Draft

SCAT

South Coast Area Transit Triennial Performance Audit

Fiscal Years: 1995/96, 1996/97, 1997/98

Submitted to:

Ventura County Transportation Commission

Submitted by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the final performance audit report for South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) covering fiscal years 1995/96, 1996/97 and 1997/98. An audit is required triennially of every transit operator in the state of California to be eligible for Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding. This audit was commissioned by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and was conducted in accordance with the audit process established by the California Department of Transportation.

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) is the regional transportation system serving residents of western Ventura County, California. SCAT transit services were initiated through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) signed in 1973 by the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme and San Buenaventura. In 1975, the City of Santa Paula, and, in 1977, the County of Ventura were added as participating members.

SCAT provides fixed route services and ADA/paratransit services throughout western Ventura County. The fixed route service consists of fourteen routes and two route deviations. The Oxnard Transportation Center (OTC) is a transfer center for the majority of SCAT's routes and is an important link to the AMTRAK and Metrolink services. There were no major changes to SCAT's routing structure during the three year audit period. Changes were limited to schedule adjustments primarily on Routes 7 and 8 which serve Pleasant Valley and Oxnard College. Extended evening service was introduced in June 1997. On seven of SCAT's 14 routes, the service span was extended to meet demand for evening service. Between one and three runs were added to Routes 1 through 6 and two runs were added on Route 8. Service on these routes now extends to about 9:00 pm.

SCAT's ACCESS is a curb-to-curb, ADA complementary paratransit service for its fixed route transit system. Service began in July 1994 (FY 94/95), the first year of a three-year plan to fully implement ADA complementary service in the SCAT service area. According to plan, service levels gradually increased until the service reached full ADA compliance in July 1997. ADA Certification is handled by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), who certifies individuals for all transit agencies throughout Ventura County. Currently, there are nearly 1,800 people who are registered to use ACCESS.

This audit was conducted in two phases, described below.

COMPLIANCE AUDIT

The compliance portion of the audit covers Chapters 3 through 5. The tasks conducted in this phase are summarized below:

- Review of internal and external reports for consistency and accuracy;
- Compliance with TDA reporting requirements;

- Review of SCAT's actions to implement the recommendations from the prior performance audit;

- Analysis of the five TDA-required performance indicators for SCAT's fixed route and DAR services.

DETAILED AUDIT

This portion of the audit (Chapter 6) covered several areas summarized below:

- Identification of SCAT's goals, objectives and performance standards.

- An assessment of performance by functional area for SCAT's fixed route and DAR services.

FINDINGS

1. SCAT converted its operation from diesel to CNG. SCAT is commended for accomplishing this major undertaking and taking a leadership role in the transit industry. This conversion involved the design and construction of a CNG fueling facility at its headquarters, and acquiring a new fleet of CNG vehicles. SCAT is also in the process of replacing all of its non-revenue vehicles with CNG vehicles.

2. SCAT operates a network of local and intercity fixed routes in western Ventura County. During the audit period, the service was relatively stable with changes limited to schedule adjustments to Routes 7 and 8, plus introduction of later evening service on select routes in June 1997.

3. Ridership on fixed route service has grown over 20% during the last three years even though service levels have remained relatively constant. As a result, passenger productivity has improved with the service carrying nearly 30 passengers per hour. This is a high level of productivity for a system of its size.

4. SCAT exceeded its state required farebox recovery ratio of 20% each year of the audit period. In the last year of the audit, the farebox recovery ratio was 30%.

5. Even though ridership growth was steady during the last three years, there was an increase in the number of passenger complaints. The number of verified complaints per 100,000 passengers rose from 7.9 to 11.0 over this three year period. A close examination into the types of complaints reveals that the vast majority of them were related to the vehicle operator. This suggests that there may be a correlation between complaints and a decline in operator training.

6. SCAT achieved full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) during the audit period by enhancing service hours on ACCESS to be consistent with the days and service span of its fixed route service. Service levels rose approximately 30% per year for the first two years of the audit and stabilized in the last year. Operating costs increased over 150% between FYs 96 and 97, and the following year costs declined ten percent even though hours increased two percent. The drop in operating costs is primarily attributed to a change in the contract operator. SCAT is continuing its progress to improve the cost effectiveness of the service.

7. SCAT has a series of strategic goals and objectives that were established in 1990 and they have not been revised in nearly ten years. There are also several specific performance measures; however, there are not numeric values associated with them. There are several functional areas, such as vehicle operations, maintenance, planning and administration, which are not adequately addressed for its fixed route or ADA/paratransit operation.

8. SCAT is complimented for making significant efforts toward fulfilling the prior performance audit recommendations. Three of the four recommendations were fully implemented, and one recommendation was partially implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The auditor was impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of SCAT staff and commends their efforts to improve the level and quality of fixed route and ADA/paratransit services. The following recommendations are offered to help SCAT further realize its full potential.

1. Develop comprehensive set of goals, objectives and performance standards for fixed route and ADA/paratransit services.

Although SCAT currently has a set of goals and objectives, they are strategically oriented and do not address the agency's day-to-day fixed route and ADA/paratransit operations. SCAT is encouraged to establish a set of goals and objectives for each of its services with accompanying standards by which to measure annual performance. Standards should be agreed-upon targets for SCAT to achieve and may be calibrated annually or more frequently to reflect changing circumstances such as market changes, funding changes, and operational changes. All functional areas should be addressed for fixed route and ACCESS service and include objectives and performance standards for vehicle operations, vehicle maintenance, planning and marketing, and administration and management. Of particular importance for ACCESS are objectives and standards relating to ADA compliance such as trip denials, no-shows, cancellations, as well as cost effectiveness and productivity measures.

2. SCAT should work to reduce customer complaints by enhancing its operator training program.

This recommendation is carried forward from the 1993 and 1996 Performance Audit. In the last audit it was recommended that SCAT work to reduce its customer complaints. The complaint rate fluctuated between FY 92 and 95, with positive results occurring immediately following customer training program attended by SCAT operators. During this audit period, the number of complaints per 100,000 passengers increased each year, climbing from 7.9 to 11.0. During the same time period, the number of training hours per operator declined. A close examination into the types of complaints reveals that the vast majority of them were related to the vehicle operator. This suggests that there may be a correlation between the increase in the number of complaints and the decline in operator training. SCAT is encouraged to enhance operator training through a formal training program as a strategy to reduce complaints and improve customer satisfaction. An effective training program could include quarterly sessions covering key areas and limited to no more than four hours in length.

3. SCAT should consider establishing a dedicated position for administering its ACCESS service.

SCAT does not have a dedicated staff person to administer its growing ACCESS service. The Director of Planning and Marketing and the Planning and Marketing Assistant are responsible for administration and oversight of its contract operator, documenting and reporting operating statistics, coordinating with cities and social service agencies, and other day-to-day activities. While staff is very dedicated to providing western Ventura County with a high quality ADA/paratransit service, there are many other responsibilities that staff assumes and are unable to devote their full attention to this valuable service. An annual operating budget of nearly $400,000, plus future expansion plans on the horizon, suggests that a dedicated staff person to administer ACCESS is warranted.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the draft performance audit report for South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) covering fiscal years 1995/96, 1996/97, and 1997/98. An audit is required triennially of every transit operator in the state of California to be eligible for Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding. This audit was commissioned by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) and was conducted in accordance with the audit process established by the California Department of Transportation.

VCTC's objective in overseeing the performance audits is to meet the state legal requirements as well as provide the transit operator with practical and useful recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their operation.

The audit consists of two phases, the compliance audit (phase I) and the audit survey (phase II). The compliance audit reviews and analyzes the five measures required by the TDA:

1. Operating cost per passenger
2. Operating cost per vehicle service hour
3. Passengers per vehicle service mile
4. Passengers per vehicle service hour
5. Vehicle service hours per employee

The audit survey evaluates the operator's performance based on its own internal set of goals, objectives and standards. This approach enables a transit system to be evaluated according to the standards it has established for itself and assesses whether it has met its adopted performance standards. For South Coast Area Transit, the 1997/1998 Short Range Transit Plan was the source document used to identify goals, objectives and performance standards.

Following this introductory chapter, there are six chapters that document and review the South Coast Area Transit system including:

- a description of transit services provided by South Coast Area Transit including fixed route and dial-a-ride services,
- the compliance audit documenting the data collection and reporting procedures and a review of the compliance checklist,

- the status of the prior audit recommendations,
- six-year performance trends of the five TDA indicators for fixed route and dial-a-ride services,
- a description of the goals, objectives, and standards used to measure performance, and an analysis of performance, and
- findings and recommendations.

This audit was designed to serve as an independent, objective evaluation of South Coast Area Transit, and to provide sound, constructive recommendations for transit and paratransit service improvements.

CHAPTER 2. DESCRIPTION OF SOUTH COAST AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM

INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

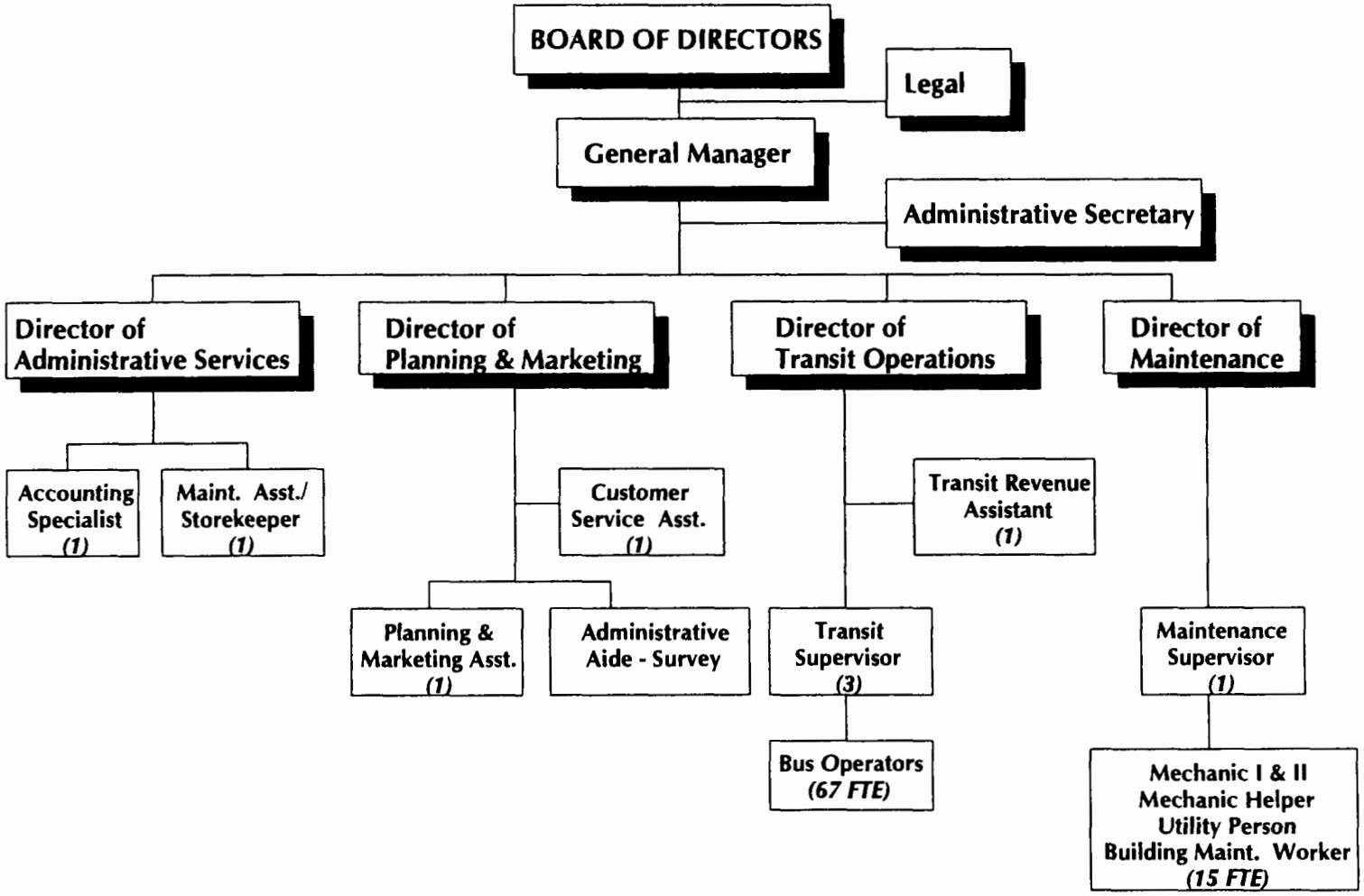
South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) is the regional transportation system serving residents of western Ventura County, California. SCAT transit services were initiated through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) signed in 1973 by the cities of Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme and San Buenaventura. In 1975, the City of Santa Paula, and, in 1977, the County of Ventura were added as participating members.

Effective July 1994, the City of Santa Paula separated from the SCAT JPA. The City is now providing transit service through the Ventura Intercity Service Transit Authority (VISTA), initially a Federal demonstration program that is now considered a successful intercity service. The VISTA service provides general public demand-response service within the City of Santa Paula and express bus service between the cities of Fillmore, Santa Paula, and Ventura.

South Coast Area Transit is governed by a Board of Directors in coordination with the Ventura County Transportation Commission. The Board is made up of five members, each representing a member city and one representing Ventura County. Each board member has a weighted vote in all decision making based on the service hours and miles operated within each city's boundaries. The Board consists of representatives from the city councils of Oxnard, San Buenaventura, Ojai, and Port Hueneme and from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. The Board meets monthly to provide policy formation and direction for SCAT operations. An organizational chart of SCAT is shown in Figure 2-1. It shows the organizational structure and reporting relationship between SCAT's four divisions. The General Manager has both management and operational responsibility.

FIGURE 2-1
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART – SOUTH COAST AREA TRANSIT

Adopted by the Board of Directors
January 2, 1991



SERVICES

SCAT provides fixed route services and ADA/paratransit services throughout western Ventura County. Each service is described below.

Fixed Route Service

SCAT's Operating Division is responsible for day-to-day operations of fixed route service. Service is provided with SCAT's fleet of 43 vehicles. All vehicles are maintained by SCAT's Maintenance Division and stored and fueled at the Facilities Yard located at 301 East Third Street in Oxnard.

The fixed route service consists of fourteen routes and two route deviations. The Oxnard Transportation Center (OTC) is a transfer center for the majority of SCAT's routes and is an important link to the AMTRAK and Metrolink services. A map all of SCAT's routes is shown in Figure 2-2. Service is operated Monday through Friday from 5:00 am on Routes 1 and 6 (and from 6:30 am on Routes 4, 5 and 12) to about 9:00 pm on select routes. On Saturdays service generally extends from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm with a few routes starting as early as 5:20 am and running until 8:45 pm. On Sundays, service is provided on six of the 14 routes; Routes 1, 2, 3, 6, 15 and 16.

Fares

Figure 2-3 shows cash fares by passenger type. There has been no change in the fare structure since 1993. The basic adult fare is $1.00. Seniors age 65 and older pay $.50 and those aged 75 and over may ride free (though restricted hours apply). The student fare is $.75. Other discounted fares are listed in Figure 2-3 below. Transfers are free and issued when fares are paid. In addition to cash fares, SCAT offers a variety of pre-paid tickets and passes available at discounted prices (See Figure 2-4 below). SCAT sells its tickets and passes through several outlets including three City Halls and many check cashing stores throughout the area. All tickets are assigned a unique identification number and given to the outlets on a consignment basis. There is no commission on ticket sales.

SCAT also participates in the Countywide "SMARTCARD" bus pass program with other area operators, and coordinated by VCTC.

Figure 2-2: SCAT Fixed Routes

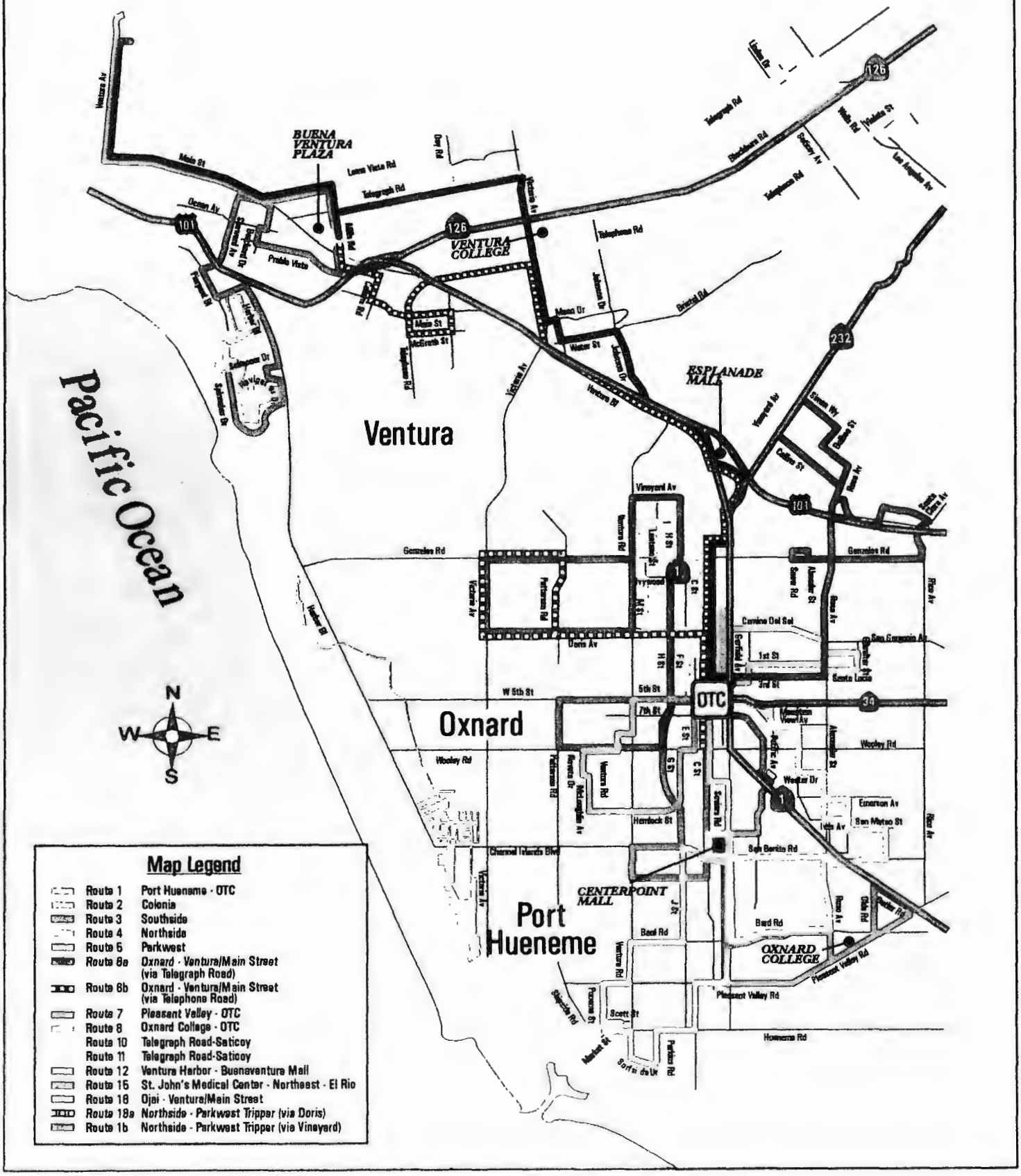


FIGURE 2-3
FIXED ROUTE CASH FARE STRUCTURE

Type of Passenger	Fare Amount
Adult	$1.00
Student	$.75
Senior/Medicare	$.50
Persons with Disabilities	$.50
Age 75 +	Free
Children under 45" tall	Free

FIGURE 2-4
FIXED ROUTE PRE-PAID TICKETS AND PASSES

Type of Passenger	10-Ride Ticket	20-Ride Ticket	30-Ride Ticket	Monthly Pass
Adult	$7.50	$14.00	$20.00	$30.00
Student	$6.00	$11.00	$16.00	$24.00
Senior/Disabled/Medicare	$3.00	$5.50	$8.00	$12.00

Fleet

The fixed route fleet consists of 43 active buses, of which 35 are compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles that SCAT acquired within the last four years. All CNG vehicles are stored, maintained and fueled on site at SCAT's CNG fueling facility. This facility, came on line in 1996 and is capable of fueling up to 60 vehicles. Before SCAT had its own CNG facility, there was a brief period when vehicles had to be fueled off-site.

In addition to the primary fleet of CNG vehicles, SCAT has eight diesel vehicles that are primarily used for tripper service and as the back-up fleet. When these vehicles are replaced in the year 2000, SCAT's entire fleet will be CNG vehicles. SCAT is also in the process of replacing all of its non-revenue vehicles with CNG vehicles. Figure 2-5 shows the breakdown of the SCAT fleet.

FIGURE 2-5
VEHICLE FLEET INVENTORY

No. of Vehicles	Type of Vehicle	Fuel Type	Seating Capacity	Replacement Year
9	Orion V	CNG	29	2007
18	FLX Bus	CNG	34	2007
8	FLX Bus	CNG	40	2007
2	FLX Bus	Diesel	27	2000
6	GFC Bus	Diesel	37	1994

Service Changes During Audit Period

There were no major changes to SCAT's routing structure during the three year audit period. Changes were limited to schedule adjustments primarily on Routes 7 and 8 which serve Pleasant Valley and Oxnard College.

The major change was the introduction of extended evening service in June 1997. On seven of SCAT's 14 routes, the service span was extended to meet demand for evening service. Between one and three runs were added to Routes 1 through 6 and two runs were added on Route 8 (See Figure 2-6 below). Service on these routes now extends to about 9:00 pm.

FIGURE 2-6
ROUTES WITH EXTENDED EVENING SERVICE

Route Number & Name	New Evening Runs
1 Port Hueneme	2 - 7:30 / 8:10 pm
2 Colonia	3 - 7:00 / 7:40 / 8:15 pm
3 Southside	3 - 7:00 / 7:40 / 8:15 pm
4 North side	3 - 7:00 / 7:40 / 8:15 pm
5 Parkwest	3 - 7:00 / 7:40 / 8:15 pm
6 Oxnard/Ventura	1 - 8:40 pm
8 Oxnard College	2 - 7:00 / 8:10 pm

ADA/Paratransit Service

SCAT's ACCESS is a curb-to-curb, ADA complementary paratransit service for its fixed route transit system. The service has been operated under a contract operation since it began in July 1994. The initial contractor was Medi-Ride who had a one year contract with two one-year options. SCAT went out to bid in March 1997 and selected Laidlaw Transit Services Inc. who is currently operating the service. The contract between SCAT and Laidlaw is a three year contract with two one-year options. The current contract is in effect until July 1999. Laidlaw provides the vehicles, which at this time include six wheelchair accessible vans. Laidlaw's contract with SCAT is all inclusive, providing everything for the operation including vehicles, trip booking, scheduling and dispatching. SCAT assumes responsibility for marketing/public information, budgeting, planning, community liaison and provides contract oversight.

ADA certified registrants may use ACCESS to travel between any two points in the service area which are within .75 miles of a SCAT fixed route. ACCESS matches the fixed routes service hours and days. The service area includes most of the City of Oxnard and the City of San Buenaventura, as well as portions of Port Hueneme and Ojai and the unincorporated areas between cities. A map of the SCAT ACCESS service area is shown in Figure 2-7. Key trip destinations include Community Memorial Hospital, Ventura College, St. Johns Hospital, Buenaventura Medical Clinic, Ventura County Medical Center, Oxnard Dialysis, Ventura Dialysis and Buenaventura Mall.

The service operates from approximately 5:30 AM to 9:50 PM, Monday through Friday and 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM Saturday. Limited Sunday service is available. In order to use Sunday service, reservations must be made no later than close-of-business on the preceding Friday because the dispatch office is closed on weekends.

ADA Certification is handled by the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), who certifies individuals for all transit agencies throughout Ventura County. Currently, there are nearly 1,800 people who are registered to use ACCESS.

Fares

The fare for the ACCESS service is $2.00, twice the base fixed route fare. Personal care attendants riding with an ADA eligible passenger as a mobility aid, travel free of charge. Books of ten tickets are available for $20. There is no discount on these tickets, they are offered only as a convenience. Tickets are sold at the SCAT office, through the mail, and at several social service agencies throughout western Ventura County.

Figure 2-7: SCAT Access Service Area

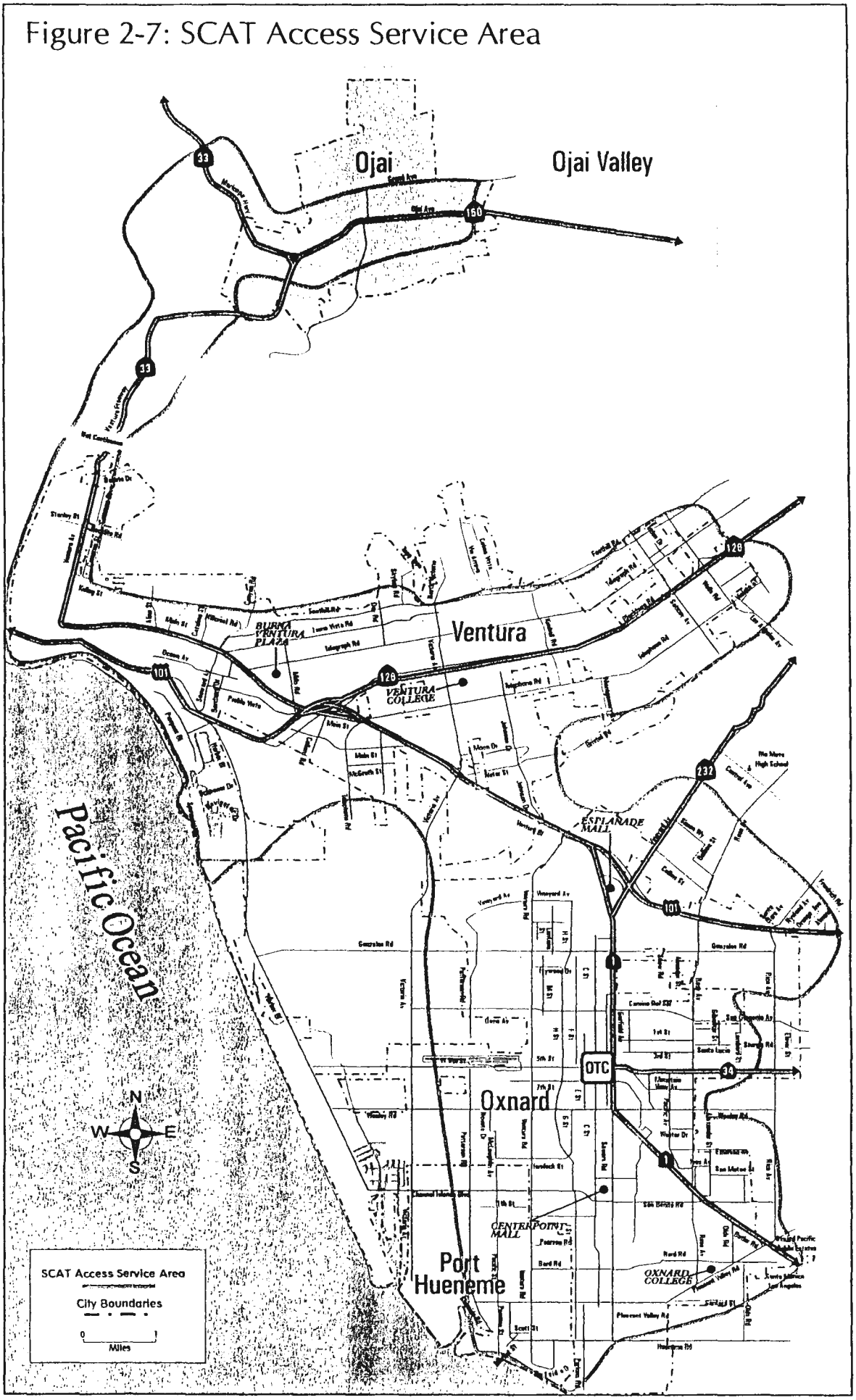
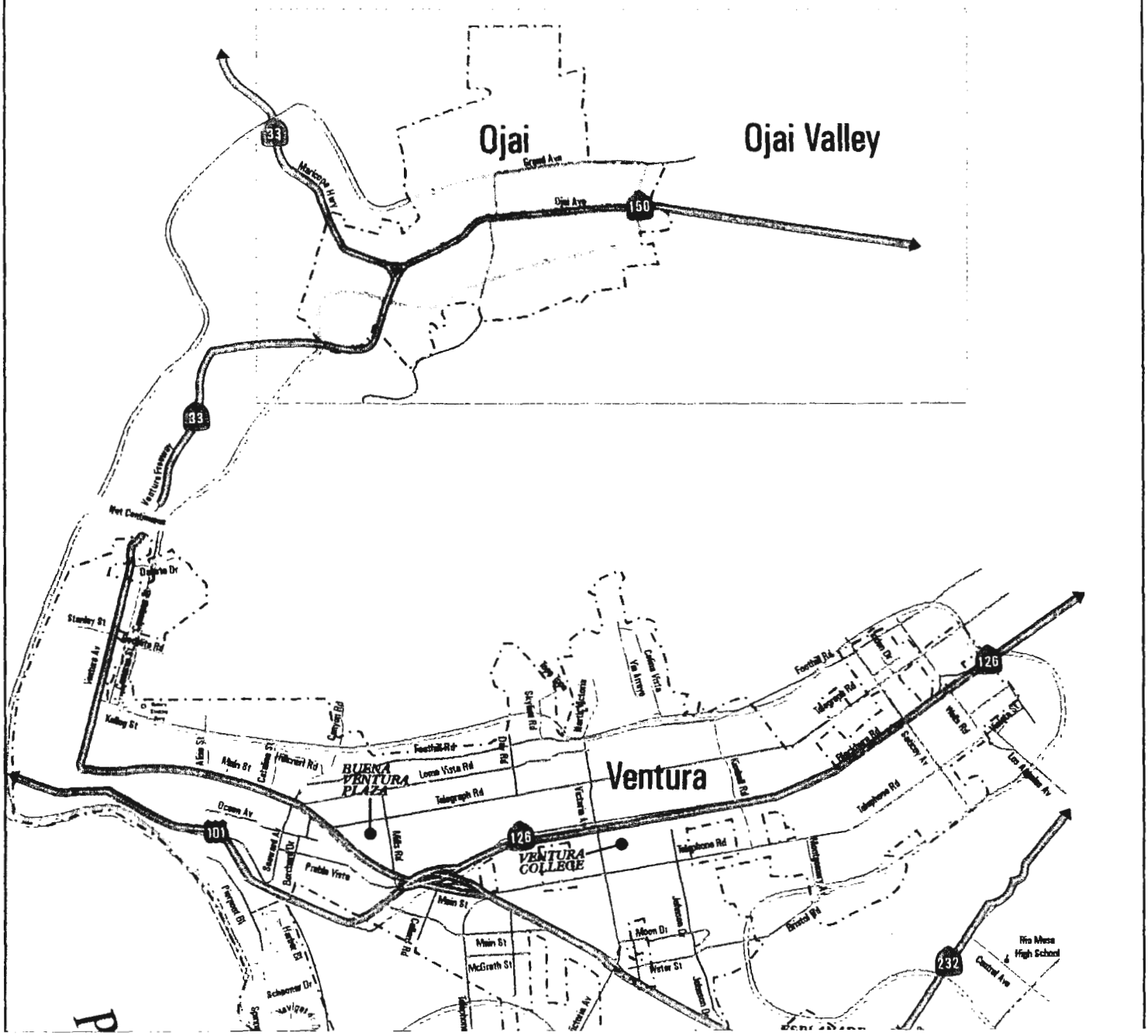


Figure 2-7: SCAT Access Service Area



Service Changes During Audit Period

SCAT ACCESS began operation in July 1994 (FY 94/95), the first year of a three-year plan to fully implement ADA complementary service in the SCAT service area. According to plan, service levels gradually increased until the service reached full ADA compliance in July 1997. SCAT ACCESS operated roughly 5,600 annual service hours during the first year of operation, and increased service hours by about one-third the following year, to 7,400. This meant that the initial three-van operation expanded to four vans during the second year of operation. Similar increases occurred the following year with SCAT ACCESS providing nearly 9,500 annual service hours. In 1997 a fifth vehicle was added to the service, and one van was used for back-up. In May 1998, another vehicle was added to service, making a total fleet of six vehicles – five in service and one spare back-up.

CHAPTER 3. COMPLIANCE AUDIT

This chapter describes the methods by which data is currently collected by SCAT for its fixed route and ADA/paratransit service. It evaluates technical compliance with TDA definitions. Actual performance statistics are presented in Chapter 5 of this report.

In accordance with State TDA requirements, the consultant conducted on-site interviews with administrative and operations personnel, and thoroughly reviewed the performance data collection and reporting process. Internal and external reports were reviewed, including the State Controller's Report, National Transit Database reports and the SCAT's year-to-date operating reports. Also, the contract operator's internal records were reviewed for accuracy, consistency and timeliness. Current data collection procedures are outlined below. Figure 3-1, found on page 3-5 provides a tabular summary of TDA operator requirements, and a determination of SCAT's compliance with these requirements.

DATA VERIFICATION

FIXED ROUTE

Operating Cost

Operating costs includes the total costs of operating a transit system, exclusive of capital expenditures. According to the State Controller and TDA requirements, depreciation and amortization are excluded from annual operating costs. Operating cost data is compiled by the SCAT Director of Administrative Services using its internal accounting system and then it is reported in the annual FTA Section 15 Report for motorbus operation. Operating costs include vehicle operations, vehicle maintenance, non-vehicle maintenance and general administration. SCAT's procedures for reporting operating cost data are in compliance with TDA definitions.

Passengers and Farebox Revenues

Passengers are defined as boarding passengers, whether or not they are fare paying passengers. Passenger boardings are counted through the registering GFI fareboxes. The four cash categories include: adult, student, senior and disabled. The two free categories are seniors aged 75 years+ and children under 45" tall. In addition to the cash fares, riders may board by using a transfer (available free with any cash fare payment), or by pre-paid tickets or passes.

A reading is taken from the farebox three times a week. The ridership data is read on specific dates to account for weekday, and weekend ridership. The ridership data is entered into a spreadsheet by passenger category and route and summarized on a monthly basis and then rolled up for year end figures. At the end of each month, SCAT conducts a reconciliation of

ridership and revenue. A sample review of data reveals that there were no inconsistencies and all data appears to be accurate. The data from the ridership spreadsheet feeds into SCAT's internal "Operations Statistical Spreadsheet." Data from this spreadsheet is used for reporting monthly, quarterly and annual information including entries into the State Controller's Report and the FTA Section Report.

Passenger revenues come from three sources: 1) cash fares, 2) pre-paid tickets from SCAT's administrative offices, and 3) ticket sales from ticket vendors. The fareboxes are emptied three times a week and the cash and tickets are stored in a locked facility at the SCAT offices. The monthly fares are rolled up and then prorated by route and ridership (for the month). Pre-paid tickets are allocated the same way – by route, by date and by day of the week.

SCAT's procedures for reporting passengers are in compliance with TDA definitions.

Revenue Service Miles

Revenue service miles are the miles that transit vehicles are operating in revenue service. SCAT's process for recording revenue service miles are determined by first documenting the base route mileage for all 14 routes including Tripper service. The number of runs per weekday, Saturday and Sunday are then multiplied to calculate daily miles. To determine monthly mileage, the number of weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays for each month are multiplied by the daily mileage. The monthly data is then added each month to determine annual mileage. All of this data is entered and calculated in a standard spreadsheet application. Revenue service miles are subtracted or added in a given month based on service adjustments for that month. For example, if there was a missed run recorded in the dispatcher's daily logs, service miles would be subtracted to reflect the deleted service. The total mileage (revenue miles plus deadhead) is simply taken from the odometer readings of each vehicle.

SCAT's procedures for reporting vehicles service miles are in compliance with TDA definitions.

Revenue Vehicle Service Hours

Vehicle service hours are the hours that transit vehicles are operating in revenue service. Travel to and from the first bus stop are considered non-revenue hours and are not counted as revenue service hours. The base data for each route is obtained from the printed schedules. The number of hours for each route by weekday, Saturday and Sunday is then multiplied by the number of vehicles used on each route to calculate the daily service hours. As with vehicle service miles, hours are adjusted by route and day to account for any added or deleted service recorded in the dispatcher's daily logs. This data is summarized by month and then totaled for the year.

SCAT's procedures for reporting vehicles service hours are in compliance with TDA definitions.

Full Time Employee Equivalent (FTE)

The full time employee equivalent (FTE) is a measure of employee time, not of actual persons or positions. This indicator is calculated by totaling all employee hours expended on transit-related activities during the fiscal year and dividing this sum by 2,000.

FTEs is based on the actual person count for full time and part time employees in Operations, Maintenance and Administration. This total is then divided by 2,000. SCAT's procedures for reporting FTEs are in compliance with TDA requirements.

ADA/PARATRANSIT: SCAT ACCESS

Operating Cost

Operating costs include all expense items except depreciation. The major cost element for SCAT ACCESS is the cost of purchased transportation. In addition to day-to-day operations, the contractor pays for insurance and fuel.

Passengers and Farebox Revenues

Each ACCESS passenger is listed separately on the driver's daily log form. Companions are allowed to accompany ADA certified passengers on a space available basis. Registered attendants ride free. The driver sums the total passengers carried at the end of his/her shift and turns the form in to the dispatcher who has the responsibility of then entering the driver's form into a spreadsheet.

All drivers are given a schedule at the close of the day for the following day. A copy of the log is kept with the dispatcher as a back-up copy. Drivers transfer this information into the *daily driver log* with the pick-up address. All buses are equipped with a Motorola cellular phone system which are used for true demand-responsive trips (versus standing-orders or subscription trips that are listed in the daily driver log).

The driver logs show:

- ***Arrival*** - The actual arrival time at the pick up/drop off location
- ***Actual*** - The scheduled time of the trip
- ***Leave*** - This is the actual time the vehicle left the location.

This information is entered into the spreadsheet on a daily basis to monitor on-time performance. A discussion of on-time performance on SCAT ACCESS is found in Chapter 6, page 6-4.

There are no fareboxes on board the vehicles. Exact fare, tickets and tokens are accepted as payment and deposited in envelopes. Drivers reconcile fares at the end of their shift. If there is a shortage it is the driver's responsibility to pay the difference.

The envelope (with cash, tickets, tokens) is given to the dispatcher who counts the money in front of the driver and records the amount on the form. Cash is deposited daily by Laidlaw representatives. Laidlaw keeps the fares and this amount is deducted from SCAT's monthly payment for contracted services.

This method of fare collection complies with TDA accounting principles. However, under an ideal situation, buses would be equipped with registering fareboxes, to reduce driver cash handling. It is the auditor's understanding in the next year SCAT will be acquiring new paratransit vehicles and will be providing these vehicles to its contract operator.

Vehicle Service Hours

Revenue vehicle hours for a demand responsive service consists of the time when a vehicle is available for transporting passengers. Therefore, downtime, when the vehicle is not available for service, such as during a driver's lunch or other breaks, is not included. Deadhead time, from the yard to the first pick up point, and from the last drop-off back to yard, is also excluded.

Each driver has their own form which is turned in at the end of each shift. The driver fills out the form while the shift is in process and enters the daily hours. Break times and driver lunches are excluded from the calculation of revenue service hours. Each form is totaled at the end of the day and provides revenue service hours by day by vehicle. The contract operator, Laidlaw, reports revenue service hour and other data each month to SCAT who maintains the data on a monthly and annual basis in a standard spreadsheet format.

This method of recording revenue service hours is accurate and in compliance with TDA requirements.

Vehicle Service Miles

Revenue service miles consist of the miles traveled by vehicles during revenue service hours. This includes the distance from the first pick-up point to the last drop-off point. Deadhead mileage to and from the yard and other out of service miles are excluded.

The process of recording revenue service miles is the same process used for recording vehicle service hours. The contractor also provides *both* revenue and total miles.

The method of recording revenue service miles is accurate and in compliance with TDA requirements.

FIGURE 3-1
TDA COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Operator Compliance Requirements	Compliance
1. Submit annual reports to the RTPE based upon the Uniform System of Accounts and Records established by the State Controller.	Yes
2. Submit annual fiscal and compliance audits to its RTPE and to the state controller within 180 days following the end of the fiscal year, or has received the appropriate 90 day extension allowed by law.	Yes
3. The CHP has, within the 13 months prior to each TDA claim submitted by an operator, certified the operator's compliance with Vehicle Code Section 1808.1 following a CHP inspection of the operator's terminal.	Yes
4. The operator's claim for TDA funds is submitted in compliance with rules and regulations adopted by the RTPE for such claims.	Yes
5. The operator does not routinely staff with two or more persons public transportation vehicles designed to be operated by one person.	Yes
6. The operator's operating budget has not increased by more than 15% over the preceding year, nor is there a substantial increase or decrease in the scope of operations or capital budget provisions for major new fixed facilities unless the operator has reasonably supported and substantiated the change(s).	Yes
7. Operator funding provided through the Transportation Development Act makes up no more than 50% of operating, maintenance, capital and debt service requirements after federal grants are deducted, if applicable.	Yes
8. If the operator serves an urbanized area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to one-fifth (20 percent), unless it is in a county with a population of less than 500,000, in which case it must maintain a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to three-twentieths (15 percent), if so determined by the RTPE.	Yes
9. If the operator serves a rural area, it has maintained a ratio of fare revenues to operating costs at least equal to one-tenth (10 percent).	N/A
10. The current cost of the operator's retirement system is fully funded with respect to the officers and employees of its public transportation system, or the operator is implementing a plan approved by the RTPE which will fully fund the retirement system within 40 years.	Yes
11. If the operator receives state transit assistance funds, the operator is not precluded by contract from employing part-time drivers or from contracting with common carriers.	Yes
12. If the operator receives state transit assistance funds, the operator makes full use of funds available to it under the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 before TDA claims are granted.	Yes

CHAPTER 4. PREVIOUS AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The TDA requires that the performance audit process includes a review of previous audit recommendations. This review is intended to serve as a progress report from period to period. The previous audit identified four recommendations. Figure 4-1 summarizes the four findings and recommendations of the previous audit and determines whether each recommendation was implemented, partially implemented, or not at all.

DISCUSSION OF PRIOR AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: SCAT Should Work to Reduce Customer Complaints

SCAT has taken a number of steps to respond to passenger issues and concerns. In November 1996, SCAT conducted an on board passenger survey which revealed passenger preferences in three major areas: 1) later evening service, 2) bikes on board buses and 3) adjustments on select routes. SCAT has responded to these preferences with the introduction of evening service in June 1997 and is currently in the process of obtaining bike racks for the buses.

Since completion of the last performance audit, SCAT has refined its method of tracking passenger complaints. SCAT now separates complaints into those that can be verified and non-verified. A verified complaint documents passenger name, address and other factual information. Another step undertaken by SCAT was to establish a Passenger Complaint Task Force. The task force recommended that in addition to existing in-house quarterly training, staff may benefit from a more formalized training program facilitated by an outside consultant. SCAT has hired a consultant in the past for customer service training.

Review of verified passenger complaints per 100,000 boardings for the last three years shows that they are still increasing, although the rate of increase is slowing down. SCAT is commended for responding to customer requests, however, SCAT should take additional steps to reduce the number of passenger complaints. For additional discussion of passenger complaints, please refer to page 6-12 of this audit.

Current Status: Recommendation not fully implemented. Carry Forward.

Recommendation #2: SCAT Should Direct Its Independent Financial Auditor to Show the Calculations of the Fare Revenue Ratio in the Audit Report.

In order to qualify for TDA funds, SCAT must demonstrate that its farebox recovery ratio is equal to or exceeds 20 percent. The details of the calculation, including exceptions and exemptions are now shown in the independent financial auditors annual report.

Current Status: Recommendation Implemented/Complete

Recommendation #3: SCAT Should Clarify the Terms of Subsequent Paratransit Agreements

In November 1996 SCAT issued a Request for Bid (RFB) for a contract operator for ACCESS, its ADA/paratransit service. SCAT entered into a new contract with Laidlaw Transit Services Inc. in March 1997 for provision of paratransit services. This contract covered FY 1997/98, and stated that Laidlaw would be paid at an hourly rate of $38.78 per vehicle revenue hour. Responding to this audit recommendation, SCAT added a section to this contract on definitions of paratransit terms. It defines vehicle revenue hour (vehicle service hours) as the time spent by transit vehicles:

- In revenue service transporting passengers
- Between a passenger drop-off and a subsequent passenger pick-up (even though there are no passengers on board), and
- During short non-terminal layovers (but not including meal breaks)

Current Status: Recommendation Implemented/Complete

Recommendation #4: SCAT Should Review Its Safety Record.

SCAT's safety record has shown tremendous improvements during the last three years. The number of collision accidents per million vehicle miles has fluctuated somewhat during this audit period, from 1.4 in the first year, to 5.5 and then dropped the following year to 2.8. The number of passenger injuries has dropped from nine in FY 1996 to only two in the last year of the audit. In FY 1995, there was a change in reporting definitions.

Current Status: Recommendation Implemented/Complete

FIGURE 4-1
STATUS OF PREVIOUS AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding	Recommendation	Status
1. Public complaints have been increasing over a period of years with the exception of one year when a customer training program was introduced.	SCAT should work to reduce customer complaints.	SCAT has refined its method of tracking passenger complaints and has taken steps to reduce the number of complaints. However the number of "verified" complaints per 100,000 boardings continues to increase. **Recommendation not fully implemented. Carry Forward.**
2. The independent financial auditor did not show the details of the calculations when showing the farebox recovery ratio.	SCAT should direct Its independent financial auditor to show the calculations of the Fare Revenue Ratio in the Audit Report.	SCAT's independent auditor now includes the detailed calculations when determining the farebox recovery ratio. **Recommendation implemented.**
3. SCAT paid its paratransit contract operator for "total service hours" rather than "vehicle revenue hour." This meant that "deadhead" hours were included in contractor payments.	SCAT Should Clarify the Terms of Subsequent Paratransit Agreements	SCAT entered into a new contract with Laidlaw Transit Services Inc. in March 1997 for provision of paratransit services. The new contract added a section on definitions of paratransit terms to clarify revenue service hours from "total" service hours. **Recommendation implemented.**
4. There was significant increase in the number of vehicle collision accidents and number of passenger injuries.	SCAT should review its safety record.	SCAT's safety record has shown improvements during the last three years. **Recommendation implemented.**

CHAPTER 5. ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This section of the audit report presents an analysis of the fixed route and dial-a-ride performance of the five TDA required indicators. Fixed route is presented first followed by ACCESS service. To understand longer-term trends, the analysis covers a six-year period covering FY 1993 through FY 1998.

FIXED ROUTE

Figure 5-1 presents the base data and performance measures for fixed route service. For longer-term trend analysis, the performance over the last six years has been graphed in Figures 5-2 through 5-6. Discussion of each indicator follows the graph.

The five indicators reviewed that are required by the TDA are as follows:

- Operating Cost per Passenger,
- Operating Cost per revenue vehicle service hour,
- Passengers per revenue vehicle service hour,
- Passengers per revenue vehicle service mile,
- Revenue vehicle service hours per full time employee equivalent (FTE).

FIGURE 5-1
SOUTH COAST AREA TRANSIT – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE
TDA PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TRENDS

	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998
Performance Measures						
Operating Cost (Actual $)	$5,172,207	$5,437,173	$5,472,826	$5,816,247	$5,730,770	$6,153,558
Annual Change		*5.1%*	*0.7%*	*6.3%*	*-1.5%*	*7.4%*
Operating Cost (Constant $)	$5,172,207	$5,356,821	$5,307,034	$5,567,672	$5,378,283	$5,695,331
Annual Change		*3.6%*	*-0.9%*	*4.9%*	*-3.4%*	*5.9%*
Fare Revenue (Actual $)	$1,239,069	$1,367,620	$1,405,221	$1,557,956	$1,700,580	$1,859,928
Annual Change		*10.4%*	*2.7%*	*10.9%*	*9.2%*	*9.4%*
Vehicle Service Hours	109,041	111,669	107,216	107,017	108,683	112,354
Annual Change		*2.4%*	*-4.0%*	*-0.2%*	*1.6%*	*3.4%*
Vehicle Service Miles	1,375,777	1,322,103	1,331,211	1,323,021	1,316,305	1,360,883
Annual Change		*-3.9%*	*0.7%*	*-0.6%*	*-0.5%*	*3.4%*
Passengers	2,874,889	2,798,438	2,696,215	2,939,165	3,107,427	3,308,967
Annual Change		*-2.7%*	*-3.7%*	*9.0%*	*5.7%*	*6.5%*
F/T Employee Equivalents	84.2	88.8	84.4	87.7	88.9	90.1
Annual Change		*5.5%*	*-5.0%*	*3.9%*	*1.4%*	*1.3%*
Performance Indicators						
Oper. Cost per Hr. (Actual $)	$47.43	$48.69	$51.04	$54.35	$52.73	$54.77
Annual Change		*2.6%*	*4.8%*	*6.5%*	*-3.0%*	*3.9%*
Oper. Cost per Hr. (Constant $)	$47.43	$47.97	$49.50	$52.03	$49.49	$50.69
Annual Change		*1.1%*	*3.2%*	*5.1%*	*-4.9%*	*2.4%*
Oper. Cost per Psgr. (Actual $)	$1.80	$1.94	$2.03	$1.98	$1.84	$1.86
Annual Change		*8.0%*	*4.5%*	*-2.5%*	*-6.8%*	*0.8%*
Oper. Cost per Psgr. (Constant$)	$1.80	$1.91	$1.97	$1.89	$1.73	$1.72
Annual Change		*6.4%*	*2.8%*	*-3.8%*	*-8.6%*	*-0.6%*
Psgrs. per Hour	26.37	25.06	25.15	27.46	28.59	29.45
Annual Change		*-5.0%*	*0.3%*	*9.2%*	*4.1%*	*3.0%*
Psgrs. per Mile	2.09	2.12	2.03	2.22	2.36	2.43
Annual Change		*1.3%*	*-4.3%*	*9.7%*	*6.3%*	*3.0%*
Farebox Recovery Rate	24.0%	25.2%	25.7%	26.8%	29.7%	30.2%
Annual Change		*5.0%*	*2.1%*	*4.3%*	*10.8%*	*1.9%*
Hours per Employee	1,295	1,258	1,270	1,220	1,223	1,247
Annual Change		*-2.9%*	*1.0%*	*-3.9%*	*0.2%*	*2.0%*
Los Angeles-Anaheim-Long Beach CPI						
Annual Change		*1.50%*	*1.60%*	*1.30%*	*2.00%*	*1.40%*
Cumulative Change in CPI		*1.50%*	*3.12%*	*4.46%*	*6.55%*	*8.05%*

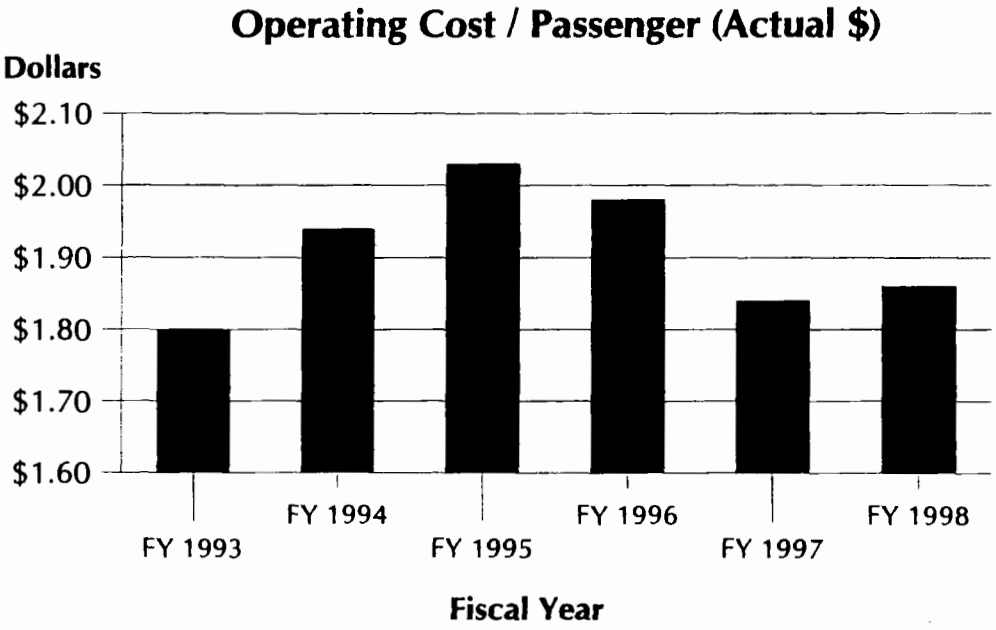
Sources: State Controllers Reports, and FTA Section 15. Indicators calculated by Nelson\Nygaard.

Operating Cost Per Passenger – Fixed Route Service

During the three year audit period, operating costs showed modest increases in FYs 96 and 98, with a slight drop in FY 97. During the same time period, passengers increased each year, ranging from a high of nine percent increase between FY 95 and 96 to about six percent increase each year for the next two years. With this steady growth in ridership, the operating cost per passenger showed an improving trend in the first two years and stabilized in FY 98.

Over a six year period, the cost per passenger peaked at $2.03 in FY 95. Cost per passenger at less than $2.00 shows that SCAT is a cost effective service.

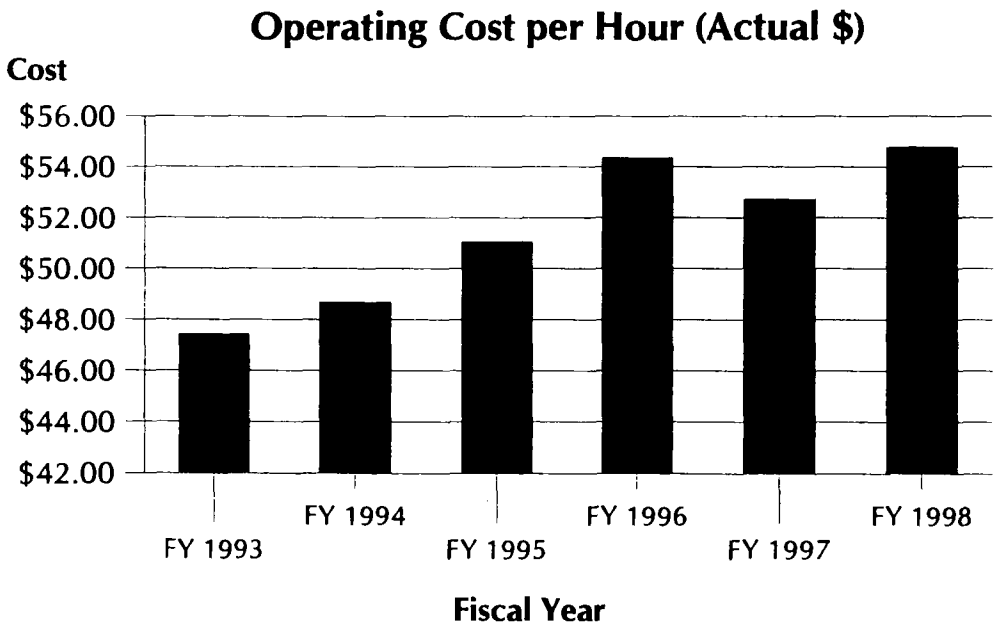
FIGURE 5-2
OPERATING COST PER PASSENGER – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



Operating Cost per Revenue Vehicle Service Hour – Fixed Route Service

SCAT's operating cost per revenue vehicle hour ranged from $54.35 in FY 96 to $54.77 in FY 98. There was a slight drop in hourly costs in FY 97 because costs declined 1.5% while at the same time hours increased by a similar amount. The trend in operating cost per hour increases have been modest, averaging about four percent per year. When adjusting for the cost-of-living, the annual increase drops to about two percent.

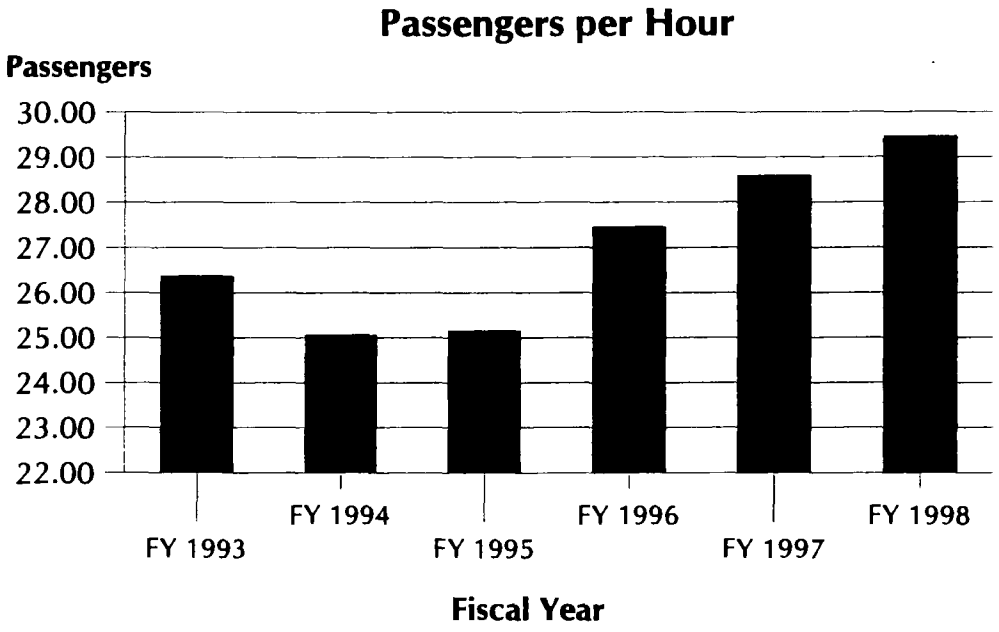
FIGURE 5-3
OPERATING COST PER REVENUE VEHICLE SERVICE HOUR – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



Passengers per Service Hour – Fixed Route Service

Productivity, as defined by the number of passengers carried per hour measures the effectiveness of a service. SCAT's productivity has steadily improved over the least three years. Ridership has grown over 20% during this time period, while annual service hours have increased only five percent. Over the six year period, SCAT's passenger productivity increased from about 26 hourly passengers to nearly 30 hourly passengers in FY 98.

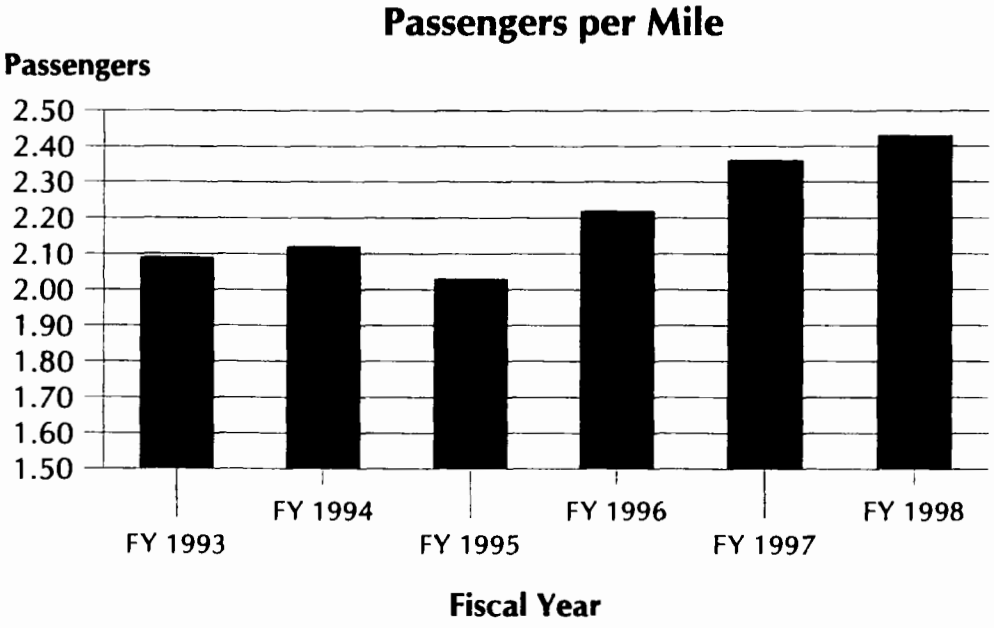
FIGURE 5-4
PASSENGERS PER SERVICE HOUR – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Service Mile – Fixed Route Service

As with passengers per hour, SCAT shows a steady increase in this indicator during the last three years. Between FY 96 and FY 97, annual service miles declined about one-half of one percent while passengers increased nearly six percent. SCAT has been carrying between two and three passengers per mile over the six year period. Performance has improved each year with the exception of FY 95 when there was a four percent drop in ridership while SCAT's mileage increased nearly one percent.

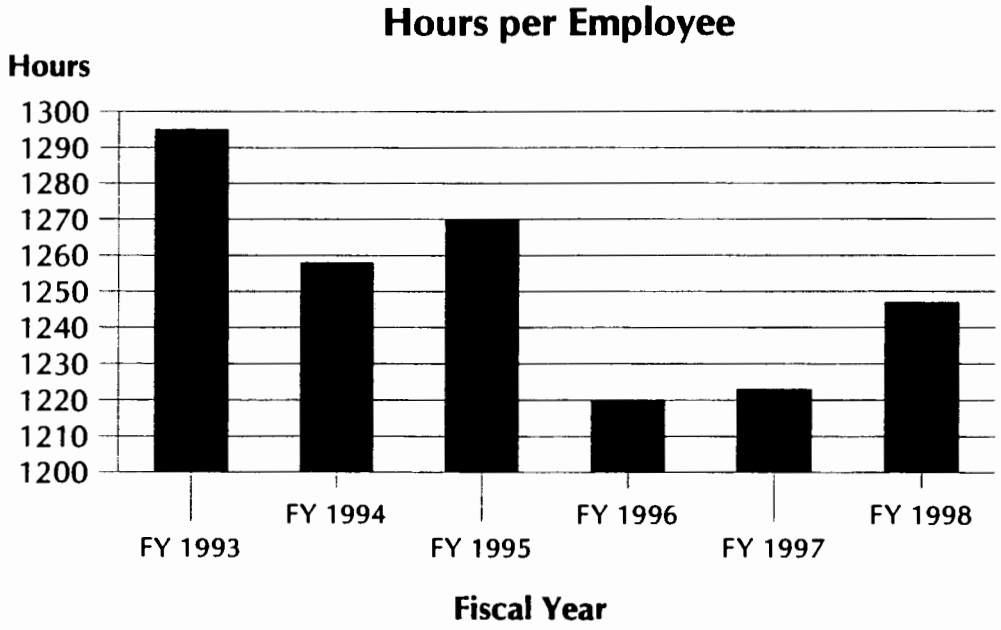
FIGURE 5-5
PASSENGERS PER REVENUE VEHICLE SERVICE MILE – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



Revenue Vehicle Service Hours per Employee – Fixed Route Service

Vehicle service hours per employee measures transit system labor efficiency. This indicator has fluctuated during the last three years, with a nearly four percent decline between FY 95 and FY 96, followed by very modest increases the next two years. Over the six year period, vehicle service hours per full-time employee equivalent (FTE) ranged from a peak of 1,295 in FY 93 to 1,247 in FY 98.

FIGURE 5-6
REVENUE VEHICLE SERVICE HOURS PER EMPLOYEE – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



DIAL-A-RIDE

For the ACCESS ADA/Paratransit service the same five TDA indicators are reviewed in detail as were with the fixed route system. The following table and graphs, however, show only four years of data since ACCESS service only began in mid-1994.

Figure 5-7 presents the base data and performance measures for ACCESS. Since this service has been operating since FY 95, the figures shows only four years of data. Each of the five required performance indicators are graphed in Figures 5-8 through 5-12.

FIGURE 5-7
SOUTH COAST AREA TRANSIT – ACCESS/ADA PARATRANSIT
TDA PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TRENDS

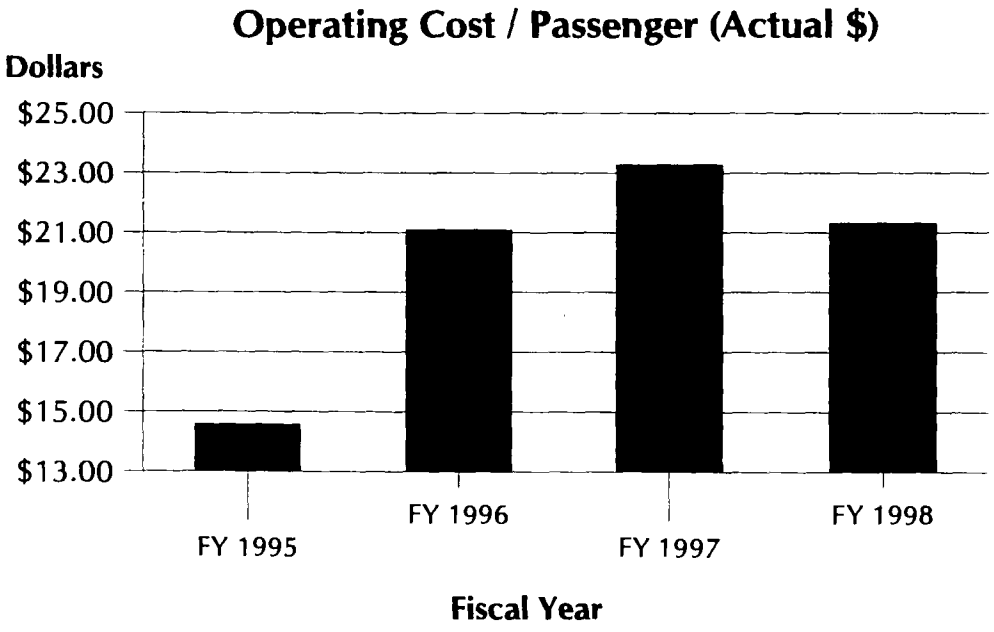
	FY 1993	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998
Performance Measures						
Operating Cost (Actual $)	-	-	$130,007	$326,968	$415,528	$373,477
Annual Change				*151.5%*	*27.1%*	*-10.1%*
Operating Cost (Constant $)	-	-	$126,069	$312,994	$389,970	$345,666
Annual Change				*148.3%*	*24.6%*	*-11.4%*
Fare Revenue (Actual $)	-	-	$16,997	$33,737	$41,268	$38,672
Annual Change				*98.5%*	*22.3%*	*-6.3%*
Vehicle Service Hours	-	-	5,650	7,416	9,484	9,631
Annual Change				*31.3%*	*27.9%*	*1.5%*
Vehicle Service Miles	-	-	90,856	138,340	165,208	168,507
Annual Change				*52.3%*	*19.4%*	*2.0%*
Passengers	-	-	8,651	15,503	17,859	17,521
Annual Change				*79.2%*	*15.2%*	*-1.9%*
F/T Employee Equivalents	-	-	3.0	4.0	9.0	5.0
Annual Change				*33.3%*	*125.0%*	*-44.4%*
Performance Indicators						
Oper. Cost per Hr. (Actual $)	-	-	$23.01	$44.09	$43.81	$38.78
Annual Change				*91.6%*	*-0.6%*	*-11.5%*
Oper. Cost per Hr. (Constant $)	-	-	$22.31	$42.21	$41.12	$35.89
Annual Change				*89.2%*	*-2.6%*	*-12.7%*
Oper. Cost per Psgr. (Actual $)	-	-	$15.03	$21.09	$23.27	$21.32
Annual Change				*40.3%*	*10.3%*	*-8.4%*
Oper. Cost per Psgr. (Constant$)	-	-	$14.57	$20.19	$21.84	$19.73
Annual Change				*38.5%*	*8.2%*	*-9.7%*
Psgrs. per Hour	-	-	1.53	2.09	1.88	1.82
Annual Change				*36.5%*	*-9.9%*	*-3.4%*
Psgrs. per Mile	-	-	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.10
Annual Change				*17.7%*	*-3.5%*	*-3.8%*
Farebox Recovery (Actual $)	-	-	13.1%	10.3%	9.9%	10.4%
Annual Change				*-21.1%*	*-3.7%*	*4.3%*
Hours per Employee	-	-	1,883	1,854	1,054	1,926
Annual Change				*-1.6%*	*-43.2%*	*82.8%*
Los Angeles-Anaheim-Long Beach CPI						
Annual Change		*1.50%*	*1.60%*	*1.30%*	*2.00%*	*1.40%*
Cumulative Change in CPI		*1.50%*	*3.12%*	*4.46%*	*6.55%*	*8.05%*

Sources: State Controller Reports, and FTA Section 15. Indicators calculated by Nelson\Nygaard.

Operating Cost per Passenger – ACCESS ADA/Paratransit

Overall, operating costs more than doubled during this four year growth period in ACCESS service. SCAT's ACCESS began service in FY 95 and service levels increased about 30% each year for the next two years and then stabilized the following year, in FY 98. Between FY 95 and 96, costs rose about 150% while ridership rose about 80%. The resulting (actual) cost per passenger was $21.09. The following year costs increased about 27% and ridership growth was about 15%, which meant the cost per passenger, calculated at $23.27, rose 10%. The final year of the audit, the cost per passenger dropped about eight percent because costs dropped 10% while at the same time there was a slight drop in passengers. The cost per passenger was $21.32. While this cost is within the range of other ADA services, SCAT is in the process of expanding service while continuing to improve its cost-effectiveness.

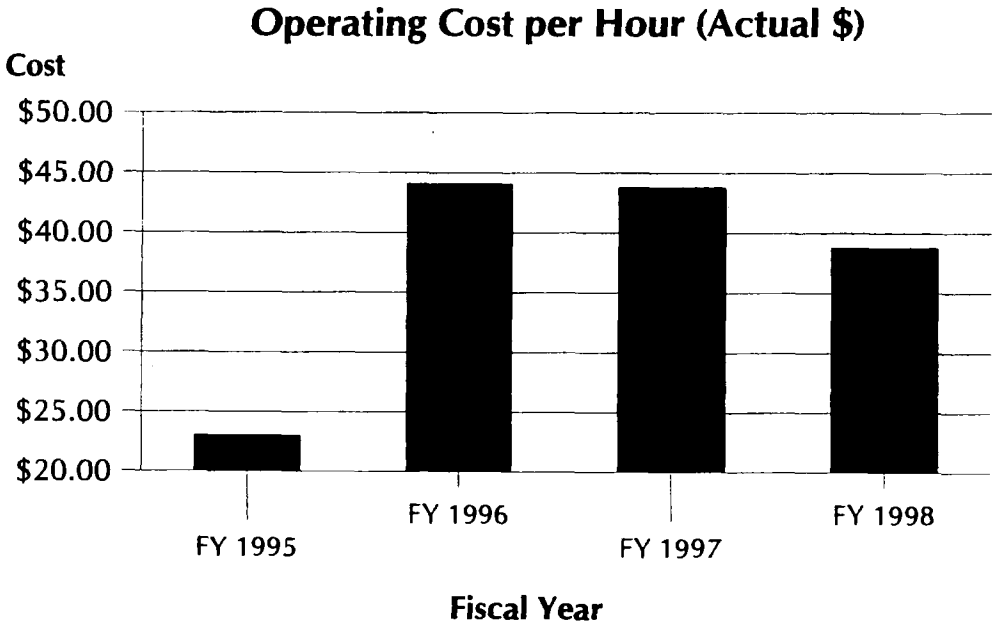
FIGURE 5-8
OPERATING COST PER PASSENGER – ACCESS ADA/PARATRANSIT



Operating Cost per Revenue Vehicle Service Hour – ACCESS ADA/ Paratransit

There was a sharp increase (150%) in costs between FY 95 and 96 with service hours increasing about 30%. The result is that hourly costs rose about 90% between the first and second year of service. This indicator showed significant improvement in the next two years. Between FY 96 and FY 97, costs and hours each increased about 27%, which meant the cost per hour indicator stabilized. The following year the hourly cost declined nearly 12% due to a drop in operating costs of ten percent while hours rose only two percent. The drop in operating costs is primarily attributed to a change in the contract operator. In the last year of the audit, hourly costs were less than $40, and this positive trend is expected to continue in FY 1998/99 and beyond.

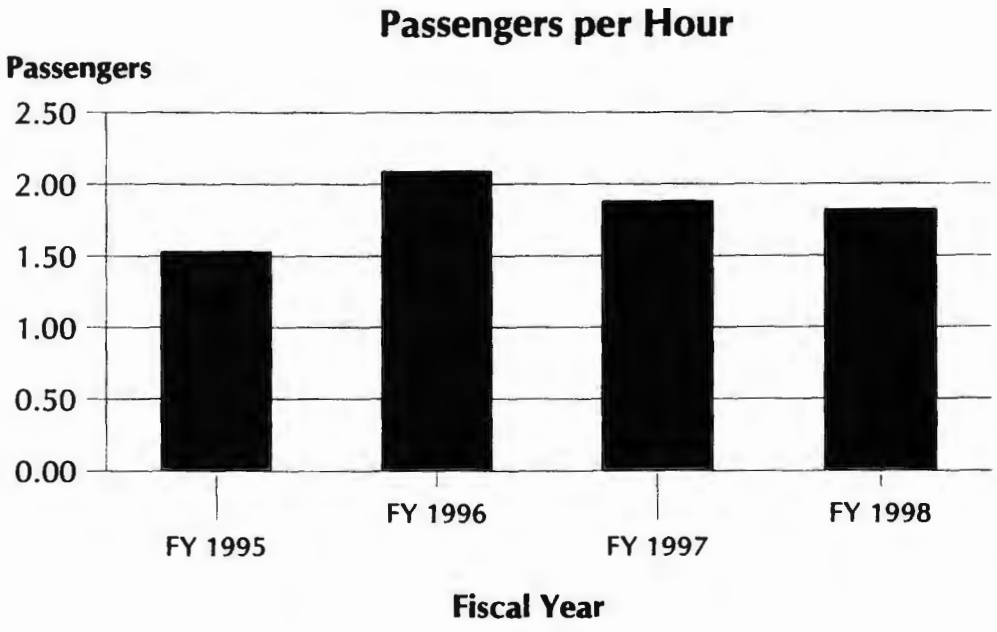
FIGURE 5-9
OPERATING COST PER REVENUE VEHICLE SERVICE HOUR – ACCESS ADA/PARATRANSIT



Passengers per Service Hour – ACCESS ADA/Paratransit

SCAT ACCESS has carried about two passengers per hour during its four years of operation. Passenger productivity peaked at 2.09 in FY1996. Given that this is an ADA service that carries more individual trips than group trips, this level of productivity is consistent with other comparable ADA services.

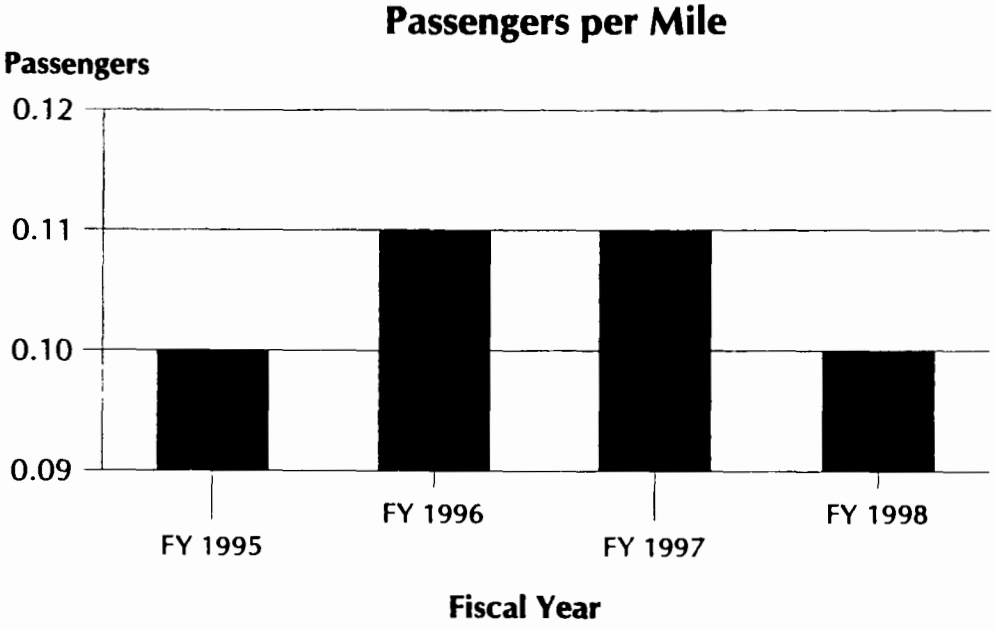
FIGURE 5-10
PASSENGERS PER SERVICE HOUR – ACCESS ADA/PARATRANSIT



Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Service Mile – ACCESS ADA/Paratransit

This indicator has remained constant during this audit period at .1 passengers per mile.

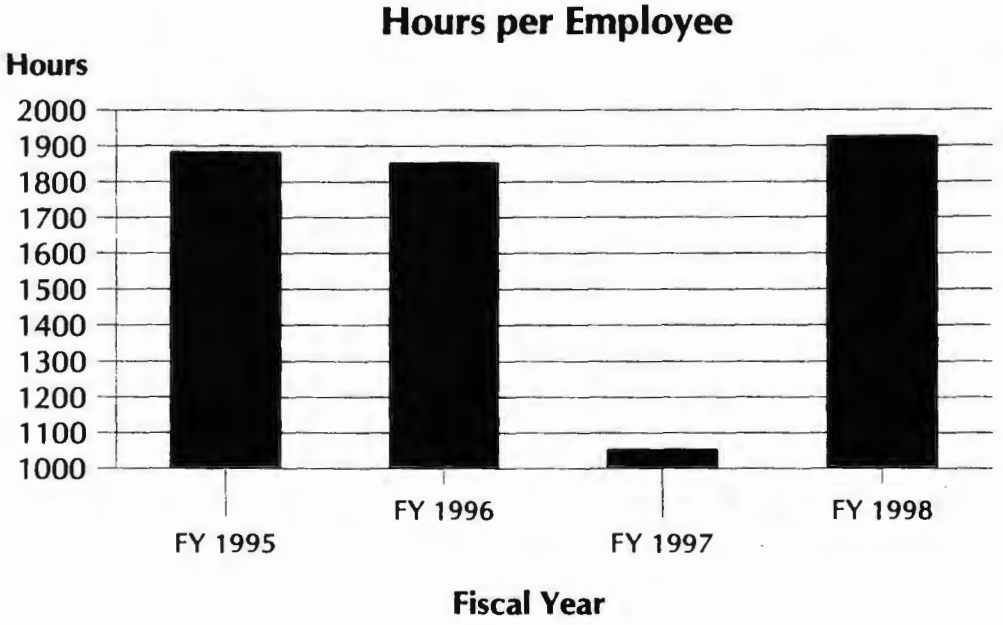
FIGURE 5-11
PASSENGERS PER REVENUE VEHICLE SERVICE MILE – ACCESS ADA/PARATRANSIT



Revenue Vehicle Service Hours per FTE – ACCESS ADA/Paratransit

This performance indicator showed a 43% decline between FY 96 and 97. This reflects an increase in the number of full-time employee equivalents from four to nine. The auditor questions the accuracy of this figure and assumes that this number is in error. It is reasonable to assume that there are about 1,900 vehicle hours per full-time equivalent. This is the indicator for FYs 95, 96, and 98.

FIGURE 5-12
REVENUE VEHICLE SERVICE HOURS PER FTE – ACCESS ADA/PARATRANSIT



CHAPTER 6. FUNCTIONAL AUDIT

OVERVIEW

This chapter presents a functional evaluation of South Coast Area Transit (SCAT). It first reviews the goals, objectives and performance standards established by SCAT, and then evaluates performance in four functional areas against the measures SCAT has established for itself.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

A system of goals, objectives and performance standards provides a framework for evaluating the performance of a transit system. A goal is a statement of a desired outcome or situation, and is used to set policy and determine organizational direction. An objective is a step toward the achievement of a goal or a chosen course of action and should therefore be stated so that its attainment can be measured. A performance standard or benchmark denotes an acceptable or desired level of achievement of an objective, often presented as a numerical value. Performance standards are very clear levels - they are met or they are not.

The goals and objectives adopted by the Board of Directors for South Coast Area Transit are listed in Figure 6-1. These goals and objectives were established in 1990 and have not changed since that time.

FIGURE 6-1
SOUTH COAST AREA TRANSIT – GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1. To establish a baseline transit system that will serve the most number of travelers in 1995, 2000, and 2010.
Continue the utilization of the origin-destination study as adopted by the Board of Directors.
Identify the capital and operations budgets associated with the service levels projected for 2000 and 2010.
Identify the cost of building expansion associated with an increased level of service and concurrent increase in labor requirements (operations, maintenance, and administration).
Identify the need and cost for expanded facilities, i.e., administrative staff and support equipment, operations facilities, and maintenance facilities and equipment.
Goal 2. To establish new initiative transit services that will reduce automobile dependency in suburban areas while maximizing transit's share in the emerging and future growth markets of the regional system.
Include the rural and suburban areas in SCAT's efforts to develop commuter oriented transit services.
Utilize the ADA required transit services to augment suburban services within the SCAT Region.
Goal 3. To establish a permanent and stable external financing source that will support the expansion of regional transit through the baseline system and the new initiative goals.
Goal 4. To seek change in institutional relationships, funding and legislative authority which are supportive of the long-term well being of regional transit in Ventura County.
Increase the visibility of Board of Directors members as advocates for SCAT, by increased communications of SCAT issues and programs at community meetings and events, Ventura issues and programs at community meetings and events, Ventura County Transportation meetings, etc.
Increase the participation of Board of Directors members at the legislative and general conferences of the California Transit Association (CTA) and American Public Transit Association (APTA).
Increase Board member contact with local legislators regarding pending legislation and regulations impacting SCAT and transit in general.

Performance Measures and Standards

SCAT monitors its performance against the following ten performance measures. This list includes the five TDA required indicators plus five other measures of importance.

- Unlinked passengers per service mile (monthly)
- Unlinked passengers per service hour (monthly)
- Operating cost per service hour (annually)
- Operating cost per unlinked passenger (annually)
- Vehicle service hours per FTE employee (annually)
- Fare revenue per service mile (monthly)
- Fare revenue per service hour (monthly)
- Operating subsidy per service mile (annually)
- Operating subsidy per unlinked passenger (annually)
- Fare recovery ratio (annually)

There are no numeric values associated with these performance measures. This means there are no specific performance "targets" with the exception of the TDA requirement to achieve a minimum 20% farebox recovery ratio.

Although SCAT does not have specific goals, objectives and standards for SCAT ACCESS, there are five defined performance measures and standards that are stated in its contract agreement with Laidlaw Transit Services, Inc. (See Figure 6-2 below).

FIGURE 6-2
ACCESS PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS CONTRACT AGREEMENT BETWEEN SCAT AND CONTRACT OPERATOR

Performance Measure	Performance Standard
Passengers per hour	2.20 trips per vehicle revenue hour
Maximum trip duration	45 minutes
On-time performance	Minimum 90% of pre-scheduled pick-ups within 15 minutes prior to, or 15 minutes after scheduled time
Farebox recovery ratio	10% of operating costs
Service interruption	Not to exceed one trip per vehicle per month

While these standards are reasonable for an ADA service, they are limited in scope and are not formally adopted by the SCAT Board of Directors.

FUNCTIONAL AREA EVALUATION

There are four functional areas in this evaluation. They are:

- **Transportation Operations** - Including provision of service delivery for fixed route service and safety factors.
- **Vehicle Maintenance** - Including vehicle effectiveness, maintenance activity effectiveness, and maintenance activity efficiency.
- **Administration** - Including personnel and labor efficiency, administrative services and training.
- **Planning and Marketing** - Including service planning and market analysis, fare policy, public relations, advertising and service planning.

These functional areas apply primarily to SCAT's fixed route service and are evaluated in the following sections. Since operations and maintenance for ACCESS is handled by a contract operator, the functional evaluation is limited to a few select areas. This evaluation is presented at the conclusion of this chapter.

FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

For each functional area, a figure is presented with all of the indicators that were reviewed for the three year audit period. Percent change between the first and last year of the audit period as well as percent change between the last two years is presented to help illustrate trends. A discussion of the indicators follows.

Scheduling, Dispatch and Operations

The evaluation of this function emphasizes vehicle operations costs and safety. Figure 6-3 presents data and corresponding indicators for the last three years.

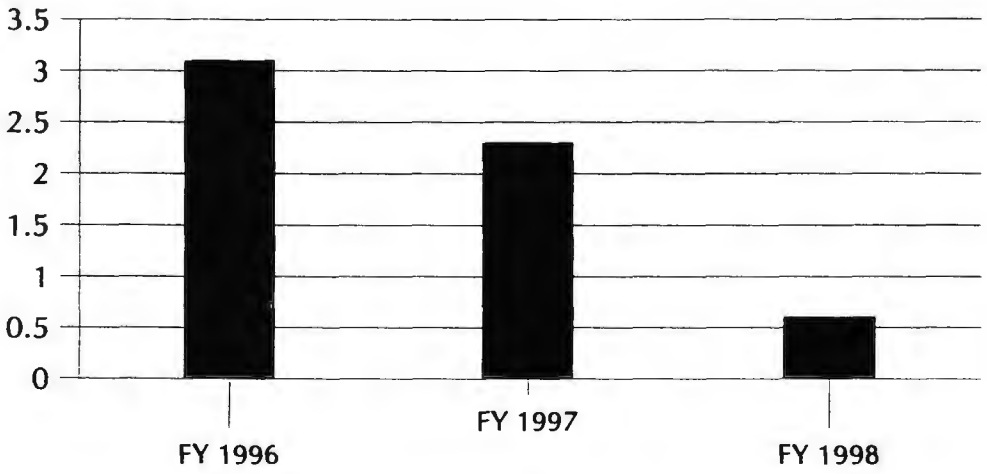
FIGURE 6-3
SCHEDULING, DISPATCH AND OPERATIONS – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

Data Items	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1996 - FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1997 - FY 1998
Vehicle Operations Cost	$3,469,001	$3,345,593	$3,660,239	5.5%	9.4%
Vehicle Operations Wage Cost	$2,111,336	$2,169,872	$2,235,249	5.9%	3.0%
Vehicle Operations Fringe Benefit Cost	$984,053	$812,240	$1,037,107	5.4%	27.7%
FTE Vehicle Operators	66.7	67.6	67.0	0.4%	-0.8%
Vehicle Service Hours	107,017	108,683	112,354	5.0%	3.4%
Total Vehicle Miles	1,401,414	1,463,138	1,411,413	0.7%	-3.5%
Total Vehicle Collision Accidents	2	8	4	100.0%	-50.0%
Passenger Injuries	9	7	2	-77.8%	-71.4%
Passenger Boardings	2,939,165	3,107,427	3,308,967	12.6%	-6.5%
Indicators					
Vehicle Operations Cost per VSH	$32.42	$30.78	$32.58	0.5%	5.8%
Vehicle Operations Wage Cost per VSH	$19.73	$19.97	$19.89	0.8%	-0.4%
Vehicle Operations Fringe Benefits per VSH	$9.20	$7.47	$9.23	0.4%	23.5%
Collision Accidents per Million Vehicle Miles	1.4	5.5	2.8	98.6%	-48.2%
Pass. Injuries per Million Pass. Boardings	3.1	2.3	0.6	-80.3%	-73.2%
Los Angeles Area CPI Annual Change	*1.3%*	*2.0%*	*1.4%*	*7.7%*	*-30.0%*

Vehicle operations cost rose five percent between FY 96 and 98, consistent with the increase in service hours. Since labor costs represent the largest category of system costs, it is valuable to review key labor performance measures. Vehicle operations wage rates rose about six percent during the three-year audit period. These costs on a per hour basis reveal a less than one percent increase during the last three years. This reflects a November 1996 labor agreement which implemented a two-tier wage scale. All employees begin and end at the same wage rate, but it takes new employees longer to reach the top of the scale. The number of FTE vehicle operators remained essentially the same during the last three years, at about 67 FTEs.

There have been transit service safety improvements in the last three years. Between FY 1997 and FY 1998 the number of vehicle collisions dropped 50% to only four incidents while vehicle service hours increased by three percent. Passenger injuries dropped 71% to only 2 incidents (.6 injuries per million boardings). Figure 6-4 below shows the decline in passenger injuries per one million boardings over the last three years.

FIGURE 6-4
PASSENGER INJURIES PER 1 MILLION BOARDINGS – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



Maintenance

Vehicle maintenance is handled by SCAT's Maintenance Division. There is a Director of Maintenance, a maintenance supervisor and other support functions including mechanics, a utility person and a building maintenance worker. The evaluation of revenue vehicle maintenance addresses maintenance cost and vehicle utilization. Figure 6-5 presents maintenance data and corresponding indicators for three year audit period.

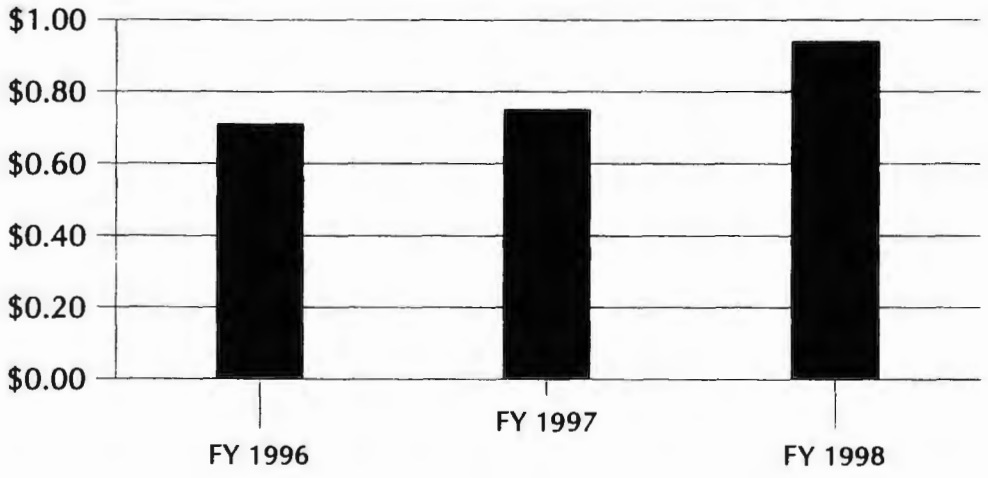
FIGURE 6-5
MAINTENANCE INDICATORS – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

Data Items	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1996 - FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1997 - FY 1998
Vehicle Maintenance Cost (less insurance)	$997,613	$1,090,538	$1,330,741	33.4%	22.0%
Vehicle Maintenance Labor Cost	$454,388	$459,293	$521,535	14.8%	13.6%
Active Vehicles	37	46	43	16.2%	-6.5%
Peak Vehicles	28	30	30	7.1%	0.0%
Total Vehicle Miles	1,401,414	1,463,138	1,411,413	0.7%	-3.5%
FTE Vehicle Maintenance Employees	13.1	13.5	15.5	18.3%	14.8%
Indicators					
Vehicle Maintenance Cost per Vehicle Mile	$0.71	$0.75	$0.94	32.4%	26.5%
Vehicle Maintenance Labor Cost per Vehicle Mile	$0.32	$0.31	$0.37	14.0%	17.7%
Vehicle Miles per Active Vehicle	37,876	31,807	32,824	-13.3%	3.2%
Active Vehicles/ Peak Vehicles	1.32	1.53	1.43	8.5%	-6.5%
Active Vehicles/ Maintenance Employee	2.82	3.41	2.77	-1.8%	-18.6%
Los Angeles Area CPI Annual Change	*1.3%*	*2.0%*	*1.4%*	*7.7%*	*-30.0%*

During the audit period, SCAT converted its operation from diesel to CNG. SCAT is commended for accomplishing this major undertaking and taking a leadership role in the transit industry. This conversion involved the design and construction of a CNG fueling facility at its headquarters, and acquiring a new fleet of CNG vehicles. In March 1996, SCAT replaced 26 of its aging vehicles with CNG vehicles, and purchased an additional nine vehicles in the fall of 1997. All CNG vehicles are stored, maintained and fueled on site at SCAT headquarters. SCAT has replaced almost all of its non-revenue vehicles with CNG vehicles.

Given these massive changes, it is not surprising that vehicle maintenance costs (less insurance) rose from nearly $998,000 in FY 96 to $1.3 million in FY 98. The maintenance cost per mile indicator rose from $0.71 in FY 96 to $0.94 in FY 98, an increase of 33% (Refer to Figure 6-6 below). The cost increases are attributed to additional training associated with the CNG conversion, hiring of two new maintenance employees and other related costs. The vehicle maintenance work force increased from 13 full-time employee equivalents (FTEs) in the first year of the audit to 15.5 FTEs in the last year.

FIGURE 6-6
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE COST PER MILE – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



SCAT's total fleet increased by five during the audit period, from 37 to 43. The number of active vehicles to peak vehicles reflects SCAT's spare ratio, which ranged from 1.3 to 1.5 over the last three years.

Administration, Personnel and Training

This function addresses administration, personnel and training. Figure 6-7 presents relevant data and indicators.

FIGURE 6-7
ADMINISTRATION, PERSONNEL AND TRAINING
FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

Data Items	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1996 - FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1997 - FY 1998
General Administration Cost (less insurance)	$798,284	$824,617	$763,885	-4.3%	-7.4%
General Administration Labor Cost	$345,000	$348,446	$324,984	-5.8%	-6.7%
Operator Training Cost	$17,339	$26,720	$20,450	17.9%	-23.5%
Operator Training Hours	2017	2683	1353	-32.9%	-49.6%
Administration FTE's	7.89	7.96	7.68	-2.7%	-3.5%
FTE Vehicle Operators	66.76	67.55	66.99	0.3%	-0.8%
FTE Vehicle Maintenance Employees	13.1	13.5	15.5	18.3%	14.8%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	107,017	108,683	112,354	5.0%	3.4%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	1,323,021	1,316,305	1,360,883	2.9%	3.4%
Passenger Boardings	2,939,165	3,107,427	3,308,967	12.6%	6.5%
Indicators					
Administration Cost per Vehicle Service Hour	$7.46	$7.59	$6.80	-8.9%	-10.4%
Administration Labor Cost per VSH	$3.22	$3.21	$2.89	-10.3%	-9.8%
Training Cost per FTE Operator	$259.72	$395.56	$305.27	17.5%	-22.8%
Training Hours per FTE Vehicle Operator	30.2	39.7	20.2	-33.2%	-49.1%
Los Angeles Area CPI Annual Change	*1.3%*	*2.0%*	*1.4%*	*7.7%*	*-30.0%*

SCAT prides itself on being a "lean and mean" organization. During the audit period, SCAT commissioned a study by the consulting firm of KPMG Peat Marwick. The study recommended that SCAT consider hiring new positions, primarily administrative positions such as a Human Resource Specialist and a Purchasing Agent. SCAT has elected not to expand its administrative staff and to continue providing these functions within its existing administrative structure.

As Figure 6-7 shows, administrative costs have dropped consistently each year during the audit period. A system's administrative efficiency can be measured by the administrative cost per vehicle service hour. General administrative costs (less insurance costs) increased during the last three years by four percent while at the same time vehicle service hours increased by five percent. The resulting indicator shows a decline of nearly nine percent. This reveals that SCAT is an extremely efficient organization. This is particularly impressive since SCAT has expanded its responsibilities during the last three years including the design and construction

of a CNG facility, acquiring over 30 new CNG vehicles, the current expansion of its ACCESS service, and assuming new roles and responsibilities in the federal and state funding arena.

Another element in this functional evaluation is operator training. Figure 6-8 shows the operator training costs and training hours for the three year period. Although costs have increased nearly 18% between FY 96 and 98, this reflects an increase of over 50% between FY 96 and FY 97 followed by a 23% decline the following year. Training hours experienced a similar fluctuation, with large increases between the first and second year followed by a sharp decline. The result is that training costs per operator and the number of hours devoted to training dropped significantly between FY 1997 and FY 1998 as shown in Figures 6-8 and 6-9.

FIGURE 6-8
TRAINING COSTS PER FTE OPERATOR – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

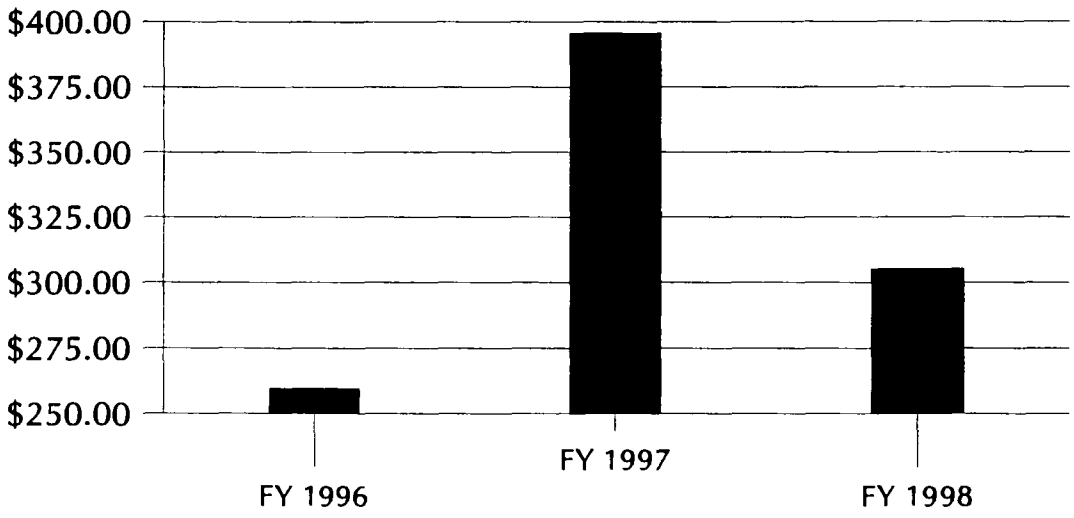
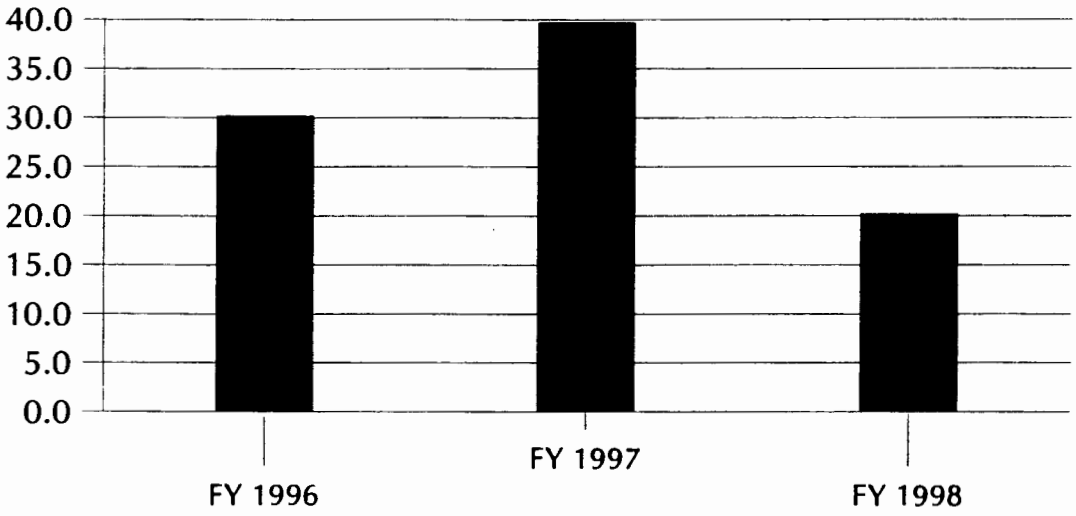


FIGURE 6-9
TRAINING HOURS PER FTE OPERATOR – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



Planning, Marketing and Public Information

SCAT's Planning and Marketing functions are performed under the Director of Planning and Marketing. This department includes a customer service assistant, a planning and marketing assistant, and an administrative aide. Major areas of responsibility include development of short and long range plans, coordination with other agencies, evaluating and setting fare policy, overseeing ACCESS service, marketing, public relations, ticket and pass sales, and disseminating public information. Figure 6-10 presents relevant data and corresponding indicators.

FIGURE 6-10
PLANNING, MARKETING AND PUBLIC INFORMATION – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE

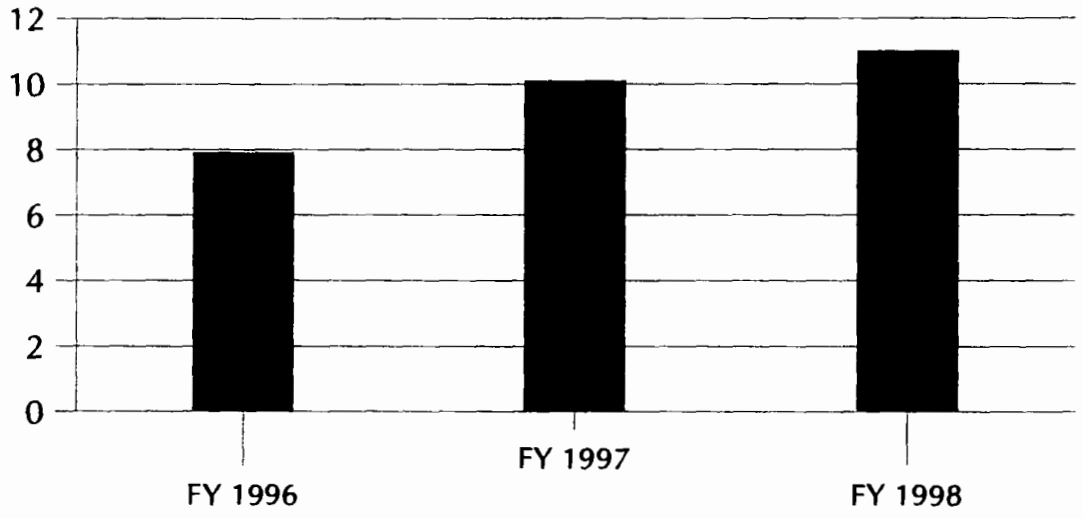
Data Items	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1996 - FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1997 - FY 1998
Passenger Boardings	2,939,165	3,107,427	3,308,967	12.6%	6.5%
Passenger Revenue	$1,572,506	$1,723,203	$1,869,928	18.9%	8.5%
Vehicle Service Hours (VSH)	107,017	108,683	112,354	5.0%	3.4%
Vehicle Service Miles (VSM)	1,323,021	1,316,305	1,360,883	2.9%	3.4%
Verified Public Complaints	233	314	363	55.8%	15.6%
Advertising and Promotion Cost	$61,227	$106,999	$80,490	31.5%	-24.8%
Indicators					
Passenger Boardings per VSH	27.5	28.6	29.5	7.2%	3.0%
Passenger Boardings per VSM	2.2	2.4	2.4	9.4%	3.0%
Passenger Revenue per VSH	$14.69	$15.86	$16.64	13.3%	5.0%
Passenger Revenue per VSM	$1.19	$1.31	$1.37	15.6%	5.0%
Passenger Revenue per Pass Boardings	$0.54	$0.55	$0.57	5.6%	1.9%
Verified Complaints per 100,000 Pass Boardings	7.9	10.1	11.0	38.4%	8.6%
Advertising/Promotion Cost per Passenger Boarding	$0.02	$0.03	$0.02	16.8%	-29.4%
Advertising/Promotion Cost per Passenger VSH	$0.57	$0.98	$0.72	25.2%	-27.2%
Los Angeles Area CPI Annual Change	*1.3%*	*2.0%*	*1.4%*	*7.7%*	*-30.0%*

SCAT's fixed route service has experienced positive growth trends in the last three years. Ridership grew about six percent each year over the last two years, and passenger revenues increased nearly 20%. At the same time, service levels as defined by service hours and miles, rose by only five percent and three percent respectively. SCAT's productivity is steadily improving and the system is carrying nearly 30 hourly passengers, a well respected figure for an inter-city fixed route system. (At the same time fixed route service was showing positive trends, SCAT was expanding its ADA/paratransit service.) A closer examination of this service is discussed on page 6-14.

Unfortunately, with these positive increases in service delivery came increases in passenger complaints. Customer satisfaction can be measured by the number of passenger complaints. Figure 6-10 shows that the number of verified complaints increased each year for the past three years, with an overall increase of 56%. The number of verified complaints per 100,000 passengers rose from 7.9 to 11 over this three year period (See Figure 6-11). The greatest increase (38%) was seen in FY 1997 - the year that a change in how SCAT monitored

complaints was implemented. Formerly, many complaints were left anonymous and thus were not considered "verified complaints." In 1997 a concerted effort was made to record the name of the person making the complaint and verify their legitimacy. This process resulted in an increase in verified complaints while total complaints remained constant. A close examination into the types of complaints reveals that the vast majority of them were related to the vehicle operator. This suggests that there may be a correlation between the complaints and the decline in operator training and warrants enhanced operator training as a strategy to reduce complaints and improve customer satisfaction.

FIGURE 6-11
VERIFIED COMPLAINTS PER 100,000 PASSENGERS – FIXED ROUTE SERVICE



SCAT's advertising and promotion costs are extremely low for a system of its size. The cost per vehicle service hours is less than one dollar. However, the cost of advertising and promotion increased 32% between FY 1996 and FY 1997. In an effort to reduce advertising and marketing costs, SCAT designed and implemented an innovative marketing program called "Sponsored Buses." SCAT has trade agreements with local radio stations and cable televison station. They advertise SCAT services for an equivalent of at least $3,000 per month in exchange for mobile billboard advertising. These stations provide billboard advertising which SCAT approves and then places on buses. In exchange for this service, SCAT gets "free" air time. SCAT contracts with an advertising agency to produce campaigns which then air on the local stations. This is a unique and desirable bartering arrangement for SCAT because it involves no exchange of money.

ACCESS (ADA/PARATRANSIT SERVICE)

Since day-to-day operations and vehicle maintenance for SCAT's ACCESS is handled under a contract agreement, the functional evaluation is focused on a few select areas. Figure 6-12 shows the number of passenger trips, cancellations, no-shows, trip denials and on-time performance for the last three years.

FIGURE 6-12
FUNCTIONAL INDICATORS – ACCESS ADA/PARATRANSIT

Data Items	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1996 - FY 1998	Annual % change FY 1997 - FY 1998
Total Revenue Trips	15,503	17,859	17,521	11.5%	-1.9%
Cancellations	3,456	3,479	3,566	3.1%	2.5%
No-Shows	377	529	740	49.1%	39.9%
Denials	450	110	119	-278.2%	8.2%
Performance					
Trips On Time	14,616	16,761	16,098	9.2%	-4.0%
% On Time	94.3%	93.9%	91.9%	-2.6%	-2.1%
% Trips Denied *	2.3%	0.5%	0.5%	-360.0%	0.0%
% Trips Canceled *	17.9%	15.9%	16.3%	-9.8%	2.5%
% Trips No Shows *	1.9%	2.4%	3.4%	44.1%	41.7%

* These ratios reflect total trips plus canceled trips.

An important objective for an ADA service is to keep the number of trip denials to a minimum, and to avoid any pattern of denial. ACCESS makes every attempt to accommodate a request for service according to the preferred time and day of travel. However, it there is no capacity, then the dispatcher will offer the closest available time. If service can not be accommodated within one hour before or after the requested time, then it is considered a denial. The number of denials has dropped precipitously as service levels increased. In FY 96 there were 450 denials and in FY 98 there were only 119. There is an extremely low denial rate with less than one percent of trips denied on ACCESS.

ACCESS has a cancellation policy which requests passengers to call at least one hour in advance. It is however, recognized, that the ADA population may have difficulty canceling service at least one hour in advance because of illness or other reason. The percent of canceled trips ranges between 16 and 18 percent and is within an acceptable range.

An important reliability measure for any system is its on-time performance. According to the contract between SCAT and Laidlaw, the service must meet a minimum standard of 90% on-

time performance of pre-scheduled pick-ups within 15 minutes prior to, or 15 minutes after scheduled time. On-time performance has exceeded this standard for the last three years.

SCAT has a no-show policy that requires drivers to call the dispatcher if they arrive at a location at a scheduled time and the passenger is not ready. Drivers are instructed to wait five minutes while the dispatcher calls the person to determine if they still plan to use the service. The percentage of no-shows is quite low (less than 4% each year), yet the actual number of no-shows has increased each year and the rate of increase is substantial. This indicator should continue to be monitored, and if it keeps increasing, ACCESS may want to consider a penalty for passengers that exceed a certain number of no-shows within a given time period.

CHAPTER 7. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the major findings and recommendations for South Coast Area Transit (SCAT).

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. SCAT converted its operation from diesel to CNG. SCAT is commended for accomplishing this major undertaking and taking a leadership role in the transit industry. This conversion involved the design and construction of a CNG fueling facility at its headquarters, and acquiring a new fleet of CNG vehicles. SCAT is also in the process of replacing all of its non-revenue vehicles with CNG vehicles.

2. SCAT operates a network of local and intercity fixed routes in western Ventura County. During the audit period, the service was relatively stable with changes limited to schedule adjustments to Routes 7 and 8, plus introduction of later evening service on select routes in June 1997.

3. Ridership on fixed route service has grown over 20% during the last three years even though service levels have remained relatively constant. As a result, passenger productivity has improved with the service carrying nearly 30 passengers per hour. This is a high level of productivity for a system of its size.

4. SCAT exceeded its state required farebox recovery ratio of 20% each year of the audit period. In the last year of the audit, the farebox recovery ratio was 30%.

5. Even though ridership growth was steady during the last three years, there was an increase in the number of passenger complaints. The number of verified complaints per 100,000 passengers rose from 7.9 to 11.0 over this three year period. A close examination into the types of complaints reveals that the vast majority of them were related to the vehicle operator. This suggests that there may be a correlation between complaints and a decline in operator training.

6. SCAT achieved full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) during the audit period by enhancing service hours on ACCESS to be consistent with the days and service span of its fixed route service. Service levels rose approximately 30% per year for the first two years of the audit and stabilized in the last year. Operating costs increased over 150% between FYs 96 and 97, and the following year costs declined ten percent even though hours increased two percent. The drop in operating costs is primarily attributed to a change in the

contract operator. SCAT is continuing its progress to improve the cost effectiveness of the service.

7. SCAT has a series of strategic goals and objectives that were established in 1990 and they have not been revised in nearly ten years. There are also several specific performance measures; however, there are not numeric values associated with them. There are several functional areas, such as vehicle operations, maintenance, planning and administration, which are not adequately addressed for its fixed route or ADA/paratransit operation.

8. SCAT is complimented for making significant efforts toward fulfilling the prior performance audit recommendations. Three of the four recommendations were fully implemented, and one recommendation was partially implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The auditor was impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of SCAT staff and commends their efforts to improve the level and quality of fixed route and ADA/paratransit services. The following recommendations are offered to help SCAT further realize its full potential.

1. Develop comprehensive set of goals, objectives and performance standards for fixed route and ADA/paratransit services.

Although SCAT currently has a set of goals and objectives, they are strategically oriented and do not address the agency's's day-to-day fixed route and ADA/paratransit operations. SCAT is encouraged to establish a set of goals and objectives for each of its services with accompanying standards by which to measure annual performance. Standards should be agreed-upon targets for SCAT to achieve and may be calibrated annually or more frequently to reflect changing circumstances such as market changes, funding changes, and operational changes. All functional areas should be addressed for fixed route and ACCESS service and include objectives and performance standards for vehicle operations, vehicle maintenance, planning and marketing, and administration and management. Of particular importance for ACCESS are objectives and standards relating to ADA compliance such as trip denials, no-shows, cancellations, as well as cost effectiveness and productivity measures.

2. SCAT should work to reduce customer complaints by enhancing its operator training program.

This recommendation is carried forward from the 1993 and 1996 Performance Audit. In the last audit it was recommended that SCAT work to reduce its customer complaints. The complaint rate fluctuated between FY 92 and 95, with positive results occurring immediately following customer training program attended by SCAT operators. During this audit period, the number of complaints per 100,000 passengers increased each year, climbing from 7.9 to 11.0. During the same time period, the number of training hours per operator declined. A close examination into the types of complaints reveals that the vast majority of them were related to the vehicle operator. This suggests that there may be a correlation between the increase in the number of complaints and the decline in operator training. SCAT is encouraged to enhance operator training through a formal training program as a strategy to reduce complaints and improve customer satisfaction. An effective training program could include quarterly sessions covering key areas and limited to no more than four hours in length.

3. SCAT should consider establishing a dedicated position for administering its ACCESS service.

SCAT does not have a dedicated staff person to administer its growing ACCESS service. The Director of Planning and Marketing and the Planning and Marketing Assistant are responsible for administration and oversight of its contract operator, documenting and reporting operating statistics, coordinating with cities and social service agencies, and other day-to-day activities. While staff is very dedicated to providing western Ventura County with a high quality ADA/paratransit service, there are many other responsibilities that staff assumes and are unable to devote their full attention to this valuable service. An annual operating budget of nearly $400,000, plus future expansion plans on the horizon, suggests that a dedicated staff person to administer ACCESS is warranted.

SCAT

South Coast Area Transit

TRIENNIAL PERFORMANCE AUDIT

FYs 1995/96, 1996/97 AND 1997/98

nelson\nygaard
consulting associates

MAJOR FINDINGS – TDA COMPLIANCE

- **SCAT's internal and external reports are complete, consistent and all required information is provided.**

- **All of SCAT's procedures for collecting and reporting data are in compliance with TDA definitions.**

- **SCAT is in full compliance with the 14 TDA compliance requirements.**

- **SCAT is to be commended for making significant efforts toward fulfilling the prior performance audit recommendations. Three of the four recommendations were fully implemented, and one recommendation was partially implemented.**

MAJOR FINDINGS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **SCAT converted its operation from diesel to CNG, taking a leadership role in the transit industry. This conversion involved the design and construction of a CNG fueling facility and acquiring a new fleet of CNG vehicles.**

- **SCAT achieved full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by enhancing service hours on ACCESS.**

- **SCAT continued to operate a network of local and intercity fixed routes in Western Ventura County. Service remained relatively stable with changes limited to schedule adjustments to Routes 7 and 8, plus introduction of later evening service on select routes in July 1997.**

- **Ridership on fixed route service grew over 20% As a result, passenger productivity improved with the service carrying nearly 30 passengers per hour.**

- **SCAT exceeded its state required farebox recovery ratio of 20% each year of the audit period. In the last year of the audit, the farebox recovery ratio was 30%.**

- **There was an increase in the number of verified passenger complaints per 100,000 passengers, from 7.9 to 11 over this three year period. The vast majority of them were related to the vehicle operator. This suggests that there may be a correlation between complaints and a decline in operator training.**

- **SCAT has a series of strategic goals and objectives that were established in 1990 and they have not been revised in nearly ten years.**

PERFORMANCE AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Develop comprehensive set of goals, objectives and performance standards for fixed route and ADA/paratransit services.**

2. **SCAT should work to reduce customer complaints by enhancing its operator training program.**

3. **SCAT should consider establishing a dedicated position to administer its ACCESS service.**