

Transit

Tap2Ride makes paying Intercity bus fares even easier

In June, VCTC introduced the Tap2Ride fare payment system on its Intercity buses. Now passengers can pay fares with contactless debit and credit cards, mobile wallets and smartwatches. Tap2Ride is available on all Intercity and Valley Express buses. VCTC is providing Tap2Ride to all Ventura County operators, a process that is expected to be complete in early 2026.

New buses improve accessibility for riders with disabilities

Five new buses that joined the Intercity fleet are equipped with an ADA-compliant vestibule and loading ramp, providing easier access for riders with mobility challenges. The Valley Express fleet also has an additional five vehicles with ramps rather than lifts. The new buses are among the 26 new and repowered buses added to VCTC Intercity and Valley Express fleets in 2025.

Transit operators join countywide regional radio program

VCTC and the operators joined the countywide regional radio program, supported by the County of Ventura. The new radio system allows Ventura County transit operators to communicate with each other and with law enforcement and has been a goal for over 10 years. Three operators have the system so far, including VCTC Intercity and Valley Express, with more operators to come online in 2026.

SB 125 funds supporting transit operators, projects

The first year of Senate Bill 125 funds, totaling nearly \$47.5 million, were received and are supporting numerous projects, including operations, bus replacements, free-fare programs, microtransit service, morning rail service to Santa Barbara and technology enhancements. VCTC distributed funds to all transit operators in the county.

Outreach

Buenas con VCTC continues to resonate with Spanish speakers

VCTC's Spanish-language campaign, Buenas con VCTC, continues to provide important information about VCTC service. The *lotería*-themed campaign connects with the Spanish-speaking community through language and culture.

VCTC offers transit education, supports community partners

Staff attended numerous community events, including Arbor/Earth Day in Thousand Oaks, a wellness expo in Simi Valley and the Port of Hueneme Banana Festival. VCTC also sponsored several events, including the Ventura County Leadership Academy awards luncheon and the Ventura County Civic Alliance State of the Region Report.

4 Things You Should Know About VCTC



1) In November 2025, Executive Director Martin Erickson received the Public Transit Professional of the Year Award from the California Transit Association. Erickson was recognized for his leadership and support of projects that improve the transit experience for riders.



2) VCTC partners with Ventura County emergency responders during evacuations and emergencies. VCTC Intercity, Valley Express and several other local transit operators have assisted with evacuations during recent wildfires and transported passengers to safe locations after train incidents.



3) VCTC expanded workforce development efforts by launching its first internship program in 2025. Two interns are getting experience in transit planning and land-use planning through hands-on training and staff collaboration. VCTC plans to continue the program in 2026.



4) VCTC is a member of the California Vanpool Authority board of directors. CalVans facilitates vanpools for commuters, particularly those in outdoor industries. In 2025, the program recorded 56,613 passenger trips in Ventura County, providing reliable transportation while reducing vehicles on roads.

March 2026

Annual Community Impact Report



Ventura County Transportation Commission



goventura.org

751 E Daily Dr. STE #420
Camarillo, CA 93010

@GoVCTC

Management and Administration

Message from the Executive Director

Partnerships are powering progress in meeting transportation needs

By *Martin Erickson*



The 2025 edition of VCTC’s annual Community Impact report named “the power of partnerships” as the theme for the year. VCTC’s five-year strategic plan, adopted in 2023, identifies partnerships as critical to meeting the county’s transportation needs. In short, to make progress, we must work together. The past 12 months have proven that statement still holds true.

Nearly all of VCTC’s successes in 2025 were the result of collaborative working relationships with our partners at the local, state and federal levels. Accomplishments over the past year include identifying the first segment in a phased plan to improve U.S. 101; positioning Ventura County to receive roughly \$48 million in future federal funding; and getting more transit agencies joined to a countywide regional radio system, a decade-long effort that, when complete, will enhance communication between transit operators and law enforcement agencies.

Taking time to recognize and celebrate achievements is important.

Yet our work is not done. That’s why, instead of selecting a new theme for 2026, we will continue to champion the power of partnerships. In 2026, projects include completing repairs to the Sespe Creek railroad bridge near Fillmore; taking delivery of five additional renewable diesel buses with a low-entry vestibule with a ramp for ADA-compliant, rapid boarding for VCTC Intercity; and advocating for transportation funding from the state and federal governments. VCTC looks forward to another year of engaging with community partners, statewide organizations and our elected leaders as we continue our mission to create a more connected, resilient, equitable and user-friendly transportation system for Ventura County.

Programming

Programming department has change in leadership

Vanessa Schoenewald joined VCTC in June as director of the programming department, which is responsible for planning, administering and directing VCTC’s transportation program funds.

State funding secured to improve Hueneme Road trade corridor

VCTC supported the successful award of \$11 million in Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) funding from the California Transportation Commission for the design and right-of-way phases of the County of Ventura’s Hueneme Road Widening Project.

VCTC facilitates STBG/CMAQ Call for Projects process

VCTC facilitated the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Call for Projects and coordinated final award actions, successfully positioning Ventura County projects to receive federal funding. About \$48 million in STBG and CMAQ funding was awarded to transportation projects across Ventura County.



Finance

New director takes over finance department

Lupe Acero joined VCTC in February as director of the finance department, which is responsible for the functional areas of accounting, finance, budget, cash management and investments. Key areas of financial responsibility include audit, grant administration and reporting, budgeting, financial reporting, fixed assets, and cash management.

Commission adopts balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2025/26

In June, the Commission adopted a balanced budget of \$158,700,970 for Fiscal Year 2025/26.

VCTC recognized with award for 2025/26 budget

VCTC received the Government Finance Officers Association Budget Award for FY 2025/26. The award reflects VCTC’s commitment to the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. To receive this award, VCTC satisfied nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation.

Planning

Plan for first segment of U.S. 101 improvement project approved

VCTC and Caltrans continued to prepare a U.S. 101 draft environmental impact report for public circulation in 2026. In May, the Commission approved a phasing plan. Phase 1 will construct a 10-mile, high-occupancy vehicle / express bus lane segment on U.S. 101 northbound from Flynn Road in Camarillo to Johnson Drive in Ventura beginning in 2029.

Bicycle, pedestrian safety moves to forefront through grant

VCTC launched a Community Traffic Calming and Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Program with grant funding from SCAG. The team developed and shared traffic safety messages and identified bicycle/pedestrian safety demonstration locations in Ventura, Oxnard, and Simi Valley.

Planning grant to assess climate vulnerability

VCTC received a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation planning grant to prepare a Ventura County Multimodal Transportation Network Climate Vulnerability Assessment & Action Plan.

Motorist aid options pursued after highway call boxes removed

VCTC completed removal of all 428 emergency roadside call boxes across the county because of declining usage, technology shifts, and maintenance challenges. Savings will be redirected to other motorist aid programs, such as expanding the Freeway Service Patrol and new partnerships with California Highway Patrol in 2026.

