



VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
**Heritage Valley Policy Advisory Committee (HVPAC)**  
[www.goventura.org](http://www.goventura.org) | [www.valleyexpressbus.org](http://www.valleyexpressbus.org)  
**Ventura County Transportation Commission**  
751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420, Bakersfield, CA  
**Monday, March 23, 2026**  
**2:30 p.m.**

## **AGENDA**

(Action may be taken on any item listed on the agenda.)

- ITEM 1      CALL TO ORDER**
- ITEM 2      INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- ITEM 3      PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
Under the Brown Act, the committee should not act on or discuss matters raised during the Public Comment portion of the agenda which are not listed on the agenda. Committee members may refer such matters to staff for factual information or to be placed on the subsequent agenda for consideration.
- ITEM 4      AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**
- ITEM 5      ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**  
**Recommended Action:**  
• Receive and file  
**Responsible Staff: Cecilia Perez**
- ITEM 6      RIDERSHIP AND OUTREACH REPORT**  
**Recommended Action:**  
• Receive and file  
**Responsible Staff: Erin Kenneally, Transit Planner**
- ITEM 7      FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 VALLEY EXPRESS DRAFT BUDGET**  
**Recommended Action:**  
• Receive and file the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Draft Valley Express Budget  
**Responsible Staff: Matt Miller, Program Manager**

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In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Government Code Section 54954.2, if special assistance is needed to participate in a committee meeting, please contact the Administrative Assistant at (805) 642-1591 ext. 111. Notification of at least 48 hours (about 2 days) prior to meeting time will assist staff in assuring reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility at the meeting.

- ITEM 8      CMAQ FUNDED SERVICE EXPANSION**  
**Recommended Action:**
- Receive and file
- Responsible Staff: Matt Miller, Program Manager**

- ITEM 9      ADJOURNMENT**

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**Santa Paula City Hall**  
970 E. Ventura Street, Santa Paula, CA  
**Monday, February 2, 2026**  
**1:30 p.m.**

## MEETING MINUTES

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kelly Long, County of Ventura (Chair)  
Jenny Crosswhite, City of Santa Paula (Vice Chair)  
Martin Erickson, VCTC Director (Ex-Officio)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Carrie Broggie, City of Fillmore

**VCTC STAFF PRESENT:** Claire Grasty, VCTC Director of Public Transit  
Matt Miller, Transit Operations Manager  
Erin Kenneally, Transit Planner

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chair Kelly Long called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
2. **INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS** – No announcements
3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** – None
4. **AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS** – None
5. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**  
The Committee accepted the Minutes of September 22, 2025.

### 6. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Claire Grasty discussed the election of representatives for 2026 and the recent history of officers.

**Action:**

**Motion by Kelly Long for County of Ventura as Chair and City of Santa Paula as Vice Chair, seconded by Jenny Crosswhite.**

**Motion approved.**

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## **7. UPDATE ON VALLEY EXPRESS CMAQ APPLICATION**

Erin Kenneally provided an update on the CMAQ application for expansion of service in Santa Paula and Fillmore to support recommendations from Short Range Transit Plan. Based on the grant timeline, funds would be available in FY 27-28 and implementation would be planned for that year. Staff will bring an item with preliminary numbers at the next meeting.

## **8. RIDERSHIP AND OUTREACH REPORT**

Erin Kenneally provided an update on Quarter 1 comparison between FY 25-26 and previous fiscal years including key performance highlights on system-wide, fixed route, and Dial-A-Ride ridership, a RideCo update and marketing/community outreach work.

## **9. VALLEY EXPRESS TRANSIT REDUCED FARES FOR U.S. MILITARY VETERANS**

Matt Miller provided information on a request for approval of U.S. Military Veterans reduced fares on Valley Express Transit Service. Discussion included background on current fares, Tap2Pay, discounted fares to seniors, ADA cardholders and a single point of registration for the County.

**Action:**

**Motion by Jenny Crosswhite to approve U.S. Military Veterans reduced fares on Valley Express Transit Service, seconded by Kelly Long.**

**Motion approved.**

## **10. ZERO EMISSIONS VEHICLE TRANSITION PLANNING UPDATE**

Matt Miller provided an update on the Zero Emissions Bus Plan and information on a recommendation to retain consultant support to assist in identifying locations to build and install charging infrastructure.

**Action:**

**Motion by Jenny Crosswhite for approval of retaining consultant support to assist with transitioning to zero emission buses, seconded by Kelly Long.**

**Motion approved.**

## **11. SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN AND DEMAND RESPONSE INTEGRATION PLAN UPDATE**

Claire Grasty gave an update on the draft Short Range Transit Plan which will go to VCTC at the next meeting and confirmed that outreach in the cities is completed. She requested feedback on how the committee would like to handle specifics of the plan. Commissioners Long and Crosswhite stated that it would be preferable to return to councils for feedback. Claire said that other Ventura County cities have been approving bus routes conceptually, but they are not set in stone and can be modified based on

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feedback. Regarding the Demand Response Integration Plan, meetings with Commissioners have been concluded and meetings with the operators are forthcoming.

**12. ADJOURNMENT** - Chair Long adjourned the meeting at 2:38 p.m.



# Valley Express Bus & Dial-A-Ride

Item 6

**DATE: MARCH 23, 2026**  
**MEMO TO: HERITAGE VALLEY POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HVPAC)**  
**FROM: ERIN KENNEALLY, TRANSIT PLANNER – TRANSIT SERVICES**  
**SUBJECT: RIDERSHIP AND OUTREACH REPORT**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

- Receive and file.

## **BACKGROUND**

Valley Express service includes five fixed routes, dial-a-ride (DAR) services for the general public, and complementary ADA paratransit serving the cities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and the unincorporated area of Piru.

This report provides a Quarter 2 (October-November-December) comparison between key performance indicators (KPI) in FY 2025-26 and previous years. In addition, this report provides an update regarding the recent marketing and outreach activities for Valley Express. Ridership in Q2 increased significantly on both services over the same quarter last year.

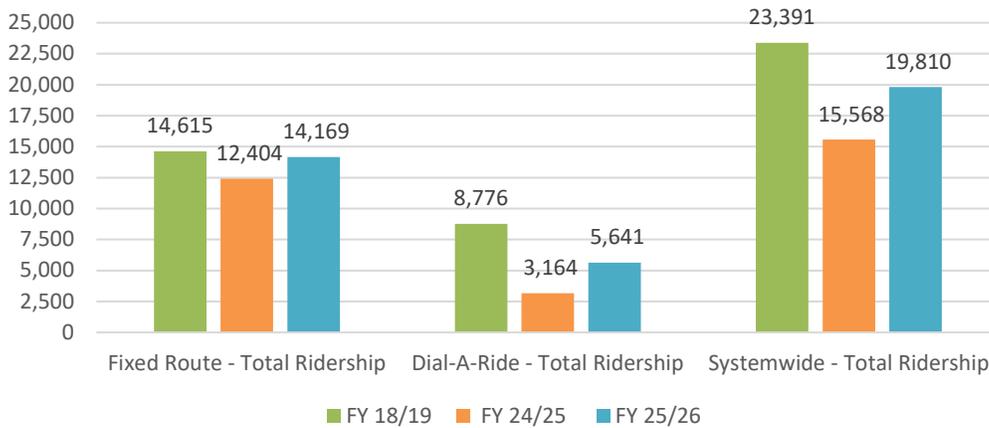
### **Key Performance Highlights:**

- The Fillmore-Moorpark Route has now been in service for nearly 20 months and in Q2 accounted for 22% of all fixed route ridership. Ridership on the route has seen a 51% increase since this time last year.
- This quarter, Valley Express ridership increased by just over 27% to 19,810 passenger trips compared to 15,568 in the same quarter of last year.
- Santa Paula fixed route ridership has decreased significantly since last year. Simultaneously, we have seen an increase in Dial-A-Ride usage in Santa Paula. We believe the ease of making same day reservations through the RideCo app as well as the low price point for DAR trips has contributed to this. The Santa Paula tripper has seen a major increase, more than doubling its ridership. Combined with the Santa Paula route, fixed route ridership is

down compared to last year but by 5% rather than 27%. We met with the Santa Paula school district last year about the tripper service.

- Annually, the Piru route currently accounts for just under half of fixed route ridership as well as 35% of systemwide ridership. It is currently at 79% of pre-COVID ridership. However, ridership is down slightly from last year.
- DAR ridership is currently at 64% of pre-COVID numbers. While fixed route ridership matched pre-COVID numbers for Q2, this is primarily due to the addition of the Fillmore-Moorpark route. Without that route it would be at about 76%.
- DAR ridership has seen a significant increase of 78% when compared to Q2 of last year. We attribute this increase to the new RideCo software which has made scheduling both passengers and drivers more efficient, which helps to increase capacity.

### Valley Express Ridership SECOND QUARTER COMPARISON



### Quarterly Ridership Comparison by Route

#### SECOND QUARTER COMPARISON (Oct-Nov-Dec)

Valley Express Bus & Dial-A-Ride	FY 18/19	FY 24/25	FY 25/26	% Change from FY 18/19	% Change from FY 24/25
Santa Paula Fixed Route	982	626	444	-54.8%	-29.1%
Santa Paula Tripper	317	84	228	-28.1%	171.4%
Fillmore Fixed Route	2598	1,023	1,633	-37.1%	59.6%
Fillmore Tripper	2013	1,562	1,871	-7.1%	19.8%
Fillmore-Moorpark^	n/a	2,033	3,073	n/a	51.2%
Piru Fixed Route	8705	7,076	6,920	-20.5%	-2.2%
<b>Fixed Route Total</b>	<b>14,615</b>	<b>12,404</b>	<b>14,169</b>	<b>-3.1%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>
Santa Paula DAR	6376	2,643	4,531	-28.9%	71.4%
Fillmore DAR	2400	521	1,110	-53.8%	113.1%
<b>Dial-A-Ride Total</b>	<b>8,776</b>	<b>3,164</b>	<b>5,641</b>	<b>-35.7%</b>	<b>78.3%</b>
<b>Valley Express Bus &amp; Dial-A-Ride Total</b>	<b>23,391</b>	<b>15,568</b>	<b>19,810</b>	<b>-15.3%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>

^Fillmore-Moorpark route launched August 1, 202

Detailed Quarterly comparisons system-wide and for fixed route service and DAR service are shown in the following Tables 1, 2 and 3.

**Table 1 System-wide Quarterly Comparison**

<b>SYSTEM-WIDE SERVICE - Valley Express KPI</b>		<b>Qtr 2 FY 2024/25</b>	<b>Qtr 2 FY 2025/26</b>	<b>Yr over Yr % Change</b>
Ridership	System-wide	15,568	19,810	<b>27.2%</b>
Passengers per Mile	System-wide	0.22	0.28	<b>30.6%</b>
Passengers per Hr	System-wide	2.87	3.12	<b>8.5%</b>
Revenue Hours	System-wide	5,417	6,352	<b>17.3%</b>
Revenue Miles	System-wide	72,352	70,482	<b>-2.6%</b>
Operating Cost	System-wide	\$ 591,836	\$ 666,244	<b>12.6%</b>
Cost per Hr	System-wide	\$ 109.26	\$ 104.89	<b>-4.0%</b>
Cost per Passenger	System-wide	\$ 38.02	\$ 33.63	<b>-11.5%</b>

**Table 2 Fixed Route Quarterly Comparison**

<b>FIXED ROUTE - Valley Express KPI</b>		<b>Qtr 2 FY 2024/25</b>	<b>Qtr 2 FY 2025/26</b>	<b>Yr over Yr % Change</b>
Ridership	Fixed Route	12,404	14,169	<b>14.2%</b>
Passengers per Mile	Fixed Route	0.24	0.28	<b>13.9%</b>
Passengers per Hr	Fixed Route	4.34	4.56	<b>5.1%</b>
Revenue Hours	Fixed Route	2,858	3,107	<b>8.7%</b>
Revenue Miles	Fixed Route	50,879	51,038	<b>0.3%</b>
Operating Cost	Fixed Route	\$ 313,026	\$ 321,270	<b>2.6%</b>
Cost per Hr	Fixed Route	\$ 109.53	\$ 103.40	<b>-5.6%</b>
Cost per Passenger	Fixed Route	\$ 25.24	\$ 22.67	<b>-10.2%</b>

**Table 3 Dial-A-Ride Quarterly Comparison**

<b>DIAL-A-RIDE (DAR) - Valley Express KPI</b>		<b>Qtr 2 FY 2024/25</b>	<b>Qtr 2 FY 2025/26</b>	<b>Yr over Yr % Change</b>
<b>Ridership</b>	Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	3,164	5,641	<b>78.3%</b>
<b>Passengers per Mile</b>	Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	0.15	0.29	<b>96.9%</b>
<b>Passengers per Hr</b>	Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	1.24	1.74	<b>40.6%</b>
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	2,559	3,245	<b>26.8%</b>
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	21,473	19,444	<b>-9.4%</b>
<b>Operating Cost</b>	Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	\$ 278,811	\$ 344,974	<b>23.7%</b>
<b>Cost per Hr</b>	Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	\$ 108.95	\$ 106.33	<b>-2.4%</b>
<b>Cost per Passenger</b>	Dial-A-Ride (DAR)	\$ 88.12	\$ 61.15	<b>-30.6%</b>

**RideCo Update**

The RideCo system has now been operating for nearly 18 months. In a Q2 comparison, passengers per hour increased just over 40%. By streamlining pick-ups and drop-offs, our revenue miles have decreased nearly 10% and despite operating costs for Dial-A-Ride increasing significantly, cost per passenger decreased by over 30%. Additionally, our drivers are maintaining a 4.9 star rating average, illustrating the outstanding service our operators deliver.

## MARKETING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Celtis Ventures, Inc., continues to assist us in promoting the Valley Express service within the Heritage Valley. While Celtis is working on updating our Valley Express signage, digital signs were installed at the Fillmore Terminal and the Santa Paula City Hall and Piru Square stops. The final four ARBOC buses have been delivered and have been wrapped to match the rest of the fleet. Celtis has a Valley Express photoshoot planned for March 30 in order to obtain footage of the new fleet, Tap2Ride readers, digital signs, and local residents using the service.





# Valley Express Bus & Dial-A-Ride

Item 7

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**DATE:** March 23, 2026  
**MEMO TO:** HERITAGE VALLEY POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HVPAC)  
**FROM:** MATT MILLER, PROGRAM MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 VALLEY EXPRESS DRAFT BUDGET

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

- Receive and File the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Draft Valley Express Budget.

## **BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to the Cooperative Agreement for the Heritage Valley Transit Service, the Heritage Valley Technical Advisory Committee (HVTAC) will make recommendations to the Heritage Valley Policy Advisory Committee (HVPAC) regarding, among other things, the annual level of service and budget. Following the HVTAC review, the item will then be reviewed by the HVPAC. Once final, the budget will be incorporated into the overall agency budget of VCTC. The budget process for VCTC includes a review by a budget and finance sub-committee, subsequent review by the full Commission with final budget adoption by June. This item is to consider recommendation of the budget to the Heritage Valley Policy Committee for the upcoming fiscal year.

## **DISCUSSION**

Over the past year the Valley Express bus service has been funded with a mix of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recurring formula funds, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program funds, State of Good Repair (SGR) funds, farebox revenue, SB 125 funds, and local funding from the member agencies. In FY26-27 service will be, once again, funded with the same mix of funds except SGR and SB125 funds.

The budget was developed based on the following factors and assumptions:

1. Contract provider rate increase in FY26-27.
2. Sustained demand for dial-a-ride service.
3. Continuation of CMAQ funded Fillmore to Moorpark Fixed Route for FY26-27.

This year’s total budget will be lower than the FY25-26 budget by approximately 18% and is due to no vehicle replacements being needed as that project has been completed and lower estimated fuel cost. Dial-a-Ride (DAR) service hours will remain the same as last year’s budget. Regarding the lower estimated fuel cost, this budget was planned before the start of the Iran conflict and subsequent increase in fuel prices. Before the final budget is presented, staff will need to increase the estimated fuel cost to account for the higher prices. Additionally, staff has since been working to determine the carryover available, which will be included in the final budget.

Though DAR service hours are higher than last year, so far, they have trended lower than expected. To insulate the jurisdictions from unexpected requests for additional funding in the middle of next fiscal year as we have seen in prior years, staff recommends that the number of DAR service hours planned matches the number from the current budget. DAR demand and use is very difficult to predict and can fluctuate from year to year and therefore it is best practice to budget conservatively.

Below is the recommended level of service by jurisdiction. As shown below there is a small increase in the projected hours for Fillmore Loop, Fillmore to Moorpark, and Piru (County) routes. The increase is due to an increase in deadhead hours from the yard to the start of service and from the end of service back to the yard. There is no increase in the number of revenue service.

**RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF SERVICE**

	<i><b>FY 2026-2027</b></i>	<i><b>FY 2025-2026</b></i>
<b><u>Fixed Route</u></b>	<b><u>Projected Hours</u></b>	<b><u>Current (Budgeted)</u></b>
<b>Fillmore</b>	<b>1,762</b>	<b>1,749</b>
<b>Fillmore – Moorpark*</b>	<b>5,328</b>	<b>5,064</b>
<b>Santa Paula</b>	<b>1,783</b>	<b>1,783</b>
<b>County</b>	<b>3,132</b>	<b>3,015</b>
<b>Subtotal Fixed Route</b>	<b>12,006</b>	<b>11,611</b>
<b><u>Dial-a-Ride</u></b>	<b><u>Projected Hours</u></b>	<b><u>Current (Budgeted)</u></b>
<b>Fillmore</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>7,500</b>
<b>Santa Paula</b>	<b>10,740</b>	<b>10,740</b>
<b>County</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>960</b>
<b>Subtotal Dial-a-Ride</b>	<b>19,200</b>	<b>19,200</b>
<b>Total All Services</b>	<b>31,206</b>	<b>30,811</b>

\*Hours for the planned Fillmore-Moorpark funded by a CMAQ grant with local match.

**Anticipated Revenues**

The Valley Express has historically utilized revenues from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, Passenger Fares, and the City of Santa Paula’s sales tax Measure “T” in addition to the State Local Transportation Fund (LTF) revenues each member agency receives and budgets for transit programs.

This budget uses a blend of Federal formula funds, CMAQ grant funds, fare revenue, and local contributions by member agencies. The following is a table of the prior three years’ budgets for reference.

	FY23-24	FY24-25	FY25-26	FY26-27
FTA - Cares Act/CMAQ	\$ 206,077	\$ 566,711	\$ 478,062	\$ 465,545
FTA	\$ 1,081,654	\$ 2,175,076	\$ 1,217,316	\$ 948,198
State of Good Repair	\$ -	\$ 1,300,000	\$ 80,409	\$ -
SB125	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 198,774	\$ -
Local Contribution - Bus Operations	\$ 1,016,319	\$ 1,673,414	\$ 1,972,287	\$ 1,794,857
Local Contribution - TDA Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Local Contribution - Route Guarantee	\$ 228,150	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Local Fee - Contract Administration	\$ 129,100	\$ 133,800	\$ 136,300	\$ 141,000.00
Local Fee - Farebox	\$ 39,000	\$ 67,000	\$ 53,000	\$ 40,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 2,700,300</b>	<b>\$ 5,916,000</b>	<b>\$ 4,136,148</b>	<b>\$ 3,389,600</b>
<b>Change from Prior Year</b>		<b>119%</b>	<b>-30%</b>	<b>-18%</b>

Attachment A attached is the draft FY26-27 Valley Express Budget and attachment B is a breakdown of each member agency’s local contribution.

This item is information only. The HVPAC’s comments and revisions will be included in the final budget document that will be presented to the HVTAC in April before being brought back to the HVPAC for final review.



# Valley Express Bus & Dial-A-Ride

Item 8

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**DATE:** MARCH 23, 2026

**MEMO TO:** HERITAGE VALLEY POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HVPAC)

**FROM:** MATT MILLER, PROGRAM MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** CMAQ FUNDED SERVICE EXPANSION

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

- Receive and File

## **BACKGROUND**

The Fillmore-Moorpark route began operation in August 2024. It quickly became the second highest performing Valley Express route. The three year grant period expires in August 2027.

For the last year, VCTC staff have been working with the Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP) consultant to develop recommendations to improve services and efficiency, increase transit use, and strengthen the long-term sustainability of the Valley Express service. While studying the Valley Express service, staff found that the Santa Paula A & B fixed-route service was not an attractive modal option due to its limited availability. To a lesser extent the same was found for the Fillmore Loop route. For the fixed route to be an attractive, practical travel option it must operate all day on a consistent schedule so that people are free to use the system when they need to. Therefore, Staff, with the HVPAC's support, pursued and were awarded a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant to fund increased service on Santa Paula Routes A and B and extended weekday service hours and new weekend service on the Fillmore Loop route.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Fillmore-Moorpark**

Though the grant funds were projected to last for three years, which would be the end of July/early August 2027, at the current rate of expenditure, we expect funding to last to about February 2028. The route costs about \$500,000 a year.

When looking at funding the route in the future, there are some options and some decisions to be made. Throughout the Valley Express service, all fixed routes are each funded by one agency. Grant matches have been funded collectively, both for service such as the Fillmore-Moorpark route and the SRTP recommended Santa Paula and Fillmore improvements, and for capital projects. As this route is not solely in one jurisdiction, how it is funded by different members would need to be determined. Likewise, Moorpark's involvement would need to be determined. Finally, we would need to determine if service levels would remain the same.

Additionally, we are currently working with a housing developer in Moorpark to include funding for this route for up to five years in their Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) grant. There are some complications that may preclude them from applying this year but we will know by May whether they are able to apply this year or whether they expect to apply next year. This presents a very good potential opportunity but the grant is very competitive.

### **CMAQ Funded SRTP Improvements**

Currently, the Santa Paula routes A and B operate seven trips on weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and six trips on weekends from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Santa Paula Tripper operates once a day during school days starting at 7:00 a.m. The Fillmore route operates weekdays only from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The CMAQ application that was awarded requested funding to increase service in Santa Paula to eighteen weekday trips with a service span of 6:15 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., increase weekend service to ten trips with a service span from 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., and add an afternoon trip on the school tripper to coordinate with the afternoon bell schedules. In Fillmore the award is for three additional weekday trips so that service ends at 7:45 p.m. This will allow the route to better align with the Fillmore-Moorpark and Piru routes. Also, it will fund five weekend trips from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. This would be a 40% increase to existing fixed route service.

The total funds awarded us \$1,319,933 and requires a 11.47% local match which equals \$151,396. The total funds for the expanded service are \$1,417,329 for three years. Over the next couple of months, we will be refining the service concepts and further developing the costs by jurisdiction that we will provide at the next meeting. Additionally, the SRTP proposes changes to DAR service and policies that would ultimately bring DAR costs down and balance out the fixed route cost increases.