AGENDA ITEM #9

SANTA CLARA
Valley Transportation Authority

	Date:	May 12, 2006
	Committee Meeting Date:	June 8, 2006
	Board Meeting Date:	NA
BOARD MEMORANDUM	ACTION ____ DISCUSSION ____ INFO	X

TO: Policy Advisory Committee
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

THROUGH: Michael Burns
General Manager

FROM: Matthew O. Tucker
Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: FY 2006 Third Quarter Transit Operations Performance Report
(July 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006)

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

BACKGROUND:

The FY 2006 Third Quarter Transit Operations Performance Report presents key performance information regarding the operation of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA). This report is routinely produced after each quarter and at the end of the fiscal year. A detailed summary of the 2006 fiscal-year-to-date third quarter performance follows.

DISCUSSION:

Ridership

Bus ridership through third quarter of FY 2006 totaled 23.1 million, a 2.0% increase compared to the previous fiscal year. Average weekday ridership increased by 2.7% from 96,911 FYTD 2005 to 99,485 FYTD 2006. This is the first increase since FY 2001 covering the same period. Average Saturday ridership increased by 0.6% while average Sunday ridership increased by 1.1% through the end of the third quarter of FY 2006.

Light rail ridership continues to increase, showing a 16.5% improvement in total boardings through the third quarter of FY 2006. Average weekday ridership through the third quarter of FY 2006 was 24,634, up 15.8% compared to the same period last year. Average Saturday and Sunday ridership increased by 17.0% and 23.0%, respectively.

Overall, total system ridership (bus and rail) through the third quarter increased by 4.6%. Average weekday ridership increased 5.0%, and average Saturday and Sunday ridership increased by 3.8% and 5.3%, respectively. It should also be noted that FY 2006 is the first fiscal year since 2001 that VTA has not raised fares or cut service.

Operating Expense and Revenue

The total transit operating expense through third quarter of FY 2006 increased 6.3% to $181.6 million, but was $1.8 million lower than fiscal-year-to-date budget.

For the first nine months of FY 2006, expenses for supplies and services, which constitute 20.1% of the total FYTD 2006 operating expenses, increased 25.0% compared to the same period last year. Supplies and services consist primarily of parts, diesel fuel, professional services, security services, utilities, and other operating expenses, totaling $36.5 million through the third quarter. Fuel costs increased by $2.3 million and parts usage increased by $1.3 million as a result of the expiration of the warranty for most of the Kinkisharyo light rail vehicle fleet. These two elements constituted 49.2% of the 25.0% increase.

During the first nine months of FY 2006, wages increased 2.5% while benefits increased 7.2%, compared to the same period last year. Overall, cost of labor through the third quarter of FY 2006 was up 4.7% compared to the same period during FY 2005.

System total operating hours through the third quarter of FY 2006 increased by 2.6% compared to the same period during FY 2005. The increase in operating expenses outpaced the increase in total system hours resulting in an increase in the system cost per total hour of 3.6% from $157.59 to $163.26, lower than the FYTD adopted goal of $173.36.

Fare revenue collected during the first nine months of FY 2006 was an estimated $25.5 million, up 8.4% compared to the same period during FY 2005. The increase was primarily due to increased ridership and increased average fare revenue. The farebox recovery ratio for the first nine months of FY 2006 was 14.0%, a 1.4% improvement compared to the FY 2005 performance of 13.8% during the same period.

Key Performance Indicators

Bus operators' unscheduled absenteeism (or personal time-off) through the third quarter of FY 2006 improved by 10.6% (from 8.5% last year to 7.6% this year). Bus maintenance personnel's unscheduled absenteeism improved by 23.2% (from 9.9% last year to 7.6% this year). Light rail operators' unscheduled absenteeism improved by 9.7% (from 7.2% last year to 6.5% this year). Light rail maintenance personnel's unscheduled absenteeism improved by 2.6% (from 7.6% last year to 7.4% this year). Light rail way, power, & signal maintenance personnel's unscheduled absenteeism went up 25.8% (from 6.6% last year to 8.3% this year).

Combined bus and light rail miles between chargeable accidents decreased through the third quarter of FY 2006 when compared to FY 2005 but exceeded the established goals for FY 2006. Miles between chargeable accidents were 177,601 compared to the established goal of 175,000. The daily service reliability performance during the first nine months of FY 2006 was 99.37%, slightly higher compared to the same period last year, and exceeded the established goal of 99.30%.

Through the third quarter of FY 2006, bus and light rail miles between major mechanical schedule losses decreased 10.4% compared to FY 2005. The number of major mechanical road calls for bus and light rail that resulted in a service loss increased by 14.8% over the same period last year. Engine problems topped the list of major mechanical road calls with an increase of 17.0% in FY 2006. Light rail reliability has been negatively affected as vehicle warranty approaches its expiration. VTA light rail Engineering is working with the manufacturer to improve the reliability of components with high failure rate before the warranty expires. Bus reliability has been impacted by several factors. The installation of new particulate matter emissions reduction devices has resulted in a higher than expected mechanical breakdown rate. VTA is working with the emissions device manufacturer as well as the motor manufacturer to correct these issues.

FYTD light rail on-time performance declined by 3.1% compared to FYTD 2005. The primary cause of the decline was the single-track operation between Convention Center and Virginia light rail stations to support the highway 87 HOV lanes project. Bus on-time performance was 90.3% in FY 2006, down from last year's 93.8%. FY 2006 marks the first time VTA is utilizing the ACS (Advanced Communication System) data to determine on-time performance for bus. The use of ACS technology is more accurate and will significantly increase the quantity and quality of data collected.

Paratransit

The total passenger trips through the third quarter of FY 2006 were 722,623, an increase of 6.3% compared to same period last year. Approximately 18% of the 6.3% increase is attributable to the eligibility ride program. Eligibility ride program trips are often longer and thus cost more to provide than paratransit rides provided to eligible customers. This higher cost of the Eligibility Interview/Appeal Trips has impacted the net cost of all paratransit trips.

During the first nine months of FY 2006, the Paratransit program net cost to VTA increased 6.0% compared to the same period last year.

Net cost per passenger trip was $25.50, a slight improvement from $25.57 experienced during the same period last year, and below the established goal of $27.00. The cost per trip includes 100% of costs, including fleet capital that is generally not included in the cost per trip in the NTD (National Transit Database).

Other Contracted and Inter-Agency Services

VTA is a funding partner supporting Caltrain, ACE, Highway 17 Express and Dumbarton Express*. Ridership through the third quarter of FY 2006 compared to the same period of FY 2005 is as follows:

- Caltrain ridership was 7,462,590, up 8.2%, an estimated 3.1 million of these were Santa Clara County transfers;
- ACE ridership was 463,991, down 3.1%, an estimated 195,000 of these were Santa Clara County transfers;
- Highway 17** was 129,390, down 11.9%, an estimated 66,000 of these were Santa Clara County transfers.

* Dumbarton Express ridership data through third quarter of FY 2006 was not available.
** No service in October 2005 due to labor strike.

Prepared by: Joonie Tolosa