



City Of Camarillo

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August 12, 1999

Honorable Charles Campbell
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Ventura County Hall of Justice
800 South Ventura Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

Dear Judge Campbell:

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report Titled: The Ventura County Transportation Commission and Its Role in Public Transit

This letter is in response to the above-referenced Grand Jury report. We appreciate the opportunity to provide additional information on this matter and hope the information will be helpful to the Grand Jury.

While the Grand Jury examined all public transit in Ventura County and based their findings on the collective transit system, we have focused our responses on how the findings apply to the Camarillo transit system. If you or the Grand Jury need additional information, please contact our Transportation Engineer, Mr. Tom Fox, at 388-5355.

Recommendation R-1: Set up Public Transit as an independent department.

Response: Partial concurrence. Our understanding of the need for this recommendation is to segregate transit from the Public Works Department so there is less of a tendency to use transportation funds on road maintenance rather than transit. Transit and road maintenance reside in different departments in Camarillo. Road maintenance functions are administered by the Public Services Department. Transit as administered by the Engineering Services Department. We feel the intent of this recommendation has been achieved in Camarillo and it would not be appropriate to subdivide the Engineering Services Department further to create a Transit Department.

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Recommendation R-3: Require transit decision-makers to use public transit regularly.

Response: Non-concurrence. Decision-makers periodically use the transit system. Key staff routinely ride the city buses and interview riders to obtain their input. The city will maintain this practice. However, creating a requirement for decision-makers to regularly use transit is not practical because this is a matter of individual choice and is not enforceable.

Recommendation R-4: Increase marketing budget.

Response: Concurrence. The recently-approved fiscal year 1999-2000 budget includes an increased marketing budget to hire a marketing consultant.

Recommendation R-5: Improve transit information on the Internet.

Response: Concurrence. The city recently upgraded the City Hall Home Page which includes information on the transit system.

Recommendation R-6: Make route information available seven (7) days a week, sixteen (16) hours a day.

Response: Partial concurrence. The city's Automated Citizens' Information System provides detailed transit information twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. Staff are available to answer telephones during all periods when transit service is operating. It would be impractical to expand staff hours to sixteen hours per day to merely duplicate an existing effective information program.

Recommendation R-7: Redesign schedules to make them easier to interpret.

Response: Non-concurrence. The city has worked with several marketing and transit consultants during the past three years to simplify and improve the city transit schedules. The response from our riders has indicated that the current schedules are significantly improved and easy to understand. Because our riders have been accustomed to the current format for more than two years, it would be confusing rather than beneficial to change the existing effective format.

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Recommendation R-8: Arrange with newspapers to print schedules on a weekly basis.

Response: Non-concurrence. It would be very expensive and not cost-efficient to pay to print bus schedules each week. Bus schedules are complex and the numerous lines would require very large and prohibitively expensive ads and would not necessarily be convenient for the public to use. Since schedules remain relatively stable throughout the year so that riders can depend on the times for work, school, child care, etc., a printed schedule which can be folded is much more convenient.

Recommendation R-9: Contact employers, commercial centers, etc., to subsidize bus costs.

Response: Partial concurrence. The city has contacted businesses, commercial centers, schools, and other entities to subsidize bus costs. The VCTC through SCAG's ride share agency also performs this function. Further efforts would be duplicative.

Recommendation R-10: Have staff speak to citizen groups about transit.

Response: Partial concurrence. Staff routinely meets with citizen groups to provide information about the city transit system. Staff will continue to make presentations as opportunities arise. Expanding current efforts would be impractical.

Recommendation R-12: Insert bus schedules in City Council proceedings on television.

Response: Partial concurrence. It would not be practical to provide an entire bus schedule on television. However, the city provides information on the government channel about the transit system and where schedules can be obtained.

Recommendation R-13: Maintain close contact with Calworks.

Response: Partial concurrence. The city is working closely with VCTC, which is the agency that coordinates between local transit service and Calworks.

Recommendation R-14: Work closely with California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI).

Response: Partial concurrence. The city routinely meets with the CSUCI transportation coordinating committee to accommodate transit service to the new university. The city has

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initiated efforts to obtain additional parking at the Metrolink Station to serve as a viable transit center. The intent of this recommendation is being met and additional efforts by the city would not be practical.

Recommendation R-15: Shorten wait times and extend hours that buses run.

Response: Non-concurrence. Wait times between buses is not an issue in Camarillo because the city provides general public dial-a-ride which serves as a taxi service. The bus arrives at prescheduled times so that no waiting is required. The service hours have been extended to periods when ridership demand tapers off significantly. Extending the service beyond these periods would increase costs to the public while not serving additional demand.

Recommendation R-16: Provide shelters at bus stops.

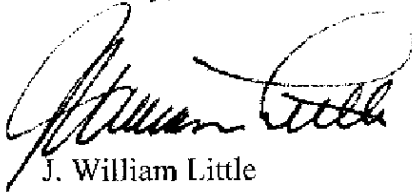
Response: Partial concurrence. Because the city provides general public dial-a-ride, there are not bus stops like there would be with fixed-route service. Bus shelters have been provided at key pick-up points such as shopping centers. As new commercial and community centers are developed, new shelters will be installed. However, additional shelters are not warranted at this time.

Recommendation R-17: Increase commuter transit to major employers.

Response: Non-concurrence. Major employers have been contacted to alert them to the availability of dial-a-ride service. If employees need transit service to work, they merely call for a ride. There is not a need to provide additional service to accommodate commuter needs because the dial-a-ride service is demand responsive.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,



J. William Little
City Manager

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