



August 30, 2012

TO: Gold Coast Transit Board of Directors

FROM: Margaret Heath 
Paratransit & Special Projects Manager

SUBJECT: ACCESS Paratransit Management Report for FY 2012

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACCESS is the federally mandated ADA complementary paratransit program of Gold Coast Transit. ACCESS provides shared ride demand response transportation to customers certified as having disabilities that prevent them from independently using the fixed route service. The ACCESS service area includes the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme and Ventura, along with the county unincorporated areas in between the cities. This service is also provided to seniors, 65 years of age and older. Connections are provided to other paratransit operators in Ventura County. Operating statistics reported are for fiscal year 2012.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the GCT Board of Directors receive and file this report.

II. OPERATIONS

Ridership: Demand for ACCESS services during FY2011-12 was down almost 11% compared with FY2010-11, from 76,730 to 68,618 trips. ACCESS ridership peaked during FY2008-09 at almost 84,000 rides and has been decreasing each year since then.

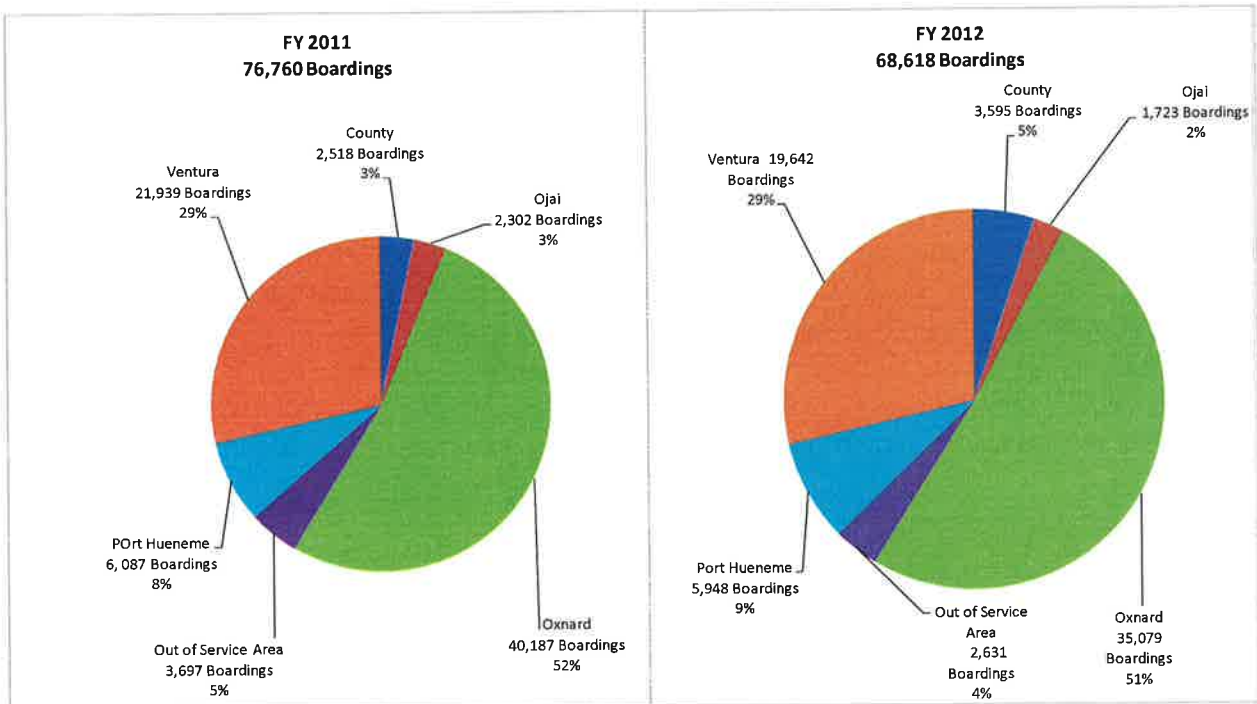
This ongoing trend reflects the apparent caution exercised in restoring social and educational programming cut during the initial economic downturn. There continue to be significantly fewer trips requested for travel to educational and senior nutrition sites. These destinations historically generated multiple visits by a single passenger in a week. Due to the smaller volume of the demand response service, fluctuations in ridership due to change in circumstances for a small proportion of regular riders can significantly affect the number of trips taken.

Subscription ridership decreased along with the decline in overall ACCESS ridership, down about 11% from FY11 and about 15% from FY10. Subscription trips are those trips that are frequently repeated within a month to the same destination at the same

time of day and day of week. The three most common types of subscription trips for ACCESS passengers last year were those to dialysis, employment, church.

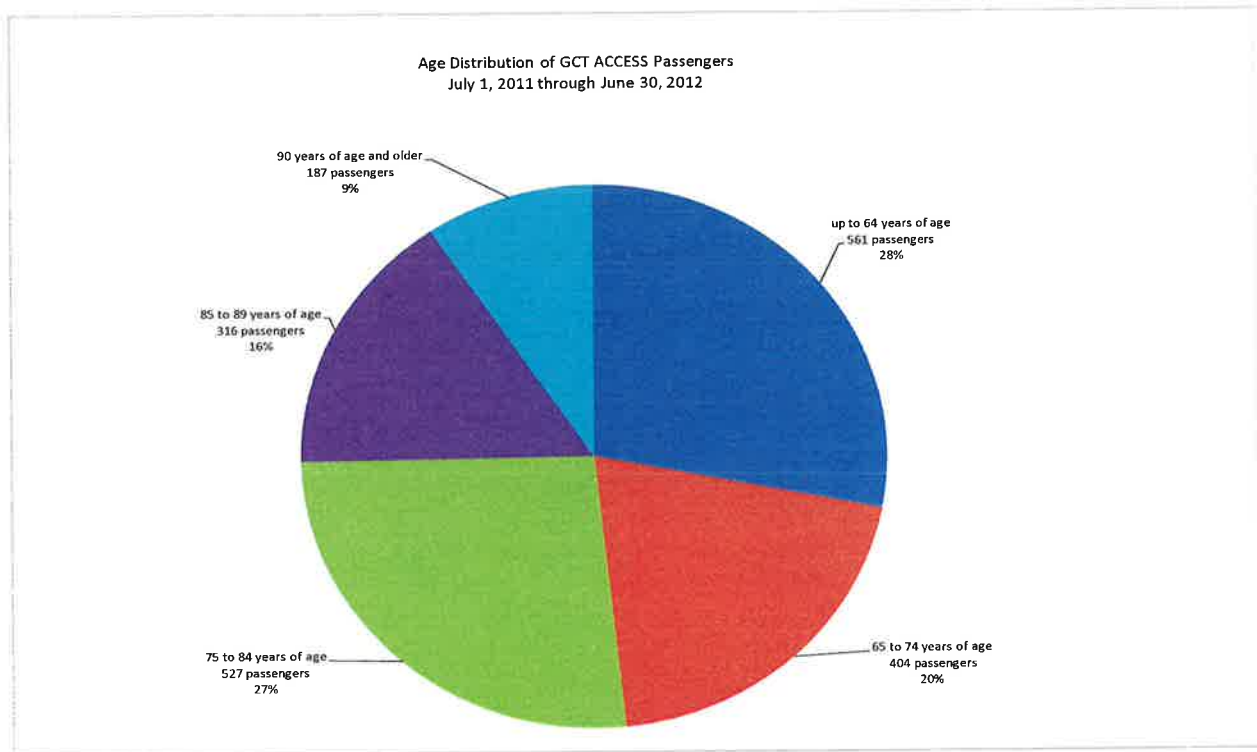
Many paratransit passengers participated in travel training presentations throughout the service area. More passengers appear to be exercising their ability to use fixed route, effectively stretching their budgets. At least 50% of ACCESS riders are over 75 years of age and qualify to ride fixed route service free. ACCESS passengers are taking advantage of the recently expanded 75+ fare benefit to help stretch limited incomes. The travel training program appears to have been effective in teaching seniors to use fixed route where appropriate and encouraging passengers to select the mode most appropriate for a particular trip.

As the most populous city, Oxnard generates the most ACCESS trips (35,079) with 51% of all rides. Ventura (19,642) is next at almost 29%. The proportion of rides from these two jurisdictions was consistent to those of prior years. ACCESS rides increased from the County areas from 3.3% of the trips in FY10-11 to 5.2% of the trips last year, an increase of 1,077 trips. Trips from all other areas declined, with the biggest decreases from Oxnard (down 5,108 rides) and Ventura (down 2,297 rides). Declines from other areas include: out of the service area (e.g.; Camarillo, East County) (down 1,066 rides), Ojai (down 579 rides) and Port Hueneme (down 139 rides).



Our Riders: ACCESS provided service to 1,995 individuals during the course of the year. This is 161 fewer people than the prior year, a decline of 7.5%. Of these individuals, 28% were under 65 years of age, up from 21% last year. More than 52% of ACCESS passengers were at least 75 years of age, up from 48% last year. Dwell time

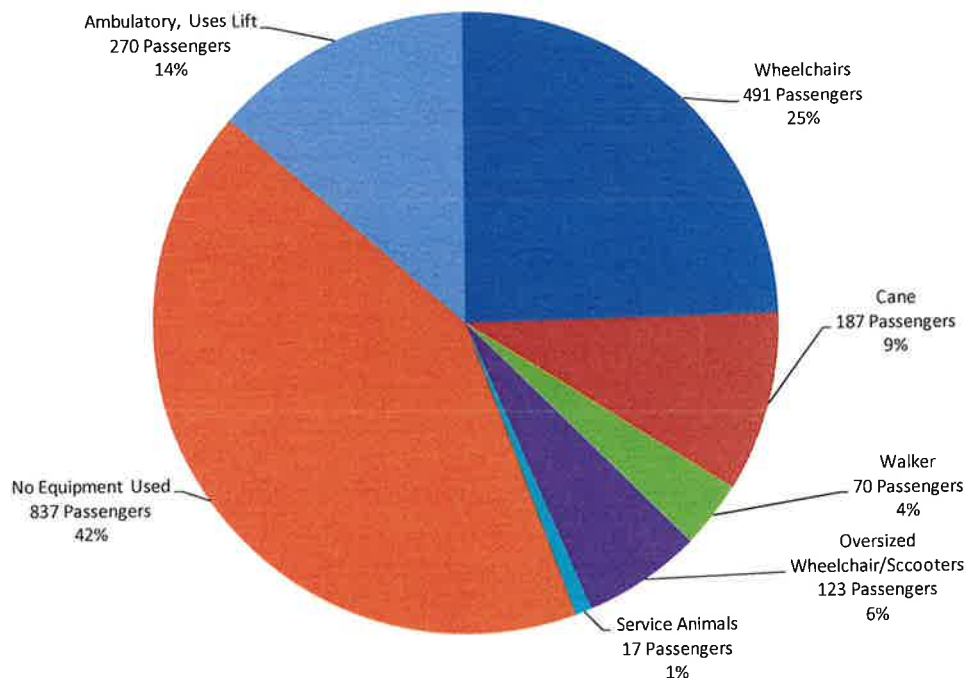
may increase with the age of our passengers, slowing down the system. The chart below shows the breakdown of ACCESS passengers by age.



About 87% of ACCESS riders use the service less than once a week. Approximately ten percent of the passengers ride once a week. The remaining 3% ride frequently. The statistical average ride length is about 10 miles, but individual ride lengths vary quite a bit. While ACCESS passengers used the service to go to a wide variety of destinations, the most common trip purpose remains medical/dental, which may help explain the apparent self restricting use of the paratransit services by the majority of the passengers.

Almost 60% of ACCESS passengers use at least one mobility aid to assist them. ACCESS passengers relied on several different types of mobility equipment as shown below. Historically, the three most common mobility aids used are wheelchair (42% in FY2012), cane (16%) and walker (6%). However, the types of aids used and their frequency of use vary from year to year depending on the situations of the ACCESS population.

Mobility Equipment Use By GCT ACCESS Passengers



Due to the passenger's disability, his or her mobility needs may vary daily. It is not unusual for a passenger to have more than one mobility device; this way he/she may select the most appropriate device for use on a particular day. This can add to the dwell time at a pick up location, creating an unintended delay in the schedules. A passenger may make a reservation today to travel tomorrow stating he/she will use his/her walker. The driver may arrive tomorrow and the passenger may have determined that it is safer for him/her to rely on his/her wheelchair due to a change in his/her condition overnight. A passenger takes approximately the same time to board the vehicle whether he/she uses a walker or a wheelchair. However, the wheelchair requires more time to complete a four-point tie down.

GCT ACCESS received 39 complaints from customers during FY 2012 for an overall ratio of 0.57 complaints per 1,000 boardings, down slightly from FY11. The chart below shows the types of concerns and feedback customers had during FY 2012. Maintaining customer service standards in the dynamic paratransit environment is challenging. Customer needs change hourly. The relative stability of the GCT ACCESS bus operator force has been instrumental in providing a consistent level of service. On-time performance has been at or above 90% for the last three years. Even on the busiest of

days, ACCESS customers receive attention quickly on the telephone. The average phone wait time is under 30 seconds before staff is available to assist the caller.

Type	Issue	Fourth Quarter	FY2011/12
Policy			
	NoShow/Late Cancellation	0	4
Scheduling			
	Ride Time/Late	0	10
	Reservations/Dispatch	2	6
Operations			
	On-Time Performance	0	3
	Operator	3	16
Totals		5	39

GCT ACCESS bus operators provide quality service to some of the most vulnerable members of the population. The operators perform their duties tirelessly and with great compassion on a daily basis. GCT ACCESS staff is currently comprised of 29 individuals, with five having over 10 years of service. Nine more operators will be observing at least their fifth anniversary of service to our customers in the coming fiscal year.

III. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the GCT Board of Directors receive and file this report.



 General Manager's Concurrence