

CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

July 26, 1999

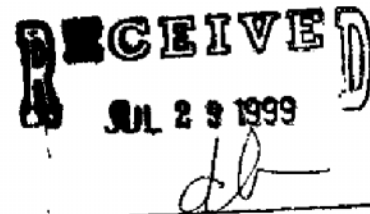
CITY COUNCIL

The Honorable Charles W. Campbell
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Ventura County Superior Court
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

James J. Friedman, Mayor
Ray Di Giulio, Deputy Mayor
Brian Brennan, Councilmember
Donna De Paola, Councilmember
James L. Monahan, Councilmember
Sandy E. Smith, Councilmember
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Subject: 1998-99 Grand Jury Reports

The Honorable Judge Campbell:



Thank you for the opportunity for the City of San Buenaventura to consider the recommendations included in the 1998-1999 Ventura County Grand Jury Reports on:

- *The Year 2000 Computer Problem*, dated May 18, 1999,
- *The Ventura County Cities Labor Relations*, dated June 22, 1999, and
- *The Ventura County Transportation Commission and Its Role in Public Transit*, dated June 23, 1999.

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05, this letter transmits the San Buenaventura City Council response to these Reports.

Year 2000 Computer Problem Report

Recommendations

The Ventura County Grand Jury's Report titled: *Year 2000 Computer Problem* yielded three recommendations applicable to our City, which are below. The City of San Buenaventura's response to the recommendations follows.

- R2** *"Any area that can not perform the necessary tasks to keep on target to complete compliance before Year-2000 because of lack of equipment or personnel resources should receive management assistance immediately."*

The City's goal is to reach satisfactory resolution to the Year 2000 Computer Problem prior to September 1, 1999. Currently, there does not appear to be any need for additional resources or equipment in order to

Ventura County Cities Labor Relations Report

The Ventura County Grand Jury's Report titled: *Ventura County Cities Labor Relations* yielded a recommendation that urged the cities and unions to continue the practice of good faith negotiations they currently use.

The Report does not require a response to the recommendations by the City.

Ventura County Transportation Commission and Its Role in Public Transit Report

Recommendations

The Ventura County Grand Jury's Report titled: *Ventura County Transportation Commission and Its Role in Public Transit* yielded nine recommendations applicable to our City, which are below. The City of San Buenaventura's response to the recommendations follows.

Administration

R-1 "Set up public transit as independent departments in each jurisdiction."

Although the City concurs with the Grand Jury as to the importance of public transit, the City does not agree with the recommendation. This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

Transit service in Ventura is provided through Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) and Ventura Intercity Services Transit Authority (VISTA). VCTC was formed under the Public Authorities Utilities Code to oversee transportation needs in Ventura County and to be responsible for the distribution of Federal and State funding. SCAT is operated under a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to provide public transit service in western Ventura County. VCTC operates and oversees VISTA as an intercity bus service. VCTC and SCAT have a full complement of staff dedicated to transit issues within the member cities. Creating a separate independent transit department in the City is not warranted, nor reasonable. The purpose of these regional agencies is to eliminate the unnecessary

duplication of staff. Creation of individual departments would unnecessarily duplicate staffing services and increase the cost of transit services.

Although many local transit staff work within the Public Works Department and the City may utilize funding not used for transit to complete necessary road repairs, it is short sighted to conclude that creating an independent department will cause a more effective transit service to result. The City Council sets policy direction for the City, not the Public Works Department.

R-3 *"Require transit decision-makers to use public transit regularly."*

Although agreeing with the intent, the City will not be implementing the recommendation as proposed. Public transit decision-makers, elected officials, do use the transit system. Some use the system on a regular basis and some use the system on an occasional basis. This practice should be continued. In addition, other elected officials should continue to be encouraged to use the transit system. However, requiring decision-makers to use public transit is for the most part, not practical and not enforceable. Continuing to encourage the use of the system is a more reasonable approach.

Informational

R-4 *"Increase percentage of budget for marketing in advertising to attract automobile drivers."*

The City fully agrees with the need to continue to attract automobile drivers to use mass transit and supports efforts to do so. This recommendation has already been implemented through VCTC's newly adopted budget. Increased funding was included for additional marketing efforts, as well as continued support of other agencies' efforts to lure drivers to mass transit. The City through the launch of our new Public, Educational and Government (PEG) Access channel may also pursue other efforts later this year. Marketing efforts produced by other agencies may be aired through this new access channel.

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

This recommendation will be implemented later this calendar year. The City of Ventura is in the process of upgrading and improving our Web site. A link to VCTC and SCAT (VISTA is operated by VCTC) will be provided for improved access to transit scheduling and other transit information for the public and other agencies.

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

Although agreeing with the need to improve access to transit schedules, this recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The approach proposed would be very expensive, cost prohibited, and not an effective method to provide transit information to the public. Other methods to increase accessibility to the public such as creating a link on the City's Web Page will be pursued.

- 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."***

This recommendation has already been implemented. The City of Ventura has a Speaker's Bureau that provides staff, elected officials and volunteers to speak to local groups, civic organizations and schools on a variety of subjects. The topic of public transit is already included in this program.

- R-12 *"Insert bus and train schedules in City Council proceedings on television."***

Although agreeing with the intent to provide publicity for local transit on the City's public access station, this recommendation will not be implemented as proposed. Providing transit schedules during City Council proceedings will not be an effective method for providing this type of information.

With the conclusion of the City's cable franchise renewals this fall, an improved PEG Access channel will be launched. This will provide new opportunities to provide educational information to the public on transit either through programming or infomercial type spots. This will be pursued as part of the implementation of the City's new PEG access channel.

Service

- R-16** ***"Provide well lighted shelters with benches at bus stops with large maps and schedules posted, to make bus stops more visible and more comfortable."***

The City concurs with the need to improve bus stops throughout the City. This recommendation will be partially implemented. Last month the City Council approved an improvement program for the City's bus stops. This program proposes the level of improvements for each stop based on ridership and physical constraints. Details of the proposal are included in the attached administrative report on the program.

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

The City agrees with the intent of this recommendation, however the recommendation as proposed will not be implemented. Local transit services and schedules are reviewed and evaluated each year to make sure they are meeting the maximum demand while still operating in the most productive and cost-effective manner. As warranted, VCTC and SCAT provide increased service to major employers, schools and regional transfer centers. To this end, the City of Ventura is building a new transit transfer center at the renovated Buenaventura Mall, the Pacific View. The building of this center will assist in providing increased and more effective service to employers and schools.

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The City of San Buenaventura appreciates the opportunity to consider the recommendations included in the Grand Jury's Ventura County Report. Staff is available to provide additional information or to answer any questions the Grand Jury may have.

Sincerely,



James J. Friedman
Mayor

c: Grand Jury Foreman Marvin J. Reeber
City Councilmembers
City Manager Donna Landeros
City Attorney Robert Boehm
Administrative Services Director Marilyn E. Leuck
Public Works Director Ronald J. Calkins
Human Resources Director Linda Kegerreis
City Clerk Barbara Kam
County Clerk Richard D. Dean (2 copies)

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