

V. POLICY ELEMENT

This section of the Transit Development Plan outlines the various policies that control the operation of the Kings Area Rural Transit (KART) and Corcoran Area Transit services. These policies have been developed from existing policies adopted by KCAG, the Kings County Area Public Transit Agency (KCAPTA) and the City of Corcoran. These goals, objectives and policies are not intended to be static and should be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in each of the communities and modifications in the services provided.

In addition to the goals, objectives and policies, this section will outline a set of service standards, which will be used by KCAPTA and the City of Corcoran to test the attainment of the specified policies and for KCAG to use in its evaluation of the services being provided. KCAPTA and the City of Corcoran will use these service standards to test the success of services and to flag any performance problems which may arise. These performance standards are also being prepared to reflect the recommendation made in the 2007 Triennial Performance Audits for both KART and Corcoran Area Transit.

Figure 37

KINGS COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM GOALS

GOAL	KART	Corcoran Area Transit
Fare Box Ratio	20%	16% ¹
Avg. Fare per Passenger	40¢	85¢ ¹
Cost per Passenger	\$2.50	\$5.25 ¹
Operating Cost per Hour	\$32.00	\$16.00 ¹
Passengers per Hour	15.00	6.20 ¹
Passengers per Mile	1.00	0.50 ¹

1 - Applies to Dial-a-Ride service only

Previously, KCAG had *quantifiable* measures to determine what transit needs are "reasonable to meet". However, numeric values do not necessarily address other measures of meeting reasonable transit needs, such as the need for expanding transit routes, or factoring in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance costs. Therefore, a new criteria and definition what constitutes a transit need that is "reasonable to meet," has been developed that is more of a qualifiable measurement.

The Kings County Association of Governments has evaluated the nature of “reasonable to meet” public transit demand in Kings County and has developed criteria that addresses public transit service which:

- 1) is responsive to individual transportation needs;
- 2) has been found to be the most cost effective and feasible to operate;
- 3) serves those areas of the Kings County which need transit accessibility;
- 4) is flexible in determining new transit services and routes.

A. Kings County Association of Governments

The Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is a Council of Governments that was formed in May 1967 as a joint powers agency (JPA) under the laws of the State of California. The members were the Cities of Hanford, Corcoran, and Lemoore, and the County of Kings. They were joined in 1979 by the newly incorporated City of Avenal. Each city has one voting member who is a member of, and is appointed by, that city's Council to represent that city. The County has two members, who are members of the Board of Supervisors and appointed by the Board.

KCAG is also a state-designated regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) recognized by the State's Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. The primary functions of an RTPA are in developing and updating a Regional Transportation Plan, preparing a Regional Transportation Improvement Program, preparing a Federal Transportation Improvement Program, and administering the Transportation Development Act (TDA). KCAG is also a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) recognized by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, and receives federal funding to conduct several activities required of MPOs.

All RTPA activities are governed by the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), which is the final approving authority. The TPC is a committee of the KCAG Commission and composed of members of the regular KCAG Commission, plus the Director of Caltrans, District 6 representing the Director of Caltrans Headquarters.

The Commission is advised by two committees. The first is a *Technical Advisory Committee* (TAC) whose members include KCAG staff, county and city public works and planning directors, city managers, administrative officers, Caltrans District 6 staff, a Lemoore NAS representative, a San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District representative, Kings County Area Public Transit Agency, and a Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe representative. The primary responsibility of the TAC is to review all issues that KCAG will consider and to provide technical input to advise the Commissioners in making their decisions.

The second committee is the *Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC)*. Senate Bill 498 (Chapter 673, Statutes of 1987) requires each RTPA to provide for the establishment of a SSTAC and to utilize the SSTAC to solicit the input of transit needs of transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, handicapped and low income persons. The SSTAC is to have the following responsibilities:

- Annually participate in the identification of transit needs in Kings County, including unmet transit needs that may exist within Kings County and that may be reasonable to meet by establishing or contracting for new public transportation or specialized transportation services or by expanding existing services.
- Annually review and recommend action by the RTPA which finds, by resolution, that a) there are no unmet transit needs, b) there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet, or c) there are unmet transit needs, including needs that are reasonable to meet.
- Advise the RTPA on any other major transit issues, including the coordination and consolidation of specialized transportation services.

In addition to these committees, more citizen participation is accomplished through various other activities. KCAG uses news releases, public hearings, and public meetings to get public input into its planning activities. KCAG staff directly contacts organizations representing citizen and business interest as well as the Tribal Council Chairman of the local Native American tribe for specific input into specific items. KCAG's website includes meeting agendas and meeting minutes, planning and programming documents, and other information that the public can access to assist in the planning process.

1. Overall Goal

Develop and maintain a multi-modal transportation system which efficiently and safely moves people and goods, and which serves this region's social, economic, and physical needs.

2. Program Policies and Objectives

The policy of KCAG, as stated in the "Kings County Regional Transportation Plan", is to continue making full use of KCAG's decision-making forums, including regular meetings, to examine alternative solutions to transportation needs and problems.

Objectives:

- a. Transportation decisions shall be made on the basis of the broadest range of Kings County area public interests.

- b. KCAG shall provide clear and firm guidance to the California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and local agencies on all transportation matters affecting Kings County.
- c. Transportation decisions shall include Transportation Systems Management (TSM) evaluations.
- d. Public safety and system efficiency shall be used as criteria in evaluating projects.
- e. Total route or system development shall be considered when selecting projects.
- f. Funding sources for all transportation modes shall be identified, evaluated and developed consistent with overall growth and development policies contained in city and county general plans.
- g. Public and private transportation facilities shall be planned and developed consistent with overall growth and development policies contained in city and county general plans.

3. Environmental Policy and Objectives

The policy of KCAG, as stated in the “Kings County Regional Transportation Plan”, is to take into account the environmental consequences of a transportation project. Of particular importance are impacts relating to air quality, energy use, noise, and changes in land use.

Objectives:

- a. Using TSM evaluations, consider those alternative solutions that lessen environmental problems, yet serve transportation needs.
- b. Seek to mitigate unavoidable adverse impacts associated with selected alternatives.
- c. Use environmental documents such as Initial Studies and EIRs as decision-making tools.
- d. Coordinate transportation control measures with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) and the latest air quality attainment plan for the San Joaquin Valley.
- e. Consult with lead agencies on projects having environmental effects, of statewide, regional, or areawide significance on transportation facilities.

- f. Maintain modeling capability that will respond to state and federal reporting requirements and the need for accurately projecting travel demand in future years.

4. Public Transportation Policy and Objectives

The policy of KCAG, as stated in the “Kings County Regional Transportation Plan”, is to provide public transit services for those needs defined as "Unmet Transit Needs" which are "Reasonable to Meet".

Objectives

1. Continue operating the Kings Area Rural Transit and Corcoran Dial-a-Ride systems to provide dependable services for those living in Kings County's urbanized areas that have "unmet transit needs" which can be met at a cost KCAG determines to be reasonable.
2. Provide assistance to social service agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of coordinated transportation services for their clients.
3. Encourage transit operators to minimize transit system operating costs by increasing ridership through the following examples:
 - a. Implement route and schedule modifications.
 - b. Implement equipment and maintenance improvements.
 - c. Implement an aggressive marketing program to improve the image of public transit.
 - d. Follow up on comments of the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council and Productivity Improvement Committee.
4. Follow recommendations of the KCAG 2003 Kings County Transit Development Plan.
5. Assist all eligible claimants, both public and private, in applying for federal transportation grants.
6. Encourage the custom of ridesharing as an alternative to single occupant vehicle commuting.
7. Utilize the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and Productivity Improvement Committee to identify unmet transit needs of the transit dependent.
8. Promote the coordination of transit with other transportation modes.

9. Encourage and support the enhancement of transit services as a transportation control measure to improve air quality.
10. Support the coordination and consolidation of transit services where appropriate through the development and implementation of the Action Plan and Inventory of Social Service Transportation Providers.

5. Unmet Transit Needs and Reasonable to Meet Definitions

The Local Transportation Fund (LTF) was created by the Transportation Development Act of 1971. The fund equals 1/4 of one cent of the six cent sales tax collected in Kings County and supplies county-generated revenues to provide public transportation. According to the TDA, the county, cities and public transportation operators may claim portions of the LTF. The Kings County Auditor-Controller stated that Kings County estimated FY 2008-09 LTF allocation will be \$3,000,000.

Before the TPC may allocate any portion of the LTF claimed for streets and roads, it must make certain specific findings concerning unmet transit needs and whether they can be reasonably met. The TPC's decision will be based on the committee's evaluation of the services now provided, the testimony given at the public hearing, and whether proposed expenditures of the LTF comply with the policies of the Kings County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The TPC conducts public hearings annually to determine if any "unmet public transit needs" which are "reasonable to meet" exist in Kings County or the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore.

State law requires that KCAG determine its definitions of the following terms:

- A. "Unmet transit need"
- B. "Reasonable to meet"

KCAG has defined these terms as follows:

- A) "Unmet transit need", at a minimum, exist where local residents do not have access to private vehicles or other forms of transportation, due to age, income, or handicap, for the purpose of traveling to medical care, shopping, social/recreational activities, education/training and employment.
- B) It is "reasonable to meet" the above needs if the proposed or planned service can be operated while maintaining, on a system wide basis, the adopted service goals for that type of service and meet the following criteria:
 - 1) New, expanded, or revised transit service, if implemented or funded, would not cause the operator to incur expenditures in excess of the maximum amount of Transportation Development Act funds available to Kings County.

- 2) The proposed transit service does not duplicate transit services currently provided by either public or private operators.
- 3) The proposed transit service has community support from the general public, community groups and community leaders.
- 4) New, expanded, or revised transit service, if implemented or funded, would allow the responsible operator to meet the TDA required rural area farebox and revenue ratio of 10% for the overall system.
- 5) There is supporting data to indicate sufficient ridership potential for the new, expanded, or revised service.
- 6) Implementation of the new, expanded, or revised transit service should achieve or be moving toward the goals outlined in the Kings County Transit Development Plan for a comparable type of service. Services not meeting the goals should be evaluated on a yearly basis to determine if modifications or cancellation of service should be implemented.
- 7) The proposed transit service shall have a reasonable expectation of future demand and available funding on a long term basis to maintain the service.
- 8) Is needed by and would benefit either the general public or the elderly and disabled population as a whole.

6. Public Participation Policy and Objectives

The policy of KCAG, as stated in the “Kings County Regional Transportation Plan”, is to ensure transportation facilities and services meet the needs of all segments of the population. KCAG welcomes community comment and guidance in its transportation planning and decision making process.

Objectives

1. Continue building an active citizen participation forum.
2. Seek representation from the entire community, including the elderly, poor, and disabled.
3. Hold citizen meetings at convenient times and places.

4. Seek citizen comments early in the planning process, preferably in the problem-identification stage of project preparation.
5. Work to create an atmosphere that encourages the expression of all viewpoints, allowing both obvious and latent issues to be brought into the open.
6. Explore alternative methods of obtaining the public's views. Use surveys, make presentations to special interest groups, etc.
7. Keep local media informed of transportation issues and encourage their attendance at public meetings held by KCAG.

B. Kings County Area Public Transit Agency

Over the years the KART System has offered transit service for those who do not own vehicles or who are unable to use vehicles due to physical or developmental disability. The KART system has enjoyed a close working relationship with its clients and has proven to be responsive to their needs both as individuals and for the agencies--both public and private-- they provide services for.

The Kings Area Rural Transit goal, adopted in 1993, represents the operator's commitment to the people of Kings County:

1. GOAL:

It is the goal of this agency to provide reliable Public Transportation Service that is clean and convenient; focused on that portion of the public which is transit dependent; in a proactive manner, resulting in continued improvements and cost effectiveness.

2. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES:

A. The primary objective of KCAPTA is to provide service to the transit dependent citizens of Kings County, not served by Corcoran Area Transit services.

Policies:

1. The elderly, youth, handicapped and low income riders will be considered when designing service levels.
2. Non-ambulatory service will be provided by lift equipped vehicles.
3. Efforts shall be made to provide service to other government programs.

4. Provide services in compliance with the adopted Americans with Disabilities Act Paratransit Plan for the Kings County Area Public Transit Agency.

B. Provide a service which is cost effective to operate and economical to use.

1. The KART system will be managed in a cost effective manner to ensure the lowest cost to the member agencies.

2. KART will maximize the use of passenger fares, as well as, state and federal funds in funding the service.

3. Establish service standards to monitor the performance of the service.

4. The system's fleet will be managed in a professional manner to ensure the maximum productivity and life expectancy of the vehicles.

5. Establish an equitable fare structure which generates the adopted fare box ratios for fixed route services and Dial-a-Ride services.

6. KART will continue its commitment to bilingual service and promotion.

C. Operate the service in a professional manner, which achieves the service goal.

1. KART will continue to contract for operation of the service using the bid process when appropriate.

2. Vehicle usage will be coordinated with peak service demand to ensure the attainment of the service standard.

3. The KART Dial-a-Ride will continue to operate as a shared ride service.

4. KART services will be promoted per the development of a current Marketing Plan. This Plan will contain the following marketing objectives:

a. Improve awareness and encourage the use of KART services.

b. Make the service as simple to use as possible, and promote that it is easy to understand and use.

c. Maintain the patronage of KART's senior citizens.

3. SERVICE GOALS:

The following are specific standards to use to test the success of the KART services. These standards are linked directly to the objectives and policies stated above.

- a. The elderly will be defined as any rider 60 years of age or older.
- b. Youth will be defined as persons 12 years of age or younger. For fare purposes, children are defined in two age groups: 7 to 12 for half fare and 0 to 6 for free rides.
- c. Disabled passengers are defined in the ADA Paratransit Plan for Kings County Area Public Transit Agency.
- d. Unaccompanied children 12 years and younger must be capable of safely accessing the system, understanding and adhering to time schedules, be responsible for payment of transit fares and be capable of accessing the system at the proper location. Service will be provided only to those children who possess these capabilities. Children six years and under must be accompanied by an adult.
- e. A minimum of one wheelchair accessible vehicle will be available for service at all times.
- f. KART will periodically update and distribute the transit schedule brochure, and shall market the service to the community through implementation of the strategies outlined in the Kings Area Rural Transit Marketing Plan.
- g. Fixed route design will consider areas of low automobile ownership, concentrations of elderly, youth, handicapped and low income.
- h. Bus capacity will be designated for each type of bus.
- i. Fixed route transit buses will be at capacity when the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWB) is reached (based on 150 lbs. per person and 300 lbs. per wheelchair passenger).
- j. KART Dial-a-Ride buses will be at capacity when all available seats and wheelchair positions are filled.
- k. Additional buses will be placed into service, if available, whenever a transit bus needs repair while on route.
- l. The following service standards will be used to test the effectiveness of the various services operated by the KART system.

Figure 38

KART Service Goals

	Dial-a-Ride	Hanford Fixed Route	Intercity	System
Fare Box Ratio	10%	15%	15%	15%
Avg. Fare per Passenger	\$0.38	\$0.31	\$0.70	\$0.49
Cost per Passenger	\$16.00	\$1.60	\$3.00	\$3.00
Cost per Hour	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00	\$45.00
Cost per Mile	\$8.00	\$3.75	\$2.00	\$2.75
Passengers per Hour	4.00	27.00	16.50	15.00
Passengers per Mile	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00
Vehicle Hours per Employee	900	1,100	500	N/A
On Time Performance	N/A	90%	95%	N/A
Wait Time				
Call to Pick Up:				
0-30 Minutes	50%	N/A	N/A	N/A
30-60 Minutes	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ride Time				
Pick Up to Drop Off:				
0-30 Minutes	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A
30-60 Minutes	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Service Time				
Call to Drop Off:				
0-30 Minutes	50%	N/A	N/A	N/A
30-60 Minutes	90%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Figure 39

KART Fleet Standards

Group A (under 16 Passengers)	
Average Age	4 years
Average Mileage	100,000
Rehabilitation Mileage	125,000
Spare Vehicle Ratio	30%
Group B (16 to 25 passengers)	
Average Age	7 years
Average Mileage	200,000
Rehabilitation Mileage	200,000
Spare Vehicle Ratio	30%
Group C (over 25 Passengers)	
Average Age	20 years
Average Mileage	350,000
Rehabilitation Mileage	500,000
Spare Vehicle Ratio	30%

Figure 40

KART Fare Structure (2008)

Fixed Route Service	
General Fares	\$1.00 Downtown Fixed Routes
	\$1.50 Intercity
	Children under 6 ride free
Senior, Disabled, and Veteran Fares	Half price Fixed Routes fares from 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM
Monthly Pass	\$40.00 Downtown Fixed Routes
	\$50.00 Intercity
Dial-a-Ride Services	
General Fare	\$2.00
Monthly Pass	\$60.00
Personal Attendants	Free

C. Corcoran Area Transit

GOAL:

Provide low cost, convenient, and cost effective public transit service to all citizens of Corcoran and surrounding county areas.

Objectives:

Corcoran Area Transit's primary goal is to provide service to the transit dependent citizens' of the Corcoran Area Transit's service area.

Policies:

1. The elderly, youth, and handicapped riders shall be considered when designing service levels.
2. Non-ambulatory service shall be provided by lift-equipped vehicles.
3. Service shall be provided to seniors participating in the Seniors Recreation program.
4. Social/recreational trips constitute a significant portion of Corcoran Area Transit trips and will be encouraged.

B. Provide a service which is cost effective to operate and economical to use.

1. The service shall be managed in a cost effective manner to ensure the lowest cost to the City of Corcoran.
2. The City shall maximize the use of passenger fares and state and federal funds in funding the service.
3. Establish service standards to monitor the performance of the service.
4. The system's fleet shall be managed in a professional manner to ensure the maximum productivity and life expectancy of the vehicles.
5. Establish an equitable fare structure, which generates the adopted fare box ratios.

C. Operate the service in a professional manner, which achieves the system goal.

1. Vehicle usage will be coordinated with peak service demand to ensure the attainment of the service standards.
2. The Corcoran Area Transit service will continue to operate as a shared ride service.
3. The City will continue to educate the public on the issue of no-shows and cancellations.
4. The city will promote the service to the citizens of Corcoran and surrounding County areas.
5. Passengers are to be picked up and dropped off in a manner what will avoid longs delays and inconvenience to the passengers.
6. Handicapped and passengers needing assistance are to be assisted in boarding and exiting the bus.

D. Promote the coordination of service with other transportation services.

1. Coordinate specific locations and times for interfacing with AMTRAK.
2. Coordinate service with the Senior Lunch Program.
3. Coordinate service with the Kings Area Rural Transit.
4. Coordinate the service with the California State Prison - Corcoran and the Bienvenidos Visitors Center.

Figure 41

Corcoran Service Goals

	Dial-a-Ride	AMTRAK	System
Fare Box Ratio	10%	20%	16%
Avg. Fare per Passenger	\$0.70	\$4.92	\$0.88
Cost per Passenger	\$7.90	\$5.20	\$7.20
Cost per Hour	\$51.45	N/A	N/A
Cost per Mile	\$7.76	N/A	N/A
Passengers per Hour	6.51	10.50	6.20
Passengers per Mile	1	N/A	0.50
Vehicle Hours per Employee	985	1,100	N/A
On Time Performance	N/A	90%	N/A
Wait Time			
Call to Pick Up:			
0-30 Minutes	50%	N/A	N/A
30-60 Minutes	100%	N/A	N/A
Ride Time			
Pick Up to Drop Off:			
0-30 Minutes	85%	N/A	N/A
30-60 Minutes	100%	N/A	N/A
Service Time			
Call to Drop Off:			
0-30 Minutes	50%	N/A	N/A
30-60 Minutes	95%	N/A	N/A

Figure 42

Corcoran Fleet Standards

Group A (under 16 Passengers)	
Average Age	4 years
Average Mileage	100,000
Rehabilitation Mileage	125,000
Spare Vehicle Ratio	30%
Group B (16 to 25 passengers)	
Average Age	7 years
Average Mileage	200,000
Rehabilitation Mileage	200,000
Spare Vehicle Ratio	30%

Figure 43**Corcoran Fare Structure (2008)**

Dial-a-Ride Services	
General Fare	\$1.00
Seniors and Handicapped Fare	Free
Personal Attendants	Free
AMTRAK Discount Ticket	
One Way	\$4.00
Round Trip	\$5.00
Personal Attendants	Free
AMTRAK ticket booklets	\$16.00

VI. FINANCIAL ELEMENT

A. Transportation Development Act

Public transit operators throughout California obtain a majority of their transit operating funds from the Transportation Development Act (TDA). Both the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA) provide public transit operators with two primary funding sources, which come from the TDA.

A primary requirement of the TDA for the allocation of funds is the process of determining if there are any unmet transit needs that the operator can *reasonably* meet, before any funds can be allocated to Cities and Counties for street and road purposes. This unmet transit needs determination requires public hearings which allow transit users to voice their recommendations for transit service which is not currently being provided or that which is considered as not fulfilling a transit need.

1. Local Transportation Fund

The Local Transportation Fund (LTF) is primarily used for public transit purposes and secondarily for local streets and roads; provided that all identified public transit needs have been met. Revenues are derived from one-quarter cent of the total retail sales tax collected statewide. The LTF funds are returned to each county according to the amount of tax collected in that county and are then apportioned and allocated by KCAG to each jurisdiction for specific purposes and uses.

KCAPTA annually receives shares of LTF money from each member agency's apportionment. Each member agency's LTF contribution is their individual share of KART's annual budget, based on the formula of $\frac{1}{2}$ number of service hours provided to that agency and $\frac{1}{2}$ population. The City of Corcoran is allocated an amount needed to meet the city's transit operations and services. LTF provides over half of the transit systems' revenues.

KCAG, as the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency, monitors the LTF, determines the annual apportionment, notifies claimants, approves apportionments, allocations and uses of the LTF. This means that KCAG reviews LTF claims by KCAPTA and the City of Corcoran. As required by the TDA, KCAG conducts public hearings each spring to hear testimony considering transit needs before determining LTF allocations.

Kings County annually receives approximately \$3 million in total LTF money and about 75% is used to fund transit need within Kings County. The remaining LTF funds are allocated for transportation planning and street and road purposes.

Figure 44

Percent of Total County LTF Supporting Public Transit

YEAR	COUNTYWIDE ALLOCATION	AMOUNT DEVOTED TO TRANSIT	PERCENT DEVOTED TO TRANSIT
1980-81	\$968,902.03	\$50,911	5.25%
1981-82	\$1,034,769.13	\$116,661	11.27%
1982-83	\$982,748.28	\$151,003	15.36%
1983-84	\$1,059,422.26	\$36,049	3.40%
1998-85	\$1,148,453.35	\$58,517	5.10%
1985-86	\$1,127,357.00	\$86,636	7.68%
1986-87	\$1,156,786.61	\$173,708	15.02%
1987-88	\$1,309,059.28	\$156,993	11.99%
1988-89	\$1,345,763.34	\$230,117	17.10%
1989-90	\$1,444,125.32	\$330,567	22.89%
1990-91	\$1,493,327.07	\$320,178	21.44%
1991-92	\$1,500,811.02	\$424,892	28.31%
1992-93	\$1,574,502.14	\$616,166	39.13%
1993-94	\$1,618,530.52	\$722,421	44.63%
1994-95	\$1,746,628.02	\$856,135	49.02%
1995-96	\$1,837,162.56	\$800,631	43.58%
1996-97	\$1,944,527.93	\$964,253	49.59%
1997-98	\$1,873,619.84	\$1,105,908	59.03%
1998-99	\$1,814,927.43	\$1,007,538	55.51%
1999-00	\$2,068,930.74	\$1,075,572	51.99%
2000-01	\$2,341,142.72	\$1,604,380	68.53%
2001-02	\$2,384,664.00	\$1,981,376	83.09%
2002-03	\$2,615,126.00	\$2,002,179	76.56%
2003-04	\$2,400,000.00	\$1,099,069	45.79%
2004-05	\$2,600,000.00	\$1,068,320	41.10%
2005-06	\$2,400,000.00	\$2,054,436	86.00%
2006-07	\$3,200,000.00	\$2,455,470	76.73%
2007-08	\$3,400,000.00	\$2,993,159	88.03%
2008-09	\$3,000,000.00	\$2,559,651	85.32%

Source: KCAG, Kings County Auditor

2. State Transit Assistance

Funds for the State Transit Assistance (STA) program are derived from the statewide sales tax on gasoline and diesel fuel. The funds are apportioned to each regional transportation planning agency by a formula based on population and operator revenues, and then reallocates the funds to transit operators on the same basis. STA funds estimated to be apportioned to Kings County are allocated to KCAPTA and the City of Corcoran for transit operating costs.

With the enactment of Senate Bill 45 (Chapter 622, Statutes of 1997), the formula for apportioning STA funds to regional agencies to support transit operations was modified and has increased the formula amount of funding for the STA program. However, the actual funding is still contingent upon incoming revenues.

Figure 45

STA Apportionments for Public Transit

YEAR	KCAPTA	Corcoran Area Transit
1981-82	\$101,588	\$0
1982-83	\$154,032	\$0
1983-84	\$193,256	\$0
1984-85	\$175,855	\$0
1985-86	\$157,735	\$0
1986-87	\$21,550	\$1,088
1987-88	\$3,819	\$346
1988-89	\$16,352	\$1,477
1989-90	\$8,411	\$1,077
1990-91	\$66,380	\$10,524
1991-92	\$86,928	\$14,311
1992-93	\$84,169	\$13,095
1993-94	\$85,306	\$12,851
1994-95	\$98,915	\$14,695
1995-96	\$115,513	\$17,017
1996-97	\$127,670	\$17,606
1997-98	\$140,176	\$19,072
1998-99	\$202,441	\$31,664
1999-00	\$168,215	\$32,000
2000-01	\$169,732	\$32,460
2001-02	\$318,105	\$60,836
2002-03	\$270,357	\$49,367
2003-04	\$177,605	\$32,255
2004-05	\$203,880	\$36,948
2005-06	\$348,284	\$63,338
2006-07	\$1,301,783	\$203,976
2007-08	\$688,951	\$109,759
2008-09	\$1,549,154	\$253,254

Source: KCAG, Kings County Auditor

Note: Prior to 1991, STA funds could be used for street and road purposes.

B. Federal Transit Act

The Federal Transit Act (FTA) provides for a number of grant programs available for transit planning and transit system operations and capital expenses. Of primary importance to Kings County public transit operators are the FTA Sections 5311 and 5307 programs for capital and operating assistance and FTA Section 5310 for capital purchases. The following is a brief summary of the FTA programs.

1. FTA Section 5304 – Technical Planning Assistance Program

Under the FTA State Planning and Research Grant Program, Caltrans' Mass Transportation Program administers the subvention of Technical Planning Assistance funds to local agencies for the purpose of conducting public transportation planning projects in non-urbanized areas of California. FTA Technical Planning Assistance funding is not to exceed 80 percent of the cost of the project. The local share of the project cost must come from non-federal funds. Grant awards may be up to \$100,000 per project, which are approved on a discretionary basis.

2. FTA Section 5303 – MPO Transportation Planning Grant Program

FTA funds are apportioned annually to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) for transportation planning purposes. Each MPO receives a base of \$15,000 plus a percentage of the remainder of statewide funds, based upon the percentage of urbanized population within a metropolitan area of over 50,000 population. The grant provides up to 80 percent of the total project cost.

Kings County recently attained urbanized area status based upon data from the 2000 Census. The Census Bureau added Hanford as a new urbanized Area with an urban population of 69,639, which includes the Hanford Urban Cluster and Lemoore Urban Cluster. This designation qualifies the entire county and makes it eligible to receive funding through this program. Kings County has received an apportionment of about \$38,000 for FY 2008-09.

3. FTA Section 5310 – Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Program

The FTA Section 5310 program provides for capital grants for the purpose of helping public and private non-profit corporations that provide transportation for elderly and handicapped persons for whom mass transportation services are generally unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate. About \$12 million was made available in FY 07-08 to eligible agencies that compete statewide for the funds.

Funds are available to cover 80 percent of costs for the purchase of wheelchair accessible vans and buses, or other transportation equipment to serve individuals with special needs. Public agencies are eligible to apply for these funds only if they coordinate services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities and certify that no non-profit agencies in the area are readily available to carry out services.

To evaluate project applications for the FTA Section 5310 program, KCAG is required to score projects based on state and regional evaluation criteria. The criteria considers project need, project effectiveness, ability of the applicant to operationally and financially manage the project, and the extent of the applicant's participation in the coordination of transportation services with other agencies.

Projects compete for funding on a statewide basis. Applications from Kings County transit operators over the past few years have not been successful in statewide competition. In recent years, proposed legislation has attempted to amend the program to provide a county apportionment based on the elderly and handicapped population of each county, which would then be programmed by the RTPA. No such legislation has yet been enacted.

4. FTA Section 5311 – Non-urbanized Area Formula Program

Section 5311 of the Federal Transit Act provides for federal assistance to rural and small urban area (under 50,000 population) public transportation providers. Grants are awarded for capital, operating and administrative purposes to eligible providers. The Section 5311 program is designed to help enhance the access of persons in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, recreational, public services, and employment. This program provides funds for annual apportionments to counties, state funds programmed on a discretionary basis, and intercity bus projects. Private, non-profit agencies can only apply through a sponsoring public agency. With Kings County's FY latest apportionment, grant funds were awarded by KCAG to the City of Corcoran and to KCAPTA for operating assistance.

Each county or region receives an apportionment of FTA Section 5311 funds based on a population formula. The regional transportation planning agency then develops a regional program of projects to show how the apportioned funds will be distributed among the eligible applicants within the region. Operating assistance grants are federally funded at a maximum of 50 percent of the cost of the project and capital grants are federally funded up to 80 percent of the total cost of the project.

In order to comply with federal guidelines, which strongly suggest that FTA Section 5311 funds be distributed to eligible providers in an equitable manner, KCAG uses 10 criteria to evaluate FTA Section 5311 fund requests. These are:

- Dependability - The transit operator must demonstrate that its service is reliable and it regularly meets its schedule. A dependable backup system must be available so that in normal circumstances only minor delays in the operating schedule will occur and service will not be unreasonably disrupted.
- Accessibility - The transit operator must demonstrate that the system is accessible to the elderly and handicapped. Each vehicle does not have to be fully accessible, but provisions must be made within the system to provide reasonable service to persons with special needs. ADA requirements must have been met.

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- Affordability - The transit operator must demonstrate that the fare structure of the system provides for ridership by persons of limited income. This does not mean a fare cannot be charged, but that the fare may not be excessive in a manner which restricts the access of the poor.
- Adequacy - The transit operator must demonstrate that it provides a reasonable level of service with sufficient range and capacity to allow any person who cannot provide their own transportation to have access to opportunities which will support an adequate standard of living. The minimum service should provide travel to medical appointments, shopping areas, social service agencies, and home again.
- Economy - The transit operator must demonstrate that it has attempted to provide the most efficient and effective service possible and identify criteria used to establish a service cost limit. When suggested by the Productivity Improvement Committee, the operator should present feasible alternative transit programs with projected costs vs. service levels.
- Convenience - The transit operator must demonstrate that the service proposed will be such that it does not discourage use of the service. While service is not expected to be instantaneous or as convenient as travel by private automobile, reasonable headway time should be incorporated into scheduling and capacity considerations.
- Coordination - The transit operator must demonstrate how its system is coordinated with other systems and travel modes to enhance, rather than detract from the effectiveness of each system.
- Flexibility - The transit operator must demonstrate how the system can adjust its schedule and route to accommodate changes in community needs. When the operator has made an adjustment in its service, it will document the basis for the change and improved service which resulted from the change.
- Monitoring - The transit operator must submit a plan for monitoring its service. Data required from the operator is listed with information on the performance audit.
- Responsiveness - The transit operator must implement a Productivity Improvement Program designed to ensure that the system can anticipate demands for new service, expand service, and operate at the most efficient cost.

As a result of Kings County's new urbanized status, the annual apportionment has been reduced from the previous years. The apportionment for the FY 2007-08 was \$254,144. The adopted FTA Section 5311 Regional Program of Projects includes the allocation of these funds to KCAPTA for operating assistance for KART services and to the City of Corcoran for operating assistance for Corcoran Dial-a-Ride.

Figure 46**FTA Section 5311 Apportionments**

FY	KART	Corcoran Area Transit
1981-82	\$32,400	\$0
1982-83	\$46,721	\$0
1983-84	\$35,128	\$0
1984-85	\$36,596	\$0
1985-86	\$31,386	\$0
1986-87	\$38,230	\$0
1987-88	\$32,658	\$0
1988-89	\$33,409	\$0
1989-90	\$33,400	\$0
1990-91	\$34,573	\$0
1991-92	\$33,400	\$60,000
1992-93	\$147,149*	\$5,004
1993-94	\$78,415	\$14,349
1994-95	\$79,764	\$14,276
1995-96	\$66,447	\$11,774
1996-97	\$70,191	\$11,774
1997-98	\$81,938	\$13,598
1998-99	\$106,210	\$20,412
1999-00	\$112,328	\$24,992
2000-01	\$119,981	\$26,856
2001-02	\$130,059	\$27,214
2002-03	\$95,849	\$38,971
2003-04	\$72,480	\$30,841
2004-05	\$68,294	\$34,668
2005-06	\$175,624	\$89,475
2006-07	\$153,904	\$80,930
2007-08	\$161,898	\$92,246

Source: KCAG, Caltrans

Note: *Includes discretionary grant of \$72,000

Five percent of FTA Section 5311 funds are set aside by the State and awarded by Caltrans on a discretionary basis. Priority use of the funds is for capital purposes. The state discretionary reserve program provides additional funds to operators that have used all of their regional apportionment, yet still have a need for capital funds. Eligible applicants compete for these funds when the fund availability is announced. This program is offered approximately every three years.

5. FTA Section 5311(f) – Intercity Bus Program

Each year the state sets aside at least 15 percent of the state apportionment of FTA Section 5311 funds for projects that develop and support connectivity of intercity bus transportation between non-urbanized areas and urbanized areas. Grants are available to public and private transportation operators for planning, capital, and operating assistance. No project proposals have been submitted for FTA Section 5311(f) funds.

6. FTA Section 5307 – Small Urbanized Area Formula Program

This program provides operating assistance and capital funds to operators of urban public transportation services. Funds are apportioned to urbanized areas with a population over 50,000 based on a formula of population and population density. Based on the 2000 Census, the city of Hanford has been designated as an Urbanized Area. An urbanized area is a population cluster consisting of 50,000 or more residents. As published in the *Federal Register* on August 23, 2002, the Census Bureau added Hanford as a new Urbanized Area with an urban population of 69,639, which includes the Hanford Urban Cluster and Lemoore Urban Cluster. The Section 5307 program provides funding for capital and planning at 80 percent of costs and for operating at up to 50 percent of costs.

Since KCAPTA is the only public transit operator serving the urbanized area, it has become eligible to receive an allocation for operating, capital and planning assistance. In addition, these funds will need to be programmed by KCAG into the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). Kings County's apportionment for FY 2006-07 was \$1,095,539.

Section 5307 funds must be matched by state and local funds. Local matching funds can be cash or cash-equivalent, depending upon the expenditure. Non-cash shares, such as donations, volunteered services or in-kind contributions, are eligible to be counted toward the local match only if the value of each share is documented formally.

7. FTA Section 5316 –Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC)

The purpose of this program is to develop transportation services designed to transport welfare recipients and low income individuals to and from jobs and to develop transportation services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities. Emphasis is placed on projects that use mass transportation services.

The JARC program is authorized under the provisions set forth in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act. In order to be eligible for JARC funding, submitted projects must be derived from the Kings County Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan (HSTCP), and are competitively scored. Kings County's apportionment for FY 2006-07 was \$41,219.

8. FTA Section 5317 – New Freedom Program

This new program will provide formula funding for new transportation services and public transportation alternatives beyond those required by ADA to assist persons with disabilities.

The New Freedom program is also authorized under the provisions set forth in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act. This program follows the same application process as JARC. Kings County's apportionment for FY 2006-07 was \$24,937.

C. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 created the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program to provide funding for areas designated as non-attainment of air quality standards. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) continued and expanded this program, its successor, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), also continued the program. CMAQ funds are eligible for projects or programs that will reduce air quality emissions. These would include programs for expansion of public transit services, trip reduction programs and vanpools.

KCAG programs CMAQ funded projects through the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). Transit related projects included in the previous FTIP's are the purchase of additional buses, larger replacement buses and the establishment of Saturday service on the KART system to expand transit service within Kings County. A Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station was also built by Kings County with CMAQ funds.

The FY 2007-08 apportionment available to Kings County was \$1,514,175 and programmed for various projects in the current FTIP.

Figure 47

CMAQ Apportionments

YEAR	ALLOCATION
1996-97	\$481,751
1997-98	\$866,957
1998-99	\$1,052,181
1999-00	\$1,173,704
2000-01	\$1,210,028
2001-02	\$1,166,270
2002-03	\$1,269,276
2003-04	\$1,745,388
2004-05	\$1,501,520
2005-06	\$1,659,022
2006-07	\$1,458,038
2007-08	\$1,514,175
2008-09	\$1,474,490*

* Estimate

Source: California Department of Transportation

D. REMOVE II Program

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's (SJVAPCD) established a four dollar fee on all motor vehicles registered in the eight county San Joaquin Valley Air Basin in order to provide grants through its **Reduce Motor Vehicle Emissions** (REMOVE II) Program. Grant funds are used to fund projects that reduce motor vehicle emissions. KCAG has received past grants to develop the "Cross Valley Passenger Rail Feasibility Study" and the "Kings County Short Range Transit Development Plan". Other projects approved for other counties have included transit subsidies, transit bus retrofits, carpool incentives, and park and ride lots. Approximately \$3.55 million was made available for programming during the FY 2007-08 funding cycle. The amount varies from year to year based on mandates and priorities of the SJVAPCD. The REMOVE II Program includes several components of which one is the "Public Transportation and Commuter Vanpool Subsidy".

E. Fresno Measure C

In November 1986, Fresno County passed a 1/2 cent sales tax increase (Measure C), Tax revenues were dedicated to "Improving Roads and Transportation in Fresno County." In November 2006, Fresno County passed an extension to the Measure C program.

The 2006 Measure C Extension Expenditure Plan provides \$500,000 in funds for a Commuter Vanpool Program fund. The program is designed to get commuters to their destinations safely, improve air quality, and provide a cost-effective alternative to the single occupant vehicle. It is also designed to spark the development of new vanpools and offer financial assistance to existing vanpools to ensure that they stay on the road.

The Commuter Vanpool Program is open to both public and private industry competition, as well as potential public/private partnerships. KART, whose services extend into Fresno County, was eligible for Measure C funding.

The 2006 Measure C Extension Expenditure Plan also provides \$500,000 in funds for Farm worker residing in Fresno County. This subsidy for both new and existing vanpools. The program is designed to assist Fresno County farmworkers getting to and from their work safely.

The Commuter Vanpool Program is open to both public and private industry competition, as well as potential public/private partnerships. KART, whose services extend into Fresno County, was eligible for Measure C funding.

F. Bicycle Transportation Account

California's Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) provides local agencies a funding source for projects that improve safety and convenience for bicycle commuters. Cities and counties are eligible to apply for funding for projects that are included in a current bicycle plan. The amount of funding made available statewide each year is \$7 million. The BTA grant fund covers 90 percent of the project's cost, with a 10 percent local match requirement.

In most instances, the BTA funds are used for the development of bicycle lanes or bicycle paths. For transit operators, BTA funds can be used for the purchase of bicycle racks which can be placed either on the inside or outside of transit vehicles. Promoting bicycle usage in the County is an established goal in the Kings County Regional Transportation Plan and the adopted Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan.

G. Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP)

This program provides funds that can be used for construction, rehabilitation and operational improvements for highways and bridges. This would include projects that are necessary to accommodate other transportation modes and for bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways principally for transportation, rather than recreation purposes, and for carrying out non-construction projects related to safe bicycle use.

Funds are payable up to 80% of the total project cost. Project selection is made by local jurisdictions from their annual apportionments and programmed through the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). RSTP funds that are exchanged could also be used for non-motorized projects.

H. State Transportation Improvement Program

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is the state's five-year program of projects, updated every two years. A state requirement, it consists of the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). The STIP is also the bi-annual estimate of funds anticipated to be available for transportation projects.

The RTIP is comprised of a five-year program of high-priority transportation projects proposed for funding. The projects generally reflect the Policy, Action and Financial Elements of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTIP is updated and adopted on a two year cycle during odd-numbered years and is submitted to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in Sacramento on or before December 15th of each odd-numbered year.

Funds are available for programming projects in the RTIP for a broad range of transportation improvements, including not only state highways, but also grade separation, transportation system management, transportation demand management, soundwalls, rail transit, local streets and roads, intermodal facilities, pedestrian and bicycle facility projects. The funds available for programming may also be used for rehabilitation of local roads. Projects in other programs may be included for informational purposes, and therefore listed separately.

SB 45 (Kopp), legislation enacted in 1997, modified the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which contains a listing of projects proposed in both the Interregional and Regional Transportation Improvement Programs. SB 45 has streamlined the RTIP process by empowering RTPAs to have a more active role in the programming and funding of local projects. It mandates that 25% of the State Highway Account to the Interregional Improvement Program (IIP) and the remaining 75% to the RTIP. Allocations for administration and the State Highway Operations and Protection Plan (SHOPP) are generally taken off the top.

I. Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement

Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement (PTMISEA) is part of a transportation bond designed to advance important goals and policies including protecting the environment, public health, energy conservation, congestion relief, and provided alternative mobility choices for transit users in California.

For FY 2007-08, Kings County received an allocation of \$1,420,539. These funds were utilized by the Kings County Area Public Transit Agency to match CMAQ fund to replace older buses , purchase new dial-a-ride vehicles, and funded the installation of a CNG Slow Fuel facility.

J. California Transit Security Grant Program

The TSGP is one of five grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2007 Infrastructure Protection Program (IPP). The IPP is one tool among a comprehensive set of measures authorized by Congress and implemented by the Administration to help strengthen the nation's critical infrastructure against risks associated with potential terrorist attacks.

The vast bulk of America's critical infrastructure is owned and/or operated by State, local and private sector partners. The funds provided by the TSGP are primarily intended to support the work of public transit agencies that operate rail and bus networks. The TSGP also supports security funding for ferry systems and the National Passenger Rail Corporation, Amtrak. Over \$20 Million in grant funding was available statewide in FY 2007.

VII. ACTION ELEMENT

A. Kings Area Rural Transit

Originally, KART was started to address the needs of those persons in Kings County who either had no automobile, seniors, and those who were physically disabled. Shortly after KART's creation, the local senior transportation system was disbanded. This resulted in a client base that was at least 60% seniors. While KART has grown into a transit provider for all Kings County residents with a senior ridership of 15%, the client base of the elderly and disabled will become a larger percentage of KART riders in the future.

More and more families in Kings County are taking care of the elderly in their own homes. Seniors themselves are choosing to live at home and shying away from nursing home care providers. Some nursing homes have been able to offer transportation for their elderly patients. However, those that are cared for in private homes may not be able to get to shopping, medical and social appointments on a regular basis. KART and its Dial-A-Ride service, has over time, become *the* primary transit service used by this client base. KART's flexibility in dealing with individual riders is an example of KART's responsive nature in working to meet transit needs.

A second development has been a recent increased use of wheelchairs by those that are physically unable to walk but a short distance due to weight or physical disability. This trend, coupled with the aging senior population, compels KART to develop and administer an evaluation method to determine those who truly need the curb to curb service provided by the Dial-A-Ride system. Failure to do this will compromise KART's ability to provide quality service while holding down increasing costs.

While a benefit to those who regularly use KART, if these trends continue, KART may be less able to meet these individual needs. KART's ability to meet its required goals for farebox revenue, costs per hour, is largely based upon its route service operations and its ability to balance revenues and operations costs. Increased senior ridership on both Dial-A-Ride and route services will have an impact in KART's ability to provide a desirable level of accessibility for all riders.

1. KART Fixed-Route Service

Over the past years, ridership on KART's fixed route has increased from 703,338 passengers in 2002 to 796,219 passengers in 2008, an increase of 13.2%. This increase reflects the increased willingness of residents to use public transportation. The growth is expected to continue as a result of rising fuel prices and a slowing economy.

Presently, KART utilizes seven buses for its seven Hanford routes keeping a continual flow of pick ups and drop offs within a duration of 30 minutes. The current Downtown Hanford Routes system was expanded from six to seven buses in 2008. The routes end times have been expanded from 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM.

KART's fixed route services will receive the largest demand for expanded and added service in the future. This growth in ridership will be the result of increases in population and commercial development in West Hanford; added emphasis on public transit as part of the overall transportation system; a strategy for improving air quality; and the continuing expansion of convenient fixed route service. The intercity and Hanford Downtown Routes will reflect the majority of the KART trips over the next five years.

2. KART Dial-A-Ride

KART's management has encouraged transit riders to utilize fixed route service, due to its lower operational cost over Dial-A-Ride, through changes in transit fares and policies. Dial-A-Ride riders undergo an evaluation to assess functional ability for public transportation purposes by determining the extent of their disability, and differentiating between those riders who have a mental disability versus those with a physical disability. Riders with disabilities that do not prohibit use of the regular route system will be required to use the fixed route service provided by KART. In order to be eligible for Dial-A-Ride service, according to the Americans with Disabilities Act, all riders must be certified ADA riders.

The Dial-A-Ride service provided by KART is expected to see an increase in demand for service over the next five years. The projected operational costs of maintaining the service, however, will be countered or offset by adopting the policy of having riders undergo an evaluation to determine paratransit eligibility. Although a slight decrease may arise, the expansions of service areas are expected to be modified to correspond with population growth and development.

3. Marketing Outreach

If projections are accurate, KART will continue to increase ridership up to and beyond the year 2013. KART's marketing program has been targeted to reach those who are *consistent* KART riders regarding changes in scheduling and fares. "Word of mouth" referrals for KART service has been a significant part of KART's yearly growth. However, KART's marketing program, up to now, has not attempted to gain new riders who had not been transit users in Kings County. Those groups would include: higher income residents; regular bicycle riders; and single-occupant vehicle drivers.

KART management, through direction from the KCAPTA Board, will need to address its future marketing efforts to target non-transit user groups pending projected effectiveness and the costs. KART has been successful in providing transit service for groups who once had unmet transit needs. The active soliciting of *new* service and routes will be a significant departure from KART's past marketing programs. A more significant ridership increase, resulting from successful marketing, could adversely affect KART's ability to provide service to its core ridership base including the elderly and the physically disabled. KART's reputation for being flexible and responsive to transit patrons could become more difficult to maintain. KART must ask these questions in developing a new marketing strategy:

- 1) Who are the groups not previously served by public transit;
- 2) What will be the financial costs of developing an expanded marketing program;
- 3) What would be the ability of KART to handle increased ridership as a result of successful advertising;
- 4) What would be the estimated costs of new equipment and personnel in relation to significant ridership increases.

KCAPTA will prepare an updated marketing plan in FY 2009-10 to address these concerns.

4. Proposed Fare Structure

KART will continue to be responsive to economic conditions of its riders. At the same time, KART must also operate in a manner which is both efficient and responsible given its established operating budget.

KART relies on a number of funding sources for its daily operations and capital improvements. Those sources include KART's farebox receipts, State Transit Assistance and Local Transportation Funds, FTA Sections 5307 and 5311 operating assistance. These funds are variable, which means that the amount of funds coming to KART can change, sometimes significantly, from year to year.

Currently KART is required to maintain an over all 15% farebox ratio. KART meets this farebox, but just barely. KCAPTA needs to closely monitor farebox revenues and possibly increase fares at some point in order to keep up with increased costs and maintain the required 15% revenue ratio.

KART should review the fare structure every year. The focus of these reviews should be on adjustments necessary to maintain the required fare box ratio, as well as adjustments for service changes and inflation.

5. Triennial Performance Audit Recommendations

Every three years the Regional Transportation Planning Agency is required to have a performance audit of each public transit operator conducted. The audits are to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the operation of the agency. The latest triennial performance audit conducted for the Kings County Area Public Transit Operator (KCAPTA) was completed in 2007 for the period of FY 2003-04 to FY 2005-06.

The audit report for KART recognized that KCAPTA had made major strides in expanding public transit services in Kings County, had substantially improved overall system productivity, and that KCAPTA staff had been diligent in monitoring services. The audit report offered the following recommendations:

- Request through Kings County Association of Governments that the lower farebox recovery ratio be established for the KART public transit program.
- Ensure that appropriate and correct information on KART operating cost and fare revenues collected are available for the annual fiscal audit review that will result in an accurate calculation of the farebox recovery ratio.
- Improve system monitoring and reporting by developing periodic summary reports of system performance relative to the adopted standards for efficiency and effectiveness. Incorporate system performance monitoring of roadcalls, accidents, and complaints into monitoring reports.
- Work to reduce trip costs for demand-response service element. Consider restricting eligibility for service to ADA certified residents only (no general public ridership). Also, consider eliminating the monthly Dial-A-Ride pass program that permits unlimited rides; instead charge a flat fare for each trip with a discount punch pass made available for individuals that need to use the system more frequently.
- Develop an abbreviated interim plan document between county-wide Transit Plan updates that focuses specifically on performance standards and current system performance; modifications to current standards should be made as needed.

KCAPTA has committed itself to fulfilling the aforementioned recommendations and monitoring them on a frequent basis. KCAPTA regularly calculates its farebox recovery ratio and distributes a spreadsheet of "KART Facts" monthly that shows operation costs, revenues and farebox ratios for each service route. KCAPTA is working closely with KCAG to ensure the most accurate calculation.

The 2008 Transit Development Plan has been undertaken to reflect the substantial changes in KCAPTA's operations since the 2003 Plan update. The 2008 Plan reflects the new performance standards for the entire system as well as for each system component: Fixed-route, intercity service, commuter and vanpool operations, and Dial-a-Ride. The 2008 Plan also takes into consideration the role that KCAPTA will play as a small urban transit operator as a result of Kings County's recent Urbanized Area designation.

KCAPTA has realized that Dial-a-Ride costs must be contained in order to sustain the necessary 15% farebox ratio requirement as a small urban transit operator. Dial-a-Ride is designated for those riders who live more than ½ mile from an existing fixed-route or for those riders who are certified as disabled by the ADA. One approach will be to encourage the use of the fixed-route service by Dial-a-Ride users. KCAPTA will have Dial-a-Ride users undergo an examination by a certified physical therapist to determine the extent of their disability.

Fleet maintenance and computer-based recordkeeping has been implemented and utilized to a fuller extent than was previously noted. KCAPTA has hired additional staff to monitor the KART fleet. In addition, the contractor has provided a number of elements to help KART operate its fleet more efficiently.

KCAPTA has also been working to implement recommendations for more marked bus stops. The Executive Director has been working in close collaboration with the City of Hanford, Lemoore and Avenal in regard to the placement of the bus stop signage and shelters. The long term goal is to have bus stop locations and policies adopted by all the cities leading up to the placement of bus stop signs at all regular bus stops. In addition, there is an effort to adopt one standard for bus shelters and benches that works county wide. These improvements should encourage and increase ridership.

6. Bicycle Racks on Transit Vehicles

Many public transit systems are installing bicycle racks on their buses. This gives the transit operator a greater opportunity to solicit new transit riders and improving their farebox ratio and riders per day figures. Simply having the bicycle racks noticed by potential transit riders may offer another reason to ride public transit. Bike racks designed for buses costs approximately \$3,000 per rack.

Having bikes on buses encourages an intermodal (i.e., connected) transportation network, increases transit ridership, and provides another alternative to automobile usage. Currently, all KART buses are equipped with bicycle racks that hold 2 bikes.

7. Van Pool Services

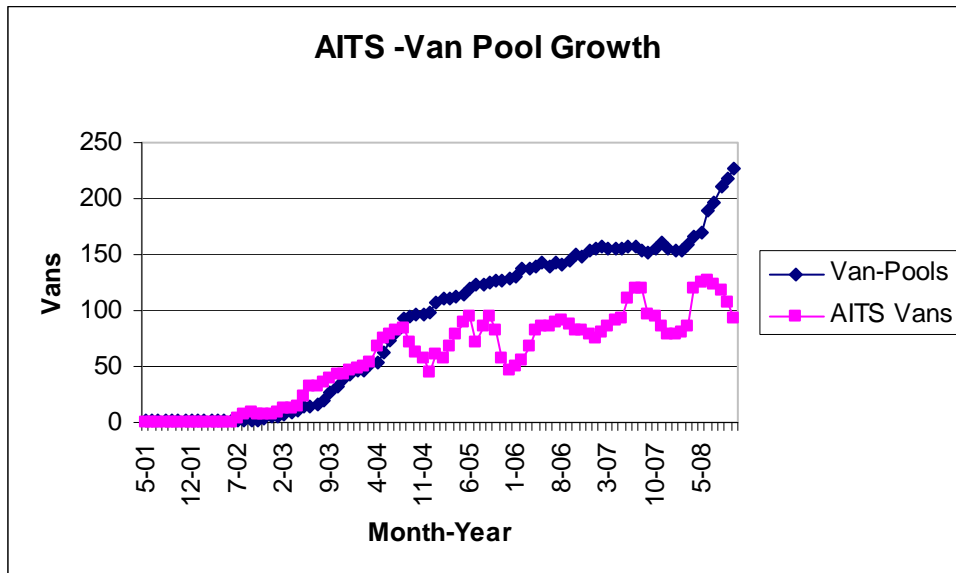
Following an accident in which 13 farmworkers were killed; KCAPTA staff submitted a proposal to Caltrans for providing vanpools to farmworkers. This led to the establishment of the Agricultural Industries Transportation Services project, commonly called the AITS project. As outlined below, this project was established in 2001 and continues to grow and expand. The grant funds provided the seed money to buy the vans and get the program started. Revenues from the riders pay operational costs to keep the program operating. Replacement vans come from new grant funds or from older vans moved from the conventional vanpool project. The program presently operates between 75 and 130 vanpools, depending on the time of year.

The conventional vanpool project was established to address requests from local residents who vanpooled to some of the State Prisons located in the nearby smaller communities. The first vanpool was established in 2001 with the understanding that the vanpool driver would be responsible for all cost related to providing the vanpool. This included the lease/purchase cost of the van. Today there are over 226 vanpools operating in this fashion. Vans in this program are lease/purchased for a four or five year period, and retained once they are paid for. Vans that are paid for are offered to vanpool groups at a reduced rate or moved to the AITS project to provide vans for that program.

KCAPTA's vanpool program has grown over the past seven years, from a staff of 2 to 18, from operating within Kings County to an adjacent five counties area, and generating over \$400,000 in monthly revenue. The general conventional vanpool project now provides vanpools to a broad group of riders. These include state workers, federal workers, school teachers, college students, and casino workers, to mention a few. The number of vanpool groups continues to grow; driven by fuel prices, the economy, and air quality mandates being implemented by the state. It is forecasted that the present fleet will grow by 100 vehicles this year. A number of these will be purchased for an expanded AITS project in the Salinas Valley area.

Timeline of Vanpool Activities

Jan - 2001	Provided first vanpool for Corrections staff traveling between Visalia and Corcoran.
Nov - 2001	Received \$2 million grant to establish vanpool program (AITS) for farmworkers
Nov - 2001	Purchased 48, 15-passenger GMC vans.
Jan - 2002	Expanded AITS Program to include Tulare County.
Jul - 2002	Provided first Vanpools to farmworkers traveling from Avenal to Paramount Farms.
May - 2003	Received \$2.9 million to expand AITS project to include Fresno County.
Jun - 2003	Purchased 75, 15-passenger vans for expanded program.
Nov - 2006	20 million in statewide funds established to implement or expand other programs.
Apr - 2007	Received \$5 million to expand project in existing three county area.
Apr - 2007	Purchased 66, 15-passenger GMC vans.
Jan - 2008	Received 2.5 million to expand project into Kern and Madera counties.
Sep - 2008	Asked to take over projects in Ventura, Santa Barbara and Monterey counties.
Oct - 2008	Establish agreements with Ventura and Monterey to use 4 million in project funds.



8. Capital Program

The following capital program for KART is designed to provide adequate equipment and facilities to meet the service demands projected over the next five years. The capital plan has been developed to be consistent with KART's commitment to maximizing the use of existing equipment and the purchase of new and larger buses. The capital program has also been prepared to develop a core of new equipment to assist in the reduction of maintenance costs, increase service reliability and reduce the average age and average mileage of the KART fleet.

Figure 48
KART Capital Needs Program
(2008/09 through 2013/14)

Year	Item	Cost	Funding Sources
2008/09	Purchase (1) CNG Buses/ (2) Paratransit Vehicles	\$480,000	Federal/Local
2009/10	Purchase (1) CNG Buses/ (2) Paratransit Vehicles	\$480,000	Federal/Local
2009/10	Establish downtown Lemoore Route	\$600,000	Federal/Local
2011/12	Purchase (1) CNG Buses/ (2) Paratransit Vehicles	\$480,000	Federal/Local
2012/13	Purchase (1) CNG Buses/ (2) Paratransit Vehicles	\$480,000	Federal/Local
2013/14	Purchase (1) CNG Buses/ (2) Paratransit Vehicles	\$580,000	Federal/Local

9. Financial Plan

The service and capital plans outlined above will result in the following five year financial plan. This financial plan includes all operating and capital expenditures plus revenues by source. The financial plan has been designed to minimize the use of local funding from Transportation Development Act programs, maximizing the use of state and federal funding to deliver the projected capital and operating program needs.

FTA 5307 funds are expected to cover approximately 70% of all capital and operating costs over the next five year period. Federal programs will provide an increasing level of funding over the five year period, since Kings County has become an urbanized area. TDA funding will still be expected to provide a notable share of total operating and capital expenses. Fare revenues are expected to increase, providing approximately 20% of total costs.

It is important to note that this program assumes a significant level of discretionary funding for the acquisition of new buses. KCAPTA will attempt to purchase new buses through the FTA grant programs. The CMAQ program will provide a significant amount of funding for new buses provided that they are used for the expansion of transit service. TDA funds will be used as a local match.

Figure 49

KCAPTA Financial Plan (2008/09 through 2012/13)

	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Revenues					
LTF	2,065,960	2,086,620	2,107,495	2,128,562	2,171,133
STA	1,492,000	525,000	400,000	400,000	425,000
CMAQ	237,000				
5307 FTA	1,169,964	1,118,000	1,218,000	1,318,000	1,500,000
Fares	5,067,948	5,219,986	5,500,000	6,500,000	6,550,000
Other	2,285,444	3,645,049	3,700,000	2,830,000	2,750,000
	12,318,316	12,594,655	12,925,495	13,176,562	13,396,133
Expenses					
Labor	1,256,956	1,294,655	1,333,495	1,373,499	1,414,704
Equipment	6,516,000	6,700,000	6,901,000	7,000,000	7,100,000
Contracts	3,608,200	3,650,000	3,732,500	3,843,063	3,919,429
Overhead	937,160	950,000	958,500	960,000	962,000
	12,318,316	12,594,655	12,925,495	13,176,562	13,396,133

B. Corcoran Area Transit

1. Marketing Outreach

Corcoran Area Transit will continue its marketing efforts for its Dial-a-Ride and AMTRAK services. A recent study of Corcoran's public transit system recommended several methods to enhance marketing efforts. Among the recommendations cited include posting fares on all vehicles, developing a promotional brochure, and promoting transit awareness in the community. The content of the brochure would feature information on the services provided (Dial-a-Ride and AMTRAK); eligibility requirements; reservation and cancellation policies, phone numbers, fares; AMTRAK subsidy program; and other transit connections such as KART, AMTRAK, Orange Belt Stages and the Corcoran State Prison visitor shuttle. The brochure would be economical to produce and designed in such a way that it can be easily updated.

2. Proposed Fare Structure

Following the Corcoran Transit Study, Corcoran Area Transit implemented fare changes in order to improve the farebox ratio. The farebox ratio was 18% in FY 2003-04 but declined to 11% in FY 2005-06 and has continued to fall. As costs for staffing the Intermodal Center have increased, the overall operating costs have increased without any offsetting increase in fare revenues.

The Corcoran Transit Study reviewed the fare structure, in which it was noted that seniors and fixed-route passengers currently ride free on Corcoran Transit. However, in order to attain the required 10% farebox ratio, the study recommended that seniors and fixed-route passengers be charged 50 cents or 50% of the base fare, which would be phased in over a three year period. The initial fare charged would be 25 cents and be gradually increased to 50 cents. Implementing a fare increase in steps reduces the potential financial hardship and allows the City to monitor the farebox recovery ratio to see if it meets the 10% standard. At this time there is no longer a fixed route, and Seniors who do not attend the Senior Center are charged \$0.25. Children under 8 and persons with a disability are also charged \$0.25. Regular fares are still \$1.00.

3. Triennial Performance Audits

Every three years the regional transportation planning agency is required to have a performance audit of each public transit operator conducted. The audits are to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the operation of the agency. The latest triennial performance audit conducted for the City of Corcoran Transit Service was completed in 2007 for the period of FY 2003-04 to FY 2005-06.

The audit report for Corcoran Transit System recognized that the agency continues to provide effective and efficient service to residents in the greater Corcoran area. However, several issues were identified that warranted further evaluation as provided in the following recommendations:

- Improve system monitoring and reporting by developing periodic summary reports of system performance relative to the adopted standards for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Incorporate system performance monitoring of roadcalls, accidents, and complaints into monitoring reports.
- Develop an abbreviated interim plan document between transit plan updates that focuses specifically on performance standards and current system performance; modifications to current stands should be made as needed.
- Continue to check for accuracy the calculation of farebox ratio in the annual fiscal audits.
- Examine overall operating expenses to see if, and where, they can be reduced. As part of the analysis, review the allocation costs between demand-response program and the administrative costs of the maintaining the Amtrak ticket subsidy program. Also, review the increasing cost of city-wide overhead charged to the transit program.
- In line with the prior recommendation, consider increasing the fare structure (bosh demand-response and the Amtrak ticket program) to ensure that the required TDA farebox ratio is achieved.
- Consider computerizing maintenance records.

Corcoran Area Transit has committed itself to fulfilling the aforementioned recommendations and monitoring them on a frequent basis. KCAG continues to work closely with the City of Corcoran in ensuring a more accurate calculation of the farebox recovery ratio and will ensure that there is a requirement to do this in future fiscal audits. Significant efforts have been made to improve system reporting by Corcoran Area Transit staff. However, revenue vehicle miles still need to be consistent with the services provided. There is definitely a need to formalize the computer system to enable the mechanic to effectively monitor the maintenance program. The City should also consider the hiring of a maintenance auditor to randomly check maintenance records and to ensure that preventive maintenance and other repairs are conducted properly. As per the recommendations cited in the performance audit and Corcoran Transit Study, the City intends to improve their performance and monitoring standards by computerizing data, which will increase accuracy.

Furthermore, the City of Corcoran has fully examined the transit system's operating expenses and has taken steps towards decreasing costs. The City has also increased the fare structure to ensure farebox standards are being met.

4. Corcoran Fixed Route

Due to lack of ridership, the fixed route has been discontinued.

5. Service Improvements

As of September 2008, the City of Corcoran had three medium duty 22 passenger buses and two 15 passenger buses. In order to increase safety on the buses and at the transit center, security equipment such as cameras may be installed.

The management of Corcoran Area Transit will continue to monitor the demographics of ridership trends and develop strategies to respond to any changes in community needs.

6. AMTRAK

AMTRAK rail passenger service stops at Corcoran twelve times daily, with six northbound and six southbound stops. While this service is essential for visitors to the Corcoran prison and for those who use the service to travel to Hanford, the time of the scheduled stops at Corcoran is not conducive in gaining significant passenger increases for interregional travel from the community. The location of Corcoran on the San Joaquin line would make additional runs or those at earlier times of the morning impractical for AMTRAK to offer.

The City of Corcoran's subsidy of AMTRAK tickets is used primarily by Corcoran residents for better access to government services as well as for shopping and recreation in Hanford. There has also been an increase in teenage ridership on AMTRAK between Corcoran and Hanford as younger riders discover AMTRAK, at times, being the only means of available transportation to Hanford and beyond for recreational activities.

7. Corcoran Transit Study

The City of Corcoran, through KCAG, commissioned a transit study to help identify specific goals for improvement and provide an action plan for implementation. Some of the recommendations which came out of the study include the following:

- Ensure the cleanliness of buses;
- Upgrade the radio system;
- Increase vehicle utilization to boost productivity to an average of seven passengers an hour;
- Track the total costs of the Amtrak subsidy program;
- Develop a bilingual passenger guide listing available services, fares, schedules and reservation policies; and
- Re-evaluate the existing fare structure.

The study examined the benefits and costs of Corcoran's existing transit service being substituted by or integrated into KART. KART currently provides limited service between Corcoran and Hanford, serving mainly prison staff and Kings Rehabilitation Center clients. The primary benefit for Corcoran in joining KART would be a significant reduction in costs to operate the service.

8. Capital Program

Corcoran Area Transit has provided residents with a stable and efficient transit system. Corcoran will need to seek new funding sources to meet its total transit budget, including a review of the fare system.

With increased security funding available, the City of Corcoran is looking into the installment of security monitoring equipment for the Transit Depot building as well as the buses.

Figure 50

Corcoran Area Transit Capital Needs Program (2008/09 through 2012/13)

Year	Item	Cost	Funding Sources
2009/10	Security (on bus cameras)	\$28,000	Federal/Local/State
2010/11	Security (transit center cameras)	\$36,000	Federal/Local/State

9. Financial Plan

The five year service and capital plan outlined above will result in the following five year financial plan. This financial plan includes all operating and capital expenditures plus revenues by source.

Figure 51

Corcoran Area Transit Financial Plan (2008/09 through 2012/13)

	FY 08-09	FY 09-10	FY 10-11	FY 11-12	FY 12-13	Totals
Revenues						
LTF	\$412,000	\$422,000	\$432,000	\$442,000	\$452,000	\$2,160,000
STA	\$260,000	\$39,500	\$41,500	\$43,500	\$45,500	\$430,000
CMAQ	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FTA	\$24,500	\$25,500	\$26,500	\$27,500	\$28,500	\$132,500
Fares	\$42,600	\$44,600	\$46,600	\$48,600	\$50,600	\$195,000
Other	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$105,000
Total	\$760,100	\$552,600	\$567,600	\$582,600	\$597,600	\$3,060,500
Operating Expenses						
Labor	\$225,010	\$233,010	\$245,010	\$257,010	\$269,010	\$1,229,050
Equipment	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$20,000
Direct Charges	\$268,000	\$290,000	\$312,000	\$334,000	\$356,000	\$1,560,000
Overhead	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$56,000	\$280,000
Total	\$553,010	\$583,010	\$613,010	\$643,010	\$673,010	\$3,065,050

C. Kings County Association of Governments

1. Federal Transit Grant Applications

One of KCAG's responsibilities is to review and evaluate applications for Federal Transit Act (FTA) grant funds from area transit operators. Applications for FTA Section 5311 funds are evaluated by KCAG based on specific criteria. If the application meets the criteria, KCAG will include the projects in the annual Regional Program of Projects for submittal to Caltrans. The annual apportionment of funds is generally apportioned by KCAG to each transit operator based on their non-urban service area population. Transit operators rely upon these funds to minimize the use of local funds for operating assistance. KCAG will ensure that area operators make full use of these funds in their annual budgets.

For the FTA Section 5310, 5316 (JARC), and 5317 (New Freedom), discretionary grant funds for elderly and handicapped projects, KCAG is to evaluate and score projects from local transit operators based on criteria provided by Caltrans. KCAG may either choose to evaluate each application itself, or create a Local Review Committee to review and score the applications. Depending on the number of applications submitted by area operators, KCAG will either review the applications or appoint the Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) as the local review committee to review the applications. KCAG will work with each applicant to develop a successful grant application.

Under FTA Section 5307, KCAPTA, the public transit operator providing service to the newly urbanized area of Hanford and Lemoore, is eligible to receive funds for transit operating and capital assistance. Federal planning laws require the operator of a public transit provider servicing a newly designated urbanized area enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MPO regarding the coordination of ongoing transit planning and programming of federal funds. These funds are programmed by KCAG into the FTIP according to the MOU between KCAG and KCAPTA.

In addition to grants for transit operators, FTA Technical Planning Assistance program funds are available to local agencies in non-urbanized areas for rural transit planning projects. KCAG will solicit project proposals from area transit operators and other eligible agencies on an annual basis. KCAG will continue to apply for grant funds to conduct transit studies as the need arises.

2. Transportation Development Act

KCAG has the responsibility of administering the funding programs found in the Transportation Development Act (TDA). The TDA is the primary source of transit funds. Special emphasis is given to local transit systems through the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and the State Transit Assistance (STA) fund.

Of the LTF revenue that becomes available each year in Kings County, about 40 percent is normally directed to support local transit services. Up to two percent of each county's annual LTF can also be claimed by local jurisdictions to be used for installing or maintaining bicycle and pedestrian facilities and bicycle safety programs. STA funds can only be used for transit.

3. Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan

The Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan (HSTCP) was developed in 2007 to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes by ensuring that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple federal programs. This coordination will enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most appropriate cost effective transportation possible with available resources.

This Plan includes available service inventories, transportation needs, strategies to meet those needs, and coordination possibilities among local social service providers. The HTSCP was created with the help of input received from local transit providers, public transit users, and social service agencies.

4. Social Service Transportation Provider Inventory

Every four years KCAG is required to prepare an update of the Inventory of social service transportation providers. The latest Inventory was prepared and submitted in December 2007. The next update to the inventory is due December 31, 2011. KCAG will ensure that updates are prepared in a timely manner with the assistance of the SSTAC, area transit operators and social service agencies. KCAG will also ensure that the Inventory is widely distributed to inform citizens and agencies of available transportation services to meet special needs.

5. Air Quality

The San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (SJVAB) is designated as a nonattainment area for meeting federal and state ozone and particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM-10) standards. For these designated areas, the 1990 Federal Clean Air Act Amendments (FCAAA) and the California Clean Air Act (CCAA) of 1988 require the implementation of transportation control measures (TCM) to bring the SJVAB into compliance with state and federal air quality standards. TCMs are defined as any strategy to reduce vehicle trips, vehicle use, vehicle miles traveled, vehicle idling or traffic congestion for the purpose of reducing motor vehicle emissions. KCAG programs various funds in the FTIP for transit projects that have air quality benefits to assist in meeting attainment standards.

6. Triennial Performance Audit

Every three years the regional transportation planning agency is required to have a performance audit of the agency conducted by an independent auditor. The audits are to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency and to provide constructive and practical recommendations for improvements in fulfilling the responsibilities of the agency. The latest triennial performance audit conducted for the Kings County Association of Governments was completed in 2007 for the period of FY 2003-04 through FY 2005-06.

The audit report for KCAG recognized that the agency continues to function in an effective, efficient, and economical manner as it accomplishes its many duties. However, several issues were identified that warranted further evaluation as provided in the following recommendations:

- Review ability of the regional transit agency to achieve minimum 20% farebox ratio while meeting its internal goal of providing affordable service to the public. If appropriate, consider action to permit KCAPTA to maintain lower farebox ratio as permitted by TDA Regulations.
- Continue to work towards inclusion of correctly calculated farebox ratios of county's transit providers in annual fiscal audit report.
- Assist county's transit operators in development of abbreviated interim transit plan updates that focus specifically on performance standards, current system performance, and future farebox recovery ratios; modify standards as needed to reflect changes over time.
- Assist county's transit operators in improving system monitoring and reporting through developing periodic summary reports of system performance relative to the adopted standards for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Work to keep KCAG website current. Consider adding separate work element for staff training in annual work program.
- Consider development of a comprehensive transportation user's guide

KCAG has committed itself to fulfilling the aforementioned recommendations and monitoring them on a frequent basis. For instance, KCAG has reviewed KCAPTA's required farebox ratio and found it unable to meet the 20% goal. KCAG has since lowered the minimum to 15%. KCAG is also working with the transit provider to include accurate farebox calculation in annual fiscal audit reports.

KCAG is also working to update its website and keep accurate information available as well as the possible. A transportation user's guide is being considered and would add to the resources available to the public via the website.

The 2008 Transit Development Plan has been undertaken to reflect the substantial changes in public transit operations within Kings County since the 2003 Plan update. The 2008 Plan seeks to examine the new and expanded services as well as capital and operational improvements, which have been implemented. Furthermore, with the findings contained in the 2008 Transit Plan, KCAG seeks to undertake a more proactive role in assisting operators in monitoring the success levels of new service. KCAG staff will continue to monitor performance by utilizing the system and encouraging more public participation in the transit planning process.

7. Transportation Improvement Programs

Every two years KCAG prepares the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) to allocate regional share funds for area transportation projects. Projects included in the approved RTIP are programmed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Eligible transit projects include capital improvements and purchases that expand capacity or reduce congestion. Non-capital projects such as maintenance and operating assistance are not eligible. KCAG will involve area transit operators in the RTIP development process to ensure that transit projects are considered for funding in the STIP. KCAG is required to prepare the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) at least every three years. Projects include those which are funded with federal funds or require federal approval. KCAG will involve area transit operators in the FTIP development process to ensure that transit projects are considered for funding through the CMAQ, FTA, RSTP, and TEA programs. In accordance with the MOU between KCAG and KCAPTA, KCAG will program projects into the FTIP.

8. Regional Transportation Plan

KCAG is required to prepare an updated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP documents the region's goals, policies, and objectives for meeting current and future transportation mobility needs; identifies transportation improvements to address the issues and mobility needs; identifies those agencies responsible for implementing the action plans; and documents the region's financial resources needed to meet mobility needs.

The RTP includes a chapter specifically addressing public transit. This Transit Development Plan (TDP) is used as the basis for the public transit chapter. KCAG will highlight important elements of this TDP and incorporate it by reference in the RTP update.

9. SB 375 – Sustainable Communities Strategy

SB 375 requires that the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) include Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that will help reach the Green House Gas (GHG) reduction targets.

KCAG can assure GHG reduction in the RTP by promoting better integrated land uses that reduced vehicle trips and promote use of public transit. An example of this land use would be a Transit Oriented Development (TOD). A TOD is a self sustaining community in which transit is readily available as well as housing and medical services.

10. San Joaquin Valley Express Transit Study

The San Joaquin Valley Express Transit Study was started to identify markets that can support inter-county commuter express transit service in the San Joaquin Valley.

The first part of the study was to account for all of the major transit services currently provided within the region, with particular attention paid to routes that travel across county lines. It also documents the diversity of inter-county service models now offered in the region, in order to evaluate which express transit models are currently serving the region most effectively.

Findings will be used in operations and organizational planning to ensure that any new service proposed for the region builds on the existing inter-county transit network and learns from the experiences of existing providers. This will help to move the Valley towards a more complete and productive express transit network.

11. Southern San Joaquin Valley Rural Vanpool and Rideshare Study

The purpose of the study was to comprehensively analyze the potential to provide safe and viable transportation options, specifically vanpool and rideshare alternatives, for employees, with an emphasis on agricultural farm workers, traveling to and from their agricultural work sites in the Southern San Joaquin Valley.

A secondary goal of the project is to provide an assessment of public transportation options within the region. This project was completed in 2007.

VIII. CONCLUSION

During first several decades of the 21st century, Kings County will continue to experience steady population growth, with transit operators remaining responsive to future transit needs. As the population of the County grows, so will the proportion of residents who are dependent upon public transit services. KART and Corcoran Area Transit must be prepared to meet this increasing demand through responsible planning and programming of funds.

Kings County's recent Urbanized Area designation will assure increased federal funding for planning, programming, marketing, and service expansion. Planning objectives must take into consideration the challenges of an emerging urbanized area. The San Joaquin Valley air basin has been designated as a serious non-attainment area for PM-10 and as a severe non-attainment area for ozone. Increased population growth and development will generate more traffic congestion, prompting the need for more transportation control measures.

The local public transit agencies are already up to meeting this challenge by leveraging state and federal resources. KCAPTA has initiated a number of ridesharing programs by providing commuter vanpools and addressing the transit needs of agricultural workers through the AITS program. Intermodal facilities have been established and are undergoing expansion in Hanford and Corcoran, allowing for better connectivity between buses, AMTRAK and other transit modes. Lemoore developed its own intermodal facility to accommodate KART buses, AMTRAK connector buses, and the Palace Gaming Center shuttles. Nevertheless, increased coordination between services and the eventual consolidation of certain services are essential in assuring an efficient and responsive public transit service for all users.