



# TDA TRIENNIAL PERFORMANCE AUDIT FY 2011 – FY 2013

Ventura County Transportation Commission

June 2014

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

Ventura County is served by seven public fixed-route bus operators, five public dial-a-ride operators, and four paratransit services for seniors and people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> Ventura County is also served by two Los Angeles-based bus operators (LA Metro and LA DOT), two rail operations (Metrolink and Amtrak), and several private carriers that serve portions of the county. These services are funded and operated by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), the Gold Coast Transit Joint Powers Agency, the County of Ventura and individual cities within the county.

*VCTC's mission is to improve mobility within the County and increase funding to meet transportation needs.* To fulfill that mission, VCTC establishes transportation policies and priorities to ensure an equitable allocation of federal, state, and local funds for highway, transit, rail, aviation, bicycle and other transportation projects. VCTC has evolved to administer and act as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), the Congestion Management Agency (CMA), the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA), the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE), the County Transportation Commission (CTC), the County Transportation Authority (CTA), and the Ventura Intercity Service Transportation Authority (VISTA). It is advised by several formal and ad hoc advisory committees (see Figure 1-1).

As the county's California Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds distributor, VCTC is required to submit to Caltrans a Triennial Performance Audit that reports whether it has met each of 14 different TDA compliance requirements. Nelson\Nygaard was retained to serve as VCTC's auditor for the FY 2010/11 through FY 2012/13 three-year period. This report addresses these requirements, provides a functional review, and offers several recommendations for improving VCTC's policies and procedures.

## Compliance Audit Findings

VCTC was found to be in compliance with all 14 TDA requirements.

| RTPA Compliance Requirement   | PUC Code Reference | VCTC Compliance |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Claims do not exceed apportionment.                                      | 99231              | Yes             |
| 2. Adopt rules for claims submission for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. | 99233              | Yes             |

<sup>1</sup> This is the inventory of services provided by the end of FY 2012/13. In FY 2013/14, the County of Ventura added a fixed-route service in Oak Park. Information taken from Ventura County Regional Transit Study, Appendix II and VCTC staff.

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| RTPA Compliance Requirement  | PUC Code Reference                     | VCTC Compliance                        |
|--|--|--|
|  | 99234                                  |  |
| 3. Establish Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) and hold at least one annual public hearing.  | 99238<br>99238.5                       | Yes                                    |
| 4. Annually identify, analyze, and recommend potential productivity improvements.  | 99244                                  | Yes                                    |
| 5. Annual fiscal and compliance audits of claimants.   | 99245                                  | Yes                                    |
| 6. Triennial performance audits of operators and RTPA.   | 99246<br>99248                         | Yes                                    |
| 7. Submit RTPA and operator performance audits to Caltrans.  | 99246(c)                               | Yes                                    |
| 8. Ensure operator performance audit requirements.   | 99246(d)                               | Yes                                    |
| 9. Establish rules and regulations regarding revenue ratios for operators.   | 99270.1<br>99270.2                     | Yes                                    |
| 10. Establish rules and regulations for Article 4.5 and the determination of cost effectiveness of proposed services.  | 99275.5                                | Yes                                    |
| 11. Allocate State Transit Assistance (STA) funds only for transportation planning and mass transportation purposes.   | 99310.5<br>99313.3<br>Prop. 116        | Yes                                    |
| 12. Match STA allocations to State allocations.  | 99314.3                                | Yes                                    |
| 13. If TDA funds are allocated for non-transit purposes, the RTPA must annually: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with the SSTAC</li> <li>• Identify transit needs</li> <li>• Define reasonable to meet</li> <li>• Identify Unmet Transit Needs</li> <li>• Adopt findings on Unmet Transit Needs</li> <li>• Fund Unmet Transit Needs before allocation to streets and roads</li> </ul> | 99401.5                                | Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes |
| 14. RTPA fiscal and compliance audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete annually</li> <li>• Transmit to State Controller</li> <li>• No commingling of funds</li> </ul>   | California Code of Regulations<br>6662 | Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes                      |

## Functional Review Findings

In addition to a compliance audit, the audit also reviewed VCTC’s functional activities. As required by the TDA, the auditor reviewed VCTC activities related to:

- Administration and management
- Transportation planning and regional coordination
- Claimant relationships and oversight (i.e., “TDA administration”)

- Marketing and transportation alternatives
- Grant applications and management

Lastly, the auditor reviewed VCTC's legislative advocacy efforts. No major deficiencies were found in VCTC's functional review.

## **Recommendations**

The auditor determined that VCTC is in full compliance with all 14 TDA performance requirements and serves each functional category sufficiently. Therefore, the auditor has no immediate, high-priority recommendations for VCTC to implement.

However, as a means of enhancing the work of the agency within its many roles and responsibilities, the auditor offers five recommendations to VCTC. These include:

1. Establish a Productivity Review Subcommittee of Transcom to review productivity and performance measurement of transit service
2. Update rules and regulations for the evaluation of claims for TDA Article 4.5 funds
3. Monitor the newly established East County Transit Alliance with Eastern Ventura County Cities
4. Update the county's Congestion Management Program and upload the document to the GoVentura website
5. Appoint a representative from VCTC to represent VISTA to the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) and Transcom to comply with California Public Utilities Code (PUC) 130105(e). This will also help VCTC achieve its duties under PUC 130303, which deals with the Commission's short-range transit planning and coordination responsibilities.

# 1 DESCRIPTION OF VENTURA COUNTY AND VCTC

## Roles and Responsibilities

Ventura County is positioned to the north of Los Angeles County and to the southeast of Santa Barbara County, with strong economic links to these counties. Ventura has seen moderate growth in recent years, which is projected to continue in the long-term. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county's population grew about 9 percent between the 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census and at a similar annual rate between 2010 and 2012.<sup>2</sup> The growth levels both in Ventura County and the larger Los Angeles metropolitan region will stimulate increasing demand on the County's transportation network.

Ventura County is served by seven public fixed-route bus operators, five public dial-a-ride operators, and four paratransit services for seniors and people with disabilities.<sup>3</sup> Ventura County is also served by two Los Angeles-based bus operators (LA Metro and LA DOT), two rail operations (Metrolink and Amtrak), and several private carriers that serve portions of the county. These services are funded and operated by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), the Gold Coast Transit Joint Powers Agency, the County of Ventura, and individual cities within the county.

VCTC was created in 1989 as the successor agency to the Ventura County Association of Governments (VCAG), assuming all the assets and liabilities of that body. In 2004, VCTC was reorganized under Assembly Bill 2784, expanding the Commission to its current configuration of a seventeen-member Commission comprised of five Ventura County Supervisors; ten City Council members; two Citizen Appointees (one representing the cities and one representing the County); and, one Ex-Officio member appointed by the Governor of California.

*VCTC's mission is to improve mobility within the County and increase funding to meet transportation needs.* To fulfill that mission, VCTC establishes transportation policies and priorities to ensure an equitable allocation of federal, state, and local funds for highway, transit, rail, aviation, bicycle and other transportation projects. VCTC has evolved to administer and act as:

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<sup>2</sup> According to the American Community Survey, available online at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>

<sup>3</sup> This is the inventory of services provided by the end of FY 2012/13. In FY 2013/14, Oak Park will also be adding a fixed-route service. Information taken from Ventura County Regional Transit Study, Appendix II and VCTC staff.

- **Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA).** VCTC is responsible for multi-modal transportation planning, programming, and fund allocation, as required by the state statutes. This includes the annual allocation of Transportation Development Act funds, as well as all federal and local funds for highway, transit, rail, bicycle and other transportation projects.
- **Congestion Management Agency (CMA).** The cities and county have designated VCTC as the CMA for Ventura County. In this capacity, VCTC is responsible for the development and implementation of the countywide Congestion Management System (CMS) required in all urban counties. In the past, the State of California and the federal government required the CMA to prepare a Congestion Management Program (CMP), which provides local agencies and private developers the procedures and tools necessary to manage and decrease traffic congestion in the County. Although this is no longer a state-level requirement, VCTC continues to update and monitor its CMP.
- **Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA).** VCTC is the state mandated facilitator charged with the development and implementation of regional coordination of transit and paratransit services and improvement of social service transportation to seniors, persons with disabilities, the young and the low-income disadvantaged.
- **Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC).** In this capacity, VCTC is responsible under state law to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring that vacant lands in the vicinity of airports are planned and zoned for uses compatible with airport operations.
- **Ventura County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE).** As the SAFE, VCTC is responsible for the installation, operation, and administration of the system of roadside call boxes in Ventura County that is financed by a \$1.00 per year fee on all motor vehicles registered within the county.
- **County Transportation Commission (CTC).** As the CTC, VCTC leverages state and federal transportation dollars and provides assistance during project implementation. VCTC’s responsibilities include preparing the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for submittal to the State, participation in the AB1246 Committee, performing short-range capital and service planning, and preparing long-range expenditure plans for transportation programs in the county.
- **County Transportation Authority (CTA).** VCTC was designated the CTA per California Public Utilities Code 130050.1. In the role as the CTA, VCTC determines the preferred method and distribution of sales tax revenue for transportation improvements, when applicable.
- **Ventura Intercity Service Transportation Authority (VISTA).** VCTC provides intercity bus service, branded as VISTA, with connections between the cities of Ventura County and neighboring Santa Barbara and Los Angeles Counties. VISTA also provides a dial-a-ride service for the general public in and between Fillmore and Santa Paula.

To invite countywide participation in defining VCTC’s policies and priorities, VCTC staffs a number of standing regional committees, listed in Figure 1-1, and has the option to create special-purpose committees as the need arises.

**Figure 1-1 VCTC Advisory Committees**

| Advisory Committee               | Roles & Responsibilities   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Citizens Transportation Advisory | CTAC/SSTAC serves as an advisory council to VCTC for the purposes of |

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|  |   |
|--|---|
| Committee/Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC/SSTAC) | transportation planning and the identification of Unmet Transit Needs. The CTAC/SSTAC involvement in the TDA Unmet Transit Needs process is required under the TDA. Committee membership includes two representatives and one alternate from each of the ten cities and two representatives and an alternate from Ventura County. The Committee meets at least six times per year, typically on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:30pm at the Ventura County Government Center.                 |
| Santa Paula Branch Line Advisory Committee (SPBLAC)                    | The SPBLAC advises VCTC regarding the management, uses and operations of the Santa Paula Branch Line. There are five members and their designated alternates including: the Commissioners representing the cities of Ventura, Santa Paula and Fillmore along with the two County Supervisors who represent the unincorporated areas along the SPBL. It meets on an as needed basis.   |
| Transit Operators Advisory Committee (Transcom)                        | Advises VCTC on all matters pertaining to transit in Ventura County, including commuter rail issues. The Committee includes one representative from each transit operator in Ventura County and an Ex-Officio member from the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, although its own VISTA service is not represented on the committee. Transcom meets on the second Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at least six times per year.   |
| Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)                     | As required under TDA, TTAC advises VCTC on all technical transportation matters in the county and cities. The Committee includes one representative and one alternate from the following: Ventura County Public Works Department, each city, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and Caltrans District 7; like Transcom, there is no representation for VISTA. TTAC meets on a monthly basis at locations throughout the County. |

VCTC also has two appointed committees: the Finance Committee and the Administrative Committee. VCTC convenes project specific committees and working groups on an as-needed basis.

## Organization

Growing from three employees in 1989 to its proposed roster of 20 regular full-time employees, VCTC's staff includes 14 professional positions and 6 support positions.

VCTC's FY 2013/14 budget reflects the decision to add three new staff positions to support the continuation and improvement of the organization's successful VISTA intercity public transit operations. These new positions are a manager level position to administer transit contracts, a transit analyst position for transit planning, and an administrative assistant dedicated to transit and programming support.

In addition to its staff, VCTC has a seventeen-member Commission composed of five Ventura County Supervisors; ten City Council members; and, two Citizen Appointees, one representing the cities and one representing the County. In addition to the above membership, the Governor appoints an Ex-Officio member to the Commission, usually the Caltrans District 7 Director. Below are the current members of the Commission:

- Ralph Fernandez, City of Santa Paula, Chair
- Peter Foy, County of Ventura, Vice-Chair
- Steven Sojka, City of Simi Valley, Past Chair
- Steve Bennett, County of Ventura

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- Claudia Bill-de la Peña, City of Thousand Oaks
- Betsy Clapp, City of Ojai
- Brian Humphrey, Citizen Representative (Cities)
- Kathy Long, County of Ventura
- Bryan MacDonald, City of Oxnard
- Jan McDonald, City of Camarillo
- Keith Millhouse, City of Moorpark
- Manuel Minjares, City of Fillmore
- Carl Morehouse, City of Ventura
- Linda Parks, County of Ventura
- Jon Sharkey, City of Port Hueneme
- Jim White, Citizen Representative (County)
- John Zaragoza, County of Ventura
- Carrie Bowen, Caltrans (Ex-Officio)

Elected representatives must attend meetings and cannot send an alternate in their place if they are unable to attend. The Commission meets on the first Friday of each month at 9:00 a.m. in the Camarillo City Council Chambers.

## **Staffing**

VCTC currently has a staff of 20 people and one contracted General Counsel. During the audit period, the following staffing changes occurred:

- The Director of Capital Projects position was eliminated
- Two part-time positions were consolidated into one full-time Program Analyst position
- One new full-time Program Analyst position was created
- The Rail Manager position now reports to the Director of Planning

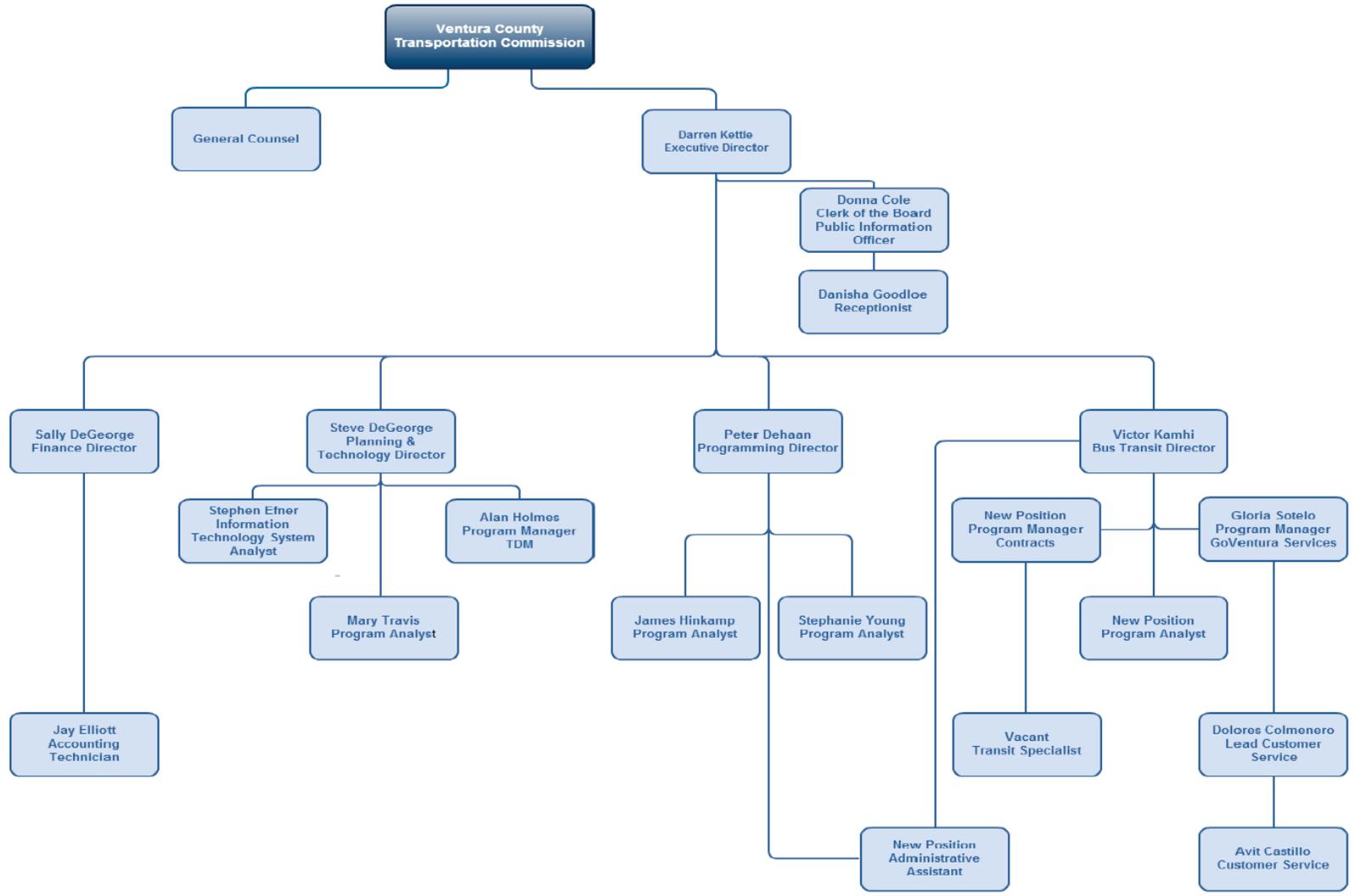
The current Executive Director, Darren Kettle, was hired in October 2007. As of FY 2013/14, five positions report directly to the Executive Director:

- Finance Director
- Planning & Technology Director
- Programming Director
- Bus Transit Director
- Clerk of the Commission

This represents an organizational change from the previous Audit period, as noted above, during which seven positions reported to the Executive Director (the Rail Manager no longer reports to the Executive Director). Additionally, the title of the Chief Financial Officer position was changed to Finance Director with no change in role or responsibilities.

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Figure 1-2 FY 2013/14 VCTC Organizational Chart



## Major Accomplishments during the Audit Period

Many changes and significant events occurred during the audit period. Highlights and major accomplishments are summarized below.

### Planning

#### Unmet Transit Needs Process

Throughout the Audit period, VCTC successfully engaged the public in its Unmet Transit Needs process and received many comments by reaching out in English and Spanish, holding three public meetings, collecting online and phone comments, and displaying ads in local newspapers (including Vida – an English/Spanish newspaper). However, most of the needs collected from the public dealt with operational needs. Operational improvements, including additional stops or increased frequency on existing services, did not represent Unmet Transit Needs for VCTC, and instead were referred to individual operators to review and consider in light of funding and operational data.

To improve the process and clarify the types of things that constitute Unmet Transit Needs, VCTC hired a consultant in FY2013/14 (after the Audit period) to review and recommend changes to their Unmet Transit Needs process. As a result, the Commission adopted a new overall process with definitions and thresholds that make the difference between Unmet Transit Needs and operational needs clearer.<sup>4</sup> The new process was adopted in December 2013 (just after the current Audit period) and implemented in February 2014 during a public hearing on current Unmet Transit Needs.<sup>5</sup> VCTC staff report they now approach the Unmet Transit Needs process “with new enthusiasm.”

#### Comprehensive Transportation Plan

VCTC worked throughout the Audit period with a contractor to develop the Ventura County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), which was adopted in September 2013. The CTP is a long-range policy document, built from community-based, local priorities and community-expressed needs to enhance regional connections. It is aimed at ensuring mobility and enhancing the quality of life for all Ventura County residents. The CTP also fully examines various funding strategies and options from the federal, state, regional and local levels. It is intended to provide a framework for future community-based planning and collaboration and inform Ventura County’s long-range transportation decisions.

#### Regional Transit Study

In early 2010, VCTC embarked on a Regional Transit Study for the county. The intent was to define a direction for improving the quality, efficiency and overall sustainability of public transportation in Ventura County and to provide a platform for presenting an organizational proposal to the State Legislature. VCTC enlisted the services of a consulting team to work with Commission and staff in reviewing the state of the system, identifying potential options and charting an initial path forward. The results of this analysis would form the basis of a report to the Legislature and also pave the way for a more effective, comprehensible, and sustainable public

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<sup>4</sup>

<http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/VCTC%20Unmet%20Transit%20Needs%20Public%20Outreach%20Report%20FINAL%20w%20Attach.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/14-15%20Unmet%20Needs%20Agenda\\_0.pdf](http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/14-15%20Unmet%20Needs%20Agenda_0.pdf)

transportation system for Ventura County.

VCTC's Regional Transit Study, adopted in April 2012 and refined in March 2013, supplements the CTP. It "culminated in an unprecedented level of consensus among the operators on the desirable path forward in creating a more coordinated, customer-focused system of services in Ventura County."<sup>6</sup>

The following recommendations were developed from the Regional Transit Study and included in the CTP:

- Refinement of the Heritage Valley service startup and management
- A framework for further consolidation of ADA and dial-a-ride services
- The creation and constitution of the Gold Coast Transit (GCT) District in accordance with AB 664 (Williams)
- Terms and timing of the East County Memorandum of Understanding

As a result of the study, the County of Ventura and the cities in eastern Ventura County (Camarillo, Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks) adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU for the "East County Transit Alliance" or ECTA). The MOU sets a structure for transit agencies to coordinate and improve public transit in East County, and it includes six broad transit goals:

1. Provide public transit services that are inclusive, customer focused, efficiently operated, and financially viable
2. Enhance existing transit services and options
3. Improve local and inter-agency transit connectivity
4. Improve coordination of public transit services
5. Establish a single provider for ADA and Senior Dial-a-Ride (DAR) service within the ECTA service area
6. Leverage cost efficiencies

The ECTA Management Committee is tasked with developing a Transit Implementation Plan.

*Short Range Transit Plan*

Though just after the current Audit period, it is worth noting that VCTC commenced a Short Range Transit Planning process in December 2013 by issuing an RFP. The contract for the work was awarded in February 2014 and the plan is expected to continue into FY 2014/15.

*Apportionment Planning*

Every February, VCTC notifies all operators of TDA funds available for apportionment. In June, the Commission adopts a final apportionment decision.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.goventura.org/?q=commission-meeting-april-2012>

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During the Audit period, VCTC communicated to its jurisdictions that less money would be available due to the reduction in revenues during the recession period. Because of this, in March 2011, the Commission adopted a policy to set aside a larger reserve (approximately 10%).<sup>7</sup>

For the past 17 years, VCTC had allocated \$400,000 per year for Metrolink passenger rail service in Ventura County, but operating costs for the rail operation significantly increased over that period. VCTC has an agreement with the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) and LA Metro to trade some of its federal capital funds for LA Metro's local funds. Given the increasing constraints of the funding exchange, starting in FY 2013/14 (after the Audit period), VCTC started setting aside about one-third of the recent growth in LTF funds (\$666,000 for FY 2013/14) to contribute to Metrolink commuter rail, in addition to its original \$400,000 set-aside.

## **Technology**

### Trapeze Software

VCTC's FY 2013/14 budget designated a task to process vehicle communication invoices until the conclusion of the operator agreements in late FY 2013/14. Throughout the Audit period, VCTC processed vehicle communication invoices for the agencies, but that concluded in FY 2012/13.<sup>8</sup>

### Metrolink Safety Technology

VCTC continued to be a supporter of Metrolink commuter rail, especially with regard to its project to improve safety using positive train control (PTC) technology. In FY 2010/11, VCTC sent a letter of support to the Governor regarding Metrolink's requested Proposition 1A funding for PTC.<sup>9</sup> The rollout of PTC is expected to be service-wide by the end of 2015.<sup>10,11</sup>

## **Financial and Administrative**

A major accomplishment during this Audit period was the development and State of California approval of the Gold Coast Transit District. This planning process started in FY 2012/13 and its implementation will commence in FY 2014/15. According to the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee AB 664 Analysis:

*“Currently, Gold Coast Transit joint powers agency members receive TDA funds from the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), and then share them with the joint powers agency to operate its transit operation. This has led to the joint powers agency assigning existing service based on the source of funding instead of on what may make the most sense for improving service and mobility region wide. According to the author, one of the major benefits of this bill is that, by dissolving the joint powers agency and forming a transit district, VCTC will allocate TDA funds directly to the district and the district's governing board will be able to look beyond jurisdictional boundaries and allocate services to meet the needs and demands of the area at large.”<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with VCTC Executive Director, Darren Kettle

<sup>8</sup> VCTC annual budgets

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/Oct%201,%202010%20Agenda.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.metrolinktrains.com/news/news\\_item/news\\_id/901.html](http://www.metrolinktrains.com/news/news_item/news_id/901.html)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.commutersmart.info/csnews/page2.html>

<sup>12</sup> Senate Transportation & Housing Committee, AB 664 Analysis. [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab\\_0651-0700/ab\\_664\\_cfa\\_20130627\\_132625\\_sen\\_comm.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab_0651-0700/ab_664_cfa_20130627_132625_sen_comm.html)

## Marketing

In FY 2012/13, VCTC conducted a special marketing program with Metrolink. They distributed coupons in mass mailers, which recipients could mail back to get a system map and two free rides to try out the system. The partnership also helped VCTC market its limited weekend service to the Ventura County Fair and promote the annual Holiday Toy Train.<sup>13</sup>

Starting in March 2010 and continuing through the Audit period, VCTC worked with Moore and Associates in an extensive marketing and promotional effort. These efforts spanned VCTC's agency, commuter services, VISTA, and other elements and have included such projects as agency rebranding, website redesign, social media expansion, promotion of Rideshare and Bike to Work weeks, redesign of VISTA brochures, and the development of the Teen Council.

## Bus Transit Operations

As part of the refined Regional Transit Study approved by the Commission in March 2013 VCTC agreed to go "back into the intercity bus business" with its VISTA routes. VCTC's contractor for this service, Coach America, went bankrupt in 2012, giving just 16 days notice to VCTC to find a replacement provider. VCTC was able to identify a new contractor (Roadrunner) in June 2012 to take over the operations.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/VCTC\\_Budge-FY2013-2014.pdf](http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/VCTC_Budge-FY2013-2014.pdf)

<sup>14</sup>

<http://www.stb.dot.gov/decisions/ReadingRoom.nsf/51d7c65c6f78e79385256541007f0580/4a716d676e54641c85257a2b00655c53?OpenDocument>

## 2 COMPLIANCE AUDIT

The Triennial Performance Audit Report for the Ventura County Transportation Commission is an independent and objective evaluation of the Regional Transportation Planning agency (RTPA). The Performance Audit Guidebook lists specific RTPA compliance requirements. These were investigated by means of reviewing VCTC records and interviewing VCTC management and staff, as well as the Executive Director. Figure 2-1 below summarizes the audit findings relative to each of the compliance requirements. A discussion of each area of compliance follows.

**Figure 2-1 Compliance Audit Requirements**

| RTPA Compliance Requirement   | PUC Code Reference              | VCTC Compliance |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Claims do not exceed apportionment.  | 99231                           | Yes             |
| 2. Adopt rules for claims submission for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.   | 99233<br>99234                  | Yes             |
| 3. Establish Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) and hold at least one annual public hearing.   | 99238<br>99238.5                | Yes             |
| 4. Annually identify, analyze, and recommend potential productivity improvements.   | 99244                           | Yes             |
| 5. Annual fiscal and compliance audits of claimants.  | 99245                           | Yes             |
| 6. Triennial performance audits of operators and RTPA.  | 99246<br>99248                  | Yes             |
| 7. Submit RTPA and operator performance audits to Caltrans.   | 99246(c)                        | Yes             |
| 8. Ensure operator performance audit requirements.  | 99246(d)                        | Yes             |
| 9. Establish rules and regulations regarding revenue ratios for operators.  | 99270.1<br>99270.2              | Yes             |
| 10. Establish rules and regulations for Article 4.5 and the determination of cost effectiveness of proposed services.   | 99275.5                         | Yes             |
| 11. Allocate State Transit Assistance (STA) funds only for transportation planning and mass transportation purposes.  | 99310.5<br>99313.3<br>Prop. 116 | Yes             |
| 12. Match STA allocations to State allocations.   | PUC 99314.3                     | Yes             |
| 13. If TDA funds are allocated for non-transit purposes, the RTPA must annually: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with the SSTAC</li> <li>• Identify transit needs</li> </ul> | 99401.5                         | Yes<br>Yes      |

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| RTPA Compliance Requirement   | PUC Code Reference                        | VCTC Compliance          |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define reasonable to meet</li> <li>• Identify Unmet Transit Needs</li> <li>• Adopt findings on Unmet Transit Needs</li> <li>• Fund Unmet Transit Needs before allocation to streets and roads</li> </ul> |   | Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes |
| 14. RTPA fiscal and compliance audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete annually</li> <li>• Transmit to State Controller</li> <li>• No commingling of funds</li> </ul>  | California Code<br>of Regulations<br>6662 | Yes<br>Yes<br>Yes        |

## **Requirements of the Transportation Development Act (TDA)**

### **1. Apportionments and Claims**

The RTPA must ensure that all the operators and governmental entities in a given area claim no more than the LTF monies apportioned to that area. The County auditor is required to furnish the RTPA with an estimate of the total amount available for apportionment before February 1 of each year for the fiscal year beginning the following July 1. The auditor’s estimate includes an estimate of anticipated sales tax revenues, with an addition or subtraction for differences between actual revenues in the current year and the estimate prepared the prior year. Before March 1 of each year, the RTPA is required to determine and advise potential claimants of the apportionments for their area, including how funds are to be divided where claimants’ areas overlap. Claimants wishing to receive an allocation must file an annual claim with the RTPA in accordance with the rules and regulations established by that transportation planning agency, and in the absence of such rules and regulations, at least 90 days before the start of the fiscal year for which funds are apportioned.

The auditor reviewed the VCTC allocation resolutions for each audit year. Article 3 of the TDA covers funding for Commission activities, the County Controller’s administrative costs, Commuter Rail, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects. The remaining funds are used for Articles 4 and 8 projects, which cover Transit and Street and Road projects.

Articles 4 and 8 funding is allocated to VCTC jurisdictions based on the California Department of Finance population estimates. The funding allocation is documented in VCTC’s TDA final apportionment report, which is delivered to the Commission in June of each year.

### **2. Rules and Regulations for Pedestrians and Bicycle Claims**

The RTPA must adopt rules and regulations delineating procedures for submission of claims for facilities provided for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles.

Pursuant to California PUC Section 99233.3, two percent of the LTF available for claims is to be made available to counties and cities for facilities for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycle facilities. About 15% of TDA Article 3 apportionments will be allocated to the cities/County based on the Class I Bike Trail mileage each jurisdiction maintains under the Commission’s Class I Bicycle Trail Maintenance program. After this amount is deducted, the remaining amount is allocated on a competitive basis to the cities and County for local bicycle or pedestrian projects.

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VCTC has established an annual process for the cities and County to submit projects and compete for the available funds. Each agency is allowed to submit one project for funding consideration. VCTC’s Citizen’s Transportation Advisory Committee/Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC/SSTAC) has a specific duty to review all claims and interview claimants before evaluating and ranking proposed projects. To rank projects, CTAC/SSTAC looks at the following criteria:

| Criteria  | Description  |
|---|--|
| <b>Matching funds</b><br>(yes or no)                      | Evaluates local support for the proposed project in terms of financial partnership. It is highly recommended there be a minimum 50/50 match of the request.  |
| <b>Safety</b><br>(up to 30 points)                        | Evaluates how the proposed project will affect safety at existing facilities or improve safety by building new facilities.   |
| <b>Project readiness</b><br>(up to 15 points)             | Evaluates deliverability of a proposed project.  |
| <b>Special considerations</b><br>(up to 15 points)        | Adds flexibility and allows cities and/or agencies to be creative and discuss any other ways the proposed project will benefit City/County residents (e.g., improving air quality, reducing VMT, serving older areas without recent improvements, making major improvements to accessibility and/or to serve lower income residents. |
| <b>Maintenance of facility</b><br>(up to 10 points)       | Evaluates whether a proposed project will be maintained at an appropriate level after the project is completed.  |
| <b>Connectivity</b><br>(up to 5 points)                   | Evaluates the proposed project's relationship to regional and/or local planned pathway systems.  |
| <b>Involvement of other agencies</b><br>(up to 10 points) | Evaluates whether the proposed project has local and/or regional significance.   |
| <b>Traffic generators</b><br>(up to 5 points)             | Evaluates the proposed project's usefulness in serving major traffic generators.   |
| <b>Expected utilization rate</b><br>(up to 5 points)      | Evaluates the proposed project's usage (e.g., as a percentage of the applicant's population or as a percentage of the population the project affects).   |
| <b>Multimodal interface</b><br>(up to 5 points)           | Evaluates the proposed project's connectivity to transit modes and other forms of transportation.  |

The claims process begins in January of each year with proposals due to CTAC/SSTAC in March. CTAC/SSTAC then makes a recommendation to the Commission and in June, an apportionment resolution is adopted.

### **3. Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and Citizen Participation Process**

The RTPA is required to establish a Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) and must ensure that there is a citizen participation process that includes at least one annual public hearing. VCTC has a Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee/Social Services Transportation

Advisory Council (CTAC/SSTAC) that participates in the Unmet Transit Needs hearing process and advises VCTC on transportation matters from a citizen and social service agency perspective.

During the Audit period, CTAC/SSTAC adopted the Unmet Transit Needs schedule and definitions for the upcoming year in November and approved the Unmet Transit Needs Findings and Recommendations in May. In the interim, CTAC/SSTAC was involved in a substantive process with significant public participation, Commission member involvement, and engagement with the issues, as evidenced in Commission and CTAC/SSTAC meeting minutes and interviews with stakeholders representing these groups.<sup>15</sup>

The requirement of the legislation has been fully met.

#### **4. Productivity Improvements**

PUC Section 99244 requires the RTPA to annually identify, analyze, and recommend potential improvements that could lower the operating costs of transit operators in Ventura County. The recommendations must include productivity-related recommendations from the latest triennial performance audit. The RTPA may not approve any increase in an operator's transit allocation from the LTF unless the operator has made a reasonable effort to implement recommended improvements. There is no required productivity improvement committee; however, the requirement for the RTPA to make and follow up on recommendations is still in force.

Gold Coast Transit has a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), comprised of staff representatives from each of its five jurisdictions, that evaluates operations and efficiency and makes recommendations. For example, at its February 2014 meeting, the TAC reviewed a list of low ridership routes with GCT staff. VCTC is an Ex-Officio member on the GCT TAC.<sup>16</sup>

VCTC's Transit Operators Advisory Committee (Transcom) was set up to advise the Commission on transit issues. Transcom periodically reviews transit performance and makes productivity recommendations. This group advises VCTC on all transit-related matters including commuter rail and the performance of transit services; their recommendations go to the Commission for review. VCTC is exploring ways to strengthen Transcom's involvement in the future. Currently, the committee includes one representative from each city and each transit operator in Ventura County and an Ex-Officio member from the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. Transcom meets monthly.

Lastly, VCTC monitors the implementation of Gold Coast Transit Performance Audit recommendations through the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) development and approval process, which includes review by Transcom. Through regularly scheduled meetings with transit operators, VCTC receives updates on local transit issues, including progress on performance and productivity.

Countywide performance metrics and service guidelines are being prepared as part of the 2014 Short-Range Transit Plan to assist VCTC in determining priorities when allocating funds and programming future transit investments. Applying such practices will enable VCTC to meet California Senate Bill 716 requirements for monitoring transit productivity within Ventura County.

The requirement of the TDA legislation has been met.

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, the VCTC FY 2012/2013 Unmet Transit Needs Findings report, published May 4, 2012

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.goldcoasttransit.org/about-gct/boardcommittee-info/technical-advisory-committee>

## **5. Fiscal Audits**

The RTPA must conduct an annual fiscal audit of its activities and ensure that each claimant to whom it allocates TDA funds submits an annual certified fiscal audit to the State Controller within 180 days of the end of each fiscal year.

GCT transit is responsible for submitting its own audit; VCTC hires an independent auditor to audit all remaining TDA-funded activity in Ventura County. The 180-day certified Fiscal Audit is also included as a check-off on the Standard Assurances form in VCTC's TDA Claims Manual.

The claimants include the Cities of San Buenaventura, Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and Ventura County. The Auditor identified that one of the claimants, the City of Fillmore, was found to have comingled funds in FY 2009/10, but that this was corrected during the current Audit period. VCTC staff indicated the Audits and Letters of Certification were submitted to the State Controller within the specified time limit (180 days after the close of the fiscal year).

## **6. Triennial Performance Audits**

As required by PUC Section 99248, VCTC contracted with an independent entity, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, to conduct a performance audit of VCTC and Gold Coast Transit. These audits were completed in March 2011 and covered three fiscal years: FY 2007/08 through FY 2009/10.

## **7. Submittal of Performance Audits to Caltrans**

The RTPA must submit a copy of its performance audit to the Director of the California Department of Transportation and must certify in writing to the Director that the operator performance audits were completed. VCTC staff indicated they submitted copies of its performance audits to the Department of Transportation and certified completion of the Gold Coast Transit performance audits by the mandated deadline, but were unable to provide documentation to confirm this. Commission approval of the FY 2007/08 through FY 2009/10 Audit was on the June 2011 Commission-meeting agenda. The July 2011 meeting minutes indicate that it was approved by the Commission. No record of its transmission to the State Controller was available.

## **8. Performance Audits of Operators**

Performance audits of Gold Coast Transit include a section addressing the appropriate State-required compliance reviews and verification of all applicable performance measures. These include the following required measures for GCT, required by the TDA:

- Operating cost per passenger
- Operating cost per vehicle service hour
- Passengers per vehicle service mile
- Passengers per vehicle service hour
- Vehicle service hours per employee

VCTC also collects relevant performance statistics for the VISTA service, but does not complete a separate performance audit for this operation. Only "Transit Operators" (as defined by TDA) must conduct a Performance Audit. The only Transit Operator in Ventura County is Gold Coast Transit.

## **9. Rules and Regulations Regarding Revenue Ratios**

Claimants for TDA funds are required to make every effort to achieve and maintain the required minimum ratio of farebox revenues to operating cost (20 percent in urban areas and 10 percent in non-urban areas).

This certification requirement is included in VCTC's Standard Assurances for Public Transit Claimants form, which is part of its annual claim. GCT certified that it met the required revenue ratios in each year of the audit period. Neither Simi Valley nor Camarillo used TDA money to fund their services and, as such, are not required to meet the 20% farebox recovery rate.

As outlined in its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, in every fiscal year covered in this Audit period, VISTA's service recovered at least 20% of its operating costs through farebox revenues. VCTC exceeds the TDA farebox recovery ratio requirement.

## **10. Evaluation of Article 4.5 Claims**

VCTC must adopt criteria, rules, and regulations for the evaluation of claims filed under Article 4.5 of the TDA and for determining the cost-effectiveness of the community transit services. As the designated CTSA for Ventura County, VCTC is the only eligible claimant for these funds, but did not claim them during this Audit period.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, VCTC has not updated its rules and regulations for the evaluation of claims filed under Article 4.5 since 1995.

## **11. Use of State Transit Assistance (STA) Funds**

In 2008, the State announced the elimination of future State Transit Assistance (STA) revenues through 2013 with no guarantee that the funds would return. State legislators "restored" the STA revenues for two years in March 2010. In 2011, legislation was passed to create a funding source for transit operations and capital purchases.

The VCTC TDA Claims Manual states that STA funds can only be used for mass transportation and transportation planning purposes. In Ventura County, all of the STA PUC Section 99313 population-based funds have been used to fund transit services including Metrolink, with the remainder (PUC 99314 revenue-based funds) available only to Gold Coast Transit and Metrolink in Ventura County.

To claim funds, Gold Coast Transit must complete and submit to VCTC the Claim Form, Financial Reporting Forms, Standard Assurances Form, and an adopted authorizing resolution. During the period, VCTC authorized STA funds for a variety of transit-related uses, including Metrolink commuter rail services within the county, the Santa Paula Branch Line, VISTA intercity transit service, and Nextbus installation and operation.

## **12. Allocation of STA Funds**

PUC Section 99314.3 specifies that State Transit Assistance funds shall be allocated only for public transportation purposes, including community transit services. A review of allocation resolutions for the audit years shows that all STA allocations by VCTC are specified as being for transit purposes. During the audit period, STA funds were allocated to Metrolink commuter rail

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<sup>17</sup> All of the jurisdictions within the County, with the exception of Simi Valley and Camarillo, provide service using Article 8 and Article 4 funds.

services within the county, the Santa Paula Branch Line, VISTA intercity transit service, and Nextbus installation and operation.

During the previous Audit period, statewide tax revenues dropped dramatically. In 2011, legislation was passed to create a more reliable State Transit Assistance program that permits VCTC to continue to use STA for both operations and capital purchases.

### 13. Use of TDA Funds for Streets and Roads

If any TDA funds are used for non-transit, non-pedestrian, or non-bicycle projects, then the RTPA must conduct a public process to identify any “Unmet Transit Needs,” as specified in PUC Section 99401.5. The RTPA must consult with the CTAC/SSTAC, adopt or reaffirm its definitions of “Unmet Transit Need” and those that are “Reasonable to Meet,” identify any reasonable-to-meet Unmet Transit Needs, and adopt a finding concerning the Unmet Transit Needs. Any Unmet Transit Needs that are reasonable to meet must be funded before any funds are allocated for streets and roads purposes.

VCTC annually conducts at least one public hearing to receive testimony on Unmet Transit Needs and reports that they held one public hearing and two evening “listening sessions” in each year of the Audit period. The public hearing notices are published in local newspapers in both English and Spanish. Input is received by oral presentations at public hearings. Public comments are also received through letters, the VCTC website, emails, and telephone calls. A panel consisting of a number of the VCTC Commissioners is appointed annually by the VCTC Chairman to act as the hearing board. The full Commission considers all input and then adopts the findings.

The resolution approving the findings must include information that provides the basis for the Commission decision. For each of the three Audit years, VCTC met this requirement by providing a staff response to each comment received.

In accordance with PUC Section 99401.5 (c) the Commission adopted definitions of “Unmet Transit Need” and “Reasonable to Meet” at the January 5, 1996 VCTC meeting and reaffirmed these definitions at its January 8, 2010 meeting. As of FY 2012/13, *Unmet Transit Needs* are:

*At a minimum, those public transportation services that have been identified by substantial community input through the public hearing process or are identified in a Short Range Transit Plan; in local Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) plans; in other area/local paratransit plans; and/or in the Regional Transportation Plan and have not yet been implemented or funded.*

An Unmet Transit Need is considered *reasonable to meet* if the proposed service is in general compliance with the following criteria:

- **Equity**
  - The proposed service will not cause reductions in existing transit services that have an equal or higher priority; and
  - The proposed service will require a subsidy generally equivalent to other similar services
- **Timing:** The proposed service is in response to an existing rather than future transit need
- **Feasibility:**
  - The proposed service can be provided within available funding; and

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- The proposed service can be provided with the existing fleet or under contract to a private provider
- **Performance:**
  - The proposed service will not unduly affect the operator’s ability to maintain the required passenger fare ratio for its system as a whole; and
  - The proposed service will not meet the scheduled passenger fare ratio standards as described in Attachment A of the VCTC FY 2009/10 Unmet Transit Needs findings report, and
  - The estimated number of passengers to be carried will be in the range of other similar services, and/or the proposed service provides a link or connection that contributes to the effectiveness of the overall transit system
- **Community Acceptance:** The proposed service has community acceptance and/or support as determined by the Unmet Transit Needs public hearing record, inclusion in adopted programs and plans, adopted governing board positions and other existing information

Note that in FY 2013/14, VCTC hired a consultant to review its existing Unmet Transit Needs process. The consultant made recommendations to refine the “Unmet Transit Need” and “reasonable to meet” definitions, as well as changes to its public involvement process, which were endorsed by the CTAC/SSTAC and Transcom. In December 2013, the Commission adopted these recommendations, which were implemented in the FY 13/14 Unmet Transit Needs process.

The CTAC/SSTAC participates in the annual process by reviewing the public testimony, VCTC staff analysis, and recommendations. VCTC staff recommendations also may be reviewed by other committees, such as Transcom, but this is not a requirement of the TDA. To create their recommendations, VCTC staff reviews public testimony, staff recommendations, and committee comments, and adopts an Unmet Transit Need finding in June each year. In FY 2010/11, FY 2011/12, and FY 2012/13, VCTC found that there were no Unmet Transit Needs that were reasonable to meet. As an example, below are VCTC’s recommendations for FY 2012/13, based on the Unmet Transit Needs hearing process:

1. Continue all existing bus services substantially as they exist.
2. Continue all public senior and disabled services in all jurisdictions in the County substantially as they exist. Work to implement the recommendations of the VCTC Countywide Human Services Transportation and Transit Services Coordination Study.
3. Discontinue Gold Coast Transit Route 40 due to a failure to meet ridership goals and performance productivity objectives of both Gold Coast Transit and VCTC.
4. If awarded grants, monitor the proposed service demonstrations on the VISTA 126 (expanded hours) and the Gold Coast Transit Channel Islands Boulevard/Victoria Avenue (new route) to determine if a transit need which is reasonable to meet exists.
5. Continue the Ventura County interagency bus transfer program.

The auditor reviewed the Transit Needs Assessment reports prepared by VCTC in 2011, 2012, and 2013, as well as Commission’s resolutions making required Unmet Transit Needs findings for each audit year. The reports document a comprehensive process.

## 14. Fiscal and Compliance Audit of RTPA

The TDA Fiscal and Compliance audits were found to be complete. Bazilio Cobb and Associates prepared the TDA Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for FY 2010/11, FY 2012/13, and FY 2011/12. The auditor found that one claimant, the City of Fillmore, had previously commingled funds, but corrected their financial practices during the Audit period; therefore, there was no commingling of funds during the Audit period. VCTC staff indicated each of these Audits was submitted to the State Controller, but the auditor was unable to obtain confirmation notices for the annual TDA Fiscal Audits from FY 2010/11 and FY 2011/12.

### Other TDA-Related Compliance

Though not required in the TDA Triennial Performance Audit, the Auditor wishes to acknowledge VCTC's compliance with PUC Section 99282.5 (Transfers between Operators) and Section 99283 (Interchange of Transfers).

#### ***Section 99282.5: Transfers between Operators***

Where there are two or more operators within its area of jurisdiction, the transportation planning agency, the county transportation commission, and the San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board, as the case may be, shall adopt, not later than July 1, 1980, rules and regulations to provide for transfers between the public transportation services of the operators so that such services will be coordinated.

#### ***Section 99283: Interchange of Transfers***

The consent of a transit district to the operation of a public transportation system by an included municipal operator pursuant to Section 99280 may include a requirement for interchange of transfers on an appropriate basis between the public transportation system of the included municipal operator and the public transportation system of the transit district, or any nominee of such transit district, in connection with the furnishing of services by such public transportation systems.

In 2010, the Commission approved a nine-month demonstration project to assess the effect of a free transfer program between VISTA fixed-route services and other operators within the County. After the nine-month pilot, VCTC found that the program was well-received by riders, that there was a steady increase in transfer use during the demonstration, that ridership overall increased, and that there was a minimal negative impact on fare revenue because transfers represent a small percent of all trips.

Figure 2-2 shows VCTC's published marketing material related to these rules.

Figure 2-2 Ventura County Bus Transfer Program Rules

## Ventura County Bus Transfer Program

### How To Use A Transfer

Step 1



#### Plan Your Trip in Advance

- Know the name/route number of both of your buses
- Know where and when you will transfer to the second bus
- Contact goventura.org or 800.438.1112 to learn more

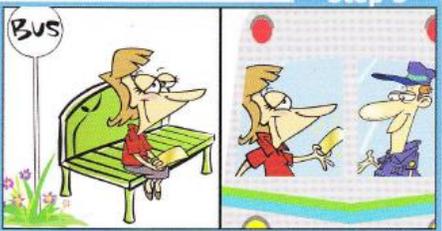
Step 2



#### Ask For a Transfer

- Upon boarding first bus, ask the first driver for a transfer
- Transfer is valid for 90 minutes from the time it is issued
- Exit the bus at your transfer point

Step 3



#### Change Buses

- Wait at the transfer point for your second bus
- Hand the second driver your transfer (and fee, if applicable)

# Rules & Fees

- Remember to ask the driver on your first bus for a transfer when you pay your fare. **You will not be able to get a transfer when you get off the bus.**
- Most transfers are FREE. Transfers to VISTA's Conejo Connection and Coastal Express are \$1.50. Transfers to Camarillo Dial-A-Ride are \$1.00. Transfers to Heritage Valley Dial-A-Ride are 50¢.
- Transfers are good for transferring between **two buses in a single direction**. Boarding a third bus will require payment of the full fare.
- Transfers may not be used for stopovers and cannot be used for a return trip.
- You must transfer at the first point of contact with the route you want to transfer to.
- Once you receive your transfer pass, **it is valid for 90 minutes**. The transfer will be stamped with the date and time it was issued.
- Transfer must be kept in a clean, presentable condition.
- You may not sell, trade, exchange, give away or offer for passage a transfer in violation of the rules of the Authority.
- In case of dispute, you are required to pay the full fare and notify the main administrative office at 800.438.1112.

### Participating Agencies

- VISTA
- VISTA Heritage Valley Dial-A-Ride
- Camarillo Area Transit (fixed-route only)
- Gold Coast Transit
- Moorpark City Transit
- Oxnard Harbors & Beaches Dial-A-Ride
- Simi Valley Transit
- Thousand Oaks Transit



[goventura.org](http://goventura.org)    800.438.1112

EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 2011

## Summary

The auditor reviewed VCTC's activities in each of the 14 required compliance areas specified in the Caltrans Performance Audit Guidebook. Our review indicates that VCTC complies with all of the requirements for administering the Transportation Development Act in Ventura County, though improvements could be made to its record keeping for compliance-related activities.

## 3 FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

This chapter presents an overview of VCTC's activities under six functional areas. They are also addressed to a large extent in the Compliance Audit section of this report. The six functional areas are listed below.

- Administration and Management
- Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination
- TDA Administration
- Marketing and Transportation Alternatives
- Grant Applications and Management
- Legislative Advocacy

Since most of the functions performed by an RTPA are difficult to quantify, the functional review relies heavily on the achievements and challenges of VCTC within each functional area. Information was derived by review of internal and external agency documents, interviews with VCTC staff and management, and supplemented by interviews with select Commissioners and advisory committee members. A copy of the interview guide is presented in Appendix A.

### Administration and Management

VCTC is governed by a seventeen-member Commission that meets monthly. Its meetings are open to the public and agendas and minutes are posted online at the VCTC website, [www.goventura.org](http://www.goventura.org). VCTC is organized into four functional areas, which allows it to fulfill its numerous responsibilities as an RTPA: (1) Finance, (2) Planning and Technology, (3) Programming, and (4) Bus Transit.

During the Audit period, VCTC celebrated several specific accomplishments:

- In FY 2012/13:
  - Participating in the planning for establishing the Gold Coast Transit District began.
  - Completion of the Heritage Valley Transit Study which updated the 1994 Transit Plan for the Santa Clara River Valley.
- In FY 2011/12:
  - VCTC completed the Ventura County Regional Transit Study, which included several recommendations. Since that time, all of the recommendations have been acted upon and many have been implemented, including supporting the establishment of the Gold Coast Transit District and approving an East County Memorandum of Understanding for the coordination of transit services. The Regional Transit Study was accompanied by the Ventura County Comprehensive Transportation Plan.
  - VCTC was able to maintain VISTA intercity bus service when its previous contractor went bankrupt in 2012. A new contractor, Roadrunner, now operates the system.

As a measure of VCTC’s successful financial management, VCTC has enjoyed clean financial audit reports in all recent audit periods, performed by two different independent auditing firms. VCTC also received Certificates of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (“CAFR Awards”) for the past four years.

Commission meeting agendas, minutes, and attachments are available online, and offer concise yet informative documentation. They document Commission actions and provide sufficient detail to obtain an understanding of what occurs at the meetings.

Each year, the Commission is presented with a draft and final budget, which includes a summary of the objectives, recent accomplishments, upcoming work elements, specific outcomes or work products expected, funding sources, and expenditure comparisons by year for each specific program task. Also, a monthly budget report is presented at each Commission meeting by the Finance Director. Quarterly progress reports on the status of all STIP-funded projects are presented to the Commission as well.

VCTC staff performs support functions for the six Standing Committees, as well as various appointed and ad hoc committees. VCTC staff attends monthly meetings of the Ventura Council of Governments (VCOG), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and as-needed meetings of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) regarding the Coastal Express service. It should be noted that, during the Audit period, VCTC administered VCOG through an agreement with that agency.

### **Key Personnel Changes during the Audit Period**

VCTC reports that its current staffing level is adequate to perform its responsibilities. During the audit period, the following staffing changes occurred:

- The Director of Capital Projects position was eliminated
- Two part-time positions were consolidated into one full-time Program Analyst position
- One new full-time Program Analyst position was created
- The Rail Manager position now reports to the Director of Planning

### **Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination**

This functional area includes short- and long-term projections of transportation needs, transportation and transit service planning and coordination, and financial planning analysis.

Examples of VCTC regional coordination efforts include:

- Participation in the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) and with Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties in the Coast Rail Coordinating Council
- Membership in the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), which operates Metrolink
- Joint sponsorship with SBCAG for the Coastal Express

One of the best examples of VCTC’s transportation planning and regional coordination efforts is its Human Service Transportation and Transit Service Coordination Plan, which is a requirement to receive funding under the FTA 5316, 5317, and 5310 programs. This plan, which was last

updated in FY 2012/13, has four main goals: to improve regional and intercity travel; to build transit capacity; to provide individualized transit information and assistance; and for the agency to be a leader and administrator of coordination efforts in the county.

As a result of this plan, Trapeze paratransit scheduling software was licensed and installed for nine agencies. Currently, five of those agencies continue to use the system, while others stopped using it for budgetary or administrative reasons. Gold Coast Transit's Paratransit and Special Project Manager was selected to serve as the Trapeze system administrator and, as such, provides additional coordination assistance among the various participating agencies.

The Coordination Plan found that both the populations of low-income adults and adults over age 65 are growing much faster than the county population as a whole, and that the population of low-income older adults is the fastest growing population subgroup in the county. As a result, several of its proposed strategies relate to increasing service availability to people in these demographic areas.

A second major transportation planning initiative completed during the Audit period was the Ventura County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and its complement, the Regional Transit Study (RTS). The CTP is a long-range policy document, built from community-based, local priorities and community-expressed demands to enhance regional connections. It is aimed at ensuring mobility and enhancing the quality of life for all Ventura County residents. The outcome of the RTS was consensus between the Regional Transit Study Steering Committee, Transit Managers, and City Managers to pursue several innovative transit cooperation and consolidation approaches, including the creation of the Gold Coast Transit District and for the MOU between East County cities and the County of Ventura regarding the coordination of their services.

Other regional planning efforts in which VCTC participated are described in Figure 3-1.

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**Figure 3-1 Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination Accomplishments**

| Function or Responsibility  | Description of Activities   |
|---|---|
| <b>Southern California Association of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)</b> | <p>As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for six counties (including Ventura), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is mandated by federal law to adopt a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) every four years to address the region's transportation needs. The RTP provides the long-range, comprehensive direction for transportation improvements within Ventura County and for the entire SCAG region and is the culmination of a multi-year effort involving stakeholders from across the SCAG Region.</p> <p>The most recent RTP entitled, "2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy: Towards a Sustainable Future," made several recommendations for Ventura County including new bus and BRT routes. VCTC's Executive Director reports that he has regular interaction with his counterpart at SCAG and that while Ventura is not the largest county in the regional government, they still play an important role in SCAG activities.</p> |
| <b>Congestion Management Program (CMP)</b>  | <p>As the designated Congestion Management Authority (CMA) for Ventura County, VCTC is responsible for coordinating land use, transportation planning, and air quality to mitigate traffic congestion. Every two years, VCTC prepares an updated Ventura County Congestion Management Program (CMP) to provide local government agencies and private developers with the resources necessary to positively impact traffic congestion throughout Ventura County. The most recent approved CMP is from 2009.</p>  |
| <b>Transit planning</b>   | <p>In addition to the two major planning studies mentioned previously, VCTC recently initiated its Short Range Transit Plan in FY 2013/14. One of the main goals of the SRTP is to establish better performance standards and tracking. The preparations for issuing this RFP were completed within the Audit period.</p> <p>Regarding transit planning, during the Audit period VCTC got "back into the intercity bus business. VCTC now contracts operations for its VISTA service with a new operator.</p>   |
| <b>Gold Coast Transit District</b>  | <p>VCTC was instrumental in establishing the Gold Coast Transit District, which will take effect on July 1, 2014.</p>   |
| <b>TDA apportionment planning</b>   | <p>During the Audit period, less TDA money was available due to the recession (reduction in sales tax revenues). Therefore, in March 2011, the Commission adopted a policy to set aside a larger reserve (approximately 10%). Additionally, once LTF monies stabilized, VCTC enacted a new policy of setting aside one-third of the increase of funds for Metrolink contributions.</p>  |

## TDA Administration

VCTC is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) responsible for administration of the Transportation Development Act (TDA) in Ventura County. The TDA funds allocation process appears to work smoothly in Ventura County. The allocation resolutions have been approved in a timely manner in each of the audit years. For the most part, the transit agency and city staff who claim TDA funds have been involved in the process for many years, as has the staff at VCTC administering the process. VCTC staff works with applicants each year to make sure that claims are submitted in a timely manner.

VCTC's TDA Claims Manual includes all materials needed to submit a claim. The most recent manual was updated in July 2009; however, it is not posted on the VCTC website. The previous Audit noted that, prior to 2010, the manual had not been updated since 1996. In FY 2013/14, VCTC took action to improve their records keeping practices.

Under the TDA, an "Unmet Transit Needs" public process is required in counties when local streets and roads projects are eligible for TDA funds, which is the case in Ventura County. Knowing its process was outdated and could serve the public better, during the Audit period, VCTC adopted new definitions and methods for public outreach related to Unmet Transit Needs. Besides these non-required improvements, VCTC continued to uphold other requirements of the Unmet Transit Needs process, including:

- Utilizing its Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) to review the transit needs of transit-dependent and/or disadvantaged persons throughout the process
- Providing at least one public hearing annually<sup>18</sup>
- Providing the following documentation to Caltrans:
  - 30 days' advance notice of the public hearing date
  - Copies of the hearing notice and proof of its distribution
  - Resolution or minutes of its "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet" definitions
  - Signed resolution adopting the Unmet Transit Needs findings

Before going to the full Commission for approval, the SSTAC reviews all community input on Unmet Transit Needs. The SSTAC then makes a recommendation to the Commission for approval. In each of the three years during the Audit period, VCTC found that there were no Unmet Transit Needs that were reasonable to meet. VCTC is in compliance with TDA statutes in completion of its Unmet Transit Needs process.

TDA claims for bicycle and pedestrian projects do not require an Unmet Transit Needs process. Instead, after the Class I Bike Trail mileage maintenance formula allocation,<sup>19</sup> cities within VCTC's jurisdiction apply for LTF monies in a competitive process. VCTC is responsible for developing a schedule and evaluation criteria for the submitted projects. The CTAC and SSTAC then review the proposals, evaluate, and rank them before the funding allocation is approved by the Commission. During the Audit period, VCTC adopted some changes to its bicycle and pedestrian claims review process, including more specific definitions of its evaluation criteria and a new emphasis on coordinated proposals that link communities within the county.

In none of the three Audit years did claims for transit, bicycle and pedestrian, and local streets and roads projects exceed VCTC's apportionment of TDA funds.

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<sup>18</sup> During the Audit period, VCTC held one public hearing, two evening listening sessions, and collected additional comments through telephone calls, email, and written letters. Under the new Unmet Transit Needs process, starting in FY 2013/14 VCTC additionally attends two community meetings to obtain community input.

<sup>19</sup> By Commission policy, about 10% of the available Article 3 funds each year are allocated to all the cities and the County to augment their existing funds for separate, Class I bike trail maintenance. The allocations are based on the city/County proportional share of the available money as divided by the linear feet of trail maintained.

## Marketing and Transportation Alternatives

VCTC has a strong commitment to alternative transportation modes and makes a significant effort to encourage the use of transit, walking, bicycling, carpooling, and other non-drive alone modes.

VCTC maintains the “Go Ventura” website at [www.goventura.org](http://www.goventura.org), which provides a wide variety of useful transportation information. From its home page, users can learn about bus and traffic information, link to bikeways and transit trip planning smartphone applications, and connect with VCTC on Facebook and Twitter. The site also links to more information about VISTA (regional bus service provided by VCTC), local bus services throughout the county, biking, services for seniors and people with disabilities, and GoVentura—the county’s transit smartcard, which can be used on most public buses in Ventura. Real-time bus arrival times (through Nextbus) and traffic information are also available through the GoVentura website.

Other marketing efforts include:

- **Innovative marketing partnership.** In FY 2012/13, VCTC partnered with Metrolink for a unique marketing effort. Transit coupons were distributed to Ventura County residents through mass mailers. People could return the coupons to VCTC to receive a free transit map and two free tickets to try Metrolink service.
- **Marketing transportation options.** VCTC’s Ridesharing program takes responsibility for marketing all sustainable transportation modes available in Ventura County. Through the ridesharing section of VCTC’s website, people can learn about carpooling, vanpooling, park and ride locations, bicycling, walking, and local and regional transit. The Ridesharing program also advertises directly to employers, including information about its Guaranteed Ride Home program and downloadable materials for posting at worksites. In 2013, the program mailed brochures to residents about registering for a free personalized “RideGuide” that gives transportation options specific to their needs. Funding for the Rideshare program is provided by federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) monies. Reporting of the Rideshare Programs is currently done through a quarterly update to the Commission.
- **Engaging students.** VCTC maintains a Teen Council, which is selected from a pool of applicants to represent schools and the youth community across Ventura County.<sup>20</sup> In FY 2012/13, the Teen Council produced a video about what it is like to ride transit.<sup>21</sup>
- **Traditional and social media.** VCTC also publishes press releases, print, radio and television ads, holds press events, maintains a Facebook and Twitter site, and engages youth through its Teen Council Tumblr site.
- **Guaranteed Ride Home program.** The Guaranteed Ride Home program (GRH) continues to encourage ridesharing by addressing concerns that an employee may be stranded at work on a day they commute by carpool, vanpool or bus by offering a free ride home under specific conditions and limitations. As of FY 2012/13, approximately 32,000 individuals were registered and eligible to use the GRH program. On average, about 35 emergency rides home are provided each year.
- **Regional rideshare database.** Since FY 2003/04, VCTC has had contractual agreements with four Southern California county transportation commissions for the provision and maintenance of a regional rideshare database. VCTC currently contracts with Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) for the delivery of rideshare matching database management. These agreements will end in FY 2013/14, but a revised agreement with LA Metro and Orange County Transportation Authority takes effect in FY 2014/15.
- **Transit Information Center.** The Transit Information Center is the “front line” for Ventura County’s transit population and, as of FY 2011/12, receives on average over 4,000 customer

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<sup>20</sup> <http://vctcteencouncil.tumblr.com/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8yUe1dIXRU>

contacts every month. The Transit Center provides customer service to the public by providing transit information to those traveling within Ventura County, to Warner Center in the San Fernando Valley, and to Santa Barbara.

- **Agricultural Worker Vanpool program.** In FY 2011/12, VCTC transitioned its responsibilities for the Agricultural Worker Vanpool program to the newly created California Vanpool Authority (CalVans). VCTC continues to support the program through marketing to eligible individuals in Ventura County.

## **Grant Applications, Program Management, and Monitoring**

VCTC programs federal, state, and regional funds for several modes of transportation. VCTC administers annual grants provided by the FTA for transit planning, operations, and capital improvements, funding for VISTA and VCTC planning activities, and providing pass-through funding for Metrolink and most county transit bus operators. VCTC administers Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for Ventura County and monitors expenditures to ensure that no grant funds lapse. During the Audit period, VCTC was also responsible for coordinating and reviewing capital grant applications for FTA Section 5310 funds for service to seniors and people with disabilities, FTA Section 5316 (Job Access/Reverse Commute funds) funds, and FTA 5317 (New Freedoms) funds.

VCTC updates the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) every two years, which serves as the primary funding program for improvements to highways, streets, and roads in the region.

In addition to monitoring these funding sources, staff also provides technical assistance to local entities to develop grant applications and develops discretionary grant applications for its own uses. In FY 2012/13, VCTC consolidated two part-time positions to create one full-time Program Analyst position whose focus is to ensure conformity with all federal grants.

## **Legislative Advocacy**

VCTC maintains a strong legislative advocacy program to ensure that legislation favorable to the County's transportation interests is supported at the State and Federal levels of government. Every year, the Commission adopts a Legislative Program for state and federal legislation for the upcoming year. It sets forth the Commission's overall priorities for current transportation issues to inform legislators, their staffs, and the public so that they can make informed decisions. Throughout the year, VCTC staff asks the Commission to take official positions on specific legislation, which is advocated for at the state level by VCTC's lobbyist.

During the audit period, VCTC undertook several legislative actions.

- In FY2010/11, VCTC helped form a coalition of advocates to propose a solution to address transportation funding challenges created by Propositions 22 and 26 (the "Transportation Tax Swap"), which was passed in March 2010. The coalition included the California State Association of Counties, the League of Cities, the California Transit Association, Alliance for Jobs, and Transportation California. The coalition's advocacy efforts were successful; in spring 2011, the proposed solution was adopted by the state legislature.<sup>22</sup> Another concern of VCTC during this time period was the prolonged federal transportation bill renewal discussions.
- In FY 2011/12, VCTC continued to be concerned with the federal transportation program. In light of ongoing uncertainty at the federal level, several regional agencies, including VCTC, continued staff-level discussions regarding elements to advocate for in the new authorization. Gold Coast Transit's Maintenance Facility was regarded as the top transit earmark priority. At the state level, VCTC

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<sup>22</sup> Tim Egan, VCTC's Sacramento representative. See Commission meeting minutes from April 2011 ([http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/April%2011,%202011%20Agenda\\_0.pdf](http://www.goventura.org/sites/default/files/April%2011,%202011%20Agenda_0.pdf)).

continued monitoring the General Fund shortfall and opposing further efforts to use transportation funds to fill that gap.

- In FY 2012/13, the federal government passed a new federal transportation authorization—Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21)—as a two-year bill. As such, the VCTC Legislative Program for 2013 included ongoing discussion with regional agencies to develop a coordinated approach to upcoming authorization. At the state level, one of the key recommendations from VCTC’s Countywide Transportation Plan—to address the provisions of SB 716 regarding the distribution of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) in rural areas in Ventura County—was implemented through SB 203. SB 203 allows jurisdictions within Ventura County with a population of fewer than 100,000 residents to use LTF funds for local streets and roads, provided that all reasonable-to-meet transit needs are met. Also in FY2012/13, VCTC hired a new state representative.

## **Summary**

VCTC accomplished a comprehensive range of responsibilities within the audit period with only one new staff position (and three positions added after the Audit period). In addition to this commendable record, it has been able to secure discretionary funds for high-priority transportation projects and undertake new management of the VISTA operation with a new contracts administrator on staff. The agency acts as a resource to other agencies in Ventura County, assisting in the pursuit of discretionary grant funding. VCTC processes its TDA claims efficiently and in a timely manner and is in compliance with all relevant provisions of the TDA. Finally, it encourages transit and alternative transportation through a well considered package of programs such as intermodal connections, multi-agency smartcards, ridesharing and Guaranteed Ride Home programs, customized RideGuides, and other methods to provide Ventura County residents’ reasonable alternatives to driving alone.

## 4 PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The prior TDA performance audit was completed by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates in 2011. It contained one recommendation to further improve the effectiveness of VCTC's performance. As part of the current audit, the status of the recommendation has been reviewed. The recommendation is listed below, followed by the prior auditor's rationale (quoted verbatim) and a discussion of the current status of the recommendation.

**Prior Audit Recommendation: VCTC should improve reporting of Ventura County rideshare performance and establish standards.**

### Prior Auditor Rationale

"VCTC's Commuter Services program is dedicated to reducing the number of single-occupant vehicles on Ventura County's roads and highways, conserving fuel, reducing air pollution and making it easier for commuters to get to and from work or school. VCTC administers the Ventura County Rideshare Program and Guaranteed Ride Home Program and conducts a variety of outreach efforts, public education programs, information dissemination, and marketing.

In order to help bridge the gap between the user and the transportation service, VCTC Commuter Services has developed RideSmart Tips and customized RideGuides to promote transportation choices. If a commuter chooses to "opt-in" to this service, they receive a free RideGuide that includes a list of potential carpools and vanpools, bus information, Park & Ride locations, and bike commute partners – all customized to the individual's home and work locations. If a registrant does not request a RideGuide, they still receive RideSmart Tips, which promotes positive transportation choices.

Reporting of the VCTC Commuter Services program is currently done once a year as part of the annual budget report. The report highlights general accomplishments, description of services, and work elements for the year. The VCTC Commuter Services program has a general mission statement, but lacks identified goals, objectives and performance standards to guide its work and evaluate its effectiveness. Goals and standards provide a framework for documenting progress and monitoring program effectiveness. Establishing goals and objectives could help to define and prioritize the program's various activities and funding expenditures, which could assist not only internal staff, but also the partners which work with VCTC.

In order to accomplish this, the auditor suggests three steps:

6. Establish annual program goals and objectives
7. Develop a methodology for measuring and monitoring programs and services
8. Prepare and disseminate an annual report

The auditor investigated King County Rideshare and Traffic Solutions (Santa Barbara Rideshare) to better understand how other agencies report Ridesharing information. Examples of goals and performance standards from King County Rideshare and Traffic Solutions and can be found in

Appendix B. As shown by these examples, goals and standards could relate to program function, ridesharing activities, VMT reductions, or outreach events. Each program subcomponent, such as the Guaranteed Ride Home Program, Employer programs, RideGuides, Bicycle Promotion, etc. could have its own set of standards.

As shown in Figure 4-1 below, measurements can be qualitative or quantitative. The annual report should clearly state whether goals/objectives have been met. The report could also include a trend analysis including trends for a minimum of five years and a brief explanation of the reasons for the trends.<sup>23</sup> The reporting of ridesharing activity is critically important to convey the value of the program to a wide audience and to build trust with existing partners and to develop new partnerships.”

**Figure 4-1 Performance Evaluation**

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Program Function</b>       | Number of active employers<br>Total database registrants<br>Commuter cost savings<br>Number of website visits                                  |
| <b>Ridesharing Activities</b> | New carpools/vanpools formed<br>Average riders per van<br>Number of RideMatch registrants  |
| <b>VMT Reductions</b>         | Reduction in VMT<br>Single occupancy vehicle trips reduced<br>Number of fewer gallons of gas consumed<br>Reduction in harmful emissions (lbs.) |
| <b>Outreach Events</b>        | Bike to work week registrants<br>Number of participants who attend special events<br>Number of Transportation fairs attended                   |

**Figure 4-2 Prior Recommendation and Proposed Timeline**

| Recommendation  | Responsibility             | Priority | Timeline  |
|---|----------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Improve reporting of Rideshare performance and establish standards | Rideshare Programs Manager | Medium   | FY2011/12 |

## **Current Status – Fully Implemented**

As of September 2013, this recommendation has been fully implemented. Starting in FY 2011/12, VCTC began presenting a Commuter Services Quarterly and Year End Report to the Commission on a quarterly basis. In the fourth quarter of FY 2012/13, VCTC also presented a Commuter

<sup>23</sup> Tracking five year trends is a longer term goal.

**VCTC FY 2011 – FY 2013 Triennial TDA Performance Audit**  
Ventura County Transportation Commission

Services FY 2012/13 Fourth Quarter and Year End Report to Transcom. At the September 2013 Commission meeting, VCTC staff enhanced the report to include both actual performance measures and goal levels of those measures in Table 1 of their report. These reports are in direct response to the previous Audit recommendation.

In the quarterly and year-end reports, VCTC tracks and reports on the following metrics:

- Total program registrants on file
- Current number of Guaranteed Ride Home program registrants and program usage
- Registrants with “Active” ride matching interest
- Company worksites on file
- Average home to work commute distance
- Number of carpool matches attempted, separated by source
- Number of RideGuides generated that contained at least one match
- Average age of data for matches
- Average number of matches per RideGuide
- Estimated program benefits
- Marketing activities
- Vanpool activities
- Call volume
- CalVans passengers, miles, and passenger lane miles completed
- An estimate of benefits of the program including reductions of vehicle miles traveled, commuting costs, greenhouse gas emissions, and particulate reductions

VCTC staff worked with the previous Auditor to establish this list of metrics and to define goals for each metric. For FY 2013/14, the Commuter Services program has the following goals:

**Figure 4-3 Commuter Services Program Performance Goals**

| Performance Measure                              | FY 2013/14 Goal |
|--|-----------------|
| Commuters on file                                | 32,000          |
| Commuters active for matching                    | 6,500           |
| Company worksites on file                        | 310             |
| Estimated average home to work distance          | 16              |
| AVR reports generated                            | 36              |
| Number of carpool matches attempted (public/web) | 1,700           |
| Number of carpool matches attempted (staff)      | 1,500           |
| Total carpool matches attempted                  | 3,200           |
| Number receiving at least one match              | 2,200           |
| Average age of matching record (days)            | 145             |
| Average number of matches/RideGuide              | 8               |
| Average distance home/work                       | 16.0            |

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|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| RideSmart tips generated                          | 10,000      |
| Guaranteed Ride Home: Rental car trips            | 35          |
| Guaranteed Ride Home: Taxi rides                  | 35          |
| Guaranteed Ride Home: Total trips                 | 70          |
| Estimated reduction in vehicle miles traveled     | 3,000,000   |
| Estimated reduction in commuting cost             | \$1,700,000 |
| Estimated reduction in carbon monoxide            | 47.00 tons  |
| Estimated reduction in volatile organic compounds | 6.40 tons   |
| Estimated reduction in oxides of nitrogen         | 7.50 tons   |

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the conclusions of the audit and offers five recommendations to further improve the effectiveness of VCTC's performance.

### Conclusions

The major conclusions drawn from the performance audit are summarized below.

- **Prior Audit Recommendation** – The Performance Audit covering FY2007/08 through FY2009/10 identified one recommendation, which has been fully implemented.
- **TDA Compliance Review** – With the help of VCTC staff, the 14 compliance requirements were reviewed by the auditor to assess whether VCTC meets state requirements. The review revealed that VCTC is in compliance with all TDA regulations. The Auditor found that, during the Audit period, VCTC did not always keep clear records of its compliance-related activities, particularly related to keeping documentation of submittals to the State of California. With recent changes in staff, VCTC has reorganized staff responsibility and has made significant progress on improving tracking and documentation.
- **Performance Review** – For a small agency, VCTC has a variety of roles and responsibilities. VCTC carries out its functional responsibilities in an exemplary manner. It has rules, regulations, policies, and procedures to follow for completing its routine functions. VCTC also works well with its member jurisdictions on special projects, aggressively and successfully pursues discretionary funding opportunities and legislative changes, and participates in promoting transit services and transportation alternatives.

While the primary focus of the performance audit is VCTC's administration of the TDA Program, the auditor acknowledges VCTC has many areas of responsibility, from planning to programming to implementation. Therefore, conclusions and recommendations contained in this audit address some of the other significant activities performed by VCTC.

### Interviews

As part of the functional review, an interview was conducted with VCTC's Executive Director and several attempts were made to contact members of the Commission. The intent of the interviews was to supplement the consultant's review of written materials including both internal documents and published reports. The auditor focused on identifying themes that emerged from the interviews rather than on isolated comments. All comments received are considered confidential. A copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

The Auditor found that VCTC staff was commended on their responsiveness, level of engagement with issues, and general awareness of key information. One of the interviewees noted, *“There is a lot of support from the Commission toward the staff.”* There was also general support for all the standing committees, who are engaged and provide a great deal of value to decision makers on the Commission.

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations described below and summarized in Figure 5-1 have been developed based on findings from interviews, review and analysis of VCTC’s TDA Claims, Unmet Needs testimony, staff reports, and published reports and documents. These recommendations are intended to help VCTC improve its performance and increase its effectiveness in the region. The order in which they are listed does not imply priority.

### **1. Establish a Productivity Review Subcommittee of Transcom to review productivity and performance measurement of transit service**

VCTC has several standing committees. The Transportation Commission Transit Committee, or “Transcom,” is comprised of one representative from each city and each transit operator in Ventura County and one Ex-Officio member from the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. Transcom advises VCTC on all transit-related matters, including commuter rail. VCTC’s other standing committees often provide feedback and information necessary for Transcom to make its recommendations.

Given its broad set of responsibilities, Transcom meetings often are focused on short-term requests and informational items. One key oversight role that is lacking is a systematic and regular review of operators’ productivity. Transcom is well-positioned to take on this role as it is comprised of representatives from every transit operator in the county.

To understanding better exactly where there is potential for additional transit demand and efficiencies, it is recommended that the Transcom operating rules (or bylaws) be revised to designate a Productivity Review Subcommittee (as recommended in PUC Code Section 99244).<sup>24</sup> Such rules should be specific about which performance metrics will be tracked, how often they will be tracked, and to whom they will be reported. At a minimum, this subcommittee should support VCTC in tracking the TDA-required performance metrics:<sup>25</sup>

- Operating cost per passenger
- Operating cost per vehicle service hour
- Passengers per vehicle service hour
- Passengers per vehicle service mile
- Vehicle service hours per full-time employee equivalent

In addition to tracking these metrics, the subcommittee should develop performance targets for each measure.

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<sup>24</sup> “A committee for the purpose of providing advice on productivity improvements may be formed by the responsible entity.”

<sup>25</sup> PUC Code Section 99247

## **2. Update rules and regulations for the evaluation of claims for TDA Article 4.5 funds**

As the designated Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA) for Ventura County, VCTC is the only eligible claimant for Article 4.5 (Community Transit Services) funds, but did not claim these funds during the Audit period.

VCTC's current allocation policies and procedures for Article 4.5 funds were last updated and approved in 1995. Updated guidelines should be prepared for the evaluation of claims for these funds. Such guidelines should include a determination of the cost effectiveness (e.g., the farebox recovery ratio) of the proposed services and could include each of the five TDA-required performance measures listed above.

## **3. Monitor the newly established East County Transit Alliance with Eastern Ventura County Cities**

In September 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between each of the cities in eastern Ventura County (Camarillo, Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks) and the County of Ventura was established. This "East County Transit Alliance" (ECTA) followed from a specific recommendation in the Ventura County Regional Transit Study.

The ECTA provides a foundation for how agencies work together to coordinate transit services in eastern Ventura County and creates a framework for combining fiscal resources on specific regional transit services. It has six goals:

1. Provide public transit services that are inclusive, customer focused, efficiently operated, and financially viable
2. Enhance existing transit services and options through a cooperative and collaborative partnership that balances regional concerns with each agency's unique transit needs
3. Improve local and interagency transit connectivity within the ECTA service area and with other transit service providers in Ventura and Los Angeles counties
4. Improve coordination of public transit services in the key areas of scheduling, fares, eligibility, marketing and outreach, and policies and procedures
5. Establish a single provider for ADA and Senior DAR service within the ECTA service area
6. Leverage cost efficiencies through coordinated purchases of services and equipment, shared use of facilities and other capital resources, and investments in technology

The ECTA's first responsibility, completed by its Management Committee, was to develop a Transit Implementation Plan, which includes several high-priority projects. Currently, the ECTA is working to develop a proposed implementation process for the high-priority projects.

To ensure progress towards these goals and the execution of immediate next steps for transit implementation, it is recommended that VCTC staff continue to monitor ECTA activities and progress reports. This could be achieved by designating a VCTC staff member to attend ECTA meetings.

## **4. Update the county's Congestion Management Program and upload to the GoVentura website**

As the county's Congestion Management Agency, VCTC is required by federal regulation to maintain a Congestion Management Program (CMP). The Ventura County CMP provides local

agencies and private developers the procedures and tools necessary to manage and decrease traffic congestion in the County. The July 10, 2009 update to VCTC’s CMP is the most recent version available through its website. VCTC staff indicates that the CMP is currently being updated. It should be uploaded to the website as soon as it has been approved by the Commission.

**5. Add representation from VISTA to the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) and Transcom to comply with PUC Section 130105(e)**

Currently, VISTA is not represented on the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) or Transcom advisory committees. Given that VISTA is administered by VCTC, it may make sense for the Executive Director to appoint a representative to each committee.

Under California Public Utilities Code (PUC) 130105(e), VCTC is directed to “appoint a technical advisory committee of representatives from all of the transit operators, all of the cities and the county, and the Department of Transportation, and such other advisory committees it deems necessary.” Implementing this recommendation will help VCTC fulfill this responsibility.

This will also help VCTC achieve its duties under PUC 130303, which deals with the Commission’s short-range transit planning and coordination responsibilities

**Recommendation Priorities**

Figure 5-1 presents a recommended timeline for the implementation of each of the five recommendations. Given that VCTC currently meets all the requirements under TDA, none of the recommendations are considered high priority. However, implementing these recommendations has the potential to improve the ability of VCTC to continue to improve its effectiveness and achieve its goals.

**Figure 5-1 Recommendations and Proposed Timeline**

| Recommendation   | Responsibility                           | Priority | Timeline            |
|--|--|----------|---------------------|
| 1. Establish a Productivity Review Subcommittee to focus the efforts of Transcom         | Transcom                                 | Medium   | FY 2014/15          |
| 2. Update rules and regulations for the evaluation of claims for TDA Article 4.5 funds   | Finance Director<br>Bus Transit Director | Medium   | FY 2014/15          |
| 3. Monitor the newly established East County Transit Alliance                            | Executive Director                       | Medium   | Ongoing             |
| 4. Update the county’s Congestion Management Program and upload to the GoVentura website | Planning and Technology Director         | Low      | As soon as possible |
| 5. Add representation from VCTC to represent VISTA to the TTAC and Transcom              | Executive Director                       | Medium   | FY 2014/15          |

# Appendix A Interview Guidelines

## VCTC TDA Triennial Performance Audit

The California Transportation Development Act (TDA) requires that each transportation planning agency have a triennial performance audit of its activities every three years. A performance audit is required to “evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the operation of the entity being audited.” Nelson\Nygaard Associates has been retained by the VCTC to conduct the performance audit which covers the three-year period ending June 30, 2013.

We believe it is valuable to speak with a sample of VCTC Policy Board members, as well as selected members of staff, to gather insight about VCTC’s performance. Individuals can speak to us in confidence. Any quoting of outcomes will be done anonymously. Our main purpose is to gather perceptions of VCTC.

- 
1. VCTC is involved in a broad range of planning and operational responsibilities of regional and local interest and SCAG is the TPA.
    - How well do you think the two organizations work together?
    - Do you think VCTC is performing well and is effective in its regional planning endeavors?
    - Are there specific suggestions for making Ventura County’s participation in SCAG activities more relevant and meaningful? What’s your assessment of the RTP process?
  2. How well does the existing process work for administering TDA funds in Ventura County?
  3. Do you have any recommendations for VCTC regarding the agency’s planning activities?
  4. The following question will be tailored to one of the following:
    - Board of Commissioners
    - Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)
    - Citizen’s Transportation Advisory Committee/Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (CTAC/SSTAC)

As a member of the TTAC, CTAC/SSTAC, Board of Commissioners, or other committee member, do you feel you receive the “right” level of information from VCTC to advise VCTC on matters of importance to your committee? Are lines of communication open and do you have a good working relationship with VCTC staff?

5. The prior audit recommended improving reporting of Ventura County Rideshare Performance and to establish standards. Do you feel this was adequately addressed?
6. Do you have any other input on how to improve the effectiveness of VCTC?

# Appendix B **Commuter Services Quarterly Report**

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Item # 9D

September 6, 2013

**MEMO TO: VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**FROM: ALAN HOLMES, TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANGEMENT  
PROGRAM MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: COMMUTER SERVICES FY 2012/2013 4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER AND YEAR END REPORT**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Receive and file

**DISCUSSION:**

To improve reporting of Ventura County Rideshare activities, staff prepares and submits to the Commission quarterly reports for review. A year-end report is also provided summarizing Rideshare activities for the previous fiscal year and establishing annual goals and objectives for the upcoming year. The FY 2012/2013 report contains the following information for the Commission's review:

- Total registrants on file
- Current number of Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program registrants and program usage
- Registrants with 'Active' ridematching interest
- Company worksites on file
- Average home to work commute distance
- Number of carpool matches attempted, separated by source
- Number of RideGuides generated that contained at least one match
- Average age of data for matches
- Average number of matches per RideGuide
- Estimated Program benefits
- Marketing activities
- Vanpool activities

The primary focus of the Commuter Services program is to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by a voluntary reduction of single occupant vehicle (SOV) commute trips in Ventura County. SOV trips are reduced by offering direct assistance to employers located in Ventura County and through the provision of services to county residents, promoting carpooling, vanpooling, bus pooling, transit, walking, biking and other Transportation Demand Management (TDM) commute alternatives.

**Services**

|  | 11/12<br>Actual | 12/13<br>Goals | 12/13<br>actual | 13/14<br>Goals |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>Database</b>                                |                 |                |                 |                |
| Commuters on file                              | 33,240          | 31,000         | 31,023          | 32,000         |
| Commuters active for matching                  | 6,401           | 6,000          | 6,029           | 6,500          |
| Company worksites on file                      | 369             | 337            | 337             | 310            |
| Estimated Avg. Home to work distance           | 15.83           | 15.5           | 16.43           | 16             |
| AVR reports generated                          | 34              | 58             | 60              | 36             |
| <b>Number of carpool matches attempted:</b>    |                 |                |                 |                |
|  | 11/12<br>Actual | 12/13<br>Goals | 12/13<br>Actual | 13/14<br>Goals |
| Public (web)                                   | 1,479           | 1,800          | 1,670           | 1,700          |
| Staff  | 4,561           | 1,650          | 1,197           | 1,500          |
| Total carpool matches attempted*               | 6,040           | 3,450          | 2,867           | 3,200          |
| Number receiving at least one match            | 4,567           | 2,000          | 2,126           | 2,200          |
| Average age of matching record (days)          | 90              | 150            | 169.2           | 145            |
| Average number of matches/RideGuide            | 8               | 8              | 8               | 8              |
| Avg. distance home/work                        | 15.2            | 14.5           | 14.5            | 160            |
| RideSmart Tips generated                       | 7,184           | 10,000         | 10,725          | 10,000         |
| <b>Guaranteed Ride Home Program Usage</b>      |                 |                |                 |                |
| Rental Car Trips                               | 8               | N/A            | 35              | 35             |
| Taxi Rides                                     | 8               | N/A            | 34              | 35             |
| Total  | 16              | N/A            | 69              | 70             |
| <b>Estimated Program Benefits</b>              |                 |                |                 |                |
| Reduction in Vehicles Miles of Travel          | 6,318,031       | N/A            | 2,795,526       | 3,000,000      |
| Reduction in Commuting cost (in \$s)           | 3,411,630       | N/A            | 1,509,331       | 1,700,000      |
| Reduction in carbon monoxide (tons)            | 97.71           | N/A            | 41.21           | 47.00          |
| Reduction in volatile organic compounds (tons) | 12.81           | N/A            | 5.31            | 6.40           |
| Reduction in Oxides of Nitrogen (tons)         | 15.73           | N/A            | 6.28            | 7.50           |

\*Prior to the release of the online emailed RideGuide (eRideGuide or eR/G), staff could not track actual employee usage of information contained in the hardcopy RideGuide. As more employers use the online

survey option the eR/G has become more prevalent. Staff noticed a drop in the Carpool Matches Attempted count although the volume of surveys received was nearly the same. Several modifications are being considered to make the end-user experience easier while still protecting the confidentiality of their information. Staff will provide updates to the Commission as alternatives are identified.

### **Marketing Activities:**

During the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2012/2013, the Ventura County Transportation Commission's Commuter Services program reached out to the community by promoting the availability of resources through educational materials, outreach programs, and various promotional venues. After extensive planning, focus was on execution of Earth Day and Bike to Work Week outreach and campaigns before turning attention to Rideshare Week. Additionally, further development steps were taken to improve the Rideshare section of VCTC's website.

### ***Employer Support***

- **Commuter eBlast** – The monthly update of the Commuter Services program was sent out on the first business day of each month to the list of approximately 130 transportation coordinators based at various employers throughout the county. The topics ranged from “Save the Environment - One Less Car at a Time” to “Bike to Work Week 2013 is almost here!” to “Congratulations to this year's Diamond Award winners!”
- **Rideshare Website Updates** – Following the website assessment and first phase of text updates, a second phase was undertaken to update the employer promotional materials available online. These materials included new carpool and vanpool posters, as well as a CalVans poster. All three pieces of artwork were translated into Spanish and made available on the website. Additionally, the materials request form was updated to reflect the current branding, include new items, and enhance user-friendliness.

### ***Outreach and Promotion***

- **Earth Day 2013** – Completed preparations for five Earth Day events, attending events in Oxnard on April 6, Thousand Oaks on April 13, Amgen on April 19, Ventura on April 20, and CSUCI on April 22. Activities included distribution of promotional items, one on one discussion of ridesharing benefits and other associated transportation services with potential ridesharing participants.
- **Wellness/Health Events** – In addition to the annual campaigns, Commuter Services coordinated and staffed events promoting ridesharing and VCTC's services (Commuter Services and VISTA) at four different sites during the fourth quarter, including the Camarillo Senior Expo on May 7, Simi Valley Wellness Expo on May 22, and two Baxter Healthcare locations on June 4 and 5.
- **Bike to Work Week 2013** – In preparation for our first focused large-scale promotion of the calendar year, we completed planning and logistical coordination of Bike to Work Week activities, including print promotion, City Council meeting announcements, “Pit Stops,” procurement of community-specific gifts (donations), and design work. The promotion was very successful. The number of “Pit Stop” events doubled from three in 2012 to six in 2013; online participation increased by 51 percent; and event attendance increased by 166 percent. Promotional

assistance was coordinated through local bicycle shops and cycling clubs as well as the Cities of Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Ventura. We conducted follow-up calls to confirm receipt of promotional packets and participation and content was printed in the *VC Star* and other local outlets (feature articles and media coverage). Social media and VCTC's "On the Move" newsletter were also utilized to promote and recap Bike to Work Week 2013.

***Social Media***

- **Facebook and Twitter** – Approximately 20 percent of all posts and tweets on Facebook and Twitter during the fourth quarter encouraged ridesharing. Across the quarter, Facebook "likes" increased two percent and Twitter followers increased by more than eight percent. With the 2013
- Rideshare Week campaign coming up in the next quarter, we are looking forward to even more participation and outreach through these social venues.

***Print Media***

- **Earth Day 2013** – Distributed the promotional/information pieces at five Earth Day events held throughout Ventura County.
- **Bike to Work Week 2013** – Posters and promotional packets were designed and distributed to employers and bicycle shops throughout Ventura County. Postcards were mailed to promote the event and were distributed by local bike shops and at outdoor events (i.e., 5Ks). Event-specific posters were also designed and distributed to the cities of Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Ventura to promote the community-centralized "Pit Stops." We also drafted and submitted an "Eye on the Environment" article, which was published in the *VC Star*.

***Planned First Quarter 2013-2014 Activities***

- We will coordinate our first Rideshare Luncheon – to be held on August 23, 2013 – to promote the program and Rideshare Week. Efforts will include development of event-specific promotional pieces, materials, and communications.
- Rideshare Week 2013 materials, including posters, postcards, promotional packets, and promotional communications will be designed/developed, up to ten on-site employer events will be scheduled, and promotional items will be distributed.
- The updating of [www.GoVenturaRideshare.org](http://www.GoVenturaRideshare.org) will be continued in coordination with the recommendations found within the initial website evaluation report.
- We will continue preparation and distribution of monthly Rideshare-themed eblasts to support employer participants.

Social media representation and utilization will continue with particular focus on the availability of new employer materials and the promotion of Rideshare Week 2013.

**CalVans**

In the fourth quarter of 2013, CalVans vanpools travelled a total of 78,287 miles and carried a total of 33,751 passengers, accruing 836,265 passenger lane miles. The fiscal end of year vanpool travel miles are 185,095 with a total of 70,218 passengers and 2,061,902 passenger lane miles.

**Farm Labor**

The number of vans on the road fluctuates with the crops cycles and growing conditions. Currently, there are 19 vans on the roads and in the fields. This month we have seen a small increase in the number of

vans traveling to Maricopa and Arvin via the 126 freeway from Ventura County. Now most of the vans are working locally, in Santa Paula, Piru and Oxnard.

**Commuter Vanpools**

Currently, we have five commuter vanpools on our freeways, travelling from Ventura to North Santa Barbara. Of special local focus to us right now is the commute between Ventura and Santa Barbara—one of the most heavily travelled in the region. Roadwork on the 101 that will continue until 2016 is a great reason to showcase the importance of vanpools and ridesharing. We continue active outreach throughout Ventura & Santa Barbara counties, this quarter we have made great effort to create new commuter vanpools between Ventura and Santa Barbara with outreach to companies and agencies: Lockheed Martin, QAC, Mar Burg Recycling, County of Ventura Government Center, County of Santa Barbara, UCSB and CAL AMP Electronics.

In addition, we have recently received permission to have our vans enter into Los Angeles County. We hope to make major impacts and assist people who commute between Ventura and Los Angeles counties. The following chart indicates passenger counts by month:

**CalVans Passenger Counts FY 2012/2013 by Month**

| <b>FY 2012/2013</b>    | <b>Passengers</b> |                 |               |               |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Month</b>           | <b>Weekdays</b>   | <b>Saturday</b> | <b>Sunday</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
| July                   | 3509              | 590             | 242           | 4341          |
| August                 | 3828              | 616             | 167           | 4611          |
| September              | 2692              | 568             | 134           | 3394          |
| <b>First Quarter</b>   | <b>10029</b>      | <b>1774</b>     | <b>543</b>    | <b>12346</b>  |
| October                | 845               | 176             | 60            | 1081          |
| November               | 825               | 176             | 60            | 1061          |
| December               | 1346              | 238             | 98            | 1682          |
| <b>Second Quarter</b>  | <b>3016</b>       | <b>590</b>      | <b>218</b>    | <b>3824</b>   |
| January                | 5699              | 680             | 150           | 6529          |
| February               | 5005              | 619             | 420           | 6044          |
| March                  | 6270              | 1028            | 426           | 7724          |
| <b>Third Quarter</b>   | <b>16974</b>      | <b>2327</b>     | <b>996</b>    | <b>20297</b>  |
| April                  | 9123              | 1178            | 590           | 10891         |
| May                    | 9128              | 1275            | 741           | 11144         |
| June                   | 8970              | 1994            | 752           | 11716         |
| <b>Fourth Quarter</b>  | <b>27221</b>      | <b>4447</b>     | <b>2083</b>   | <b>33751</b>  |
| <b>Year End Totals</b> | <b>57240</b>      | <b>9,138</b>    | <b>3,840</b>  | <b>70,218</b> |

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