

Ventura County Transportation Commission Oversight Review

Summary

With the appearance of Measure B on the November 2004 Ventura County election ballot, the Ventura County 2004-2005 Grand Jury exercised its oversight review authority as to the management and fulfillment of responsibilities by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC). The VCTC is fulfilling the mission and is operating within the limits defined by the legislature.

Background

Created by the California State Legislature in 1988, the VCTC's mission is, "To improve mobility within the county and increase funding to meet transportation needs." In assessing the effects of a decline in state funding for transportation projects, VCTC initiated Measure B as a possible local funding source (a tax that remains within the county and can not be taken, borrowed, or held up by the state). The Ventura County voters did not approve Measure B. As the proponent of Measure B, it was the responsibility of the VCTC to write the ballot summary, provide the ballot argument, write the ballot rebuttal to the opposing argument and file them with the County Elections Division. Some critics viewed the VCTC methods and efforts as campaigning. General Counsel for VCTC has presented court rulings that support the VCTC actions.

In February 2004, Superior Court officials testified at the VCTC unmet transit needs hearing regarding service to the new Juvenile Justice Center (JJC). Combining this request with other nearby identified unmet transportation needs, the VCTC has recently proposed a new bus route that will provide service to these areas. The probability of unmet public transportation needs at the JJC was foreseen as early on as the site selection in 1999 and was addressed in the Conditional Use Permit (CUP-5144) in 2000. The permit required the Ventura County Public Works Agency (PWA) ensure sufficient public transportation be available from the JJC to the nearest South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) bus stop for a period of up to three years or until regular bus service became available. In 2005 the JJC is open and in operation, regular bus service is planned for fall this year, but the interim public transportation still remains to be provided.

Methodology

In addition to receiving a general presentation in chambers by the VCTC, the Grand Jury visited the VCTC offices and observed their daily operations. Specific documentation including statutes and regulations with respect to the commission's mission, responsibilities, funding sources and authorized spending limits were requested and received from the VCTC. The Grand Jury also conducted interviews with and reviewed documents from the PWA; visited, toured and inspected the recently constructed JJC; and received presentations from and visited SCAT. Information and

comments from Ventura County citizens and news media were also received and considered in this investigation.

Findings

- F-01.** The VCTC’s mission is, “To improve mobility within the county and increase funding to meet transportation needs.”
- F-02.** The VCTC is a public agency whose board consists of all five county supervisors, one representative from each of the incorporated cities (mayor or member of city council), one citizen member appointed by the County Board of Supervisors, one citizen member appointed by the County City Selection Committee, and one non-voting member appointed by the governor (traditionally from CalTrans).¹
- F-03.** The VCTC, created by state legislation in 1988, is charged with establishing transportation policies, setting priorities and coordinating activities between the various transportation operators, agencies, cities and the county.²
- F-04.** The VCTC controls and/or reviews the allocation of federal, state and local funds for highway, transit, rail, aviation, bicycle and other transportation projects.³
- F-05.** Meetings are publicly noticed in accordance with the Brown Act and public attendance is welcome. Monthly agendas and archives of past agendas are available on www.goventura.org under the heading “About VCTC.”³
- F-06.** When California voters passed the gas tax increase in June 1990 (Proposition 111), the requirement for the Congestion Management Program (CMP) also became law.⁴
- F-07.** With passage of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991, all urban areas in the nation were required to have a Congestion Management System (CMS). The CMS was largely modeled after, and is quite similar to, the California CMP. The Federal Highway System accepts the CMP as the basis for meeting the CMS requirements.⁴
- F-08.** In Ventura County, the cities and county have designated the VCTC to be the Congestion Management Agency responsible for preparing and monitoring the CMP.⁴
- F-09.** The purpose of the CMP is to help develop a coordinated approach to managing and decreasing traffic congestion by linking the various transportation, land use, and air quality planning programs throughout the county. New development, such as housing tracts or shopping malls, permitted in one city can add traffic congestion and air pollution in other areas of the county. The CMP is one tool to help the county take into account and deal with the overall county-wide impact of local land use decisions.⁴
- F-10.** VCTC Roles and Responsibilities:⁴
- Preparation and Adoption of the CMP
 - Developing Countywide Traffic Model and Databases

- Reviewing and Approving local traffic models
- Approving Deficiency Plans
- Monitoring CMP Implementation
- Determining CMP Conformance
 - If VCTC finds that a city or the county is not in conformance with the CMP, they are required to notify the State Comptroller to withhold local gas tax revenues.

F-11. Summary of Available Funding Sources:⁴

- *State Gas Tax* - Motorists in California pay 36.4 cents for each gallon of gas purchased. Of this, 18 cents goes to the State of California with the remaining 18.4 cents going to the federal government (about 90% of that returns to California under different transportation programs).
- *Approximate Breakdown of the 36.4 cents per gallon –*
 - 15 cents from each gallon goes to CalTrans to maintain and operate the state highway system.
 - 11.3 cents is returned to local agencies (county and city) to construct, operate and maintain their local streets.
 - 3 cents is allocated to transit.
 - 1.5 cents goes to other states through a federal program where more populous states subsidize less populous states.
 - 5.5 cents goes to construction of new projects within the state (approximately 1/8 of a cent goes to Ventura County).⁴

F-12. VCTC maintains a major project priority list (Attachment 1)

F-13. VCTC maintains a summary of county transit services (Attachment 2)

F-14. Requirement for public transportation at the JJC was recognized as early as 1999.⁵

F-15. CUP-5144 required the PWA ensure that sufficient public transportation service is available to meet needs of JJC for a period of three years or until the bus route can be modified.⁶

F-16. Public transportation is not available at the JJC as of June 2005.

F-17. California Attorney General opinion and case law indicate VCTC time and funds used on Measure B were appropriate.⁷

Conclusions

C-01. The VCTC is operating within its legislatively defined limits. (F-02, F-05, F-17)

C-02. The VCTC is fulfilling its mission. (F-01, F-03, F-04, F-06 thru F-12)

- C-03.** There are areas in which the VCTC, the county, and cities could more effectively and efficiently coordinate their interfaces. (F-14, F-15, F-16)

Recommendations

- R-01.** The county and cities should provide VCTC with all construction and development plans involving transportation arterial interfaces or potential effects on public transit as early in the planning stages as possible. Follow up dates should be set and met to update data. (C-03)

Responses

Ventura County Board of Supervisors
Ventura County Transportation Commission

Attachments

1. Ventura County Transportation Commission Adopted Major Project Priority List
2. Summary of Transit Services

Bibliography

1. California Public Utilities Code, Section 130000 – 130455, County Transportation Commissions Act.
2. VCTC Budget Summary July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005
3. VCTC, Measure B Information letter dated September 23, 2004
4. 2004-05 Ventura County Congestion Management Program (CMP)
5. SCAT letter dated May 11, 1999
6. CUP-5144 dated June 18, 2001
7. General Counsel memo dated May 9, 2005

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS

VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION ADOPTED MAJOR PROJECT PRIORITY LIST (Optimistic Scenario) Based on 2004 Draft STIP fund Estimate

Project Priority List	Total Project Cost (\$M)	Program Year (STIP)
1. SR-23 –US-101 to SR-118 widening	35.92	2006
SR-23 – SR-23/US-101 Interchange & Auxiliary Lane Improvements on US-101	34.2	2009
<i>Sub-total: Route 23</i>	<i>70.12</i>	
2. SR-118 – LA County Line to Tapo Canyon widening – Phase 1 plus ITS	40.68	2008
SR-118 – Rocky Peak Rd Ramps	2.27	2008
<i>Sub-total: Route 118 Freeway</i>	<i>42.95</i>	
3. Lewis Rd Widening – Ventura Bl. to CSUCI	30.00	2009
4. SR-118 – Tapo Canyon to New LA Ave. widening – Phase II	158.60	2021
5. US-101 – LA County Line to SR-33 widening, replace interchanges and ramps	350.00	2048
6. SR-33 – Casitas Springs	175.50	2061
7. Santa Paula Branch Rail Line – Montalvo to LA County line	74.10	2067
8. SR-118 – SR-126/US-101 to Moorpark widening, Truck Weigh Station, Grade Separation, Rail Siding and Bike lanes	248.04	2086
9. US-101 –SR-33 to Santa Barbara County	195.00	2101
10. SR-126 – Within Fillmore City Limits	28.60	2103
11. SR-23 –SR-23/SR-118 Junction to Walnut Canyon	97.50	2110
12. SR-126 – Southbound Connector to US-101	97.50	2117
Total	1,556.13	

SUMMARY OF TRANSIT SERVICES

Figure A5-1

FIXED-ROUTE & GENERAL PUBLIC DIAL-A-RIDE TRANSIT OPERATORS (FY2003/2004)							
Transit System Name	South Coast Area Transit (SCAT)	Simi Valley Transit	Moorpark City Transit	Thousand Oaks Transit (TOT)	Camarrillo Area Transit System (CATS)	Ojai Trolley	VISTA Intercity & Dial-a-Ride
Contact	(805) 487-4222 643-3158	(805) 583-6456	(805) 517-6200 517-6315	(805) 499-2443	(805) 388-5346	(805) 646-5581	(805) 642-1591
Service Type	Local	Local/ Intercity	Local	Local	Local	Local	Local/ Intercity
Hours	5:00AM-10:00PM*	5:00AM-7:45PM	6:00AM-6:00PM	6:30AM-6:30PM	7:30AM-9:00PM	7:15AM-5:30PM	5:30AM-11:00 PM
Days	All week	Mon-Sat	Mon-Fri	Mon-Fri	Mon-Fri; Sat	All week	Mon-Sat
Routes	14	4	2	4	1	2	6
Fare	\$0.60-\$1.25	\$.35-\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0.25-\$1.00	\$0.50-\$2.00	\$0.25	\$0.75-\$2.00
Pass?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Annual Passengers	3,372,170	445,000	40,000	150,000	56,000	20,000	458,900
Total Fleet Size	46	19	4	12	4	4	25

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SUMMARY OF TRANSIT SERVICES

Figure A5-2

REGIONAL/INTERCITY TRANSIT OPERATORS IN VENTURA COUNTY										
Operator Name	Los Angeles Department of Transportation (DOT)	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)	AMTRAK (Surfliner train and Thruway Connecting buses)	MetroLink Commuter Rail	Greyhound (stops in Ventura, Oxnard, and Thousand Oaks)	Ventura County Airporter	VISTA**	Simi Valley Transit	Goleta Commuter Express	
Contact	(213, or 818) 808-2273	(800) 266-6883	(800) 872-7245	(800) 371-5465	(800) 229-9424	(805) 650-6600	(800) 438-1112	(805)584-6287	(805) 562-2942	
Description Service Type	Commuter buses to and from Thousand Oaks, and Simi Valley	Local bus service between Thousand Oaks and Warner Center	Rail service between San Diego and San Luis Obispo	Rail service between Montalvo and Los Angeles*	Inter-city bus	Airport Service	Commuter/Intercity	Commuter/Intercity to Chatsworth	Commuter	
Hours	4:50 am – 8:35 pm	5:54 am – 8:50 pm M-F shorter hours on weekends	7:26 am – 11:30 pm	5:07 am – 7:45 pm	5:05 am – 10:20 pm	4:40 am – 11:15 pm****	6 am – 7:50 pm M-F 6:55 am-6:52 pm SS*****	5:39 am – 6:50 pm M-F 6:39 am-7:00 pm Sat.	5:45 am NB; 5:50 pm SB end.	
Days	M-Sat	M-Su.	M-Su	M-F	M-Su	M-Su.	M-Su	M-F	M-F	
Routes	3 (#423/242/575)	1 (#161)	1	1	1****	1	7	1***	1	
Fare	Cash Distance based zones	Cash Distance based zones	Tickets Distance based zones	Tickets/ 10-rides Distance based zones	Tickets Distance based	Tickets/ Prepaid Tickets	Cash/ E-purse	Cash/ E-purse	Monthly subscription on \$135	
Pass	Yes	Yes	Rail-to-rail MetroLink	Yes	No	No	Yes – GOVENTURA	Yes – GOVENTURA	No	

Comments:
 * Some trains start and end in Montalvo, others in Moorpark. Service connects in LA with other MetroLink services throughout the region.
 **VISTA Coastal (Ventura – Santa Barbara) and 126 (Ventura to Fillmore) operate 7 days a week; VISTA East, VISTA 101/Conejo, and VISTA CSUCI operate M-Sat.
 *** One Simi Valley route leaves the city limits, the other 3 operate within the city.
 ****Greyhound operates 6 roundtrips a day between San Francisco and Los Angeles, with stops at points in-between
 ***** VC Airporter operates 8 round trips to LAX Sunday through Friday, on Saturday, it operates 7 round trips. Stops are at Ventura and Oxnard.
 *****Times vary by routes. VISTA CSUCI operated until 10:30 on weeknights

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