diploma.
  - None of the respondents have a personal vehicle—they are fully dependent on transit.
  - 64% use a smartphone.
- **What Riders Appreciate**
  - Friendly drivers were the most frequently mentioned positive aspect of current transit service.

## Stakeholder Interviews

Between September and October 2025, alongside the community and passenger surveys, the TCT consultant team conducted virtual interviews with more than a dozen key stakeholders to ensure that affected agencies, community leaders and key stakeholders had the opportunity to provide their input into the planning process. The interviews prioritized individuals with a history of past engagement with public transit issues and connections with existing passenger groups, such as seniors, low-income residents, students, veterans, and people with disabilities. The interviews focused on identifying critical issues that have emerged since the last Coordinated Plan was completed in June 2020—during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic—and on assessing mobility needs and service gaps for the targeted population groups.

Stakeholders were also encouraged to share the community and passenger surveys with their clients and networks to broaden participation. Representatives from the following organizations were interviewed:

- Black Oak Casino Resort

- Chicken Ranch Casino
- Central Sierra Economic Development District
- Columbia College
- Con Amor Building Bridges
- Mother Lode Job Training
- Sonora Chamber of Commerce
- Sonora High School Superintendent
- Southside Community Connections / Wheels and WAVE
- Summerville Union High School Superintendent
- Tuolumne County Chamber of Commerce
- Tuolumne County Health and Human Services Agency
- Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools
- Visit Tuolumne County

Seven key themes emerged from the stakeholder interviews, as follows.

### ***Key Themes from the Stakeholder Interviews***

#### **1. Transportation Access Challenges**

Stakeholders highlighted significant barriers to regional and local mobility. Limited connectivity to major destinations such as the Bay Area, Modesto, Sacramento, and airports restricts travel options, compounded by the absence of rental car return locations. Within Tuolumne County, rural and mountainous areas like Groveland and Big Oak Flat lack reliable transit coverage, leaving residents isolated. Safety concerns were also raised, particularly regarding poor road conditions, inadequate striping, and the lack of nighttime transit services, which make evening travel risky.

#### **2. Service Gaps and Underutilization**

A recurring theme was the underutilization of existing services due to low awareness and operational limitations. Many stakeholders and their clients were unaware that Dial-A-Ride is open to the general public and operates six days a week. Similarly, knowledge of the TCT journey planning app and its scheduling features remains minimal. Service frequency and scheduling constraints—such as long wait times and limited early morning or late evening hours—further discourage ridership and reduce mobility.

#### **3. Infrastructure Needs**

Infrastructure deficiencies were identified as a major obstacle to safe and convenient transit. Stakeholders emphasized the need for additional bus stops and shelters near new housing developments, schools, and community hubs. Walking and biking conditions were described as hazardous, particularly along Highway 49, due to the lack of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths. Transitioning to electric buses also presents challenges, as rural terrain and long distances strain battery range and require specialized charging infrastructure.

#### **4. Sustainability and Funding Concerns**

Financial and operational sustainability emerged as a pressing concern. Many transit programs rely heavily on grant funding, creating uncertainty about long-term viability. Driver shortages—especially for those with CDL license—pose a significant barrier to maintaining service levels. Additionally, aging vehicle fleets and limited maintenance facilities, including those serving tribal and school transportation needs, threaten reliability and increase operational costs.

#### **5. Public Awareness and Marketing**

Stakeholders agreed that low visibility of transit services is a critical issue. Many residents and visitors remain unaware of available options, underscoring the need for stronger marketing efforts. Suggested strategies include social media campaigns, QR codes linked to service information at bus stops, and educational outreach. There was also interest in event-based transit services, such as shuttles for cultural events or seasonal offerings like New Year's Eve buses, to boost ridership and community engagement.

#### **6. Equity and Inclusion**

Ensuring equitable access to transportation was a priority for stakeholders. Programs like Wheels and WAVE fill critical gaps for seniors and individuals with disabilities in areas where TCT does not operate. However, financial barriers remain a concern, particularly with the reintroduction of fares, which could deter low-income riders unless mitigated through subsidies or discounted passes. Stakeholders stressed the importance of maintaining affordability to support vulnerable populations.

#### **7. Coordination and Communication**

Finally, stakeholders called for improved collaboration among transit providers and community organizations. More consistent engagement and information-sharing would help align services and avoid duplication. Opportunities exist to integrate nonprofit, tribal, and public transit resources to create a more seamless and efficient transportation network. Strengthening these partnerships is seen as essential for meeting diverse mobility needs across the county.

#### **In-Person Events and Workshops**

TCT staff and the consultant team participated in three community events/workshops.

The first event was the Tuolumne County Community Roots Resource Fair, held on September 24, 2025. Participation served three primary purposes; (1) to share information about TCT's fixed route transit and Dial-a-Ride services, (2) solicit feedback from the public on their transportation needs via the community survey using electronic and hard-copies in English and Spanish, ensuring broad outreach to the general public and the targeted Coordinated Plan populations, and (3) engage with other agencies and service providers attending the Resource Fair.

The event generated strong engagement: over 50 surveys were completed (hard copy and electronic), 8 individuals signed up for additional information and plan updates, 7 comment cards were submitted, and staff and the consultant team engaged with an approximate 100 people that stopped by the booth. The TCT team also distributed brochures, maps, and promotional items, while engaging in meaningful conversations with attendees interested in learning more about the transit system.

***Key Themes from Comment Cards Gathered at the Resource Fair and Other Activities:***

- Appreciation for free TCT services, especially helpful for those on tight budgets at month's end.
- Requests for increased service frequency to prevent food spoilage while waiting in hot weather after grocery shopping.
- Desire for service expansion to Chinese Camp.
- Need for clear bus stop signage at existing stops.
- Request for a bus stop at Oak Terrace Navigation Center in Soulsbyville.
- A veteran in Tuolumne City reported difficulty accessing timely Dial-a-Ride service.
- Need for higher frequencies, later evening service, and weekend service on Route 2 to serve AA and NA meetings at the Alano Club in East Sonora
- Desire for fixed-route to Tuolumne City and hourly service to the Willow Springs Clubhouse

The second event was a stakeholder workshop, held on October 29, 2025. Attendance included:

- Transit rider advocate
- Representative of SSTAC
- Representative from the Chicken Ranch Casino Resort
- Person on contract with Sonora High School to conduct a study on a shared busing for students
- Executive from Southside Community Connections (operator of Wheels and WAVE services)
- Representatives from the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools
- Executive from the Area 12 Agency on Aging
- Representative from the Central Sierra Economic Development District (CSEDD)
- TCTA staff and the consultant team

Workshop goals included providing stakeholders an opportunity to hear the results of the stakeholder interviews and survey responses gathered to date, conducting preliminary visioning of service improvements, hearing initial concepts being considered by the project team, and providing input before the drafting of the SRTP and Coordinated Plan. The discussion was robust and resulted in the following themes.

## ***Key Themes from the Stakeholder Workshop***

### **Service Expansion and Reliability**

Participants emphasized the need to expand transit services to underserved areas and improve reliability of Dial-A-Ride. Current scheduling issues—such as long wait times and missed return trips after medical appointments—were identified as major barriers. Suggestions included piloting on-demand microtransit in core areas like East Sonora near Walmart, and exploring partnerships with services like GoGo Grandparent (Uber/Lyft integration) to provide flexible mobility options.

### **Intercounty and Medical Access**

There was strong interest in improving intercounty connectivity, particularly to Modesto for medical appointments, as well as exploring partnerships with hospitals like Mark Twain Medical Center, in San Andreas (Calaveras County) and Adventist Health in Sonora. Participants suggested coordinated routes to major medical centers and dialysis facilities, and expanding collaboration with Calaveras County to increase service days for cross-county trips.

### **Technology and Digital Access**

Stakeholders stressed the importance of modernizing Dial-A-Ride booking. The current Dial-a-Ride mobile app requires prospective riders to call a dispatcher to confirm their home address is safe to send a vehicle. While this is justifiable in some portions of the hilly service area, this approach is seen as outdated and discourages younger riders from using the service. A digital booking option—similar to Uber or Lyft—was identified as critical for attracting new riders and improving convenience. Participants also noted confusion between the Dial-a-Ride mobile app and the Transit App, highlighting the need for better education and user-friendly technology. A single, unified journey planning app (e.g. City Mapper, Moovit) would display fixed-route and demand-response (e.g. Dial-a-Ride, microtransit) service information integrated side-by-side. Such a platform would also feature both multimodal (fixed-route, microtransit optionality) as well as intermodal (fixed-route to microtransit or vice-versa) journey planning options.

### **Marketing and Outreach**

Limited awareness of transit services remains a major challenge. Recommendations included weekly newspaper blurbs, advertising through churches, Meals-on-Wheels, in-home medical services, and community events like “Try Transit Week.” Creative ideas such as promoting event-based transit (e.g., Bigfoot Festival shuttles, prom party buses) and leveraging social media were suggested to boost ridership and visibility.

### **Equity and Community Priorities**

Participants agreed that service improvements should prioritize local transit needs first, including access to medical care, shopping, and social activities, to a greater extent than potential interregional services. Concerns were raised about fare reintroduction, with calls for zero-fare

options for students and affordable pricing for seniors and low-income riders. Expanding service to senior centers and improving curbside access were also noted as priorities.

### **Infrastructure and Safety**

Infrastructure gaps were highlighted, including bus stops and shelters in need of upgrades or replacements, particularly at high-traffic locations like Walmart and the Sonora Senior Center. Suggestions included adding regularly scheduled stops at Courthouse Park<sup>14</sup> and improving pedestrian safety along major corridors such as Highway 108.

## **Understanding the role of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Services Provided by Medi-Cal**

When the 2020 Coordinated Plan was published, LogistiCare served as the provider of Medi-Cal services for Tuolumne County and subcontracted its non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services to Common Ground Senior Services. Since then, Common Ground is no longer in operation, and Golden Years Transit now provides specialized senior and mobility services.

Medi-Cal is the Title XIV program of the Social Security Act providing health insurance for low-income people and includes California's expanded coverage levels made possible by the Affordable Care Act. Tuolumne County's NEMT is now managed via ModivCare, which formerly operated as LogistiCare. ModivCare serves as the statewide NEMT broker, arranging rides—including ambulatory, wheelchair-accessible, and stretcher services—for Medi-Cal beneficiaries and other eligible individuals.

Some uncertainty remains whether Congress will renew or significantly alter the Affordable Care Act (ACA). If the ACA were repealed or significantly altered, the federal framework that expanded Medicaid eligibility and funding would change. However, California has taken steps to protect and even expand Medi-Cal coverage independently of the ACA, including for transportation services. Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) and Non-Medical Transportation (NMT) are benefits required under Medi-Cal for certain populations (e.g., those who cannot drive to medical appointments). These benefits are governed by state policy and federal Medicaid rules, not solely by the ACA. Unless California changes its own laws or loses federal Medicaid funding entirely, these services would likely continue.

To schedule a ride for medical appointments, users can use the ModivCare online/web portal at [Portal Logins & Information | Modivcare](#) or call their health plan provider's phone number listed on the following page or shown below: [Find Your Plan | MyModivcare](#).

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<sup>14</sup> Currently this location is served as an on-demand stop, in that buses will only stop there if the rider requests pickup by calling the dispatcher (or notifying their driver) at least 15 minutes in advance.

## California

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<b>Alameda Alliance Health Plan:</b> 1-866-791-4158	<b>HealthNet Medi-Cal Health Plan:</b> 1-855-253-6863	<b>CalOptima Medi-Cal:</b> 1-833-648-7528
<b>Anthem Blue Cross Health Plan:</b> 1-877-931-4755	<b>UnitedHealthcare Medicare Lacers National:</b> 1-866-418-9812	<b>OneCare:</b> 1-866-612-1256
<b>CalViva Health Plan:</b> 1-855-253-6864	<b>UnitedHealthcare Medicare National:</b> 1-866-418-9812	<b>Imperial Valley (CHPIV)</b> 1-855-251-7097
<b>HealthNet Commercial HMO:</b> 1-866-842-0675	<b>HCSC Group Retiree:</b> Group Retiree National Line Reservation/Ride Assist: 1-866-824-1566	<b>San Francisco Health Plan MCAL:</b> 1-855-251-7098

Source: California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS)

### Organizing Needs and Gaps by Trip Purpose and Population Group

It is important for the Coordinated Plan to provide a visualization of needs and gaps that can serve as a high-level working summary. **Table X.** Mobility Needs by Market and Identified Transportation Providers, provides a representation of the trip types, clients, and transportation providers able to serve travel needs by trip purpose (medical, work or school, or shopping or other) and by population group (seniors and people with disabilities, low-income individuals, and veterans), paired with the existing transportation resources identified in [Section 2](#).

#### Summary of Mobility Needs and Gaps

The table below provides a concise summary of the key mobility needs identified for Tuolumne County's older adults and individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, and veterans. It serves as a quick reference to the most pressing challenges these groups face in accessing reliable and equitable transportation. Following the table, readers will find a comprehensive discussion that explores these needs and gaps in greater depth, drawing on findings from demographic analysis, stakeholder interviews, public surveys, and community workshops. This detailed narrative explains not only what the needs are, but also how they impact daily life for vulnerable populations. Together, the summary table and subsequent analysis create a clear foundation for developing targeted strategies and priorities in the next chapter, ensuring that future transportation planning is responsive, inclusive, and data-driven.

**Table 10.** Mobility needs by market and identified transportation providers

	65+/Disabled	Low Income	Veterans
<b>Medical - Local</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• TCT Golden Years Transit</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• TCT Golden Years Transit</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• TCT Golden Years Transit</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>• Sonora VA Health Clinic</li> <li>• Tuolumne County Veterans Service Office</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>
<b>Medical - Out-of-County Destinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>• Sonora VA Health Clinic</li> <li>• Tuolumne County Veterans Service Office</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> </ul>

	65+/Disabled	Low Income	Veterans
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>
<b>Medical – From areas outside TCT service area, including Groveland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>Frontier Cab</li> <li>Courtesy Cab</li> <li>Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>Frontier Cab</li> <li>Courtesy Cab</li> <li>Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>Behavioral Health Services Dept</li> <li>Sonora VA Health Clinic (?)</li> <li>Tuolumne County Veterans Service Office</li> <li>Frontier Cab</li> <li>Courtesy Cab</li> <li>Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>
<b>Work/College within TCT service area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>Frontier Cab</li> <li>Courtesy Cab</li> <li>Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>Frontier Cab</li> <li>Courtesy Cab</li> <li>Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>Frontier Cab</li> <li>Courtesy Cab</li> <li>Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>
<b>Work/College outside TCT service area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>Calaveras Connect</li> <li>Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> </ul>

	65+/Disabled	Low Income	Veterans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>
<b>Shopping/ Other within TCT service area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT SkiBus</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT SkiBus</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT SkiBus</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>
<b>Shopping/ Other outside TCT service area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT SkiBus</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT SkiBus</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT SkiBus</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> </ul>

	65+/Disabled	Low Income	Veterans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>
<b>Shopping/ Other – Out-of-Cou nty destinations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TCT Fixed Route</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (ADA)</li> <li>• TCT Dial-a-Ride (General Public)</li> <li>• TCT Tuolumne TRIP</li> <li>• YARTS</li> <li>• Calaveras Connect</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/Wheels</li> <li>• Southside Community Connections/WAVE</li> <li>• Frontier Cab</li> <li>• Courtesy Cab</li> <li>• Mother Lode Charter</li> <li>• Blue Mountain Transit Charter</li> </ul>

## Discussion of Mobility Gaps and Needs

Together, the summary table above and the accompanying analysis below, which draws from all the public input comprehensively, establish a strong basis for shaping the goals and strategies outlined in [Section 5](#). This foundation ensures that upcoming transportation plans are well-informed, equitable, and designed to meet the diverse needs of the community.

### ***Demographic Trends Driving Transportation Needs***

Tuolumne County's population is aging rapidly, with older adults now comprising 27.7% of residents, nearly double the statewide average of 15.6%. This growth includes increasing numbers of individuals aged 80 and older, who are more likely than others to experience physical limitations that restrict their ability to drive. Veterans represent 8.6% of the population, more than twice the state average, and over half are age 70 or older. Disability prevalence in Tuolumne County is higher than statewide averages, with 5.5% of children and 17.2% of working-age adults living with disabilities, compared to 3.6% and 8.6% statewide, respectively. Overall, about 21% of residents have a disability, and many live outside the Dial-a-Ride service area or beyond walking distance to fixed-route stops, creating substantial mobility gaps. Although poverty rates have declined to 10.1%, financial hardship remains a barrier to transportation access, especially for low-income households and retirees on fixed incomes. Median household income, while rising to \$72,259, remains 25% below the state median, limiting affordability for private vehicle ownership. Geographic isolation in rural areas compounds these challenges, underscoring the need for flexible, affordable, and well-marketed transit solutions.

### ***Transportation Access Challenges***

Older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, veterans, and tribal community members face significant barriers to regional and local mobility. Limited connectivity to major destinations—such as the Bay Area, Modesto, Sacramento, and airports—restricts access to medical care, employment, and essential services. Within Tuolumne County, rural and mountainous areas like Groveland and Big Oak Flat lack consistent transit coverage, leaving vulnerable populations isolated. Safety concerns, including poor road conditions, inadequate striping, and the absence of nighttime transit options, further limit travel for those who cannot drive.

### ***Underutilization and Digital Access via Technology***

Existing services are underutilized due to low awareness and operational limitations. Many residents, including seniors and veterans, do not know that Dial-A-Ride is available to the general public and operates Monday through Saturday. Similarly, awareness of the TCT app and its scheduling features is minimal, reducing convenience for riders who rely on technology. Limited service hours—particularly early mornings and late evenings—along with long wait times, make it difficult for individuals to attend medical appointments, work shifts, or community events. Stakeholders stressed the importance of modernizing Dial-A-Ride booking. A digital booking option without having to call a dispatcher—similar to Uber or Lyft—was identified as critical for attracting new riders and improving convenience. Confusion between the TCT Dial-a-Ride mobile

app and the Transit App also highlights the need for better education and user-friendly technology solutions.

### ***Infrastructure and Safety***

Safe and accessible infrastructure remains a major need. Additional bus stops and shelters are required near new housing developments, schools, tribal properties, and community centers. High-traffic locations such as Walmart and the Sonora Senior Center need improved facilities, including curbside access. Suggestions also included adding stops at Courthouse Park and improving pedestrian/biking safety along major corridors like Highway 108 and Highway 49, due to the absence of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths—posing risks for those who cannot afford a car, where many residents currently walk due to limited transit options.

### ***Public Awareness and Marketing***

Low visibility of transit services continues to be a challenge and disproportionately affects older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents who depend on affordable transportation. Many are unaware of available options, including Dial-A-Ride and app-based scheduling. Stakeholders suggested targeted outreach through social media, QR codes at bus stops, educational campaigns, weekly newspaper updates, outreach through churches, Meals-on-Wheels, in-home medical services, and community promotional events like “Try Transit Week.” Event-based transit—such as cultural event shuttles or seasonal services—could also improve access and engagement for these groups.

### ***Equity and Community Priorities***

Affordability and accessibility remain critical for vulnerable populations. Concerns were raised about fare reintroduction, with calls for zero-fare options for students and discounted pricing for seniors, veterans, and low-income riders. Stakeholders agreed that service improvements should prioritize local needs first, including access to medical care, shopping, and social activities, before expanding interregional services. Programs like Wheels and WAVE help fill gaps, but additional resources are needed to ensure equitable access.

### ***Coordination and Communication***

Improved collaboration among transit providers, tribal entities, nonprofits, and community organizations is needed to close service gaps. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of regular engagement and integrated planning to avoid duplication and ensure continuity. Better coordination could align resources and create a seamless transportation network that meets the diverse mobility needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, veterans, and tribal communities.

# 5. Recommended Coordinated Plan Goals and Strategies

This section builds upon the mobility needs and gaps identified in [Section 4](#) and incorporates insights gathered through the Coordinated Plan’s extensive public outreach and stakeholder engagement. It presents a set of recommended goals and strategies designed to address the most pressing transportation challenges facing Tuolumne County’s older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, veterans, and members of tribal communities. Clearly articulating these goals and strategies is critical, as they form the foundation for future service improvements and funding opportunities.

In particular, projects that align with locally-adopted Coordinated Plans are eligible to compete for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 funds, which support transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities.

## Recommended Goals and Strategies

**Goal 1 - Expand and Adjust TCT Fixed-Route Service to Improve Operational Efficiency and Rider Convenience.**

**Table 11.** Recommended Strategies for Goal 1

Number	Recommended Strategy	Context	Roles & Responsibilities
1.1	<p><b>Extend weekday service hours to accommodate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early morning (e.g., 7:00 AM zero-period classes)</li> <li>• Late evening (e.g., after-school activities, casino shifts)</li> </ul>	<p>Extending weekday service hours addresses the need for transit outside typical 8-to-5 windows, specifically supporting early morning "zero-period" classes at 7:00 AM and late-evening employment shifts at casinos or after-school activities. Expanding hours of service ensures that transit remains a viable option for students and the local workforce.</p>	<p>TCTA is responsible for funding and planning the service span, while TCTA's contracted operator manages the implementation of updated schedules.</p>
1.2	<p><b>Extend weekend service, especially Sundays.</b></p>	<p>There is a documented gap in mobility during weekends, which limits access to essential shopping and community events for non-drivers. Formalizing Sunday service creates a consistent transit network for the county.</p>	<p>TCTA provides the funding and oversight, while TCTA's contracted drivers and dispatchers execute the additional service days.</p>

1.3	<b>Increase frequency of existing routes.</b>	Current wait times of up to 3 hours (e.g. Route 2) act as a significant barrier to transit adoption and rider convenience. Increasing frequency improves rider experience and opportunities for transfers.	TCTA staff manages the fleet and route planning to optimize frequency, funded through local and state transit allocations.
1.4	<b>Reintroduce seasonal and event-based transit.</b>	Providing targeted transit for events like "Second Saturdays," the Big Foot Festival, and New Year's Eve encourages community engagement, introduces new groups to transit, and reduces congestion.	TCTA may coordinate with local event organizers. Current operator contract allows for billing of special event-related service.

**Goal 2 - Expand and adjust demand-response service to improve operational efficiency and service convenience.**

**Table 12.** Recommended Strategies for Goal 2

Number	Recommended Strategy	Context	Roles & Responsibilities
2.1	<b>Expand general public on-demand services with app-based capabilities.</b>	Introduce on-demand transit (a.k.a. microtransit) in more developed areas, such as Sonora. On-demand service supplements the existing Dial-a-Ride service by offering a reliable, same-day option that can be booked via smartphone as well as by calling the dispatcher. App-based capabilities are expected to increase ridership among key demographic groups, such as students and younger populations. On-demand service will allow riders to connect to key populations as well as make transfers to and from the fixed-route network.	TCTA has sourced funding through SB125 for a pilot program. TCTA procures service either bundled with the current contracted operator or as turnkey service through a third party.
2.2	<b>Extend Dial-a-Ride service to currently unserved communities.</b>	Many outlying areas of the County currently lack fixed-route bus access and are not covered by the current Dial-a-Ride service zone. Expanding the Dial-a-Ride service area will provide critical service for residents to reach key destinations.	TCTA sources funding and provides operational oversight. Contracted operator

			provides additional service.
2.3	<b>Maintain Dial-a-Ride service capacity for riders with disabilities.</b>	Dial-a-Ride service should be continued for ADA-eligible riders to ensure the system remains compliant and accessible for ADA-eligible riders.	TCTA is responsible for compliance and capacity management, e.g. by ensuring no ADA-eligible ride requests are denied and sufficient wheelchair-accessible vehicles are available.
2.4	<b>Extend Dial-a-Ride operating hours to early mornings and late evenings (e.g., 6:00 - 7:00 am and 6:00 - 8:00 pm).</b>	Dial-a-Ride service plays a key role in connecting residents to medical appointments and other community resources, which may require them to use the service in the early morning or evening hours. Increasing operating hours would increase the accessibility and usefulness of Dial-a-Ride service.	TCTA is responsible for setting Dial-a-Ride schedules, funding the additional hours, and securing operating staff to operate additional hours.

**Goal 3 - Enhance data monitoring, reporting, and transparency.**

**Table 13.** Recommended Strategies for Goal 3

Number	Recommended Strategy	Context	Roles & Responsibilities
3.1	<b>Establish a short-term fare policy with passes and discounts similar to the previous TCTA fare policy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly, daily, and weekly passes</li> <li>• Senior (60+), K-12 student, veteran, and low-income discounts</li> <li>• Zero-fare program for Columbia College, high-school students</li> </ul>	Returning to the previous structured fare policy that includes daily/monthly passes and targeted discounts for seniors, students, and low-income riders will ensure the system secures sustainable funding while remaining affordable for key populations. Using the same fare structure that was previously applied will also be easy for residents to grasp. Alternatively, higher fare levels may be adopted to account for inflation and rising operating costs during the zero-fare period (2020-2026), provided that targeted discount programs for above groups remain.	TCTA sets the policy and manages farebox recovery targets. TCTA can partner with local organizations, such as senior and veteran programs, and schools like Columbia College to fund/administer passes.

3.2	<b>Identify post-COVID fare policy changes among peer agencies.</b>	Evaluating regional fare policies will enable TCTA to develop a long-term fare policy that balances fiscal sustainability with high ridership. Peer analysis will ensure continued alignment with industry standards and state requirements.	TCTA's Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) will ensure the adopted fare policy is in line with peer transit agencies.
3.3	<b>Introduce mobile fare payment options.</b>	Mobile fare payment options can reduce barriers for riders by enabling a seamless booking and boarding process, with the added benefit of attracting younger riders to the service. Mobile payments can also provide TCTA with better data, such as passenger counts and stop-level ridership, for route planning and service adjustments.	TCTA funds and procures payment technology and can oversee implementation and rider education.

**Goal 4 - Improve access to key destinations in isolated communities or out-of-county.**

**Table 14.** Recommended Strategies for Goal 4

Number	Recommended Strategy	Context	Roles & Responsibilities
4.1	<b>Coordinate with Calaveras County in partnership with GoGo Grandparent.</b>	Several areas in and around Tuolumne County are difficult to reach with a traditional bus and have extremely low population densities, making them expensive to serve with traditional public transit options. This approach would use brokers like GoGo Grandparent to provide on-demand transportation to seniors with qualified drivers on TNC platforms. Leveraging third-party platforms can help serve residents in extremely hard-to-reach areas where a traditional bus is not cost-effective. This regional partnership expands the menu of options for elderly residents needing specialized trips. A coordinated partnership with Calaveras County may be necessary to create an economy of scale and attract sufficient drivers to the program.	TCTC and Calaveras County provide joint oversight and potential funding subsidies for the platform's use.
4.2	<b>Promote WAVE service and WHEELS volunteer driver programs.</b>	These programs are lifelines for the Big Oak Flat and Groveland areas, which are difficult to serve with traditional transit options due to their geographic isolation. Continued promotion ensures that the	TCTA provides marketing and administrative support; Nonprofit

		programs continue to have the funding needed to operate and that residents are aware of the specific volunteer driver programs available to them. Community engagement could also inform future service expansions.	partners source 5310 or other funding, and operations provided either by Southside Connections staff (WAVE) or Southside-affiliated volunteer drivers.
4.3	<b>Expand marketing for TCT's mileage reimbursement program (TRIP).</b>	The TRIP program empowers residents to find their own volunteer drivers (often family members or friends), which is often the most efficient and cost-effective way to serve isolated, long-distance medical needs or other essential errands. Marketing efforts ensure residents are aware of this specific resource. About \$20,000 annual funding is available for mileage reimbursement, about 60% of which was expended in FY25.	TCTC funds the mileage reimbursements; Nonprofits (e.g., Area 12) manage participant enrollment and volunteer tracking.
4.4	<b>Enroll additional nonprofit partners to the TRIP program.</b>	Enrolling more nonprofit partners expands the program's reach and administrative capacity. Nonprofits can also market the service directly to their constituents and case workers, increasing awareness.	TCTC provides oversight; Nonprofits manage the recruitment and management of volunteer drivers.
4.5	<b>Expand TRIP reimbursement eligibility by trip purpose.</b>	Broadening the criteria for reimbursement allows more residents to utilize the program for a wider variety of essential needs, ensuring additional populations without traditional transit access can access the program's services.	TCTC establishes the eligibility criteria and provides the funding for the expanded reimbursement scope.

**Goal 5 - Improve transit awareness and education through coordinated rider communications, engagement, and community outreach.**

**Table 15.** Recommended Strategies for Goal 5

Number	Recommended Strategy	Context	Roles & Responsibilities
5.1	<b>Launch targeted marketing for Dial-a-Ride</b>	Many residents are unaware of their eligibility for Dial-a-Ride or the	TCTA funds and creates

	<b>and app-based booking.</b>	availability of new digital booking tools. Targeted campaigns can encourage broader adoption among the general public.	marketing materials; TCTA staff manage social media and digital outreach, in partnership with stakeholder organizations.
5.2	<b>Facilitate regular stakeholder meetings on travel training.</b>	Direct engagement with tribal organizations, schools, and nonprofits allows TCTA to provide hands-on "travel training" to those who may be unfamiliar with the transit system. These partnerships also ensure that transit information is further distributed by well-informed stakeholders.	TCTA organizes the meetings and provides training materials, while coordinating with stakeholder groups on audience and information dissemination.
5.3	<b>Expand awareness of specialized transportation options through community organizations.</b>	Engaging with other community organizations, such as Meals-on-Wheels, in-home medical services, and houses of worship will drive increased community awareness of specialized transportation options, thereby increasing ridership on specialized transportation.	TCTA can coordinate with local organizations to increase awareness, leveraging the organizations to distribute information to their respective stakeholders.

**Goal 6 - Address transit operator infrastructure needs to improve rider experience and meet state fleet electrification requirements (ICT).**

**Table 16.** Recommended Strategies for Goal 6

<b>Number</b>	<b>Recommended Strategy</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b>
6.1	<b>Coordinate with regional agencies to reduce battery-electric bus (BEB) costs.</b>	Transitioning to zero-emission vehicles will be costly. Cooperative procurement with adjacent counties facing similar challenges (e.g. Calaveras, Amador) may allow TCTA to achieve bulk pricing and shared infrastructure knowledge related to charging or BEB maintenance. Some examples of cooperating purchasing agreements include Cal-ITP, 791, and NEO-Ride.	TCTA and adjacent county agencies enter into joint procurement agreements; state and federal grants typically fund the vehicle purchases.
6.2	<b>Support regional CDL</b>	A shortage of qualified drivers with	TCTA can

	<b>training programs.</b>	Commercial Driver’s Licenses (CDL) is a risk to service reliability and longevity. Supporting regional training ensures a steady pipeline of local drivers to operate the transit system.	partner with Columbia College or vocational schools to support curriculum; TCTA may provide funding or internship opportunities.
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Coordinate active transportation improvements and investments with TCTC to address infrastructure needs.</b>	Infrastructure needs, such as poor road conditions, inadequate striping, and the absence of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths along major corridors like Highway 49 and Highway 108, can negatively impact rider experience and discourage riders from taking public transit. Improving infrastructure can relieve some of the burden on public transit by enabling active transportation and ensuring riders can safely reach stops and pickup/dropoff points.	TCTA can partner with TCTC to ensure changes are facilitating increased transit access.

**Goal 7 - Address transit operator's infrastructure needs to improve rider experience and meet state electrification mandate.**

**Table 17.** Recommended Strategies for Goal 5

<b>Number</b>	<b>Recommended Strategy</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Identify transportation providers and volunteers for evacuation planning.</b>	In the event of a natural disaster, TCTA is required to have a pre-verified list of vehicles and drivers capable of moving vulnerable populations.	TCTA maintains the resource list; local volunteers, such as TRIP driver volunteers and other private providers, can be solicited to be on-call for emergencies.
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Update emergency transportation protocols with County OES/GIS.</b>	Ensuring emergency transportation protocols are updated is critical for emergency preparation. Working with local stakeholders and distributing plans as needed will increase awareness and compliance.	TCTA can coordinate with local human-services transportation stakeholders

# Appendix 1. Public Engagement Summary

# Appendix 2. Results from Community Surveys

# Appendix 3: Results from Passenger Surveys