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Chapter 1 | Executive Summary

In 2022, the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) selected Moore & Associates, Inc., to prepare Triennial Performance Audits of itself as the RTPA and the 10 transit operators to which it allocates TDA funding.

The California Public Utilities Code requires all recipients of Transit Development Act (TDA) Article 4 funding to undergo an independent performance audit on a three-year cycle in order to maintain funding eligibility. Audits of Article 8 recipients are encouraged.

The Triennial Performance Audit is designed to be an independent and objective evaluation of Thousand Oaks Transit (TOT) as a public transit operator, providing operator management with information on the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of its programs across the prior three fiscal years. In addition to assuring legislative and governing bodies (as well as the public) that resources are being economically and efficiently utilized, the Triennial Performance Audit fulfills the requirement of PUC Section 99246(a) that the RTPA designate an entity other than itself to conduct a performance audit of the activities of each operator to which it allocates TDA funds.

This chapter summarizes key findings and recommendations developed during the Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) of Thousand Oaks Transit public transit program for the period:

- Fiscal Year 2019/20,
- Fiscal Year 2020/21, and
- Fiscal Year 2021/22.

The City of Thousand Oaks' transit program is marketed as Thousand Oaks Transit (TOT). The TOT service area includes the cities of Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village; as well as Ventura County's unincorporated areas of Newbury Park, Ventu Park, Lynn Ranch, Rolling Oaks, Oak Park, Hidden Valley, and Lake Sherwood. It is accessible via State Route 23 from the north and U.S. Highway 101 from the east and west.

The City's fixed-route system is comprised of five fixed routes which cover Thousand Oaks, a portion of Westlake Village, and portions of unincorporated Ventura County. Fixed-route service hours are 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Saturday.

The City's door-to-door Dial-A-Ride service is available to passengers 65 years of age or above and Americans with Disabilities Act cardholders. Dial-A-Ride hours of operation are the same as those of regular fixed-route buses, except service is also offered from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday. Dial-A-Ride service is provided throughout Thousand Oaks, to Westlake Village, and to the county's unincorporated areas of Newbury Park, Ventu Park, Lynn Ranch, Rolling Oaks, Oak Park, Hidden Valley and Lake Sherwood. A City-issued Dial-A-Ride card is required.

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that the audit team plans and performs the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for its findings and conclusions based on the audit

objectives. Moore & Associates, Inc. believes the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions.

This audit was also conducted in accordance with the processes established by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as outlined in the *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities*.

The Triennial Performance Audit includes five elements:

- Compliance requirements,
- Prior recommendations,
- Analysis of program data reporting,
- Performance Audit, and
- Functional review.

Test of Compliance

Based on discussions with TOT staff, analysis of program performance, and an audit of program compliance and function, the audit team presents no compliance findings.

Status of Prior Recommendations

The prior audit – completed in February 2018 by Moore & Associates, Inc. for the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2017 – included no recommendations.

Findings and Recommendations

Based on discussions with TOT staff, analysis of program performance, and a review of program compliance and function, the audit team submits no compliance findings for Thousand Oaks Transit.

The audit team has identified one functional finding. While this finding is not a compliance finding, the audit team believes it warrants inclusion in this report:

1. The contractor’s staffing shortage is impacting the City’s ability to operate its transit programs.

In completing this Triennial Performance Audit, we submit the following recommendations for TOT’s public transit program. They have been divided into two categories: TDA Program compliance recommendations and functional recommendations. TDA program compliance recommendations are intended to assist in bringing the operator into compliance with the requirements and standards of the TDA, while Functional Recommendations address issues identified during the triennial audit that are not specific to TDA compliance.

Exhibit 1.1 Summary of Audit Recommendations

Functional Recommendations		Importance	Timeline
1	Continue to work with MV Transportation to fill the open operations positions and ensure sufficient Dial-A-Ride coverage.	High	Until filled

Chapter 2 | Audit Scope and Methodology

The Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) of Thousand Oaks Transit’s public transit program covers the three-year period ending June 30, 2022. The California Public Utilities Code requires all recipients of Transit Development Act (TDA) funding to complete an independent review on a three-year cycle in order to maintain funding eligibility.

In 2022, the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) selected Moore & Associates, Inc., to prepare Triennial Performance Audits of itself as the RTPA and the 10 transit operators to which it allocates TDA funding. Moore & Associates, Inc. is a consulting firm specializing in public transportation, including audits of non-TDA Article 4 recipients. Selection of Moore & Associates, Inc. followed a competitive procurement process.

The Triennial Performance Audit is designed to be an independent and objective evaluation of Thousand Oaks Transit as a public transit operator. Direct benefits of a Triennial Performance Audit include providing operator management with information on the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of its programs across the prior three years; helpful insight for use in future planning; and assuring legislative and governing bodies (as well as the public) that resources are being economically and efficiently utilized. Finally, the Triennial Performance Audit fulfills the requirement of PUC Section 99246(a) that the RTPA designate an entity other than itself to conduct a performance audit of the activities of each operator to whom it allocates funds.

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that the audit team plans and performs the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for its findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. The auditors believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions.

The audit was also conducted in accordance with the processes established by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as outlined in the *Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities*, as well as *Government Audit Standards* published by the U.S. Comptroller General.

Objectives

A Triennial Performance Audit (TPA) has four primary objectives:

1. Assess compliance with TDA regulations;
2. Review improvements subsequently implemented as well as progress toward adopted goals;
3. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit operator; and
4. Provide sound, constructive recommendations for improving the efficiency and functionality of the transit operator.

Scope

The TPA is a systematic review of performance evaluating the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of the transit operator. The audit of TOT included five tasks:

1. A review of compliance with TDA requirements and regulations.
2. A review of the status of recommendations included in the prior Triennial Performance Audit.
3. A verification of the methodology for calculating performance indicators including the following activities:
 - Assessment of internal controls,
 - Test of data collection methods,
 - Calculation of performance indicators, and
 - Evaluation of performance.
4. Comparison of data reporting practices:
 - Internal reports,
 - State Controller Reports, and
 - National Transit Database.
5. Examination of the following functions:
 - General management and organization;
 - Service planning;
 - Scheduling, dispatching, and operations;
 - Personnel management and training;
 - Administration;
 - Marketing and public information; and
 - Fleet maintenance.
6. Conclusions and recommendations to address opportunities for improvement based upon analysis of the information collected and the audit of the transit operator's major functions.

Methodology

The methodology for the Triennial Performance Audit of Thousand Oaks Transit included thorough review of documents relevant to the scope of the audit, as well as information contained on TOT's website. The documents reviewed included the following (spanning the full three-year period):

- Monthly performance reports;
- State Controller Reports;
- Annual budgets;
- TDA fiscal audits;
- Transit marketing collateral;
- TDA claims;
- Fleet inventory;
- Preventive maintenance schedules and forms;
- California Highway Patrol Terminal Inspection reports;
- National Transit Database reports;

- Accident/road call logs; and
- Organizational chart.

Given impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the methodology for this audit included a virtual site visit with TOT representatives on February 21, 2023. The audit team met with Mike Houser (Transit Program Manager) and reviewed materials germane to the triennial audit.

This report is comprised of eight chapters divided into three sections:

1. Executive Summary: A summary of the key findings and recommendations developed during the Triennial Performance Audit process.
2. TPA Scope and Methodology: Methodology of the review and pertinent background information.
3. TPA Results: In-depth discussion of findings surrounding each of the subsequent elements of the audit:
 - Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements,
 - Status of prior recommendations,
 - Consistency among reported data,
 - Performance measures and trends,
 - Functional audit, and
 - Findings and recommendations.

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Chapter 3 | Program Compliance

This section examines Thousand Oaks Transit’s compliance with the Transportation Development Act as well as relevant sections of the California Code of Regulations. An annual certified fiscal audit confirms TDA funds were apportioned in conformance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. TOT considers full use of funds under California Code of Regulations (CCR) 6754(a) as referring to operating funds but not capital funds. The TPA findings and related comments are delineated in Exhibit 3.1.

Status of compliance items was determined through discussions with TOT staff as well as an inspection of relevant documents including the fiscal audits for each year of the triennium, State Controller annual filings, California Highway Patrol terminal inspections, National Transit Database reports, year-end performance reports, and other compliance-related documentation.

No compliance issues were identified for Thousand Oaks Transit.

Developments Occurring During the Audit Period

The FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 audit period was significantly different than prior audit periods. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant declines in ridership and revenue, while changes to the TDA provided compliance waivers and amended existing legislation. In many instances, transit operators strove to retain operations staff despite adopting a reduced schedule, resulting in significant changes to many cost-related performance metrics. While infusions of funding through the CARES Act mitigated some of the lost revenues for federally funded programs, many transit operators have yet to return to pre-pandemic ridership and fare levels. As a result, this Triennial Performance Audit will provide an assessment not only of how COVID-19 impacted the organization, but how it responded to the crisis.

In the 50 years since introduction of the Transportation Development Act, there have been many changes to public transportation in California. Many operators have faced significant challenges in meeting the farebox recovery ratio requirement, calling into question whether it remains the best measure for TDA compliance. In 2018, the chairs of California’s state legislative transportation committees requested the California Transit Association spearhead a policy task force to examine the TDA, which resulted in a draft framework for TDA reform released in early 2020. The draft framework maintains the farebox recovery ratio requirement, but eliminates financial penalties and allows more flexibility with respect to individual operator targets. These changes have yet to be implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Assembly Bill 90, signed into law on June 29, 2020, provides temporary regulatory relief for transit operators required to conform with Transportation Development Act (TDA) farebox recovery ratio thresholds in FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21. Assembly Bill 149, signed into law on July 16, 2021, provides additional regulatory relief by extending the provisions of AB 90 through FY 2022/23 and adjusting definitions of eligible revenues and operating costs. While the ability to maintain state mandates and performance measures is important, these measures enable transit operators to adjust to the impacts of COVID while continuing to receive their full allocations of funding under the TDA.

Together, these two pieces of legislation include the following provisions specific to transit operator TDA funding under Article 4 and Article 8:

1. Prohibits the imposition of the TDA revenue penalty on an operator that did not maintain the required ratio of fare revenues to operating cost from FY 2019/20 through FY 2022/23.
2. Waives the annual productivity improvement requirement of Section 99244 through FY 2022/23.
3. Adds a temporary provision exempting operators from farebox recovery ratio requirements through FY 2024/25 provided they expend at least the same amount of local funds as in FY 2018/19.
4. Expands the definition of “local funds” to enable the use of federal funding, such as the CARES Act or CRRSAA, to supplement fare revenues and allows operators to calculate free and reduced fares at their actual value.
5. Adjusts the definition of operating cost to exclude the cost of ADA paratransit services, demand-response and microtransit services designed to extend access to service, ticketing/payment systems, security, some pension costs, and some planning costs.
6. Requires the Controller to calculate and publish the allocation of transit operator revenue-based funds made pursuant to the State Transit Assistance (STA) Program for FY 2020/21 and FY 2021/22.
7. Allows operators to use STA funds as needed to keep transit service levels from being reduced or eliminated through FY 2022/23.

AB 149 also calls for an examination of the triennial performance audit process, to ensure the practice continues to be effective and beneficial.

Exhibit 3.1 Transit Development Act Compliance Requirements

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
State Controller Reports submitted on time.	PUC 99243	In compliance	FY 2019/20: January 20, 2021 FY 2020/21: January 31, 2022 FY 2021/22: January 27, 2023
Fiscal and compliance audits submitted within 180 days following the end of the fiscal year (or with up to 90-day extension).	PUC 99245	In compliance	FY 2019/20: December 8, 2020 FY 2020/21: December 16, 2021 FY 2021/22: December 20, 2022
Operator's terminal rated as satisfactory by CHP within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim.	PUC 99251 B	In compliance	October 2, 2018 November 7, 2019 (unsatisfactory) March 4, 2020 April 2, 2021 April 14, 2022
Operator's claim for TDA funds submitted in compliance with rules and regulations adopted by the RTPA.	PUC 99261	In compliance	
If operator serves urbanized and non-urbanized areas, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to the ratio determined by the rules and regulations adopted by the RTPA.	PUC 99270.1	Not applicable	
Except as otherwise provided, the allocation for any purpose specified under Article 8 may in no year exceed 50% of the amount required to meet the total planning expenditures for that purpose.	PUC 99405	Not applicable for a contracted service	
An operator receiving allocations under Article 8(c) may be subject to regional, countywide, or subarea performance criteria, local match requirements, or fare recovery ratios adopted by resolution of the RTPA.	PUC 99405	Not applicable	While TOT receives Article 8(c) funds, it is not subject to alternative criteria.
The operator's operating budget has not increased by more than 15% over the preceding year, nor is there a substantial increase or decrease in the scope of operations or capital budget provisions for major new fixed facilities unless the operator has reasonably supported and substantiated the change(s).	PUC 99266	In compliance	FY 2019/20: +12.6% FY 2020/21: +34.0% FY 2021/22: +32.4% <i>All increases beyond 15 percent were appropriately justified within the TDA claim.</i>
The operator's definitions of performance measures are consistent with the Public Utilities Code Section 99247.	PUC 99247	In compliance	
If the operator serves an urbanized area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating cost at least equal to one-fifth (20 percent).	PUC 99268.2, 99268.4, 99268.1	In compliance	FY 2019/20: 7.78% (waiver) FY 2020/21: 2.62% (waiver) FY 2021/22: 20.00% (waiver)

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
If the operator serves a rural area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating cost at least equal to one-tenth (10 percent).	PUC 99268.2, 99268.4, 99268.5	Not applicable	
For a claimant that provides only services to elderly and handicapped persons, the ratio of fare revenues to operating cost shall be at least 10 percent.	PUC 99268.5, CCR 6633.5	In compliance	FY 2019/20: 6.09% (waiver) FY 2020/21: -0.20% (waiver) FY 2021/22: 10.00% (waiver)
The current cost of the operator's retirement system is fully funded with respect to the officers and employees of its public transportation system, or the operator is implementing a plan approved by the RTPA, which will fully fund the retirement system for 40 years.	PUC 99271	In compliance	City employees are eligible for retirement benefits through CalPERS. Operations personnel are employed by a third party.
If the operator receives State Transit Assistance funds, the operator makes full use of funds available to it under the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 before TDA claims are granted.	CCR 6754 (a) (3)	In compliance	
In order to use State Transit Assistance funds for operating assistance, the operator's total operating cost per revenue hour does not exceed the sum of the preceding year's total plus an amount equal to the product of the percentage change in the CPI for the same period multiplied by the preceding year's total operating cost per revenue hour. An operator may qualify based on the preceding year's operating cost per revenue hour or the average of the three prior years. If an operator does not meet these qualifying tests, the operator may only use STA funds for operating purposes according to a sliding scale.	PUC 99314.6	In compliance	
A transit claimant is precluded from receiving monies from the Local Transportation Fund and the State Transit Assistance Fund in an amount which exceeds the claimant's capital and operating costs less the actual amount of fares received, the amount of local support required to meet the fare ratio, the amount of federal operating assistance, and the amount received during the year from a city or county to which the operator has provided services beyond its boundaries.	CCR 6634	In compliance	

Chapter 4 | Prior Recommendations

This section reviews and evaluates the implementation of prior Triennial Performance Audit recommendations. This objective assessment provides assurance TOT has made quantifiable progress toward improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of its public transit program.

The prior audit – completed in February 2018 by Moore & Associates, Inc. for the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2019 – included no recommendations.

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Chapter 5 | Data Reporting Analysis

An important aspect of the Triennial Performance Audit process is assessing how effectively and consistently the transit operator reports performance statistics to local, state, and federal agencies. Often as a condition of receipt of funding, an operator must collect, manage, and report data to different entities. Ensuring such data are consistent can be challenging given the differing definitions employed by different agencies as well as the varying reporting timeframes. This chapter examines the consistency of performance data reported by Thousand Oaks Transit both internally as well as to outside entities during the audit period.

Much of the variation between reports has to do with where the different services operated by the City are reported.

- **State Controller Report:**
 - Fixed-route service:
 - City of Thousand Oaks – City of Thousand Oaks report
 - City of Moorpark – City of Moorpark report
 - Kanan Shuttle – County of Ventura report
 - Demand-response service:
 - City of Thousand Oaks ADA and Senior Dial-A-Rides – City of Thousand Oaks report (including that funded by the County of Ventura)
 - Moorpark Dial-A-Ride – City of Moorpark report
 - Westlake Village Dial-A-Ride – City of Thousand Oaks report
 - ECTA – City of Thousand Oaks report
 - Agoura Hills Dial-A-Ride – City of Thousand Oaks report
- **National Transit Database (NTD) Report:**
 - Fixed-route service:
 - City of Thousand Oaks – City of Thousand Oaks report
 - City of Moorpark – City of Moorpark report
 - Kanan Shuttle – County of Ventura report
 - Demand-response service:
 - City of Thousand Oaks ADA and Senior Dial-A-Rides – City of Thousand Oaks report (including that funded by the County of Ventura)
 - Moorpark Dial-A-Ride – City of Thousand Oaks report
 - Westlake Village Dial-A-Ride – City of Thousand Oaks report
 - ECTA – City of Thousand Oaks report
 - Agoura Hills Dial-A-Ride – City of Thousand Oaks report
- **Monthly performance reports:**
 - Fixed-route service is clearly segregated by program.
 - Demand-response service segregates ridership for each program.
 - Beginning in FY 2022, demand-response service segregates revenue miles and hours for ECTA and Agoura Hills Dial-A-Ride; all others are combined.

Given the variation in content, it can be difficult to draw comparisons with each external report. However, the primary difference between the two external reports is the inclusion of Moorpark Dial-A-Ride in the NTD report but not in the State Controller Report.

Vehicle Service Hours (VSH) and Vehicle Service Miles are the most consistently reported metrics, given most of the demand-response services are not segregated. However, the City should be mindful to only report data for services that are not reported elsewhere. For example, if Moorpark Dial-A-Ride is reported to the State Controller by the City of Moorpark, that data should not also be reported in the Thousand Oaks report.

Operating cost and fare revenue are the most consistent between the TDA fiscal audit and the State Controller Report. It is unclear why the operating cost reported to the NTD is significantly higher, especially since the fixed-route mode should only be reporting Thousand Oaks Transit.

Fixed-route ridership appeared to be under-reported to the NTD in FY 2020/21 (51,391 versus 70,703 as reported elsewhere). The cause of this could not be identified, and the figures were more consistent in FY 2021/22. Demand-response ridership differed in each of the three reports in FY 2021/22, however, being reported as 30,488 (State Controller); 33,376 (NTD); and 37,519 (monthly reports).

Subsequent to this audit period, the City demonstrated use of the TDA definition of full-time equivalent (FTE) employee. As a result, reporting to the State Controller is higher than it should have been.

Exhibit 5.1 Data Reporting Comparison

Performance Measure	System-Wide		
	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
Operating Cost (Actual \$)			
<i>TDA fiscal audit</i>	\$4,407,101	\$4,454,939	\$4,857,630
<i>National Transit Database</i>	\$5,745,165	\$5,499,467	\$5,493,941
<i>State Controller Report</i>	\$4,110,093	\$4,876,524	\$4,794,877
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)			
<i>TDA fiscal audit</i>	\$205,411	-\$3,449	\$2,288
<i>National Transit Database</i>	\$293,796	\$0	\$16,252
<i>State Controller Report</i>	\$205,411	\$0	\$788
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	37,379	36,971	31,713
<i>National Transit Database</i>	46,327	36,699	31,675
<i>State Controller Report</i>	39,936	36,972	31,713
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	562,726	605,600	497,298
<i>National Transit Database</i>	785,878	605,600	497,298
<i>State Controller Report</i>	638,919	605,600	497,298
Passengers			
<i>Monthly Performance Reports</i>	161,945	107,065	136,058
<i>National Transit Database</i>	162,459	87,753	131,699
<i>State Controller Report</i>	150,588	104,694	129,027
Full-Time Equivalent Employees			
<i>State Controller Report</i>	42	46	48
<i>Per City methodology</i>	Not provided	Not provided	36

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Chapter 6 | Performance Analysis

Performance indicators are typically employed to quantify and assess the efficiency of a transit operator's activities. Such indicators provide insight into current operations as well as trend analysis of operator performance. Through a review of indicators, relative performance as well as possible inter-relationships between major functions is revealed.

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) requires recipients of TDA funding to track and report five performance indicators:

- Operating Cost/Passenger,
- Operating Cost/Vehicle Service Hour,
- Passengers/Vehicle Service Hour,
- Passengers/Vehicle Service Mile, and
- Vehicle Service Hours/Employee.

To assess the validity and use of performance indicators, the audit team performed the following activities:

- Assessed internal controls in place for the collection of performance-related information,
- Validated collection methods of key data,
- Calculated performance indicators, and
- Evaluated performance indicators.

The procedures used to calculate TDA-required performance measures for the current triennium were verified and compared with indicators included in similar reports to external entities (i.e., State Controller and Federal Transit Administration).

Operating Cost

The Transportation Development Act requires an operator to track and report transit-related costs reflective of the Uniform System of Accounts and Records developed by the State Controller and the California Department of Transportation. The most common method for ensuring this occurs is through a compliance audit report prepared by an independent auditor in accordance with California Code of Regulations Section 6667¹. The annual independent financial audit should confirm the use of the Uniform System of Accounts and Records. *Operating cost* – as defined by PUC Section 99247(a) – excluded the following during the audit period²:

¹ CCR Section 6667 outlines the minimum tasks which must be performed by an independent auditor in conducting the annual fiscal and compliance audit of the transit operator.

² Given the passage of AB 149, the list of excluded costs will be expanded beginning with FY 2021/22.

- Cost in the depreciation and amortization expense object class adopted by the State Controller pursuant to PUC Section 99243,
- Subsidies for commuter rail services operated under the jurisdiction of the Interstate Commerce Commission,
- Direct costs of providing charter service, and
- Vehicle lease costs.

Vehicle Service Hours and Miles

Vehicle Service Hours (VSH) and *Miles* (VSM) are defined as the time/distance during which a revenue vehicle is available to carry fare-paying passengers, and which includes only those times/miles between the time or scheduled time of the first passenger pickup and the time or scheduled time of the last passenger drop-off during a period of the vehicle's continuous availability.³ For example, demand-response service hours include those hours when a vehicle has dropped off a passenger and is traveling to pick up another passenger, but not those hours when the vehicle is unavailable for service due to driver breaks or lunch. For both demand-response and fixed-route services, service hours will exclude hours of "deadhead" travel to the first scheduled pick-up, and will also exclude hours of "deadhead" travel from the last scheduled drop-off back to the terminal. For fixed-route service, a vehicle is in service from first scheduled stop to last scheduled stop, whether or not passengers board or exit at those points (i.e., subtracting driver lunch and breaks but including scheduled layovers).

Passenger Counts

According to the Transportation Development Act, *total passengers* is equal to the total number of unlinked trips (i.e., those trips that are made by a passenger that involve a single boarding and departure), whether revenue-producing or not.

Employees

Employee hours is defined as the total number of hours (regular or overtime) which all employees have worked, and for which they have been paid a wage or salary. The hours must include transportation system-related hours worked by persons employed in connection with the system (whether or not the person is employed directly by the operator). Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is calculated by dividing the number of person-hours by 2,000.

Fare Revenue

Fare revenue is defined by California Code of Regulations Section 6611.2 as revenue collected from the farebox plus sales of fare media.

³ A vehicle is considered to be in revenue service despite a no-show or late cancellation if the vehicle remains available for passenger use.

TDA Required Indicators

To calculate the TDA indicators for Thousand Oaks Transit, the following sources were employed:

- Operating Cost was not independently calculated as part of this audit. Operating Cost data were obtained via State Controller Reports for each fiscal year covered by this audit. Operating Cost from the reports was compared against that reported in the City's audited financial reports and appeared to be consistent with TDA guidelines. In accordance with PUC Section 99247(a), the reported costs excluded depreciation and other allowable expenses.
- Fare Revenue was not independently calculated as part of this audit. Fare revenue data were obtained via State Controller Reports for each fiscal year covered by this audit. This appears to be consistent with TDA guidelines as well as the uniform system of accounts.
- Vehicle Service Hours (VSH) data were obtained via State Controller Reports for each fiscal year covered by this audit. The City's calculation methodology is consistent with PUC guidelines.
- Vehicle Service Miles (VSM) data were obtained via State Controller Reports for each fiscal year covered by this audit. The City's calculation methodology is consistent with PUC guidelines.
- Unlinked trip data were obtained via State Controller Reports for each fiscal year covered by this audit. The City's calculation methodology is consistent with PUC guidelines.
- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) data were obtained from State Controller Reports for each fiscal year covered by this review. Use of the TDA definition regarding FTE calculation was confirmed as part of the audit, but this metric was overreported in prior years..

System Performance Trends

System-wide, operating cost experienced a net 16.7 percent increase during the audit period, and a 0.7 percent net increase across the last six years. Fare revenue, however, steadily decreased during the six-year period, with most of the decline occurring in FY 2020/21 due to the fare-free period. This resulted in a net 99.6 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 99.8 percent decrease over six years.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) declined every year of the six-year period. This resulted in a net 20.6 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 53 percent decrease during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) also decreased every year during the six-year period. This resulted in an overall net decrease of 22.2 percent during the audit period, and a net decrease of 53.6 percent during the six-year period. Ridership declined during five years of the six-year period, though the most significant declines did not occur until FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to a 14.3 percent net decrease during the audit period and a 46.3 percent net decrease across the six-year period.

Cost-related metrics typically provide an indicator of a system's efficiency, while passenger-related metrics offer insight into its productivity. Improvements are characterized by increases in passenger-related metrics and decreases in cost-related metrics. Operating cost per passenger increased by 36.2 percent during the audit period. Passenger-related metric rose during the audit period, with passengers per VSH increasing by 7.9 percent and passengers per VSM increasing by 10.1 percent.

Exhibit 6.1 System Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	System-wide					
	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$4,761,886	\$4,580,283	\$5,167,940	\$4,110,093	\$4,876,524	\$4,794,877
<i>Annual Change</i>		-3.8%	12.8%	-20.5%	18.6%	-1.7%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$323,759	\$320,505	\$290,322	\$205,411	\$0	\$788
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.0%	-9.4%	-29.2%	-100.0%	
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	67,456	57,809	52,420	39,936	36,972	31,713
<i>Annual Change</i>		-14.3%	-9.3%	-23.8%	-7.4%	-14.2%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	1,071,813	880,486	804,782	638,919	605,600	497,298
<i>Annual Change</i>		-17.9%	-8.6%	-20.6%	-5.2%	-17.9%
Passengers	240,328	237,164	216,301	150,588	104,694	129,027
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.3%	-8.8%	-30.4%	-30.5%	23.2%
Employees	71	65	51	42	46	48
<i>Annual Change</i>		-8.5%	-21.5%	-17.6%	9.5%	4.3%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$70.59	\$79.23	\$98.59	\$102.92	\$131.90	\$151.20
<i>Annual Change</i>		12.2%	24.4%	4.4%	28.2%	14.6%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$19.81	\$19.31	\$23.89	\$27.29	\$46.58	\$37.16
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.5%	23.7%	14.2%	70.7%	-20.2%
Passengers/VSH	3.56	4.10	4.13	3.77	2.83	4.07
<i>Annual Change</i>		15.2%	0.6%	-8.6%	-24.9%	43.7%
Passengers/VSM	0.22	0.27	0.27	0.24	0.17	0.26
<i>Annual Change</i>		20.1%	-0.2%	-12.3%	-26.7%	50.1%
Farebox Recovery	6.8%	7.0%	5.6%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		2.9%	-19.7%	-11.0%	-100.0%	0.0%
Hours/Employee	950.1	889.4	1,027.8	950.9	803.7	660.7
<i>Annual Change</i>		-6.4%	15.6%	-7.5%	-15.5%	-17.8%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$4.44	\$5.20	\$6.42	\$6.43	\$8.05	\$9.64
<i>Annual Change</i>		17.1%	23.4%	0.2%	25.2%	19.7%
VSM/VSH	15.89	15.23	15.35	16.00	16.38	15.68
<i>Annual Change</i>		-4.1%	0.8%	4.2%	2.4%	-4.3%
Fare/Passenger	\$1.35	\$1.35	\$1.34	\$1.36	\$0.00	\$0.01
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.3%	-0.7%	1.6%	-100.0%	0.0%

Sources: FY 2016/17 – FY 2018/19 data from prior audit.
FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 data from State Controller Reports.

Exhibit 6.2 System Ridership

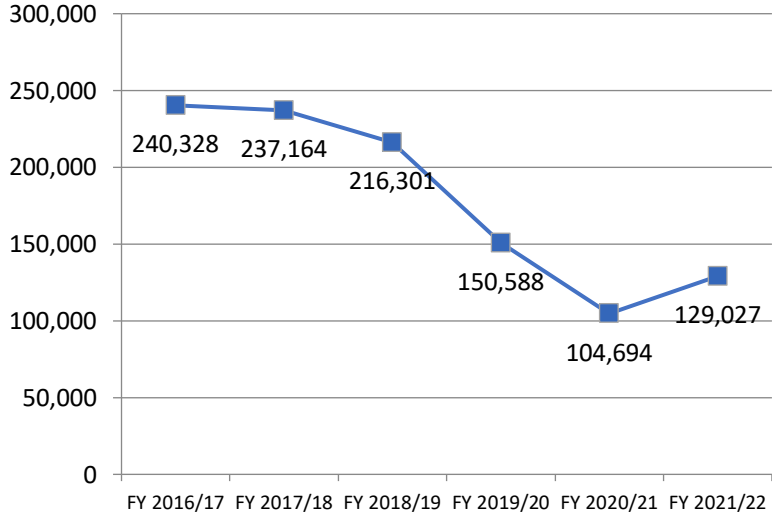


Exhibit 6.3 System Operating Cost/VSH

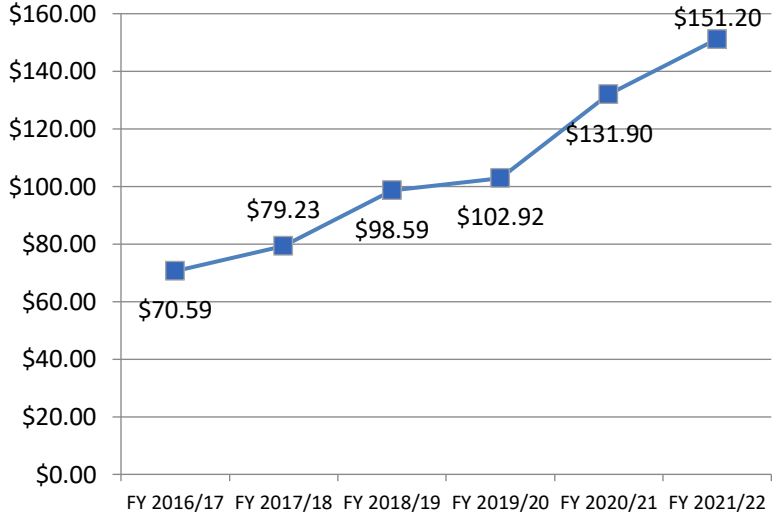


Exhibit 6.4 System Operating Cost/VSM

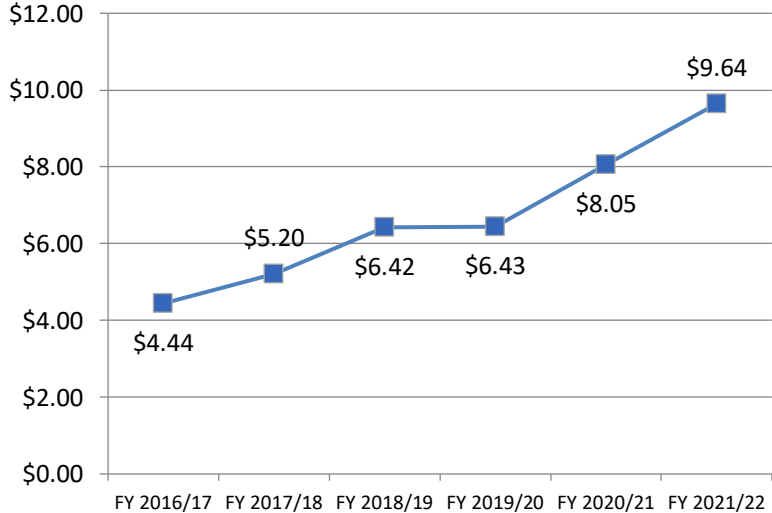


Exhibit 6.5 System VSM/VSH

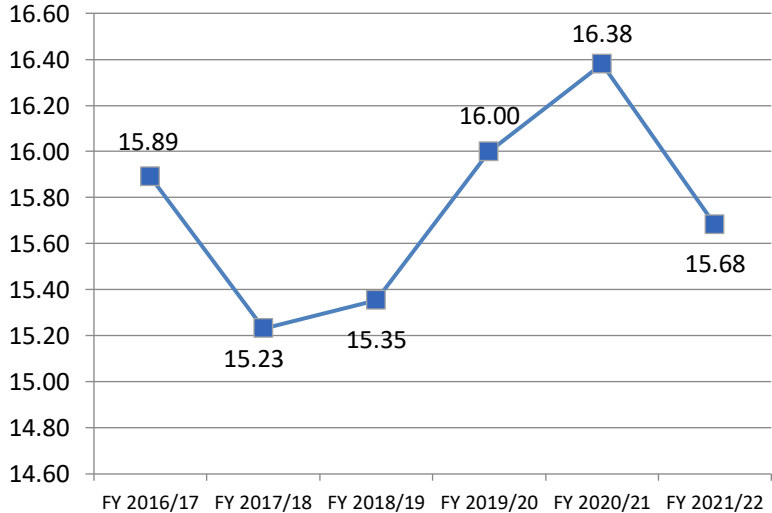


Exhibit 6.6 System Operating Cost/Passenger

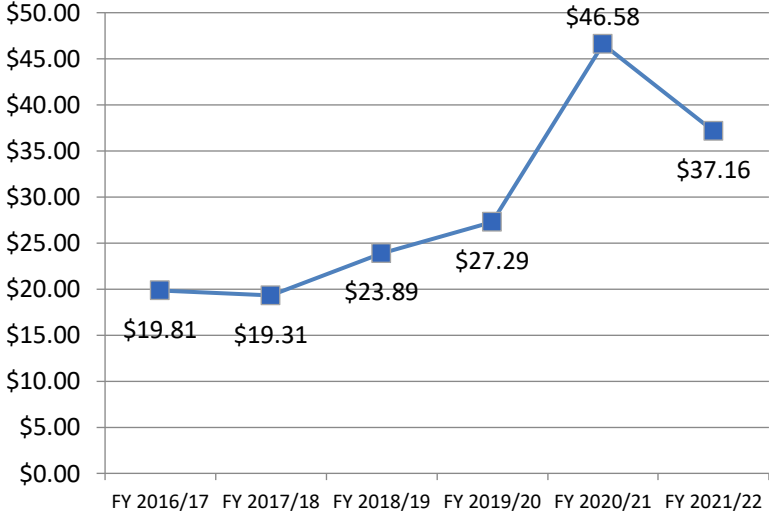


Exhibit 6.7 System Passengers/VSH

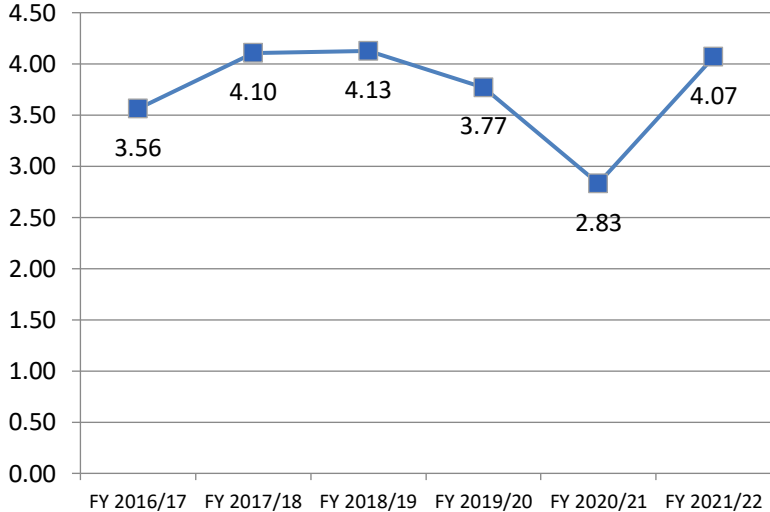


Exhibit 6.8 System Passengers/VSM

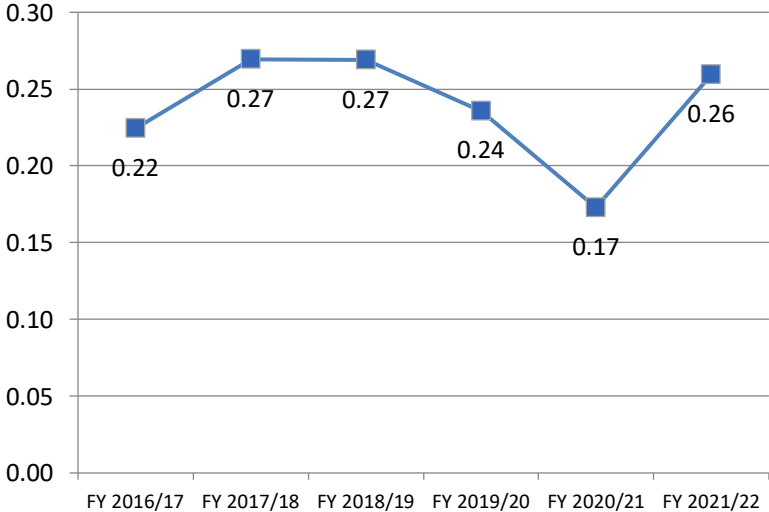


Exhibit 6.9 System VSH/FTE

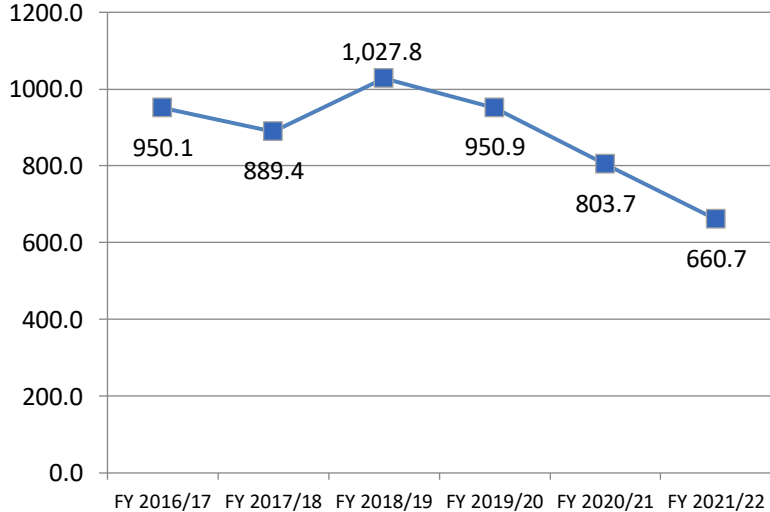


Exhibit 6.10 System Farebox Recovery

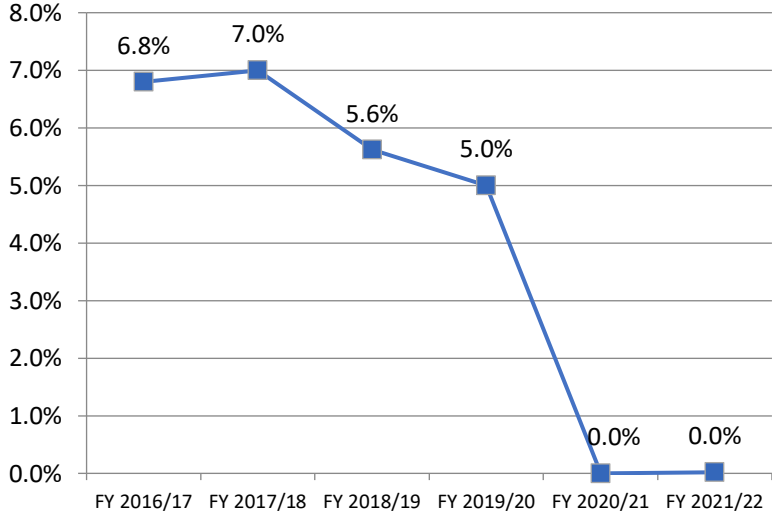
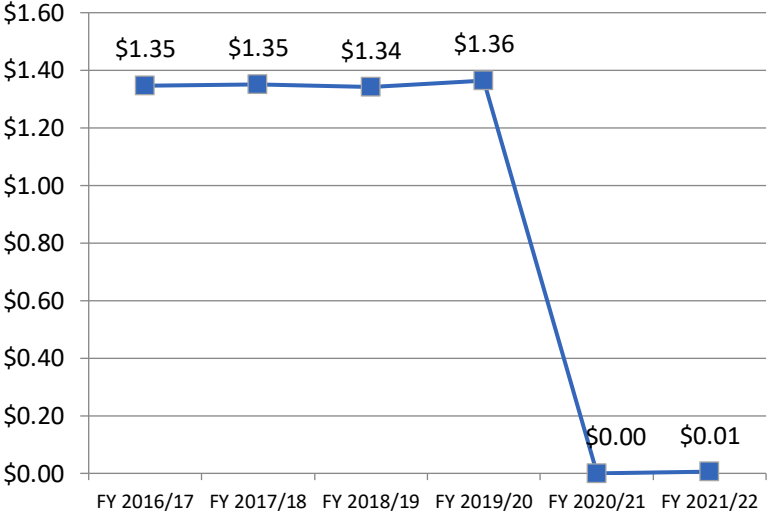


Exhibit 6.11 System Fare/Passenger



Fixed-Route Performance Trends

Fixed-route operating cost experienced a net 25.1 percent increase during the audit period, and a 3.5 percent net increase across the last six years. Fare revenue, however, decreased during FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21, with the greatest decline occurring in FY 2020/21 due to the fare-free period. This resulted in a net 99.2 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 99.5 percent decrease over six years.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) declined every year with the exception of FY 2020/21. This resulted in a net 7.4 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 33.5 percent decrease during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) experienced the same pattern with a net 9.2 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 30.5 percent decrease during the six-year period. The increases in FY 2020/21 followed a significant decrease in FY 2019/20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership declined during three years of the six-year period, though the significant declines did not occur until FY 2019/20 and FY 2020/21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to a 4.2 percent net decrease during the audit period and a 37 percent net decrease across the six-year period.

Due to the increase in operating cost in FY 2020/21, fixed-route cost-related metrics increased during the audit period. Operating cost per passenger rose by 30.7 percent during the audit period. Passenger-related metrics increase slightly during the audit period, with passengers per VSH increasing by 3.4 percent and passengers per VSM increasing by 5.5 percent.

Exhibit 6.12 Fixed-Route Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	Fixed-Route					
	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$2,511,862	\$2,514,628	\$2,861,911	\$2,078,157	\$2,930,301	\$2,600,739
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.1%	13.8%	-27.4%	41.0%	-11.2%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$150,423	\$151,467	\$184,958	\$98,033	\$0	\$788
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.7%	22.1%	-47.0%	-100.0%	
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	24,908	24,237	21,765	17,874	19,103	16,555
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.7%	-10.2%	-17.9%	6.9%	-13.3%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	372,036	368,294	342,333	284,971	296,066	258,619
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.0%	-7.0%	-16.8%	3.9%	-12.6%
Passengers	156,478	159,398	145,176	102,884	70,703	98,539
<i>Annual Change</i>		1.9%	-8.9%	-29.1%	-31.3%	39.4%
Employees	29	19	17	16	22	25
<i>Annual Change</i>		-34.5%	-10.5%	-5.9%	37.5%	13.6%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$100.85	\$103.75	\$131.49	\$116.27	\$153.39	\$157.10
<i>Annual Change</i>		2.9%	26.7%	-11.6%	31.9%	2.4%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$16.05	\$15.78	\$19.71	\$20.20	\$41.45	\$26.39
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.7%	25.0%	2.5%	105.2%	-36.3%
Passengers/VSH	6.28	6.58	6.67	5.76	3.70	5.95
<i>Annual Change</i>		4.7%	1.4%	-13.7%	-35.7%	60.8%
Passengers/VSM	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.36	0.24	0.38
<i>Annual Change</i>		2.9%	-2.0%	-14.9%	-33.9%	59.6%
Farebox Recovery	5.99%	6.02%	6.46%	4.72%	0.00%	0.03%
<i>Annual Change</i>		0.6%	7.3%	-27.0%	-100.0%	300.0%
Hours/Employee	858.9	1,275.6	1,280.3	1,117.1	868.3	662.2
<i>Annual Change</i>		48.5%	0.4%	-12.7%	-22.3%	-23.7%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$6.75	\$6.83	\$8.36	\$7.29	\$9.90	\$10.06
<i>Annual Change</i>		1.1%	22.4%	-12.8%	35.7%	1.6%
VSM/VSH	14.94	15.20	15.73	15.94	15.50	15.62
<i>Annual Change</i>		1.7%	3.5%	1.4%	-2.8%	0.8%
Fare/Passenger	\$0.96	\$0.95	\$1.27	\$0.95	\$0.00	\$0.01
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.2%	34.1%	-25.2%	-100.0%	0.0%

Sources: FY 2016/17 – FY 2018/19 data from prior audit.
FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 data from State Controller Reports.

Exhibit 6.13 Fixed-Route Ridership

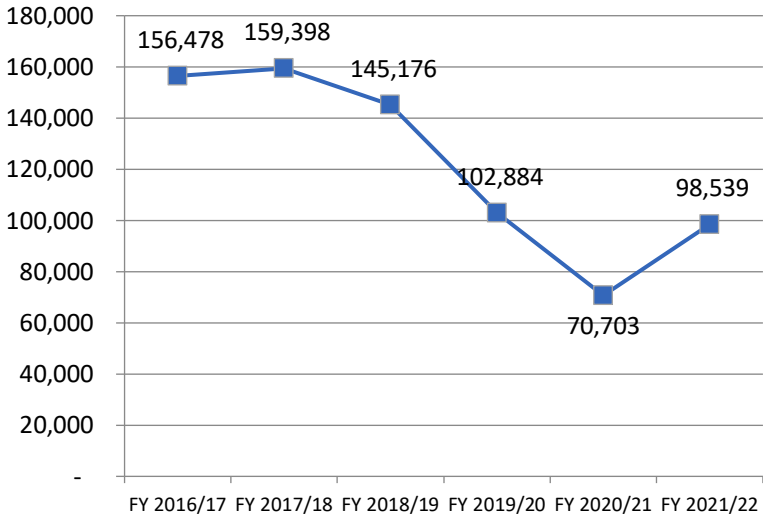


Exhibit 6.14 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/VSH

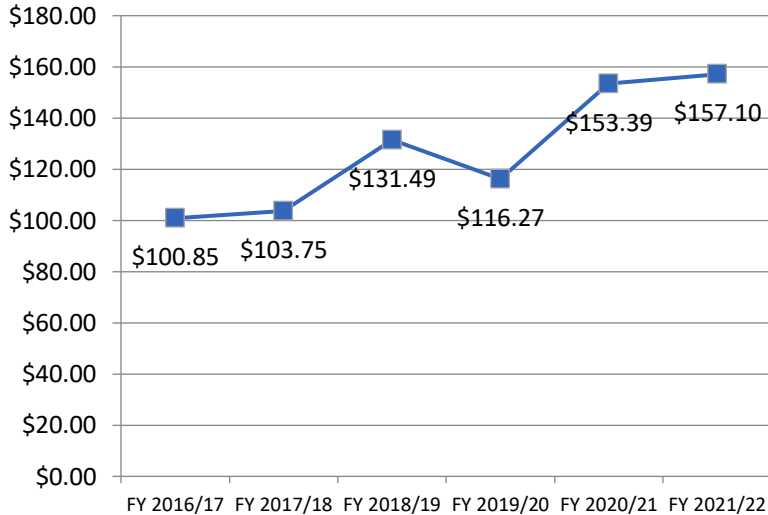


Exhibit 6.15 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/VSM

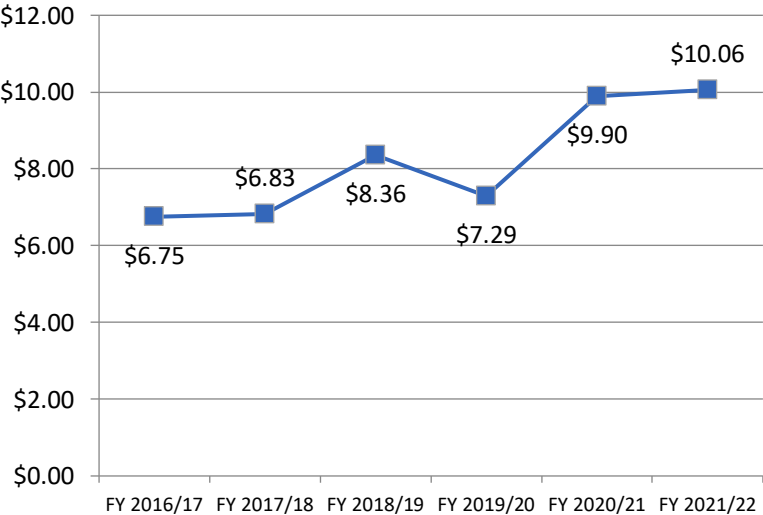


Exhibit 6.16 Fixed-Route VSM/VSH

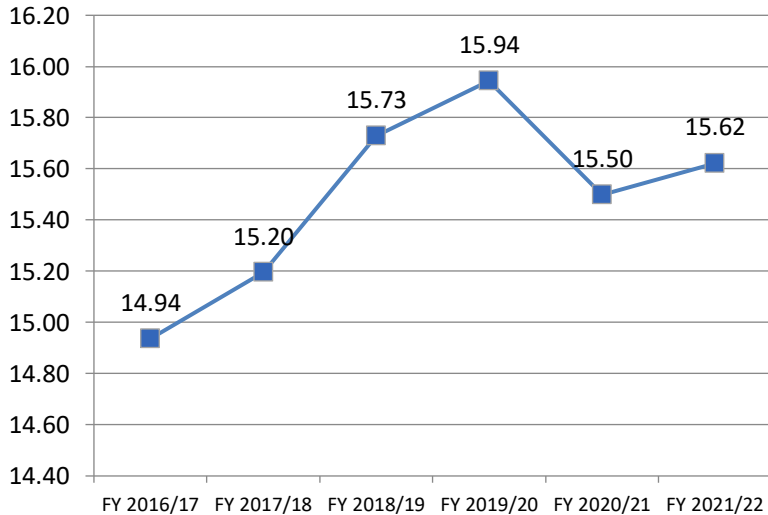


Exhibit 6.17 Fixed-Route Operating Cost/Passenger

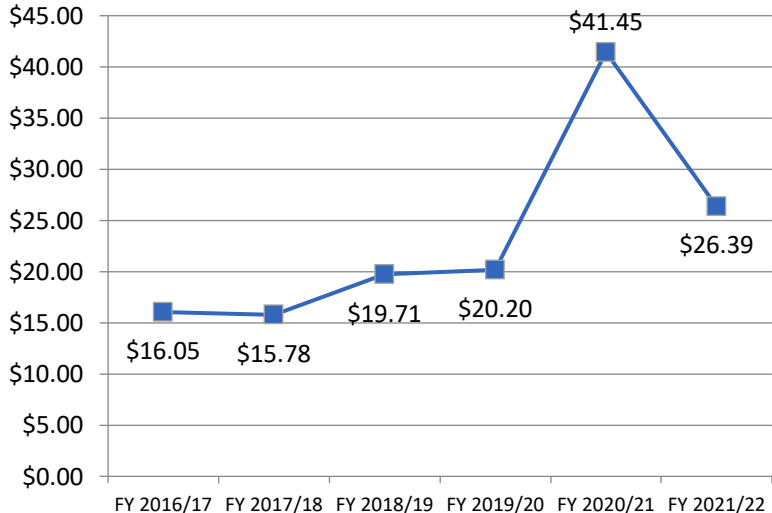


Exhibit 6.18 Fixed-Route Passengers/VSH

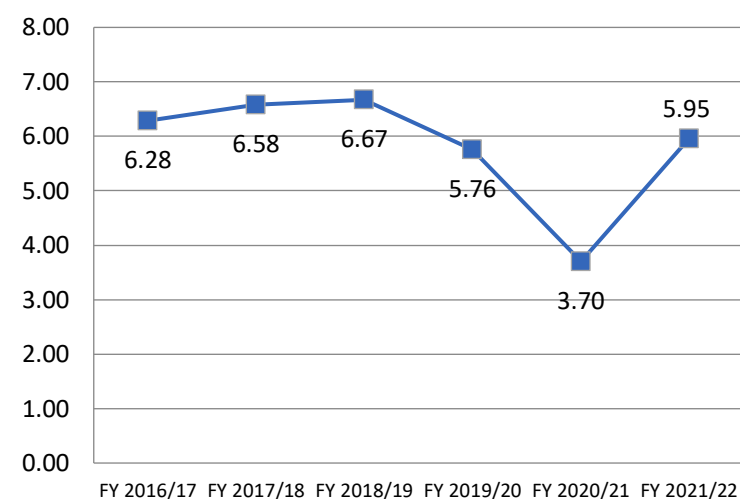


Exhibit 6.19 Fixed-Route Passengers/VSM

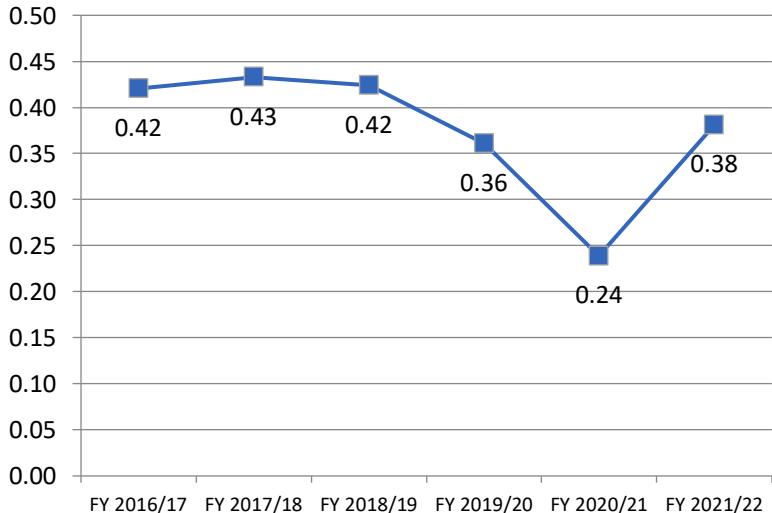


Exhibit 6.20 Fixed-Route VSH/FTE

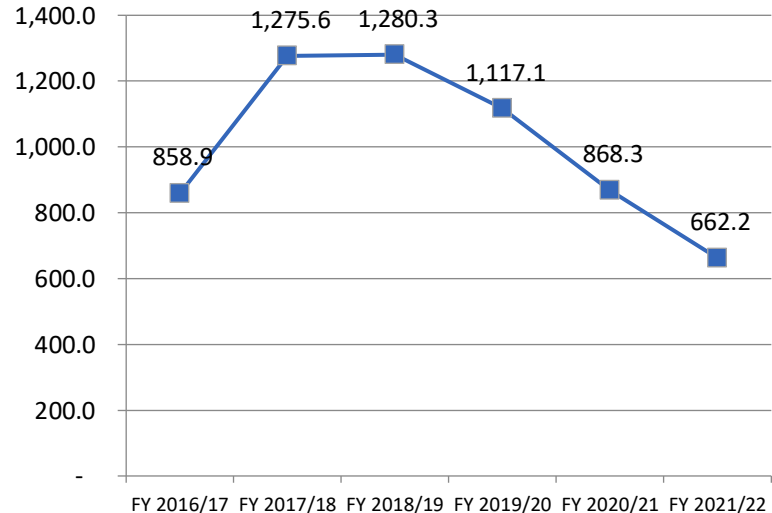


Exhibit 6.21 Fixed-Route Farebox Recovery

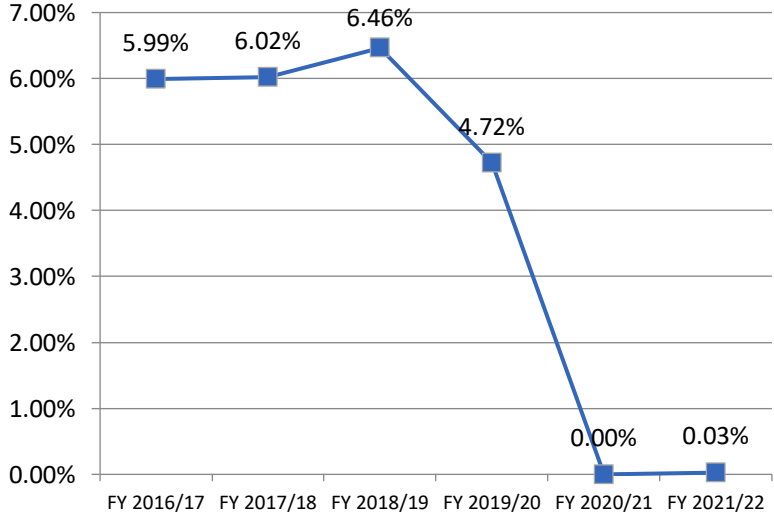
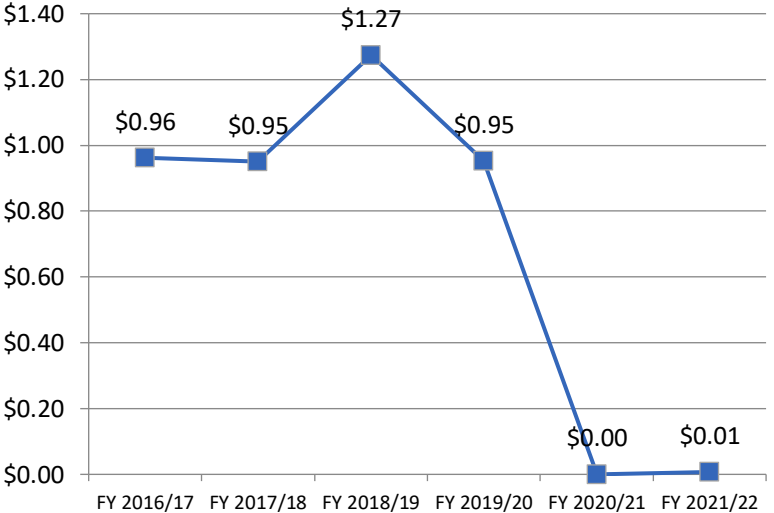


Exhibit 6.22 Fixed-Route Fare/Passenger



Demand-Response Performance Trends

Demand-response operating cost experienced a net 8 percent increase during the audit period, but a net 2.5 percent decrease across the last six years. Fare revenue decreased every year during the six-year period, with the exception of a slight increase in FY 2019/20. The service went fare free the last two years of the audit period.

Vehicle service hours (VSH) decreased every year of the six-year period. This resulted in a net 31.3 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 64.4 percent decrease during the six-year period. Vehicle service miles (VSM) experienced the same pattern. This resulted in a net 32.6 percent decrease during the audit period and a net 65.9 percent decrease during the six-year period. Ridership also declined every year of the six-year period. This led to a 36.1 percent net decrease during the audit period, and a 63.6 percent net decrease across the six-year period.

Cost-related metrics rose during the audit period, with operating cost per VSH increasing 57.2 percent and operating cost per passenger increasing 69 percent during the audit period. Passenger-related metrics fell during the audit period, with passengers per VSH decreasing by 7 percent and passengers per VSM increasing by 5.2 percent.

Exhibit 6.23 Demand-Response Performance Indicators

Performance Measure	Demand-Response					
	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21	FY 2021/22
Operating Cost (Actual \$)	\$2,250,024	\$2,065,655	\$2,306,029	\$2,031,936	\$1,946,223	\$2,194,138
<i>Annual Change</i>		-8.2%	11.6%	-11.9%	-4.2%	12.7%
Fare Revenue (Actual \$)	\$173,336	\$169,038	\$105,364	\$107,378	\$0	\$0
<i>Annual Change</i>		-2.5%	-37.7%	1.9%	-100.0%	0.0%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	42,548	33,572	30,655	22,062	17,869	15,158
<i>Annual Change</i>		-21.1%	-8.7%	-28.0%	-19.0%	-15.2%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	699,777	512,192	462,449	353,948	309,534	238,679
<i>Annual Change</i>		-26.8%	-9.7%	-23.5%	-12.5%	-22.9%
Passengers	83,850	77,766	71,125	47,704	33,991	30,488
<i>Annual Change</i>		-7.3%	-8.5%	-32.9%	-28.7%	-10.3%
Employees	42	46	34	26	24	23
<i>Annual Change</i>		9.5%	-26.1%	-23.5%	-7.7%	-4.2%
Performance Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSH (Actual \$)	\$52.88	\$61.53	\$75.23	\$92.10	\$108.92	\$144.75
<i>Annual Change</i>		16.4%	22.3%	22.4%	18.3%	32.9%
Operating Cost/Passenger (Actual \$)	\$26.83	\$26.56	\$32.42	\$42.59	\$57.26	\$71.97
<i>Annual Change</i>		-1.0%	22.1%	31.4%	34.4%	25.7%
Passengers/VSH	1.97	2.32	2.32	2.16	1.90	2.01
<i>Annual Change</i>		17.5%	0.2%	-6.8%	-12.0%	5.7%
Passengers/VSM	0.12	0.15	0.15	0.13	0.11	0.13
<i>Annual Change</i>		26.7%	1.3%	-12.4%	-18.5%	16.3%
Farebox Recovery	7.7%	8.2%	4.6%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Annual Change</i>		6.2%	-44.2%	15.7%	-100.0%	0.0%
Hours/Employee	1,013.0	729.8	901.6	848.5	744.5	659.0
<i>Annual Change</i>		-28.0%	23.5%	-5.9%	-12.3%	-11.5%
TDA Non-Required Indicators						
Operating Cost/VSM	\$3.22	\$4.03	\$4.99	\$5.74	\$6.29	\$9.19
<i>Annual Change</i>		25.4%	23.6%	15.1%	9.5%	46.2%
VSM/VSH	16.45	15.26	15.09	16.04	17.32	15.75
<i>Annual Change</i>		-7.2%	-1.1%	6.3%	8.0%	-9.1%
Fare/Passenger	\$2.07	\$2.17	\$1.48	\$2.25	\$0.00	\$0.00
<i>Annual Change</i>		5.1%	-31.8%	51.9%	-100.0%	0.0%

Sources: FY 2016/17 – FY 2018/19 data from prior audit.
FY 2019/20 – FY 2021/22 data from State Controller Reports.

Exhibit 6.24 Demand-Response Ridership

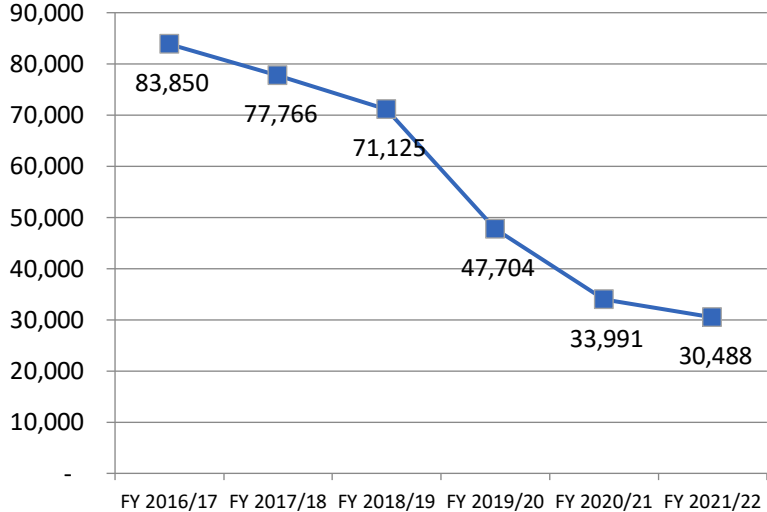


Exhibit 6.25 Demand-Response Operating Cost/VSH

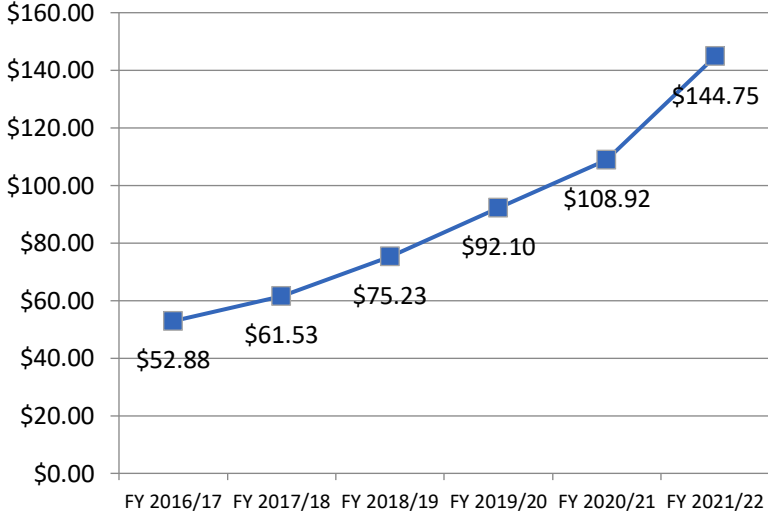


Exhibit 6.26 Demand-Response Operating Cost/VSM

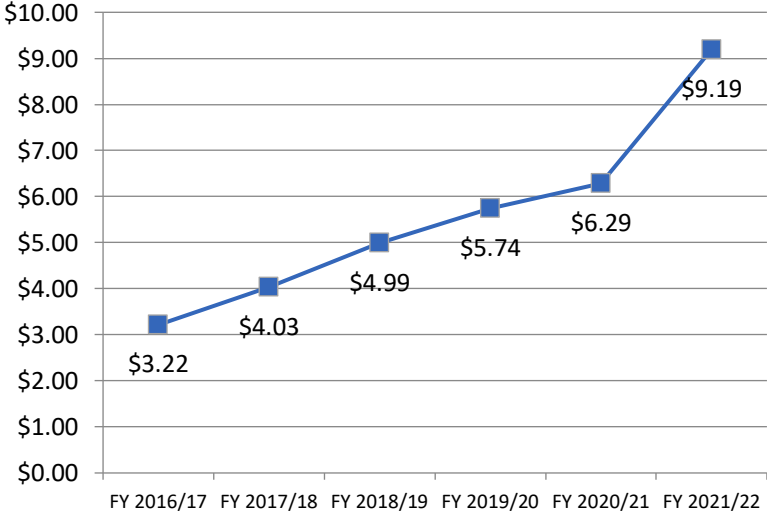


Exhibit 6.27 Demand-Response VSM/VSH

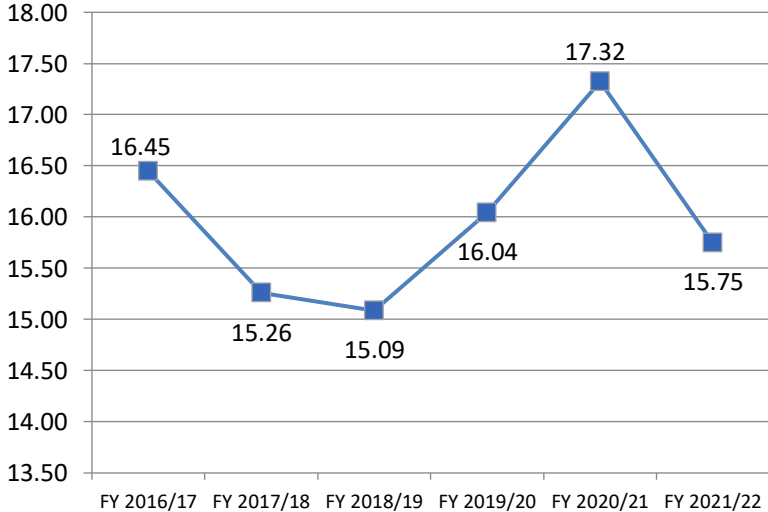


Exhibit 6.28 Demand-Response Operating Cost/Passenger

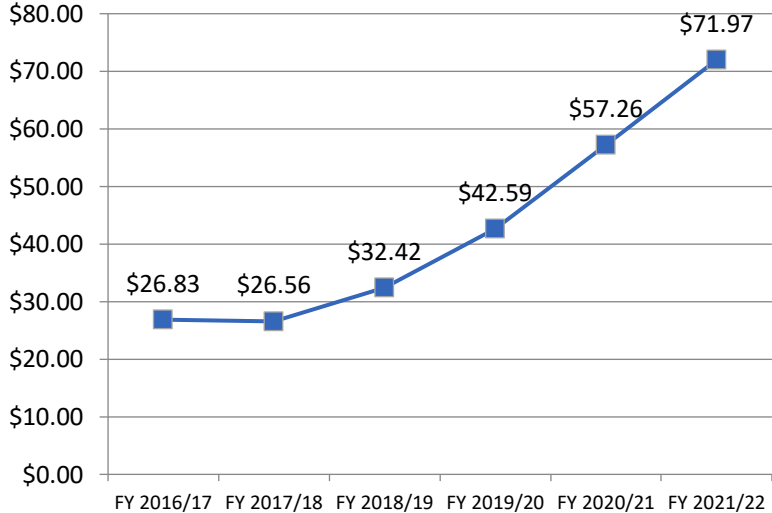


Exhibit 6.29 Demand-Response Passengers/VSH

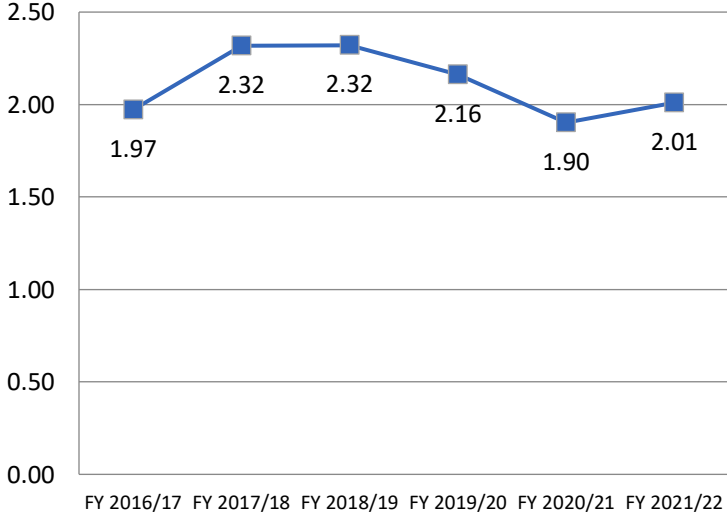


Exhibit 6.30 Demand-Response Passengers/VSM

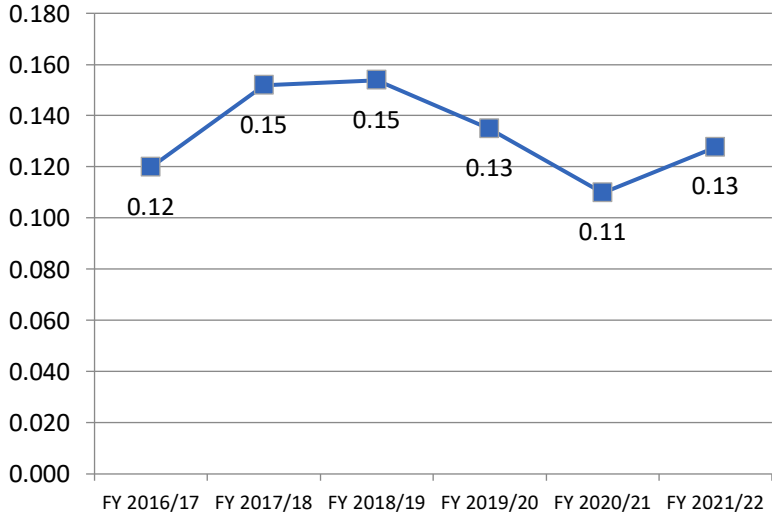


Exhibit 6.31 Demand-Response VSH/FTE

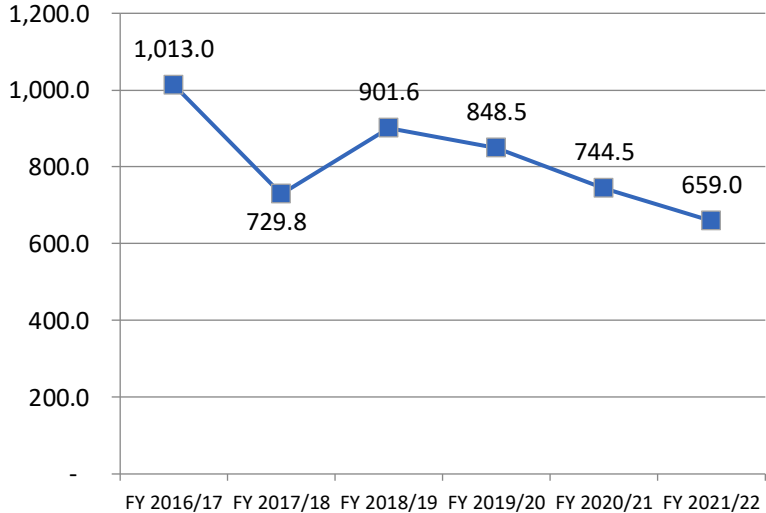


Exhibit 6.32 Demand-Response Farebox Recovery

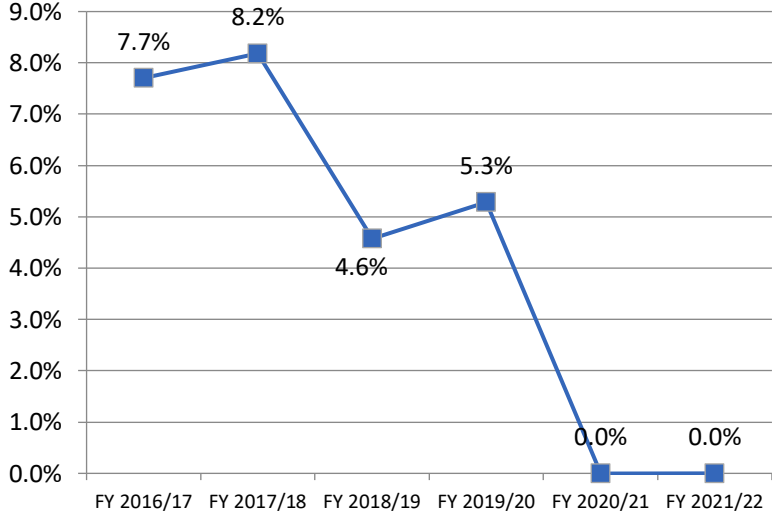
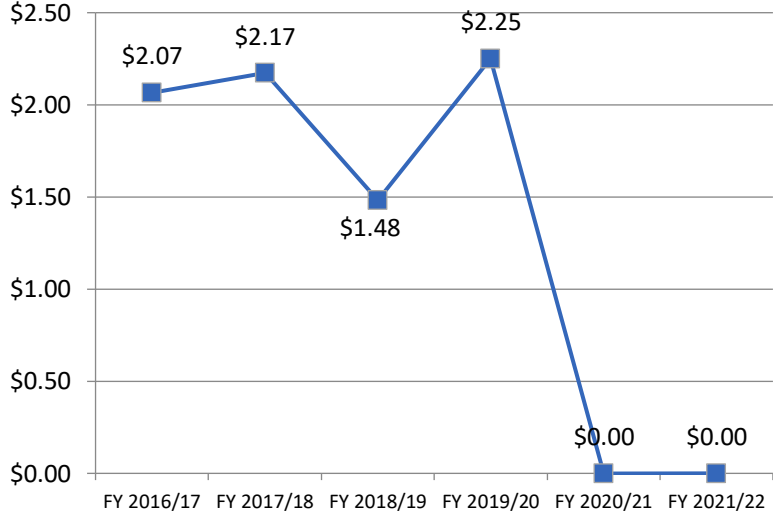


Exhibit 6.33 Demand-Response Fare/Passenger



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Chapter 7 | Functional Review

A functional review of Thousand Oaks Transit’s public transit program is intended to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the operator. Following a general summary of the City’s transit services, this chapter addresses seven functional areas. The list, taken from Section III of the *Performance Audit Guidebook* published by Caltrans, reflects those transit services provided by TOT through its transit program:

- General management and organization;
- Service planning;
- Administration;
- Marketing and public information;
- Scheduling, dispatch, and operations;
- Personnel management and training; and
- Fleet maintenance.

Service Overview

The City of Thousand Oaks’ transit program is marketed as Thousand Oaks Transit (TOT). The TOT service area includes the cities of Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village; as well as Ventura County’s unincorporated areas of Newbury Park, Ventu Park, Lynn Ranch, Rolling Oaks, Oak Park, Hidden Valley, and Lake Sherwood. It is accessible via State Route 23 from the north and U.S. Highway 101 from the east and west.

The City’s fixed-route system is comprised of five fixed routes which cover Thousand Oaks, a portion of Westlake Village, and portions of unincorporated Ventura County. Fixed-route service hours are 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Saturday.

The City’s door-to-door Dial-A-Ride service is available to passengers 65 years of age or above and Americans with Disabilities Act cardholders. Dial-A-Ride hours of operation are the same as those of regular fixed-route buses, except service is also offered from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday. Dial-A-Rideservice is provided throughout Thousand Oaks, to Westlake Village, and to the county’s unincorporated areas of Newbury Park, Ventu Park, Lynn Ranch, Rolling Oaks, Oak Park, Hidden Valley and Lake Sherwood. A City-issued Dial-A-Ridecard is required.

Exhibit 7.1 Fixed-Route Fare Structure

Fare Category	Fare Price
Single Ride	
Regular	\$2.00
Senior/Disabled/Medicare	\$0.50
Transfer (between TOT and VCTC)	Free
College Ride Program (with college ID)	Free
Youth Ride Free Program (Grades 1-12)	Free
Children age 5 and under (with fare-paying passenger)	Free (up to 3)
10-Ride Pass	
Regular	\$16.00
Senior/Disabled/Medicare/Medi-Cal	\$4.00
7-Day Pass	
Regular	\$16.00
Senior/Disabled/Medicare/Medi-Cal	\$4.00
31-Day Pass	
Regular	\$50.00
Senior/Disabled/Medicare/Medi-Cal	\$14.00

Exhibit 7.2 Demand-Response Fare Structure

Fare Category	Fare Price
Senior/ADA (one-way)	\$4.00
Companion	\$4.00
Personal care attendant (registered)	Free

Recent service and fare changes

The City did not introduce any new services during the audit period. In January 2020, TOT introduced a two-hour-per-day service reduction, various fare adjustments, route adjustments to achieve clock-face service on four of the five routes, and approximately 40 bus stop changes including additions, moves, and closures. A service expansion, including implementation of a sixth route, was originally planned for Fall 2020. This expansion was curtailed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on operations and ridership.

Subsequent service changes were due to COVID-19 and included suspension of bus service for six weeks starting in March 2020; implementation of fare-free service in April 2020; consolidation of ECTA intercity services and Agoura Hills Dial-A-Ride onto Thousand Oaks Transit vehicles in August 2020; and suspension of Saturday bus service and Route 42 in Fall 2021. In Spring 2022, Saturday service and Route 42 service resumed. Fare collection resumed in July 2022 with a half-fare program. In September 2022 TOT implemented route time adjustments due to new high school bell schedule requirements and increased service hours by two hours per day. In January 2023, TOT returned to full fares. Evaluation of service changes is ongoing. The City is also participating in the College Ride Free and Youth Ride Free programs.

Response to COVID-19 pandemic

The impact of COVID-19 was felt throughout the transit program. Several services experienced partial shutdowns for multiple weeks, tightening of demand-response operations to more statutory minimums,

staffing shortages, operational challenges with supplies, parts, and equipment. There was also a loss of institutional knowledge and experience due to layoff or staff leaving the workforce for other positions.

Thousand Oaks was the first Ventura County agency to temporarily pause services and first to implement COVID cleaning routines and service restrictions designed to protect riders and operators, as well as the first to implement free fares for all services.

Fixed-route services have returned to normal, with some modifications to enable enhanced cleaning and sanitizing routines. Demand-response service adjustments are still in place including limits on the number of same-day reservations that can be booked, shorter terms for subscriptions, moratorium on new subscriptions, limitations on guests, and need for riders to book further in advance for peak time periods. Times are also negotiated on all services except ADA Dial-A-Ride and Agoura Hills Dial-A-Ride.

General Management and Organization

City staffing is appropriate and supported by other City divisions and departments as required. There is a clear chain of command within the program and those staff who substantially support the program (Administration, Finance, IT, Facilities, Fleet, Streets). As of 2022, all contract-required management positions for the contractor are filled for the first time since the contract was executed in 2019. Currently, the Assistant Transit Planner is the primary contact between the City and the Contractor.

The City of Thousand Oaks contracts with MV Transportation to provide vehicle operators as well as maintenance on leased service vehicles. City employees provide maintenance on City-owned vehicles as well as Moorpark City Transit vehicles. The contract with MV spells out specific performance measures on a variety of measures, and the contractor reports on these measures on a monthly basis. The contract is performance-based, rather than penalty-based, with the contractor earning bonus payments for superior performance. The City also maintains separate lists of performance targets for all City services and reports transit program performance there as well.

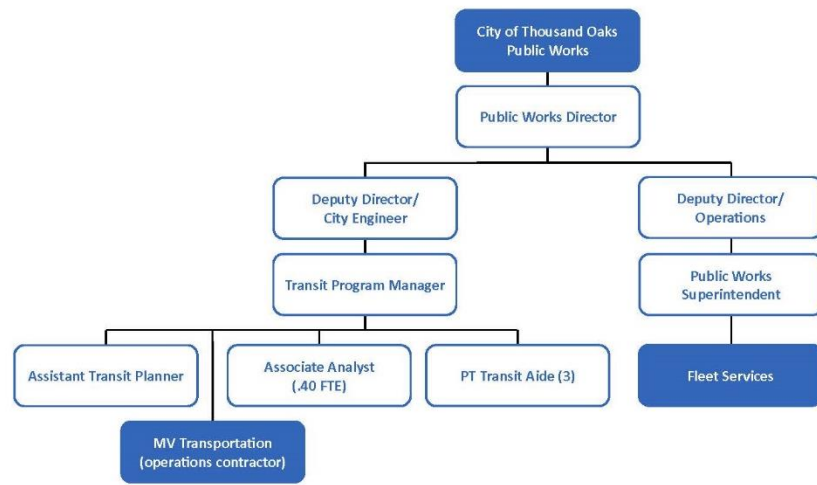
Program information is received from the operations contractor on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. The City also monitors performance through installed technologies. The City also utilizes qualified consultants to review and monitor data.

Team meetings with assigned program staff, support staff, and contractor management staff are scheduled on a biweekly basis. Additional meetings are scheduled on an as-needed basis and occur frequently.

The City was fully staffed throughout the audit period, but currently has an Analyst vacancy and three hourly vacancies in the program it is actively recruiting for. The openings are due to scheduled retirements, internal promotions, and resignations to accept full-time employment elsewhere. The contractor states a need to hire a dispatch supervisor and fill 20 openings for operators, dispatchers, and customer service representatives. Staffing shortages have impacted service, specifically Dial-A-Ride. Recruitment is on-going.

Exhibit 7.3 illustrates the organizational structure of the transit and fleet maintenance programs within the City.

Exhibit 7.3 Organizational Chart



The Thousand Oaks City Council is the governing body for the City’s public transit program. Meetings are open to the public. City council meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at city hall, which is well served by transit. Staff routinely report on transit developments to the city council, and the council was supportive of the free-fare periods.

During the audit period, several citizen advisory committees provided periodic input on transit issues, including:

- Traffic and Transportation Advisory Committee,
- Disabled Access Appeals and Advisory Board,
- Council on Aging, and
- Youth Commission.

During the audit period, the City introduced e-paper information signs to an additional 20 bus stops to improve information to the rider and completed a comprehensive improvement to the Transportation Center that doubled bus capacity and improved ADA and pedestrian access to the facility. This has had an overall positive impact on operations. TOT also introduced new AVAS equipment, a new app, and contactless fare collection, though full implementation is still pending on some items.

As a provider of services, the City has developed strong, cooperative relations with other local municipal entities in order to provide transit services under contract. The City serves as the lead agency and fiscal agent for the ECTA MOU. The City works cooperatively with the Gold Coast Transit District on joint procurements and VCTC on issues of regional concern including the rollout of new technologies and coordination of services, and participates in special programs and projects such as the College Free Ride Program. The City does not have a direct relationship with the FTA, as it is a sub-recipient through VCTC. The Transit Program Manager serves as the intergovernmental liaison.

Service Planning

Budgeting is prepared on a two-year cycle with a three-year look-ahead. Annual service adjustments are typically implemented in August. The City actively evaluates and plans future route adjustments to provide service to development areas both planned and currently under construction. It expects to begin work on its short range transit plan in FY 2024/25.

The City regularly reviews and evaluates its progress toward established goals and objectives. Future goals and objectives will be evaluated in a short-range transit plan following the outcome of the VCTC TIES study and release of VCTC's Comprehensive Short-Range Transit Plan. One of the impacts of COVID-19 was the need for a two-layer process with respect to goals and standards – comparison of actual performance against the established goals and standards, and analysis of what level of performance is realistic given COVID-related restrictions and staffing challenges.

The City ensures all services, regardless of type, are accessible to persons with disabilities. The fleet is 100 percent accessible, as are all facilities. Wherever possible, the transit program exceeds federal minimums. Demand-response services typically reflect fixed-route service hours; however, Sunday service is also offered, which exceeds federal requirements.

Public participation is available for all items presented to the city council and Traffic and Transportation Advisory Committee. The transit program participates in and sponsors public outreach events (such as Arbor Earth Day and the Street Fair) and travel training seminars. Public hearings are conducted as required by VCTC, CEQA, Title VI, or FTA. Hearings are held at city hall or other city venues designed for public meetings. Every effort is made to providing information to riders in three languages (e.g., English, Spanish, and Chinese) wherever possible.

Onboard surveys were conducted in 2022 and 2023 for all modes. Community surveying occurred in 2023. Surveys are administered online and in person, typically by a third party rather than by transit drivers.

Administration

The City prepares a biennial budget which includes transit expenditures broken out by capital, operations, and user fees. The Transit Program Manager is primarily responsible for preparing the transit budget. Budgeted expectations are compared with actual expenditures at least quarterly, with some measures monitored monthly. All financial data is maintained in NaviLine. The Finance Department manages most of this data, but all staff have some level of access to run budget, revenue, and expenditure reports.

Grants are managed by a combination of transit staff (primarily the Transit Program Manager), Engineering staff serving as the Project Managers for the capital projects, and Finance staff assigned to support the transit program. The Transit Program Manager is responsible for grant applications, reporting grant funding availability to other staff, and reporting to City Council on grant acceptance. Finance staff prepare required financial reports, handle audit responsibilities, and ensure proper accounting procedures. Project Managers are responsible for budget expenditure tracking and compliance with grant conditions for use of funds.

Transit staff aggressively seek out funding opportunities. Decisions to pursue grants are influenced by the resources needed to monitor and report on the grants. The City has not lost any grants due to inattention or failure to comply with requirements.

The City has both a Risk Manager and Safety Analyst on staff, and has a procedure for processing claims. The City's self-insurance covers the first \$1 million, and the City is a member of an Excess Liability pool (PRISM) that provides coverage up to \$25 million. City has an adopted and compliant Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). MV Transportation maintains its own insurance that meets the requirements of the contract. The safety of operating practices is reviewed by the City on an ongoing basis by its Health and Safety Officer, while MV reviews its practices on a daily, monthly, and quarterly basis. The operations contractor is required to maintain a disaster preparedness plan, which is updated annually. The City and MV have Injury Prevention Plans in place and participate in monthly meetings with the PTASP committee.

Contracts managed through the transit department include transit operations, transit facility leases, vending, security, bus stop and shelter maintenance, farebox validation, automated passenger county (APC) maintenance and support, APC validation, technology maintenance agreements, printing and marketing services, vehicle purchases, bus stop and shelter amenities, and professional services. Oversight of contracts includes monthly reporting, review of performance measures, and routine inspections. Contracts under \$30,000 can be approved by department heads, while contracts under \$50,000 can be approved by the City Manager. All other contracts greater than \$74,999 must be approved by City Council. Any changes to scope require a City Council amendment.

The City's purchasing procedures are governed by the Municipal Code as well as the TO Purchasing Ordinance. VCTC has established procurement policies, which the City is following to the letter. The City also follows FTA procurement rules.

All City staff complete timesheets electronically through Executime. MV Transportation employees clock in and out electronically. All employee records are securely managed. The City requires its staff to utilize direct deposit, while approximately 75 percent of MV employees utilize direct deposit.

The City has an internal annual audit plan that is risk-based. It is reviewed annually and modified as needed based on any new risks identified. The audit plan is reviewed by the Finance Director, City Manager, and Finance Audit Committee. Audit reports with recommendations receive periodic follow-ups.

Marketing and Public Information

Transit marketing is conducted by the City using City resources, channels, and contractors. It includes regular website updates, content for four social media platforms, print advertising, community outreach events, flyers, postcards, and promotional items. Service brochures (including service schedules) are frequently updated and distributed to approximately 40 locations through the community. Other marketing and information activities include posting information at key transit locations and public facilities, on vehicles, and in other locations; electronic messaging at bus stops and onboard transit vehicles; phone "on hold" messaging; and participation in public events and travel training activities.

Brochures are available at both libraries, the senior and teen centers, City Hall, TOTC, Oaks Mall, on vehicles, and at some ancillary locations (e.g., Senior Concerns, Area Housing Authority, social services offices). Brochures are also provided to Mobility Management Partners, VCTC, and Gold Coast Transit. The Thousand Oaks Transit Center also has brochures for VCTC, Commuter Express, Metro 161, Kanan Shuttle, and Moorpark Shuttle. The City's transit website includes .pdfs of all brochures. Display kiosks at the TOTC are made available to other transit operators.

Customer inquiries, concerns, and compliments are encouraged and can be received by phone, email, and other methods. All customer contacts are entered into a Customer Response Management (CRM) system, which documents investigations and resolutions. The contractor has 72 hours to respond to inquiries, while City staff try to respond within one business day. There are some exceptions for complex complaints or issues. Transit maintains a general email account and messages are retained for three years. Voicemail and email messages are saved in dedicated files on the City's network, and written correspondence is retained as well.

The City's transit marketing focuses on rider education rather than ridership growth, given more than 95 percent of riders are transit dependent. Survey data is used to inform marketing decisions, and the City periodically hires a marketing consultant to support its marketing efforts. Marketing typically focuses on the benefits of using transit, service changes, opportunities for public participation or engagement, and promotion of regional or national programs or initiatives.

The public's perception of Thousand Oaks Transit is generally positive. This is based on transit surveys conducted in 2018 and 2022/2023 as well as comments received via social media and the City's separate community attitude survey. Frequency and hours of service are typically identified as attributes that do not score as high.

[Scheduling, Dispatch, and Operations](#)

The City of Thousand Oaks contracts with MV Transportation to provide vehicle operators and maintenance of leased vehicles for the City's transit services. MV's operators, dispatchers, road supervisors, and customer service representatives are represented by Teamsters Local #848. At present, MV only has full-time drivers, as it has had difficulty filling vacancies and the investment and expense of training staff does not warrant hiring part-time staff.

All drivers are required to meet the same licensing and certification requirements. MV requires a commercial license with passenger and air brake endorsements as well as a Vehicle Transit Training (VTT) certificate.

Vacations are bid out each year. They are covered by standby drivers, or off-duty drivers may be called in on their scheduled days of if needed. Unscheduled absences (call-outs) require one hour of notice. In these situations a standby driver is dispatched to cover the assignment. If no standby driver is available, a road supervisor will cover the route until a suitable replacement is available.

Vehicles are assigned to routes daily by dispatchers on a rotation basis. Each program operated by MV has its own fleet, and buses branded for one fleet are not assigned to another service. Dispatch receives a list of down vehicles daily. Vehicles available for service are then assigned for the day.

Fareboxes are pulled once weekly for all buses that have been in service during the prior seven-day period and brought to City Hall. The fareboxes are opened in the Finance Department, witnessed by two City staff (the Finance Department cashier and a member of the transit staff), then coins are immediately deposited into a secure, tamper-proof bag, and placed in the vault for counting at the bank. All bills are counted, double-counted, banded, then deposited into a tamperproof bag, and placed in the vault. Fares are picked up by armored car service. There are only two keys to the fareboxes – one is locked in the Finance Department where the cashier has access, and the other is held by the City’s Fleet Supervisor in order to deal with a jammed farebox. No MV staff or transit staff can access the fareboxes.

All TOT bus pass types are sold on board the buses and at the Transportation Center. Money on buses is deposited into the farebox vaults. For sales at the Transportation Center, MV staff provide a receipt to the customer and a monthly spreadsheet of sales to the City, which is reconciled against a printout from the ticketing machine that only City staff can generate.

For Dial-A-Ride, trip tickets are sold at the Transportation Center, City Hall, and the Senior Center. At City Hall transactions are processed no differently than any other cash transaction and are entered into the City’s financial system. Tickets sold at TOTC are pre-purchased by MV. Tickets sold at the Senior Center are supplied by transit staff who reconcile the sales at least weekly against both receipts and the ticket log. The cash is deposited with the City’s cashier and entered into the financial system. All fare media supplied to all three locations are logged two ways and a three-part receipt is generated for record-keeping purposes.

The City has installed the equipment to support VCTC’s county-wide contactless fare payment program (VCbuspass), but it is not yet fully operational on TOT’s fleet. The equipment still needs to be configured. The City is working with VCTC to get this resolved. In the meantime, it tracks free youth and college rides for reimbursement from VCTC.

Personnel Management and Training

Drivers bid for their work assignments on a seniority basis. Many bid schedules have multiple route or service components, but not all. Some drivers may work for multiple agencies under contract with the City of Thousand Oaks on a single shift. All drivers are trained to operate all fixed-route and demand-response vehicles.

Currently, there are not enough drivers being recruited to meet the contractor’s needs. Across MV’s entire Thousand Oaks operation, they are short approximately 15 drivers and five other staff. Recruitment and training are continual and ongoing, but MV has not had full staffing for at least 18 months due to low unemployment and higher wages available elsewhere. Employee recruitment is conducted via multiple methodologies, including job fairs, workforce/job placements/outreach programs, ads on local hiring sites, veterans outreach, and County offices. MV also has in-house recruiters that are stationed locally.

Thousand Oaks and MV have been working together to increase wages to be more competitive in recruitment, especially for drivers. Two recent wage increases – in August 2022 and January 2023 – have brought starting driver wages up from \$15.50 to \$20.70. Another increase will bring the starting wage up to \$23.00 in July 2023. Other wages are being adjusted as well to bring them up to parity with other local operators.

Safety activities include monthly safety meetings, safety stand-downs, road evaluations, risk assessments, and ongoing wheelchair recertification. Minimum safety and training requirements are included in the transit operations operator’s contract. All vehicles are equipped with safety equipment required by the Department of Transportation, state, and contract. Some vehicles also include health safety devices such as special air filters and driver shields in response to COVID-19.

MV strives to motivate its employees by holding employee appreciation events and luncheons, conducting customer service and safety contests, and selecting an Employee of the Month. Drivers receive bonuses for safety, gift cards, and food events to help motivate them and enhance job satisfaction. All positive rider comments are passed along to drivers. Operator staff regularly receive risk assessments and road evaluations. There is also an incentive performance clause in MV’s contract with the City of Thousand Oaks.

Discipline and attendance policies are outlined in an Employee Handbook which is provided to all employees upon the start of employment. These include a safety point system, attendance point system, coaching, and counseling. A progressive discipline program is also utilized. MV’s drug and alcohol policy is monitored by the City of Thousand Oaks and the FTA.

MV Transportation provides comprehensive benefits to all full-time employees. Employees receive a package outlining available benefits on an annual basis.

Maintenance

The Thousand Oaks Transit Center (TOTC) is managed by the City’s facilities division, while the Municipal Services Center (MSC) is managed by the City’s fleet and facilities division.

The City of Thousand Oaks maintains its own vehicles as well as vehicles for the City of Moorpark at its Municipal Services Center. Traditionally, the City of Thousand Oaks has tried to maintain at least one spare vehicle per service it operates (Thousand Oaks fixed-route, Thousand Oaks DAR, Kanan Shuttle, Moorpark, etc.) at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center.

The City of Thousand Oaks adheres to the required preventive maintenance program. Drivers complete a Daily Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR), which identifies any unsafe conditions. MV has standing orders to identify any issues with the vehicles as part of the pre- and post-trip inspections. Maintenance will notify dispatch regarding any vehicle deemed unsafe. Vehicles undergoing maintenance will be tagged so they are not used. Repairs are performed in a timely manner; transit vehicles are the highest priority of all maintenance work at the MSC.

The City of Thousand Oaks contracts with MV Transportation to maintain all contractor-owned and leased vehicles. MV has an established preventive maintenance program that includes A, B, and C level

inspections. Maintenance does not typically conflict with regular vehicle use. Warranty work is typically sent out, and MV conducts other work in-house.

Maintenance is notified promptly of breakdowns. There is no real issue with vehicle downtimes, as a robust reserve fleet is maintained and vehicles can be exchanged across services if absolutely necessary.

California Highway Patrol (CHP) inspections are conducted every 45 days. Vehicles not passing the CHP inspection are not put into service. The City of Thousand Oaks is able to identify vehicles under warranty if repairs are necessary. Some major repairs are outsourced, such as transmission rebuilds or large-scale body work. The City follows guidelines for ramp and wheelchair lift inspections – when one is down, that vehicle must be pulled out of service. The City of Thousand Oaks’ policy prohibits deferred maintenance. There is currently no backlog of repairs and no idle time, as fleet mechanics work on all City-maintained vehicles.

The current maintenance facility features one heavy lift and three portable lifts. Up to four heavy vehicles can be accommodated simultaneously. The facility is suited to all aspects of maintenance that are performed there.

The City of Thousand Oaks’ transit fueling facility at the MSC was completed in 2013 and activated in 2014. Moorpark buses are fueled and maintained there. Moorpark and Thousand Oaks buses have their own CNG fueling meters so that fuel is allocated accurately.

Parts inventories are sufficient to minimize vehicle downtime. There is a defined timeframe between a request to order parts and receipt of the parts. The City of Thousand Oaks has established an email account for fleet parts so that maintenance can be notified when parts have shipped or been delivered. The parts warehouse is secured. All parts are barcoded and inventoried annually. There is very little loss.

Exhibit 7.4 illustrates the City’s fleet inventory. MV uses a useful life standard of four years or 150,000 miles for Dial-A-Ride vehicles. Vehicle replacement was addressed in VCTC’s group Transit Asset Management Plan as well as in the City’s Capital Improvement Project budget. The City replaces vehicles as soon as they became eligible under FTA qualifications.

Exhibit 7.4 Thousand Oak Transit's Fleet

Make/Model	Year	Seating capacity	Fuel Type	Quantity	Assigned to:
Orion VII Bus	2008	34/2 WC	CNG	2	Thousand Oaks FR
Gillig Bus	2015	23/2 WC	CNG	2	Thousand Oaks FR
Ford E450 Cutaway	2014	16/2 WC	CNG	2	Thousand Oaks FR
Ford E450 Cutaway	2018	28/2 WC	Diesel	1	Thousand Oaks FR
Gillig Bus	2019	23/2 WC	CNG	4	Thousand Oaks FR
El Dorado Bus	2010	23/3 WC	CNG	3	Moorpark
El Dorado Bus	2015	23/3 WC	CNG	2	Moorpark
Ford E450 Cutaway	2019	30/2 WC	CNG	3	Kanan Shuttle
Dodge Caravan	2019	3/1 WC	Gasoline	8	Thousand Oaks DAR
Ford Transit	2018	8/5 WC	Gasoline	2	Thousand Oaks DAR
Ford Transit	2019	8/3 WC	CNG	6	Thousand Oaks DAR
Ford Transit	2019	8/2 WC	Gasoline	1	Thousand Oaks DAR
Ford E450 Cutaway	2014	12/2 WC	CNG	6	Thousand Oaks DAR
Hometown Trolley	2017	30/2 WC	Propane	1	Thousand Oaks SE
Starcraft Cutaway	2018	8/3 WC	Gasoline	4	ECTA
Starcraft Cutaway	2019	8/3 WC	Gasoline	3	ECTA
Starcraft Cutaway	2015	8/3 WC	Gasoline	2	Thousand Oaks DAR - Reserve

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Chapter 8 | Findings and Recommendations

Conclusions

Moore & Associates, Inc. finds Thousand Oaks Transit to be in compliance with the requirements of the Transportation Development Act. In addition, the entity generally functions in an efficient, effective, and economical manner.

Findings

Based on discussions with Thousand Oaks Transit staff, analysis of program performance, and an audit of program compliance and function, the audit team presents no compliance findings.

The audit team has identified one functional finding. While this finding is not a compliance finding, the audit team believes it warrants inclusion in this report:

1. The contractor's staffing shortage is impacting the City's ability to operate its transit programs.

Program Recommendations

In completing this Triennial Performance Audit, the auditors submit the following recommendations for the Thousand Oaks Transit's public transit program. They are divided into two categories: TDA Program Compliance Recommendations and Functional Recommendations. TDA Program Compliance Recommendations are intended to assist in bringing the operator into compliance with the requirements and standards of the TDA, while Functional Recommendations address issues identified during the audit that are not specific to TDA compliance. Each finding is presented with the elements identified within the 2011 *Government Auditing Standards* as well as one or more recommendations.

As there are no compliance findings, only functional findings and recommendations are presented below.

Functional Finding 1: The contractor's staffing shortage is impacting the City's ability to operate its transit programs.

Criteria: The City's operations contract with MV Transportation requires MV to provide sufficient staffing to meet all contract requirements for service provision.

Condition: While the contractor has improved its general management staffing during the audit period, it has been unable to provide sufficient staff to meet the demand for service, primarily with respect to Dial-A-Ride services. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the contractor was deploying 18 to 19 vehicles per day to serve its combined Dial-A-Ride programs. At the time of the site visit, only seven vehicles were being deployed each day. This has severely impacted Dial-A-Ride reservations. Only about a half of those who call are able to get their requested ride time. One quarter of callers are able to accept a different ride time, while another quarter do not get a ride.

Both the City and MV have been working to recruit additional staff. City staff estimates MV needs to fill approximately 20 operational positions (drivers, dispatchers, and customer service). MV has a recruiter

located in Thousand Oaks, while the City and MV have worked together to increase the contract cost and raise wages in order to attract qualified candidates.

Cause: There are two primary causes of the current staffing shortage: Recovery from the reduced demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and lower wages that left the City’s transit operation less competitive within the county.

Effect: As a result, it has been more difficult to recruit operations personnel.

Recommendation: Continue to work with MV Transportation to fill the open operations positions and ensure sufficient Dial-A-Ride coverage.

Recommended Action: The City has played an active role in getting the contractor’s open positions filled by increasing the contract cost to allow for several wage increases. One more wage increase is planned for 2023. The City should monitor MV to ensure it is continuing to place a high priority on getting these positions filled and deploy additional Dial-A-Ride service as it becomes feasible to do so.

Timeline: Ongoing until positions are fully staffed.

Anticipated Cost: Wage increases are already budgeted under the current contract.

Exhibit 8.1 Audit Recommendations

Functional Recommendations		Importance	Timeline
1	Continue to work with MV Transportation to fill the open operations positions and ensure sufficient Dial-A-Ride coverage.	High	Until filled