



Ventura County Transit Investment Study

Final Report
December 4, 2009



JACOBS

Ventura County Transit Investment Study

Submitted to
Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC)

**950 County Square Drive, Suite 207
Ventura, CA 93003**

December 4, 2009

Submitted by
Jacobs

**600 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Steve Brooks, Project Manager
William Lieberman, AICP, Deputy Project Manager**

In conjunction with
Consensus Planning Group
**626 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Lilian De Loza Gutierrez, Vice President
Sara Costin, Director**

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Purpose of the Study..... | 1 |
| Study Process Overview | 1 |
| Summary of Findings and Recommendations..... | 2 |
| Study Results | 3 |
| A. Existing Conditions..... | 3 |
| B. Transit Gaps Analysis | 10 |
| C. Prioritizing Projects | 21 |
| D. Projects | 27 |
| E. Community Outreach..... | 31 |
| F. Other Consultant Recommendations..... | 36 |

Appendices

- A. Existing Conditions Technical Memorandum
- B. Transit Gaps Analysis Technical Memorandum
- C. Project Evaluation Process
- D. Spreadsheet Transit Model Documentation
- E. Public Involvement Documentation

Ventura County Transit Investment Study

Purpose of the Study

The Ventura County Transportation Commission conducted this study to determine how to best allocate funds for projects that would enhance transit services for county residents. Initially seen as providing a methodology for prioritizing state funds that were anticipated to be available from Prop 1B, the study was modified slightly over time. Potential projects for funding under Prop 1B were incorporated into applications for federal funds available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act early in 2009. Accordingly, the prioritization process was modified to ensure its applicability to other funding sources.

The process for identifying and prioritizing needs was conducted by Jacobs Engineering (Jacobs) in close cooperation with the members of VCTC's Transit Operators Advisory Committee (TRANSCOM). Members not only assured the accuracy of study inputs and provided insights into numerous issues, but were critical to developing the prioritizing criteria that they will subsequently use when competing projects must be ranked. Additionally, comments on needs and priorities were sought from elected officials and the public. ***An important finding of the study is the consistent desire among all participants for better coordinated and linked transit services that largely ignore jurisdictional boundaries.***

Study Process Overview

The study began by documenting the current services of the nine transit agencies serving the county, as well as interviewing key agency staff of the seven agencies that are based in Ventura County. These interviews gathered information about current services, known areas of need, planned improvements, and other issues affecting how service is provided. The results of these interviews are reported in an Existing Conditions Report (Appendix A).

One of the recurring themes from agency interviews and comments from elected officials and the public was a basic need to improve linkages among the various transit systems. An analysis of current connections was conducted to identify opportunities for improvement. The result of this assessment is a Transit Gaps Analysis (Appendix B), which looked at four types of shortfalls in transit service: corridors between localities when no transit is operated today; geographic areas with densities that appear high enough to warrant service but that are not served today; gaps in service on different bus lines; and places where transit routes come together, but arrival and departure times are not optimal to enable convenient transfers. In combination, these captured a high-level picture of the overall availability and shortfalls of transit service from a county-wide perspective.

The Gaps Analysis provided one of the main bases for developing projects and other recommendations for an improved transit system. It also fed into the development of two

tools for use by the transit operators and VCTC: a prioritization methodology (Appendix C) and a transit forecasting methodology to test changes in service frequency (Appendix D).

Validation of the goal for more connected transit service in the county, compared with the technical perspective of the study, was garnered through a public outreach effort. In addition to one-on-one interviews with elected officials, public comments were sought through two public workshops and from an on-line survey on the VCTC website. The overarching message from across the spectrum of respondents (Appendix E) was that transit services needed to be more extensive in areas served and in hours of operation, and seamlessly connected, with more convenient and reliable transfers.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

There is a basic need to improve linkages among the various transit systems. This was a recurring issue raised from agency interviews, input from elected officials, and from a variety of public groups.

There is an expressed willingness to cooperate among the existing service agencies, evidenced in their common commitment to serving patrons, a desire to provide improved services to their constituents, to addressing issues in a coordinated manner when possible, and an interest in exploring opportunities for how to provide improved service.

Near-term transit improvements can most readily be made in increments, with an overarching goal to ignore jurisdictional boundaries whenever possible. Near-term improvements should be identified by way of a detailed evaluation of schedules and development of a better-linked, cross-jurisdictional operating plan that serves areas of high transit demand and high transit potential.

There is interest in modifying organization structures or exploring new organizational structures to provide transit on a countywide or an areawide basis, with the underlying goal of creating a comprehensive and seamless network. A long-term plan for transit should be undertaken that defines levels of service goals, explores options for system management, analyzes upcoming and possible funding sources, and develops strategic options for reaching the service goals.

There is a broad public awareness that transit services must compete for limited funds from local jurisdictions, offset by a desire to identify dedicated or focused funds to create the envisioned comprehensive and seamless network. VCTC and the operating agencies and their management should take advantage of this public support for transit by improving communication tools and building partnerships.

Study Results

A. Existing Conditions

Transit Services: Public transportation serving Ventura County is fragmented, with seven fixed-route bus operations, five public dial-a-ride operations, and four paratransit services restricted to disabled or senior riders. There are also two Los Angeles-based bus operators, two rail operations, and several private carriers that serve portions of the county. While in some cases the fares and schedules of connecting systems are coordinated, this is more the exception than the rule. There are even instances where adjacent systems don't connect at all; this situation is not unique to Ventura County and is understandable given the evolution of transit over time. Local transit service was established over the past 40 years incrementally, as each community developed enough density to justify it. One bus carrier, VISTA, serves primarily as an intercity connector within the County, even extending services north into Santa Barbara County and South into Los Angeles County.

Nine public agencies operate fixed-route bus service in the county at this time:

- Camarillo Area Transit (CAT): 1 route administered by the City of Camarillo
- Gold Coast Transit: the largest local operator, with 17 routes operated through a JPA with Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, and the County of Ventura
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro): 1 route operated into Ventura County
- Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT): 3 weekday peak routes operated into Ventura County
- Moorpark City Transit: 2 routes administered by the Moorpark Public Transit Division
- Ojai Trolley: 2 routes operated by the Ojai Public Works Department
- Simi Valley Transit: 4 routes operated by the Simi Valley Department of Community Services
- Thousand Oaks Transit (TOT): 4 routes administered by the City of Thousand Oaks
- Ventura Intercity Service Transit Authority (VISTA): 7 routes administered by VCTC.

Together, these nine agencies operate over 40 distinct routes. All but Gold Coast Transit, Ojai Trolley, Simi Valley Transit and LA Metro utilize contracts with private companies to actually operate and/or maintain their buses.

Most of the systems in the list above operate exclusively within Ventura County, with a few exceptions. Simi Valley Transit offers weekday service into Chatsworth in Los Angeles County, while VISTA operates weekday service into Woodland Hills in Los Angeles County and daily service into Santa Barbara County. The two Los Angeles-based operators, LA Metro and LADOT, extend service into the eastern portion of Ventura County. (They are not listed in Table 1 because they would not be the recipient of transit funds anticipated to flow to Ventura

County). In addition to these nine public operators, private bus carriers serve various parts of the county. These include Greyhound and Transportes Intercalifornias, two intercity carriers whose only stops in Ventura County are located in Oxnard; and various small private operators serving airports or employment centers. Since the focus of this study is on publicly-funded improvements to publicly-operated systems, these private carriers are mentioned only in passing to give a full picture of the transit options available.

Service throughout the county tends to be offered at a low frequency, with headways of 30 to 60 minutes the most common. About a third of the lines operate only during weekdays, with a span of service from about 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM. While two thirds of the lines operate on Saturdays, only about one third is in service on Sundays. This means that many residents without access to their own automobiles must rely upon friends or taxis to drive them to their destinations when public transportation is not offered. Many probably defer such trips to those times when service is available.

There are some notable exceptions to the low frequency service described below in corridors with higher ridership. For example, Gold Coast's Route 6 offers headways as short as 20 minutes in between Oxnard and Ventura; VISTA's shuttle between the Camarillo Metrolink Station and CSUCI (California State University Channel Islands) operates 15-minute service on weekday afternoons and evenings.

| <u>Operator</u> | <u>Monday-Friday</u> | <u>Saturday</u> | <u>Sunday</u> |
|------------------------|--|--|---|
| Camarillo Area Transit | 8:19 AM – 4:30 PM | no service | no service |
| Gold Coast Transit | H 5:00 AM -10:00 PM L 6:00 AM – 8:00 PM | 5:30 AM – 9:00 PM 6:30 AM – 8:00 PM | 5:30 AM – 8:45 PM 6:30 AM – 8:00 PM |
| Moorpark City Transit | 6:00 AM -- 6:00 PM | no service | no service |
| Ojai Trolley | 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM | 9:00 AM – 5:15 PM | 9:00 AM – 5:15 PM |
| Simi Valley Transit | 5:15 AM – 7:30 PM | H 5:00 AM – 8:00 PM L 8:00 AM – 7:00 PM | no service no service |
| Thousand Oaks Transit | 6:00 AM – 6:45 PM | no service | no service |
| VISTA | H 4:15 AM – 9:00 PM L 6:00 AM – 7:30 PM | 6:45 AM – 7:30 PM 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM | 6:45 AM – 7:30 PM 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM* |

*Highway 126 service only

Note: the table above represents an approximate average of the spans of service of the individual lines of each operator. Many lines do not operate on weekends. H = higher service lines L = lower service lines

An examination of the structure of all the fixed routes described above indicates a series of generally radial networks. Most are centered on one node of activity in the community, such as

a civic center or shopping mall. Coverage of the urbanized areas of the county by these networks, as depicted in Figure 1, appears adequate at first glance. However, without a thorough analysis of how the networks coincide with areas of high density and the location of major trip attractors, it is difficult to confirm this supposition. If the low frequency of much of this network is considered, along with restricted hours of service in many instances, then it must be concluded that much of the urbanized area has only minimal transit service. Moreover, the numerous connecting points between the lines shown on the map belie the fact that transfers may be difficult to make. This is because the schedules of the connecting lines are rarely synchronized, and the costs to make such transfers may be prohibitive for many potential users. Thus, while the map in Figure 1 gives the impression of good transit coverage, that quality exists in few parts of the county.

In addition to the bus services discussed above, there are two rail operations serving the county: both Metrolink and Amtrak share portions of the railroad network established in the 1800s. Metrolink commuter rail service is operated by the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), a JPA of five regional agencies including VCTC. Metrolink offers 10 trips each weekday on its Ventura County Line. This service operates into and out of Los Angeles, serving Montalvo, Oxnard, Camarillo, Moorpark, and Simi Valley in Ventura County. An 11th weekday trip in each direction is offered by Amtrak at these same stations (except for Montalvo). The frequency offered is relatively low due both to funding shortfalls and to constraints placed on rail service by the single track available for use north of the City of Moorpark.

Amtrak, with funding support from Caltrans, operates Pacific Surfliner service between San Louis Obispo and San Diego. This service provides four additional train trips in each direction at many of the Metrolink stations, plus one outbound and two inbound Motorcoach Throughway bus trips each weekday. On weekends when Metrolink is not in service, these same Amtrak trips are available to passengers at the stations served in Ventura County. Metrolink monthly pass holders can ride them free of charge, while others must pay standard Amtrak fares. Amtrak also provides intercity service to other parts of the state and the country. One Coast Starlight train in each direction serves the Oxnard and Simi Valley stations. The Amtrak station in Ventura is served by 5 daily Pacific Surfliner trains in each direction, but not by Metrolink. Since Amtrak is not eligible for the funds that would be available for local transit operators in the county, only Metrolink will be considered further in this study.

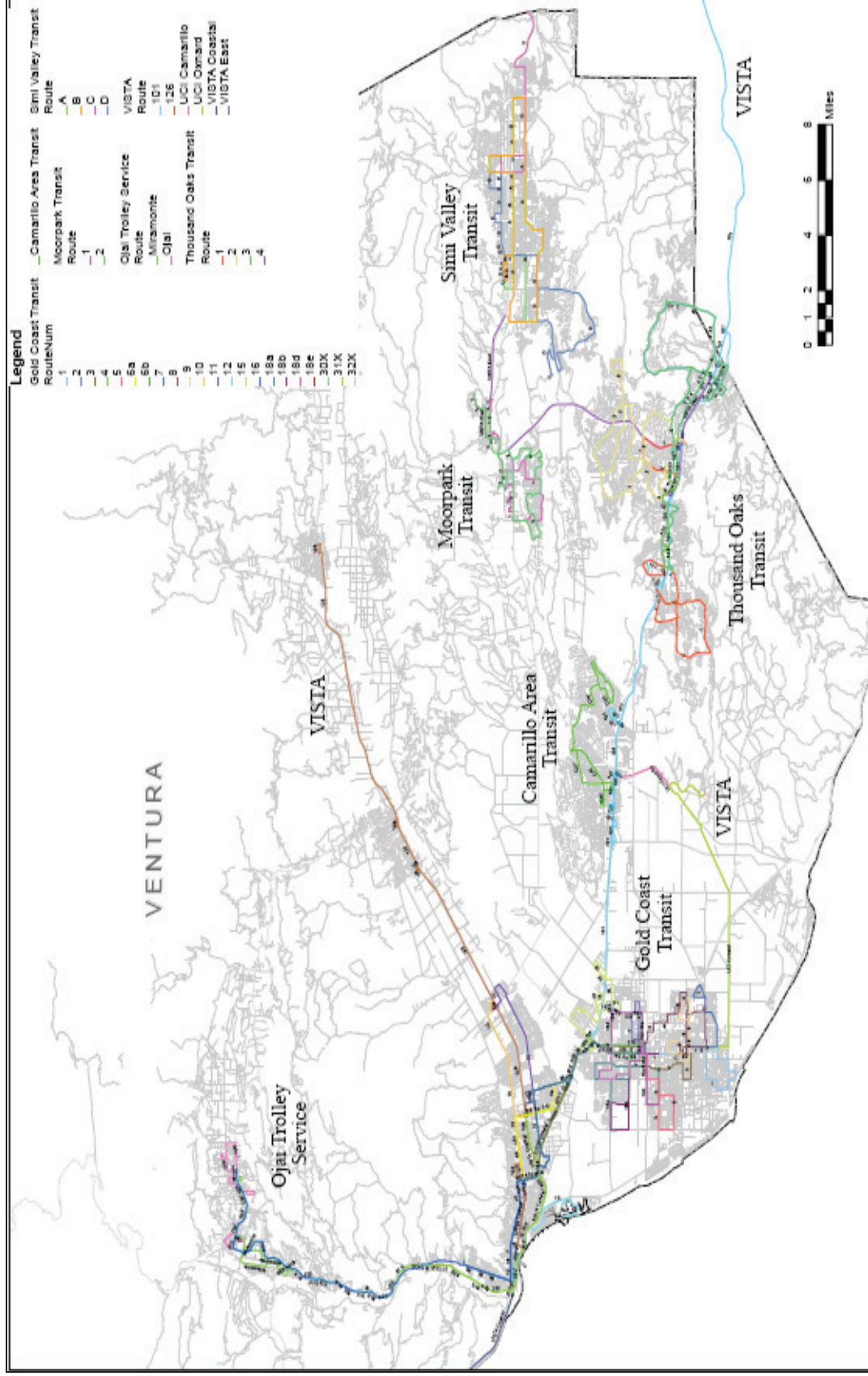


Figure 1: Ventura County Fixed-Route Transit Lines

The fixed-route bus and rail lines in Ventura County are complemented by general public Dial-A-Ride and paratransit operations that use vans or small cutaway buses in demand-responsive services. These services generally have no fixed routes or schedules, but rather pick up and drop off passengers within specific geographic areas. Trip requests are made by phone in advance, though some of the services allow ongoing reservations or subscription services for recurring journeys. These services are essential for those physically unable to access fixed-route transit and are useful for others to reach areas not well served by the fixed routes. There are eleven such paratransit operations. Seven of these serve the general public (condensed in Table 1 as the five principal operations listed below):

- Camarillo Department of Public Works administers CAT service for intra-city dial-a-ride trips
- Oxnard operates the Harbors and Beaches Dial-a-Ride serving the westernmost section of the city
- Thousand Oaks is served by a dial-a-ride administered by the City of Thousand Oaks, with some areas outside the city served by a County-administered dial-a-ride
- Ventura County Public Works Agency administers two smaller services:
 - Juvenile Center service uses a contract with a taxi company to serve the County Juvenile Facility near El Rio on Vineyard Avenue
 - Service in Oak Park, Newbury Park, and Lynn Ranch
- VISTA administers two public dial-a-rides:
 - Fillmore Dial-a-Ride serves the communities of Fillmore and Piru
 - Santa Paula Dial-a-Ride serves the community of Santa Paula.

The remaining four public paratransit operations transport only senior or disabled passengers:

- ACCESS: a senior/disabled service operated by Gold Coast Transit to serve the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura and unincorporated areas of Ventura County between these cities.
- Moorpark Dial-A-Ride: administered by the Moorpark Public Transportation Division, with a senior dial-a-ride serving Moorpark and a disabled dial-a-ride serving Moorpark intra-city trips, as well as those destined to Thousand Oaks, Camarillo and Oak Park.
- Simi Valley Transit: operated by the Simi Valley Department of Community Services to serve both intra-city trips and connecting trips to adjacent communities.
- Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride: administered by the City of Thousand Oaks and serving the City of Thousand Oaks, plus the unincorporated county areas of Ventu Park, Rolling Oaks, and Lynn Ranch.

As with the fixed-route operators, there are numerous privately-operated paratransit services not eligible for the transit funding contemplated as the focus of this study. These include those operated by Arc of Ventura County, Camarillo Care-A-Van, and Help of Ojai, as well as numerous taxi companies and airport shuttles. Paratransit operations are generally quite expensive in terms of the cost per rider, on the order of 10 times higher per trip than fixed-route transit. On the other hand, they are often less expensive overall than providing fixed-route service in some areas. In

places with difficult terrain or discontinuous street patterns, they may offer the only practical way that public transportation can be provided.

Transit Facilities: The transit facilities of note in the county include passenger stations and maintenance bases. Railroad stations in Oxnard, Camarillo, Moorpark, and Simi Valley are shared by Metrolink and Amtrak. The station in Montalvo is off the main line and is used only by Metrolink, while that in Ventura is used only by Amtrak. Several of these stations have associated bus stops, such as Oxnard and Simi Valley. However, as mentioned earlier, timed transfers between bus and rail rarely occur.

The Oxnard Transportation Center, contiguous with the Oxnard railroad station, is a major facility with timed meets between different bus lines. A similar arrangement occurs at the Thousand Oaks Community Transportation Center, a free-standing facility just off Highway 101. A smaller bus transit center is located in Ventura at the Pacific View Mall. Several park-and-ride lots are scattered throughout the county. With the exception of those at the railroad stations, however, most are oriented to carpooling rather than transit use. Smaller physical amenities, like bus stop signs, benches, and shelters, are located with considerable inconsistency. Shelters are overseen by jurisdictions, not the operators, and few stops are so equipped. Even bus stop signs are not always found at the regular stopping points of certain bus lines, and there is no uniform countywide standard.

Most of the maintenance facilities and storage yards for the county's transit and paratransit services are owned and operated by private contractors. The exceptions are those facilities operated by Gold Coast Transit in Oxnard, and by the public works departments of Ojai, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks. Most of these were said to be reaching their capacities and the need for larger or newer facilities were anticipated in the near future.

Fleets operated by the county's fixed-route services range from standard transit buses and over-the-road coaches, to rubber-tired trolleys and cutaways. Paratransit vehicles use mainly cutaways and vans. By and large, the fleets are relatively new, and many are powered by CNG. Ojai, Simi Valley, and VISTA would like some replacements soon.

Planned Changes (as reported in October 2008): Regarding near-term plans, a few systems, like Simi Valley Transit, had recently restructured routes and felt no need for more changes at the present time. Others, like Ojai Trolley, had some restructuring plans in mind, and Moorpark mentioned an upcoming consultant study of its service. Innovations in equipment appeared to be underway. Many of the bus fleets, such as Gold Coast's, Thousand Oaks', and Simi Valley's, are 100% CNG-fueled. In fact, Thousand Oaks and Gold Coast were among the first to use CNG buses. Nearly all systems were taking advantage of advanced technologies provided by VCTC. These technologies included NextBus for passenger information and operations management, as well as

the Go Ventura smart card for easier fare payment. Most the systems not currently using these technologies expressed the desire to do so. The fact that numerous metropolitan areas around the country still do not employ these technologies demonstrates the receptivity of local county operators to innovation.

Operators' Perspective: Transit personnel that were interviewed in each community were uniformly committed to making improvements to their systems and interested in the prospects of new funding (e.g., Prop1 B). However, most are part of very small staffs dedicated to transit, in many cases only one or two people. Their focus is, by necessity, their current systems. Several freely admitted that there was little or no long-range transit planning, since the maintenance of the existing lines took up all of their time. The County of Ventura adopted a transit vision statement in 2005, calling for creation of a seamless system. However, there has been no consensus on how to implement that vision, nor adequate funding for systematic improvements. It was hoped by many of those interviewed that this Transit Investment Study would be a first step toward that vision.

The consensus of most of the operators was that increases in the intensity of service on their existing routes would take precedent over extensions of these routes or infill with new services. This is a clear reflection of the low frequencies that typify most of the fixed-route lines in the county. Still, there was some interest in future innovation. Gold Coast and Oxnard mentioned the desirability of some form of bus rapid transit on the more heavily traveled corridors, albeit at a lower intensity of service than typically found in larger urban areas. VISTA discussed the need for limited-stop runs in the 101 corridor, as well as between Simi Valley, Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura, which has too many time-consuming local stops. Capital needs identified for the short term varied from replacement buses to expanded maintenance bases. Feelings regarding current bus stop signs and shelters were mixed; some operators said that they had sufficient facilities, others expressed interest in upgrades, and still others were neutral.

A number of challenges were identified in the course of the interviews. Among them, the following are notable:

- There are few concentrated employment areas in most of the jurisdictions, making it difficult to focus transit services;
- The county has “too many operators and not enough coordination”; cross-county trips that require a transfer are especially onerous in terms of a passenger’s time, money, and comfort;
- Though originally established to fund public transportation, the state Transit Development Act (TDA) funds allocated to Ventura County seem to be coveted for road projects; hearings on unmet needs did not necessarily result in greater allocations for transit. This is evidenced by that fact that only 58.5% of TDA is used for transit countywide;
- The agencies’ governing boards seemed interested in maintaining transit service but not necessarily in expanding it. Most of these boards wish to live within the funding limits

currently available for transit and are not able to allocate additional funds because of other competing needs.

See Appendix A for additional information on Existing Conditions.

B. Transit Gaps Analysis

An analysis of gaps in service that was conducted on the existing fixed-route bus transit systems operating in the county. It is based on field surveys, examination of travel and demographic data, and analysis of operating schedules at selected points in the county. Four principal forms of “gaps” were defined:

1. Corridors between service areas where no service is operated today
2. Geographic areas with densities that would warrant transit service but are unserved today
3. Gaps in the hours of service on different bus lines
4. Places where transit routes (or modes, like local bus and commuter rail) come together, but whose arrival and departure times are not coordinated; this results in sometimes lengthy waits for those wishing to make transfers or, in more extreme cases, no practical transfer opportunities at all.

This analysis was conducted as a high-level overview and identified numerous apparent gaps in transit service that later, operational studies that are beyond the scope of this study, should investigate in more detail. Among them are corridor gaps between existing transit services. Several of these may be problematic to fill because of terrain or low travel demand. Out of nine corridors evaluated, five corridors, shown on Figure 2, are recommended for further study: Fillmore-Santa Clarita, Camarillo-Moorpark (two alternate routes), Simi Valley-Thousand Oaks, and Western Oxnard-Ventura. Filling these gaps is important not to serve the land uses in between the end points (as there is little in most cases to serve), but rather to connect areas that already have transit service.

To determine the potential transit demand of each corridor for through travel, countywide travel data were sought. Total trips from one transit service area to another (even if made by automobile) could be used to judge the general magnitude of ridership that would result if transit service were available in that corridor. The 2000 U.S. Census Journey to Work data (see Table 1) were used in conjunction with daily traffic counts obtained from Ventura County and Caltrans to provide a general idea of existing trip making in each corridor. Daily traffic volumes less than 10,000 were considered a sign of relatively low demand, volumes above 30,000 as relatively high, and those in between as moderate. Of course, observed usage of a road is dependent, to an extent, on its capacity.

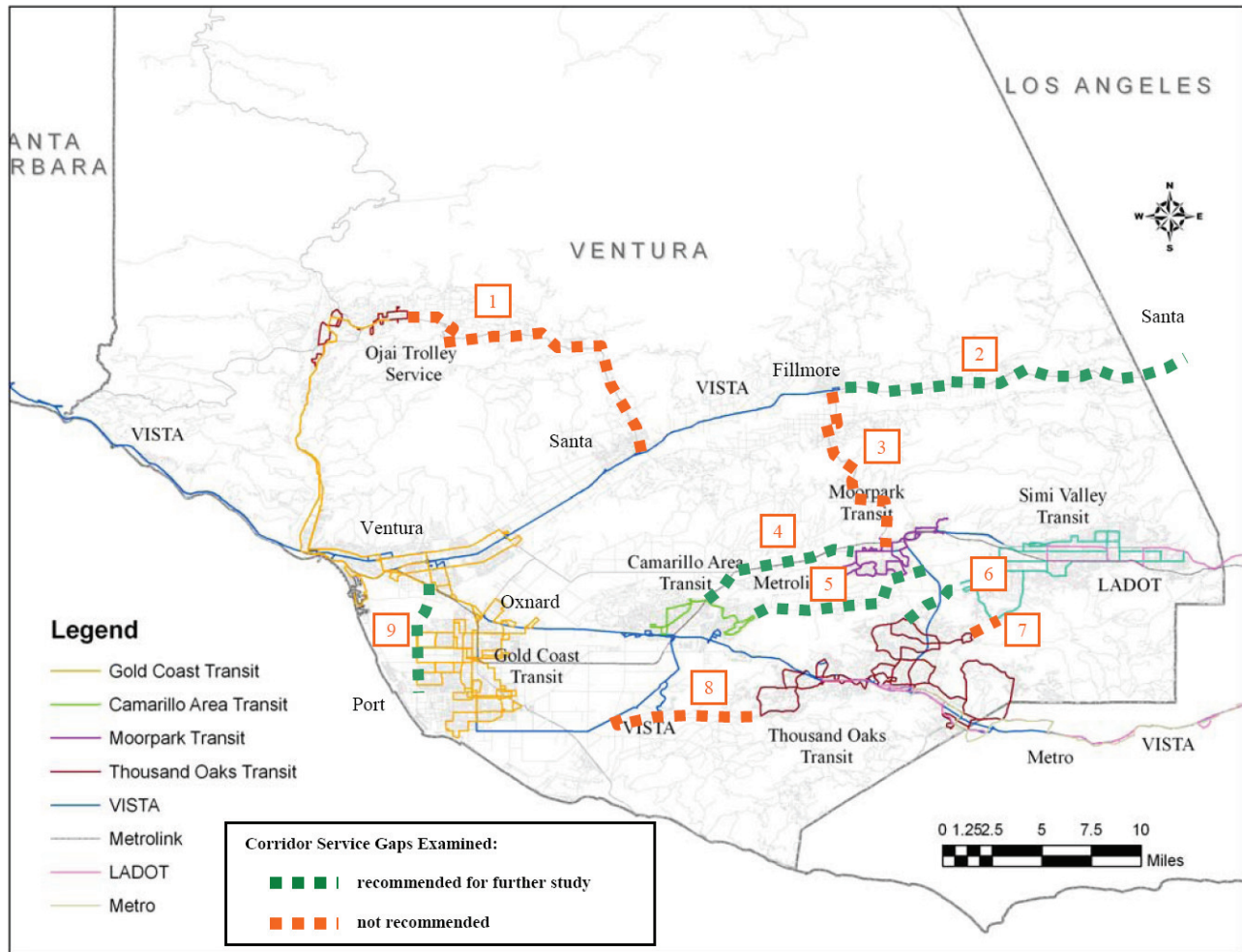


Figure 2. Ventura County Fixed-Route Bus Lines and Corridor Service Gaps

Table 1: 2000 U.S. Census Local Journey to Work Data

| | Camarillo | Casa Conejo | Channel Islands Beach | El Rio | Fillmore | Meiners Oaks | Mira Monte | Moorpark | Oak View | Ojai | Outside of County | Oxnard | Port Hueme | Remainder of County | Santa Paula | Simi Valley | Thousand Oaks | Grand Total |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------|--------|----------|--------------|------------|----------|----------|-------|-------------------|--------|------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Camarillo | 8,910 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 75 | 10 | 4 | 470 | | 40 | 4,149 | 2,905 | 815 | 2,435 | 2,740 | 120 | 2,895 | 26,303 |
| Casa Conejo | 165 | 65 | | | | | | 40 | | | 452 | 90 | 10 | 95 | 75 | 4 | 110 | 1,521 |
| Channel Islands Beach | 110 | | 235 | | 4 | | | 20 | | 10 | 398 | 375 | 70 | 75 | 350 | 15 | 25 | 1,807 |
| El Rio | 225 | | | 170 | | | | 10 | | 10 | 187 | 765 | 80 | 280 | 320 | 45 | 75 | 2,297 |
| Fillmore | 310 | | | 10 | 1,270 | | | 10 | 170 | 15 | 701 | 370 | 50 | 595 | 660 | 390 | 320 | 5,161 |
| Meiners Oaks | 80 | | | 10 | 15 | 225 | 40 | 4 | 40 | 540 | 204 | 120 | 25 | 110 | 285 | 35 | 40 | 1,818 |
| Mira Monte | 180 | | | | 15 | 55 | 265 | 10 | 60 | 610 | 309 | 225 | 55 | 255 | 735 | 40 | 25 | 2,944 |
| Moorpark | 570 | 15 | | 10 | 30 | | 4 | 2,725 | | 10 | 4,941 | 545 | 30 | 745 | 525 | 55 | 1,765 | 14,740 |
| Oak View | 40 | | | | | 10 | 30 | | 175 | 275 | 368 | 110 | 20 | 200 | 660 | 30 | 35 | 1,978 |
| Ojai | 80 | | | | 10 | 140 | 20 | 15 | 10 | 1,550 | 256 | 220 | 30 | 285 | 480 | 25 | 35 | 3,246 |
| Oxnard | 7,465 | 25 | 60 | 450 | 265 | 15 | 40 | 560 | 30 | 215 | 5,341 | 26,175 | 3,695 | 7,995 | 10,090 | 840 | 1,505 | 69,081 |
| Port Hueme | 955 | | 10 | 25 | 35 | | 10 | 120 | | 15 | 638 | 2,510 | 2,480 | 985 | 1,380 | 70 | 175 | 9,778 |
| Remainder of County | 1,860 | 4 | 10 | 25 | 275 | 20 | 40 | 475 | 55 | 680 | 9,728 | 1,740 | 435 | 6,960 | 2,850 | 580 | 850 | 29,782 |
| San Buenaventura (Ventura) | 2,765 | | 40 | 110 | 170 | 50 | 110 | 275 | 50 | 605 | 6,494 | 5,460 | 1,030 | 3,490 | 24,295 | 720 | 710 | 48,674 |
| Santa Paula | 605 | | | 25 | 180 | | | 150 | 10 | 45 | 884 | 1,255 | 140 | 1,710 | 1,960 | 3,375 | 195 | 10,949 |
| Simi Valley | 1,310 | 4 | 10 | 25 | 35 | | 4 | 1,480 | | 65 | 24,154 | 1,055 | 125 | 1,290 | 1,355 | 115 | 19,335 | 55,802 |
| Thousand Oaks | 2,300 | 60 | | 15 | 60 | 20 | | 955 | 4 | 115 | 21,242 | 1,630 | 235 | 2,470 | 1,650 | 190 | 2,415 | 58,001 |
| Grand Total | 27,930 | 188 | 375 | 890 | 2,439 | 545 | 577 | 7,479 | 434 | 4,800 | 80,446 | 45,550 | 9,325 | 29,975 | 50,410 | 6,649 | 28,310 | 343,882 |

A winding two-lane highway may limit a large number of drivers from using it. However, observations in the field indicated that these roadways had generally free-flowing conditions, often at Level of Service A. While some motorists may be discouraged from using them due to grades and alignment, it did not appear that roads themselves were metering the number of cars that possibly could use them. The conclusions from both the travel demand and physical analyses of the corridors are summarized below (keyed to the numbers shown in Figure 2):

- Fillmore-Santa Clarita via State Route 126: Following Telegraph Road through the Santa Clara River Valley, this 22-mile east-west corridor avoids the mountains both north and south of it, providing a level pathway east to I-5 in Santa Clarita, as well as to several employment centers there. There were 701 work trips from Fillmore to locations outside of the county and traffic volumes of 24,000 per day indicate moderate ridership potential, and a demand-responsive service currently connects the communities of Piru and Fillmore. *Recommendation: This corridor shows some promise as a possible bus route, most likely the final leg of service that originates in Ventura.*
- Camarillo-Moorpark via Highway 118: This 12-mile east-west corridor would close the gap in transit service between Moorpark and Camarillo. It is situated on flat terrain, adjacent to farmland and railroad tracks, utilizing Somis Road and West Los Angeles Ave (Highway 118). There are 1040 work trips that occur between Camarillo and Moorpark with Daily traffic Volumes of 19,000. *Recommendation: this corridor shows potentially viable transit patronage.*
- Camarillo-Moorpark via Santa Rosa Road: This 12-mile east-west corridor passes through largely flat land, with some residential development on streets branching off its easterly portion. Again, there are 1040 work trips that occur between Camarillo and Moorpark but more significantly here, 5665 work trips that occur between Camarillo and Thousand Oaks with daily traffic volumes of about 19,000 are similar to those via highway 118. *Recommendation: This corridor offers an alternative to Camarillo-Moorpark via Highway 118, above, for bus service between these communities.*
- Simi Valley-Thousand Oaks via E. Olsen Road: This is a 4-mile east-west corridor centered on Olsen and Madera roads. A bus line here would provide a shorter trip for many riders than the current transfer to VISTA's East County Service using the more circuitous routing on Highways 23 and 101. There are 7855 work trips that occur between Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks but traffic data are not available for this corridor to gauge possible transit demand; former VISTA fixed-route service here was not very successful. *Recommendation: This corridor could be retained for consideration in future analyses to determine if conditions have changed sufficiently to make it more promising to reinstate regular transit service.*
- Oxnard-Ventura via Victoria Avenue: Victoria is a wide north-south street on flat terrain. This 6-mile segment skirts the western fringe of Oxnard and Port Hueneme, and portions of it are served by terminal loops of Gold Coast Transit east-west lines. The segment between Highway 101 and W. 5th Street passes through agricultural uses, but areas to the south are rapidly developing with dense residential and some retail development. Should development occur along the more northerly segments, consideration should be made for using Victoria Avenue as an artery for a new north-south transit service to Ventura. There

are 15,550 work trips that occur between Oxnard and Ventura and the current traffic volumes are a high 44,000 per day, underscoring the potential for strong transit demand. *Recommendation: This corridor should be considered further for possible transit service.*

In addition, ten unserved areas appear to have the population density to justify regular fixed-route service. Many are already served by dial-a-ride operations, which may be the most cost-effective way to provide transit service there. Nonetheless, attracting “choice” riders will likely require the establishment of fixed-route service to negate the need to make reservations and shorten the time it takes to make a trip. The ten areas highlighted on Figure 3 are reasonable starting points for at least considering new or modified fixed-route (or flex-route) bus service.

1. Ventura, east of Ventura Avenue, along Seneca Street
2. Ventura, south of Telephone Road, on either side of the railroad tracks
3. Oxnard, west of Ventura Avenue, north of Gonzales Street
4. Oxnard, west of Victoria Avenue and along Silver Strand, Hollywood Beach, and along Harbor Boulevard
5. Camarillo, south of Highway 101 and north of Pleasant Valley Road (this area does not show up on the density maps but aerial photos reveal extensive residential development)
6. Camarillo, along Lewis and Flynn roads
7. Camarillo, along Upland Road
8. Thousand Oaks, along Pederson Road (currently served by just 2 morning and 2 afternoon trips of TOT Route 2B)
9. Unincorporated County at Oak Park
10. Santa Susana Knolls, near the southeast boundary of Simi Valley

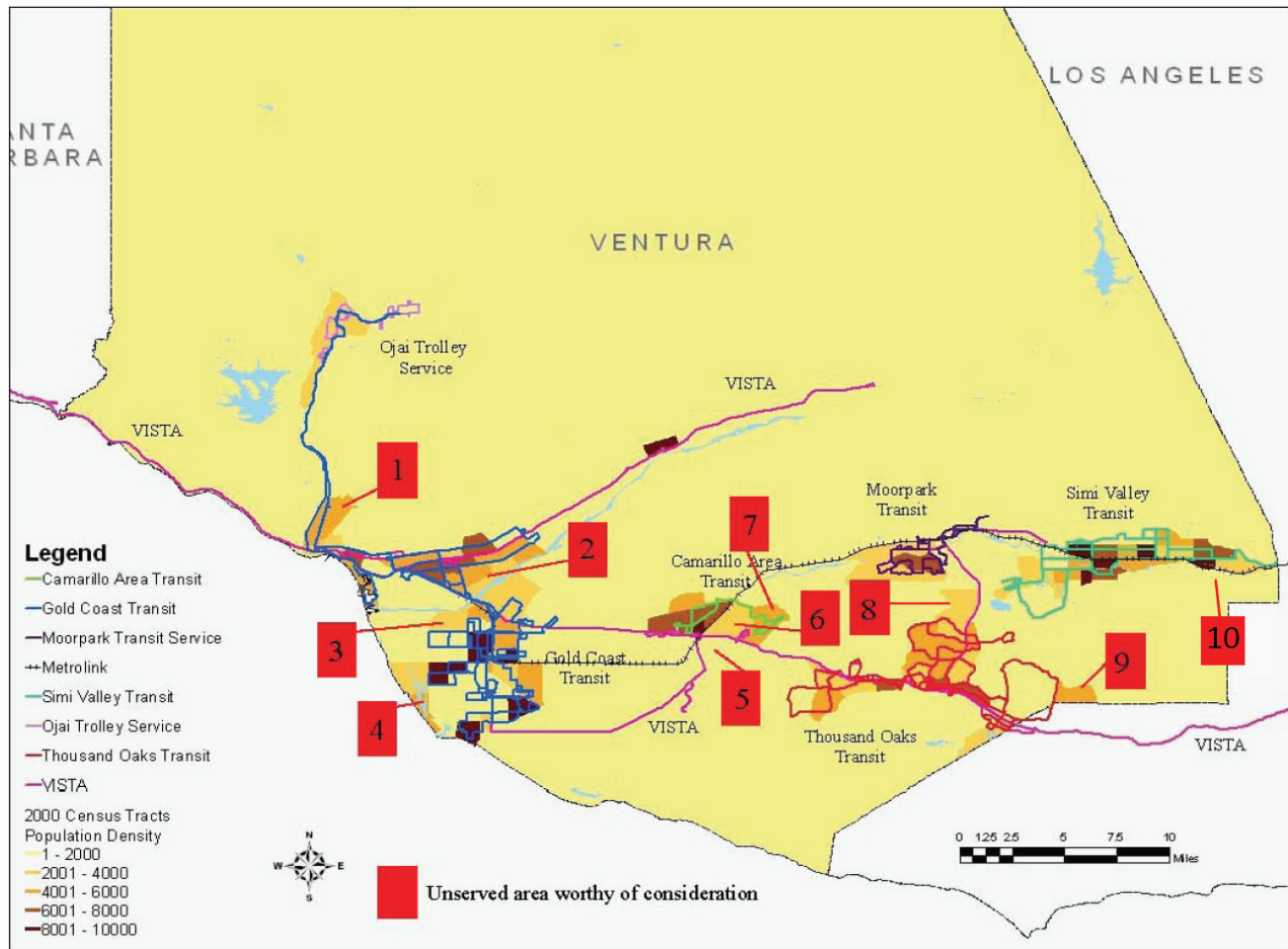


Figure 3. Population Density of Ventura County in Relation to Bus Service

All of these areas, except for number 10, are served by various senior/disabled dial-a-rides. In addition, areas 4, 5, and 7 offer general public Dial-a-Ride service for the general population. In at least one instance, area 4, the transit operator reported that the Beaches and Harbor Shuttle dial-a-ride service is considerably more cost-effective and attracts more ridership than previous fixed-route service in this location. There are no doubt other areas included in the list that have similar histories. Nevertheless, fixed-route transit service has not yet caught up with much of the new residential and commercial development. Such service, with its regularity of schedules, usually proves more attractive to discretionary riders. The ten areas discussed here should be among the first considered for such service enhancements in the future.

It must be noted that a weakness of this gaps analysis is that it assumes that a location within a quarter mile walk of a bus line is “served by transit”, regardless of the level of service of that bus line. In fact, many lines, like those in Camarillo and Moorpark, offer service frequencies of an hour or greater, and several do not operate in evenings or on weekends. When considered in this light,

there are likely many more “gaps” in service than appear at first glance on Figure 2. This issue should be investigated in more depth if and when an operations analysis is conducted on countywide transit services.

A trip that appears possible by looking at a transit map may not be in reality if a transfer is involved; if one of the lines in question has not yet started for the day or has already ended service, then a traveler would not be able to complete their trip. To get an idea of the magnitude of this gap, the spans of service of the 38 lines in the county’s fixed-route bus network were laid out in charts for weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The lack of service on many lines during weekends or early mornings creates a gap of a different sort than the physical gaps identified above. Transit is simply unavailable at these times unless users have access to demand-responsive service. There are gaps midday when certain peak-hour routes are not running. When considering that much of the county’s fixed-route transit service is operated at relatively low frequencies, the “gap” created by low service levels could be much greater than revealed by the initial analysis. The analysis of the timing of transfers at key points in the network indicates plenty of room for improvement. At most, only 20% of bus-to-bus transfers could be considered convenient. In many cases, departing buses miss arriving buses by mere seconds. In other cases, the buses of many routes occupy bays at a transit center simultaneously, but long layovers increase the actual time it takes a transferee to continue a trip.

Riders with a choice of travel modes will want to make their transfers as expeditiously as possible, and transfer times greater than 5 to 10 minutes for bus-to-bus and 10 to 12 minutes for bus-to-rail will not be attractive to them. Improving this situation will require a new approach to how transit vehicles are scheduled throughout the county. This may, in many cases, result in higher operating costs but is sure to result in higher ridership. This, at least, is the experience elsewhere, when conversion to timed-transfers was almost always followed by an increase in riders. Ironically, building in layover time to allow for better timed meets would result in a more attractive service, likely leading to greater ridership and an increase in the overall effectiveness of the system. This is, perhaps, the single most effective measure to increase ridership among the county’s transit providers. To help transit agencies assess how changes in frequency of service might affect ridership, a simple forecasting model was developed as part of this study. The model uses current schedules and ridership as a base, and applies factors gathered from national examples and research to test the effect of changing frequency of service on a route-by-route basis (Appendix D).

Passenger surveys from 2008 provided input from actual users of the transit services and reinforce a widespread desire for better connectivity. For instance, of the 146 results gathered for the Highway 101/Conejo Connection, 25 percent asked for more frequent buses, and 18 percent wanted later service. From this survey group, 61 percent did not have cars and 44 percent were using Saturday service.

For the Highway 126 service, 89 percent did not have cars. Of the 148 persons surveyed, 69 percent lived in Fillmore and 21 percent in Santa Paula. One-third were using transit for school trips; one-fourth for work; and one-fourth for shopping. Seventeen percent planned to transfer—primarily to Gold Coast Transit, VISTA Santa Paula and Fillmore Dial-a-Rides (in that order).

For service in the East County, 61 surveys showed that 67 percent of riders surveyed used the weekday bus to get to school (14% for Saturday service), and 25 per percent traveled to work (57% on Saturday). Twenty six percent of weekday riders and 12 percent of Saturday passengers had a car available for the trip. Passengers requested later service, Sunday service, better on-time performance and more frequent buses during the day.

For the Coastal Express, 73 percent of weekday riders use the bus four or more days a week and an additional 20 percent ride 2 to 4 days a week. In addition to weekday service, the most popular reasons for taking the weekend Coastal Express are 29 percent for trips to/from work and 24 percent for. While 21 percent of weekday riders had no car, 81 percent of weekend riders did not.

Also, input from the Unmet Needs public hearing should be considered. Although some of the following did not meet the feasibility or technical criteria of the Unmet Needs program, this February 2009 data provides important information about users' perspectives on the range and types of transit improvements they desire and can be segregated into three general categories, greater frequency, additional areas and general service improvements:

GREATER FREQUENCY

- Better/faster bus service from South Oxnard to north Oxnard
- Express bus service between Ojai and Ventura and/or Oxnard
- Gold Coast Transit Service after 10 pm to Ojai from Oxnard/Ventura
- Increased frequency on Gold Coast Transit Route 6, including later 6B bus service
- Gold Coast Transit Route 5 to operate later
- Weekend Service to Woodland Hills
- Earlier southbound Conejo Connection to connect with the LA Metro Orange line at 6 am; more and later Conejo Connection service
- Sunday service on the VISTA 101
- Non-stop VISTA 101 Service between "Centers" of Ventura, Oxnard, and Thousand Oaks
- More frequent VISTA EAST service between Simi Valley and City of Westlake Village
- Later morning service to UCSB, later evening service, later weekend service, more service overall
- Increased reverse commute service on the VISTA Coastal Express
- Earlier VISTA 126 Service to Fillmore

- Later VISTA 126 Service on weekends
- Weekend service on Camarillo Area Transit
- Sunday service on the Dial-A-Ride
- Thousand Oaks Transit to operate on the weekends
- Additional evening services on the Dial-A-Ride
- More frequent service on Thousand Oaks Blvd. and Moorpark Road
- Better transit services between Santa Paula and Oxnard for daily work trips
- Earlier and later VISTA 101 service to Pardee Plaza
- Mid-day service on Thousand Oaks Transit
- Increased service on Thousand Oaks Blvd. between the Oaks and Westlake Blvd.
- Either a direct bus from Camarillo to Moorpark College or Metrolink service to Moorpark with start times of 7 or 8 AM
- Additional train service between Ventura and Simi Valley
- More rail service to Santa Barbara; improved rail speeds to Santa Barbara.
- Expansion of Surfliner services
- Mid-day and weekend Metrolink Service from Montalvo to Los Angeles;
- Hourly Metrolink service
- Late night rail service from Los Angeles to Ventura County.
- Earlier bus service countywide

ADDITIONAL AREAS

- Bus service to Valentine Road area (Tech Development Center and Adult Ed school)
- Bus service at or near Gonzales and Victoria, with increased service to Oxnard High School
- Bus service at or near Lombard and Sturgis in Oxnard.
- Transit service from Oxnard to Ventura using the Victoria Corridor, to various destinations in Ventura
- Fixed route transit service on Channel Islands between Center Point Mall and Channel Islands Harbor/County Beach Communities or intermediate points
- Transit service on the Vineyard Corridor, including fixed route service to the Juvenile Justice Center and direct service from El Rio to Saticoy
- Gold Coast Transit Service from Valmore/Preble to Pacific View Mall
- Transit service from East Ventura (on Foothill corridor) to County Hospital
- Transit service to the Oxnard Airport
- Additional stop of Gold Coast Transit route 16
- Transit service to Villa Cesar Chavez
- Direct transit service from the area of Gonzales and Rose to Oxnard College

- Stops added to existing VISTA 101 service, including new stops and additional stops made by existing trips
- VISTA service from Thousand Oaks to Santa Barbara (VISTA 101 connection to Coastal Express)
- VISTA EAST service to Moorpark College
- An added Coastal Express stop at Ventura College
- VISTA Coastal Express to stop at the Santa Barbara Airport
- VISTA CSUCI service extended to the Oxnard Transportation Center (OTC)
- VISTA CSUCI service to connect Oxnard and Camarillo.
- Wants the TOT number 3 (Blue) and/or the number 4 (Red) come out a little farther like the number 3 (Blue) does in the mornings
- Thousand Oaks Transit to provide more direct service from Newbury Park to the Oaks and Westlake
- Wants bus stops at major business parks
- Bus service between Ventura and Point Mugu
- Direct commuter transit service from East Ventura to Moorpark
- Direct transit service from Moorpark to Ventura County Hospital
- Direct transit service from Moorpark to hospitals in Los Angeles County
- Weekend transit service from Thousand Oaks to soccer fields in Calabasas, Simi Valley, Camarillo, Oxnard, Ventura, and Santa Barbara.
- Commuter bus service from Thousand Oaks to Century City
- Direct (non-stop) shuttle service from central locations in each city to Oxnard, Moorpark, and Ventura Colleges
- Bus service from Fillmore to Santa Clarita
- Transit service for Somis and Santa Rosa Valley
- Direct transit service from Ventura to Agoura Hills
- An additional train stop at Haas Automation in Oxnard

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

- Increased bike capacity on buses
- Fare transfers between Gold Coast Transit and VISTA services
- Better connections between VISTA Coastal Express and Gold Coast Transit
- Improve reliability of VISTA 101 service
- Increased VISTA marketing
- Increased/improved signage at bus stops
- Better coordination VISTA and CAT

- Changes in the way Thousand Oaks Transit delivers service including turning all two way loops into one way loops, moving all bus lines to arterials and collectors, and using smaller buses.
- Hybrid or electric shuttles connecting rail stations, universities, parks, medical facilities, and shopping centers
- Better shelter from elements at the Ventura Transit Center
- A permanent train station at Montalvo
- An improved train station in downtown Ventura
- Better information regarding transit on website and at bus stops
- Improved ADA connections between Simi Valley and LA ACCESS

While the above comments often represent individual needs and issues, in combination they clearly underscore the public desire for improved transit. They also show a general consistency with possible projects identified by the study team and the TRANSCOM.

Rail-to-Bus Transfers were also reviewed. The focus was on buses arriving in time to meet southbound trains heading for Los Angeles. The results are summarized below:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Montalvo Station: | Of 2 southbound rail departures during this period, none were conveniently served. There was only one bus arrival (of Route 6A on Bristol Road) during the hour when the two morning rail trips departed. |
| Oxnard Transit Center | Of 4 southbound rail departures during this period, 3 were conveniently served: the 6:59 train was served by 6 bus arrivals, the 7:37 train by 3 bus arrivals, and the 10:11 train by 2 bus arrivals (a total of 11 bus arrivals out of 37 bus arrivals during the hours when trains departed). [Neither of the 2 northbound rail arrivals during this period was conveniently served by a bus departure.] |
| Camarillo Station | Of 4 southbound rail departures during this period, 1 was conveniently served: the 6:30 train was served by 1 bus arrival (out of 14 bus arrivals during the hours when trains departed). [One of the 2 northbound rail arrivals during this period was conveniently served by 1 bus departure.] |
| Moorpark Station | Of 5 southbound rail departures during this period (excluding the 6:03, which would have been fed by buses in the previous time slot), |

2 were conveniently served: the 6:41 and 8:26 trains each were served by a single bus arrival (a total of 2 bus arrivals out of 18 possible bus arrivals during the hours when trains departed). [None of the 3 northbound rail arrivals during this period was conveniently served by a bus departure.]

Simi Valley Station

Of 7 southbound rail departures during this period, 4 were conveniently served: the 6:53 and 7:32 trains each were served by a single bus arrival, while the 8:22 and 8:39 trains each were served by 2 bus arrivals (a total of 6 bus arrivals out of 31 possible bus arrivals during the hours when trains departed). [Each of the 3 northbound rail arrivals during this period was conveniently served by a single bus departure.]

Additional information on the Transit Gaps Analysis process is included in Appendix B.

C. Prioritizing Projects

Given that there are rarely enough funds to meet all of the needs for transit services, a means for evaluating and ranking competing projects is needed. Working closely with members of VCTC's TRANSCOM, evaluation and prioritization criteria were developed and tested. While a key premise of the evaluation process was to maintain current levels of service, relationships between transit and other jurisdictional priorities was also accounted for. The work of the committee resulted in a two-level ranking template, each with weighted criteria that reflect their views on the importance of a specific criterion. The template, shown below, was incorporated into an evaluation procedure (Appendix C). Key features of the procedure are that a proposed project is ranked by its proponents, and then is reviewed by the TRANSCOM members to reach concurrence on its priority on a county-wide basis. The process basically enables the proponent to develop strong justifications of needs and benefits so that a proposal will rank well in a priorities list; the information needed also fosters defining a project in a manner that would be very competitive for grant or other funds. Another feature of the ranking process is that projects which benefit multiple jurisdictions receive bonus points. The evaluation procedure spells out how criteria and weightings can be modified.

EVALUATION MATRIX TEMPLATE

| Table 2: Primary Evaluation Criteria | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| PRIMARY CRITERIA <i>(initially ranked in order of importance by TRANSCOM in December 2008; modify as appropriate)</i> | WEIGHTS <i>(Optional; suggested range: 1-3)</i> | SAMPLE CRITERIA/ THINGS TO CONSIDER <i>(choose from among these as appropriate for the types of projects/ funding being evaluated; add other criteria as needed)</i> | POINTS 0-5 <i>(modify as appropriate)</i> | SCORE <i>(Weight multiplied by Points for those criteria chosen for use in an evaluation)</i> |
| 1. Mandated Improvements | 1 | Required for ADA compliance | | |
| | 2 | Required for air quality compliance | | |
| | 3 | Necessary to support legislative mandates or contractual obligations | | |
| | 1 | Desirable to support legislative mandates | | |
| | 3 | Fulfills unmet transit needs | | |
| | 1 | Required safety improvements | | |
| | | Other | | |
| 2. Preservation of Current Levels of Service | 3 | For transit arterials, provides new improvements or maintenance at bus stops/rail stations | | |
| | 2 | Addresses scheduled replacements or vehicles. | | |
| | 1 | Transportation control devices along transit routes/rail lines | | |
| | 1 | Improves the condition of the sidewalks and streets within 250 feet of a bus stop or rail station. | | |
| | 1 | Supports projects already designated for improvement. | | |
| | 1 | Reduces the backlog of deferred maintenance of sidewalks and streets used for | | |

| Table 2: Primary Evaluation Criteria | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| PRIMARY CRITERIA <i>(initially ranked in order of importance by TRANSCOM in December 2008; modify as appropriate)</i> | WEIGHTS <i>(Optional; suggested range: 1-3)</i> | SAMPLE CRITERIA/ THINGS TO CONSIDER <i>(choose from among these as appropriate for the types of projects/ funding being evaluated; add other criteria as needed)</i> | POINTS 0-5 <i>(modify as appropriate)</i> | SCORE <i>(Weight multiplied by Points for those criteria chosen for use in an evaluation)</i> |
| | | transit. | | |
| | | Other | | |
| 3. Expansion of Transit Service (including shorter headways) | 3 | Improves current access to and from local and/or regional transit stops and rail stations. | | |
| | 3 | Serves/Connects current activity centers (e.g., employment, educational facilities, medical centers, shopping hubs, sporting venues, etc.). | | |
| | 3 | Adds or improves connectivity to other local and/or regional transit services. | | |
| | 1 | Serves anticipated growth in transit demand (e.g., in a specific region) - what time horizon? | | |
| | 2 | Improves speed and reliability of transit vehicles. | | |
| | 2 | Improves bus stop/rail station performance for buses, such as reducing transfer time. | | |
| | 3 | Likely to increase the percentage of trips made by transit and reduce the percentage by automobile. | | |
| | 3 | Provides new/improved service during peak hours. | | |
| | 2 | Provides new/improved service during off-peak hours. | | |

| Table 2: Primary Evaluation Criteria | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| PRIMARY CRITERIA <i>(initially ranked in order of importance by TRANSCOM in December 2008; modify as appropriate)</i> | WEIGHTS <i>(Optional; suggested range: 1-3)</i> | SAMPLE CRITERIA/ THINGS TO CONSIDER <i>(choose from among these as appropriate for the types of projects/ funding being evaluated; add other criteria as needed)</i> | POINTS 0-5 <i>(modify as appropriate)</i> | SCORE <i>(Weight multiplied by Points for those criteria chosen for use in an evaluation)</i> |
| | 3 | Fulfills a new, unmet transit need. | | |
| | 2 | Meets needs of special population group | | |
| | | Other | | |
| 4. Financial Sustainability | 3 | Provides matching funds | | |
| | 3 | Effects on fares and operating costs. | | |
| | 2 | Availability of ongoing operating funds. | | |
| | 1 | Likelihood for additional operating funds. | | |
| | 2 | Availability of ongoing staff to implement. | | |
| | 1 | Likelihood for additional staff. | | |
| | 1 | Degree to which need for other funding is increased. | | |
| | 1 | Degree to which need for other funding is decreased. | | |
| | | Other | | |
| 5. Readiness | 2 | Ability to procure in a timely manner. | | |
| | 1 | Status of design (if applicable). | | |
| | 1 | Need to implement in phases | | |
| | | Other | | |
| TOTAL PRIMARY SCORE | | | | |

| Table 3: Secondary Criteria | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| SECONDARY CRITERIA <i>(initially ranked in order of importance by TRANSCOM in December 2008; modify as appropriate)</i> | WEIGHTS <i>(Optional; suggested range: 1-2)</i> | SAMPLE CRITERIA/ THINGS TO CONSIDER <i>(choose from among these as appropriate for the types of projects/ funding being evaluated; add other criteria as needed)</i> | POINTS 0-5 <i>(modify as appropriate)</i> | SCORE <i>(Weight multiplied by Points for those criteria chosen for use in an evaluation)</i> |
| 6. Non-transit influences | 1 | Critical to other city projects/ priorities | | |
| | 1 | Supportive/desirable for other city projects/priorities. | | |
| | | Other | | |
| 7. Other | 1 | Criteria specified by funding program (if applicable and not listed elsewhere above) | | |
| 8. Bonus Points | 2 | 1 point for each additional operating agency that would be served | | |
| | | Other | | |
| TOTAL SECONDARY SCORE | | | | |

| Table 4: Other Considerations | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| CRITERIA (no priority order) | WEIGHTS (Optional; suggested range: (1-2) | SAMPLE CRITERIA/ THINGS TO CONSIDER (choose from among these as appropriate for the types of projects/ funding being evaluated; add other criteria as needed) | POINTS 0-5 (modify as appropriate) | SCORE (Weight multiplied by Points for those criteria chosen for use in an evaluation) |
| Improvements to Ride Quality | | Improves quality of transit stops, including comfort and convenience. | | |
| | | Improves information provided to users. | | |
| Safety/Security | | Eliminates or reduces a specific safety/security hazard. | | |
| | | Supports general or systemwide safety/security improvements. | | |
| Community Impacts | | Negative and positive effects, including air quality, noise, traffic, property acquisitions, and “going green”. | | |
| | | Community support/opposition. | | |
| Compatibility /conflict with Regional and Local Plans | | Part of an adopted transportation plan (e.g., congestion management, etc.). | | |
| | | Supports an adopted or pending transportation plan. | | |
| | | Supports community and economic development, business functionality, and creation or retention of employment. | | |
| | | Provides or increases access to business districts and/or employers. | | |
| | | Provides infrastructure or service to support new employment. | | |
| | | Is a required mitigation measure. | | |

| Table 4: Other Considerations | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | | Supports local land use or transit-oriented development. | | |
| Strategic | | Necessary predecessor for subsequent projects. | | |
| | | Desirable predecessor for subsequent projects. | | |
| TOTAL SCORE | | | | |

D. Projects

Transit operating agencies provided listings for desired projects during the interviews conducted in October 2008. These included new and replacement vehicles for both paratransit and fixed routes, additional or upgrade passenger stops/stations, and new or upgraded maintenance facilities. Desired improvements addressed maintaining current levels of service, improving reliability and creating the ability to expand service.

Projects from these categories were submitted for ARRA funding in early 2009. As of June 10, VCTC had received funding notices for the following 25 transit projects.

| Table 5: Candidate Projects for ARRA Funding | | |
|---|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Project | Amount | Responsible Agency |
| Bus Transfer Facility at Central and Del Norte | \$ 24,000 | Camarillo |
| Two Type II Buses and Three Type I Buses | \$ 258,514 | Camarillo Health Care District |
| Replacement Supervisory Vehicles and Related Equipment | \$ 185,000 | Gold Coast Transit |
| Eight CNG-fueled Transit Buses | \$ 3,608,000 | Gold Coast Transit |
| Upgraded Farebox System | \$ 600,000 | Gold Coast Transit |
| Operations Facility Modernization | \$ 2,091,257 | Gold Coast Transit |
| Transit Enhancements | \$ 101,723 | Gold Coast Transit |
| ADA Paratransit Operations | \$ 1,000,000 | Gold Coast Transit |
| Track/Structure Restoration | \$ 1,146,535 | Metrolink |
| Positive Train Control Design | \$ 2,480,000 | Metrolink |
| Central Maintenance Facility Improvements & Keller Yard | \$ 960,000 | Metrolink |
| Metrolink Operating Assistance | \$ 582,000 | Metrolink |
| Three CNG-fueled Transit Buses | \$ 1,260,000 | Moorpark |
| ADA Paratransit Operations | \$ 52,175 | Moorpark |

| Table 5: Candidate Projects for ARRA Funding | | |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|
| Project | Amount | Responsible Agency |
| Three LPG-fueled Buses | \$ 465,970 | Ojai |
| Replace/upgrade Deteriorated Transit Shelters | \$ 484,000 | Simi Valley |
| Modernization of Transit Garage | \$ 867,349 | Simi Valley |
| Three CNG-fueled Transit Buses | \$ 1,380,000 | Simi Valley |
| ADA Paratransit Operations | \$ 303,400 | Simi Valley |
| Five 12 passenger CNG-fueled Cutaway Vehicles | \$ 425,000 | Thousand Oaks |
| Bus Stop Enhancements | \$ 39,511 | Thousand Oaks |
| ADA Paratransit Operations | \$ 111,240 | Thousand Oaks |
| Particulate Traps for 40 VISTA Buses | \$ 400,000 | VCTC |
| Smart Card Upgrade | \$ 168,000 | VCTC |
| Scales for ADA Certification | \$ 10,000 | VCTC |
| Total for Transit | \$6,548,645 | 14.5% of total award |
| Highway Projects | \$38,515,826 | 85.5% of total award |
| Total ARRA Funding | \$45,064,481 | |

Some Remainder Projects

From the desired listings of projects originally identified by operating agencies, the following are examples of some of the needs over the next few years that were not addressed by the ARRA funding. This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to illustrate the breadth of needs across the county and magnitude of costs. This range of identified needs also underscores the need for the prioritization process to help assure that projects are funded in a logical and complementary manner. It also underscores the desirability for improvements in the planning process discussed elsewhere.

| Table 6: Near-Term Project Needs Not Addressed by ARRA | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Agency | Project | Estimated Cost |
| Camarillo | 14 to 20- passenger vehicles for Dial-A-Ride (35-40 vehicles) | \$ 4.0 to 6.0 M |
| Camarillo | 26 to 30 passenger fixed route vehicles (5-6 vehicles) | \$ 1.0 to 2.0 M |
| Camarillo | Benches/shelters/ schedules improvements | \$ 250,000 |
| Camarillo | Metrolink station improvements | \$ 1.0 M |
| Camarillo | Pedestrian grade separation at Metrolink station | \$17.0 M |
| Gold Coast Transit | Replacement vehicles for fixed routes and paratransit | \$ 2.0 to 4.0 M |
| Moorpark | Replacement vehicles for fixed routes and paratransit | \$ 2.0 to 4.0 M |

| Table 6: Near-Term Project Needs Not Addressed by ARRA | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Agency | Project | Estimated Cost |
| Moorpark | Bus Stop Enhancements | \$ 200,000 |
| Ojai | Maintenance Facility | \$ 500,000 |
| Ojai | Transit stop enhancements | \$ 75,000 |
| Simi Valley | Replacement vehicles for fixed routes and paratransit | \$ 4.0 to 6.0 M |
| Simi Valley | Farebox replacements | \$ 1.0 M |
| Simi Valley | Additional Metrolink parking | \$ 1.0 to 2.0 M |
| Simi Valley | Safety improvements | \$ 500,000 |
| Oxnard | Bus Stop Enhancements | \$ 500,000 |
| Thousand Oaks | Replacement vehicles for fixed routes and paratransit | \$ 2.0 to 3.0 M |
| Thousand Oaks | Safety improvements | \$ 500,000 |

Consultant Recommendations Regarding Projects

Near Term

As a precursor to specific projects beyond those that are now funded by ARRA, Jacobs recommends additional studies to build upon the issues raised and work conducted in the study. These studies are intended to more fully evaluate issues which have been looked at only from a high level.

A recurring comment from study participants was that service across jurisdictional boundaries needed to be better coordinated. This study considered this issue at a high level view in the Gaps Analysis, which documented the sensitivity of coordinating schedules at points where transit services connect. The arrival, waiting and departure times at such points are critical for patrons to make trips in which they must use multiple transit services. The ability of the transit operators to make these interconnections is complicated by sometimes competing needs to them to ensure timely service at other locations. In order to allow VCTC and the operators to begin to explore how schedule changes could affect both individual services and the connection points, a simple modeling technique was developed (Appendix D). However, to develop schedules that take into account the needs for all components of the individual systems and ensure effective interconnections, Jacobs recommends that a detailed analysis of schedules for each jurisdiction and from a system wide basis be conducted.

Closely related to developing a more effective schedule, Jacobs recommends that opportunities for enhancing interagency coordination and cooperative efforts be further explored. One of the potential outcomes of improved scheduling could well be that some trips would be much better for patrons if they did not have to make transfers. The need for transfers is driven in many cases by operating agencies not being able to cross jurisdictional boundaries. One way to optimize the trips for patrons would be to enable transit services to be focused on serving entire routes that fully link destinations without regard to geographic boundaries. Implementing this type of service could be accomplished through inter-local agreements among adjoining cities, or other means. The latter might include organizing the transit providers as operating units that serve travel demand markets, rather than being geographically focused; new or additional service-sharing on a subarea basis; or new or additional shared maintenance.

Consideration should also be given to consolidation of several existing services within sub-areas of the county, perhaps east and west. Inter-local agreements could be formed between neighboring cities with common transit needs. These inter-local agreements might take the form of combined paratransit operations, combined fixed route services, shared maintenance, shared purchasing, or other activities where better efficiencies could be realized.

During the public outreach efforts for this study, many participants lauded VCTC for inviting comment on plans and issues in a workshop setting that was accessible in terms of location and used interactive formats. The methods for invitation included both mailings and individual phone contacts, to help be sure that individuals became aware of meetings, rather than relying only on newspaper advertisements. There were also commendations for using the internet to distribute information and to seek comment. Jacobs recommends that VCTC, and the operating agencies continue and expand their public communications efforts beyond the typical public hearings on specific programs. Consideration should be given to:

- Presentations at community events
- Speakers bureau including transit agency board members
- Using social communication tools (such as Facebook and Twitter) to provide timely messages on issues and to direct recipients to the websites for more details
- Using the websites to solicit comments
- Conducting electronic town hall meetings, which are capable of accommodating thousands of listeners simultaneously at very low cost.

Long Term

Given the size of Ventura County and its ongoing change into a suburbanized county, creation of countywide transit service should also be considered. Additionally, the potential for a countywide

sales tax underscores the need for development of a comprehensive approach and a long-term transit plan. Both would be important to garnering voter support. Creating a countywide service could occur in a variety of ways: phased consolidation of existing operators; designation of one of the existing operators as a master operating agency to guide creating of a countywide service; change VCTC 's role to become an operating agency; create a new operating agency; or other approaches or combinations.

A long term transit plan should evaluate internal circulation in communities and across the county over time, the provision of transit connections to other parts of the region, options for operating the system elements, options for financing, and the myriad and interconnected issues needed to create a comprehensive and cost-effective service for the residents and businesses of Ventura County. There are two basic approaches to developing a long term plan—determine what incremental increases would be needed to continue current (and relatively low) levels of service, or to define high levels of transit mobility for all areas of the county and lay out the process for achieving more robust service.

The benefits of a well-crafted long term plan are not only for transit users, but have also been shown to be a critical element in attracting and retaining jobs. The availability of good transit is a top-level, “must-have” component in the ever-increasing competition among communities to attract desirable employers.

E. Community Outreach

In addition to the outreach for this study, comments from the 2008 passenger surveys and the Unmet Needs public hearing held February 2, 2009 provided another validation of desires for improved transit. The Findings Report from those hearings noted “most of the testimony fell into several broad categories: expanded and/or more frequent bus service; better coordination among bus systems; improved bus service for seniors and the disabled; and increased train service.”

Several efforts were undertaken to help assure that this Transit Investment Study included public comment. These included:

- Development of a survey instrument to solicit and track issues
- Development of a countywide database and organizations to be contacted regarding surveys and meetings
- One-on-one or telephone interviews with elected officials

- Development of an on-line survey of transportation issues that was posted on the VCTC website
- Published notices and made individual calls regarding public meetings
- Conducted two public outreach workshops.

Results

Key results of these efforts are summarized below. Additional information is contained in Appendix E.

Survey Tool: The survey instrument sought information using the following questions:

1. *What Ventura County city do you reside?*
2. *Which specific issues concern you regarding the existing public transportation services and/or infrastructure?*
3. *In your opinion, what are the most commonly cited transportation infrastructure deficiencies?*
4. *In Ventura County, which areas/communities do you believe have insufficient public transit options?*
5. *Should Ventura County be focused on pursuing local or regional transit solutions?*
6. *Which public transit projects do you believe are a priority?*
7. *In your city, do you believe there is adequate funding for public transportation? Which projects do you believe should receive funding?*
8. *Would you and/or your friends and family support a regional tax measure devoted to expanding transportation infrastructure?*
9. *In your opinion, what can VCTC do to encourage cooperation between cities to form a cohesive transportation vision?*
10. *Please identify any current issues or concerns that you are aware of in your community that may affect future transportation improvements.*

- 11. What can VCTC do in their public outreach and/or information materials to encourage community members to participate in this study?*
- 12. What key stakeholders/organizations would you suggest meeting with that would be interested in participating in this study?*
- 13. Are there any additional transportation improvements that are needed that we have not discussed?*

Database: The database includes more than 550 individuals and organizations. Not only was this used for the study, but it provides useful information for future public outreach efforts by VCTC and the operating agencies.

Interviews with Elected Officials: One-on-one interviews were conducted with 16 elected officials about their perspectives on the transportation needs of the County. In addition to the one-on-one interviews, the surveys were used to solicit input at the January 29, 2009 meeting for elected officials hosted by the Ventura County of Governments. The most important issues with regard to the current and future transportation needs for Ventura County were (in order of prevalence):

1. Frequency of transit thereby reducing headways
2. Connectivity between east and west Ventura County
3. Accessibility to transit via more strategically based bus stops and increasing weekend/evening service
4. Service deficiencies throughout Ventura County especially in Santa Paula, Fillmore and Ojai
5. Lack of funding throughout Ventura County creating transportation challenges on both the local and regional level; however, participants largely agreeing that constituents would not support a tax measure to increase funding.

Public Meeting Notifications: Meeting notices were mailed to all persons in database, as well as others. Approximately 800 notices were mailed. The workshops were publicized in the Ventura County Star and The Acorn newspapers. Leading up to each workshop, reminder phone calls were placed to leading business groups, transportation-oriented groups, and community-based organizations to encourage attendance and participation. Several of these groups committed to distribute the workshop invitation to their membership, post the workshop information on their

membership calendar, announce the workshop at their board meeting, post the workshop information on their website, and mention the workshop in their newsletters.

On-Line Surveys: The meeting notices identified how to provide comments via the VCTC website; this has become an industry standard for enabling those who cannot attend meetings to participate. Twelve on-line surveys were submitted via the VCTC website, which ran during the entire notification process and public workshops. The on-line input is combined with the results of the workshops, below.

Public Workshops: Two workshops on this Transit Investment Study were held - April 9, 2009 in Camarillo and April 15, 2009 in Thousand Oaks. At each of these an overview of the study process was presented and visitors were provided several opportunities to provide comments. These included the questionnaire, posting of specific areas of concern on large aerial maps, and to talk with the project study team and representatives of VCTC and the operating agencies. ***There was a very favorable reaction to the workshop format and several participants asked that there be more such outreach.*** Participants represented various cities including: Ventura (15), Camarillo (14), Oxnard (5), Newbury Park (5), Ojai (3), Port Hueneme (3), Santa Paula (2), Simi Valley (2), Somis (2) and 1 each from Oak Park, Thousand Oaks, Moorpark and Buena Ventura. What is noteworthy is the distances that people were willing to travel to participate

Key Findings from the Public Workshops and On-Line Surveys

Overall, respondents feel that public transit is slow and inconvenient. There is an overwhelming sense that connectivity around the County needs to be improved whether it is by bus, train, or bike paths. Generally residents feel that it is easier to get in their car and drive to their destination.

Regional Issues

1. Frequency- More frequent service would minimize the amount of time riders spend on the bus and would help promote transit as a viable transportation alternative.
2. Connectivity- Lack of connectivity and coordination between cities makes it difficult for transit riders to travel from one side of the County to the other, whether east to west or north to south. Stronger transit connections between cities need to exist to create accessibility to jobs, educational centers, government centers, etc.
3. Accessibility- Enhance accessibility by providing more busses, additional strategic bus stops and improving service during evenings and weekends. Identify job access areas that should be transit accessible.
4. Multi-modal transit center- Create a transit hub in downtown Ventura that ties

Metrolink, Amtrak, Greyhound, VISTA and future rail service.

5. Regional bus service- Combine existing transit services into one regional bus service managed by a regional authority. Respondents said this would increase the effectiveness of funding and service throughout Ventura County.
6. Expansion- Work to expand Gold Coast in the west and work on a regional system for the east County; integrate services with VISTA.
7. VCOG/VCTC- Merge VCOG and VCTC into a true regional planning and transportation agency; give the new agency power to create the Sustainable Communities Strategy required under SB 375.

Local Issues

1. Transit deficiencies
 - a. Increase transit options specifically VISTA service in East County cities such as Ojai, Fillmore, Santa Paula, and Piru not only to connect between cities but enhance accessibility to the rest of the County.
 - b. Currently, unincorporated areas outside of Ojai city limits do not have sufficient public transit options.
 - c. Northwest Port Hueneme and Hueneme Bay do not have mass transit especially for seniors who reside in that region.
 - d. Improve transit west of Victoria Avenue, beach communities, and Oxnard Transportation Center.
 - e. No public transit from Simi Valley to Oxnard.
 - f. Bus service is lacking in Port Hueneme, Thousand Oaks, and Camarillo.
 - g. Cal State Channel Islands buses are too large and limited to only a few of the campus roadways.
 - h. VISTA is the only option from Ventura to Santa Barbara.
 - i. Increased daytime/evening and night connections with VISTA Coastal Express.
2. Dial-A-Ride programs- Protect transportation options for the aging and disabled population who depend on dial-a-ride and paratransit programs to travel throughout Ventura County.
3. Metrolink- Expand Metrolink service in Ventura County by providing a station in downtown Ventura and Thousand Oaks.
4. Bike paths- Create more bike paths and increase pedestrian pathways in every city.
5. Bus shelters- Provide more bus shelters in every city.

6. Funding- Provide funding for Ojai Trolley, Gold Coast Transit, and HELP Ojai's van service.
7. Street paving- Improve both streets and highways by repaving existing roads.
8. SR-101/ SR-23 interchange- Upgrade existing interchange to reduce bottlenecks and increase the flow of traffic.
9. SR- 118- Widen and landscape SR-118 to increase flow of traffic in Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks and Moorpark region.
10. Improvements- Improve bypass on Highway 33 through Casitas Springs to increase safety and reduce traffic.

Funding

The general consensus is that there is not enough funding on both the local and regional levels and there is an ongoing struggle to find resources to fund projects. Cities are faced with difficult challenges when prioritizing projects based on limited federal financial support. Furthermore, Ventura County lacks funding for both capital projects and ongoing maintenance and operations.

Potential Tax Measure

While more than half of those that responded at the VCOG meeting said that their constituents would not support a tax measure devoted to transportation infrastructure, more than 60% of the attendees from the community workshops said they would support a tax measure.

F. Other Consultant Recommendations

Near Term

During the public outreach efforts for this study, many participants lauded VCTC for inviting comment on plans and issues in a workshop setting that was accessible in terms of location and presentation. The methods for invitation included both mailings and individual phone contacts. There were also commendations for using the internet to distribute information and to seek comment. Jacobs recommends that VCTC, and the operating agencies continue and expand their public communications efforts beyond the typical public hearings on specific programs. Consideration should be given to:

- Presentations at community events
- Using social communication tools (such as Facebook and Twitter) to provide timely messages on issues and to direct recipients to the websites for more details
- Using the websites to solicit comments
- Conducting electronic town hall meetings, which are capable of accommodating thousands of listeners simultaneously at very low cost.

Increased public communications should become a hallmark for transportation planning and services. As was evident in the 2008 ridership survey and 2009 Unmet Needs public hearing, members who now use transit are willing to express their views on current services and desired improvements. The input received for this Transit Investment Study are indicative of the overall support for transit as a baseline public service that should be expanded to support the quality of life throughout Ventura County. A robust communication process is a cost-effective way to create and maintain the numerous partnerships among governments, businesses, organizations, transit advocates, and the general public that are needed to build a transit system that supports economic vitality and makes Ventura a desirable place to live, work and play.

As a way to underscore the importance that the general population places on quality transit, even during economically challenging times, consider that a recent poll in Los Angeles County indicated that, despite a worse economy than in November 2008, voters would still overwhelmingly vote for Measure R, the self-imposed transportation tax.