Date: October 5, 2010

To: GCT Board of Directors

From: Helene Buchman
Acting Director of Planning and Marketing

Subject: Approval of GCT’s Participation in a Ventura County Transportation Commission Sponsored Interagency Transfer Demonstration Project

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Currently, passengers cannot transfer between VCTC’s VISTA service and other public transit systems in Ventura County. VCTC, like all other transit providers in the County, strives to make it as easy as possible for riders to use our services. In an effort to promote seamless and streamlined interagency connections, VCTC has initiated a 9-month demonstration program to integrate transfers between VISTA and other transit systems.

It is recommended that the GCT Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding that will enable GCT’s participation in a 9-month demonstration interagency transfer program sponsored by the Ventura County Transportation Commission.

II. BACKGROUND

The Ventura Intercity Service Transit Authority (VISTA) provides long-haul or regional transit connections between major destinations within Ventura County and Santa Barbara, Fillmore, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley and the northern San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles County. With a few very specific exceptions, VISTA riders have not been able to transfer directly to other transit services in Ventura County, including other VISTA routes. To date, this has been the result of inequities among fare structures and the lack of coordination relative to revenue sharing.
The one departure from this is the GOVENTURA Smartcard, which is accepted on most transit systems in the county. The GOVENTURA Smartcard can be either a monthly pass good for unlimited rides, or a stored-value account, allowing the user to debit the amount of a fare each time it is used. Both options are primarily popular among choice riders; however, not all transit passengers choose or, are able to utilize this type of fare medium.

At present, VISTA currently has four transfer arrangements in place. These are:

- VISTA 126 and VISTA Heritage Valley Dial-A-Rides (DAR). This is a free transfer from the DAR ($1.50 fare) to the VISTA 126 ($1.00 fare); and a $.50 transfer from the VISTA 126 to the DAR;
- Free transfers between the VISTA Coastal Express and any Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (SBMTD) bus;
- Free transfers between the VISTA 101 bus and the County JJC DAR; and,
- Free transfers between the VISTA CSUCI-Oxnard and VISTA CSUCI-Camarillo routes.

Some of these transfers have had virtually no use, while others are used frequently. The VISTA Coastal Express – Santa Barbara MTD transfers, which the VCTC authorized as a demonstration program in 2004, are now used by approximately 50 people daily in each direction. Both VCTC and SBMTD recognized that the transfers helped to grow ridership on both systems while improving service to the riders.

In addition to the desire of the VCTC to address the use of transfers on VISTA and local connecting services, it has a responsibility under state law to address transfers as part of its Transportation Development Act (TDA) requirements. Under California Government Code Title 3, Division 3, Chapter 2, Article 11 - Transportation Fund, VCTC is obligated to:

- **Transfers Between Operators:** Where there are two or more operators within its area of jurisdiction, the transportation planning agency, the county transportation commission ... shall adopt ... rules and regulations to provide for transfers between the public transportation services of the operators so that such services will be coordinated.

- **Interchange of Transfers:** The consent of a transit district to the operation of a public transportation system by an included municipal operator ... may include a requirement for interchange of
transfers on an appropriate basis between the public transportation system of the included municipal operator and the public transportation system of the transit district ....

To address these provisions in state code, VCTC adopted transfer rules which govern the use of the GOVENTURA Smartcard and its predecessor, the Ventura County "Passport".

With the continued success and growing popularity of the interagency transfers on the VISTA Coastal Express, VCTC seeks to expand the program to include transit operators throughout Ventura County. At the September, 2010 meeting, the Ventura County Transportation Commission approved the initiation of a 9-month demonstration program of free transfers between VISTA and all local fixed-route services inside Ventura County.

**POTENTIAL REVENUE IMPACTS**

VCTC anticipates that the recommended 9-month demonstration program may result in a short term loss of fare revenue to VCTC. However, as VCTC is proposing an increase in its fares, the net impact of the higher fares, along with the small loss of revenue due to the interagency transfers is expected to result in a net increase in transit use and revenue.

While the interagency fare program is not expected to have any impact on the use of the GOVENTURA Smartcard pass, it may be of assistance to low income riders who use the bus but are unable to purchase a GOVENTURA Smartcard for various reasons.

GCT staff has reviewed the proposed 9-month interagency transfer demonstration program and its potential impact on GCT revenues. Given the possibility of increased ridership on GCT bus routes as a result of the seamless transfers, staff does not anticipate a measurable net loss in fare revenue. It is possible that GCT may experience a slight net increase if significant ridership increases occur as potential new passengers will be riding transit and paying the GCT fare in one direction of their trip.

VCTC has recommended that the demonstration program begin in January 2011. VCTC further recommends evaluating the program after 6 months in order to measure the usage and impacts to that point. If the program is deemed successful at the end of July, 2011 by VCTC and participating transit policy boards, additional recommendations for future actions regarding transfers among participating agencies after
the 9-month period is over will be made to the VCTC and GCT's Board of Directors.

III. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the GCT Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding that will enable GCT's participation in a 9-month demonstration interagency transfer program sponsored by the Ventura County Transportation Commission.

[Signature]
General Manager's Concurrence