



# City of Santa Paula

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July 20, 1999

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

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Honorable Judge Campbell;

Enclosed please find the response of the City Council of the City of Santa Paula to the 1998-1999 Grand Jury report titled:

The Ventura County Transportation Commission and Its Role in Public Transit.

If you have any questions about this response, please contact me or Mr. Norman Wilkinson, Public Works Director/City Engineer.

Sincerely,

Peter Cosentini  
City Manager, City of Santa Paula

Enclosure:

cc w/attachment:

1999-2000 Grand Jury  
County Clerk (2 copies)  
City Clerk  
Councilmember Robin Sullivan  
Norman Wilkinson  
Ginger Gherardi, VCTC

**CITY OF SANTA PAULA  
RESPONSES  
TO THE  
1998-1999 GRAND JURY**

**FINAL REPORT ON  
THE VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
AND ITS ROLE IN PUBLIC TRANSIT**

**APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF SANTA PAULA**

**JULY 19, 1999**

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Paula, through its elected officials and staff members, participates on the VCTC board and on most of the VCTC committees. As such, the City has the ability to influence VCTC decisions but not to control them. Many of the recommendations upon which the City has been asked to comment involve decisions that must be made through VCTC and therefore cannot be implemented unilaterally by the City of Santa Paula.

Santa Paula's involvement in transit services changed substantially when VISTA was formed. The City withdrew from SCAT in order to implement universal dial-a-ride service in lieu of the ineffective fixed-route service previously provided. VISTA operations in Santa Paula and the Santa Clara River Valley are provided under a cooperative agreement between the Cities of Santa Paula and Fillmore, Ventura County and VCTC. The local share of costs are split equally between the three local jurisdictions. A subcommittee of elected officials from these agencies makes recommendations on VISTA levels of service. VCTC manages the service contracts.

With the above institutional arrangements in mind, the following comments are provided on those recommendations identified in the response matrix found on page 25 of the Final Report.

## RESPONSES

R-1 Set up Public Transit as independent departments in each jurisdiction.  
(Non-concurrence)

The city of Santa Paula relies on VCTC and VISTA for transit service. The city is not involved in day-to-day transit operations. Therefore, the city of Santa Paula has no need for a Transit Department. A member of the City Council represents the City on VISTA matters.

R-2 No response required.

R-3 Require transit decision-makers to use public transit regularly. (Partial Concurrence)

Elected representatives cannot be compelled to ride public transit but Santa Paula's representative to the VCTC board has volunteered to ride VISTA from time to time starting immediately.

R-4 Increase percentage of budget for marketing and advertising to attract automobile drivers. (Concurrence)

This is best done through VCTC programs such as Smart Card and Guaranteed Ride Home. Santa Paula will support reasonable increases in advertising expenditures for such programs at the next VISTA meeting opportunity.

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

Santa Paula's Internet web site is expected to be online within the next year. Transit information will be included along with a link to VCTC's site.

- R-6 No response required.

- R-7 No response required.

- R-8 Arrange with newspapers to print schedules on a regular basis every week, as theater schedules are printed. (Partial Concurrence)

This is best done through VCTC for the entire VISTA system. It is unknown whether or not this recommendation is workable on a weekly basis or perhaps as a special insert on a less frequent basis. Santa Paula will support some form of newspaper distribution of schedules at the next VISTA meeting opportunity.

- R-9 Contact major employers, mall operators, schools and public agencies about subsidizing employee's bus costs. (Concurrence)

Outreach to major employers and others is a reasonable part of an advertising and public information program. Santa Paula will support increased VISTA efforts in this area at the next VISTA meeting opportunity.

- R-10 Use staff members and volunteer speakers to address high school students, senior citizens groups, service clubs and social clubs on transit options available. (Concurrence)

This is also an appropriate outreach measure. It requires persons who are knowledgeable on transit services throughout the county, including VISTA, SCAT, TOT, Metrolink and others. Santa Paula will support increased efforts in this area through VISTA at the next meeting opportunity.

- R-11 No response required.

- R-12 Insert bus and train schedules in City Council proceedings on television. (Concurrence)

Local bus and dial-a-ride information will be added as a regular part of Santa Paula's cable channel programming within 60 days.

R-13 No response required.

R-14 No response required.

R-15 Shorten wait times and extend hours that buses run. (Partial Concurrence)

Transit service within Santa Paula is a universal dial-a-ride system. Wait times vary due to individual scheduling. The dial-a-ride system is supplemented during peak periods by a fixed-route local commuter bus. Scheduled Route 126 express service makes two stops in Santa Paula with coordinated connections to the dial-a-ride buses and the local commuter bus. Additional buses on the Route 126 express would reduce wait time. Santa Paula will support a study to investigate such a change at the next VISTA meeting opportunity. Santa Paula will also support a study to consider extended hours of service for both the express and dial-a-ride services.

R-16 Provide well lit shelters with benches at bus stops, with large maps and schedules posted, to make bus stops more visible and more comfortable. (Concurrence)

Santa Paula has recently installed modern bus shelters at the two express bus stops and at selected locations where dial-a-ride service is frequently used. These locations include shopping centers, the Post Office, city and county offices and similar locations which were selected in coordination with the dial-a-ride operator. The City will continue to work with the dial-a-ride service contractor on an ongoing basis to identify additional locations where the demand for dial-a-ride service would justify installation of shelters.

At the next VISTA meeting opportunity, Santa Paula will also work with VCTC to develop additional display materials for bus stops.

R-17 Increase local and commuter transit service to major employers, schools and regional transit transfer points. (Partial Concurrence)

Increased frequency and hours of service are discussed in response to R-15 above. Dial-a-ride service throughout the community reaches all employers, schools and transfer points on a demand basis. When student demand exceeded dial-a-ride capacity recently, a supplemental commuter bus was added. Santa Paula, acting through VISTA, will continue to monitor dial-a-ride

ridership, looking for possible revisions to the commuter bus route or schedule. A new dial-a-ride operator has taken over service in Santa Paula as of July, 1999. The operator's prior history with the Fillmore dial-a-ride suggests that the quality of service will increase, which will result in higher ridership and better satisfied customers. Santa Paula is looking forward to the improvements.

R-18 No response required.

R-19 No response required.

R-20 Consider the Santa Paula Branch line for future rail service to Santa Clarita.  
(Concurrence)

The expansion of Metrolink service to include the Santa Paula Branch Line is a regional decision that is out of Santa Paula's hands. The City supports the eventual use of the branch line for commuter passenger rail service along with continued freight and recreational rail service. The Santa Paula General Plan provides appropriate goals, objectives, policies and implementation measures in support of future passenger service including the planning for a future Metrolink Station. Santa Paula contributed staff time and money to the purchase of the branch line to secure its use for a variety of purposes including eventual commuter rail service. A station site has been identified and preserved.

R-21 No response required.

R-22 No response required.

## CONCLUSION

In recent years, Santa Paula has made a strong commitment to improved transit services for its residents. It was apparent that the previous fixed-route bus system was not serving the public well. Santa Paula recognized the shortcomings and took appropriate action to establish dial-a-ride service in coordination with express bus service west to Ventura and east to Fillmore. As ridership has grown, the service has been expanded including Saturday service, the local commuter bus, and the installation of bus shelters. Santa Paula is committed to the continued improvement of its transit services in cooperation with its VISTA partners.

James Garfield, Mayor



Peter Cosentini, City Manager