



CITY OF OJAI

401 SOUTH VENTURA STREET
P.O. BOX 1570/OJAI, CALIF. 93024
TELEPHONE (805) 646-5581
FAX (805) 646-1980

RECEIVED
VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT

September 21, 1999

The Honorable Charles Campbell
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

RECEIVED
OCT 06 1999

OCT 01 1999

OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDING JUDGE

[Handwritten signature]

RE: 1998/99 Ventura County Grand Jury Report: *The Ventura County Transportation Commission and Its Role in Public Transit*

Dear Judge Campbell,

The Ojai City Council took action at their meeting of September 28, 1999 to authorize submittal of the following responses to the Grand Jury report on transportation referenced above. As public transit providers, we are pleased to see the recognition the Grand Jury has given to improving public transit services throughout the County. The City is very proud of the progress we have made in our community with our fixed-route Trolley Service, but we are always interested in examining areas where we can improve that service.

Listed below is each Grand Jury recommendation which Ojai was asked to respond to and listed below the recommendation is our response.

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

In December of 1997, the City Council completed a City reorganization which, among other things, created a General Services Department responsible for all of the City's transportation programs. This action took responsibility of transit services and funding for those services out of the Public Works Department.

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

The City has no authority to require it's elected officials to become regular transit users. However, many of our Councilmembers and their families are users of our trolley service and are knowledgeable about the services provided in our community.

Recommendation R-4: Increase percentage of budget for marketing and advertising to attract automobile drivers.

The Ojai Trolley Service has always placed heavy emphasis on marketing and advertising. For

the 1999/2000 fiscal year, the marketing budget represented over 15% of the total transportation budget. The City will be working on ways to increase exposure of the trolley service to residents who rely more heavily on their automobiles.

Recommendation R-5: Improve access to transit scheduling and other information on the Internet for the benefit of employee transportation coordinators and the public.

The Ojai Trolley Service launched its web site in March, 1999. The site (www.ojaitrolley.com), is linked to other regional sites and the VCTC web site. The site contains a complete schedule, route map, and details about our service, including contacts for ADA and SCAT services. Furthermore, all of our printed materials now reference the site address.

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

Earlier this year, the City completed a major redesign of our trolley schedule with full color and graphics. The new schedule improved the clarity of the map and focused on making the time schedule easier to interpret. We feel that our schedule is easy to read and use and we have received very little negative feedback from the public about the schedule.

Recommendation R-8: Arrange with newspapers to print schedules on a regular basis every week, as theater schedules are printed.

Two years ago, we were successful at working with the local newspaper to print a copy of the trolley schedule in our local telephone book - distributed to every resident in the Ojai Valley. The trolley schedule is also printed in the quarterly Visitors Guide published by the local paper as well as a visitors map distributed by our local Chamber of Commerce. The newspaper has been good about running press releases and related information on our service, however it is unrealistic to expect them to reprint, at little or no charge, the entire schedule and map on any regular basis.

Recommendation R-10: Use staff members and volunteer speakers to address high school students, senior citizen groups, service clubs and social clubs on transit options available.

The trolley's Marketing Coordinator launched an education and outreach program three years ago to work with local schools, preschools, senior facilities and the disabled community, on using public transit services. The program has been extremely successful and has expanded to include additional community outreach through participation in local festivals and events.

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

The City would be unable to include the trolley schedule as part of the broadcast of local Council meetings due to the limitations of the equipment used. We will, however, work with the local

public access channel to post bulletin board messages with information about our service. Schedules are already widely distributed and, as mentioned previously, are available on our web site, the local phone book and visitors guide and through an automated phone service.

Recommendation R-16: Provide well lit shelters with benches at bus stops, with large maps and schedules posted, to make bus stops more visible...

The Ojai Trolley service has increased exposure over the past three years by adding attractive trolley stop signs and benches. All of our stops have posted scheduled stop times. Because much of our service is in residential neighborhoods, it is unrealistic for our stops to include shelters and lighting. Further improvements in this area are a priority for us and we recently completed a site inventory of all of our stops to identify areas where improvements can be made.

Recommendation R-17: Increase local and commuter transit service to major employers, schools and regional transit transfer points.

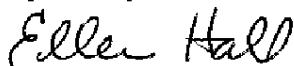
The City is pleased to report that our current service accompanies all of our major community services and schools. This includes medical facilities, all major shopping locations, motels, public services and parks and every public and private school located within the City limits. Our system also stops at our downtown Park 'n Ride facility where regional transportation services are provided by South Coast Area Transit.

The City is currently working with the County of Ventura to expand trolley services into additional unincorporated parts of the Ojai Valley, which will also increase the opportunity for transfer points with SCAT.

As a whole, we feel the City has done an exemplary job of providing public transit services to our community. Significant emphasis is placed on making our service accessible to the community through continuous participation in community events, education, and marketing. Ridership has increased dramatically since the City took over service in 1995 and the trolley has become a highly recognized community symbol. The City Council remains committed to public transportation and the positive effects it has on our community and our environment.

Again, thank you for your interest in public transportation systems. Should you have any further questions or comments, you may direct them to our General Services Director, Dan Singer, at (805) 646-5581.

Respectfully,



Ellen Hall
Mayor