



Item 6

September 10, 2024

MEMO TO: CITIZEN'S TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CTAC)/SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SSTAC)

FROM: AUBREY SMITH, PROGRAM MANAGER
CLAIRE GRASTY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE BOARDING METHOD – CAMARILLO AND OXNARD TRANSIT STATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and file

BACKGROUND:

In May 2018, the United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California ("USAO") conducted an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance review at the Camarillo Transit Station. The ADA requires that all existing intercity rail stations be accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs. Upon completion of its' review of available information, the DOJ concluded that VCTC was not in compliance with ADA requirements.

In 2021, VCTC entered into an agreement with the US Department of Justice (DOJ) to make the following improvements at the Camarillo Transit Station:

- Increasing accessibility on routes from the public right-of-way, from public transit, from accessible parking, and from the passenger loading zone due to gaps
- Remedying abrupt elevation changes and improper slopes (e.g. travel paths, platforms, etc.)
- Adding detectable warnings at pedestrian/vehicular transition areas, and curb ramps, and
- Improving signage to be ADA-compliant

As the first step in this effort, VCTC conducted an evaluation of the station, which resulted in a report by an independent licensed architect (ILA) who identified necessary improvements for compliance with applicable ADA requirements. In April 2023, VCTC awarded a contract to a consultant to develop design drawings for improvements needed at the station, which is planned, be completed by Summer/Fall of 2026. The Design consultant and VCTC Staff are currently preparing a solicitation for a Construction Management Services (CMS) firm to join the project team prior to the issuance of a construction bid to start construction in Spring 2025.

The City of Oxnard is also making upgrades to existing signage, landscaping, interior building renovations, upgrades to the exterior security lighting, and existing exterior ADA improvements

which must be completed by 2026. VCTC and the City of Oxnard are collaborating on making the rail platforms at both the Camarillo and Oxnard stations ADA-compliant.

DISCUSSION:

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), transit agencies are required to ensure accessible boarding at public transportation facilities, including bus stops, light rail, commuter rail, and intercity rail services. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are responsible for enforcing the accessibility regulations that must be followed for new or altered stations.

The FRA/FTA require that the boarding platform height be the same as a rail car floor. When standard compliance with ADA boarding requirements is not feasible due to site conditions or other constraints, transit agencies can seek “Equivalent Facilitation” from the FTA/FRA. Equivalent Facilitation refers to a process where transit agencies request permission from the FTA and/or FRA to implement alternative designs or features (e.g. ramps, lifts, gauntlet track, or other devices) that provide equivalent or superior accessibility in comparison to standard ADA requirements. VCTC and the City of Oxnard are proposing to meet the regulation through alternative methods and Equivalent Facilitation.

VCTC and the City of Oxnard will hold a series of stakeholder engagements to solicit feedback from organizations throughout Ventura and those in jurisdictions near Ventura County. There is a significant emphasis to engage organizations that advocate for persons with disabilities and their mobility options. Both entities will also present at its’ Commission along with other relevant and necessary governing entities and will have a virtual meeting and promotion on various social media platforms.

VCTC expects the duration of completing this report to take approximately four (4) to six (6) months, which will put VCTC and the City of Oxnard in a position that ensures timely project completion and compliance with federal accessibility regulations.