

# Gold Coast Transit District Strategic Plan

July 2023



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## Letter from the General Manager

This year marks the anniversary of 50 years of public transit service by our organization. While we are proud of our past, we know that like our buses, we must continuously move forward and adapt our services to meet the changing needs of our riders and continue to attract, retain, and inspire our employees to do their best work.

Like many local transit agencies throughout the state, GCTD is currently experiencing increases in ridership, as recovery from COVID-19 continues. Thanks in large part to the Ventura County Transportation Commissions' successful Youth and College Ride Free programs, GCTD has seen record ridership increases quarter after quarter over the last year. While this has provided optimism for the future, we are keenly aware of the very real challenges we face with limited funding sources and our ability to meet growing demand and increased operational costs.



As we face the future, it is imperative we have a guiding plan to help us make informed decisions on where we go next. In March of 2022, we began an agency wide effort to develop a strategic plan for the first time in over a decade. The purpose of this plan is, first and foremost, to provide clarity around our mission. The plan also sets forth our vision for the future, and provides a series of strategies and goals for improving the rider experience, system safety, financial capacity, supporting employee engagement, and increasing awareness of our services and value within the community.

The development of this strategic plan was guided by our employees, leadership team as well as our Board of Directors who worked together to explore opportunities for the future and identify how we might address future challenges. This plan provides the GCTD team with a guiding set of values, goals, and a work plan to implement over the next three years to help us achieve our longer-term vision.

### Giving our Riders a Great Experience

GCTD operates 20 routes, 359 days, 7 days a week, with the first personnel arriving on site at 3:00 am and leaving at approximately 1:00 am. In Ventura County, GCTD's local buses carry almost two thirds of the transit trips in the County, highlighting the demand for transit in our communities. GCTD's diverse group of riders include students, seniors, essential workers, and others who rely on transit to access medical appointments, school, work, food and other resources. It is imperative that we work to provide these current and future riders with quality services to ensure they get where they need to go.



**Public transportation connects our communities to health, education, independence and a better quality of life.** GCTD's fixed route buses and demand response services, GO ACCESS,



provide mobility options to every neighborhood across Ojai, Oxnard, Ventura, Port Hueneme and the unincorporated areas of Ventura County. These bus routes are more than just lines on a map, they represent lifelines - helping people gain access to opportunities needed to thrive. The quality of our transit services and the way we invest in our system is a direct reflection of how we care for the community. By improving the public transit rider's experience, we are improving the health and economic vitality of our communities.

**Public transit makes our local economy stronger.** Communities without quality transit have more traffic, have less access to jobs and education, and pay more for transportation. Communities with better transit options have reduced healthcare costs, and better overall quality of living. Without transit, many underserved communities would suffer from a lack of mobility options, causing economic and social distress in our communities. Many businesses and organizations have made access to public transit a key factor in their decision to relocate their headquarters, bringing jobs to communities that are committed to public transit. Businesses are recognizing that public transit helps their balance sheet – enabling them to attract employees with reduced transportation costs puts money back into the local economy. Ventura County households can save about \$10,000 annually by living with one less car and using public transportation.

**We're Going Places.** This strategic plan marks the beginning of a new era of creativity and resilience, with our bold new vision to revolutionize transportation in Ventura County by leading initiatives that improve the transit rider experience, achieve clean air and drive economic vitality. GCTD's 2023 Strategic Plan is both ambitious and actionable.

We are proud of the work of our employees in developing this plan, which will guide us as we fulfill our mission ***Serving, Moving, and Connecting People to Opportunity – One Ride at a Time.***

Sincerely,

*Vanessa Rauschenberger*

Vanessa Rauschenberger  
General Manager





## Introduction to GCTD Strategic Plan

### 3-Year Agency Strategic Plan

A three-year strategic plan serves as a roadmap that outlines an agency's goals, objectives, and strategies. Its purpose is to provide a clear direction and guide decision-making processes within the agency. By looking ahead and setting goals for the next three years, the strategic plan helps align the efforts of different departments and stakeholders toward a common vision. It provides a comprehensive and holistic view of the agency's future.

The benefits of a three-year strategic plan are many. Firstly, it enhances organizational focus by defining priorities and setting clear objectives. Secondly, it improves resource allocation by identifying the key areas where investments and efforts should be concentrated. Lastly, a three-year strategic plan promotes accountability and performance measurement. Overall, a well-crafted three-year strategic plan provides a roadmap for success, fosters organizational growth, and enhances adaptability. The Strategic Planning Process also included review other efforts ongoing to improve transit in the region:

- Building Transit Supportive Communities Plan
- COVID-19 Recovery Plan
- Zero Emissions Transition Plan
- Short Range Transit Plan
- Transit Integration & Efficiency Study- VCTC

### Organizational Health and High-Performance Framework

To aid in the facilitation of the strategic planning process, GCTD engaged consulting firm Insight Strategies, Inc. With almost 30 years' experience consulting with executives and organizations on organizational excellence, Insight has crafted an Organizational Health & High-Performance Framework® that has proven success.

Organizations perform at their best when employees see themselves and the roles they play in the mission and aspirational vision of the organization ("the why"); when strategies and goals are clear and aligned to the mission and vision ("the what"); when key processes anchor the mission, vision, and strategies into the day to day operations – driving employee effectiveness and accountabilities ("the how"); and when the right people are in the right positions to implement the strategies and goals and exemplify the desired culture ("the who"). Ensuring all components are maximized and aligned results in an organization's ultimate success. (See graphic.)



***As Peter Drucker famously said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast."***

## Mission

***Serving, Moving, and Connecting People to Opportunity  
– One Ride at a Time.***

## Vision

***Revolutionize transportation in Ventura County by leading initiatives that improve the rider experience, achieve clean air, and drive economic vitality.***

## Strategic Priorities

**1.** Deliver service excellence by providing customer focused, high-quality service to every member of our community.

**Priority Owner: Director of Operations & Maintenance**

**2.** Ensure safety and security while caring for the well-being of employees, passengers, and the general public.

**Priority Owner: Director of Human Resources**

**3.** Increase and provide responsible stewardship of all resources by prioritizing oversight, integrity, accountability, and transparency.

**Priority Owner: Chief Financial Officer & Director of Finance**

**4.** Cultivate a positive and inclusive work culture that prioritizes employee engagement, high performance, learning and development.

**Priority Owner: General Manager**

**5.** Increase public awareness, expand community presence, and build a transit-supportive region through public education, partnerships, and advocacy.

**Priority Owner: Director of Planning & Marketing**

## GCTD's Values

Value	Definition
<b>Safety</b>	The value of safety is of upmost importance here at GCTD. We take great pride in safely transporting our passengers, maintaining our vehicles to meet the highest safety standards and ensuring our facility is safe for all.
<b>Accountability</b>	The value of accountability is essential to the everyday functions at GCTD. We all must hold ourselves accountable to avoid delays in our individual and shared work.
<b>Communication</b>	The value of communication emphasizes the importance of open communication in all directions, whether it's discussing issues with those above, below, or alongside. It encourages direct and honest conversations to ensure transparency to employees and the public.
<b>Integrity &amp; Honesty</b>	The value of integrity and honesty means doing the right thing – having the highest ethical standards in all decision making. Doing so helps to develop strong relationships based on trust, with our employees and the public we serve.
<b>Positivity</b>	The value of positivity means starting each day with optimism to allow us to see the best in ourselves, in each other, and our community.
<b>Kindness &amp; Respect</b>	The value of kindness and respect shows that we care about the lives of our passengers, and employees in all interactions; being caring, friendly and courteous with everyone we encounter.
<b>Adaptability &amp; Creativity</b>	The value of adaptability and creativity encourages employees to find the best ways to meet our customers' needs – embracing change, innovating and adapting to the changing needs of our community.





## Strategic Priority #1: Service Excellence

**Deliver service excellence by providing customer focused, high-quality service to every member of our community.**

**Goal #1: Provide reliable service to the community with *less than 1%* percent of all scheduled miles missed on any day service is provided measured monthly.**

### Key Actions

1. Utilize Supervisors to Track Cut-Out Trips / Manager Verifies Reported Monthly.
2. Fill all budgeted operator positions to minimize missed service and reduce reliance on overtime to fill shifts.
3. Foster work culture to engage & retain employees by continuing to engage with employees, providing training, and holding quarterly recognition events.

**Goal #2: Ensure 100% of vehicles and equipment are kept in excellent condition ready for service in accordance with GCTD's Transit Assets Management Plan Targets, reviewed annually.**

### Key Actions

1. 100% preventative maintenance completed on time.
2. Seek funding for capital replacements.
3. Transit Asset Management TAM Plan (refer TAM plan Targets) reviewed annually.

**Goal #3: Improve the customer experience by meeting or exceeding 100% of KPIs established for on-time performance, cleanliness, complaints and crowding by June 30th, 2024, and each year annually.**

### Key Actions

1. Convene Customer Experience Committee to review passenger policies bi-annually.
2. Year 1- Create passenger survey schedule and timeline for results.
3. Year 2 – Develop process for tracking cleanliness & Operator feedback.

**Goal #4: Develop a transit system that attracts and retains transit riders exceeding 5 million riders by June 30, 2029.**

### Key Actions

1. Complete a Public Input Needs survey.
2. Develop a Short Range Transit Plan based on Community Input by June 2024.
3. Apply for funding to implement SRTP recommendations to attract riders.

## **Strategic Priority #2: Safety and Security**

**Ensure safety and security while caring for the well-being of employees, passengers, and the general public.**

**Goal #1: Protect life and property by operating a minimum of 1 per 100,000 miles between preventable accidents, measured monthly.**

### **Key Actions**

1. All accidents reviewed on video to determine preventable / non preventable following TSI guidelines.
2. PTASP Committee Meets Quarterly to review trends.
3. Incorporate Safety Messages for employees into meetings and training.

**Goal #2: Decrease costs incurred due to passenger and worker injuries by 10% to be achieved by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.**

### **Key Actions**

1. Research alternative workers comp insurance options to reduce GCTD's costs.
2. Track worker and employee injuries reported quarterly.

**Goal #3: Utilize real-time data management system to track incidents, complaints, injuries, and accidents 100% of the time by June 30, 2024.**

- VTT Training/Injuries/Accidents – July 2023
- Customer Contacts /Call Backs – January 2024

### **Key Actions**

1. Complete Testing of Complaints Form and Process for follow up by Nov 2023.
2. Complete Employee Training on Track It by December 1, 2023.

**Goal #4: Standardized level of cleanliness + maintenance across all bus stops by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

### **Key Actions**

1. Work with member jurisdictions to establish cleaning agreements.
2. Explore GCTD contracting for bus stop cleaning.

### Strategic Priority #3: Stewardship of Resources

**Increase and provide responsible stewardship of all resource by prioritizing oversight, integrity, accountability, and transparency.**

**Goal #1: Improve internal controls to ensure that costs are monitored and controlled in accordance with all FTA and State oversight requirements by correcting the top three financial processes.**

#### Key Actions

1. Provide staff training in new processes by October 2023.
2. Complete review of processes related to reconciliation of payroll, accounting procurement, and grants regarding internal controls by October 2023.
  - a. Payroll—100% correct and on time.
  - b. Accounting—Monthly close process within 15 days.
  - c. Grants—100% MPRs/FFRs reports completed on time and correctly.
  - d. NTD Reports completed on time.
  - e. Audits and State Controller Reports completed on time.
3. Develop PM report for each new grant by the end of December, 2023.

**Goal #2: Ensure monthly financial statements to the Board and Department Directors that assist in decision making are 100% accurate and 100% on time by the the September 2023 BOD meeting.**

#### Key Actions

1. Provide monthly budget reports to Departments by October 2023.
2. Define Grants Reports roles and responsibilities by October 2023.

**Goal #3: Identify alternatives sources “non-federal match” required for grants (to retain as much local operating funds for operating) by June 30, 2025.**

#### Key Actions

1. Identify all possible state funding sources for capital projects (bus replacements, zero emissions, etc.) and work with CTA and VCTC to increase state transit capital funding share to GCTD.

**Goal #4: Increase non-fare non-grant funding (i.e., alt-fuel sourcing, partnerships, non-traditional grants, medical reimbursement, property development, advertising, etc.) to be 10% of operating revenues by June 30, 2026.**

#### Key Actions

1. Continue to work on re-development of 301 Property.
2. Identify project owners / PMs for alternative funding projects.
3. Prepare a timeline to explore utilization of the District facilities for sales of Renewable Compressed Natural Gas to municipal operators such as the City of Oxnard refuse division by January 1, 2024.
4. Partner with VCTC to advocate for county Medical Rides reimbursement.
5. Explore new local funding options to help the District maintain and expand critical services, within GCTD authority (ballot initiative options, assessments, etc.).



### Strategic Priority #4: Culture

**Cultivate a positive and inclusive work culture that prioritizes employee engagement, high performance, learning and development.**

**Goal #1: Establish a performance management process by end of December 2023 that aligns employee expectations and accountabilities to the strategic plan.**

#### Key Actions

1. Template instructions completed by September 2023.
2. Draft instructions completed by October 2023.
3. Employee evaluations due annually by January 30th.
4. Employee Development Goals by March 1, 2024.

**Goal #2: Establish a baseline for perceptions regarding three key areas raised by employees in employee assessment:**

- communications
- fairness/favoritism
- managerial effectiveness

**Ensure GCTD's culture reflects the values as measured by employee perceptions on an employee engagement survey. Improve perceptions as measured by annual employee survey by June 30, 2024. (Reference Gallup Q12).**

#### Key Actions

1. Develop annual employee survey by January 2024 and release in Spring of 2024. Results shared and repeated annually.
2. Improve perceptions by 10% over the baseline favorable responses on annual employee survey by June 30, 2025 (Reference Gallup Q12).
3. Provide written process for recruitment with each new job posting and be clear and transparent about criteria and selection process.

**Goal #3: Increase methods of communication and engagement of employees, through the following activities:**

#### Key Actions

1. Establish internal communications committee that meets quarterly with representation from all departments. Completed by November 2023.
2. Issue quarterly employee newsletter to share key information by July 2023.
3. Offer training opportunities (to expand skills) through Vector Solutions – January 2024.
4. Workforce development in line with Zero Emissions Transition by June 2025.
5. Continue with employee events, including monthly Coffee with the GM, employee of the Quarter, and other employee engagement events.

## Strategic Priority #5: Expand Public Awareness

**Increase public awareness, expand community presence, and build a transit-supportive region through public education, partnerships, and advocacy.**

**Goal #1: Increase awareness of GCTD as an organization and our various services as measured by increasing traffic to the website by 10% by June 2024, with 5% increases year after year.**

### Key Actions

1. Develop annual marketing plan that includes at least one paid annual media buy to promote GCTD and its services.
2. Report web, social media and print media mentions in quarterly report
3. Prioritize social media content creation based on analytics.

**Goal #2: Attract and retain ridership, particularly youth riders with at least six local schools participating in the youth training program by 2026.**

### Key Actions

1. Complete our youth adult mobility management training video by June 2024, and partner with schools to train more young and young adult riders.
2. Utilize social media to provide additional training to new riders on etiquette and proper conduct.
3. Partner with school districts to distribute information to parents on the benefits of public transit, including cost benefits, safety and convenience.
4. Include youth engagement in all marketing efforts, and include programs that are engaging such as social media videos, art, music, etc

**Goal #3: Increase GCTD staff participation in community events & committees to strengthen community partnerships and expand network of community allies.**

### Key Actions

1. All management staff participate on one external committee.
2. Increase participation in community events, committees, and programs to strengthen community partnerships and expand network of community.
3. Host one GCTD public event annually focusing on public engagement and education.

**Goal #4: Increase involvement with cities to connect land use and transit planning, that encourages people to walk, bike, and take transit as measured by transit supportive recommendations integrated into 100% of City's land use and transportation plans.**

### Key Actions

1. Planning staff participate in weekly design advisory meetings.
2. Provide written comments on ways to support transit access.
3. Provide qualitative and quantitative data to member cities on the benefits of transit supportive measures in plans.

## Background

### Plan Development

Arriving at the three-year strategic priorities was a multi-step process. The agency gathered data and selected priorities from many sources including organizational and employee assessments, regulatory mandates, Board presentations, annual employee engagement surveys, customer surveys, and more. Guided by the agency's mission, vision, and values, GCTD prioritized themes that reflected both employee feedback and the SWOT analysis. GCTD evaluated those finalists against the guideposts for decision-making. From there, GCTD's leadership team reached a consensus on the five most critical agency-wide priorities that provide a solid foundation for the agency's continued advancement.

### Organizational and Employee Assessment

An organizational and employee assessment was conducted by Insight Strategies, Inc. (Insight) on behalf of GCTD. Nearly 100 GCTD employees participated in the oral strategic planning assessment and 42 employees participated in the written strategic planning survey assessment. The purpose of the assessment was to elicit input to shape and inform GCTD's three-year strategic plan and assess the current state of GCTD's leadership team effectiveness and opportunities for alignment.

### The Impact of Culture + GCTD's Desired Culture

Describing a company's culture is like describing an individual's personality. It's a combination of the ethics, values, perceptions, atmosphere, practices, attitudes, and beliefs shared by a company's employees. In simple terms, a company's culture is "the way we do things around here."

The key to transforming a strategic plan from theory to successful implementation is culture. Concurrent with this process and informed by the organizational and employee assessments, GCTD identified its current culture and defined its desired culture. Building upon what GCTD already does well, the strategic plan seeks to make GCTD an ideal work environment, focusing on:

- Communication
- Accountability
- Increasing innovation and creativity
- Collaboration
- Learning and Development

### Guidepost for Decision-Making

A guidepost for decision-making is a compass and helps teams and individuals prioritize decisions and actions. When used properly the guidepost:



- Facilitates alignment of team output
- Provides a framework for discussion, disagreement, and complex decision making
- Reduces confusion
- Saves time

*GCTD's Guidepost for Decision Making is as follows...*

- Looking at the 3-Year Horizon
- Available resources – time/\$/people
- Compliance and mandates
- Community and customer impact
- Impact on safety and reliability
- Supporting the Mission, Vision, and Values

### **SWOT Analysis**

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that helps organizations evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It provides a comprehensive overview of the internal and external factors that can impact the success of a business or project. SWOT analysis provides a structured framework for organizations to evaluate their current position, make informed decisions, and develop effective strategies to achieve their goals.

### **Leadership and Board Workshops**

A total of five leadership workshops and one Board workshop were facilitated by Insight. The outcomes of these workshops include a guidepost for strategic decision-making, a revised mission statement, a vision statement, strategic priorities, agency goals, cross-functional interdependency agreements, and more. This document summarizes the outcomes from the six workshops.

### **Tracking and Monitoring**

This strategic plan is a living document. GCTD will track progress **quarterly** to ensure accountability and follow-through, and the agency will revisit, adjust as needed, and recommit to the plan **annually**. Performance measures and timelines will cascade down to agency departments, and the agency will regularly review and refine these measures to ensure they align with desired outcomes. Individual employee goals, documented in their annual performance reviews, will align with department/division goals, agency goals, and strategic priorities.

Additional reviews will occur in conjunction with the annual budget process. To realize the strategic priorities and goals, GCTD must prioritize budgets and resources, including financials, time, people, and expertise.



[www.GCTD.org](http://www.GCTD.org)