

Ventura County Grand Jury 2012 - 2013



Final Report

Senior Transportation in Ventura County

May 30, 2013

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Senior Transportation in Ventura County

Summary

The 2012-2013 Ventura County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) opened an inquiry into the transportation needs of senior citizens in the County of Ventura (County). Research into Senior Transportation developed after an interesting protocol meeting early in 2012. The Grand Jury chose to look into the issue for further clarification. The organization of public transportation services for the County is a vital service for senior citizens. The Transportation Development Act requires that funds be spent for public transit as well as road repairs. The Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) contracts with private companies for that purpose.

Considerable effort by the VCTC and the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) is being made to ensure that transportation options meet the needs of seniors. One of the most critical turning points in the lives of seniors is when they are no longer able to travel on their own to meet their needs. Although many seniors continue to drive their own cars well into their eighties and beyond, there are many who are no longer able to do so because of financial, physical and/or cognitive limitations.

After a study of the issues surrounding senior transportation, the Grand Jury found that senior transportation providers, planners and funding organizations have failed to work together to provide an integrated county-wide transportation network for the entire County. With the residents of the County living longer, the need for senior transportation continues to increase. This inquiry identified and evaluated various senior transportation programs to determine if they are meeting the current needs of the seniors of the County.

The Grand Jury recommends that the VCTC and the VCAAA improve transportation options and their availability to the seniors of the County. In addition, the Grand Jury recommends that provision for senior transportation needs be given a top priority within the County. The Grand Jury recommends assigning an independent, non-elected County administrator to oversee and manage the collaborative efforts of all senior transportation modalities. They also need to produce strategies to simplify senior transportation. This administrator would gain cooperation by and with all transportation entities with a goal of consistency in the areas of the "5 A's" (Availability, Acceptability, Accessibility, Adaptability, and Affordability as seniors' needs for transportation) as put forth by the Beverly Foundation. [Ref-02]

Background

Transportation is one of the most important concerns in today's society. Aging is a major life transition that typically means leaving the workforce and living on a fixed income that either does not vary over time or rises modestly to cover a portion of annual inflation. The Census Bureau stated in 2010 that many older citizens live in poverty, which makes access to affordable public senior

transportation crucial. This is not a problem limited to lower income citizens. Many seniors may not be able to walk to the bus stop, or even to the curb, to avail themselves of a ride. Getting to the store to buy groceries, making it to a doctor's appointment or simply meeting with friends can be very difficult. In many cases the senior feels isolated and no longer a part of the community.

The Beverly Foundation identifies five different areas ("5 A's") of need for senior transportation. They are:

- availability
- acceptability
- accessibility
- adaptability
- affordability

Public senior transportation in the County is provided by ten different agencies through a combination of fixed route and demand-response transit services. The nonprofit senior/disabled transportation is as follows: [Ref- 03]

- Agoura Hills Dial-A-Ride
- Camarillo Health Care District Care-A-Van
- Fillmore and Piru Vista Dial-A-Ride
- Gold Coast Transit Access
- Help of Ojai
- Moorpark Dial-A-Ride
- Santa Paula Vista Dial-A-Ride
- Simi Valley Dial-A-Ride
- Thousand Oaks Dial-A-Ride
- Ventura County Transportation Commission

These agencies are not integrated into a single coordinated system.

Methodology

The Grand Jury reviewed numerous public records with respect to the various transportation needs and concerns of senior citizens. The Grand Jury examined the practices and policies of the VCTC, as well as those of the VCAAA. Also considered were current and historical documents related to senior transportation. Seniors who use demand-response transit (Dial-a-Ride and ACCESS, which are commercial names) and fixed route bus transportation (Vista and Gold Coast) were interviewed, as well as administrators and clients of senior centers. In addition, the Grand Jury obtained best practices information from impartial experts within the senior transportation field and used Internet sources of public

records. The Grand Jury researched programs in other areas of the U.S. that provided the kind of transportation service that met the needs of seniors.

Facts

- FA-01.** Based on local funding policies and perception of transportation needs, transit operators offer non-matching days and hours of service. [Ref-01]
- FA-02.** An effort to provide integrated or coordinated service has been minimal. However, the VCTC and the transit operators have attempted to improve connections through coordinated fares, media and scheduling software. [Ref-01]
- FA-03.** VCAAA is the main advocacy group for senior services in the County and has provided the seniors of the County with specialized transportation options, such as: “personalized trip planning,” instructions on how to obtain paratransit (for disabled seniors) and a helpful brochure that clearly explains transportation options such as demand-response transit systems for County seniors. In addition, their website offers advice on other services available. [Ref-07]
- FA-04.** The County consists of ten cities and large unincorporated areas that are separated by many miles, with many diverse communities and transit centers. Geographic areas do not share common economic, social and/or transportation needs. [Ref-01]
- FA-05.** The Beverly Foundation was founded in 1977. Its mission is to foster new ideas and options to enhance mobility and transportation for today’s and tomorrow’s older population. [Ref-02]
- FA-06.** The Beverly Foundation emphasizes the following factors as essential to effective and acceptable senior transportation: availability, acceptability, accessibility, adaptability and affordability. [Ref-02]
- FA-07.** The Beverly Foundation stated senior men may live as many as six years and women as many as ten years after the time that they no longer drive. They become dependent on family, as well as on a broad array of community transportation services. [Ref-02]
- FA-08.** The Federal Government’s Older Americans Act of 1965 provided for transportation needs of the elderly. This was termed demand–response transit. These services are found in most cities in the County. [Ref-04]
- FA-09.** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the national elderly population is projected to double to approximately 80 million by the year 2050. [Ref-05]
- FA-10.** In Thousand Oaks, demand-response transit service is restricted to seniors only.

- FA-11.** In Fillmore, seniors, children, farm workers and others are allowed the use of this service without priority to seniors.
- FA-12.** The VCTC Bus Book print size is small and difficult to read. [Ref-06]

Findings

- FI-01.** The Grand Jury found that senior transportation in the County is inadequate. There is little coordination among the ten cities in the County and/or the 10 transportation companies, making it difficult, if not impossible, for a senior citizen to travel easily. (FA-01-04)
- FI-02.** The Grand Jury found that mobility and transportation options are limited to the existing bus routes, and there is little or no coordination of the time schedules. (FA-05, 07)
- FI-03.** The Grand Jury found that the aging of the County population impacts accessibility to essential services and cultural events. (FA-06, 08-09)
- FI-04.** The demand-response transit services are found in all ten cities, although each city's service is independently operated and functions differently. This has been found to be very confusing and in some cases potentially dangerous to seniors. In Thousand Oaks, the service is for seniors only. However, in the Heritage Valley (Fillmore, Piru and Santa Paula) seniors, children, farm workers and others are allowed the use of this service. (FA-08, 09)
- FI-05.** The Grand Jury found that many bus routes, fees, stops, and schedules differ so profoundly that this is confusing to many. The cognitive limitations of many senior citizens add to this issue. (FA-01, 02, 04-09, 11, 12)

Recommendations

- R-01.** The Grand Jury recommends that an independent, non-elected County administrator be assigned to oversee the collaborative efforts of all the senior transportation modalities in the County and produce strategies to simplify senior transportation. This administrator would seek consensus with the independent companies and city transportation agencies with a goal of consistency in the areas of availability, acceptability, accessibility, adaptability, and affordability. Further, the administrator would develop an advisory board comprised of senior bus-riding citizens to point out the opportunities for improvements. In addition, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors should be encouraged to ride a bus route once a year to determine needs and the effectiveness of the programs.
- R-02.** In cooperation with the VCTC and VCAAA, programs should be implemented that are designed to assist senior citizens with transportation within their cities and throughout the County.

- R-03.** The Ventura County Board of Supervisors should allocate specific funding for senior transportation.

- R-04.** The VCTC, working with VCAAA, should standardize requirements for participation in the senior transportation programs. They should also publicize the availability of programs that fulfill the transportation needs of seniors.

- R-05.** The VCAAA should plan for increased staffing to accommodate a growing senior population.

Responses

Responses Required From:

- County of Ventura, Board of Supervisors (FI-01, FI-02, FI-03, FI-04, FI-05)
(R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- Ventura County Transportation Commission (FI-01, FI-02, FI-03, FI-04, FI-05)
(R-01, R-02, R-04, R-05)

Responses Requested From:

- City Council, City of Camarillo (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Fillmore (FI-04) (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Moorpark (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Ojai (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Oxnard (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Port Hueneme (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Santa Paula (FI-04) (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Simi Valley (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Thousand Oaks (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)
- City Council, City of Ventura (R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05)

Commendations

The Ventura County Area Agency on Aging is an outstanding advocate for the transportation needs of the County’s senior citizens. VCAAA staff actively participates in and collaborates with other County entities concerned with identifying resources and resolving senior transportation issues in each community.

References

- Ref-01.** *Ventura County Regional Transit Study, Final Report-Executive Summary and Report to Legislature as adopted by the VCTC, April 13, 2012, pp. 3-4.*
- Ref-02.** *Beverly Foundation* – www.beverlyfoundation.org/about
- Ref-03.** *Eldercare, Ventura County Star 2012-2013 Resource Guide for Services in Ventura County, Community Resources, p. 21.*
- Ref-04.** *Older Americans Act of 1965. (Pub. L. 89-73, 79 Stat. 218, July 14, 1965)*
- Ref-05.** www.census.gov/population/socdemo/statbriefs/agebrief.html.

Attachments

- Att-01.** VCTC (Gold Coast Transit) Bus Book, pp. 4-5.
- Att-02.** VCAAA brochure, Ventura County Public Transit for Seniors

Glossary

TERM

DEFINITION

County

County of Ventura

Demand-response transit

Any non-fixed route system for transporting individuals that requires advanced scheduling by the customer, including services provided by public entities, nonprofits, and private providers.

Fixed route transportation

Includes any transit service in which vehicles run along an established path at preset times. In the County, buses are the most common examples of this type of service.

Grand Jury

Ventura County Grand Jury

Modalities

The type of behavior, expression or way of life that belongs to a particular person or group of people.

Protocol visit

For the purpose of educating the Grand Jury to governmental functions of the County, cities and special districts so that jurors can meaningfully perform their statutory oversight functions

Senior citizen

A common polite designation for an elderly person, and it implies or means that the person is at least 65 years old or older.

VCAAA

Ventura County Area Agency on Aging

VCTC

Ventura County Transportation Commission

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Attachment 01

VCTC (Gold Coast Transit) Bus Book, Feb. 10, 2013, pp. 4-5

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HOW TO READ THE BUS SCHEDULE

Each schedule lists timepoints for several stops along the route, and these are shown on the accompanying route map. Read the schedule from left to right. To know when you should arrive at a stop that is between the listed timepoints, use the time from the timepoint *before your stop*.

If you need assistance with your trip planning, please call GCT's Customer Service Center at 805-487-4222. Our team is available to help Monday - Friday, 7 AM - 7 PM.

CÓMO LEER EL HORARIO DEL AUTOBÚS

Cada horario muestra el tiempo para varias paradas a lo largo de la ruta y éstos se muestran en el mapa de la ruta que acompaña. Lea el horario de izquierda a derecha. Para saber cuando debe llegar a una parada que está entre el tiempo indicado, use el tiempo *antes de su parada*.

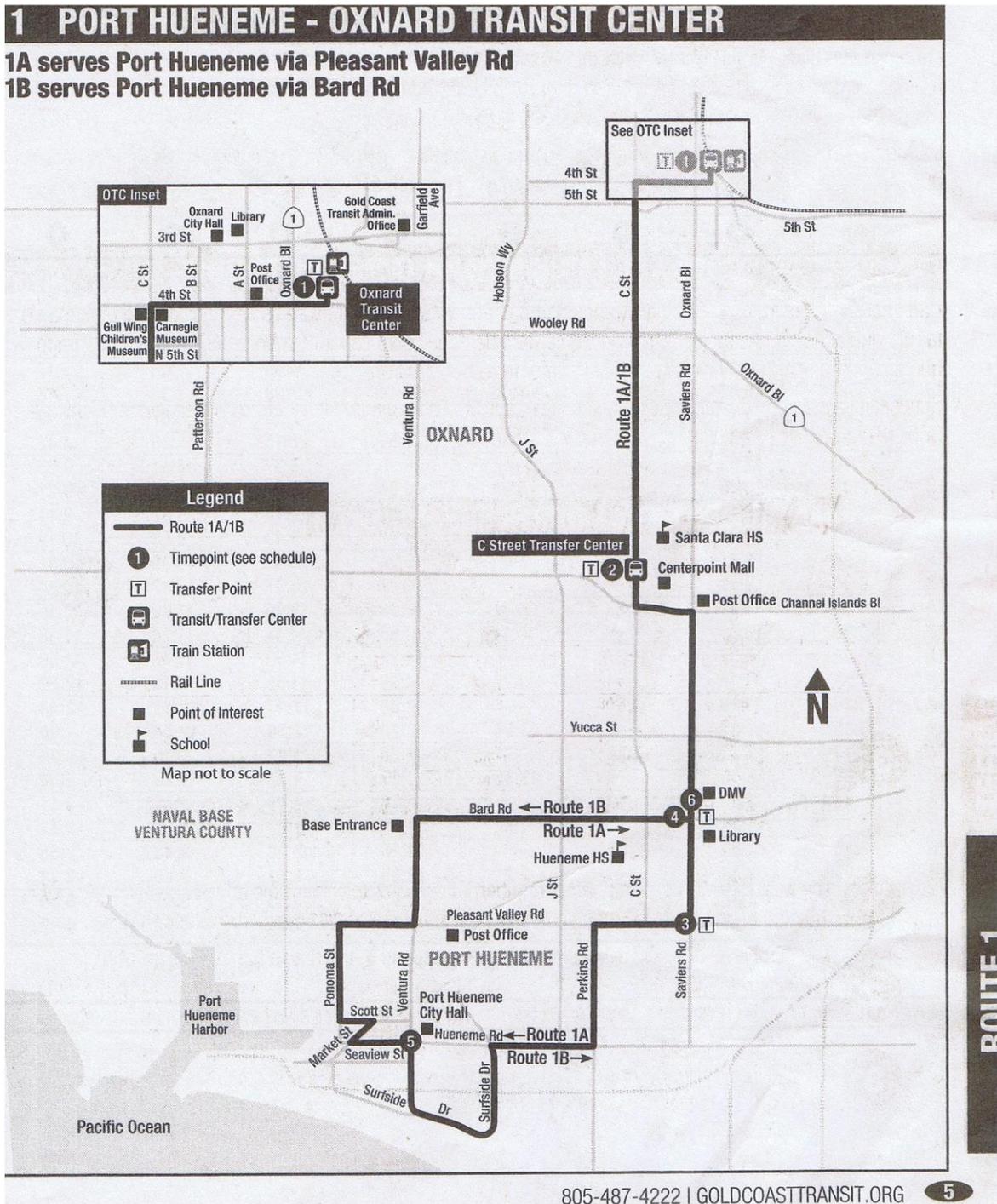
Si necesita ayuda con la planificación de su viaje, por favor llame a nuestro Centro de Servicio al Cliente al 805-487-4222, abierto de lunes - viernes, 7 AM - 7 PM.

4A GONZALES RD - NORTH OXNARD				DAILY DIARIO
1	2	3	4	1
OTC	DORIS AT STREET	GONZALES AT STREET	ROSE AT GONZALES	OTC
6:25 AM	6:33	6:47	6:54	7:05
7:10	7:18	7:32	7:39	7:50
8:00	8:08	8:24	8:34	8:47
8:55	9:03	9:19	9:29	9:42
9:50	9:58	10:14	10:24	10:37
10:45	10:53	11:09	11:19	11:32
11:40	11:48	12:04 PM	12:14	12:27

NOTE: • THESE TRIPS DO NOT OPERATE ON WEEKENDS NOTA: • ESTOS VIAJES NO OPERAN LOS FINES DE SEMANA

HOW TO USE/CÓMO LEER

- 1 The heading tells the route name, number, direction of travel and the day of operation. *(El título muestra el nombre de la ruta, la dirección de la ruta y los días que opera esta ruta.)*
- 2 The numbered discs are timepoints which correspond to the time a bus will depart at that location. These timepoints are not the only stops on the route. *(Solo los puntos claves a lo largo de la ruta están enumerados en el horario. No son las únicas paradas.)*
- 3 Symbols are used to denote specific information about a particular trip. This information is detailed in the "Note" section. *(Los símbolos se utilizan para denotar información de un viaje particular. Se detallan en la sección "Nota").*



Attachment 02

VCAAA brochure, Ventura County Public Transit for Seniors

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Relax and Enjoy the Ride!

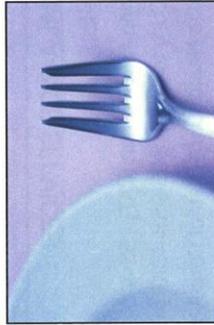
Many older adults think that giving up the keys to their car means losing their independence, but this does not have to be you! With a little planning, you can get where you need to go. For a minimal fare, buses and Dial-A-Ride vans can take you to and from the grocery store, clubs, senior centers, lunch with friends and medical appointments.



Did you know? Every city in Ventura County has a public transit system with buses that are accessible to persons with disabilities and seniors? If you cannot ride the bus, you may qualify for Dial-A-Ride services.

Join us for Lunch!

Did you know? Public transportation for seniors attending one of the county's 14 hot lunch programs is available daily during the week at no charge? Be sure to tell the driver that you are attending the Sr. Nutrition Luncheon or call the VCAAA at (800)510-2020 for more information.



The Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) serves the County's 60+ population including those with different social and cultural needs.

PERSONALIZED TRIP PLANNING
"GO VENTURA" 800-438-1112
PERSONALIZED TRAVEL TRAINING
"MMP" 800-966-7114

WELCOME ABOARD!

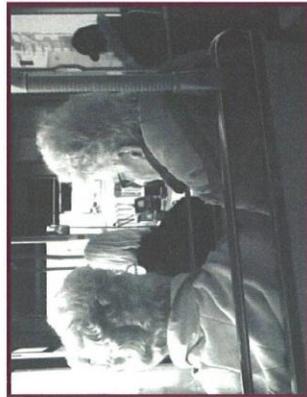
**VENTURA COUNTY
PUBLIC TRANSIT
FOR SENIORS**



FIXED ROUTE

DIAL-A-RIDE

SPECIALIZED TRANSIT



PLANNING YOUR BUS TRIP

- STEP 1:** Get a bus schedule and map
- STEP 2:** Find your routes and transfers
- STEP 3:** Determine your departure and arrival times
- STEP 4:** Locate your bus stops and have your fare ready.



PERSONALIZED TRIP PLANNING
“GO VENTURA” 800-438-1112
PERSONALIZED TRAVEL TRAINING
“MMP” 800-966-7114

Do you qualify for Dial-A-Ride (DAR)?

If you are unable to access a bus, you may qualify for other public transit services known as “Dial-A-Ride.” You can make a reservation on a wheelchair-accessible van or bus that will pick you up and drop you off at your home. To get an application & schedule an assessment, call the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Certification Office toll-free at **1-888-667-7001. SENIORS MAY ACCESS DAR WITHOUT ADA CERTIFICATION.**

CITY DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICES

Camarillo:

- Camarillo Area Transit (CAT) - 55 & Older \$1.50 (Curb to Curb) 805-988-4CAT (4228)
- Camarillo Health Care District Care-A-Van - 55 & Older \$6.50-\$21 (Door to Door for ADA & Non-Emergency Medical Appointments) 805-388-2529

Moorpark:

- City of Moorpark – 62 & Older \$1.50-\$4.50 (Curb to Curb) 1-800-881-9521 ext 290

Thousand Oaks:

- Thousand Oaks Transit— 62 & Older \$1.50 (Curb to Curb) 805-375-5467

Simi Valley:

- Simi Valley Transit— 60 & Older \$1.50 (Curb to Curb) 805-583-6464

Ojai, Meiners Oaks & Mira Monte:

- HELP of Ojai— 55 & Older \$2-\$3 (Door to Door) 805-646-5122
- Ojai Trolley— 65 & Older \$.25 805-653-2230
- Gold Coast ACCESS — 65 & Older \$3.00 (Connects with the Ojai Trolley at Vons) 805-485-2319

Oxnard, Port Hueneme & Ventura:

- Gold Coast ACCESS—65 & Older \$3.00 (Curb to Curb) 805-485-2319
- Harbor & Beaches DAR 805-207-0699

Santa Paula:

- VISTA 65 & Older— \$1.00 (Curb to Curb) 805-933-2267

Fillmore & Piru:

- VISTA 65 & Older— \$1.00 (Curb to Curb) 805-524-2319

FRAIL SENIORS NEEDING SPECIAL CARE

Elder Help & Medi-Ride programs provide a limited number of no-cost door-through-door rides for non-emergency medical appointments for frail seniors who qualify. Transportation to Los Angeles county is available in some instances. **Call the VCAA at 800-510-2020 for more details.**

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