



TRANSFORMING TRANSPORTATION IN VENTURA COUNTY

Ventura County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

DRAFT

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Ventura County Transportation Commission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is the first of its kind in Ventura County. Ventura County residents and businesses both want to maintain the high quality of life that everyone values. They have recognized that long-term planning is essential to maintaining this quality of life in the face of economic, demographic and social changes that are expected to occur. This is particularly the case with transportation. The focus needs to be not only on day-to-day issues such as maintenance of streets and bus service schedules but on building the infrastructure and systems that are needed to keep people moving and the economy healthy. The Ventura County Transportation Commission, communities, residents and other key stakeholders have collaborated to create a transportation vision for Ventura County and identify ways of achieving this vision within constrained resources.

The CTP is a long range policy document, built from community-based, local priorities and community-expressed need to enhance regional connections. It is aimed at ensuring mobility and enhancing the quality of life for all Ventura County residents. The CTP also fully examines various funding strategies and options from the federal, state, regional and local levels. It is intended to provide a framework for future community-based planning and collaboration and inform Ventura County's long range transportation decisions.

Planning and Outreach Processes

To develop the foundation of the Plan based on local priorities, VCTC designed and conducted an extensive public outreach and participation program. This outreach program was coordinated with outreach being conducted for the concurrent Regional Transit Study and the VCTC's Marketing and Branding initiatives. As detailed in this report, it involved:

- Interviews with local policy makers
- An oversight Committee of Commissioners
- A Regional Advisory Council to provide advice from a regional, interdisciplinary perspective
- Eight Local Advisory Groups to provide guidance on local community needs
- Community presentations to many and varied audiences
- A project website, various survey instruments and voter polling

- Print media outreach

A Shared Vision for the Future – Preserving Quality of Life in Ventura County

Through this engagement process, a clear vision has developed:

Preserve and enhance the special quality of life enjoyed in Ventura County through a transportation system that supports this overarching vision. This vision is:

A connected and integrated transportation system that provides convenient, safe and accessible options. This system is inclusive of all community members and needs, balancing all interests. It is intended to be built from a sustainable plan that reflects local priorities.

Priorities Expressed by the Public

Public Outreach and Consultation

Similarly, during the public outreach process, community members of all areas of the county and interests consistently and frequently prioritized maintaining local streets and roads as a major challenge to the future of the transportation system. Commuters, transit riders, bicyclists and pedestrians all have vested interests in and are directly impacted by the safety and functionality of streets and roads.

Almost all community members frequently travel to neighboring communities and counties for employment, commerce, services, education or recreation, requiring connectivity between as well as within communities. Many community members expressed frustration at the lack of options for making such connections. The overarching challenge for Ventura County will be to improve countywide connectivity of the transportation system and community members' overall mobility across all modes of travel, all while reducing greenhouse gases.

Public Opinion Research

Public opinion research conducted by VCTC from 2008-2011 among registered voters, businesses, and general community members indicated that, while transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements were important, maintaining roads and filling potholes were a higher priority. However, voters surveyed had a very favorable response to expanding transit service to seniors and disabled persons and cleaning up road runoff that pollutes beaches. Many respondents supported changes that would improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of transit services in Ventura County, with a focus on uniform standards for route information, service frequency and connections.

State of the System

To inform development of the shared vision and priorities for the transportation system in Ventura County, VCTC compiled and shared a range of data and information that explain the state of the system. Key findings guiding plan development include:

- Land use policies acknowledge growth and focus it within the incorporated cities and the resulting open spaces between communities can create a challenge for transportation.
- The dominant mode of travel is by car, and travel is predominately inter-city, approximately 80 % of work trips, rather than inter-county, approximately 20% of work trips.
- Public transit is provided by multiple operators with differing service levels creating a challenge for riders.
- Bike and pedestrian systems are developed within cities but have limited connections to other cities.

Challenges for the Future

- Vehicle travel will increase from 18 million annual miles today to nearly 22 million miles by 2035.
- Roads will be in dire need of repair with a \$1.3 billion shortfall projected over the next 30 years.
- Strong land use policies that retain open space between cities have created challenges to providing transit and cycling choices.
- Environmental issues such as greenhouse gasses, air quality, treating urban runoff and preserving wildlife corridors will be more in the forefront, requiring additional resources be devoted to these purposes.
- Fuel prices and vehicle fuel efficiency continue rising but federal and state fuel tax has remained flat so revenues are insufficient to maintain local streets, state highways or increase capacity on the freeway corridor.
- Efficient truck and rail freight movement is critical to the health of the Port of Hueneme/Oxnard Harbor District, local manufacturing, the logistics industries and Ventura County agribusiness but urban surrounds prove challenging.

Challenges in Transportation Finance

VCTC administers State and federal funds for transportation improvements throughout the County by facilitating prioritization of transportation improvements among its member agencies: the cities and the County. Nearly half of available funds are dedicated to transit and presents a funding scenario that is unbalanced, leaving significant shortfalls in most areas. Ventura County relies primarily on State and federal funds, yet those supplies continue to have diminished buying power as prices rise. Additionally, the County lacks a local source of revenues and has virtually no self-investment in transportation (a local-option sales tax is most common in California). This lack of local revenues compounds financial challenges for the County in two critical ways. First, the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy for Southern California identifies 70% of the funds for transportation improvements in the six-county region will be from local sources, but Ventura County is the only county without a local source. Second, many federal funding programs require that local agencies provide a portion of funding for projects from local revenues, or a “local match.”

Solutions for the Future

- A growing shortfall of funds for **local streets and roads** will shift efforts from maintaining existing conditions to taking a “triage” approach to maintaining only those that are most critical. Supplemental revenues are needed to keep roads in good condition, and develop more “complete streets” that support bicycle, transit and pedestrian users and even add lanes on some of the busiest city streets.
- Implementing the Regional Transit Study recommendations will create a more customer-focused **transit** system through sub-regional consolidation and coordination of services with the long term goal of further rationalization and consolidation of services.
- Existing developer fees and reciprocal traffic mitigation fees for **arterials** are currently inadequate and the gap will grow. Supplemental revenues could support efforts to meet long-term capacity needs, enhance the connectivity, improve safety, and leverage other funding sources.
- While all **highways and freeways** in Ventura County are important, US 101 and State Route (SR) 23 and 118 experience the greatest pressures with peak period capacity. Timing and funding amounts for improving US 101 and SR 118 will largely be determined by availability of adequate State and federal transportation funds. Supplemental revenues could accelerate delivery of priority projects.

- Connecting existing **bicycle** networks between cities through the unincorporated areas on a regional scale would further strengthen these networks' usefulness, and supplemental revenue could support leveraging outside funds.
- Programs and projects to maintain and improve walkability and access in communities will see increased attention. **Pedestrian** amenities will be important to maintaining the health and vitality of communities and residents. Walkable communities will decrease the need to drive and provide safe access to transit and local schools.
- **Environmental and mitigation programs** could exceed project-specific mitigation of localized environmental impacts by enhancing natural environments, providing new amenities in urban areas, and encouraging transportation-supportive land use and development.
- Sustaining **freight movement** operations and transportation connections while balancing impacts on local communities in Ventura County is critical to the local and regional economies and quality of life.

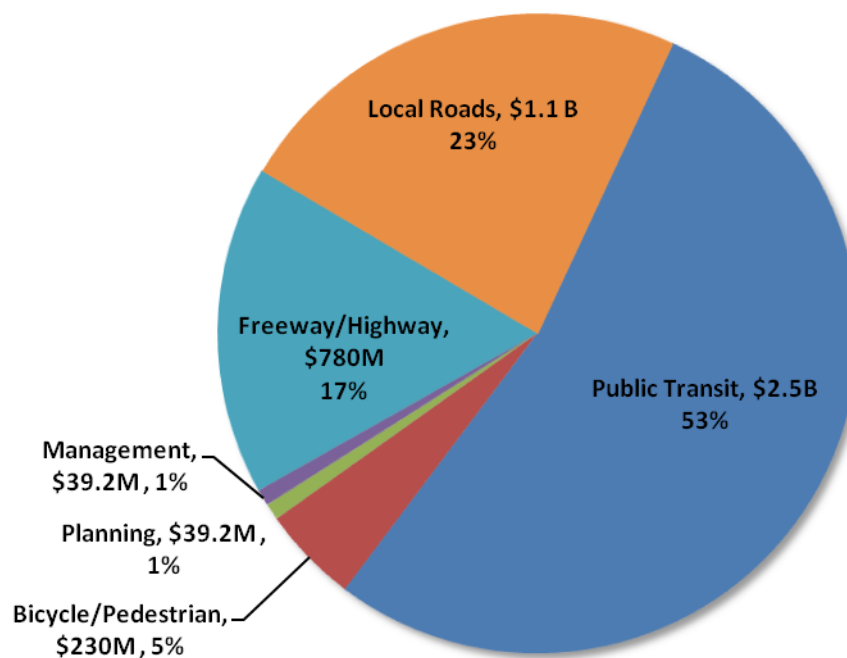
Revenue Scenarios

Based on these economic forecasts, VCTC developed a set of 30-year revenue forecasts across its State and federal revenue sources, which help to measure how these revenues might fluctuate depending upon the prevailing economic conditions. After developing and considering three, 30-year forecasts (high, medium and low), VCTC adopted the medium scenario as its revenue forecast on the grounds that the State and federal governments are unlikely to provide a major funding infusion given their own fiscal challenges, but will also be reluctant to significantly cut funding given the tremendous need.

REVENUES IN 5 YEAR INCREMENTS –SCENARIOS							
Dollars in Millions							
	13/14 - 17/18	18/19 - 22/23	23/24 - 27/28	28/29 - 32/33	33/34 - 37/38	38/39 - 42/43	30-Year Total
LOW SCENARIO	\$ 560.3	\$ 614.2	\$ 657.9	\$ 706.2	\$ 770.4	\$ 855.5	\$ 4,164.4
MEDIUM SCENARIO	\$ 767.6	\$ 806.8	\$ 860.8	\$ 959.5	\$ 1,076.5	\$ 1,214.8	\$ 5,685.9
HIGH SCENARIO	\$ 917.1	\$ 1,004.7	\$ 1,101.3	\$ 1,232.3	\$ 1,384.8	\$ 1,562.0	\$ 7,202.3

Applying the Medium Revenue Forecast, and then excluding revenues controlled by Caltrans, the following chart illustrates the funds available by use category. Over the next thirty years, the largest single share of the County’s transportation funds are dedicated for public transit and state and federal law are explicit that they cannot be used for other purposes.

Expenditure Categories



Summary of Revenue and Sources and Expenditures

- Over the next 10 years there will be a total \$438 million short fall of funds in Ventura County to maintain existing **roads, streets and arterials** in their existing condition (not including new roads). In 30 years, there will be a \$2.4 billion need, but only \$1.1 billion is available, leaving a \$1.3 billion shortfall.
- **Transit's** anticipated \$2.50 billion over the next thirty years (51% of all revenues) will be applied to a more coordinated and consolidated effort to address customer needs, which are currently under study at both the state and local levels.
- In 30 years there will be \$780 million for all of Ventura County's **highways and freeways**, but a nearly \$450 million shortfall exists for the two top priority projects-- US Route 101 widening and the remainder of the SR 118 widening. This number assumes a change in VCTC policy, to focus federal funds on highways and freeways.
- The \$258.3 million 30-year need to construct proposed **bicycle** lanes throughout the County is short \$28.3 million, which does not create a countywide network or include annual maintenance costs.

Bridging the Gap: Analysis of Funding Strategies

VCTC analyzed several strategies to bolster revenue for transportation infrastructure improvements, maintenance and capacity, and, to address a \$3 billion transportation systemwide shortfall over the next 30 years.

- A \$ 0.10 per gallon **gas tax** would be required to be added to gasoline sales in Ventura County to achieve funding that approaches the funding gap. However, revenues will decrease with improved fuel efficiencies and increased use of alternative fuels, and the cost of all vehicle trips will increase. This tax requires a two-thirds majority approval by the County's voters.
- **Tolling/express lanes** requires users to pay a fee for access to a faster, congestion-free lane or highway (set by time of day or congestion level), but revenues are generally restricted to the specific corridor or facility tolled. U.S. 101 is the only potential freeway corridor with adequate demand to support this concept, pending additional analysis to determine the viability.
- **Vehicle registration fees** in Ventura County could provide a flexible and stable source of funds for transportation projects, but the projected revenues is approximately \$7.5 million annually, or \$225 million over 30 years, which do not

significantly close the funding gap. This fee requires a two-thirds majority approval by the County's voters.

- A **countywide sales tax measure** would add one half cent to the sales tax with revenues dedicated to transportation in Ventura County. Of the strategies listed above, this is the only strategy that comes significantly close to bridging the funding gap (\$2.1 billion over the next 30 years). Additionally, the funds provide the most secure and flexible revenue stream for transportation projects, could be used flexibly across a variety of projects, leverage higher amounts of federal funds, and deliver many large projects such highway widening and transit facilities sooner. This tax requires a two-thirds majority approval by the County's voters.

To verify estimated revenues of a countywide half-cent sales tax increase, the California Lutheran University's (CLU) Center for Economic Research and Forecasting (CERF) built a long run economic forecast model for Ventura County to the year 2040, by analyzing long range trends including birth rates, civilian labor force participation, and productivity, and more. Based on these projections, CERF calculated the revenue generated from a one half-cent sales tax rate over 30 years would generate approximately \$2.1 billion in real dollars (excluding inflation).

Alternate Funding Strategy Feasibility

Today, the current economic climate adds complexity to a discussion of new taxes, but a thorough analysis assists in understanding current and future opportunities and information needs. To test the feasibility of a sales tax measure or any strategy that requires voter approval, the public participation program included voter research via a telephone survey of six hundred high propensity voters in Ventura County in September 2011. Following is a summary of key findings.

- The economy was the top issue for voters by a significant margin (high priority = 86%), but road maintenance also ranked highly (68% = high).
- Voters' sense of affordability in increasing the local sales tax by ½ cent for 30 years fell from 2008 (68%) to 2011 (59%).
- Voters' overall trust in government has declined. While originally low in 2008, voters' confidence in local elected leaders to spend revenues from a new countywide ½ cent sales tax programs efficiently, fell from 2008 (39%) to 2011 (30%).

- Satisfaction with local government agencies generally fell from 2008 to 2011, and overall awareness of VCTC has remained flat at a low level.
- Support for alternatives including a gas tax, a sales tax, or a vehicle license fee, either of which requires a two-thirds majority approval, all remained inadequately low, even when focused only on local streets and roads.

At this point in time, despite the extensive public outreach undertaken educating the public on transportation issues, voter research suggests that Ventura County voters' level of support does not meet the two-thirds threshold for approving new tax measures for transportation funding on the November 2012 ballot.

Plan Implementation

The following outcomes and associated actions are developed from the input of Commissioners and broad public participation and will guide the region in prioritizing transportation investments, positioning to leverage funding opportunities, and providing local communities with needed resources to maintain quality of life and improve mobility.

- **Outcome 1: Status Quo.** Growing funding constraints require greater accountability in ensuring that each dollar invested in transportation brings about the greatest possible return. Actions include analyzing congestion and delay projections on the highway/freeway network, re-evaluating highway improvement priorities, optimizing public transit service and leveraging specific funding sources that foster greater bicycling and pedestrian travel for daily transportation.
- **Outcome 2: Community Connections.** Improving connections within and between communities is a top priority. Actions include determining corridor-based investments that provide the best return, examining connections between cities and destinations, and continuing stakeholder engagement in regional planning.
- **Outcome 3: Public Awareness:** The public participation program highlighted the general public's lack of awareness of the cost and impact of transportation in their daily lives, as well as their desire to continue public engagement for transportation planning. Actions include continuing outreach and education efforts; and periodically monitoring voter awareness and attitudes concerning funding strategies and information needs.
- **Outcome 4: Transit:** Transit is a priority. Ventura County residents responded favorably to the development of a robust transit system that offered alternatives to the automobile. Actions include implementing the Commission adopted Regional

Transit Study, and developing a needs and performance based incentive program for a more integrated transit system that rewards services for improving connections, frequency or capacity.

The Path Forward

More than ever before, people within the Ventura County region have a shared understanding of the transportation future that they envision and desire, the challenges that need to be addressed, and the opportunities and strategies that could assist the region in achieving the vision. VCTC will continue to build on the shared regional vision by providing leadership in charting the path forward with increased levels of engagement of the cities, the County, and the broader community in planning for the future of the system and prioritizing use of existing resources to maximize the return on investment. VCTC must operate within a tightly constrained budget and significant shortfalls in funding for nearly all areas of transportation as described in this plan. Additionally, VCTC must continue to position and prepare the region to consider alternative funding strategies and to leverage opportunities for special federal and State funding should those opportunities arise.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Ventura County region is envisioning and planning for its future in new ways and with heightened awareness of the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead. Changes to the economy, social norms, growth patterns, demographics and many other aspects of life and society affect people's daily lives. Some changes have immediate effects, other changes occur more gradually over many years. Ventura County residents and businesses are placing a high priority on the need for long-range planning. Long-term changes require sustained, long-term planning and solutions that prepare individuals and communities to manage these changes according to their priorities and vision for the future. This is particularly true in the case of transportation

planning, where community-driven planning and solutions are critical to prioritizing investments in all aspects of the transportation system. For the first time, the Ventura County Transportation Commission, communities, residents, the business community and other key stakeholders have collaborated to create a transportation vision for Ventura County and identify ways of achieving this vision within constrained resources. This is the new paradigm for shaping the future of Ventura County's transportation system and preserving its unique quality of life.

For the first time, the Ventura County Transportation Commission, communities, residents, the business community and other key stakeholders have collaborated to create a transportation vision for Ventura County

Purpose of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan

After reviewing its transportation planning efforts, the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) found a consensus among local leaders that VCTC should seek out the community's priorities, which should serve as the basis for its first long range Comprehensive Transportation Plan (the Plan) for Ventura County. The Plan is a long range policy document, built from community-based, local priorities and community-expressed need to enhance regional connections. It is aimed at supporting and enhancing the quality of life for all Ventura County residents. The Plan also fully examines various funding strategies and options from the federal, state, regional and local levels.

While accomplishing a new, more detailed level of planning for quality of life and the County's transportation future, the Plan also provides a path forward for continued community-based planning, coordination, collaboration and implementation. As

challenges, opportunities, and priorities continue to evolve—particularly related to the economic outlook—ongoing planning will be critical to targeting and serving the greatest needs and leveraging resources. Additionally, the Plan informs Ventura County’s voice and position in the policy environment at the regional, state and federal levels, particularly related to the County’s long term transportation projects and program priorities.

Planning and Outreach Processes

VCTC organized the Plan development process into three key phases:

- I. Developing a Shared Vision and Understanding of Challenges
- II. Defining Strategies and Priorities
- III. Creating and Delivering the Plan

The overall goal of the public outreach and participation program focused on involving the public in development of a plan that balances local transportation and quality of life priorities

To develop the foundation of the Plan based on local priorities, VCTC designed and conducted an extensive public outreach and participation program within these phases that endeavored to engage the greatest possible range of stakeholders and backgrounds. To maximize resources and leverage efforts, VCTC closely coordinated outreach efforts for the Plan with stakeholder and public consultation processes being conducted as part of VCTC’s Regional Transit Study and the agency’s Marketing and Branding initiatives.

The overall goal of the public outreach and participation program focused on involving the public in development of a plan that balances local transportation and quality of life priorities among Ventura County’s communities, and provides an effective roadmap for improving regional connections and enhancing the overall transportation system. More specifically, the program gathered public input on transportation priorities and levels of support for alternate forms of transportation funding. The approach involved the following outreach strategies that are overarching and phase-specific:

Overarching Outreach Strategies

- Creating a broad-based approach that addresses interests that have a strong inter-relationship with transportation, including mobility, sustainability, health, environment and open space
- Developing an inclusive and expansive stakeholder base of traditional and non-traditional interests to involve in the process

- Engaging key community leaders and interest groups early and regularly in the process
- Applying a range of targeted communications activities that meet stakeholders' varying needs and ways of accessing information

Phase I: Developing a Shared Vision and Understanding of Challenges

- Improving stakeholders' understanding of the interconnectedness of the region's transportation system and policy directions
- Communicating a clear definition of the problem – the projections of future demand for transportation services and infrastructure weighed against current funding strategies and resources
- Facilitating and documenting the wide range of stakeholders' perspectives, interests and needs related to the County's future and the transportation system
- Defining a community-based, shared vision for the future of the County's transportation system that reflects and respects the unique diversity of interests and needs

Phase II: Defining Strategies and Priorities

- Identifying stakeholders' priorities for transportation improvements at the local levels, and for regional connectivity
- Testing levels of support and acceptance of alternate funding strategies
- Developing a funding strategy for the Plan that is balanced, feasible, sustainable, community-supported, and linked to projected growth and trends



VCTC Executive Director Darren Kettle presented to community members at the Community Action Forum hosted by CAUSE in July 2011.

Phase III: Creating and Delivering the Plan

- Outlining an implementation approach based on the limited available resources for advancing strategies and achieving the vision

- Confirming public acceptance for an implementation plan based on limited available resources

As part of the planning process, VCTC developed an extensive outreach database of key stakeholder groups as follows:

- VCTC Commissioners
- Elected officials
- Executive staff from local jurisdictions and partner agencies
- Local transit providers
- Transportation advocates: automobile, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, highway, roads, accessibility and rideshare
- Active transportation advocates
- Businesses and large employers
- Chambers of commerce and small/local business organizations
- Neighborhood organizations
- Environment and natural resource advocates
- Open space advocates
- Non-profit and social service agencies

VCTC implemented a range of outreach activities and tools tailored to the information needs and participation levels of each stakeholder group, as follows:

- **Ad Hoc Steering Committee:** Convened at key points in the process, this Commissioner-level Committee provided guidance to VCTC staff and consultants
 - Commissioner Steve Bennett, Supervisor, District 1, County of Ventura
 - Commissioner Bill Fulton, Councilperson, City of Ventura
 - Commissioner Dennis Gillette, Councilperson, City of Thousand Oaks
 - Commissioner Kathy Long, Supervisor, District 3, County of Ventura

- Commissioner Dean Maulhardt, Councilperson, City of Oxnard
- Commissioner Keith Millhouse, Councilperson, City of Moorpark
- Commissioner Patti Walker, Councilperson, City of Fillmore
- **Community Leader Interviews:** Early, targeted outreach to community leaders in the form of face-to-face and small group meetings initiated development of the regional vision, identified initial issues and needs of key stakeholder groups, and informed refinement of the outreach approach.
- **Local Advisory Groups:** Convened at three points in the process, a total of 8 Local Advisory Groups organized by local community clusters served as a primary outreach gateway to local communities and interest groups and provided guidance in development of the Plan to address local communities' needs. These were located in:
 - Camarillo
 - Conejo Valley
 - Moorpark
 - Ojai Valley
 - Oxnard/Port Hueneme
 - Santa Clara River Valley
 - Simi Valley
 - Ventura
- **Regional Advisory Group:** To provide a countywide perspective and guidance in plan development, the Regional Advisory Group assisted in shaping a regional vision and priorities based on the collective input from local communities. Membership represented major interests in the County, including business leaders, community-based organizations, agencies and elected officials. A more detailed listing is included in the Appendix.
- **Community Presentations:** VCTC staff provided over 45 presentations to community organizations, environmental groups and human services organizations about the purpose of the process, the emerging vision, and how to be involved in the process.



Local Advisory Groups served as a primary outreach gateway to local communities and interest groups.

- **Project Website:** The website provided dual functionality as a communication hub for VCTC's multiple interconnected planning and communication efforts, and also as the public information portal for engaged stakeholders.
- **Surveys:** Individual Surveys were aimed at gathering opinion from the general public, the business community and voters.
- **Media Outreach:** Activities included writing and placing op-eds and guest columns in local media, convening editorial boards and distributing press releases to generate earned media that supported broader community awareness of the Plan and encouraged expanded involvement.

Plan Overview

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan is explained and organized across the following chapters:

- A Shared Vision for the Future
- Public Awareness and Opinions of Transportation
- State of the System
- Challenges for the Future
- Transforming Transit
- Solutions for the Ventura County Region
- Financial Plan, Scenarios and Realities
- Bridging the Gap: Analysis of Funding Strategies
- Alternative Funding Strategy Feasibility
- Plan Implementation

CHAPTER 2: A SHARED VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Preserving Quality of Life

Through the extensive outreach and planning process for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, a shared vision emerged for the future of the Ventura County region and the transportation system. The fundamental concept expressed was that, preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life enjoyed by residents, businesses and visitors is paramount; the transportation system must support this overarching vision. As such, during the process stakeholders crafted the following elements of their shared vision for the transportation system.

Preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life enjoyed by residents, businesses and visitors is paramount; the transportation system must support this overarching vision.

A Connected and Integrated Transportation System. Driving, taking transit, bicycling and walking will be easier thanks to a more connected transportation system in Ventura County. The system will also improve connections between neighborhoods, cities, and counties, and important places like jobs, schools and businesses. Better planning between transportation, land use, housing, environmental and economics will improve these connections.

Convenient and Accessible Options.

Many options that are easy to use at local and regional levels will help to improve connectivity. Improving local streets, roads, highways and rail will expand and enhance their use for bus, bicycle, pedestrian, train, rideshare, car share, and future technology options, creating more choices for traveling locally and beyond.



Inclusive of All Community Members and Needs. The transportation system will be focused on meeting community members' basic needs. Youth will have access to schools and recreation services. Adults and commuters will have access to jobs and shopping. Senior citizens will have access to medical and social services.

Safe. Travel will be safer in Ventura County. Traffic and congestion levels will be better managed to keep people moving smoothly. Better road conditions and transit stops will improve protections between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Emergency response needs will be managed at neighborhood, city and county levels.

Balances All Interests. Everyone has vested interests in the transportation system. Businesses will have good access for customers, employees, deliveries, and tourists. Communities and cities will have safe and high quality streets and connections to neighboring areas. Human service providers will have good access for clients, schools will have safety zones, and public safety will effectively respond to emergencies on safe roads.

Built from a Sustainable Plan. Achieving Ventura County's shared vision requires creating and acting on a sustainable plan that is affordable, balanced, strategic, and community-supported. The plan provides short and long term strategies that are feasible and creative, all of which are tailored to the region's uniqueness and limited funding resources.



Regional and Local Priorities

Underpinning the shared vision for Ventura County are priorities for local communities and the region as a whole. VCTC engaged the widest possible range of stakeholders to develop a community-based advisory structure that would provide regional and localized perspectives. Key stakeholders included VCTC Commissioners, additional elected officials, staff from local jurisdictions and partner agencies, local transit providers, transportation advocates, businesses and large employers, non-profit and social service agencies, and environment and natural resource advocates

During the planning process, Local Advisory Groups organized by local community clusters and interest groups provided primary guidance in identifying priorities for addressing local communities' needs. A Regional Advisory Group provided a countywide perspective and guidance in plan development based on the collective input from local communities. A more detailed listing is included in the Appendix.

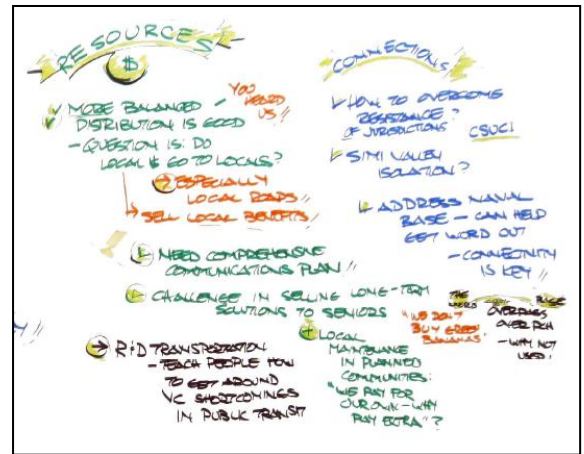
VCTC's planning team engaged these stakeholders through a balanced approach of (a.) providing the latest, in-depth data about the state of the transportation system, challenges, opportunities, and funding strategies; and (b.) facilitating discussion regarding stakeholders'

perspectives about their vision for the future of the system, and their levels of support for alternative funding strategies. Ultimately, combined with the broader range of public participation activities and outcomes, this Plan is based on stakeholders' shared vision for the future, and from local and regional priorities.

Following are concise summaries of priorities for each community-based Local Advisory Group (listed alphabetically), and for the Regional Advisory Group.

Camarillo

- Improving intermodal connectivity
- Implementing sustainable and creative solutions
- Expanding availability of efficient and flexible transportation options
- Improving the safety of the transportation system
- Supporting economic development and tourism



Portion of a wallgraphic recording of discussion points from the Camarillo Local Advisory Group

Conejo Valley

- Addressing local traffic congestion
- Expanding transit services for schools
- Preserving local community character
- Integrating community planning efforts
- Increasing public awareness of the transportation system and options

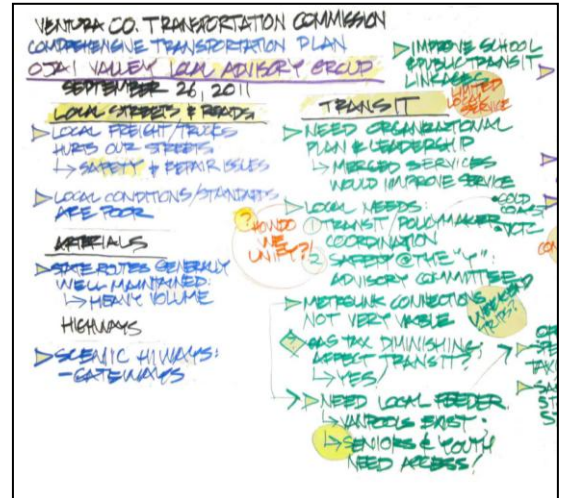
Moorpark

- Expanding the bicycle network and safety
- Improving local roads for all users
- Balancing expansion of intercity connections with preserving rural character

- Focusing on critical and lifeline connections (i.e., seniors and medical, youth and schools)
- Improving access to public information and communications
- Access to Moorpark College

Ojai Valley

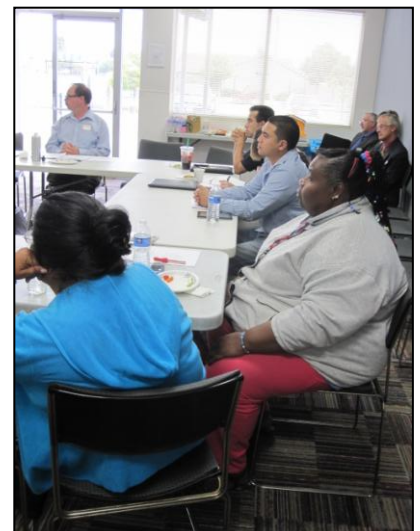
- Developing “complete streets” that balance auto, bicycle and pedestrian needs and interests
- Improving the safety of the transportation system
- Expanding intercity connections
- Focusing on small scale, localized transit services
- Providing access to basic services for youth and senior citizens
- Improving interagency coordination



Portion of a wallgraphic recording of discussion points from the Ojai Local Advisory Group

Oxnard /Port Hueneme

- Expanding the flexibility of the transportation system
- Improving the safety of roads and transit
- Focusing on workforce mobility needs
- Addressing local traffic congestion
- Increasing public awareness of the transportation system and options
- Promoting innovative partnerships and incentives for implementation
- Access to Oxnard College



Transit users, public safety officials, business representatives and others participated in the Oxnard/Port Hueneme Local Advisory Group.

Santa Clara River Valley

- Improving the safety of State Route 126 and local roads
- Expanding intercity transit connections
- Integrating community planning efforts
- Preserving local community character
- Improving emergency response and public safety access
- Access to Ventura College

Simi Valley

- Improving the efficiency of the transportation system
 - Addressing safety needs at bottlenecks and intersections
 - Increasing public awareness of the transportation system and options
 - Providing transit-based access to basic services for youth and senior citizens
 - Expanding the bicycle network
- 

Ventura

- Improving intermodal connectivity
- Expanding transit capacity and service frequency
- Improving bicycle infrastructure
- Integrating community planning efforts



Portion of a wallgraphic recording of discussion points from the Ventura Local Advisory Group

Regional Advisory Group

- Developing a strategic, focused, balanced and targeted plan
- Studying new funding strategies such as shared inter-regional transit services and updated developer impact fees

- Restructuring transit to be more customer-focused and tailored to each community's needs
- Linking transportation and broader regional planning and growth
- Providing affordable options for all community members
- Enhancing the safety of the system for all users



Regional Advisory Group members included business, social equity, housing, environment, and transportation advocate representatives

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND OPINIONS OF TRANSPORTATION

To inform and complement the outreach and planning process for developing the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, VCTC also conducted public awareness and opinion research. Collectively, the research provides a perspective of Ventura County residents' opinions, attitudes and priorities toward transportation-related needs, issues and opportunities.

Public Opinion Research

This chapter summarizes key findings from two surveys conducted in recent years.

- **Business Survey (October 2010).** VCTC conducted a survey of Ventura County businesses with 236 respondents through online (156) and mailed paper (80) surveys. The purpose of the survey was to identify transportation priorities specific to businesses' unique needs.
- **Community Survey (November 2010).** VCTC conducted a survey of 1,266 community members in Ventura County primarily through a mailed paper survey (80% of respondents) and online survey (20%). The purpose of the survey was to understand community members' awareness of the county's transportation services, VCTC, and its roles in the county.

The full questionnaires are available in the Appendix.

Priority Issues

In the Community Survey, the transportation-focused issues of "traffic congestion" and "gas prices" ranked as relatively low priorities.

Issue (Community Survey, 2010)	Choice		
	First	Second	Third
Crime	35.5%	18.4%	18.3%
Economy	33.5%	28.6%	14.3%
Education	16.0%	21.2%	16.6%

Environmental issues	6.8%	10.5%	16.9%
Gas prices	2.8%	8.7%	11.4%
Traffic congestion	5.4%	12.6%	22.5%

In the Business Survey, respondents indicated their top three transportation issues. Respondents strongly indicated that access to business facilities for customers and employees (due to traffic congestion) are top issues. These issues also ranked highly as second and third issues. A range of other issues also ranked as frequent second and third choices including businesses accessing their customers, and perceptions of difficulty in accessing businesses due to traffic congestion and lack of alternatives.

Transportation Issue (Business Survey, 2010)	Choice (number of responses)		
	First	Second	Third
Ability of our customers to get to our business	69	25	20
Ability of our business to get to our customers	24	20	17
Ability of our employees to get to work due to traffic congestion	59	39	23
Ability of our business to attract employees due to lack of affordable transportation options	13	20	19
Ability to ship products and supplies on time	10	16	9
Ability to receive products and supplies on time	9	14	18
Ability to move agricultural products to their destinations	3	2	2
Lack of transportation to agricultural workplaces (fields, distribution sites)	1	1	1
Ability to get workers to their worksites due lack of alternatives to single-occupant cars	13	23	17
Perception of Ventura County that a Ventura County workplace is hard to get to because of lack of transportation options such as public transportation	17	18	25

Perception of Ventura County that a Ventura County workplace is hard to get to because of traffic congestion	7	24	22
Other	9	10	15

Potential Solutions for Transportation

In the Community Survey, respondents indicated the top three transportation solutions that VCTC should focus on. Developing long range plans for new solutions, improving local roads and streets, and adding bus service all ranked among top choices.

Transportation Solutions for VCTC Focus (Community Survey, 2010)	Choice		
	First	Second	Third
Develop long-range plans to identify new transportation solutions	31.9%	14.7%	18.7%
Add more Metrolink rail service	9.1%	13.6%	11.5%
Widen local roadways	8.0%	7.8%	7.6%
Add more bus service	10.3%	15.0%	9.3%
Develop countywide vanpool program	2.2%	4.4%	5.3%
Build carpool lanes on freeways	3.6%	8.4%	6.7%
Local roads and streets/potholes	19.8%	14.9%	11.9%
Better connecting bus service	7.1%	12.8%	15.0%
Build more bicycle paths	5.7%	6.6%	10.2%
Other	2.2%	1.8%	3.7%

In the Business Survey, respondents indicated their top three transportation solutions to resolving their identified issues. Developing long range plans for new solutions, widening and maintaining roadways, bus service and connection improvements, and freeway and onramp improvements all ranked among top choices.

Transportation Solution (Business Survey, 2010)	Choice (number of responses)		
	First	Second	Third
Develop long-range plans to identify new transportation solutions	58	20	25
Add more passenger rail service	20	14	11
Widen local roadways	30	21	11
Add more bus service	27	28	17
Focus on options to support moving manufactured goods or agricultural products	8	6	7
Develop countywide vanpool program	3	10	9
Build carpool lanes on freeways	5	11	7
Maintain local roads and streets/potholes	36	27	30
Improve connections for bus service	11	30	13
Build more bicycle paths	2	9	11
Enhance pedestrian safety and infrastructure	2	5	7
Improve major intersections	9	27	21
Improve freeway ramps	4	7	23
Other	11	5	9

Business Survey respondents also ranked the top three most important routes for their ability to ship or receive products and supplies. Highway 101 and major local roads received the highest rankings.

	Choice (number of responses)		
	First	Second	Third
Routes (Business Survey, 2010)			
Highway 101 within Ventura County	57	63	12
Major local roads	48	21	25
Highway 101 East to Los Angeles County	25	34	25
Highway 101 West to Santa Barbara County	6	13	27
Highway 118	9	12	19
Highway 126	11	6	19
Highway 23	8	6	17
Highway 1 South from Oxnard	1	8	8
Other	5	3	5
Highway 33	2	3	6
Truck routes for Port Hueneme	4	1	1

As a final question in the Business Survey, respondents identified the single improvement to the County's transportation system that would have the biggest positive impact on their businesses. Responses to this open-ended question were analyzed and categorized in the chart that follows. Some responses were assigned to multiple categories. Roads, public transportation, traffic/congestion, and Highway 101 received the most support.

Single Improvement with Biggest Positive Impact to My Business (Business Survey, 2010)	(number of responses)
Roads	73
Public transportation	55
Traffic/congestion	47
Highway 101	44
General	18
Rail	15
Highway 118	9
Specialized transportation	8
Freight movement	5
Bike/pedestrian	4
Airport	3
Highway 23, Highway 33, Highway 126, Parking	1 each

Findings and Conclusion

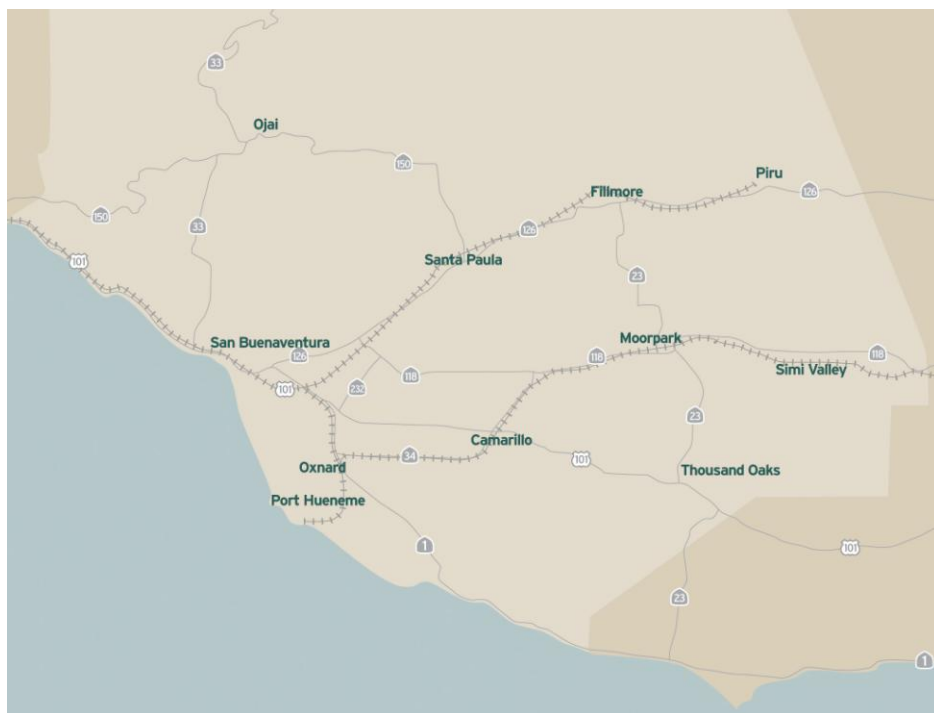
Overall, and as discussed in further detail in Chapter 9, results from the public participation program and public opinion research suggest that ongoing community-based planning efforts that further identify community priorities and respond with cost-effective, community-supported solutions are important to achieving the shared vision.

CHAPTER 4: STATE OF THE SYSTEM

To inform development of the shared vision and priorities for the transportation system in Ventura County, VCTC compiled and shared a range of data and information that explain the state of the system. The following data regarding current demographics, land use policies, travel patterns, roadway conditions, public transit services, active transportation, and fund sources all contribute to how Ventura County’s residents, businesses and visitors use and experience the transportation system.

Demographics

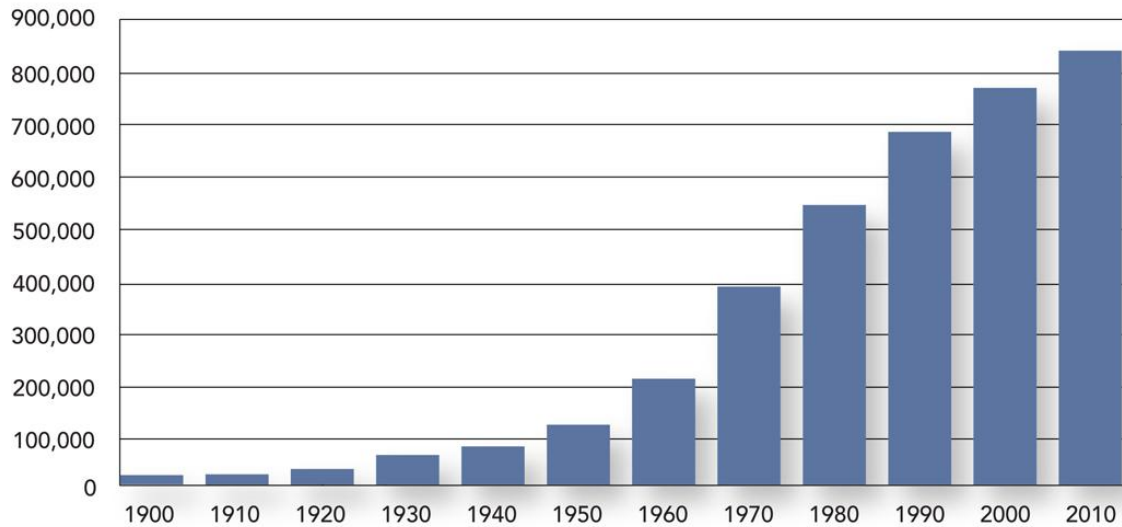
Ventura County’s diverse geography covers 1,843 square miles and ranges from rugged mountain terrain to coastal plains. The County’s ten cities lie in the southern portion of the county with the majority of the population residing close to one of the three east – west corridors: U.S. Route 101, State Route (SR) 118 and SR 23, and SR 126.



The 2010 US Census describes the population of Ventura County in a variety of ways, each providing a different perspective related to transportation needs. The total population of the County is 823,318. While many residents may consider Ventura County as a “slow growth” area compared to broader Southern California, this number represents a 9.3%

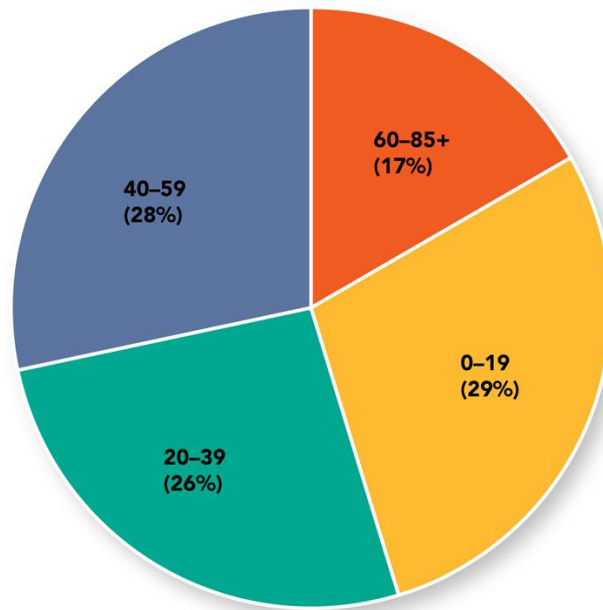
increase over the County's 2000 population, which is a faster growth rate than either Los Angeles County or Orange County during the same period. When reviewing Ventura County's population over the past century, the rate of growth has slowed somewhat in recent decades but still remains significant.

Ventura County Growth from 1900



Another way in which the 2010 US Census describes the population of Ventura County is by age. The County's median age is 36.2, and nearly half of the population is either under the age of 20 or over the age of 60. This is a key observation for the future of Ventura County transportation because youth and senior citizens tend to be the most transit-dependent, while the other age cohorts tend to rely on personal vehicles.

Ventura County Population by Age



Land Use and Land Use Policies

Overall, land use policies are established and managed among the cities and the County. The land use policy direction in a given community has significant influence on the prevalence and use of transportation modes. For example, development patterns that emphasize a low density or single use approach tend to be most efficiently traveled by personal vehicle. On the other hand, development patterns that promote more compact and mixed-use development tend to be better served by a broader range of options including bicycle, pedestrian and transit.

In Ventura County two specific land use policies have played and continue to play significant roles in shaping the existing transportation system and informing the potential for future changes.

The Guidelines for Orderly Development

The Ventura County Board of Supervisors originally adopted the Guidelines for Orderly Development in 1969, which all of the cities, the County and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) then revised and adopted in 1996. These guidelines encourage urban development to occur within the incorporated cities or through annexation of land within a city's sphere of influence. Outside a city's sphere of influence development is directed to existing communities already designated in the County's general plan. These guidelines

have been highly effective at preventing urban sprawl and maintaining open space between Ventura County's cities.

Save Our Open Space and Agricultural Resources (SOAR)

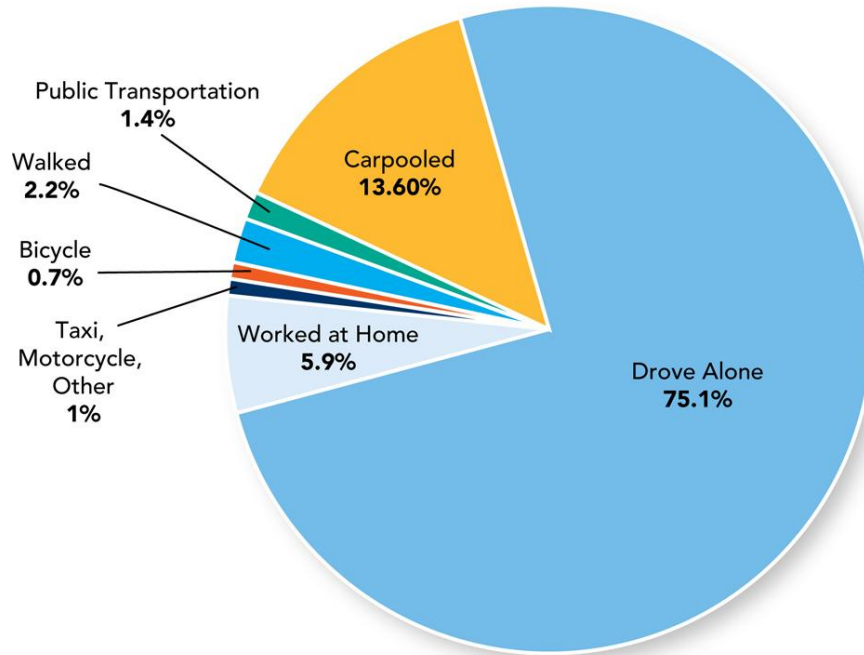
SOAR initiatives are amendments to a city's or the County's general plan that require a simple majority of voters in that plan's area to approve changes in specified land use categories. Typically, SOAR initiatives focus on protecting open space, agriculture, rural and park lands. SOAR initiatives have passed in Ventura County and in most of the cities. Associated with SOAR is City Urban Restriction Boundary (CURB), a companion initiative that creates an urban boundary line around a city. CURB also requires a simple majority of voters in that plan's area to allow "urbanization" of land outside of the CURB boundary.

Collectively, the Guidelines for Orderly Development and SOAR initiatives have largely contained urban development within city boundaries, preserving large expanses of agriculture and/or open space that contribute to a suburban or rural character throughout the County. This approach resulted in development of a transportation system that addresses localized needs within city boundaries but less connectivity between cities.

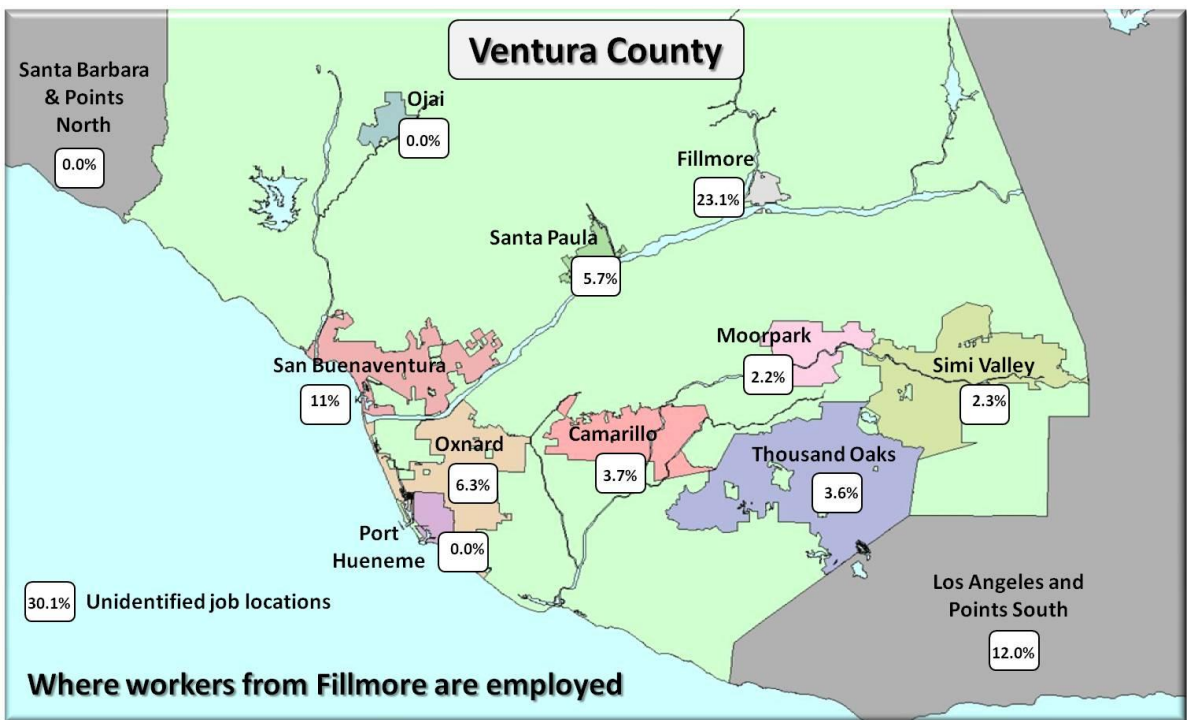
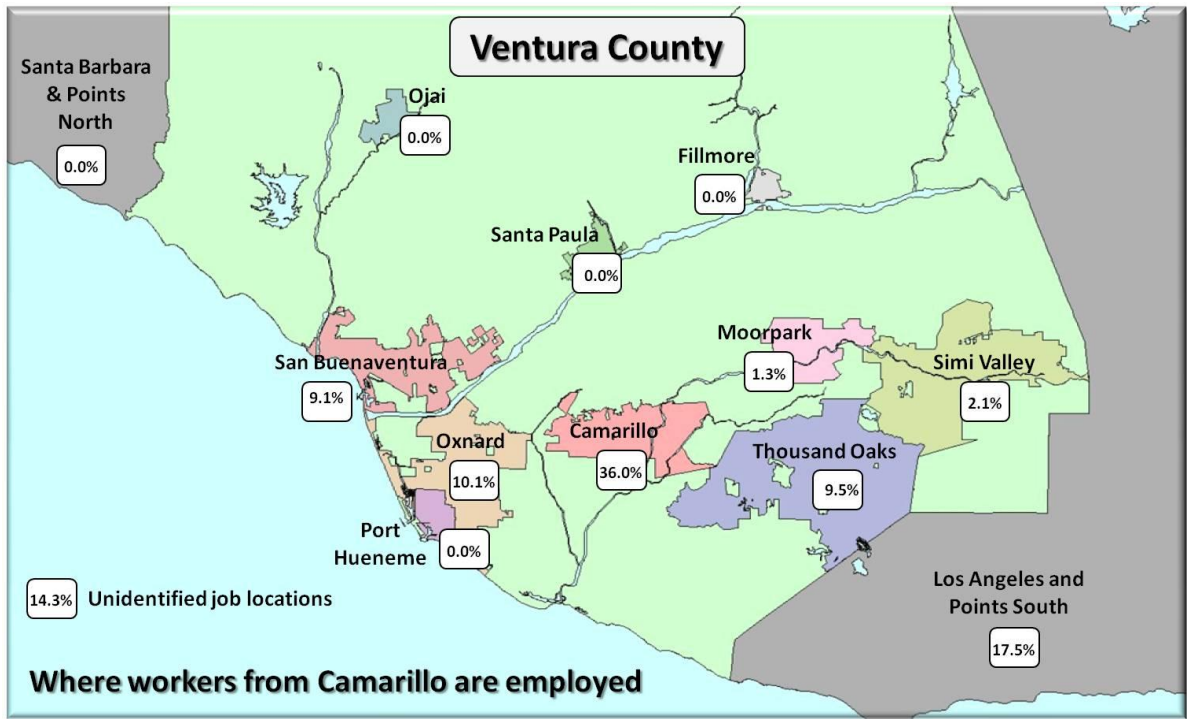
Travel Patterns

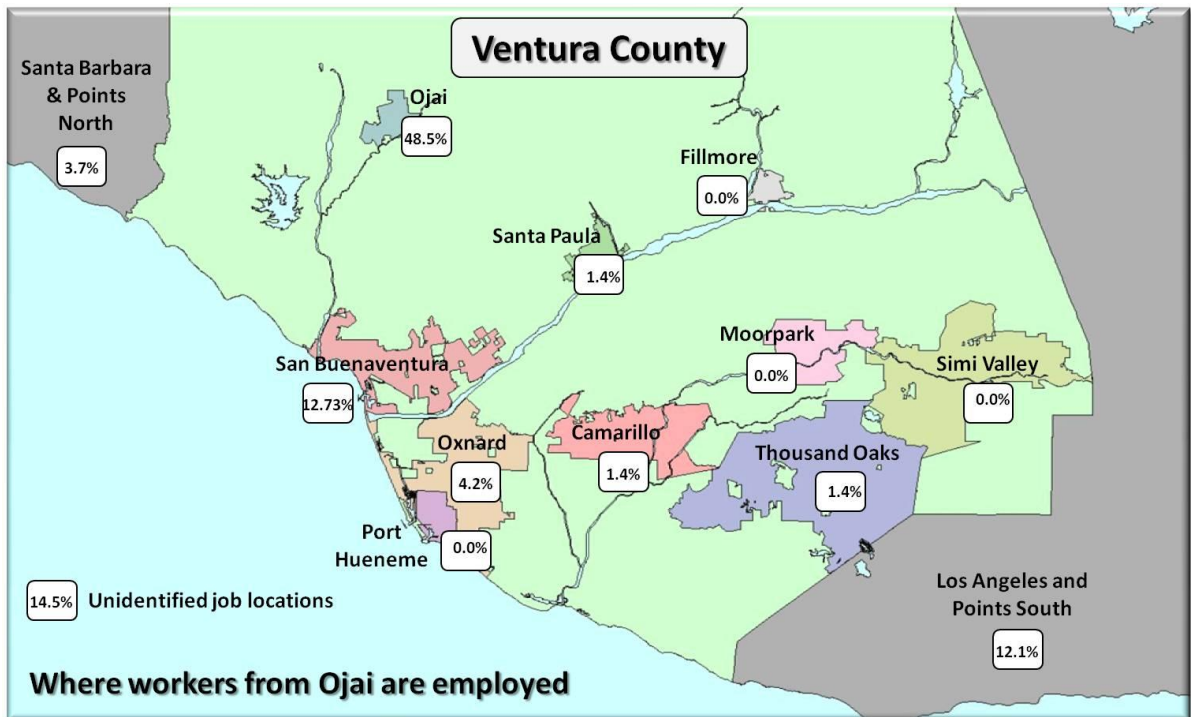
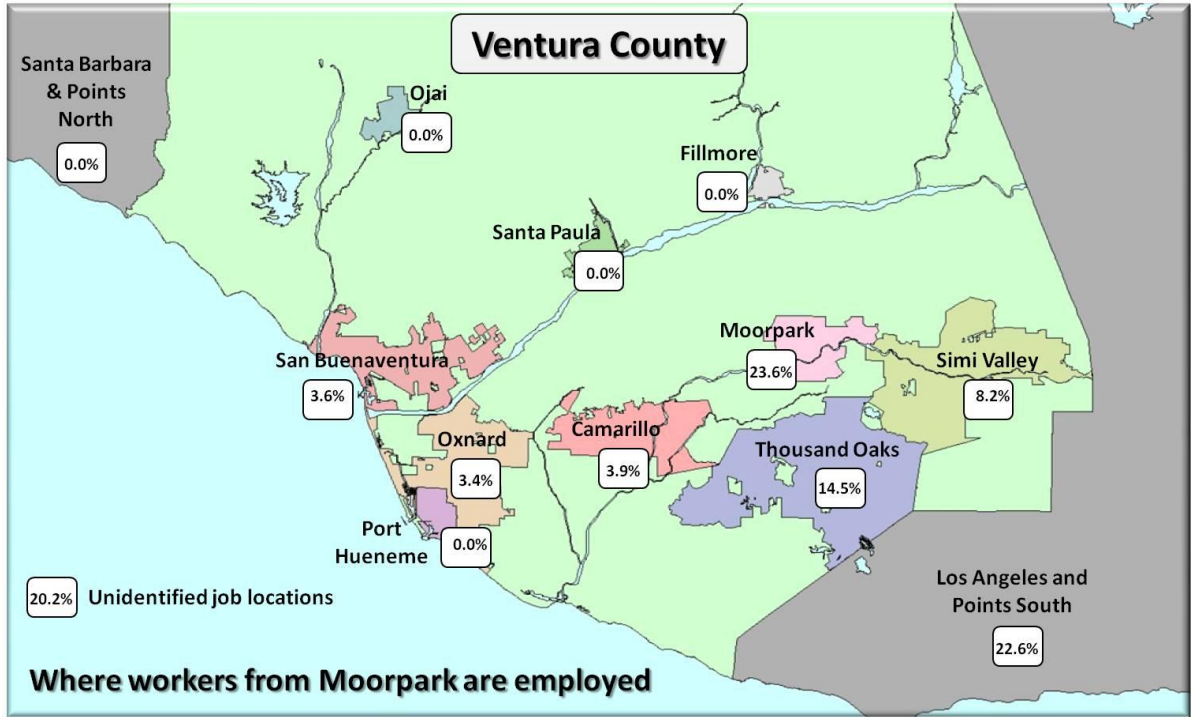
The dominant mode of travel in Ventura County is by car. The US Census 2006 – 2010 American Community Survey provides a snapshot of the commute patterns of Ventura County's 370,728 workers, indicating that 75% drive alone. Additionally, nearly 70% of the occupied housing in Ventura County has access to two or more vehicles, while only 4.1% are without vehicle access.

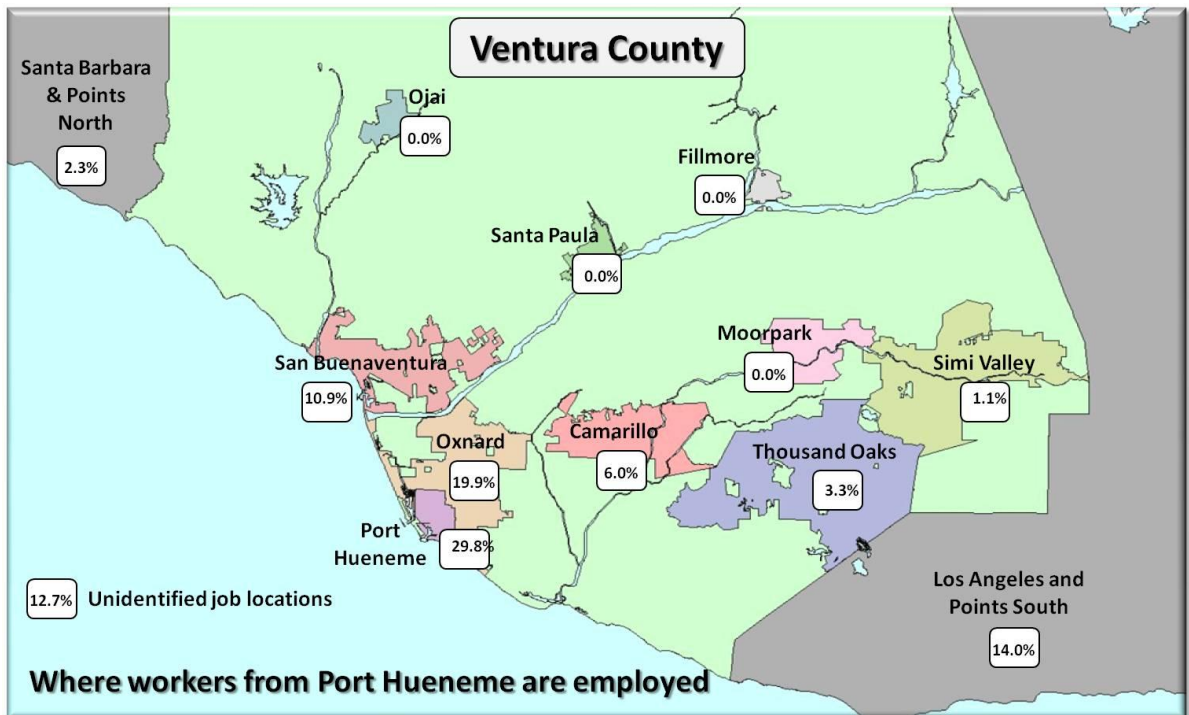
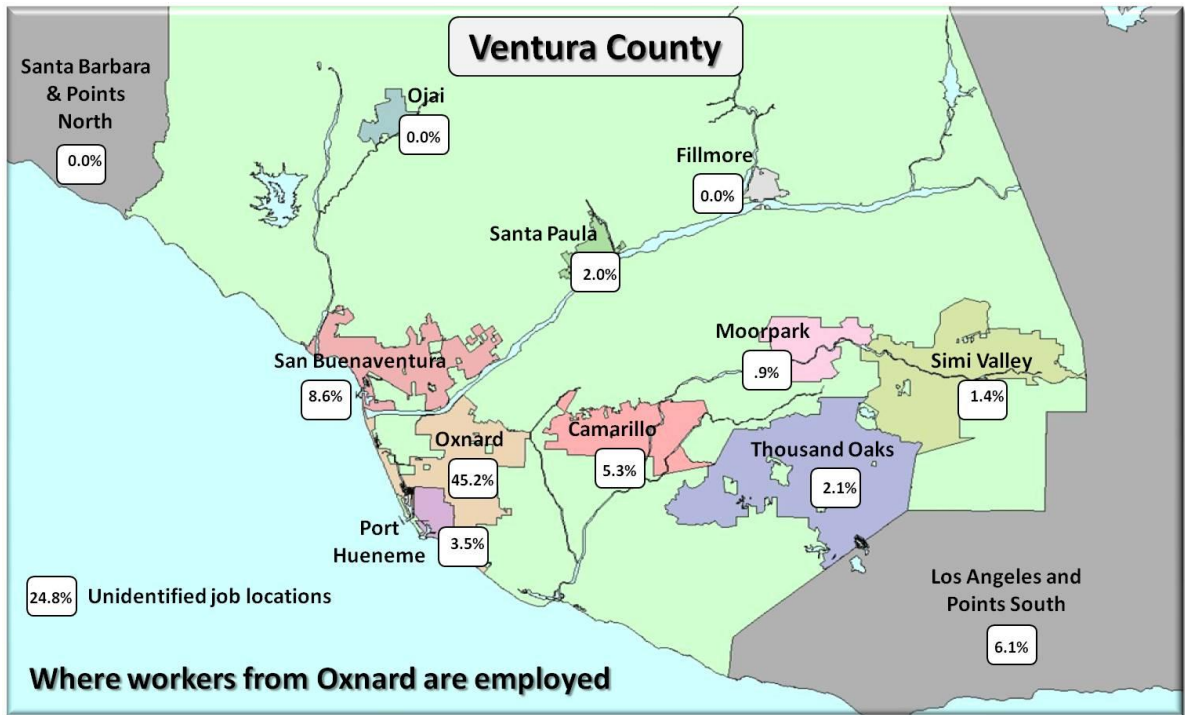
Ventura County Means of Transportation to Work

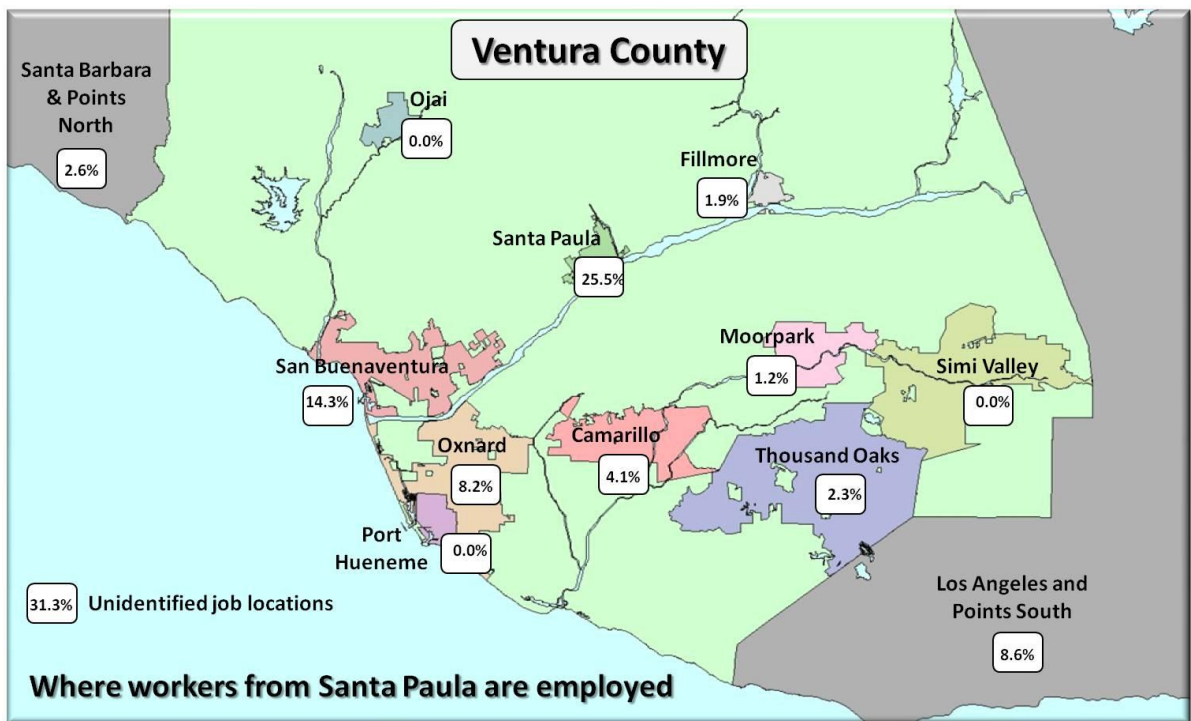
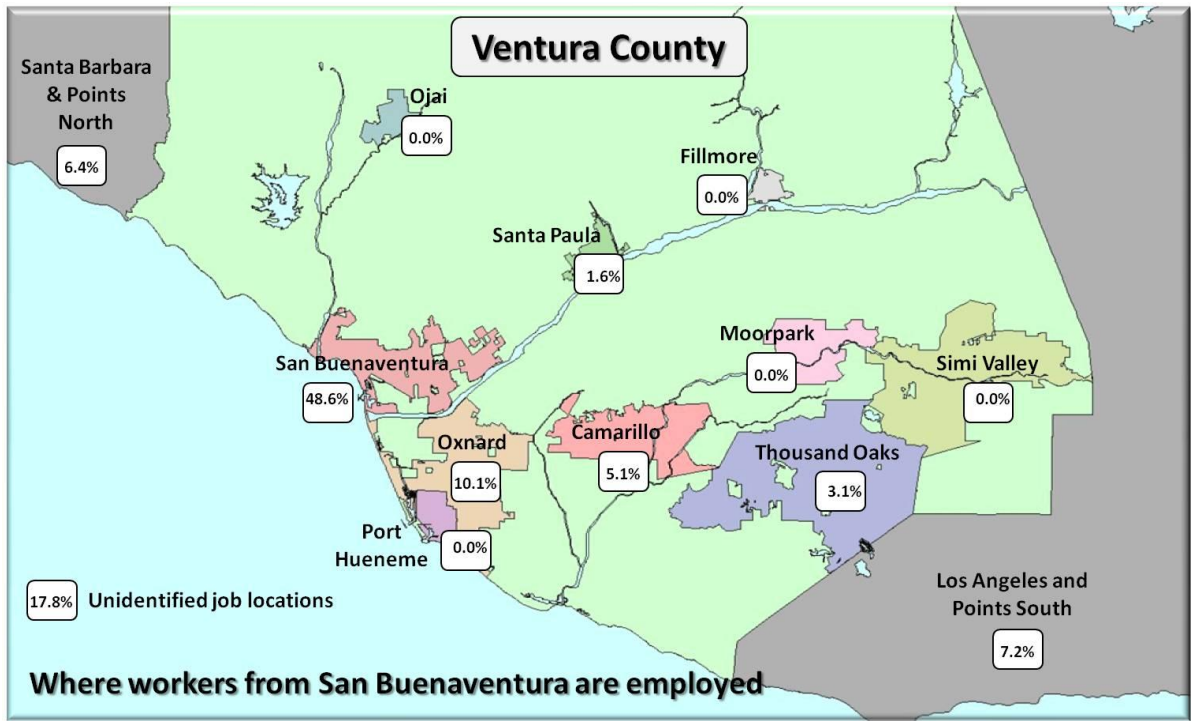


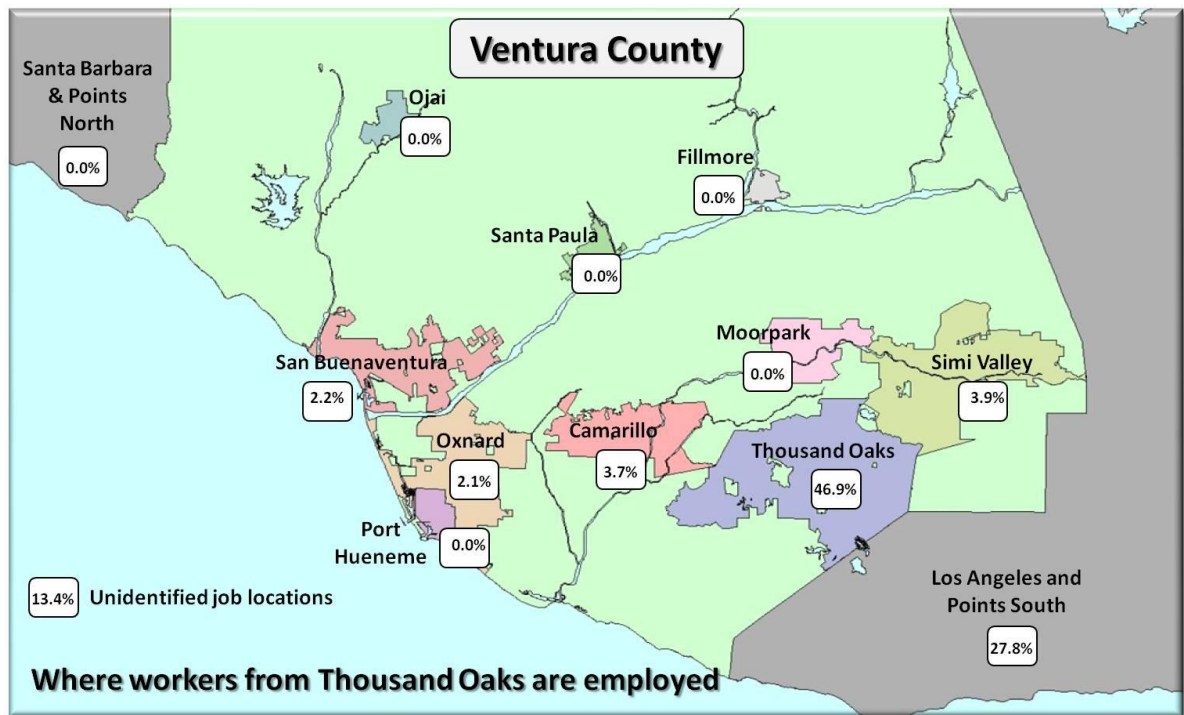
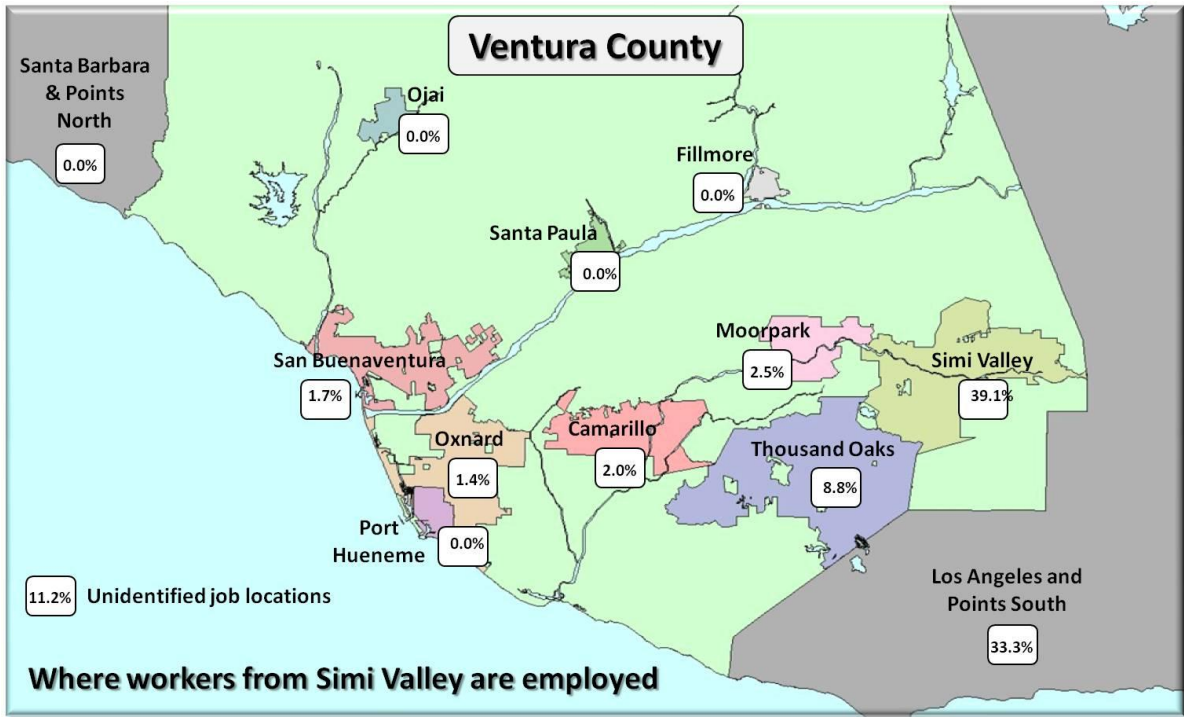
Despite Southern California's reputation for long commutes on congested freeways, most of Ventura County's residents (77.3%) work within the county boundaries. Of those who travel outside the County for work, approximately 20% travel south to Los Angeles or beyond and approximately 2% travel north to Santa Barbara County. When combining this data with additional data from the Department of Labor, the following series of figures illustrate each city's percentage of residents holding jobs in each of the ten cities and neighboring counties. As the figures show, no city is an island as far as work travel is concerned. The cities of Ojai, San Buenaventura and Thousand Oaks have the highest percentage of in-community workers (between 47% and 49%) while the communities of Fillmore and Moorpark have the lowest (hovering around 23%).









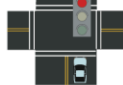


Roadway Conditions

Results from the Ventura County Traffic Model indicate that nearly 18 million miles are traveled on Ventura County's roads each day. VCTC develops the County's Congestion Management Plan (CMP) which monitors congestion and provides local agencies and developers the procedures and tools necessary to manage and decrease congestion.

Congestion is measured every two years and involves a two-step process. First, the CMP counts the number of vehicles on road and highway segments over a 24 hour period to determine an average daily vehicle count. Second, the number of vehicles is compared to the capacity of the road to carry vehicles during the AM and PM peak periods to determine the level of congestion at each count location. Dividing the number of vehicles on the road by the capacity that the road can handle, the results are expressed as the Level Of Service (LOS) and congestion is graded in letters A through F. The following tables describes the attributes of each letter.

LEVELS OF SERVICE for Freeways			
Level of Service	Flow Conditions	Operating Speed (mph)	Technical Descriptions
A		70	Highest quality of service. Traffic flows freely with little or no restrictions on speed or maneuverability. No delays
B		70	Traffic is stable and flows freely. The ability to maneuver in traffic is only slightly restricted. No delays
C		67	Few restrictions on speed. Freedom to maneuver is restricted. Drivers must be more careful making lane changes. Minimal delays
D		62	Speeds decline slightly and density increases. Freedom to maneuver is noticeably limited. Minimal delays
E		53	Vehicles are closely spaced, with little room to maneuver. Driver comfort is poor. Significant delays
F		<53	Very congested traffic with traffic jams, especially in areas where vehicles have to merge. Considerable delays

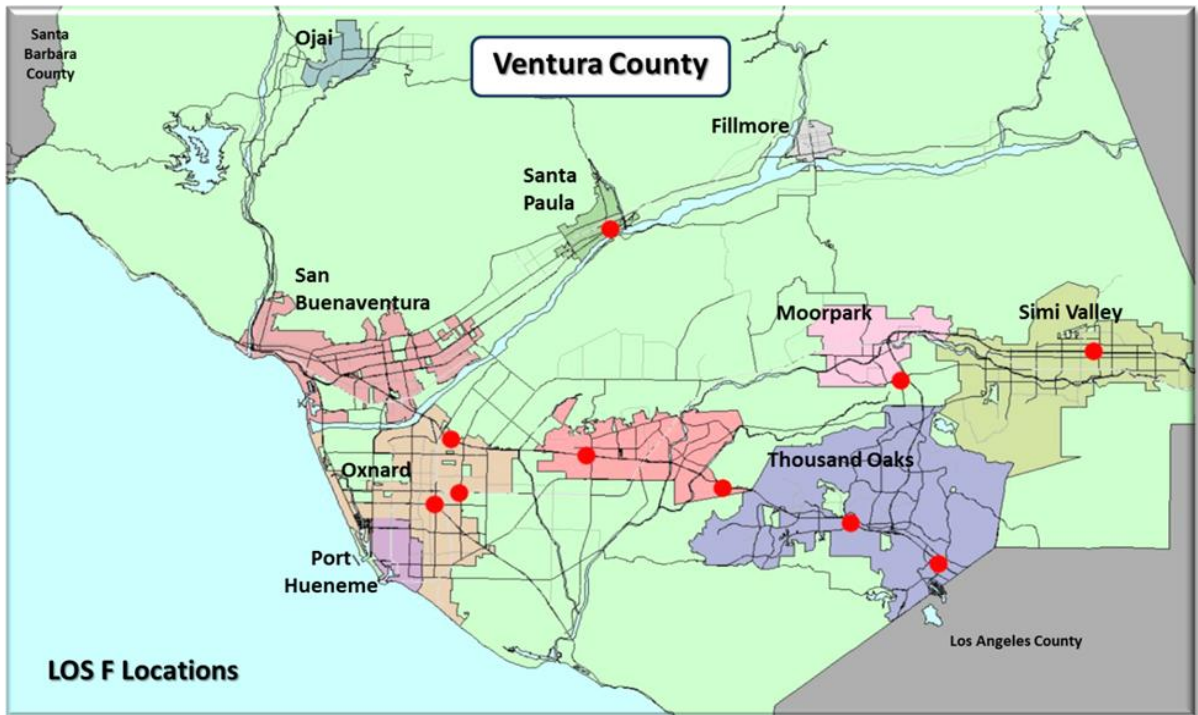
LEVELS OF SERVICE for Intersections with Traffic Signals	
Level of Service	Delay per Vehicle (seconds)
A	 ≤10
B	 11-20
C	 21-35
D	 36-55
E	 56-80
F	 >80

Factors Affecting LOS of Signalized Intersections

- Traffic Signal Conditions:**
- Signal Coordination
 - Cycle Length
 - Protected left turn
 - Timing
 - Pre-timed or traffic activated signal
 - Etc.
- Geometric Conditions:**
- Left- and right-turn lanes
 - Number of lanes
 - Etc.
- Traffic Conditions:**
- Percent of truck traffic
 - Number of pedestrians
 - Etc.

Source: 2000 HCM, Exhibit 16-2, Level of Service Criteria for Signalized Intersections

During the last monitoring period the CMP identified ten locations with LOS F rating as shown in the following map.

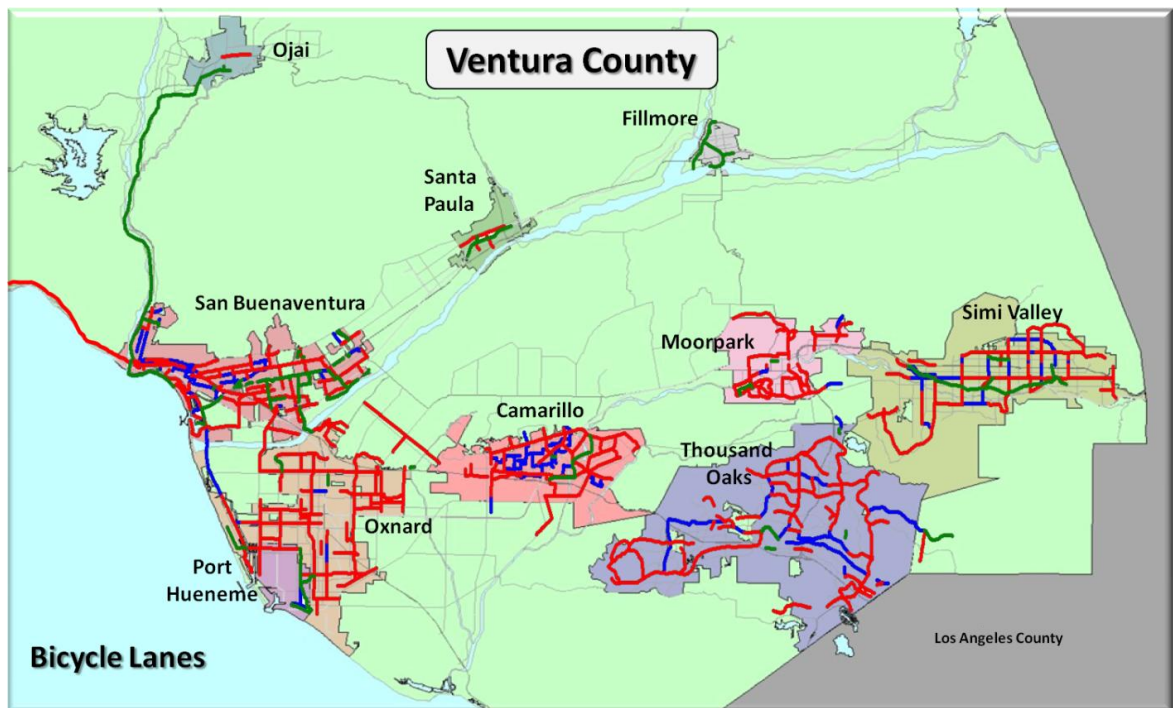


Public Transit

Seven separate operators provide fixed route transit services and some variety of demand response services in Ventura County. These systems developed organically over time with most primarily serving local residents within city boundaries. VISTA and Gold Coast Transit provide more regional and subregional services. As with other forms of transportation in Ventura County, services are funded by a mix of federal, state and local funds. The types of services vary considerably in terms of scale, scope and cost. Using an opportunity provided by California Senate Bill 716, which requires that all Transportation Development Act funds be used for public transit purposes beginning in July 1, 2014, VCTC conducted the Regional Transit Study, a process that culminated in a consensus among the operators on the desirable path forward in creating a more coordinated, customer-focused system of services in Ventura County. A more detailed description is provided in Chapter 6.

Active Transportation

Active Transportation is defined as any means of using human power to travel. While the most common definition is biking and walking, it can also involve use of public transportation where a person walks or bikes to and from a bus or train stop. Despite the limited resources available for active transportation, each city has developed a fairly extensive bicycle lane network using a combination of annual State and federal funds. Locally, approximately \$400,000 per year is allocated from the Local Transportation Funds (LTF) Article 3 to cities and the County for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Similar to the transit network, the bicycle lane network illustrated in the following map stops at each city's borders with few city to city connections.



Fund Sources and Uses

VCTC is responsible for administering State and federal funds for transportation improvements throughout the County. To do so, VCTC also facilitates prioritization of transportation improvements among the cities and the County.

Ventura County relies primarily on State and federal fund revenues to implement transportation improvements. Over the years, these fund sources have lost their purchasing power, with the current federal policy environment further leaning toward emphasis on localized revenues for a greater share of infrastructure improvements in the long-term. However, unlike most other urban California counties, Ventura County lacks a local source of revenue leading to virtually no self-investment in its transportation system (a local-option sales tax is most common in California).

This lack of local revenues compounds transportation finance challenges in three critical ways. First, the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy for Southern California identifies 70% of the funds for transportation improvements in the six-county region will be from local sources, but Ventura County is the only county without a local source. Second, many federal funding programs require that local agencies provide a portion of funding for projects from local revenues, or a “local match,” which places the County at a competitive disadvantage with other counties nationwide. Third, smaller or less affluent cities have greater struggles in meeting infrastructure funding needs due to lower ability to generate local revenues, competing priorities for resources, less ability to generate funding from private investment and lack of economies of scale that larger communities have in delivering infrastructure improvements.

In an attempt to anticipate when projects might be funded, VCTC forecasted its revenues thirty years into the future based on known funding sources. This revenue forecast is updated periodically as budgetary information is released from the State and federal sources. The following table outlines the revenue forecast for VCTC’s major sources of revenue for transportation investments. Thereafter, each funding source and the allowable uses of that funding source are described in more detail.

REVENUES IN 5 YEAR INCREMENTS							
Dollars in Millions							
	13/14 - 17/18	18/19 - 22/23	23/24 - 27/28	28/29 - 32/33	33/34 - 37/38	38/39 - 42/43	30-Year Total
State Funds							
STIP	\$ 38.1	\$ 61.7	\$ 72.1	\$ 84.3	\$ 97.4	\$ 111.4	\$ 465.1
SHOPP	\$ 127.5	\$ 127.5	\$ 127.5	\$ 127.5	\$ 127.5	\$ 127.5	\$ 765.0
HUTA	\$ 185.5	\$ 185.5	\$ 185.5	\$ 185.5	\$ 185.5	\$ 185.5	\$ 1,113.0
Prop 1B	\$ 17.0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 17.0
LTF	\$ 154.5	\$ 199.8	\$ 263.0	\$ 343.4	\$ 440.7	\$ 557.9	\$ 1,959.3
STA	\$ 27.0	\$ 30.9	\$ 36.2	\$ 42.3	\$ 48.9	\$ 55.9	\$ 241.1
Federal Funds							
STP	\$ 52.5	\$ 52.5	\$ 52.5	\$ 52.5	\$ 52.5	\$ 52.5	\$ 315.0
CMAQ	\$ 41.5	\$ 24.9	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 66.4
TAP	\$ 7.0	\$ 7.0	\$ 7.0	\$ 7.0	\$ 7.0	\$ 7.0	\$ 42.0
FTA	\$ 117.0	\$ 117.0	\$ 117.0	\$ 117.0	\$ 117.0	\$ 117.0	\$ 702.0
TOTAL	\$ 767.6	\$ 806.8	\$ 860.8	\$ 959.5	\$1,076.5	\$1,214.8	\$ 5,685.9

State Revenues

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP consists of two types of funds. Regional Improvement Program (RIP) funds are 75% of the STIP and available for capacity projects such as lane expansions, intersection or other major arterial improvements. Interregional Improvement Program (IIP) funds are 25% of the STIP and are also available for capacity projects on the State regional road system and for intercity rail projects. VCTC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Ventura County, is responsible for proposed RIP project selection while the California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for selection of proposed IIP projects. Both programs must be approved and allocated by the California Transportation Commission (CTC). Under the “transportation tax swap” approved by the State in 2010, STIP funds are derived from fuel excise taxes which are automatically adjusted to equal the funding formerly provided by Proposition 42 (sales tax on gasoline). STIP funds are primarily applied to transportation projects that are significant to the statewide system. VCTC has applied STIP funds to freeway/highway projects and Metrolink commuter rail service.

State Highway Operation and Protection Plan (SHOPP). SHOPP provides funds for Caltrans through state and federal gas taxes to rehabilitate pavement and implement operational and safety improvements on State highways and bridges within Ventura County. Statewide, this program is underfunded by \$13 billion.

Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA). HUTA revenues are derived from the State excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel. Approximately one third of the revenues are allocated to cities and counties for local streets and roads maintenance, repairs and improvements. Approximately two-thirds of the revenues are allocated by Caltrans primarily for the maintenance and repair of the State highway system.

Proposition 1B Program. In 2006, California voters approved Proposition 1B, which funds various transportation projects from bonds issued by the State. Eligible projects include transit capital, corridor mobility improvements, STIP augmentation, freight movement, state-local partnership funds, and local streets and roads allocated directly to cities and counties.

Transportation Development Act (TDA). TDA funds are comprised of two separate revenues: the Local Transportation Fund and the State Transit Assistance revenues.

Local Transportation Fund (LTF). TDA Public Utilities Code 99200, authorizes the creation of a LTF in each county for transportation purposes. LTF revenues are derived from one-quarter cent of the general State sales tax collected within the county. These revenues are received monthly from the State and may be used in four categories:

- Article 3 -- bicycle and pedestrian projects
- Article 4 -- public transportation
- Article 8a -- streets and roads (scheduled to shift to transit on July 1, 2014 as required by Senate Bill 716)
- Article 8c -- transit

Additionally, VCTC is a direct recipient of LTF for planning, administration and partial funding of Ventura County's Metrolink commuter rail program.

State Transit Assistance (STA). Historically, TDA provided a second source of revenue as STA, which are derived from the State portion of the sales tax on diesel fuel. The State Controller allocates these funds based on the County's population and revenue miles of each eligible transit operator: Gold Coast Transit (GCT) and Southern California Regional Rail

Authority (SCRRRA) in Ventura County. The State generally disburses STA revenues on a quarterly basis and the funds are held in trust by the County. STA revenues are restricted for transit purposes and are administered by VCTC.

Federal Revenues

In July, 2012, the federal government approved a new transportation act entitled Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, or MAP-21. This act replaced the previous act which dated back to 2005. The legislation authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 2-year period from October 2012 to September 2014. The following are funding programs authorized by MAP-21.

Surface Transportation Program (STP). STP funds provide revenue for federal-aid highways, bridge projects on public roads, transit capital projects, and local street and road improvement projects. The matching ratio is approximately 89% federal to 11% local. STP funds are allocated by VCTC and administered through Caltrans.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ). CMAQ funds are allocated by VCTC for transportation projects that reduce transportation-related emissions. Project types include public transit, rail transit capital improvements, pedestrian and bicycle paths and others that serve to reduce congestion and improve air quality. The matching ratio is approximately 89% federal to 11% local.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). MAP 21 consolidates several programs which addressed pedestrian and bicycle transportation, scenic beautification, safe routes to schools, historic preservation, recreational trails, and other uses. TAP funds are eligible for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, projects to provide safe routes to schools and for non-drivers, scenic roadway overlooks, recreational trails, rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities, preservation of abandoned railway corridors, control/removal of outdoor advertising, archaeological planning and research, vegetation management along transportation corridors, and mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff. California has not yet determined process for selecting projects for this new program.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The FTA provides funding for transit related programs in a variety of areas. FTA funds generally require matching local funds. FTA divides the program funds into "Sections" as follows:

- Section 5304, Statewide Planning funds are available for planning studies conducted by Metropolitan Planning Organizations or their sub recipients. Eligible uses of the funds include urban, small urban or rural transit planning studies, surveys and

research, as well as the Transit Planning Student Internship program. The matching ratios are approximately 89% federal to 11% local.

- Section 5307, Urban Area Formula funds are available for capital, capital leases and maintenance, planning projects, and for limited operating expenses. The funds can also be used for projects that improve transit access to employment for low-income individuals. Capital and planning ratios are approximately 80% federal to 20% local match, while operating cost is limited to a 50% federal share. The majority of FTA funds received by VCTC are Section 5307 funds.
- Section 5310, Elderly and Disabled funds are for transportation capital expenditures for paratransit services to elderly and disabled individuals. The funds can also be used for capital or operating expenses of new transit services for disabled individuals that go beyond the ADA minimum requirements. The operating cost reimbursement is up to 50%, and capital cost up to 80%.
- Section 5311, Rural funds provide support for rural transit operating subsidies and capital projects. Operating match can be up to 50% of net operating costs whereas the capital match is usually 20%. Historically, the majority of the 5311 funds were programmed by VCTC and administered by the State but used by other agencies.
- Section 5337, Rail State of Good Repair funds are utilized for projects such as rail and facility construction and rehabilitation. The federal/local matching ratio is usually 80/20. The Section 5337 funds VCTC receives are attributed to Metrolink services. MAP-21 increased Ventura County's revenue from this source (formerly Section 5309) by over \$4 million per year.
- Section 5339, Bus and Bus Facilities funds are a relatively small source of funds available for bus capital purposes only, with a match rate of 80/20. This program is also newly-created under MAP-21.
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Program (ARRA) funds are one-time economic stimulus revenues that were funded at 100%.

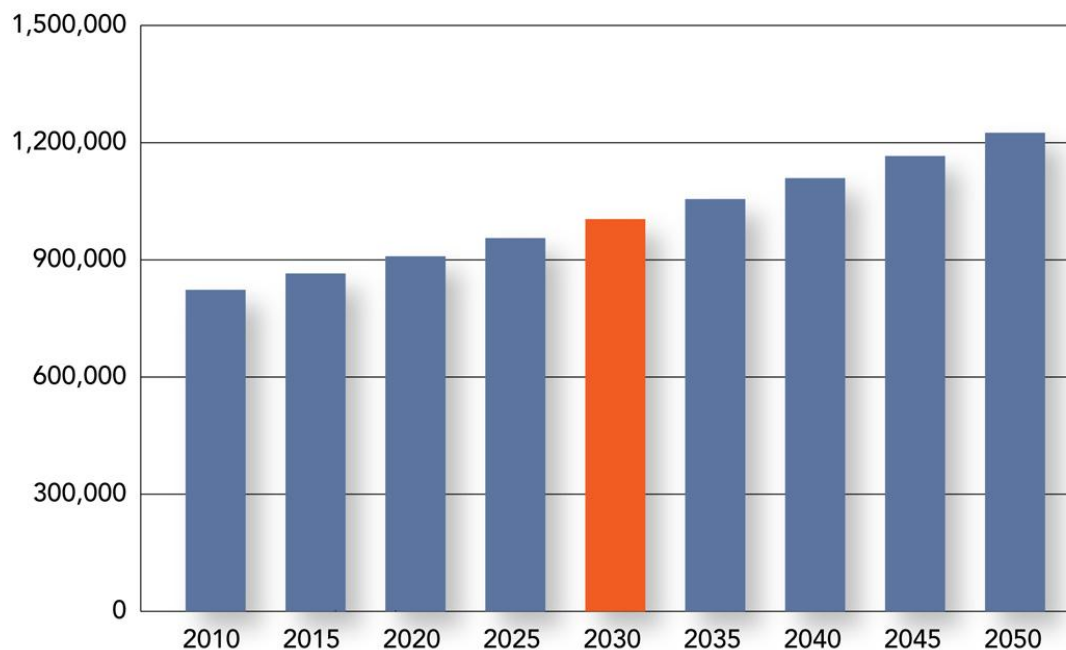
CHAPTER 5: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Given the historical and current context, as well as a range of data sources and projections, there are clear challenges facing the future of the transportation system in Ventura County. Forecasts, projections and estimates of population, traffic congestion, funding levels, and other factors affecting the transportation system provide important data. Tracking historic trends, exploring existing policies and conditions, and using credible estimation tools are critical to a realistic planning process. This information contributes to understanding the path forward, preparing for contingencies, and positioning the Ventura County region to maximize its return on investment in the transportation system.

Population

Despite the perception that Ventura County is growing slowly, the County's 9.3% growth rate between 2000 and 2010 exceeds that in Los Angeles County and Orange County. If the annual growth rate holds at approximately 1%, the following graph illustrates that Ventura County's population would be over 1,000,000 sometime before 2030, and greater than 1,200,000 by 2050.

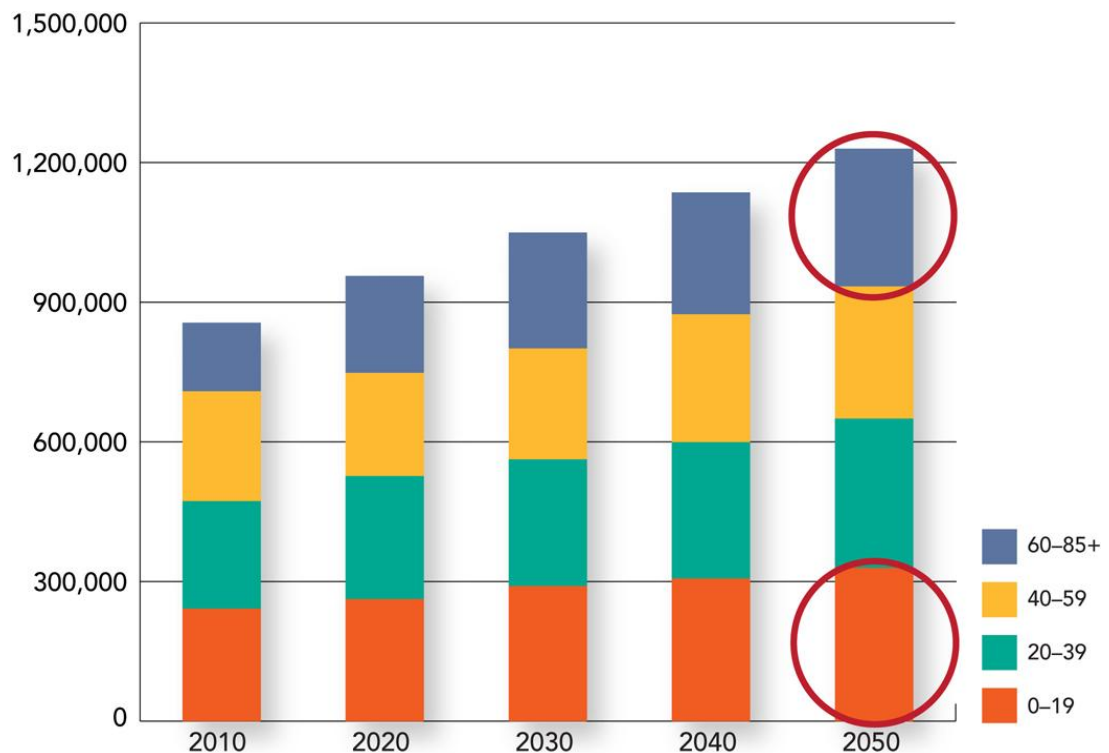
Population



Overall, for Ventura County's transportation system, greater demands will be placed on all components: streets, roads, highways, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian. However, as this growth occurs, demographic projections suggest that some shifts may occur among the age cohorts. The California Department of Finance projects that all age cohorts will grow in Ventura County, but that the youth and senior citizen cohorts will grow disproportionately faster. The following graphic illustrates that by 2035 the number of people over 60 will double and the number of people under 20 will increase by 50%. Each of these age cohorts has a greater dependency on the transit system compared to people ages 20-59.

Ventura County Population by Age 2010–2050

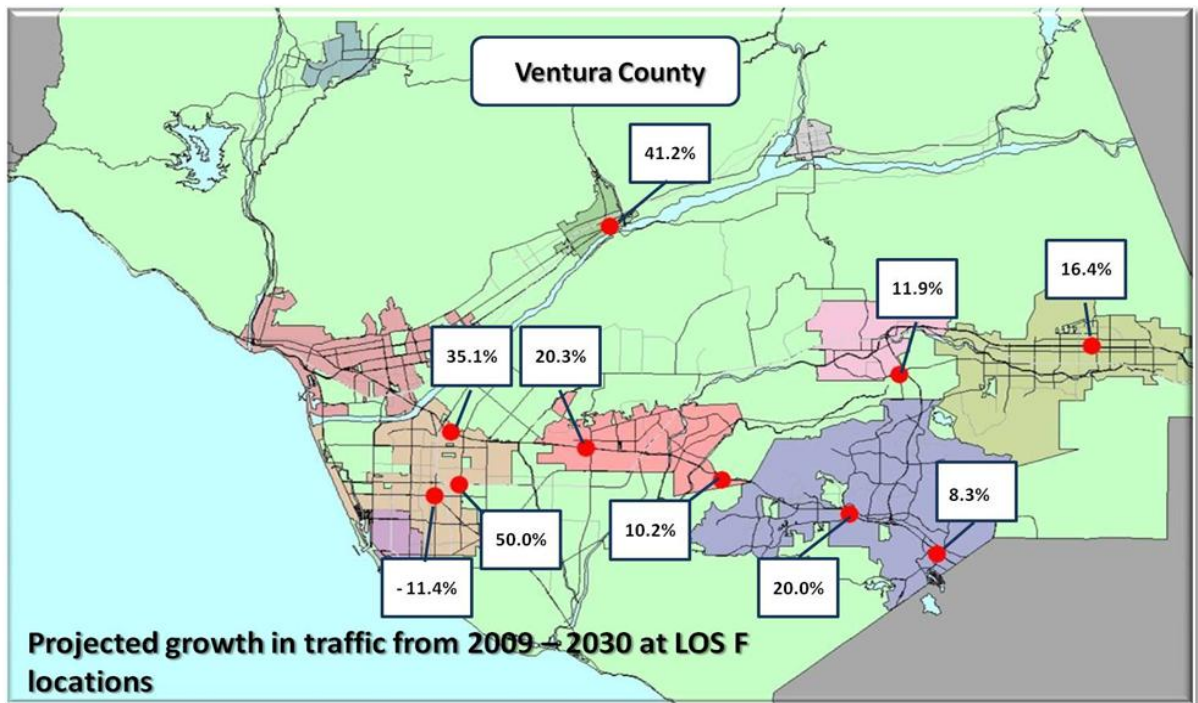
California Department of Finance Projections



During the public participation program, many community members expressed concern about the ability of Ventura County's transportation system to meet the demands of the growing population. Many community members agreed that improving availability of convenient transportation options for everyone—particularly youth and senior citizens—will be important to maintaining quality of life.

Congestion and Mobility

Another way that population growth manifests itself is through congestion. Presently, nearly 18 million miles are traveled on Ventura County's every day. Modeling forecasts of future traffic based on population growth projections suggest that daily mileage driven in Ventura County will climb to nearly 22 million miles, an 18% increase by 2030. The following map illustrates the increase in Average Daily Trips (ADT) at locations throughout the county that are currently classified as highly congested with a LOS F rating.



Increasing congestion levels will increase travel times—particularly during peak travel periods—for commuters, commerce and bus transit. Residents and businesses will spend more time and money on daily transportation needs. Air quality will also degrade due to the increased number of cars on the road and longer operating periods.

State of Good Repair

The paved streets and roads that support all of those traveled miles must support vehicles ranging from bicycles, to ultra-small cars weighing 1,800 pounds, to fully loaded freight trucks weighing 80,000 pounds. With that much use, the cities' and the County's public works departments are in constant motion, repairing, resurfacing or repaving. Each public works department maintains a schedule for annual paving of their portion of the County's 4,200 miles of local roads and arterials. Historically, and particularly during the recent

economic recession and recovery period, many public works departments experienced declining funding levels that were inadequate to meet minimum annual needs. There is a growing backlog of pavement rehabilitation projects.

This backlog is expected to grow. Looking ahead, the public works departments estimate a collective \$438 million shortfall of funds over the next ten years to maintain streets and arterials in their current condition. No new roads are included in this estimate. As part of this growing shortfall, State of California Senate Bill 716, expected to go into effect on July 1, 2014, will not permit the current use by some local jurisdictions of Transportation Development Act revenues for maintaining local streets and roads.

Projecting the estimates to 2030, based on a straight line trend of needs, there will be a \$2.2 billion need in Ventura County to maintain local streets and arterials. However, pavement does not degrade at constant rate, but at a geometrically or an accelerating rate across time, the real need for funding is more difficult to estimate and could be substantially more.

Whether during community discussions or through public opinion research, community members of all areas of the county and interests consistently and frequently prioritized the integrity of local streets and roads as a major challenge to the future of the transportation system. Commuters, transit riders, bicyclists and pedestrians all have vested interests in and are directly impacted by the safety and functionality of streets and roads. A growing “complete streets” movement is focused on expanding the safety and usability of streets and roads for all users including vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian and transit.

Climate Change

The projected impacts of climate change influenced State policymakers to pass new laws to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through land use and transportation planning. Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, was signed in 2006 by then Governor Schwarzenegger for the purpose of setting goals that reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the year 2020. These emission reductions would come through a wide ranging course of actions governed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) that include fuel standards for carbon content, carbon cap and trade, solar programs, clean fleet initiatives and many other strategies.

Senate Bill (SB) 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, was enacted to help achieve the greenhouse gas reductions goals of AB 32. SB 375 requires the State’s Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to achieve per capita greenhouse gas reductions within their planning regions by incorporating a Sustainable Communities

Strategy within their federally-mandated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). This policy strengthens the linkages and mutually-informed decision-making for land use and transportation policies at the regional and local levels. CARB set greenhouse gas reduction targets for each of the State's MPOs. The RTPs adopted by the MPOs must demonstrate how they achieve the mandated greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the MPO for the six-county Southern California region, which includes Ventura County. On September 23, 2010 CARB set greenhouse gas reduction targets for the region at 8% by 2020 and 13% by 2035. Without authority to make changes in land use, SCAG relies on voluntary actions by its member cities, counties and county-level transportation commissions in setting transportation investment priorities that help to achieve the goals of SB 375.

As described in Chapter 4 of this document, existing land use policies of the cities and the County government in Ventura County are focused on containing growth within the existing urban areas and built environments and preventing encroachment of urban development in the County unincorporated areas. From the perspective of land use development and policies, Ventura County's existing structure is a strong model of what SB 375 aims to achieve with communities throughout the State.

However, a significant challenge for the future of Ventura County's transportation network is in striking a balance in addressing connectivity within and between communities. Today, while each Ventura County community has unique conditions, collectively the internal connectivity of community-level street, bicycle, transit and pedestrian networks are strong compared to the average California community. Nevertheless, almost all community members frequently travel to neighboring communities and counties for employment, commerce, services, education or recreation, requiring connectivity between as well as within communities. Inter-city connections for bicycle, pedestrian and transit use are lacking in Ventura County.

During the public participation program, many community members expressed frustration at the lack of options for making such connections. From a geographic perspective, this is particularly true in smaller communities with fewer local commercial, health and social services such as the Santa Clara River Valley and Ojai Valley communities. From a user perspective, this is particularly true for community members who depend upon transit, bicycling and walking in addressing relatively limited connectivity. Therefore, the overarching challenge for Ventura County will be to improve countywide connectivity of the transportation system and community members' overall mobility across all modes of travel, all while reducing greenhouse gases.

Environmental Preservation

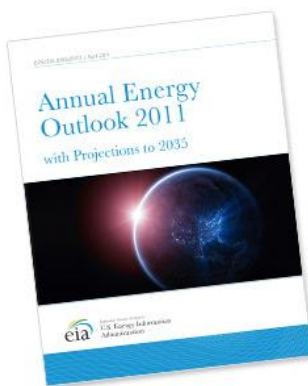
While each individual transportation project must undergo an analysis to determine if and how it impacts the surrounding environment, such analysis is rarely applied to the impacts of the transportation system in total, including how to mitigate such impacts. For Ventura County, two specific areas of environmental preservation may become more significant as a result of expanding the transportation system.

The first area is urban runoff. Rain water moving across the impervious surfaces—including buildings, sidewalks, parking lots, and roads—collects a variety of pollutants such as motor oil, gasoline, heavy metals and plastics. The region's roadways act as a conduit channeling water to storm drains that flow into streams, estuaries, beaches, and the ocean. Each city, the County, as well as State and federal government entities work to implement regulations that limit the source of pollutants and to apply their resources to a nearly continuous clean-up effort.

The second area is wildlife corridors, a recently emerging area of study in Ventura County. Roads, highways and other developments can cut off migration paths for a variety of species and reduce feeding opportunities and biodiversity. From the coast through the Santa Monica Mountains, US 101 and SR 118 and several major arterials act as barriers that prevent the free movement of wildlife across the range of their normal habitats.

While each transportation project in Ventura County implements localized mitigations of impacts, no regional programs exist today to offset these sorts of systemic impacts. As community members frequently cite the natural environment as a critical asset in Ventura County's quality of life and character, future expansion of the transportation system may require closer planning and focused action to address such systemic impacts.

Energy Uncertainty



The U.S. Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook 2011 examines the volatility of all energy markets and attempts to forecast production, consumption and costs in the world energy market. The geopolitical variables that can influence energy prices are broad and complex, but two near certainties will have significant impacts on Ventura County's transportation future.

First, fuel prices and vehicle fuel efficiencies are projected to increase, but it is difficult to project the timing and amounts. In recent years in Ventura County, as gasoline prices increased, so did

the demand for transit services. Transit operators are limited in their ability to respond to a spike in demand by their available vehicles, drivers and support staff. Historically, swings in the price of fuel have not been matched by changes in transit funding to meet demands.

Second, the increase in fuel efficiencies, the potential shift to higher transit ridership, and the potential decrease in driving will reduce gas tax revenues. Excise taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel are the basis of most federal and State transportation funding sources. Since these taxes are levied on a cents-per-gallon basis, they are dependent solely on volume of fuel consumption and are not indexed to changes in fuel prices or to inflation in general. In effect, reduced gas tax revenues will lead to diminished buying power for transportation improvements. This issue isn't restricted to Ventura County and is a significant challenge to the future of the nation's transportation system.

Freight Movement

Moving goods through Ventura County is critical to its economy. The Port of Hueneme is an economic driver for the County as the only deep water port between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, and the U.S. Port of Entry for California's central coast region. Yet the national and international port and shipping industry is increasingly competitive. U.S. west coast ports continue to compete with each other. The widening of the Panama Canal will improve access from shippers in the Asia-Pacific region to the Gulf of Mexico and U.S. east coast ports, increasing competition for the Port of Hueneme.

The Port of Hueneme specializes in the import and export of automobiles, fresh fruit and produce. Its location on the Santa Barbara Channel positions it as the primary support facility for the offshore oil industry. Freight truck and rail movement to and from Port Hueneme is critical to its continued viability. The challenge to truck movements is that Port Hueneme is completely surrounded by urban development, placing truck traffic in competition with local traffic on local streets and roads. Maintaining effective and efficient port access that minimizes impacts to surrounding communities is a significant challenge for the future.

Agribusiness

Similar to the Port, Ventura County's agribusiness faces transportation challenges related to the interface of agricultural and urban uses. Many productive agricultural fields are bounded by urban uses, forcing product distribution on large trucks to occur on urban thoroughfares and small rural roads in small communities. SR 126 from Ventura to Santa Clarita bisects the fertile Santa Clara River Valley, which hosts row crops, avocados and citrus orchards. As traffic volumes and local communities have grown along SR 126 so have the demands for safety improvements--including a center divider--from travelers and local residents. Agribusinesses that line the SR 126 corridor and depend on efficient truck access are concerned that restricting vehicle circulation could impact their operations and the local economy. Balancing safety and efficiency of the transportation network will become more challenging with the growth of economic engines—such as freight movement and agribusiness—and mobility needs.



Transportation Finance

Underlying all of the other challenges outlined in this chapter is the challenge of how to fund basic maintenance of existing infrastructure and facility improvements. Out of the total revenues in VCTC's 30-year revenue forecast described in Chapter 4, only \$4.719 billion of the projected \$5.526 billion can be allocated by VCTC for transportation projects. The remainder is allocated by Caltrans primarily for maintenance of the State highway system.

The 30-year forecast is built from funds available to the County rather than based on need. Nearly half of available funds are dedicated to transit. This presents a funding scenario that is unbalanced, leaving significant shortfalls in most areas. Only in transit might there be sufficient funding to meet the County's needs, assuming the County improves the efficiency and connectivity of transit. In most of the other project areas--local roads, highways, bicycle and pedestrian improvements--the needs outweigh available funds. The greatest challenge is with local streets and roads with a \$1.3 billion shortfall to maintain Ventura County's roads in today's condition. The challenge in financing the County's transportation system is two-fold: first, in improving the balance; and second, in meeting the underfunded needs of each component. For example, while highways/freeways and local streets and roads are relatively balanced, both are underfunded by approximately 50%.

CHAPTER 6: TRANSFORMING TRANSIT

This chapter presents the findings and outcomes of a nearly two-year study of options for organizing public transportation services for Ventura County and the direction and actions adopted by the Ventura County Transportation Commission pursuant to it. The direction for the study came from two sources: A 2009 Commission workshop on the future of VCTC's own VISTA service and legislative provisions arising out of Senate Bill (SB) 716, which went into effect January 1, 2010. SB 716 generally requires that Transportation Development Act funds be spent for public transit purposes, but in a section specific to Ventura County states that:

The Ventura County Transportation Commission may submit to the Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing and the Assembly Committee on Transportation a report analyzing options for organizing public mass transportation services in the county, for the expenditure of revenues deposited in the local transportation fund, and a recommended legislative proposal for implementing the plan by December 31, 2011. If the legislative proposal is not enacted by the end of the 2011-12 Regular Session of the Legislature, revenues deposited in the local transportation fund in that county shall be available for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2014, and each fiscal year thereafter, solely for claims for Article 4 (commencing with Section 99260) and Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 99275) purposes.

The study involved data collection, analysis of options by a Steering Committee and engagement of the community, the operators, and city and county management. The process culminated in an unprecedented level of consensus among the operators on the desirable path forward in creating a more coordinated, customer-focused system of services in Ventura County. The County's transit operators developed a proposal, which ultimately resulted in adoption of a recommendation by the Commission to be forwarded to the Legislature. This chapter summarizes the details on the analysis, process and recommendations, which are provided in full detail in the full report on file with VCTC.

The process culminated in an unprecedented level of consensus among the operators on the desirable path forward in creating a more coordinated, customer-focused system of services in Ventura County.

Commission Recommendation in Report to the Legislature

As an outcome to this study, the Commission adopted a consensus position reached by the Regional Transit Study Steering Committee, the transit managers and the city managers. The proposal is an innovative combination of the cooperation and consolidation approaches

discussed in this chapter that is uniquely tailored to Ventura County's conditions and needs, and that allows for further development and change over time as results and conditions warrant:

1. Support creation of a Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) to assume the responsibilities for West County public transportation services. Cities and communities in West County (including Heritage Valley) would be provided with the opportunity to join the District or the Heritage Valley communities could consent to form their own JPA for the administration and delivery of transit services. These options will be examined in this next year of transition.
2. Transition authority for VISTA services in West County to the new District, with services in the Heritage Valley subject to negotiation and participation by those communities and California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) and Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (for Coastal Express) pending continued funding agreements with those entities.
3. Support creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in East County between the cities of Camarillo, Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks and the County of Ventura for unincorporated East County, to further coordination of individual services.
4. Transition authority for VISTA East service to the East County MOU.
5. Support legislation to allow the use of TDA funds for Article 8 purposes, including streets and roads, and continued return to source of Local Transit Funds.
6. Use VCTC discretionary transit funds to deliver sustainable levels of transit service.



The Commission will continue the discussion and study of a consolidation of transit operations within the County.

Study Background and Process

The study began in April 2010 with appointment of a Commission Steering Committee from the Commission membership, representing the diverse geography and interests of Ventura County. This Steering Committee met six times over the course of the study, providing policy guidance and a forum for deliberation on issues and alternatives. Each of the ten agencies providing public transportation was interviewed in-depth and operator profiles were prepared. Meetings were held with the technical committee of the operators (TRANSCOM), the city managers and the public. The public meetings were conducted in conjunction with VCTC's Comprehensive Transportation Plan which are explained in detail in Chapter 1.

Guiding Principles

The Commission adopted the following Guiding Principles for the study:

Develop a network of sustainable services that meet the diverse needs of the customers through the following actions:

1. Foster open dialogue among communities, system users, operators and agencies
2. Transition to a user-focused system that goes beyond individual operator boundaries
3. Gain consensus on the approach from elected officials and city management
4. Incorporate applicable Federal, State, regional and local livability, sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction goals

Current State of Transit in Ventura County

Public transportation in Ventura County is provided by ten different agencies through a combination of fixed route and demand-responsive services. These operations range in size from the multi-jurisdictional Gold Coast Transit Joint Powers Authority to the Ojai Trolley. VCTC operates VISTA, which consists of basic interjurisdictional connector routes and a dial-a-ride serving Heritage Valley (mainly the communities of



Santa Paula, Fillmore and Piru). Based on local funding policies and perception of transit needs, operators offer different days and hours of service. This makes connections difficult and service confusing, especially for the infrequent or new rider. While VCTC and the operators have attempted to improve connections through coordinated fare media and scheduling software, progress toward truly integrated service has been minimal.

Costs also vary widely – for example according to data from the 2009 National Transit Database (NTD), utilized for illustrative purposes early in the report process, cost per passenger trip for the four largest operations ranges from \$3.66 to \$7.70 for fixed route service and from \$5.55 to \$46.39 for demand-response service. There are many reasons for this range in costs – for example type of area served, level of service provided, type of vehicle operated and variance in labor costs, including contract or in-house service and administrative overhead. Also, agencies can use different reporting methods and some transit costs are not included.

Views of the Current Situation

Interviews of key stakeholders (including all of the Transportation Commissioners) revealed some common views:

- Many of the obstacles to transit service are inherent to Ventura County's characteristics – widely spaced, diverse communities and centers where geographic areas do not share common economic, social and transportation service values.
- Current transportation services are good given the amount of local resources that are available and individual cities are doing a good job of balancing resources.
- There is no one preferred organizational structure for transit service provision – views range from a single entity to the current system of smaller, customized providers.
- There is extensive support for quality transit services.

Organizational Options Considered

The Steering Committee and the Commission considered four potential models for structuring public transit service in Ventura County:

Collaboration – informal agreements to modify or change the status quo. For example, agreements for an "800" or "511" information number, regionwide marketing, or transfers.

Over the years, VCTC has managed a number of these agreements, including a coordinated farecard, paratransit scheduling software and NextBus information program.

Coordination – formal agreements that modify ways of doing business. This could include a countywide ADA paratransit service, agreements to share funding responsibility (such as the current agreement between various parties and VCTC to VISTA service on the U.S. 101 corridor), a Joint Powers Authority to govern more formal service coordination, joint procurement or public information and marketing.

Consolidation – a formal combination or blending of services under a single or multiple entities. There are two types of Consolidation – Full or Moderate.

Full Consolidation – a single agency provides all policy, funding, planning and operations.

Moderate Consolidation - a central entity provides policy, planning and funding and one or two operating entities provide the service.

Policy Direction on Options

Mid-point in the study, the Steering Committee determined, with concurrence of the Commission, that Commission staff and the consultant team should move forward with analysis and city consultation on the Full Consolidation option (with strong continued local influence) and a hybrid version of Moderate Consolidation with two operating entities. Under this type of arrangement, the entities could be a combination of a District, a Joint Powers Authority or other alternative. Key principles moving forward were:

- Keep communities whole – having at least the level of service that communities have now
- Increase connectivity
- Improve local service
- Maintain a level of local influence and control



Evolution of the Organizational Concept

During consultation with the operators and city management, several expressed concern that the Coordination option had been abandoned prematurely and requested that it be re-

inserted for further consideration. In meeting with the Steering Committee, the operators and management were offered the option of presenting their own alternative. VCTC informed State Senate Transportation Committee staff that the report would be submitted after December 31, 2011 so that an organizational option could be worked out and the Commission and the communities could come to consensus.

The operators developed an initial proposal that featured:

- Creating a Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) to provide a framework for consolidated service in west County. Communities, including Heritage Valley, would be provided with the opportunity to join the District.
- Provide for member agency TDA to be subvented to GCTD as of July 1, 2014, net of funding for transit stations, stops and facilities. TDA would be returned to individual jurisdictions in east County and west County cities not participating in the GCTD and cities would be allowed to file for Article 8 purposes (for streets and roads) if there were no unmet transit needs.
- Transition responsibility for operation of VISTA (with the exception of VISTA East and the VISTA 126) based on funding agreements established with non-Gold Coast Transit (GCT) partners including California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) and Santa Barbara Council of Governments (SBCAG), to GCTD. VISTA East would be operated under the East County MOU. VISTA 126 would be administered and operated in the same manner as all Heritage Valley Transit Service. In the event the Heritage Valley cities opt not to participate in the GCTD, a new JPA may be created to operate all Heritage Valley transit services.
- Consolidate ADA service into no more than two areas.
- Create an east County MOU to govern further coordination of service, transfers and fares among east County operators.

The operators also articulated Guiding Principles that stated the right of local agencies to determine how to provide services, concern with equity of TDA requirements, the importance of continued local control of state and federal funds, and the desirability of consolidation of local ADA and dial-a-ride operations.

Steering Committee and Commission Direction

The Steering Committee considered the operators' proposal and recommended:

- Include Customer Focus as a top priority in any Guiding Principles
- Express consensus support for the operators' structural proposal
- Further consolidation would be pursued at a future undetermined date
- The operators' proposal for use of TDA for Article 8 purposes in East County remained an open issue

March 2, 2012 Commission Action

On March 2, 2012 the Commission took action to *"Support the operators' proposal in concept with the understanding that all cities would have flexible use of TDA funds and further discussion of Heritage Valley Service would take place before a proposal is brought back to VCTC on April 13th with the specifics fleshed out and with the recognition that the concept of full consolidation will continue to be discussed as a long term goal. Staff was directed to work with city managers to flesh out specifics."*

April 13, 2012 Commission Action

On April 13, 2012 the Commission acted to receive and file the final VCTC Regional Transit Study as amended by Commission action and submit the Executive Summary as amended as the plan called for by SB 716, to the Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing and the Assembly Transportation Commission.

Future Steps

VCTC and the operators have identified a number of issues to be considered in successful implementation of this new organizational model. These include logistics for transition of VISTA service, including outside funding arrangements from CSUCI and SBCAG; VCTC roles and responsibilities; framework for further consolidation of ADA and dial-a-ride services; creation and constitution of GCTD; terms and timing of the East County MOU; and arrangements for use of VCTC discretionary funds to meet the objective of "keeping communities whole" from a service perspective. VCTC and the operators intend to submit the report to the Legislature and continue proceeding in the preferred direction for reorganizing and improving the delivery of public transportation in Ventura County.

CHAPTER 7: SOLUTIONS FOR THE VENTURA COUNTY REGION

Based on the existing context and challenges for the future of the transportation system, the outreach process for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan engaged community members in identifying potential solutions. These community members considered transportation needs and opportunities from both local and countywide perspectives. While localized needs are summarized separately in the detailed outreach findings, the following chapter summarizes the proposed countywide solutions. For each project type, a summary of possible opportunities is provided based current revenue projections, as well as a description of the possibilities that could be afforded by supplemental revenues.

Local Streets and Roads

Everyone has a vested interest in the safety and functionality of local streets and roads. Whether moving from point A to B by driving a vehicle, riding a bicycle, taking transit, or walking—or by a combination of these modes—a traveler would be hard-pressed to avoid using local streets and roads. As the backbone of Ventura County’s transportation system, the health and integrity of local streets and roads will continue to play a large role in the system’s future. Building, repairing, resurfacing and repaving local streets and roads is best managed at the city and county levels, as has been the case to date. Yet the public works departments across Ventura County collectively estimate that the growing shortfall of funds for local streets and roads will shift their efforts from maintaining existing conditions to managing their decline. This is the most significant challenge facing the safety and functionality of the transportation system.

Supplemental revenues are needed to fill the revenue gap and bring the local streets and roads network to a higher, more consistent state of good repair across communities. While cities and the County would continue to manage maintenance, new supplemental revenues could be tied to equitable and consistent standards for maintaining street and road condition levels across communities. For those communities meeting or exceeding standards, supplemental revenues can offer the opportunity to broaden the safety and functionality for all users as “complete streets,” which could include installing traffic safety measures, bicycle lanes, enhanced bus transit stops, crosswalks, and other amenities. Essentially, this approach would maximize the value per dollar spent, as well as support the usefulness of all transportation modes.

Transit

As summarized in the previous chapter, the County's seven transit operators provide fixed route and varying forms of demand response services. Most of these services primarily serve local trip needs, do not connect with each other, offer varying hours and days of operation, and provide limited connectivity to destinations outside of the county.

VCTC conducted the Regional Transit Study as a thorough review of the opportunities to reorganize transit delivery in the county that improves connectivity, strengthens the focus on customer needs, and maximizes the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire system. While many details of implementation will be addressed over a period of months if not years, the basic consensus concept from the study process proposes two basic types of systems – creating a Gold Coast Transit District to provide a framework for consolidating West County operations and an East County model that would coordinate services through a Memorandum of Understanding between the separate individual municipal operations in Camarillo, Moorpark, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks. Existing VISTA services would be transitioned to operation by the new District with the exception of VISTA East. Authority for this operation would be transitioned to the East County MOU. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit would be consolidated into a maximum of two operations.

The operators and VCTC are committed to work together to create a seamless, customer-focused system with the long-term goal of further rationalization and consolidation of services. As service efficiencies and operational improvements occur, supplemental funding could support expanded services and frequencies.

Arterials

Similar to local streets and roads context, development and maintenance of arterials are best managed at the city and county levels, but the gap in projected and needed funding levels is significant. Arterial roads provide important connections within and between local communities, and from the highway system to local street and road networks. Typically, arterials are designed for higher speed travel on 1-3 lanes of travel in each direction. As such, arterial thoroughfares and intersections accommodate some of the highest volumes of traffic on the roadway network, increasing the potential frequency and significance of accidents between vehicles and with pedestrians and bicycles. As described in Chapter 4, the current development policy framework shaped by the Guidelines for Orderly Development and SOAR allows for very little development that would generate developer fees to improve arterial connections between cities. And while a reciprocal traffic mitigation fee currently exists, it is not estimated to produce adequate revenues for

significant improvements to arterials. Today's funding gap will continue to grow in the future.

Supplemental revenues for arterials could support efforts to meet capacity needs in the long term, enhancing the connectivity of key destinations within the county. This would particularly occur in those areas of the County where development is lacking or non-existent, but shoulder a heavy burden of the County's traffic. Supplemental revenues could also provide for expanded safety features at high-volume intersections, particularly those with LOS F. Additionally, because some of the county's arterials are classified as state routes, supplemental revenues could help to leverage state and federal funding sources and expedite improvements.

Highways and Freeways

Many of Ventura County's highway and freeways are in need of capacity enhancements and/or operational improvements. US 101 is the primary highway route that connects Ventura County's communities and the neighboring counties, a major part of local mobility and economic well-being. Its peak period capacity and the State Route (SR) 23 interchange with US 101 will continue to be the highway network's greatest area of need. While SR 23 and SR 118 through the eastern portion of the county have received some of the most recent major improvements, bottlenecks and safety enhancements will continue to be issues requiring attention. The efficiency of SR 126's connection to US 101 and its importance to local commerce and freight movement are also key requirements for successful performance of the highway system in the future. Given all of these needs, limited funding exists that barely addresses the needs of US 101.

Currently, US 101 and SR 118 are included as priority projects in the program of improvements, but identifying specific operational improvements are important to maximizing the return on investment. Available funds amounts and their timing will largely be determined by federal legislative outcomes, but supplemental revenues could leverage federal funds more effectively. These supplemental revenues could also support faster delivery of priority projects including high-occupancy travel lanes on US 101 and operational and safety enhancements to SR 118 and SR 126.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Cities and communities have strengthened their local bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in recent years, working to improve the safety and viability of these modes for local trips, reduce localized congestion, and enhance design of city centers and major destinations. These ongoing improvements and the growing "complete streets" movement focused on

expanding the safety and usability of streets and roads for all users (i.e., vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian and transit) offer significant promise for continued development of complete and safe local networks. However, significant gaps and safety issues in these networks still exist, both within and between cities.

Connecting these networks on a regional scale would further strengthen these networks' usefulness and contributions to congestion relief. Prioritizing projects that delivery greater connectivity and safety will be most effective at leveraging state and federal funds in a more competitive environment. Supplemental revenue could provide a new localized source of funds for expanded "complete streets" planning and implementation that are distributed on a similar competitive basis and support leveraging of other sources.

Environmental and Mitigation Programs

While beneficial to the environment as a whole, specific aspects of transportation infrastructure improvements often necessitate mitigation of more localized environmental impacts, which can add to the costs and time needed to complete projects. Additionally, run-off of by-product contaminants from the broader transportation infrastructure (e.g., motor oils) impacts local waterways and beaches.

Beyond mitigating project-specific impacts, a range of new strategies could potentially add broader value by enhancing natural environments, providing new amenities in urban areas, and encouraging land use and development of the built environment that is mutually-supportive of transportation infrastructure. Open space preservation strategies could include restoration, acquisition and management of lands, as well as design and implementation of trails programs. To address the continued growth of urban infrastructure and run-off, strategies could support developing infrastructure and programs that work to prevent or contain runoff into the stormwater system and natural environment. Furthermore, incentives could be provided to local jurisdictions for public and private infrastructure development that are mutually-supportive of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and in-line with local and state policies that promote sustainability and "smart growth" (e.g. SB 375, AB 32). Additional strategies that are tailored to local needs, impacts, and opportunities could be developed through close coordination with local jurisdictions and regional agencies. New local sources of supplemental revenue can be the source of these strategies.

Freight Movement

Sustaining Port Hueneme and agribusiness operations and transportation connections in Ventura County is critical to the local and regional economies, yet their impacts on local

communities' safety and health are difficult to manage. Supplemental revenues could support improvements designed to increase operational efficiency, mitigate impacts, and enhance quality of life in communities.

CHAPTER 8: FINANCIAL PLAN, SCENARIOS AND REALITIES

In the best of times economic forecasting is difficult. With today's unprecedented instability in the world's financial markets, forecasting the economic outlook in the near and long terms is extremely challenging. In the context of this plan, adding to the difficulty of forecasting is the need to predict the response to economic pressures by the federal and state governments during the next thirty years.

Revenue Scenarios

Because transportation funding for Ventura County depends upon multiple State and federal revenue sources, VCTC developed a set of 30-year revenue forecasts based on the likely amount of funds from these sources. Three, 30-year forecasts (high, medium and low) were developed to demonstrate how future revenues could vary based on factors that include economic conditions as well as State and federal policy decisions.

The forecasts below represent a range of possibilities from an optimistic scenario (high) to pessimistic scenario (low) of State and federal revenues that VCTC might receive to fund transportation over the next 30 years.

- The **low scenario** is based on the premise that revenues will further lag, and that the State and federal governments will implement across-the-board transportation funding cuts to address fiscal issues, as has been advocated by some.
- The **medium scenario** is largely the status quo, assuming that there is no change to existing transportation funding trends, with the result that funds received by VCTC slowly increase over time.
- The **high scenario** considers the possibility that the recommendations of various studies calling for increased transportation investment will be implemented, thus significantly increasing funding.

After considering these scenarios, VCTC adopted the medium scenario as its revenue forecast on the grounds that the State and federal governments are unlikely to provide a major funding infusion given their own fiscal challenges, but will also be reluctant to significantly cut funding given the tremendous need.

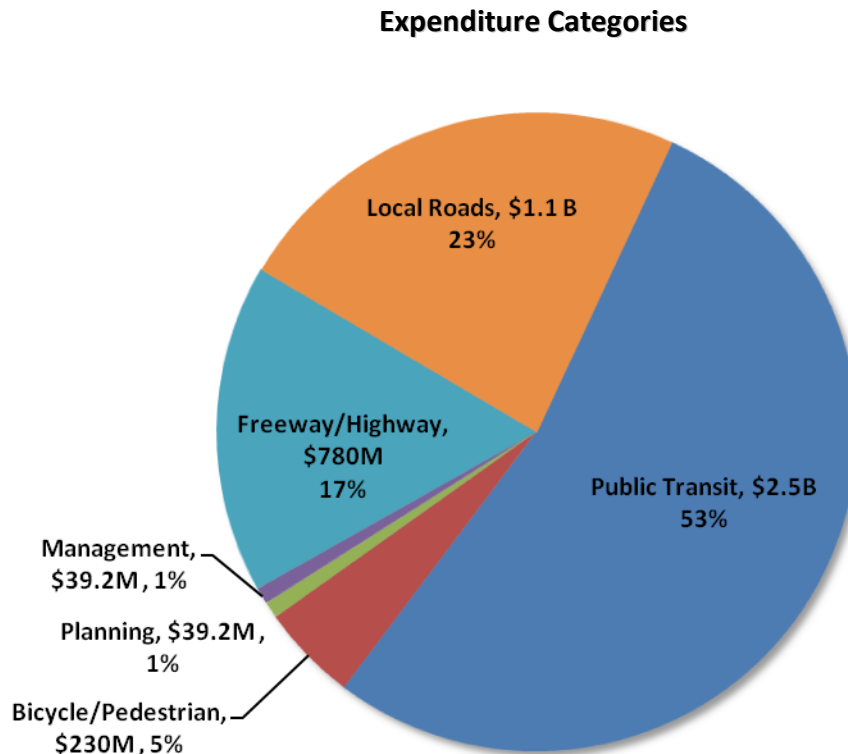
The scenarios provide separate lines forecasting funds directed to Ventura County for each State and federal transportation program. Some programs, such as LTF and STIP, are based on receipts of retail sales tax revenue, and will therefore be affected by fluctuations in those the revenues. California Lutheran University's Center for Economic Research and Forecast (CERF) forecasts form the basis for the scenarios for these types of revenue. The medium and high scenarios recognize that Proposition 22, passed by the state's voters in November, 2012, now protects most State transportation revenues including STA and STIP, while the low scenario assumes that future legislation somehow eliminates Proposition 22's protections.

REVENUES IN 5 YEAR INCREMENTS – LOW SCENARIO							
Dollars in Millions							
	13/14 - 17/18	18/19 - 22/23	23/24 - 27/28	28/29 - 32/33	33/34 - 37/38	38/39 - 42/43	30-Year Total
State Funds							
STIP	\$38.1	\$61.7	\$72.1	\$84.3	\$97.4	\$111.4	\$465.1
SHOPP	\$108.5	\$108.5	\$104.9	\$90.6	\$75.7	\$60.8	\$ 549.0
HUTA	\$117.5	\$117.5	\$113.6	\$97.9	\$81.6	\$65.3	\$593.4
Prop 1B	\$	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
LTF	\$154.5	\$199.8	\$263.0	\$343.4	\$440.7	\$557.9	\$1,959.3
STA	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Federal Funds							
STP	\$35.5	\$35.5	\$34.3	\$29.7	\$24.8	\$20.0	\$179.8
CMAQ	\$31.5	\$18.9	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$50.4
TAP	\$5.4	\$5.4	\$5.2	\$4.5	\$3.8	\$3.0	\$27.2
FTA	\$69.3	\$67.0	\$64.8	\$55.8	\$46.4	\$37.1	\$340.3
TOTAL	\$560.3	\$614.2	\$657.9	\$706.2	\$770.4	\$855.5	\$4,164.5

REVENUES IN 5 YEAR INCREMENTS – MEDIUM SCENARIO							
Dollars in Millions							
	13/14 - 17/18	18/19 - 22/23	23/24 - 27/28	28/29 - 32/33	33/34 - 37/38	38/39 - 42/43	30-Year Total
State Funds							
STIP	\$38.1	\$61.7	\$72.1	\$84.3	\$97.4	\$111.4	\$465.1
SHOPP	\$127.5	\$127.5	\$127.5	\$127.5	\$127.5	\$127.5	\$765.0
HUTA	\$185.5	\$185.5	\$185.5	\$185.5	\$185.5	\$185.5	\$1,113.0
Prop 1B	\$17.0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$17.0
LTF	\$154.5	\$199.8	\$263.0	\$343.4	\$440.7	\$557.9	\$1,959.3
STA	\$27.0	\$30.9	\$36.9	\$42.3	\$48.9	\$55.9	\$241.1
Federal Funds							
STP	\$52.5	\$52.5	\$52.5	\$52.5	\$52.5	\$52.5	\$315.0
CMAQ	\$41.5	\$24.9	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 66.4
TAP	\$7.0	\$7.0	\$7.0	\$7.0	\$7.0	\$7.0	\$42.0
FTA	\$117.0	\$117.0	\$117.0	\$117.0	\$117.0	\$117.0	\$702.0
TOTAL	\$767.6	\$806.8	\$860.8	\$959.5	\$1,076.5	\$1,214.8	\$5,685.9

REVENUES IN 5 YEAR INCREMENTS – HIGH SCENARIO							
Dollars in Millions							
	13/14 - 17/18	18/19 - 22/23	23/24 - 27/28	28/29 - 32/33	33/34 - 37/38	38/39 - 42/43	30-Year Total
State Funds							
STIP	\$58.6	\$101.5	\$118.7	\$138.8	\$160.4	\$183.4	\$761.4
SHOPP	\$158.0	\$158.0	\$158.0	\$158.0	\$158.0	\$158.0	\$948.0
HUTA	\$193.1	\$213.2	\$235.4	\$259.8	\$286.9	\$316.8	\$1,505.1
Prop 1B	\$17.0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$17.0
LTF	\$154.5	\$199.8	\$263.0	\$343.4	\$440.7	\$557.9	\$1,959.3
STA	\$27.0	\$30.9	\$36.2	\$42.3	\$48.9	\$55.9	\$241.1
Federal Funds							
STP	\$86.0	\$86.0	\$86.0	\$86.0	\$86.0	\$86.0	\$516.0
CMAQ	\$38.0	\$30.4	\$19.0	\$19.0	\$19.0	\$19.0	\$144.4
TAP	\$13.0	\$13.0	\$13.0	\$13.0	\$13.0	\$13.0	\$78.0
FTA	\$172.0	\$172.0	\$172.0	\$172.0	\$172.0	\$172.0	\$1,032.0
TOTAL	\$917.1	\$1,004.7	\$1,101.3	\$1,232.3	\$1,384.8	\$1,562.0	\$7,202.3

Applying the Medium Revenue Forecast, and then excluding revenues controlled by Caltrans, the following chart illustrates the funds available by use category. Over the next thirty years, the largest single share of the County's transportation funds are dedicated for public transit. In the case of federal funding for transit, these funds are estimated based on the system and services offered in the County. Decreasing or removing some or all transit would lead to a proportional decrease in federal funding.

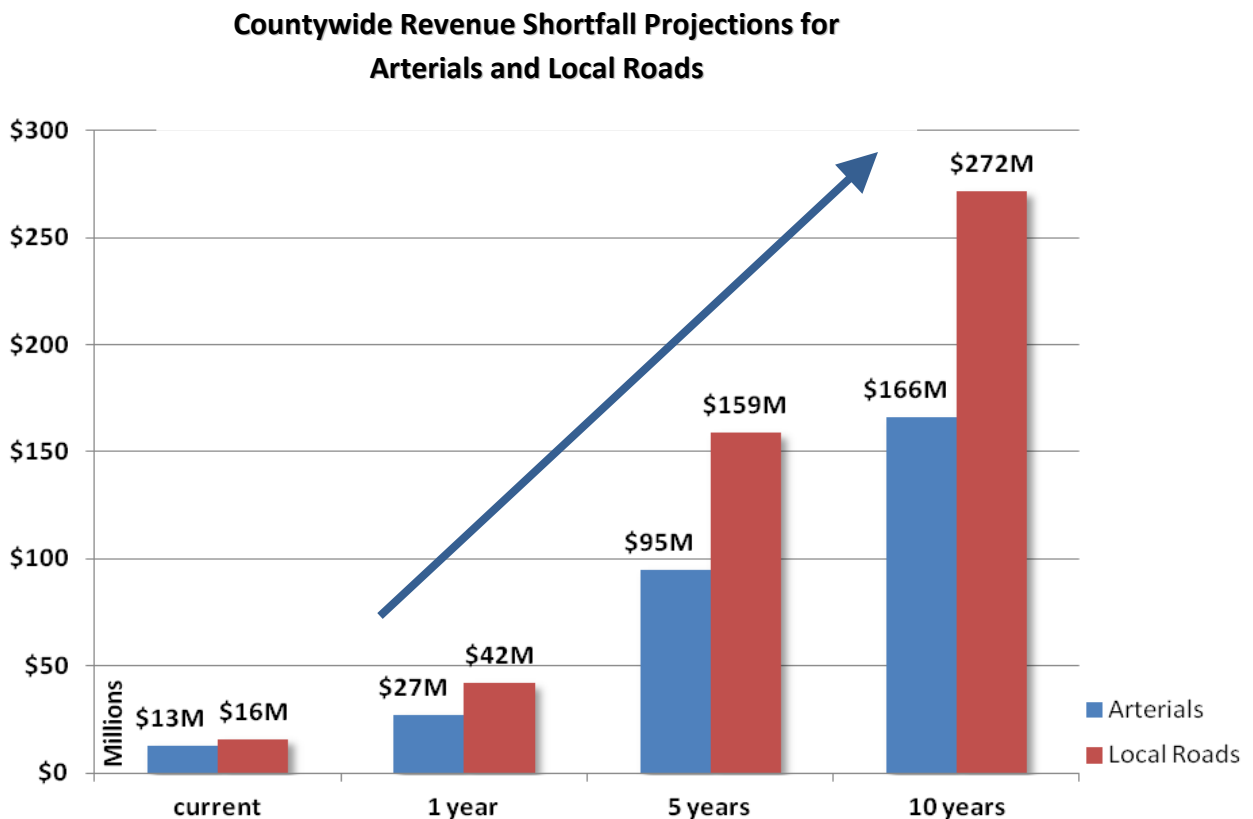


Comparison of Revenue and Sources and Expenditures

The transportation revenue estimate above can be compared to projected known expenses and potential solutions. Although expenses can be equally difficult to assess, in many cases the historic trends of expenditures are more a reflection of what revenues were available rather than real needs. In those cases the total funding over the next 30 years is presented with the understanding that that additional work will be required to identify transportation needs based on quantitative analysis. A brief discussion of the major expenditures categories follows below.

Local Streets, Roads and Arterials

As discussed in Chapter 5, the funding shortfall for maintenance of local streets and arterials provides an enormous challenge to local jurisdictions and represents a significant share of the need for transportation funds. In estimates provided by the public works departments across Ventura County this study found that in ten years there will be a \$438 million short fall of funds to maintain streets and arterials in their existing condition as illustrated in the following graphic. No future new roads are included in these estimates. Projecting the estimates to 30 years, there will be a \$2.4 billion need in Ventura County to maintain local streets and arterials. This estimate is based on a straight line trend of needs, but because pavement does not degrade at constant rate but rather it degrades geometrically across time, the real need for funding could be substantially more.



Under the adopted Revenue Forecast only \$1.1 billion is available for local streets and roads leaving a \$1.3 billion shortfall over the next thirty years.

Transit

Transit's anticipated \$2.50 billion over the next thirty years (51% of all revenues), is believed to be adequate to continue current levels of both bus and train service. As described in previous chapters, recent legislation is reallocating TDA funds used for maintenance on local streets and roads to transit effective July 1, 2014. While the Regional Transit Study results can lead to a more coordinated and consolidated effort to address customer needs, even with the adequacy of funding countywide, there will continue to be imbalances between local needs and allocation of resources until further consolidation of funding and operations is achieved.



Highways and Freeways

The traditional funding source for state highway improvements, the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), is estimated to provide \$465 million over the next thirty years. Another possible highway funding source, the federal Surface Transportation Program (STP), is projected to have \$315 million.

Although VCTC has typically used STP funds for local street rehabilitation and improvements, it has now for the first time committed some of these funds for a freeway widening, the Route 101/23 Interchange Improvement, since it would have taken many years for sufficient STIP funds to accumulate for the project. It is easier to administer the federal STP requirements on a relatively few number of large freeway projects, rather than multiple smaller street projects; however VCTC continued to put these funds on streets and roads to supplement the traditional funding which is woefully inadequate. Nevertheless, the adopted revenue forecast calls for using all STP funds for highway and freeway improvements, to provide a total of \$780 million over the next thirty years. In examining the two top priority projects, US Route 101 widening and the remainder of the SR 118 widening, there would still be a significant shortfall of nearly \$450 million.



If the available funds can only support improvements on one highway project in the next thirty years then careful consideration must be given to the benefit of that project prior to

funding allocation. A technical analysis of top-ranked highway projects should be performed so that benefits can be used as ranking criteria.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Bicycle and pedestrian projects' estimated \$230 million in funds over 30 years will need to leverage other state and federal grant programs to complete any large scale projects. Compiling the construction costs for proposed bicycle lanes throughout the County reveals a need of \$258.3 million resulting in a shortfall of \$28.3 million. In addition to the construction cost, bicycle lanes also have an annual maintenance cost, which is not included in this calculation.

Other Categories

The expenditure categories above identify those that are commonly associated with the transportation system. Other program areas such as rideshare activities or public education are not included. Impact mitigation programs and their associated expenditures are also not included in the calculations.

CHAPTER 9: BRIDGING THE GAP: ANALYSIS OF FUNDING STRATEGIES

With nearly a \$2 billion shortfall over the next 30 years the transportation system will fall behind in required infrastructure improvements, maintenance and capacity. To bridge the gap in funding, VCTC investigated several strategies commonly adopted by counties to bolster revenue specifically for transportation. During the public participation program, community members reviewed VCTC's analysis and provided feedback about the strategies' viability and their preferences. Respondents to public opinion research also provided perspective about their preferences. Following is a summary of these strategies.

Gas Tax

A local sales tax on gasoline in Ventura County would generate revenues for the purpose of funding transportation needs. In order to achieve funding that begins to approach the \$2 billion gap in funding, a \$0.10 per gallon tax would be required to be added to gasoline sales in Ventura County. While the projected revenues would significantly bridge the funding gap, as fuel efficiency and the use of alternative fuels increases, the revenues will decrease. Additionally, the tax will increase the cost of all vehicle trips, including moving freight and transit. This tax requires a two-thirds majority approval by the County's voters.

Tolling/Express Lanes

The tolling of highways or tolling of express lanes is a growing strategy in southern California. Users pay a fee for access to a lane or highway that can expedite their trip by offering congestion-free travel. Fees can be set by time of day or congestion level to ensure a relatively free flow of traffic. The 91 Express Lane in Orange County is a prime example of such a facility. This strategy can generate adequate funding for improvements and maintenance for highway facilities, but are generally restricted to the specific corridor or facility tolled. Funding proceeds tend to vary greatly depending on alternative routes available and actual use of the facility. Additionally, many perceive tolling to be "double taxation" or as an inequity impacting lower income levels. Feasibility studies from other corridors consistently suggest that tolled facilities require substantial congestion and market potential at levels beyond those found in Ventura County, including U.S. 101.

Vehicle Registration Fees

A fee placed on vehicles registered in Ventura County could provide a flexible and stable source of funds for transportation projects. Vehicle registration fees to fund activities such as the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) and other specific programs are already in widespread use. Several northern California counties recently implemented \$10 per vehicle registration fees to fund a wide variety of transportation related activities. Projected revenues based on the number of registered vehicles is approximately \$7.5 million annually, or \$225 million over 30 years—revenue levels that do not significantly close the funding gap. This fee requires a two-thirds majority approval by the County's voters.

Countywide Sales Tax Measure

This strategy would add one half-cent to the sales tax in Ventura County, raising it from 7.25% to 7.75%, with revenues dedicated to transportation. This strategy is the most common avenue for counties to fund a wide variety of transportation projects, from local streets and roads, to highways, to transit. Ventura County is one of only a couple urbanized counties in California without such a sales tax dedicated to transportation.

According to forecasts described in the following section, an increase of one half-cent would generate \$2.1 billion over the next 30 years for transportation, nearly bridging the identified gap in funding. Additionally, the funds could be used flexibly across a variety of projects, and would also leverage higher amounts of federal funds. Many large projects such as highway widening and transit facilities could be delivered sooner. This tax requires a two-thirds majority approval by the County's voters.

Of the strategies listed above, the only strategy that comes significantly close to bridging the funding gap and providing the most secure and flexible revenue stream for transportation projects is the Countywide Sales Tax. It is also the most commonly used strategy by counties throughout California. While common and affording significant revenues and flexibility for Ventura County, achieving a two-thirds majority approval by the County's voters is a significant challenge.

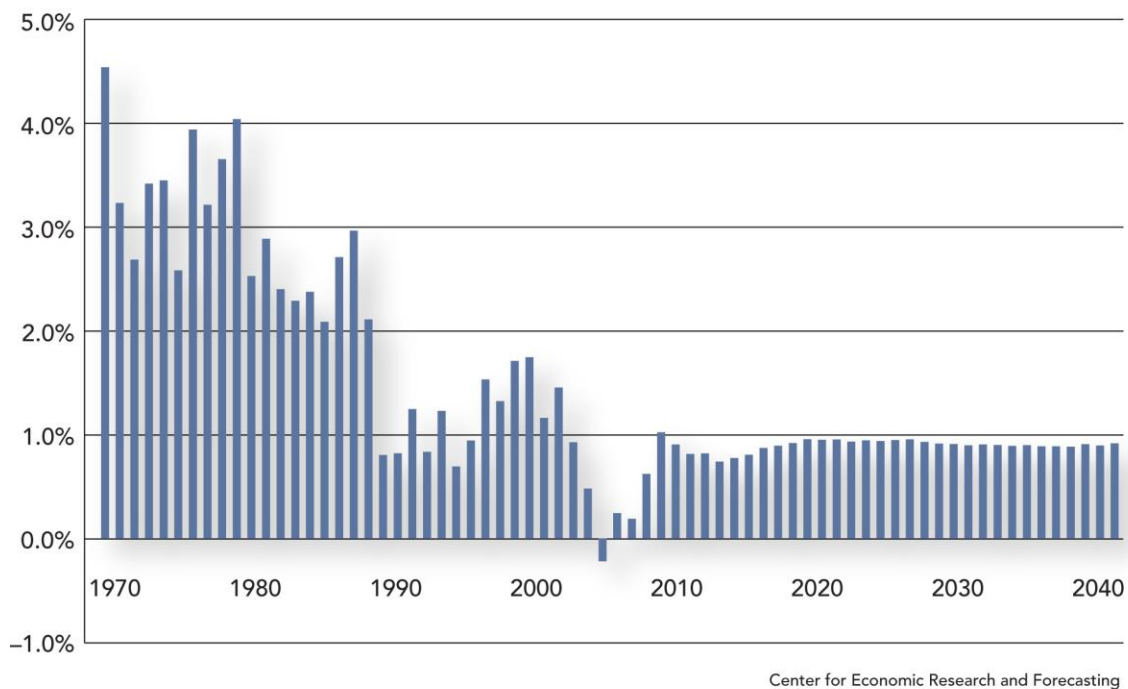
Estimating Transportation Measure Revenues

To fully explore what a dedicated transportation measure would bring to Ventura County, VCTC retained California Lutheran University's (CLU) Center for Economic Research and Forecasting (CERF) to build a long-run economic forecast model for Ventura County to the year 2040. The full report is contained in the Appendix. To develop the long-run economic

forecast, the Center for Economic Research and Forecasting analyzed long-range trends including birth rates, death rates, civilian labor force participation, the long-run unemployment rate, educational attainment and productivity.

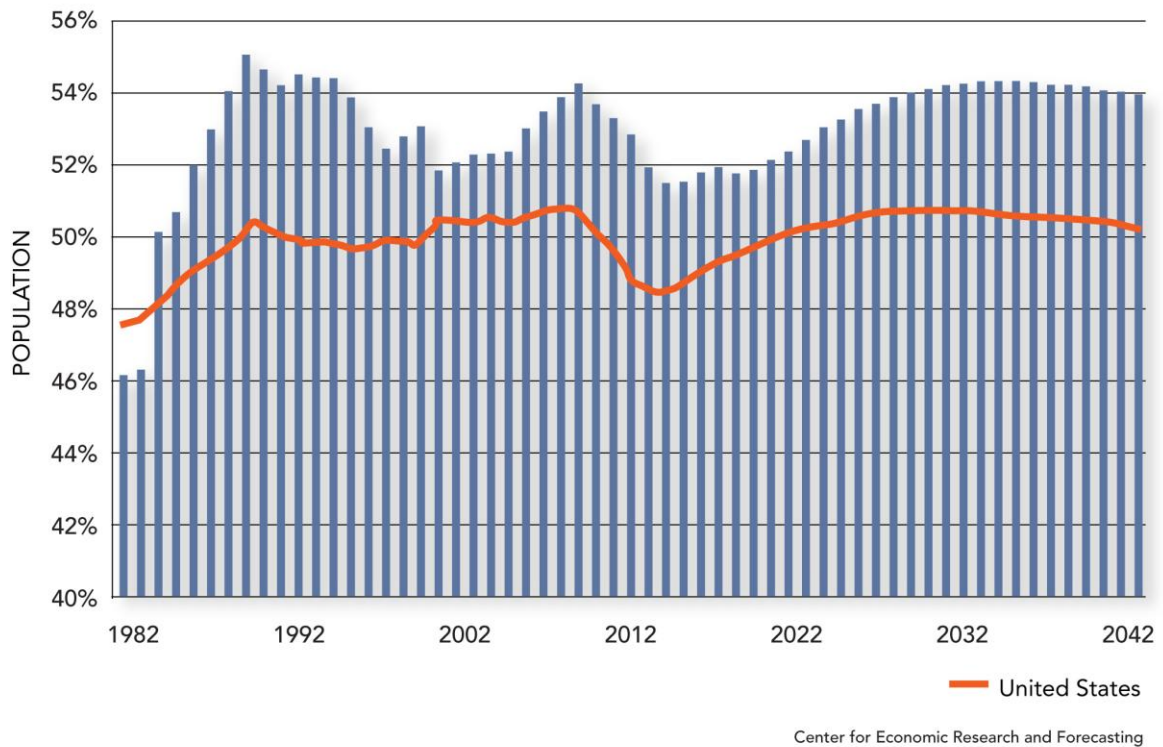
Population change is driven by two types of changes: natural change and migration. While the natural change forecast is driven by purely demographic factors, the migration forecast is driven by economic factors, especially jobs. CERF estimated the average annual growth rate at 0.90%, very close to both the California Department of Finance's 2040 forecast of 1.12% and the Southern California Association of Government's 2035 forecast at 0.90%.

Ventura County Population Growth 1900–2040



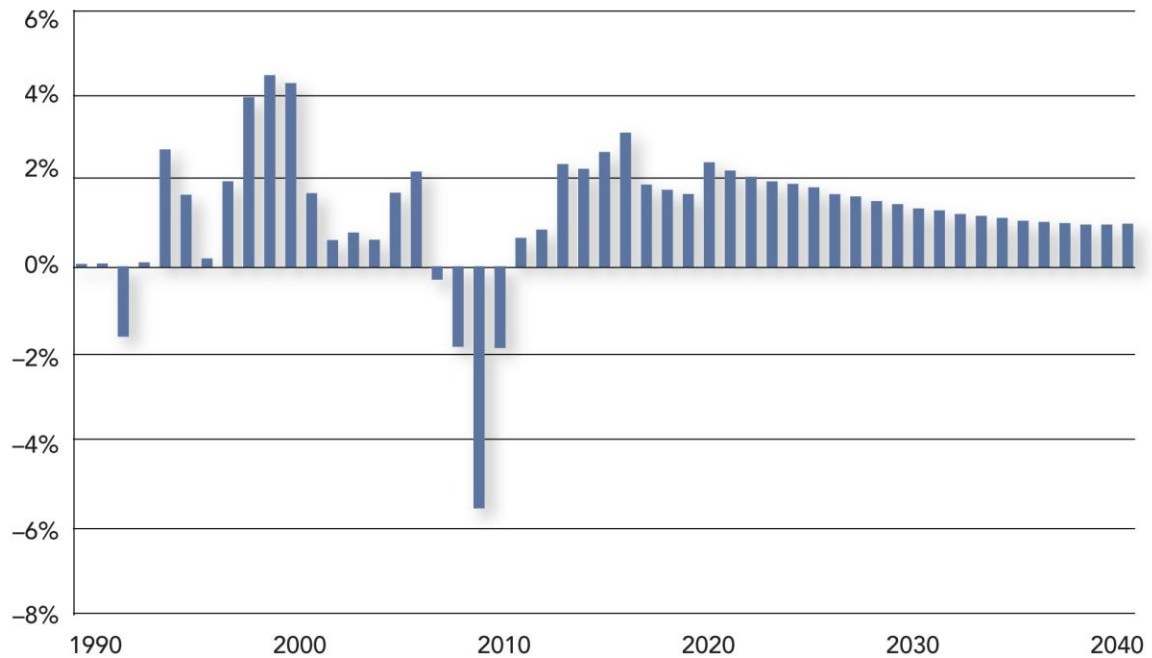
Long-run economic activity starts with the forecast of the civilian labor force. Historic trends show sharp rises in the civilian labor force participation rate (civilian labor force as a share of the population) due to specific events such as the end of World War II or the entry of women into labor force from the 1960s through the 1990s. In recent years the participation rate has leveled off. CERF and many other forecasters project that a new dynamic, older workers in the work force, will gradually increase the participation rate. Older workers will remain in the work force longer than previous generations due to the need to bolster incomes and savings, as well as due to increasing lifespans.

Ventura County Labor Force Participation Rate 1982–2042



The civilian labor force forecast along with the unemployment forecast drives the jobs forecast. CERF included the recent recession in its economic model and forecasts that unemployment will not fall back to a normal level (6%) until 2018. As Ventura County and the nation recover from the Great Recession, CERF forecasts the job growth rate in 2013 and later will be noticeably sharper than the 2008 through 2012 timeframe. Future economic cycles (“ups” and “downs”) will likely continue, but for the purposes of forecasting beyond 2018, the average over multiple years provides sufficient accuracy for the purposes of this analysis.

Ventura County Non-Farm Job Growth



Center for Economic Research and Forecasting

The forecast expects that productivity, defined as output per worker, will maintain the recent pace of 1.5%, a result of improved education levels and other historic trends. With forecasts of both jobs and productivity, CERF forecasted real gross domestic product (GDP), the broadest measure of economic activity. These forecasts are then compared to historical data and result in the following summary table.

Summary: Ventura County Baseline Forecast

Average annual growth rates (%)	History (1990-2010)	Forecast (2011-2040)
Population Growth	1.0	0.9
Productivity Growth	1.7 *	1.6
Real Retail Sales Growth	1.5	2.2
Inflation Growth	2.7	2.7
Retail Sales Growth	4.2 **	5.0

* 2.4 with 1990

** 5.4 without the Great Recession

Based on these projections, CERF calculated the revenue generated from a one half-cent sales tax rate for 10, 20, 30-year scenarios. The 30 year cenario would generate approximately \$2.1 billion in real dollars (excluding inflation).

**Ventura County Cumulative Revenue Estimates
Half-Percent Sales Tax Rate Increase**

Real Dollars (excludes inflation)

10-year scenario	\$603.3 million
20-year scenario	\$1,357.3 million
30-year scenario	\$2,082.0 million

Conclusion

These economic forecasts provide a credible estimate of how a sales tax measure could bridge the funding gap for Ventura County transportation needs. Yet achieving the required two-thirds majority approval by the County's voters would be challenging based on past experiences in Ventura County and in other California counties, notwithstanding the current economic climate.

CHAPTER 10: ALTERNATE FUNDING STRATEGY FEASIBILITY

Ventura County has twice placed a countywide sales tax measure for transportation on the ballot without successful passage, first in 1990 and then again 2004. Today, the current economic climate does not favor instituting new taxes. Nevertheless, voter research is a critical tool in conducting thorough analysis of current and future opportunities and information needs. Design of a potential future sales tax measure for transportation must include a detailed understanding of voters' expectations in order to achieve a two-thirds vote of support.

Voter Opinion Polls (2008, 2011)

To test the feasibility of a sales tax measure or any strategy that required voter approval, the public participation program included voter research to assess the possibility of placing a measure on the November 2012 general election ballot. A baseline of voter attitudes was established in 2008 and then compared with results in 2011 to assess the level of voter acceptance of any type of alternative funding strategy for transportation in Ventura County.

J. Moore Methods of Sacramento conducted twenty-minute telephone surveys with six hundred high-propensity voters in Ventura County. The first surveys were conducted in August of 2008 to establish a baseline of voter opinions. A second round of surveys were conducted in September of 2011 and then compared to the surveys completed in 2008. The survey sample size accurately reflects the voter universe in Ventura County and has an accuracy of +/- 4.2%.

The questions asked by the survey were designed to answer the following overarching questions:

- Is transportation a high priority for voters at this time?
- Are voters generally confident that they can afford a new tax at this time?
- Do voters have the confidence that tax money will be well spent?

The results revealed the priorities and attitudes of voters in Ventura County. Following is a summary of key findings.

Priority Issues

Compared to a range of popular issues, and highlighted in bold font in the following table, maintaining roads and filling potholes was a high priority, while transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements were lower priorities among voters in the Voter Opinion 2011 survey.

Issue	High	Med.	Low
Improving the local economy	86%	11%	2%
Reducing crime and gang activity	79%	16%	5%
Maintaining roads and filling potholes	68%	27%	5%
Preventing pollution of beaches	67%	26%	6%
Improving local schools	67%	19%	13%
Preserving agricultural lands and open spaces	62%	30%	8%
Controlling government salaries and pensions	56%	27%	13%
Relieving countywide traffic congestion	50%	40%	10%
Reducing taxes	49%	27%	23%
Reducing the size of government	44%	30%	21%
Reducing global warming and air pollution	43%	27%	29%
Expanding Metrolink rail services	39%	31%	27%
Providing safer bike routes and sidewalks	37%	40%	22%
Improving local and regional bus services	32%	36%	27%

Potential Solutions for Transportation

In the Voter Opinion Poll of 2011, when asked about the potential of a ballot measure to support transportation, many respondents preferred including a range of elements rather than a smaller number.

Do you have a favorable, unfavorable or neutral response to:	Favorable	Unfavorable	Neutral
Expand transit services for seniors and disabled persons?	77%	10%	12%
Clean up road runoff that pollutes beaches?	73%	13%	12%
Protect open space and farmland from impacts of transportation and development?	68%	13%	17%
Expand Metrolink services connecting Ventura County cities	64%	20 %	15%
Fill potholes, resurface streets and improve road safety?	63%	16%	20%
Add lanes to 101 from LA County line to Ventura?	58%	24%	16%
Improve safety and fix bottleneck on 118; Moorpark to Simi Valley?	54%	21%	22%
Improve safety, intersections and signal timing on 126?	51%	18%	24%
Add lanes to the 101/23 inter-change in Thousand Oaks?	51%	27%	18%

Improving Transit Services

To inform the concurrent Ventura County Regional Transit Study, the Voter Opinion Poll of 2011 included specific questions regarding potential improvements to the County's transit services. Many respondents supported changes that would improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of transit services in Ventura County, with varying levels of support depending upon the proposed change.

Local officials are studying ways to improve the quality of services and make them more effective. Would you favor or oppose ___?	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
Uniform standards for route information, service frequency, connection and transfers	81%	6%	13%
Consolidate all local transit service into one system	62%	17%	21%
Eliminate services with low ridership and use savings to add services where demand is higher	62%	24%	14%
Create one consolidated service area in east County and another in west County	52%	22%	26%
Maintain separate services, but consolidate planning, financing, information and administration	51%	23%	26%
Keep city-by-city control rather than consolidating service	31%	43%	26%

When asked specifically about transit services priorities, interest in dial-a-ride service for seniors and persons with disabilities far outweighed fixed route and commuter bus service.

On the subject of public transit service in Ventura County, is ___ a high, medium or low priority to you? (Voter Opinion Poll, 2011)	High	Medium	Low
Dial-a-ride special services for seniors and disabled persons	55%	28%	16%
Local city fixed route bus services	26%	30%	43%
Commuter bus service between cities	20%	32%	47%

Sales Tax Measure: Affordability and Confidence

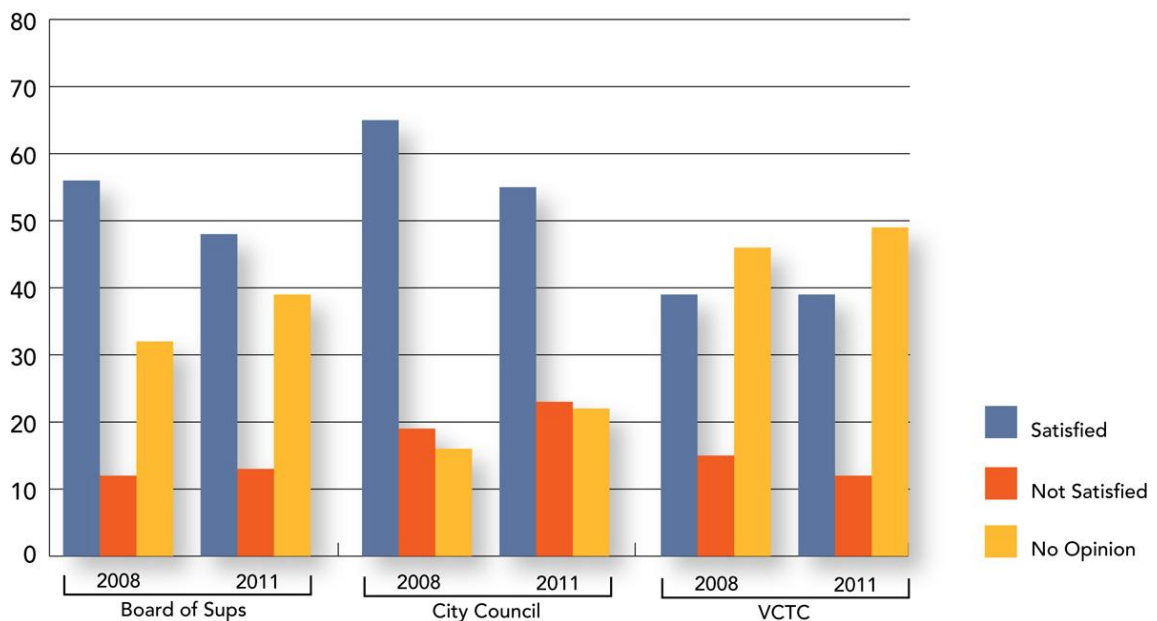
Voters' sense of affordability and their confidence in how tax money would be spent fell from 2008 to 2011.

Could you afford increasing your local sales tax by ½ cent for 30 years?	Yes	No	No Opinion
2008	67%	30%	3%
2011	59%	36%	5%

Do you have confidence in local elected leaders to spend revenues from a new countywide ½ cent sales tax programs efficiently?	Yes	No	No Opinion
2008	39%	51%	10%
2011	30%	59%	11%

Satisfaction with local government agencies fell from 2008 to 2011, and overall awareness of the VCTC has remained low.

Satisfaction



Additional Alternatives

Consideration of alternatives proved equally unsupportable, specifically for either a gas tax, a sales tax, or a vehicle license fee, all of which requires a two-thirds majority voter approval. When asked specifically about improving local streets and roads, a high priority by many measures, voters still provided inadequate levels of support.

A ten-cent gas tax increase raise the same amount of revenue as a ½ cent increase in the sales tax. Which option, if any would you prefer to fund transportation improvements?	Percent
Increase sales tax by ½ cent	57%
Increase gas tax by 10 cents a gallon	17%
Neither	21%
No opinion	5%

To pay for local road repair and safety improvements, would you favor or oppose:	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
¼ cent increase in local sales tax?	54%	43%	3%
½ cent increase in local sales tax?	53%	43%	4%
½ percent increase in local vehicle license fee?	52%	45%	3%
1 percent increase in local vehicle license fee?	44%	52%	4%

Voter Research Findings

In understanding the top issues for Ventura County voters, transportation issues are among the top issues, but do not have primacy. Nevertheless, a number of transportation and related issues are highly favorable, and, when combined with priorities and solutions identified during the public participation process, provide valuable data about how voters may support increased local taxes to address targeted issues.

At this point in time, given the economic conditions and decreased levels of satisfaction and support for taxes and government agencies, and despite the extensive public outreach undertaken educating the public on transportation issues, it appears that an insufficient number of Ventura County voters support new tax measures for transportation funding on the November 2012 ballot.

Conclusions

Without new revenues from an alternative funding source, VCTC must operate within a tightly constrained budget and significant shortfalls in funding for nearly all areas of transportation as described in this plan. VCTC must continue to elevate the engagement of cities, the County, and the broader community in planning for the future of the system and prioritizing use of existing resources to maximize the return on investment. Additionally, VCTC must continue to position and prepare the region to leverage opportunities for special federal and State funding if they may arise.

CHAPTER 11: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

More than ever before, people within the Ventura County region have a shared understanding of the transportation future that they envision and desire, the challenges that need to be addressed, and the opportunities and strategies that could assist the region in achieving the vision. VCTC will continue to provide leadership to the region in charting the path forward with increased levels of engagement from all areas and interests in the Ventura County region. The following outcomes and associated actions are built from the direction of Commissioners and broad public participation, and are particularly responsive to stakeholders' desire to focus on priorities without an immediate infusion of new local funding sources. These implementation steps will guide the region in prioritizing transportation investments, positioning to leverage funding opportunities, and providing local communities with needed resources to maintain quality of life and improve mobility.

Outcome 1: Status Quo

Growing funding constraints require greater accountability in ensuring that each dollar invested in transportation brings about the greatest possible return.

Actions:

1. Include revenue generating options in all long term planning efforts. The potential for tolling, HOT lanes, or other user fees to supplement existing funding sources should be incorporated into plans and studies for facility and/or service improvements.
2. Change the current policy for federal Surface Transportation Program funds, to prioritize the use of these funds for regional highway and freeway priorities rather than local streets and roads.
3. Request that Caltrans perform a quantitative analysis of congestion and delay projections and relief options for the highway/freeway network, compare the results to community priorities, and provide recommendations for improvements that maximize the return on investment.
4. Re-evaluate VCTC's Highway Project Priority list and project funding process to ensure those projects with the greatest value to the County, on needs-based criteria, receive funding.

5. Realign the Transportation Development Act Article 3, Bicycle and Pedestrian funding criteria, to foster greater use of bicycling and walking for daily transportation. Base project rankings on quantitative analysis of improved connectivity within and/or between communities, schools, job centers and other important destinations.

Outcome 2: Community Connections

Improving connections within and between communities is a top priority. In nearly every public participation activity, community members identified connectivity between cities, communities and important destinations as a high priority. How to best improve connectivity varies between communities throughout the region and making the needed connections requires focused, continual effort at the regional level to reach consensus among agencies, cities and interest groups.

Action:

1. Conduct corridor studies on Ventura County's major transportation routes (US 101, SR 118, and SR 126) to determine the best return on investments in improved connectivity.
2. Examine connections between cities and important destinations across all modes, including potential ridership levels for rideshare and transit.
3. Continue collaborating with local jurisdictions, interest groups, agencies and transit operators and provide the needed regional planning, funding and policy support for implementing improved connectivity among all modes, including customer service objectives contained in the Regional Transit Study.

Outcome 3: Public Awareness

The public participation program highlighted the general public's lack of awareness of the cost, funding shortfalls, and impact of transportation in their daily lives. Each of the public outreach sessions was well-received with many participants indicating the need to continue to engage more community members in planning the transportation system and developing a local funding source, specifically a local sales tax measure for transportation.

Actions:

1. Continue outreach and education efforts to inform and involve County residents in the planning of the transportation system. Deploy a range of activities and

presentation materials that meet the information and participation needs of the greatest possible range of interests.

2. Monitor voter awareness and attitudes periodically on both specific transportation issues and general attitudes concerning funding strategies including tolling, user fees, and a local sales tax measure for transportation, to assess voters' information needs and to capitalize on opportunities to create a local revenue stream for transportation.

Outcome 4: Transit

Transit is a priority. Ventura County residents responded favorably to the development of a robust transit system that offers alternatives to the automobile.

Actions:

1. Implement the recommendations of the Regional Transit Study including needed funding, planning and policy support for creation of a more integrated system of services. Additionally, include integration of ADA paratransit services into no more than two operations and further coordination of services for seniors and persons with disabilities as adopted.
2. In addition to using State Transit Assistance Funds to support a sustainable level of service, as outlined in the adopted Regional Transit Study, develop a needs-based incentive program for a more integrated transit system to reward transit operators for improving connections, frequency or capacity through the use of State Transit Assistance funds.
3. Re-evaluate the "Unmet Needs" process and definitions to ensure that transit riders' needs are captured and given sufficient technical analysis to support any findings that are rendered.