



# Item 11 - Update on Regional Transit Projects

July 11, 2025 Commission Meeting



# Modernizing Transit Across Ventura County

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Ventura County's transit landscape is undergoing a transformation.

This presentation highlights key projects and innovations, including:

- Deployment of **Tap2Ride (Open Loop Payment System)** for contactless fare payment for greater convenience
- Launch of **RideCo Paratransit Scheduling Software** to improve operations and customer experience
- Installation of **new fareboxes** across local bus fleets
- Success of **free fare programs** to promote affordability and mobility
- A **regional radio project** to unify communications
- Comprehensive **transit stop needs assessment** and **infrastructure improvements**

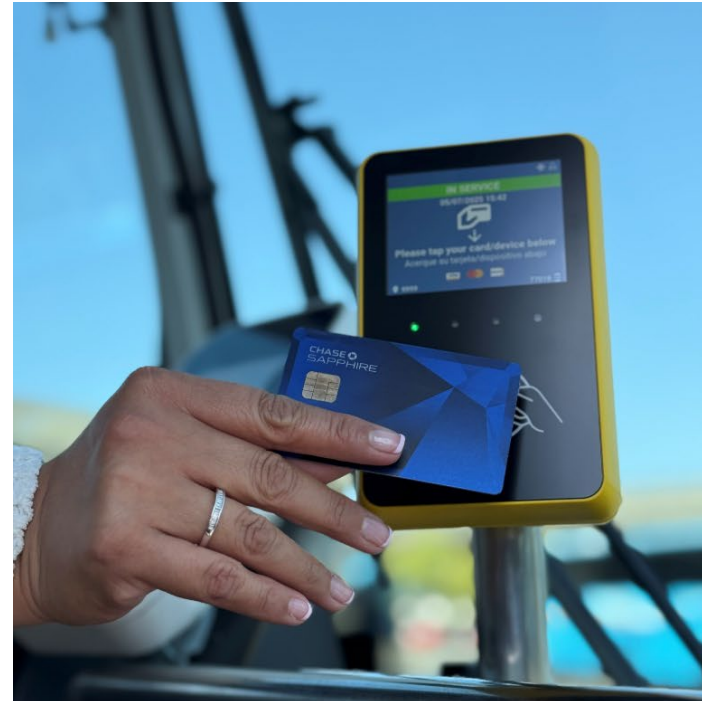


# Tap2Ride (Open Loop)

- Open -loop payment is the ability to pay transit fares with a credit or debit card
- Apple Pay & Google Pay also accepted
- Cash App can be used for those unbanked
- ADA, Senior, Veteran discounts are available
- Fare capping & other products can be implemented



**TAP2RIDE**



**Your ride is just one  
tap away with  
Tap2Ride**





# Benefits & Opportunities

## Benefits

- Removes “How to Pay” barrier
- Speeds up Boarding
- Offers familiar retail payment experience
- Provide seamless intercity & intercounty travel
- Partnered with BankOn to refer riders to safe, low -cost banking options

## Opportunities

- Increase transit ridership
- Lower fare collection cost
- Provide seamless inter -city, intra -county, inter -county travel
- Using REAP funding to implement countywide





# Tap2Ride (Open Loop)

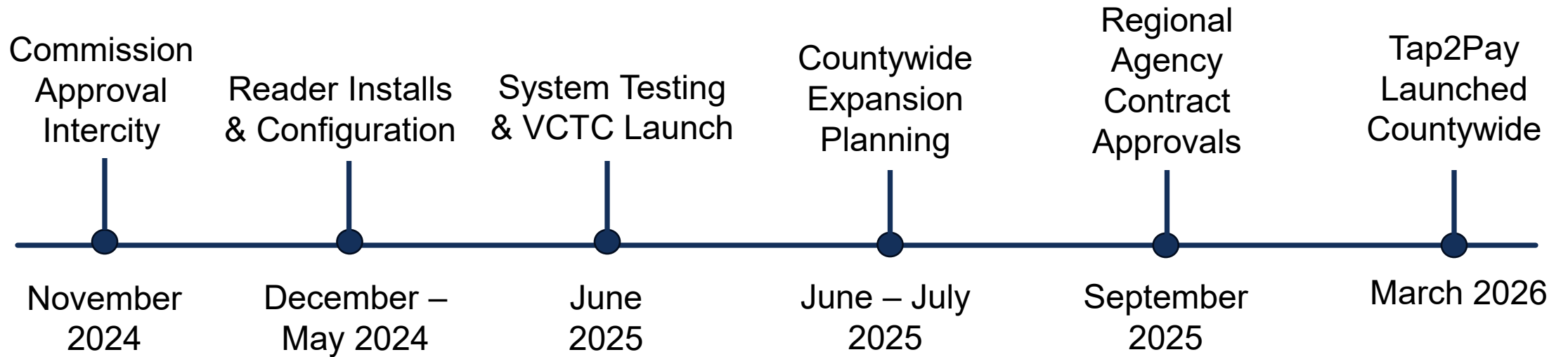
## Progress Update

- November 2024 Commission approved contracts with Open loop Venders
- Tap2Ride Launched on VCTC Intercity Service on June 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Regional agencies reviewing transit processor and payment contracts



# Tap2Pay Project Timeline

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# Demand Response Scheduling Software & App (RideCo)

- New Paratransit & Dial -A-Ride scheduling system for County operators
- Included self scheduling/ordering app with real time updates
- Increased operational efficiency
- More passenger responsive system
- System provided by RideCo

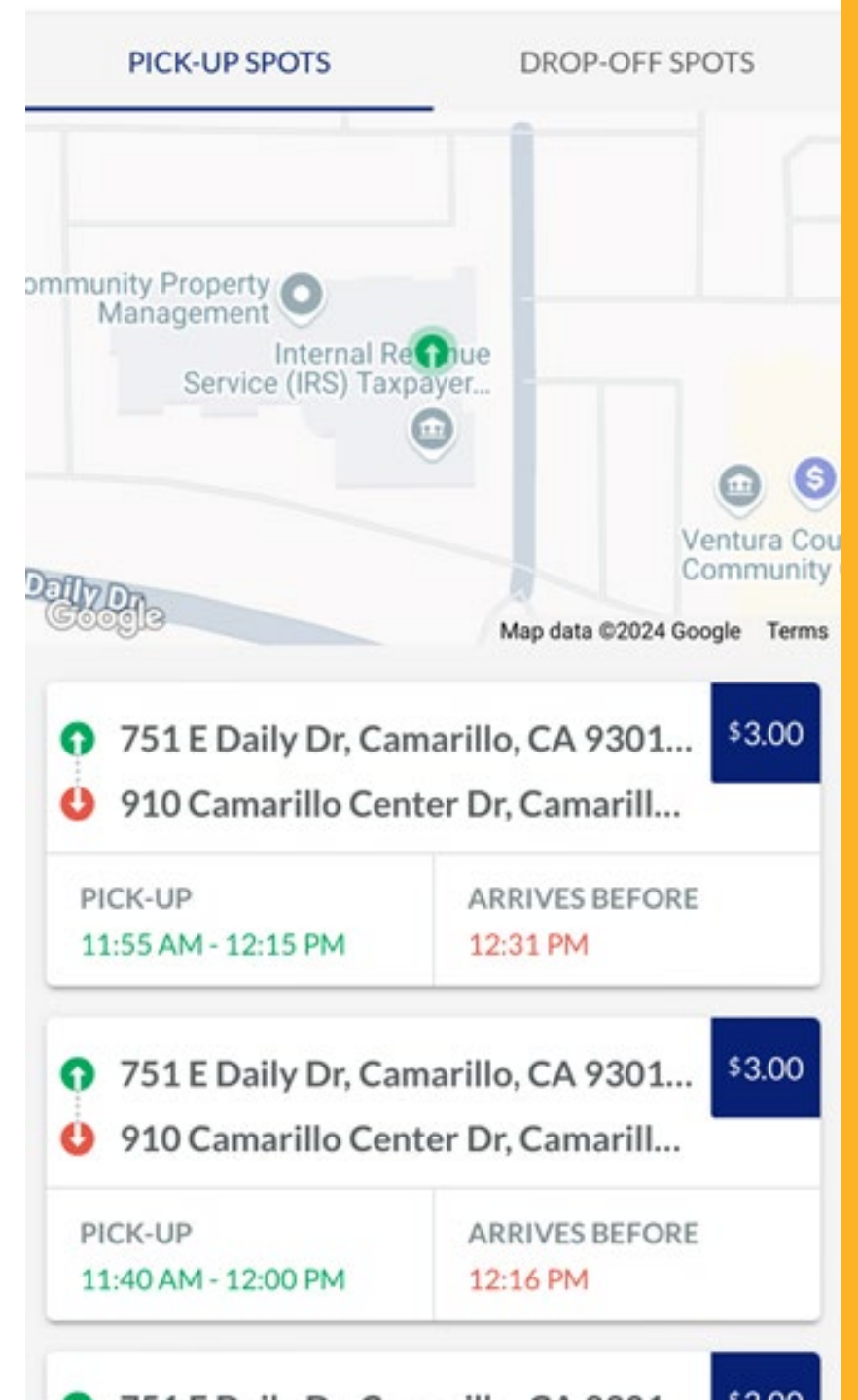


# Demand Response Scheduling Software & App (RideCo)

- Four county agencies currently using
  - Moorpark (MCT On -Demand)
  - Valley Express
  - Thousand Oaks Transit
  - Camarillo Area Transit
  - Simi Valley Transit ( MicroTransit )
- Agencies to be determined:
  - Gold Coast Transit
  - Simi Valley Transit (paratransit)
- Feature Coming Soon:
  - Debit/Credit Card Payments through App



RideCo :





# Countywide Farebox Replacement

- Replacement of obsolete onboard fareboxes
- New Fareboxes will allow for uninterrupted transit service
- Agencies will receive three years of tech support
- Full upgrades of backend software that organizes data

Current Farebox



New Farebox





# Countywide Farebox Replacement

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- Replacing fareboxes as buses are replaced or repowered
  - Fareboxes replaced to date: 36
  - Fareboxes to be replaced FY25 -26: 19
  - Remaining to be replaced over next two years: ~110





# Free Fare Programs

- Funded primarily by Low Carbon Transportation Operations Program (LCTOP) and Senate Bill 125 (SB 125)
- Free fare initiative to:
  - Increase ridership
  - Cultivate future riders
  - Improve access to education, jobs, etc.
- Focus on mobility for youth and adults enrolled in educational institutions
- Addition of free fare days encourages first time riders, boost ridership, and reduce vehicle trips





# Free Fare Programs cont.

- Total ridership since inception
  - College Ride (2018) – 2,080,920
  - Youth Ride (2022) – 3,526,652
  - Free Fare Days (2023) – 131,655
  - Over 5.7 million people served total
- Challenges
  - Combined cost more than what LCTOP generates
  - No dedicated revenues or allowable existing alternatives available
  - State budget priorities (LCTOP may get cut)
- Opportunities
  - Alternative revenue sources
  - Work with colleges and Ventura County Office of Education
  - Scaled back program to only Ventura County schools

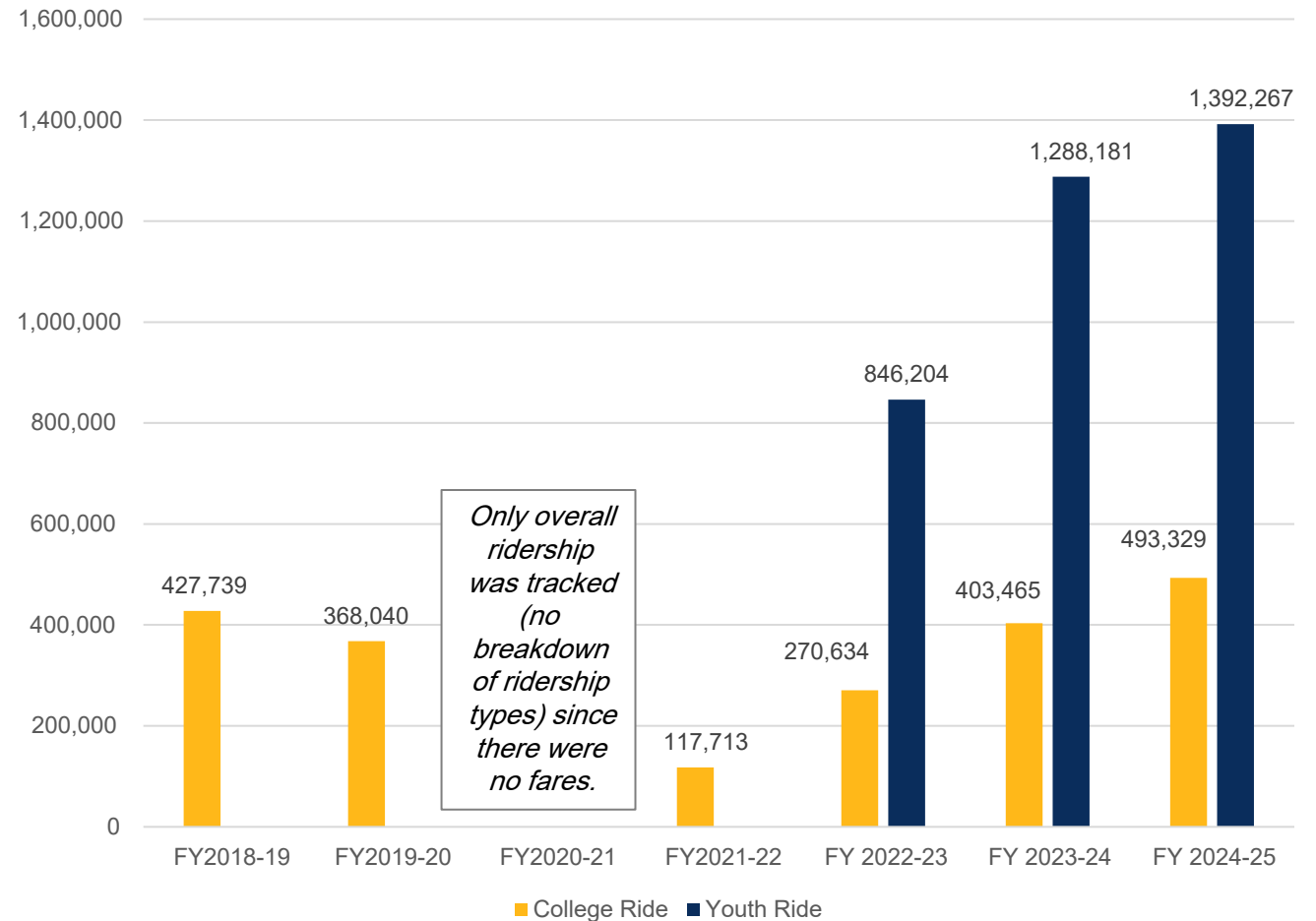




# Free Fare Program Ridership

- All Ventura County operators participate
- College Ride was popular prior pandemic, took a while to rebound and is now higher ever
- Youth Ride continues to growth on annual basis
- GCTD – Youth Ride Free accounts for 37% of all trips on GCTD services

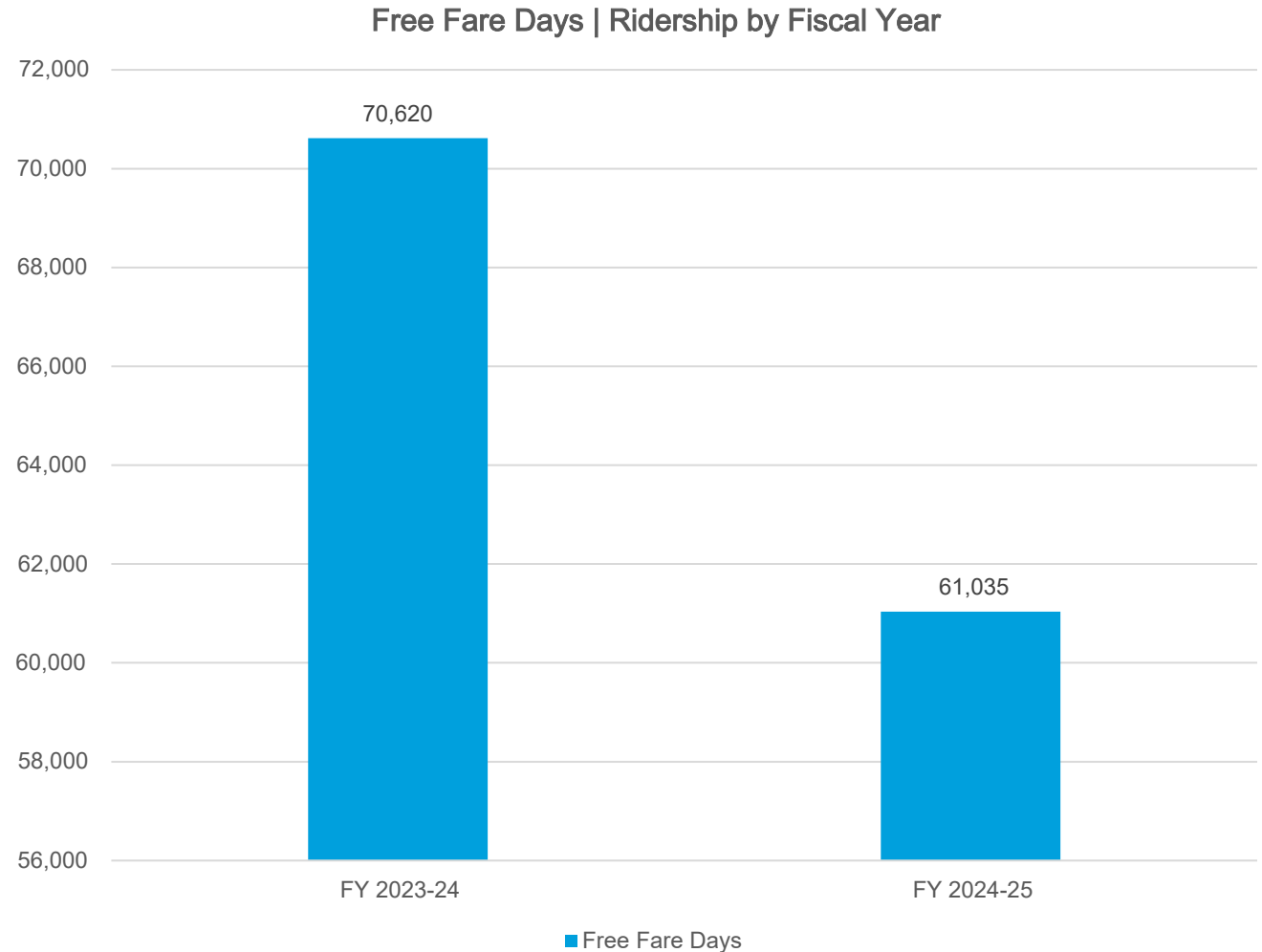
Youth Ride and College Ride Program | Ridership by Fiscal Year



# Free Fare Program Ridership

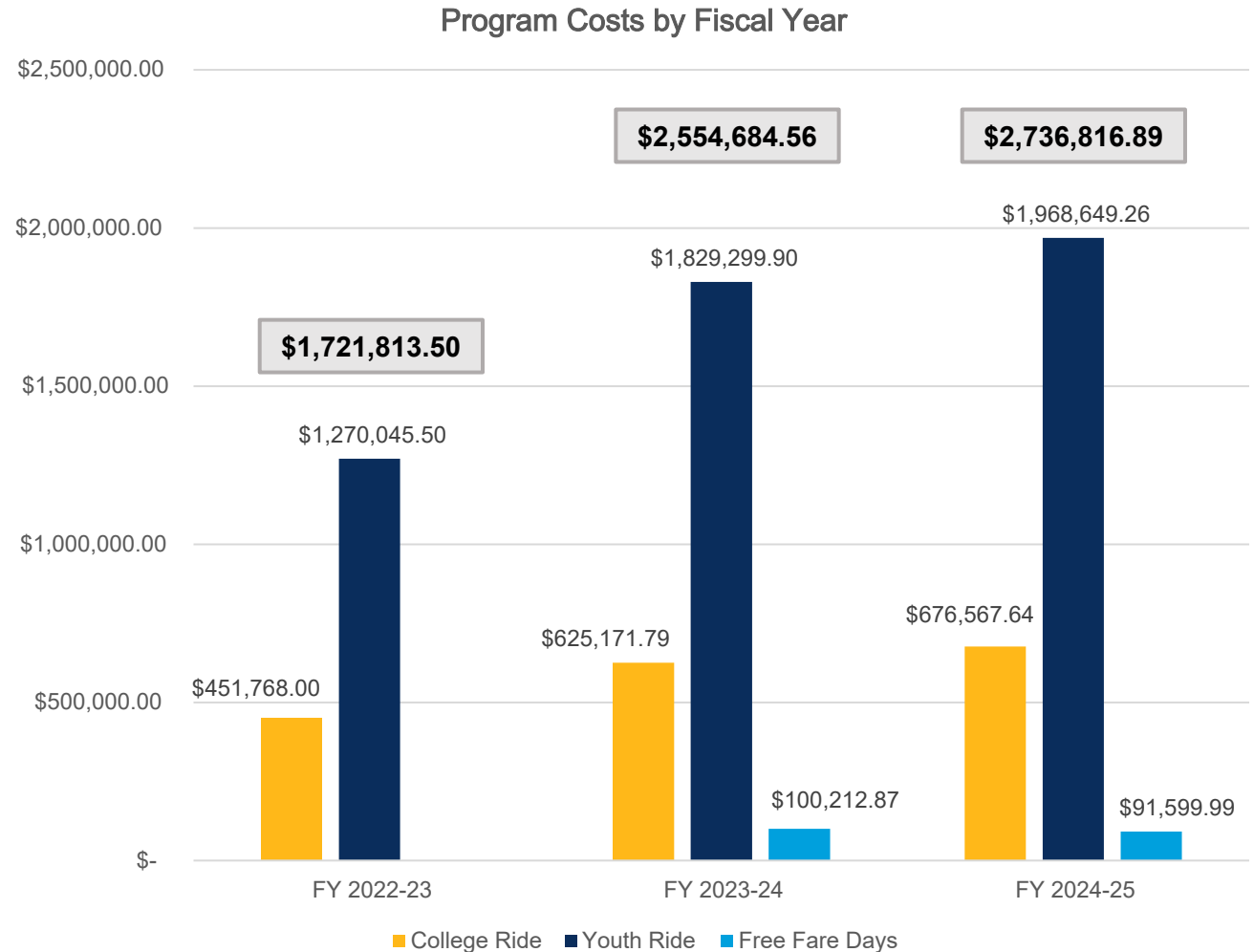
- **Free Fare Days (FFD):**
  - Car Free Day
  - Clean Air Day
  - Transit Equity Day
  - Earth Day
  - Bike to Work Day
  - Dump the Pump Day
  - Veteran's Day\*
- FY 24 -25 FFD did not include Car Free Day, Bike the Pump Day
- FY 25 -26 will include:
  - Clean Air Day
  - Transit Equity Day
  - Earth Day
  - Veteran's Day\*

\*Not funded with LCTOP



# Free Fare Program Costs

- Popularity of programs have exceeded funding
- Typically have received between \$2 -2.2M in LCTOP funds over past few years
- Disbursements for Free Fare Program were over \$2.7M in FY 24 -25 and expected to grow
- Reimbursements reduced to 75% of one -way fare in April 1, 2024





# Regional Radio Project

- Funded by Senate Bill 125 funds (~\$1M)
- Implementation of Transportation Emergency Preparedness Plan (TEPP) recommendation
- Enhance real -time communication between operators, dispatch, and emergency services
- Supports regional coordination, particularly during detours, emergencies, or special events
- Aligned with countywide and statewide efforts modernize public safety communications





# Regional Radio Project cont.

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- Procurement of radios for transit operators (Summer/Fall 2025)
  - Replacing aging communication systems with modern, interoperable radios
- Participation in County of Ventura Regional Radio System



Source: Air Comm

## TRANSPORTATION EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN



# Transit Stops Needs Assessment and Infrastructure Improvements

- Funded by Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Early Action Planning Grants (REAP) 2.0 Program
- Focus on improving accessibility, safety, and comfort at bus stops
  - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades
  - Shelter/seating enhancements
  - Lighting
  - Signage
- Supports first -/last -mile access and encourages ridership growth



# Transit Stops Needs Assessment and Infrastructure Improvements Cont.

- Aligned with input collected during the 2022 Coordinated Plan Update and ongoing customer feedback
- Three project components:
  - Countywide Bus Stop Inventory and Assessment
  - Infrastructure Improvements
  - Open Loop Payment System – Countywide Deployment
- **\$3.1M** allocated for implementation
  - ~\$300K for Bus Stop Inventory and Assessment
  - ~\$1.8M for Bus Stop Improvements (for procurement, design, and construction)
  - ~\$1M for Countywide Open Loop Payment System Deployment



# Looking Ahead: Advancing Transit in Ventura County

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- **Strong Local Partnerships**
  - Local Bus/Rail Operators
  - Cities, communities, etc.
  - VC OES/law enforcement
  - Non -profit organizations
  - Businesses
- **Innovation & Technology**
  - Contactless fare payment
  - Fleet modernization
  - Service -related technology (e.g. scheduling platforms, real -time information, etc.)
- **Shared Commitment**
  - Create a more *connected* , *resilient* , *equitable* , and *user-friendly* transportation system for Ventura County







Questions?

