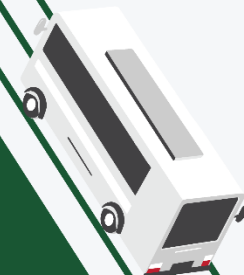


VENTURA COUNTY

Transit Integration and Efficiency Study (TIES)

Update on Draft Study

FEHR & PEERS



Why Study Transit Integration?

- TIES was initiated by Commission discussion in summer 2020
 - Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on transit ridership and finance
 - Underscored race and equity issues nationwide, and challenges for 'essential workers' and general public to access jobs and services without a car
 - Ridership nationally has been falling despite growing population and strong economy
- Challenges facing transit have only increased
 - Inflation and escalating costs, fewer contractor bids
 - Increased congestion and more competition with transit

TIES Background

- Similar study previously in 2010-2012
- Some changes followed, including formation of GCTD and ECTA
- Current study began in 2021
 - Examined data about every transit service in Ventura County
 - Held six “operator working group” sessions
 - Interviewed Commissioners
 - Interviewed staff and city managers
 - Collaborated with “Coordinated Services Plan”
 - Focus group outreach for critical rider groups

Can Integration Improve Transit Service and Rider Experience in Ventura County?

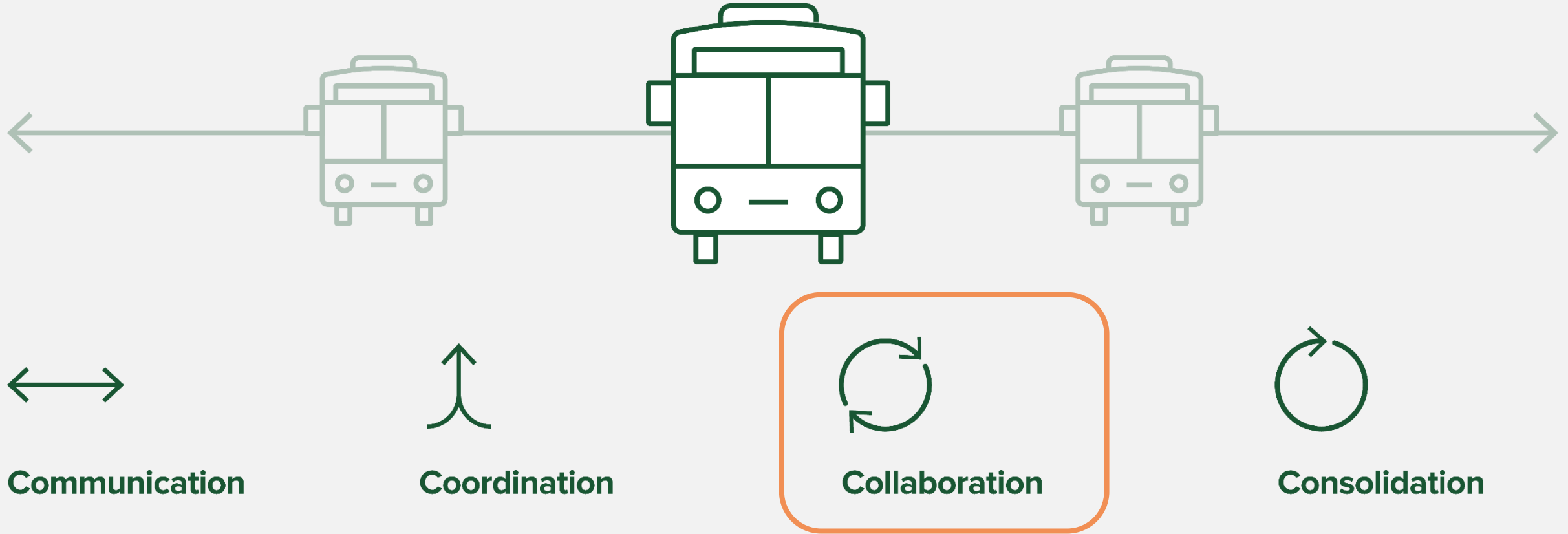
What are the Issues?

- 9 different operators that do not form a strong regional network
- Highly local focus on service delivery limits interest in improving regional connectivity, barriers to providing interagency service
- “Behind the scenes” issues
 - Increased expenses
 - Less competitive contracts
 - Driver retention and employer competition
 - Changing local priorities

What are the Issues?

- Wide variation between communities in
 - Rider policies
 - Fares and passes
 - Program eligibility
 - Quality of published information
 - Online presence
- Variation can reflect “local community” but can also hamper interoperability and connectivity

Approaches to Integration



Adapted and modified from North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Statewide Regionalization Study Final Report, 2012.

Recommended Actions/Strategies

- Improve financial resilience by coordinating administrative functions
- Centralize demand-response call-taking and scheduling
- Align rider policies, fares, and eligibility
- Standardize surveying, marketing, and online presence

Alternatives Summary

Integrating recommended actions and strategies into delivery

Approach to Alternatives

- Created three scenarios ranging from
 - Mostly collaborative
 - Partial consolidation along functional boundaries
 - Full consolidation to a county-level agency
- Other variations and alternatives are possible
- Alternatives provide framework for stakeholders to respond to and adapt moving forward

Alternative 1

- Subregional consolidation of demand-response service
- Increased and formalized interagency coordination
 - Fixed-route service planning
 - Group procurements and operating contracts, where possible
 - Standardize rider policies
 - Regional marketing, surveying, institutional partnerships

Alternative 2

- Creation of a countywide demand-response agency
 - Includes all paratransit and dial-a-ride programs
 - Probably housed within another agency initially
- Subregional consolidation of fixed-route service into two agencies
 - Gold Coast Transit + Ojai, Valley Express, VCTC (bus)
 - Thousand Oaks + Kanan Shuttle, Moorpark, Simi Valley, Camarillo
- Three agencies simplifies coordination, focuses all staff on “transit” and subregional responsiveness
- VCTC remains as RTPA, transfers all bus operations to Gold Coast

Alternative 3

- All public transit services integrated into Gold Coast Transit District
- Board structure of GCTD changes to accommodate a more regional makeup
- Most operating bases (Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Ojai, Valley Express) would remain as operating divisions
- VCTC remains as RTPA, transfers all bus operations and transit planning to Gold Coast

Alternatives Comparison

- Alt 1 requires an action plan and voluntary commitment to develop improvements
- Alt 2 balances risk by relying on existing partnerships, creates subregional platform for change
- Alt 3 is ambitious with the greatest ability for the resulting agency to enact regional change, but the most difficult to execute

	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3
How it improves passenger experience	1	3	4
How it reduces operating and capital costs	1	3	4
How it integrates existing operating systems	1	3	4
How it enhances regional service coverage	1	2	4
How it provides more community-responsive and equitable transit service	0	2	3
Risks and challenges of this approach	3	1	0
Implementation Complexity	4	2	0

Alternatives Comparison

- Alt 1 likely has least benefit for cost efficiency, protects city revenues for transit and roads
- Alt 2 could be more expensive than existing initially due to creation of 1-2 new agencies, will likely take some time to realize cost efficiencies
- Alt 3 has greatest potential for administrative cost efficiency and increases revenue to transit through TDA, but has negative effect for some city budgets

Roadmap for the Future

- TIES defined the issues and practical strategies to improve
- Alternatives provide a roadmap for how to implement strategies
- Alternative 1 codifies actions mostly agreed-on already, sets the stage for future integration

Stakeholder Concerns

Key Concerns and Issues

Funding

- Partial or full consolidation should result in cost efficiency
- Significant loss of road maintenance funds for certain cities
- Increased TDA to a countywide agency benefits riders
- Uncertainty about outcomes, assumption that TIES will result in greater expense

Responding to Community Needs

A regional agency will be less able or unwilling to maintain local/specialized service

- Camarillo Dial-a-Ride
- Ojai Trolley
- Moorpark Microtransit
- Most regional agencies operate specialized local services

Key Concerns and Issues

Service could be reduced

Consolidation will result in reduction or elimination of “underperforming” service in smaller communities

- “Do no harm” sentiment
- Not recommending major service changes linked to TIES – service analysis would need to be completed before any changes made
- Regional agencies must balance different definitions of success for urban and suburban/rural areas
- Resulting agency would continually monitor all local and regional needs

Next Steps

- Solicit public input
- Present to agencies
- VCTC to conduct regional Short Range Transit Plan, which will include TIES strategies

Future Steps

- Collaborate with represented groups
- Staff begin implementing “low-hanging fruit” actions
- Stakeholders develop working groups (finance, operations, etc.) and legal counsel to proceed based on adopted alternative

Thank You

Questions?

FEHR & PEERS

