



Item #12

**DATE** December 4, 2019

**TO** GCTD Board of Directors

**FROM** Austin Novstrup, Transit Planner *ARN*

**SUBJECT** Receive Report on Evaluation of Route 22 (CMAQ Demonstration Project) and Consider Approval of Recommendation to Discontinue Route 22 & extend Route 15

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## I. Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of Route 22 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Demonstration Route performance and includes staff recommendation to discontinue the route and extend Route 15 to serve Nyeland Acres.

In 2010, GCTD completed the Vineyard Avenue / Wells Road Community Based Transit Plan which identified a future need for transit service in a variety of areas in the north Oxnard and unincorporated areas of Ventura County in El Rio, Strickland Acres and the Saticoy neighborhoods. The study resulted in one near term and three long-term recommendations all of which detailed ways to serve this area and connect them with other parts of the service area. One long-term recommendation called for the establishment of a fixed route between Wells Center in East Ventura and the Esplanade Shopping Center via Vineyard in Oxnard.

In 2014, GCTD was awarded \$2,051,098 through a VCTC CMAQ call for projects for Route 22 operating funds which was to be a 3-year demonstration project and started to operate in July 2015. As a result of low usage throughout the demonstration period, route performance has operated at unsatisfactory levels and measures at the bottom of every performance metric GCTD uses to evaluate routes. In FY 18-19 GCTD exhausted all remaining CMAQ funds allocated for this project. Due to changes in development patterns in this area, ridership has not materialized enough to sustain and support fixed-route transit service that meets our minimum required farebox ratio.

## II. Background & Evaluation

### **Objective of Route 22 Demonstration Project:**

In 2009, GCTD was awarded a Caltrans Community Based Transportation Planning grant to study the demand for transit service along Los Angeles Avenue (SR 118) in Saticoy and Vineyard Avenue (SR 232) in El Rio and Oxnard. The study was prompted as a result of anticipated/proposed housing development in the Del Norte area (across from Rio Mesa HS) and the anticipated demand from the Juvenile Justice Complex. The product of the study was the *Vineyard Avenue / Well's Road Community Based Transit Plan*. The plan included several recommendations for new service within the study area. The first recommendation of the plan

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was to implement a three-year demonstration fixed-route to serve Esplanade-Vineyard Avenue-Central Ave-Rose Ave-St. John's Hospital. The second recommendation was to consider implementing in two to five years a fixed-route that would serve St. John's Hospital-Oxnard College via Rose Avenue. To implement these recommendations GCTD began operating the Route 17 Vineyard – Central – Rose in 2012 as a CMAQ funded three-year demonstration project.

The third recommendation of the Vineyard Avenue / Well's Road Community Based Transit Plan called to establish a fixed route between Wells Center in East Ventura and the Esplanade Shopping Center via Vineyard in Oxnard. In 2014, GCTD was awarded \$2,051,098 through a VCTC CMAQ call for projects for Route 22 operating funds which was to be a 3-year demonstration project and started to operate in July 2015. Route 22 was designed to begin at the Wells Center in East Ventura and end in Unincorporated Nyeland Acres stopping in El Rio and St Johns along the way.

In addition to implementing the Route 22 other transit routes in the plan area were modified as well. To avoid redundancy with Route 22 the Route 17 (Oxnard College-Riverpark) was modified and Route 14 (Esplanade-Nyeland Acres) was eliminated. The Route 17 provides service to the Riverpark neighborhood and bypasses Central Avenue that is serviced by the Route 22. Route 14 was eliminated as Route 22 would now serve the both Gonzales Road east of Rose Avenue and the Nyeland Acres community.

The objectives of the Route 22 Demonstration Project were to:

- Provide direct service between east Ventura and north Oxnard significantly reducing travel times between these areas.
- Provide service to essential medical destinations such as St. John's Hospital (which employs 1,200 people), Clinicas near Wells Center, Kaiser Permanente, and other medical offices along Gonzales Road;
- Mitigate traffic congestion by providing a viable transportation option for commuters employed in the light industrial areas along the route in both north Oxnard and Saticoy.
- Maintain performance levels comparable to other GCTD routes that would enable the route to continue beyond the period of the grant

#### **Marketing & Outreach strategy:**

Planning and Marketing Staff engaged in extensive marketing efforts prior to and after the launch of the Route 22. The follow steps were taken to promote support and usage of the route:

- GCTD sponsored two general outreach meetings in both the City of Oxnard & City of Ventura;
- GCTD also gave presentations to community groups in neighborhoods the route would service including the Saticoy Neighborhood Council, Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project, El Rio/ Del Norte Municipal Advisory Council, and Saticoy Neighborhood Council;
- Free fares were offered on Route 22 for the first week of service;
- GCTD Staff tabled at St. John's Hospital, and two Food Bank events in both Saticoy and Nyeland Acres.
- Post cards were mailed to major businesses along the route to promote the new service;
- Press releases to local media and flyers on buses announced the new service.

- Direct outreach to Rio Mesa High School (attended Back to School nights, met with school officials and students)

### Performance Evaluation:

The evaluation criteria for new routes is defined in GCTD's Fixed-Route Service Planning Guidelines & Evaluation Policy. The Service Evaluation Policy states that routes should meet the target for their service type (trunk, local) after three years and that new routes that fall below the performance targets will be targeted for cost-effective actions to increase productivity or for elimination. Route 22 is considered a local route; the performance target for local routes is 15 passengers per revenue hour. Below is a table of Route 22's annual performance since inception.

Year of Service	Route 22 – Actual Passengers Per Revenue Hour	Route 22 Projected Passengers Per Revenue Hour	Systemwide Passengers Per Revenue Hour
FY 2015/2016	5.3	11	18.8
FY 2016/2017	5.7	13	18.6
FY 2017/2018	6.1	16	17.2
FY 2018/2019	6.6	16	17.5
FY 2019/2020 YTD	7.9	16	18.3

Route 22 has failed to meet performance targets annually since it began operating in 2015. Planning staff have evaluated the Route 22 performance annually and made changes to improve performance. Initial changes made during the demonstration period addressed on-time performance concerns and the timing of transfers to other routes and services. Each year of the demonstration period, changes were implemented to improve efficiency by eliminating underutilized trips in the off-peak hours and weekends. While this resulted in a slight improvement to the passengers per revenue hour ridership measure, Route 22 is still failing to meet its performance target.

Staff has determined that a lack of direct trip generators along the route is the most likely cause of poor route performance. Much of the route traverses agricultural land in the unincorporated area between Oxnard and Ventura. At the time the route was implemented, construction of planned developments in the Del Norte area was anticipated. These development plans have since been abandoned. In addition, ridership has not materialized at either the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) or Rio Mesa High School. The population requiring access to the JJC has greatly diminished. The JJC has a detention capacity of 420 the population at the facility in 2018 fluctuated between 66 to 101 with a staff of 140. Ridership to and from Rio Mesa High School has also been lower than anticipated this is likely due to existing school bus service to and from most areas serviced by the route 22.

### III. Summary of Recommendations

Based upon the evaluation process, staff has determined that the Demonstration Route 22 should be discontinued for the following reasons:

- Route 22 did not meet the objectives of the CMAQ demonstration project;
- Route 22 has never met the minimum 15 passengers per revenue performance target.
- The land uses in the Route 22 area do not support a fixed-route, fixed-schedule service;
- The areas of Route 22 that are likely to support transit can be served by other existing routes.

While staff recommends discontinuing Route 22, there remains a need for transit service to the Nyeland Acres community. Staff has developed a plan to extend the Route 15 to serve this area that will preserve bus service which existed prior to the Route 22 demonstration project. Route 15 alignment options were reviewed by the GCTD Technical Advisory Committee and the El Rio Municipal Advisory Committee. With consideration of the input provided by both bodies, staff is recommending implementing the proposed extension of the Route 15 to serve the Nyeland Acres community as shown (Attachment A) in January 2020.

The discontinuation of the Demonstration Route 22 will result in loss of transit service to the Vineyard Corridor between Saticoy and El Rio including the service to the Juvenile Justice Center and Rio Mesa High School, there are other existing GCTD options that passengers can utilize which are described below.

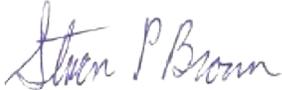
Route 22 currently provides a connection for a small number of passengers who are traveling from the Saticoy and Santa Paula area (connecting from VCTC Hwy 126 to Route 22) to reach medical offices near St. Johns. As an alternative to using Route 22 to reach this area from Saticoy, passengers going to medical destinations may use our "ACCESS" zones-based service. GCTD staff will work with VCTC to ensure that the regional office has this information to share with potential riders.

In addition, Route 11 & 10 in Ventura will continue to serve areas of Saticoy and Wells Center and provide connections to and from these areas and the rest of the service areas. Route 15, 17, 19 & 20 will continue to serve areas of El Rio, St. John's and Nyeland Acres.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**It is recommended that the Board Receive Report on Evaluation of Route 22 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Demonstration Route and Approve Staff Recommendation to Discontinue Route 22 and Extend Route 15.**

General Manager Concurrence



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Steven P Brown

## ATTACHMENT A

### CURRENT SERVICE ROUTES 15/17 & 22

Route 15, Route 17 and Route 22 currently serve the Vineyard Corridor, North Oxnard and the Unincorporated communities of El Rio and Nyeland Acres.

#### Route 15

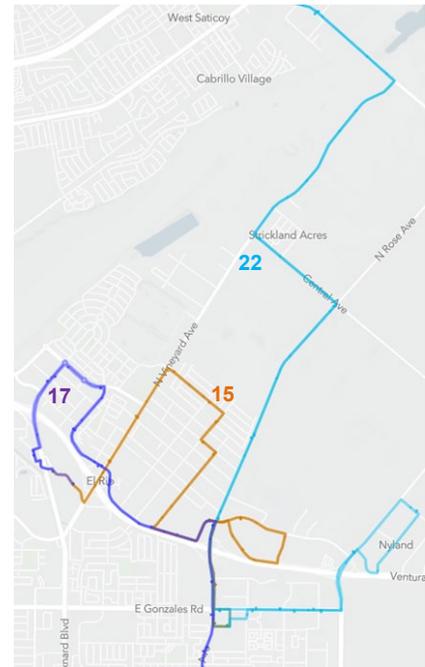
Service Area: Esplanade, El Rio, Auto Center, St. John's  
Frequency: 50-55 mins.  
Service Span: 6:39 AM to 7:55 PM  
**Daily Revenue Hours: 18:53**

#### Route 17

Service Area: Esplanade, Collection/Riverpark, North Rose Avenue Commercial Areas, Colonia, Oxnard College  
Frequency: 50 -55 mins.  
Service Span: 6:05 AM to 8:40 PM  
**Daily Revenue Hours: 23:48**

#### Route 22

Service Area: Esplanade, El Rio, Auto Center, St. John's  
Frequency: 80 mins.  
Service Span: 6:39 AM to 7:55 PM  
**Daily Revenue Hours: 13:25**



### PLANNED EXTEND ROUTE 15 & 17 (DISCONTINUATION RT 22)

With the staff recommendation to discontinue Route 22 service discontinued, staff recommends extending Route 15 to continue service to John's and Nyeland Acres. The Auto Center loop continue to be served by Route 15. Moving the Auto Center loop to the end of line creates more direct service for the higher ridership areas (relatively) of Nyeland Acres and El Rio. In this scenario frequency is reduced from 50-55 minutes to 55-60 minutes.

#### \*New\* Route 15

Service Area: Esplanade, El Rio, Auto Center, St. John's and Nyeland Acres  
Frequency: 55-60 mins.  
Service Span: 6:05 AM to 8:56 PM  
**Daily Revenue Hours: 20:47**

#### Route 17

Service Area: Esplanade, Collection/Riverpark, North Rose Avenue Commercial Areas, Colonia, Oxnard College  
Frequency: 55 - 60 mins.  
Service Span: 6:00 AM to 8:52 PM  
**Daily Revenue Hours: 21:34**

