



AGENDA

COASTAL EXPRESS POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Friday, January 30, 2015, 1:00 P.M

Carpinteria City Hall, Council Chambers

5775 Carpinteria Avenue, Carpinteria, CA 93013

Item #1 **CALL TO ORDER**

Item #2 **INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Item #3 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Each speaker is limited to three minutes. The Committee may, either at the direction of the Chair or by majority vote, waive this three minute time limitation. Under the Brown Act, the Committee should not take action on or discuss matters raised during Public Comment portion of the agenda which are not listed on the agenda.

Item #4 **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2015 Calendar Year.

Item #5 **SEPTEMBER 12, 2014 MEETING MINUTES - PG. 2**

- Approve the September 12, 2014 meeting minutes.

Item #6 **QUARTERLY SERVICE UPDATE - PG. 4**

- Receive and file service performance data related to the Coastal Express route.

Item #7 **LIMITED INTEGRATION PLAN - PG. 7**

- Receive and file information on the Limited integration plan.

Item #8 **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN - PG. 9**

- Receive and file draft Short Range Transit Plan Fare Policy Memo, direct staff to develop Fare Increase recommendations and recommend to VCTC Commission implementation of Advertising Program.

Item #9 **MARKETING AND PROMOTION - PG. 13**

- Receive and file information on marketing and promotion of service.

Item #10 **2015 MEETING SCHEDULE - PG. 17**

- Approve a 2015 quarterly meeting schedule.

Item #11 **ADJOURNMENT**

**MINUTES OF THE
VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (VCTC)
COASTAL EXPRESS POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CEPAC)
September 12, 2014**

1. Call to Order

Chair Salud Carbajal called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m.

2. Introductions

Self-introductions were performed. The following people were present:

Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Members: Council persons Carl Morehouse and Bryan MacDonald; Mayor Helene Schneider; Supervisor Steve Bennett; Supervisor Janet Wolf; Supervisor Salud Carbajal; Jerry Estrada of Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (ex-officio); Steve Brown of Gold Coast Transit District (ex-officio).

Staff: Jim Kemp, Steve VanDenburgh, Gregg Hart and Scott Spaulding of SBCAG; Darren Kettle, Vic Kamhi, Aaron Bonfilio, Treena Gonzalez, Amy Ahdi and Kara Elam of VCTC; Vanessa Rauschenberger of Gold Coast Transit District.

Also Present: Marlene Connor and Jim McLaughlin of Wendel and Associates; Kathy Connell of Ventura County; Des Sandlin of Roadrunner Management Services and Hillary Blackerby of Assembly Member Das Williams' office.

3. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

4. May 23, 2014 Meeting Minutes – Action

Carl Morehouse moved to approve the minutes. Bryan MacDonald seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and passed unanimously.

5. Coastal Express Limited Integration Planning – Receive and File

The PAC discussed the planned absorption of the Coastal Express Limited service into the VCTC Intercity Transit service. The consolidated service would begin in June 2015. The PAC requested staff look into removable, interchangeable branding (possibly a magnetic decal) on each side of the Coastal Express route buses that conforms to Measure A ordinances in citing the use of Measure A tax dollars to partially fund the Coastal Express service. At the next meeting, staff will present Measure A bus branding options and a proposed route schedule for the Coastal Express Service.

6. Draft Coastal Express Ten Year Plan – Action

Staff recommended the PAC approve for SBCAG and VCTC action the Coastal Express Ten Year Transit Plan, and direct Staff to work with the Coastal Express Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) regarding implementation of the Plan. Marlene Connor and Jim McLaughlin of Wendel and Associates jointly presented an over-view of key aspects of the Plan. Discussions were had on service restructuring, capital planning, marketing, advertising, fare policy, ridership demands, budget impacts and financial sustainability. Hillary Blackerby, senior field representative for Assembly member Das Williams and regular rider of the Coastal Express service, provided the following comments on the current Coastal Express service:

- The access to Wi-Fi is inconsistent.
- The fare box that reads the GoVentura smartcard is, at times, not functional.
- The current e-purse refill of fare costs \$2.80, not \$3.00.
- The marketing of the new buses bike capacity is important to riders who use both bike and bus transportation.
- There needs to be more sales outlets to purchase fares in Santa Barbara.

Helene Schneider moved to approve the Staff recommendation. Carl Morehouse seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and passed unanimously.

7. Set Next Meeting

The next CEPAC meeting is on Friday, January 30, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at Carpinteria City Hall in the Council Chamber Room.

8. Adjournment

Chair Carbajal moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:54 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.



Item #6

January 30, 2015

MEMO TO: COASTAL EXPRESS POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM: AARON BONFILIO, VCTC TRANSIT PROGRAM MANAGER
SUBJECT: QUARTERLY SERVICE UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

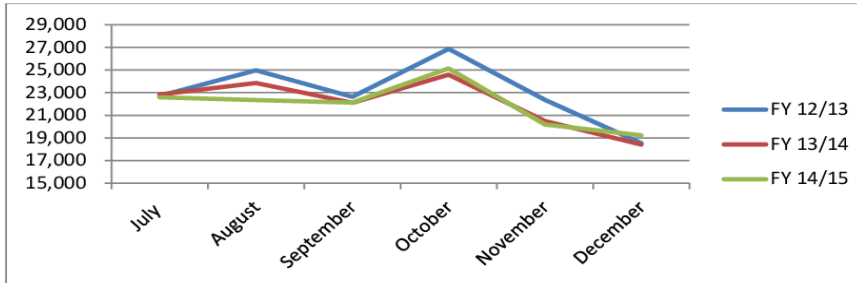
- Receive and file

BACKGROUND

Staff presents the attached service performance data related to the Coastal Express route. This data reflects the year over year performance data with respect to Passenger Trips, Fare Revenue, Hours of Service and Passengers per Hour.

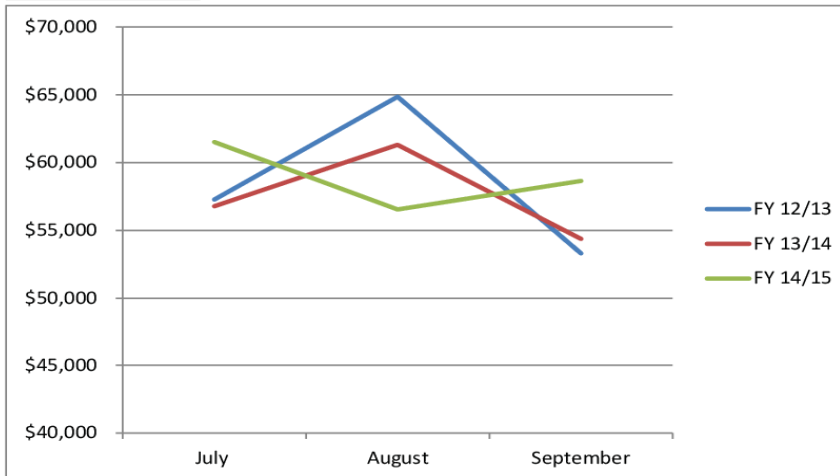
Item #6, Attachment

RIDERSHIP



	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
FY 12/13	22,693	24,963	22,621	26,862	22,361	18,527
FY 13/14	22,829	23,838	22,095	24,574	20,490	18,402
FY 14/15	22,585	22,342	22,119	25,133	20,176	19,219

FAREBOX REVENUE

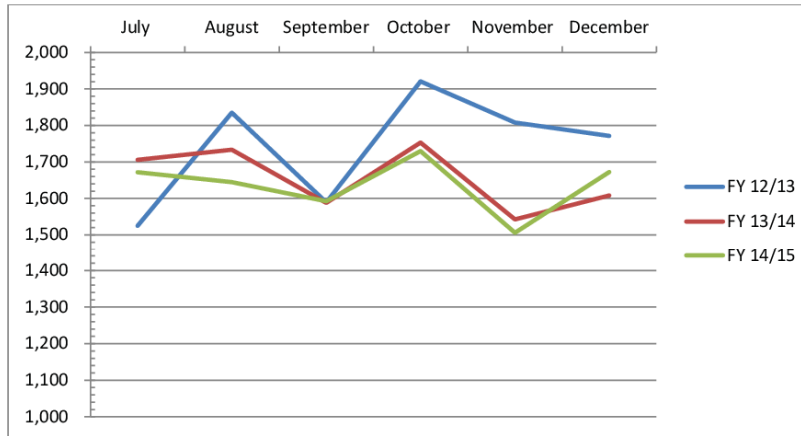


	July	August	September
FY 12/13	\$ 57,271	\$ 64,848	\$ 53,293
FY 13/14	\$ 56,779	\$ 61,298	\$ 54,372
FY 14/15	\$ 61,502	\$ 56,535	\$ 58,640

Second Quarter FY14/15 Farebox Revenues will be provided at next meeting.

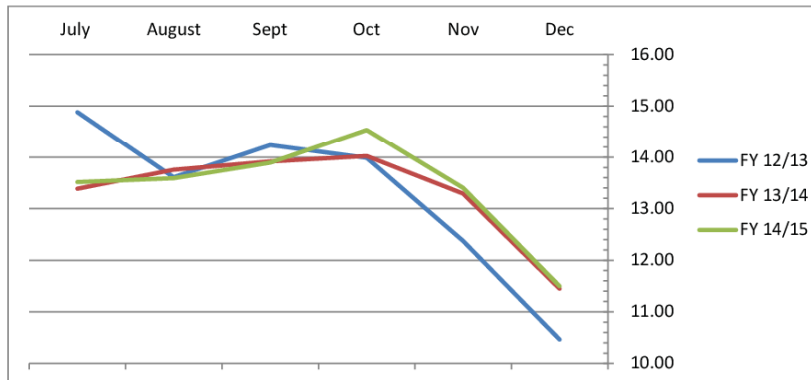
Item #6, Attachment (cont'd)

HOURS OF SERVICE



	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
FY 12/13	1,525	1,835	1,589	1,921	1,808	1,771
FY 13/14	1,706	1,733	1,588	1,753	1,542	1,608
FY 14/15	1,672	1,644	1,592	1,729	1,506	1,672

PASSENGERS PER HOUR



	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
FY 12/13	14.88	13.61	14.24	13.99	12.37	10.46
FY 13/14	13.38	13.75	13.91	14.02	13.29	11.44
FY 14/15	13.51	13.59	13.89	14.53	13.40	11.49



Item #7

January 30, 2015

MEMO TO: COASTAL EXPRESS POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FROM: AARON BONFILIO, VCTC TRANSIT PROGRAM MANAGER
SUBJECT: LIMITED INTEGRATION PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and file

BACKGROUND

Staff from both VCTC and SBCAG have reviewed the impact of the discontinuation of the Coastal Express Limited, including the impact to the current ridership, capacity constraints and identified a schedule of service for the June 15, 2015 integration start-date. To meet this demand with limited vehicle resources staff adjusted the trip times to better address the peak hour demand. Of the four trips operated by SBCAG on the Limited, two from the AM and PM were added to the over number of trips provided, and two from AM and PM were rescheduled such that they would better serve the peak demand. Staff will continually reevaluate service performance and make modifications as necessary to improve reliability, meet demand and adjust service levels as needed.

The attached table represents a “before and after” look at the level of service associated with the integration.

	Current Limited	Current VCTC	Integrated June 15
AM Northbound Arrivals (6:30 – 8)			
Goleta	2	5	6
Santa Barbara	2	3	4
PM Southbound Departures (4 – 5:30)			
Goleta	2	5	6
Santa Barbara	2	5	5



Item #8

January 30, 2015

MEMO TO: COASTAL EXPRESS POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM: AARON BONFILIO, VCTC TRANSIT PROGRAM MANAGER
VIC KAMHI, VCTC TRANSIT DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and file draft Short Range Transit Plan Fare Policy Memo; and,
- Direct staff to develop Fare Increase recommendations; and,
- Recommend the VCTC Commission consider implementation of Advertising Program.

BACKGROUND

At the prior Coastal Express Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings and Coastal Express Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings, the issue of financial sustainability of the Coastal Express service was discussed, including the review and approval of the Coastal Express Corridor Ten Year Service Plan. The Ten Year Plan recognized the increased cost to operate VCTC Intercity bus service, and provided recommendations for potential methods to reduce costs borne by the agencies supporting the service, VCTC and SBCAG. Among the recommendations presented were to increase farebox revenue through raising passenger fares, as well as implement a bus exterior advertising program to add a new revenue stream to help offset the cost increase. In addition to the guidance provided by the Ten Year Plan, VCTC is in the process of drafting a Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP).

While still in development, the draft SRTP includes discussion of recommendations regarding a system-wide VCTC Fare Policy, and future route configurations of the VCTC Intercity system. While the SRTP's draft route recommendations, including the recommendations specific to the Coastal Express, are not complete at this time, attached to this staff report is a memo provided to VCTC that presents the draft Fare Policy recommendations developed as part of the SRTP. Staff has included the draft policy recommendations as context for the PAC as it discusses the financial sustainability of the Coastal Express service and considers potential fare increases. The Commission is scheduled to review the SRTP and Fare Policy recommendations at future meetings.

Key findings of the draft VCTC Short Range Transit Plan Fare Analysis by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates Inc. found that:

- VCTC Intercity's operating costs are relatively low as compared to the selected peers (Clean Air Express, Foothill Transit, Butte Regional Transit, San Luis Obispo RTA).
- VCTC's base one-way fare of \$3.00 is within range of other peers who provide intercity transit services. Clean Air Express' \$7.00 is an exception.
- VCTC does not offer an intermediate fare product between one-way cash fares and the monthly pass. Other agencies provide a weekly pass or 10-ride fare product (VCTC does currently offer the 10% discount if using the Go Ventura Card).
- VCTC's current monthly pass multiplier is at the high end of the range amongst all peers. Particularly when comparing the Inter-county product to similar products at Butte Regional Transit and San Luis Obispo RTA (riders pay more for the monthly pass than they would if they purchased individual rides using cash fares).

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

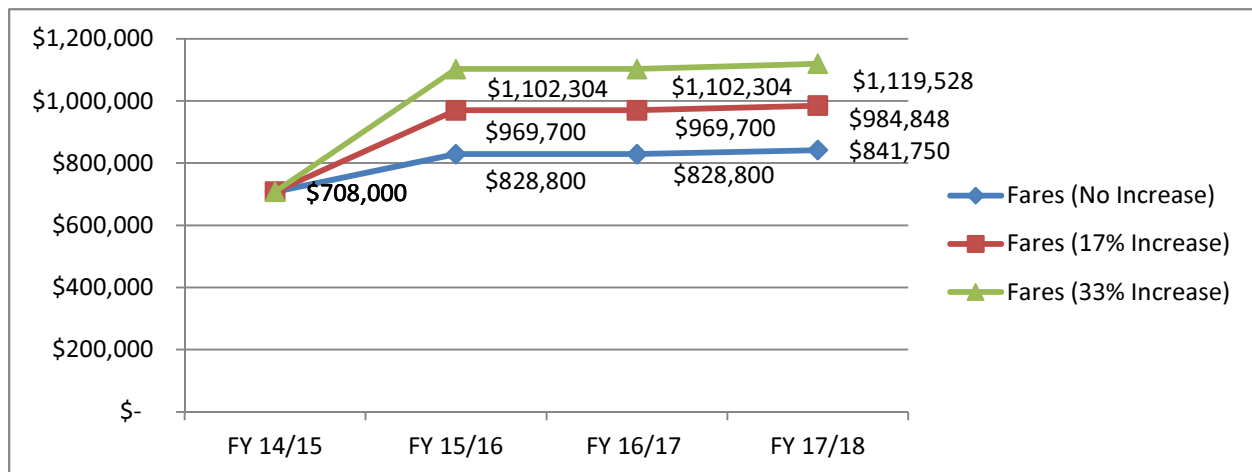
Presented below for the PAC's review are the per-agency budget projections that reflect certain fare increase assumptions; i.e. no fare increase, a 17% fare increase, and a 33% fare increase. These assumptions are based on prior discussions held at the PAC and TAC meetings as well as analysis presented in the Ten Year Plan. It should be noted that while in the next fiscal year (FY15/16) the cost of Contractor operations is expected to decline due to the new contract rate structure, and that fare revenue is projected to increase with the integration of the Limited service, a shortfall relative to the sustainability target set by SBCAG's budget for Measure A is anticipated in FY16/17. SBCAG's staff has indicated that the annual budget threshold for the Coastal service is \$800,000. While in FY 15/16, local agency subsidies will be less than that, without any other changes to the service or fares, each partner's share in FY 16/17 will climb to \$865,000.

Staff recommends the Committee review and discuss the Fare Policy guidance provided by the draft Short Range Transit Plan in light of the pending budget shortfall, and based on the consensus of the Committee direct staff to provide a fare recommendation at the next PAC meeting, which will be presented to the Commission.

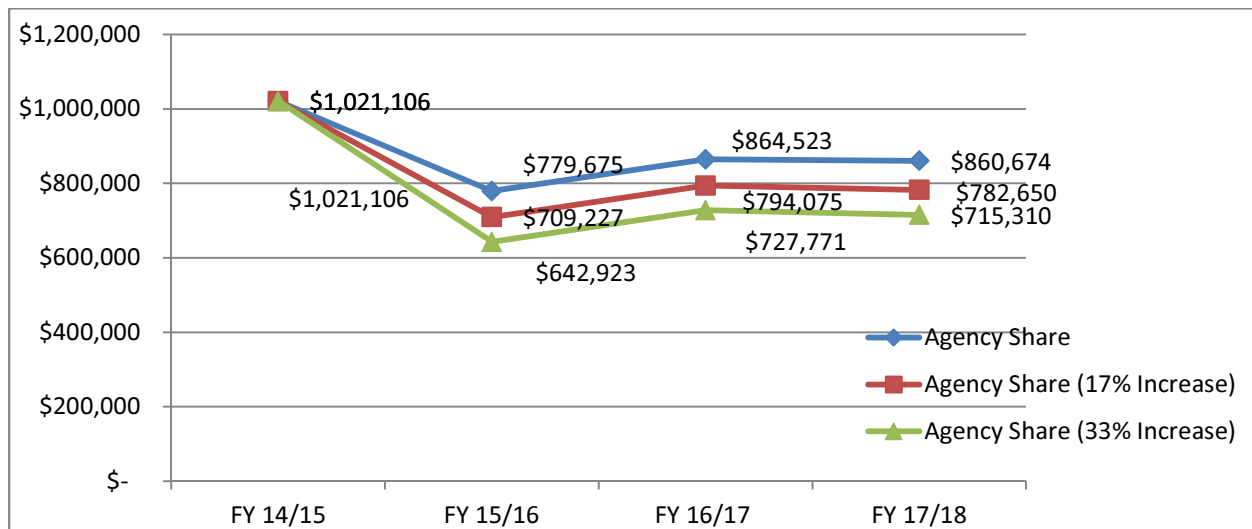
Also presented below is a brief survey of the advertising revenues for transit agencies that operate in or near or in Ventura County. While the data indicates that any program would have only limited revenue implications for the VCTC Intercity Transit Service, and the Coastal Express would be less than half of the revenues which accrue to VCTC, it still could very conservatively represent \$80,000-\$100,000 per year in revenues to the Coastal Express based on per bus revenues for GCTD and SBMTD less any costs. With an aggressive effort (and cost), that number speculatively could be doubled.

Staff also recommends the PAC recommends the Commission direct VCTC staff to present to the VCTC Commission for consideration an exterior bus advertising program which could help offset service cost increases.

FAREBOX PROJECTIONS



AGENCY SHARE



EXTERIOR BUS ADVERTISING PROGRAM

One of the potential ways to increase revenues is through the sale of exterior advertising on VCTC buses. Last year, the Coastal Limited generated \$34,060 in advertising revenue (5 buses operating about 2000 trips). Staff has contacted the four agencies adjoining or operating in Ventura County that have advertising on their transit vehicles. The summary of the four agencies advertising programs are listed below:

Los Angeles Department of Transportation/ (LADOT) earns approximately \$750,000 per year in advertising revenue for the total bus fleet (including spares and 44 Cityride vans) of 350 vehicles. LADOT has a contract with Titan for selling bus ads, and the cost of the contract is subtracted from the annual advertising revenues.

Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (SBMTD) earned approximately \$520,000 in bus advertising revenues for the Calendar Year 2014. SBMTD operates over 105 buses. The program is operated by the District staff. The SBMTD revenues include \$34,060 in external bus advertising revenue for the Coastal Limited.

Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) earned approximately \$250,000 in advertising revenues last year. The District operates approximately 50 peak hour buses daily. The program is operated by the District staff.

Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) has an advertising contractor who sells the external advertising, and provides guaranteed annual revenues of \$120k with graduated sharing plan. The fleet which is operated by the district and has ads is 71.

Staff did not include LA Metro in the analysis, although they have an extensive bus and rail advertising program, and operate buses into Thousand Oaks. The Cities of Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Simi Valley, and Moorpark transit services do not have external advertising; nor does the City of Santa Clarita Transit service.

The average revenue per bus per year is:

SBMTD	\$5000
GCTD	\$5000
LA DOT	\$2100
AVTA	\$1600 (Net, guaranteed annual revenues per bus)

The advertising revenues are strictly the revenues, they do not account for the additional vehicle maintenance costs, nor the costs of selling the advertisements and installation. At the same time, there are a number of unknowns. How scalable is the revenue earned (if the Limited doubled the number of trips, would the ad revenue increase, and how much?), if buses on freeways can command higher ad rates and more interest than those on city streets, and if the advertising were marketed more aggressively would the revenue off-set the costs? The two neighboring agencies which use firms to market their ads generate a lower revenue per bus than the two that sell their own ads, however, the types of service and the vehicle mix make it difficult to do an across the board comparison.



Item #9

January 30, 2015

MEMO TO: COASTAL EXPRESS POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM: AARON BONFILIO, VCTC

SUBJECT: MARKETING AND PROMOTION

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and file

BACKGROUND

At the last Coastal Express Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, the PAC discussed the rebranding effort underway at VCTC and the future integration of the Coastal Limited. A number of ideas were discussed and proposed by the Committee, including such items as radio buys, print media, social media, fare promotions, outreach, and earned media through press releases and events.

Since that time VCTC has engaged its marketing consultant firm, Moore and Associates and identified a number of strategic opportunities to promote and market the service. Among those include "earned media."

At the December 2014 VCTC Commission meeting, VCTC held an event to announce the new VCTC fleet delivery and rebranding. Gregg Hart of SBCAG attended and spoke at the event, alongside VCTC Chair, Peter Foy, Darren Kettle, and Jeanette Sanchez of State Assembly-member Das Williams' office. The brand new, rebranded bus was on display for the Commission and the public, and members of the press were on hand to cover the moment. This included not just local print media, such as the Ventura County Star, but also KCLU, which later aired a story on the event. This collective unveiling, signified and demonstrated the continued partnership between the two agencies to provide excellent service for the commuters of the region. An event that marked, for the first time in the twenty-year history of the VCTC VISTA bus service, the decision by VCTC to own its fleet. Later this spring articles regarding the new fleet and rebranded service are planned for national trade publications that cover public transit.

The integration of the Coastal Express Limited into the VCTC *Coastal Express* route, presents a similar moment. The combination of brand new buses and the restructuring of the route to

include trips designed and timed to meet the demand of the current Limited ridership provides for another opportunity to gain earned media surrounding the service. The “integration” is scheduled to begin June 2015. In addition to the marketing and promotional materials to inform the current riders of the change, VCTC staff has been working with VCTC’s marketing team to develop the promotional campaign to identify and attract new riders. A memo detailing the various planned marketing activities, with a \$25,000 budget, is attached, and VCTC is planning to proceed on that as part of the VCTC Transit marketing program.

In addition to traditional marketing channels such as radio, print and now social media, VCTC through its Transportation Demand Management (TDM), or Rideshare, program conducts significant employer outreach about transportation options available to the workers of Ventura County. SBCAG has a similar program in Traffic Solutions and the two staffs are working together to develop an outreach campaign that will specifically target employers in the Santa Barbara region to promote and grow the ridership of the Coastal Express.

At the next PAC meeting VCTC staff will provide a status report of completed marketing projects.

Ongoing Funding

For the current fiscal year VCTC and SBCAG will continue to employ each agency’s respective marketing programs at no additional cost to the shared cost of the route. However going forward, staff proposes that the PAC consider adopting an ongoing marketing budget line-item as part of the budget for the Coastal Express to augment VCTC’s Intercity Bus Service Marketing Budget. Focused efforts that offer the proper scale to reach the small universe of potential customers could be pursued for an estimated \$50,000 in FY15/16. This detail, if agreeable to the PAC, will be presented at the next meeting, along with the draft budget for fiscal year 2015-2016.



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memo

to:	Vic Kamhi, Bus Transit Director	from:	Jim Moore
re:	Coastal Express Relaunch Marketing Plan	date:	January 30, 2015

The purpose of this memo is to present Moore & Associates' marketing recommendations to support the relaunch of the Coastal Express service.

The relaunch of the Coastal Express service, a joint service of VCTC and SBCAG, will coincide with the elimination of the Coastal Express Limited, which was implemented to mitigate congestion along the U.S. 101 corridor during highway construction.

The three primary goals of the proposed marketing activities are:

- Continue to promote the Coastal Express as an attractive travel alternative linking Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.
- Ensure Coastal Express Limited customers are informed regarding the pending service changes so as to retain their patronage.
- Expand the Coastal Express customer base, translating to increased ridership and fare revenue.

The marketing tactics we have identified for the Coastal Express relaunch include.

1. Update, produce, and distribute the Coastal Express service brochure.
2. Provide web content for VCTC, SBCAG, Traffic Solutions, and Santa Barbara MTD usage.
3. Develop a joint "service information" letter to Coastal Express and Coastal Express Limited riders.
4. Develop a targeted mailer for households in proximity to the new RiverPark bus stop.
5. Provide a seat drop during the final week of Coastal Express Limited operation.
 - a. Alternative: Prepare/distribute a letter welcoming Coastal Express Limited customers to the Coastal Express.

Item #9, Attachment (cont'd)

6. Design and place print advertisements (three insertions) in the *Ventura County Star* and *Santa Barbara News Press*.
7. Prepare social media content.
8. Place “Transit Ambassadors” at high activity boarding locations on the first service day.
9. Revise bus stop signage to reflect service merger (including info-posts as warranted).
10. Produce Coastal Express-branded post-it notes.
11. Produce a 90-second informational video for placement on agency as well as social media sites.
12. Prepare and distribute a media release (seven calendar days) prior to service launch.
13. Secure media opportunities for VCTC and SBCAG representatives on media outlets in Ventura County and southern Santa Barbara County.
14. Prepare a targeted mailer to top employers (ETCs/TDM representatives) along the combined Coastal Express route alignment.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our marketing recommendations to support the relaunch of the Coastal Express service.



Item #10

January 30, 2015

MEMO TO: COASTAL EXPRESS POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM: VIC KAMHI, VCTC TRANSIT DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: 2015 MEETING SCHEDULE

RECOMMENDATION:

- That the Committee agree to meet quarterly at Carpinteria City Hall in the Council Chamber Room. VCTC Staff proposes meetings during the second or third week of the following months and will coordinate final dates/times with Committee Members staff:

March
June
September
December