



**VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**Transit Operators Advisory Committee (TRANSCOM)**  
**VCTC Large Conference Room**  
**751 East Daily Drive, Suite 420, Camarillo, CA**  
Wednesday, April 8, 2026  
1:30 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 COMMENT**  
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 facts or to be placed on the subsequent agenda for consideration.
- ITEM 4      AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**
- ITEM 5      MEETING MINUTES**  
**Recommended Action:**  
• Receive and file  
**Responsible Staff: Cecilia Perez, Administrative Assistant**
- ITEM 6      TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT (TDA) TRIENNIAL AUDIT REPORT**  
**Recommended Action:**  
• Receive and file the TDA draft audit report overview and update  
**Responsible Staff: Dolores Lopez, Transit Planner, and Aubrey Smith, Regional Transit Planning Program Manager**
- ITEM 7      DEMAND RESPONSE INTEGRATION PLAN UPDATE AND DRAFT**  
**Recommended Action:**  
• Receive and file  
**Responsible Staff: Aubrey Smith**

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- ITEM 8      REQUEST FOR OPERATOR APPROVAL TO UTILIZE SENATE BILL (SB) 125 INTEREST EARNINGS FOR VENTURA COUNTY'S FREE FARE PROGRAM (FFP)**  
**Recommended Action:**
- Approve the use of regional and each operator's respective interest earnings from available SB 125 interest to support the continued implementation of the Ventura County Free Fare Program
- Responsible Staff: Claire Grasty, Director of Public Transit and Aubrey Smith, Regional Transit Planning Program Manager**
- ITEM 9      SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS PROGRAMMING PROCEDURES**  
**Recommended Action:**
- Receive and file
- Responsible Staff: Vanessa Schoenewald, Director of Programming**
- ITEM 10     ADA CERTIFICATION SERVICES PROGRAM MONTHLY UPDATE**  
**Recommended Action:**
- Receive and file
- Responsible Staff: Dolores Lopez, Regional Transit Planner**
- ITEM 11     FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**
- Unmet Transit Needs
- Responsible Staff: Claire Grasty, Director of Public Transit**
- ITEM 12     ADJOURN TO WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026, AT 1:30 P.M.** in the VCTC Large Conference Room at 751 East Daily Drive #420 in Camarillo.

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**VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**Transit Operators Advisory Committee (TRANSCOM)**  
**VCTC Large Conference Room**  
**751 East Daily Drive, Suite 420, Camarillo, CA**  
Wednesday, March 11, 2026  
1:30 p.m.

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sergio Albarran, City of Ventura (Chair)  
Austin Novstrup, GCTD (Vice Chair)  
Lydia Salas, City of Camarillo  
Michelle Woomer, City of Moorpark  
Ben Gonzales, City of Simi Valley  
Tyler Nestved, City of Thousand Oaks  
Matt Miller, Program Manager

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** City of Fillmore  
City of Ojai  
City of Oxnard  
City of Port Hueneme  
City of Santa Paula  
County of Ventura

**EX OFFICIO PRESENT:** Holly Galbreath, VC Air Pollution Control District

**EX OFFICIO ABSENT:** CSU Channel Islands

**VCTC STAFF PRESENT:** Claire Grasty, Director of Public Transit  
Darrin Peschka, Program Manager  
Aubrey Smith, Program Manager  
Dolores Lopez, Transit Planner  
Erin Kenneally, Transit Planner  
Hayden Balsys, VCTC Intern  
Heather Miller, Program Manager

**1. CALL TO ORDER –** Chair, Sergio Albarran, called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

### **2. INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sergio Albarran announced that they have a new Active Transportation Program staff member, Alejandra, starting on Monday.

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Tyler Nestved announced that he will be on leave beginning Friday for approximately one month.

Claire Grasty announced to the Committee that the SB125 interest item will be on the agenda in April pending more information.

Heather Miller announced that the Drug & Alcohol Management System submittals are due Friday, is getting clarification from the Department of Transportation on how to manage this and will return with more information. For the FTA Triennial Review, five years of MIS submittals is required. The FTA apportionments should be published this month and then split letters will be prepared for agencies as requested.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**4. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None**

**5. MEETING MINUTES** – The Committee received the February 11, 2026, meeting minutes.

**6. TAP2RIDE REGIONAL FARECAP PLANNING**

Matt Miller introduced Lauren Brennan from Rebel representing Cal-ITP who is available to answer questions regarding the Tap2Ride regional farecap plan. Matt reviewed the staff report with the Committee and stated that VCTC will work with Cal-ITP for the first year to monitor data and will provide quarterly reporting. Lauren will provide resources to send to operators regarding farecap process. There were questions from the Committee regarding regional fare capping vs local amounts. Matt will collect and provide more information and thereafter an agreement will need to be signed once details are finalized.

**ACTION:**

**Austin Novstrop moved, seconded by Tyler Nestved.**

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**7. FY 2025/26 LOW CARBON TRANSIT OPERATIONS PROGRAM (LCTOP) ALLOCATION**

Heather Miller reviewed the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) request for approval of the allocation request for the Ventura County Free Fare program. It will go to VCTC Commission in April.

**ACTION:**

**Austin Novstrop moved, seconded by Lydia Salas.**

**Motion approved unanimously.**

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### **8. CONSULTANT SUPPORT FOR REVIEW AND REVISION OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) POLICIES FOR FIXED-ROUTE AND PARATRANSIT SERVICES**

Aubrey Smith discussed the request for consultant support for review and revision of ADA policies and requested feedback from operators. The Consultant would review each operator's policies and discuss recommendations individually. Claire stated we can bring this back to the Committee to discuss possible formation of a committee regarding the scope of work.

### **9. COLLEGE RIDE PROGRAM FARE MEDIA TRANSITION**

Aubrey Smith provided information on the College Ride Program transition from student ID to tap card and mobile application.

### **10. ADA CERTIFICATION SERVICES PROGRAM MONTHLY UPDATE**

Dolores Lopez provided the monthly ADA Certification Services Program.

### **11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**12. ADJOURNED TO WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026, AT 1:30 P.M.** in the VCTC Large Conference Room at 751 East Daily Drive #420 in Camarillo.

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Item 6

April 08, 2026

**MEMO TO: TRANSIT OPERATORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRANSCOM)**

**FROM: DOLORES LOPEZ, TRANSIT PLANNER  
AUBREY SMITH, REGIONAL TRANSIT PLANNING PROGRAM  
MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT (TDA) TRIENNIAL AUDIT  
DRAFT REPORT**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Receive and file the TDA draft audit report overview and update.

**DISCUSSION:**

Attached is the Summary of Performance Trends and Draft Audit Findings developed by the auditor, Moore and Associates as part of the TDA Triennial Performance Audit. The report shows countywide trends for the last two audit periods for fixed-route bus and dial-a-ride service for all Ventura County operators. Overall, ridership and decreased performance is comparable to the trends experienced nationwide as a result of the pandemic.

The reports showing findings and recommendations for each operator have been sent directly to the operators.

# Ventura County Transportation Commission

## Summary of Performance Trends and Draft Audit Findings

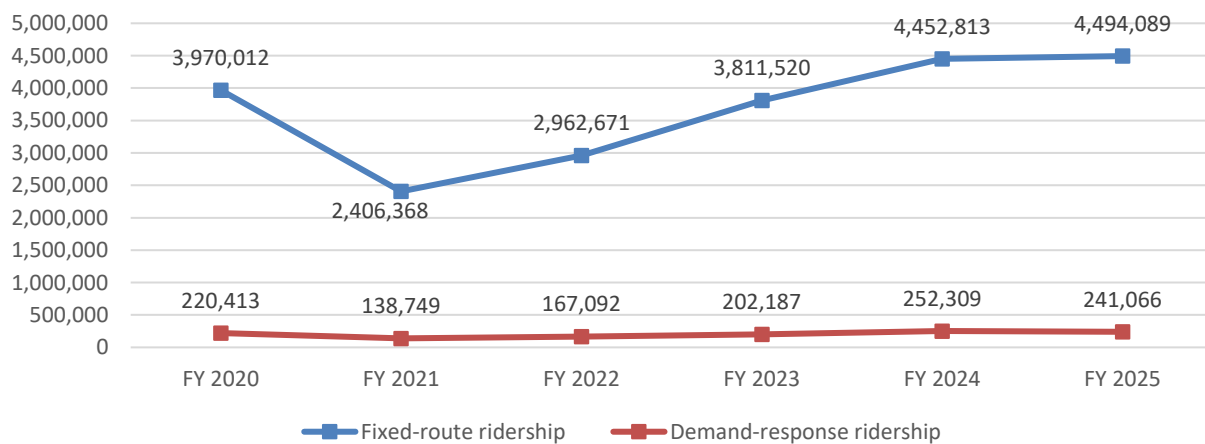
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### Countywide Performance Trends

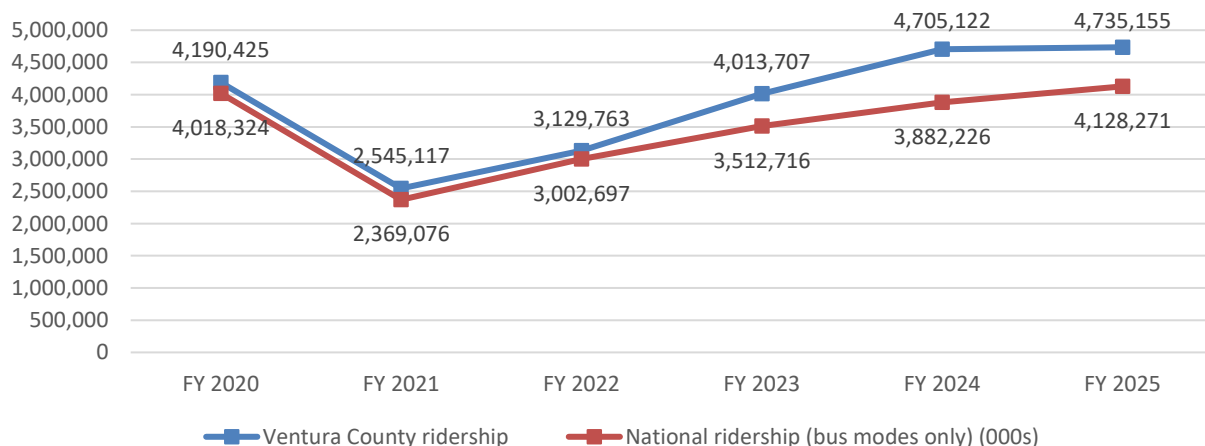
During the audit process, we looked at six-year trends for key performance measures for all operators. While the analysis for each operator is provided within that operator’s audit report, we wanted to look at the county as a whole with respect to specific metrics.

#### Ridership

All Ventura County operators experienced a significant decline in ridership in FY 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recovery over the next three years was steady. Fixed-route ridership began leveling off in FY 2024/25 (with an increase of 0.9 percent), while demand-response ridership actually declined by 4.5 percent.



Overall ridership (both modes combined) experienced a net 13 percent increase over the six-year period, with ridership ending the period higher than the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (which impacted the last four months of that fiscal year). A similar pattern was observed with national ridership for the first three years. In FY 2022/23 and FY 2023/24, Ventura County saw greater recovery than the nation overall. In FY 2024/25, national ridership continued to increase while Ventura County ridership leveled off.



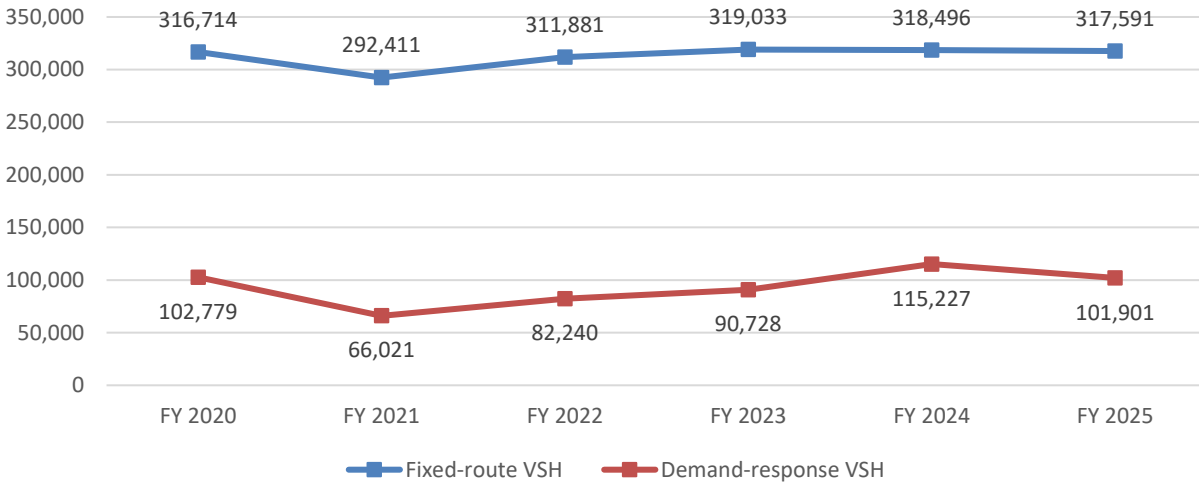
# Ventura County Transportation Commission

## Summary of Performance Trends and Draft Audit Findings

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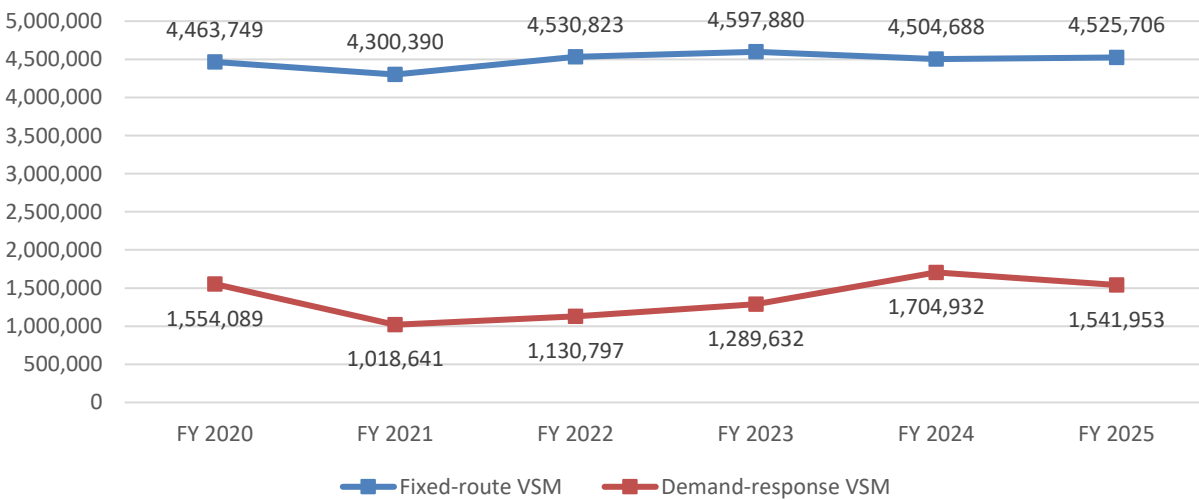
### Vehicle Service Hours

Fixed-route vehicle service hours experienced a net increase of 0.3 percent across the six-year period. Fixed-route VSH peaked in FY 2022/23, which represented a 0.7 percent increase over FY 2019/20. Demand-response vehicle service hours saw a net decrease of 0.9 percent during the same period. Demand-response VSH peaked in FY 2023/24, which represented a 12.1 percent increase over FY 2019/20.



### Vehicle Service Miles

Vehicle service miles exhibited the same basic trends as vehicle service hours. Fixed-route vehicle service miles experienced a net increase of 1.3 percent across the six-year period. Demand-response vehicle service hours saw a net decrease of 0.8 percent during the same period. VSM peaks are consistent with those related to VSH above.



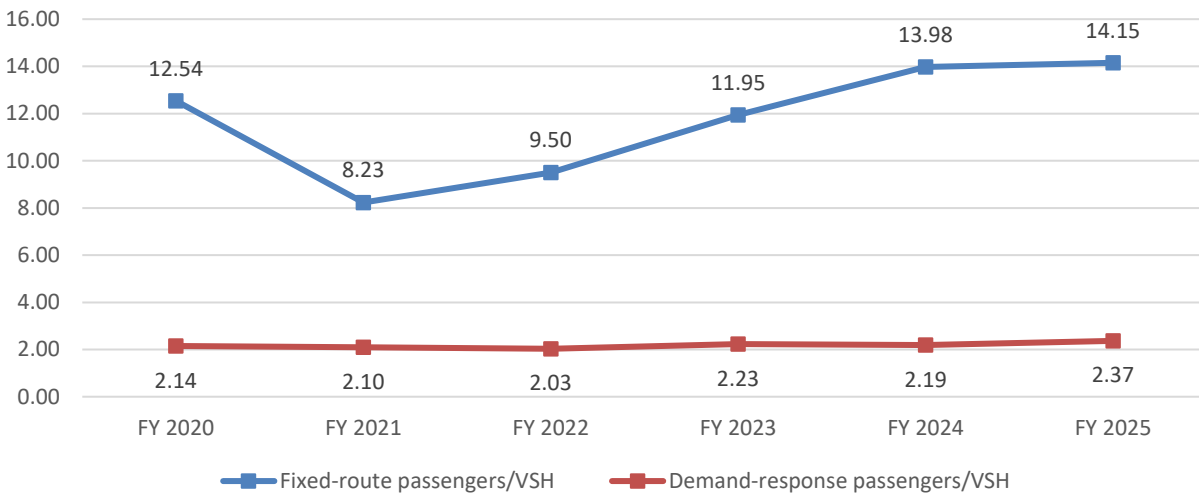
# Ventura County Transportation Commission

## Summary of Performance Trends and Draft Audit Findings

Transcom | April 8, 2026

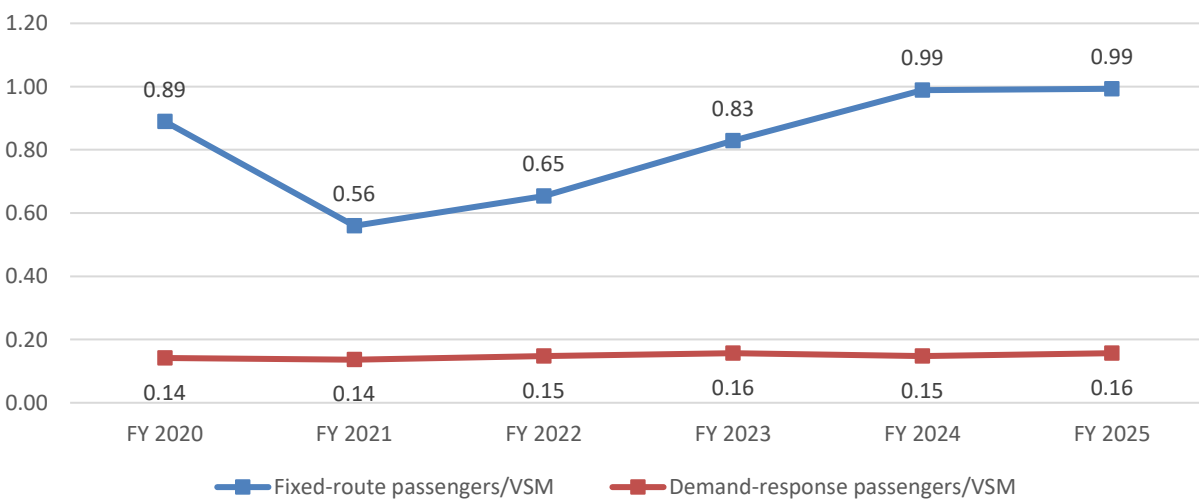
### Passengers per Vehicle Service Hour

Passengers per vehicle service hour is a standard performance indicator for assessing productivity. While this indicator increased for both fixed-route and demand-response services county-wide, the greatest improvement in productivity was noted with respect to the fixed-route service (a 12.8 percent increase as compared to the 10.7 percent increase for demand-response).



### Passengers per Vehicle Service Mile

Passengers per vehicle service mile is also a standard performance indicator for assessing productivity. As with passengers per vehicle service hour, this indicator increased for both fixed-route and demand-response services county-wide. The greatest improvement in productivity was noted with respect to the demand-response service (a 14.3 percent increase as compared to the 11.2 percent increase for fixed-route).



# Ventura County Transportation Commission

## Summary of Performance Trends and Draft Audit Findings

Transcom | April 8, 2026

### Summary of Draft Audit Findings and Recommendations

Operator	Compliance Findings	Recommendations
City of Camarillo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider providing training for Dial-A-Ride users on how to make reservations and payment using the RideCo app.</li><li>• Continue to work with Umo to ensure the VCbuspass readers are operational and the City is receiving all applicable fare revenues.</li></ul>
City of Moorpark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State Controller Reports for FY 2022/23 and FY 2023/24 were submitted after the established deadline. The FY 2024/25 report was submitted on time.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider adding a dedicated city-wide grants position (such as a grants manager or grants analyst) that could also support transit grants.</li><li>• Work with VCTC to implement the recommendations of the County-wide Short Range Transit Plan in a manner that both effectively addresses the mobility needs within Moorpark and ensures connectivity with the region as a whole.</li></ul>

# Ventura County Transportation Commission

## Summary of Performance Trends and Draft Audit Findings

Transcom | April 8, 2026

Operator	Compliance Findings	Recommendations
City of Ojai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The State Controller Report (Transit Operator Financial Transactions Report) was submitted two weeks late in FY 2022/23, and on-time submittal for the remaining two years of the audit period could not be confirmed.</li> <li>Use of the TDA definition of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Employee for reporting to the State Controller could not be confirmed for any year of the audit period.</li> <li>The City did not provide justification for increases greater than 15 percent in its Transit operating budget for any year of the audit period.</li> <li>The TDA fiscal auditor is not calculating the farebox recovery ratio correctly in the TDA fiscal audit. It appears to be counting only the City's LTF allocation as the operating expense and using that to calculate the farebox recovery ratio. In addition, the auditor used the County of Ventura contribution to supplement the farebox recovery ratio. Per VCTC's "Once TDA, Always TDA" policy (2016), TDA funds claimed by the County and contributed to the City remain TDA funds, even though they are not claimed as such by the City, and do not qualify as farebox supplementation under PUC 99268.19. While there is no penalty for not meeting the farebox recovery ratio requirement during the audit period, the City does fall below the 20 percent requirement when the full operating cost is taken into account.</li> <li>LTF revenues were not reported correctly on the State Controller Report (Transit Operator Financial Transactions Report). Instead of being reported as LTF under State Government Funds (Row R32), they were reported under General Revenues of the Local Government (Row R28). In addition, no federal funds were reported on the State Controller Report, though they were reported to the National Transit Database. Without this data reported correctly, it was impossible to determine whether the City was eligible to receive all of the TDA funding it received.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transit staff should work with the Finance department to ensure State Controller Reports are submitted prior to the established deadline.</li> <li>Transit staff should work with the Finance department to ensure the TDA definition of Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Employee is being used for reporting to the State Controller.</li> <li>The City needs to document increases to its transit operating budget greater than 15 percent as part of its TDA claim.</li> <li>The City and/or VCTC should work with the TDA fiscal auditor to ensure the farebox recovery ratio is calculated correctly.</li> <li>Transit staff should work with the Finance department to ensure all financial data is reported correctly within the State Controller Report.</li> <li>Transit staff must more accurately document performance data internally to ensure transparency and traceability of the sources used in external reporting was sourced from.</li> </ul>

## Ventura County Transportation Commission

### Summary of Performance Trends and Draft Audit Findings

Transcom | April 8, 2026

Operator	Compliance Findings	Recommendations
City of Simi Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City should continue its efforts to fully staff its driver workforce.</li> </ul>
City of Thousand Oaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
County of Ventura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the County continues to operate the Kanan Shuttle fare-free, it will be necessary to identify sufficient partner contributions to be counted as fares should farebox recovery ratio be restored as a primary metric for eligibility.</li> <li>The County should explore its options regarding transition to zero-emissions vehicles.</li> </ul>
East County Transit Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
Gold Coast Transit District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with the GCTD Board to identify an alternative zero-emission vehicle transition plan.</li> </ul>
Valley Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MV appears to be using a person-count when reporting FTE employees, rather than work hours divided by 2,000. In addition, it appears to be reporting the drivers only, rather than including other staff (management, dispatchers, mechanics, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When completing the State Controller Report, ensure data provided by the operations contractor includes all work conducted in support of Valley Express and divided by 2,000. Continue efforts regarding plans for the zero-emission vehicle transition since the current leased facility cannot accommodate the future transition.</li> </ul>
VCTC Intercity Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with the operations contractor so that the workforce is fully and sufficiently staffed.</li> </ul>



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Item #7

April 8, 2026

**MEMO TO: TRANSIT OPERATORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRANSCOM)**

**FROM: CLAIRE GRASTY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC TRANSIT  
AUBREY SMITH, PROGRAM MANAGER – REGIONAL TRANSIT  
PLANNING**

**SUBJECT: DRAFT DEMAND-RESPONSE INTEGRATION PLAN (DRIP)**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Receive and file.

**BACKGROUND:**

Over the past several years, the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), in coordination with local transit operators and partner agencies, has undertaken a series of efforts to evaluate and improve the delivery, efficiency, and integration of public transit services throughout Ventura County. Central to this work is the *Transit Integration and Efficiency Study* (TIES), a countywide study initiated in 2021 at the direction of the VCTC Commission to assess opportunities to enhance coordination among the region's multiple transit providers while improving rider experience and managing long-term operating costs.

The TIES process included extensive stakeholder engagement and technical analysis, including individual Commissioner interviews, Operator Working Group meetings, completion of an Existing Conditions Report, surveys of riders and stakeholders, meetings with city managers, and presentations to city councils. The study evaluated fixed-route and demand-response services, governance structures, operational practices, and fare and customer service policies across Ventura County's transit systems.

At subsequent Commission meetings, staff presented updates on key findings and alternatives developed through TIES. These alternatives ranged from enhanced coordination among operators to varying degrees of service and governance

consolidation, with a particular focus on improving the efficiency and sustainability of demand-response services, including ADA paratransit and dial-a-ride programs. Commission discussions emphasized the need to balance regional coordination with local control, while addressing rising unit costs, service fragmentation, and inconsistent rider experiences.

In parallel with the policy and governance analysis conducted through TIES, VCTC and several transit operators began implementing near-term, operational improvements aligned with the study's findings. A key effort has been the phased implementation of RideCo, a dynamic scheduling and dispatch platform for demand-response services. RideCo is intended to improve trip scheduling efficiency, reduce duplication across jurisdictional boundaries, support better data collection, and enhance the rider experience through more reliable and flexible service delivery. These implementation efforts are consistent with TIES recommendations to leverage technology and shared systems as foundational steps toward improved integration, regardless of long-term governance decisions.

Additional coordination and efficiency initiatives undertaken during this period have included continued operator collaboration through working groups, data sharing and performance monitoring, and exploration of service standardization opportunities related to eligibility, fares, and customer information. Collectively, these efforts represent an incremental, multi-year approach to advancing the goals identified in TIES, improving service quality, enhancing regional connectivity, and ensuring the fiscal sustainability of Ventura County's public transit network.

As a parallel effort to the Ventura County Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP), VCTC initiated the development of the Demand Response Integration Plan (DRIP) to explore how local transit providers can work together to make ADA paratransit service more seamless, efficient, and cost-effective. Paratransit provides essential transportation service for riders with disabilities, but today each local operator manages its own system. This can make countywide travel challenging, especially when trips cross city or service boundaries. The DRIP examines how bringing services together could:

- Enhance the rider experience with consistent policies and scheduling
- Improve trip coordination and regional connectivity
- Identify potential opportunities to achieve cost savings
- Support more unified data collection, reporting, and planning

The DRIP is intended to provide a foundation for decision-makers and local bus operators to consider how best to move forward. VCTC will continue to refine the draft DRIP with its' partners and the community to identify the most effective path to improve the rider experience.

*Progress Over the Last 15 Years – Foundational Regional Coordination*

### Formation of the East County Transit Alliance (ECTA):

The creation of ECTA represents one of Ventura County's earliest efforts to provide cross-jurisdictional demand-response service. Through an interagency agreement among east county jurisdictions, ECTA established a shared operational model for intercity dial-a-ride and ADA paratransit trips, allowing riders to travel point to point across city boundaries without navigating multiple local systems. The City of Thousand Oaks serves as the fiscal agent and operator, demonstrating early consolidation of administrative and operational functions while preserving local participation.

### Premium Direct Camarillo-Gold Coast Service and other Regional Connectivity Improvements:

The City of Camarillo elected not to fully participate in ECTA cost sharing but instead implemented direct ADA and senior dial-a-ride service for eligible Camarillo residents traveling to Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Thousand Oaks. This approach reduced the need for vehicle transfers and improved rider convenience while maintaining local operational control. Camarillo and GCTD established procedures allowing ADA-certified riders and seniors to travel deeper into the GCTD service area from Camarillo and vice versa for GCTD ADA certified riders and seniors, using coordinated dispatch and transfer points. While still requiring coordination, these measures represented incremental progress toward more seamless regional trips.

### Implementation of RideCo for Demand-Response Services:

Building on TIES findings, VCTC and local operators initiated implementation of RideCo, a shared dynamic scheduling and dispatch platform. RideCo supports same-day scheduling, improved vehicle utilization, and better data consistency across agencies, representing a tangible, near-term step toward operational integration without requiring immediate governance changes.

### Policy Alignment Driven by RideCo Implementation and Operator Experience

As RideCo has been implemented across participating operators, VCTC and local operators have used the platform as a practical tool to identify and address long-standing policy inconsistencies that affect both riders and operations. Through regular coordination, including recurring operator working meetings and RideCo implementation calls, agencies have surfaced real-world issues related to trip scheduling, negotiated pick-up times, no-show and late cancellation policies, dwell time expectations, reservations, and transfer coordination. These discussions, grounded in operational challenges have informed incremental policy alignment across agencies, particularly in areas where inconsistent rules created confusion for riders or limited the effectiveness of dynamic scheduling. RideCo has enabled agencies to see where differing policies directly impact on-time performance, productivity, and customer experience, creating momentum for greater consistency and enforcement of shared standards as a precursor to broader integration efforts.

Staff distributed the draft DRIP to the operators and brought it for discussion at Transcom in July 2025.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Since receiving comments back from all operators in July and August 2025, staff has worked with AMMA and Fehr & Peers on path forward, met with the commissioners to update them and met with staff at each of the operators. Staff has been working to identify areas where there is most alignment and agreement between operators and the Commission, areas that are easiest to accomplish and in particular, areas that will have the biggest impact on improvements to riders.

Based on feedback from the operators, the report has been modified to phase in improvements. This phased approach will focus on passenger facing items in the near term, which will be done within the existing operator and agency structure (without transitioning to a single paratransit agency). The attached VC Demand-Response Customer Experience Plan draft, which is part of the larger Demand Response Integration Plan focuses on the following items in the near term:

- Promoting and facilitating existing fixed-route services
- Countywide ADA eligibility
- Embracing Dynamic Scheduling
- One Mobile Application
- One Phone Number
- Localized Dispatching
- Service Branding
- Uniform policy and policy alignment
- Regional Service Model Evaluation (one seat rides throughout the county)
- Contract Enforcement and Centralized Reporting
- Role of TRANSCOM
- Developing a Memorandum of Understanding

VCTC will be procuring a Client Representative to help support the implementation of these efforts. Once all the aforementioned have been implemented and are in effect for one year, then the operators and VCTC will reevaluate whether there is a need to integrate into one agency or whether the implementation of the passenger-facing items is sufficient. Additionally, as these principles are enacted, they will each be evaluated based on applicable performance metrics.

A forthcoming document includes the existing conditions, as well as a plan to follow on how to integrate into one agency if it is determined this is desirable in the future after the items in the Demand Response Integration Plan have been implemented. This has previously been sent to the operators and is being updated to reflect the new direction based on operator feedback. This portion of the document will be distributed to TRANSCOM members when it is complete and brought to the May TRANSCOM

meeting. Both will be brought to the Commission as a draft at the May meeting. The final is expected to be brought at the July meeting.

# VENTURA COUNTY DEMAND-RESPONSE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PLAN

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## The Customer Experience

The Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), along with the local transit providers, recognizes the importance of enhancing the on-demand and paratransit customer experience; and believes there are areas for improvement and piloted service models that can be implemented before considering integration of services. This includes what most cities in Ventura County provide as “dial-a-ride” (DAR), paratransit, and in some cases, microtransit.

## Baseline Agreement of Stipulations

It is important operators first agree on the following goals and stipulations, while also ensuring compliance with regulations established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA):

- **Enhance the overall rider experience**, including for those who may need to travel regionally or outside of their hometown.
- Maintain full **compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** of 1990 and its complementary paratransit requirements.
- Deliver a coordinated, community-level mix of public transportation services that meets local mobility needs while **avoiding duplication or competition among providers**.
- Improve the return on public investment in demand-response services by **increasing productivity and cost control**.

## Ventura County’s Transportation Commission Goal

With the conclusion of the Transit Integration and Efficiency Study (TIES) study in 2023, the Commission sought the adoption of Alternative #1, which considered a partial consolidation of subregional demand-response services and enhanced agency coordination; and a continued study of Alternative #2, consolidation of all demand-response services into a new countywide agency and consolidation of fixed-route services by geography.

## Current Assessment of Demand-Response Systems

All communities comply with the ADA by providing complementary paratransit services to eligible riders, a service that needs to be maintained or replaced with alternatives that meet ADA rules outlined in FTA Circular 4701.1 (42 USC 12101-12213). All operators also provide paratransit services to seniors as well.

At the time of this writing, all agencies (with the exception of Simi Valley’s DAR system) are on the RideCo software platform allowing on-demand transportation to be dispatched dynamically – meaning, rides are scheduled in real-time to account for detours, construction, schedules changes, and fleet optimization.

## Guiding Principles and Actions for Customer Improvement

Over the years and even since the effort on this plan began, there have been many improvements to DAR services countywide. Over the years, direct service between jurisdictions has improved tremendously. Policy alignment has steadily improved over time and all agencies joining RideCo has been a significant

improvement both on the customer side and on the backend. The next step for agencies is to adopt a defined set of principles and actions to improve customer service.

This plan recommends VCTC contract with an independent Client Representative to coordinate and lead the effort towards improved customer service. Additional details on procuring and collaborating with a Client Representative are provided in the Strategy Detail section.

## **Principles**

**Promoting and facilitating existing fixed-route services** - While on-demand transportation services offer a high level of convenience and are more attractive to riders than fixed-route options, they are significantly more costly to operate and inherently less efficient in terms of passengers served per hour. Therefore, it is important for all agencies to align strategies which encourage general public ridership on fixed-route services, through travel training, targeted marketing, and service improvements outlined in the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP), while preserving on-demand capacity for individuals who rely on it most.

**Countywide ADA eligibility** - All operators in Ventura County currently utilize a single outsourced contractor (through an arrangement with VCTC) to administer ADA eligibility determinations. This approach promotes consistency, efficiency, and a uniform understanding of certification requirements across the region. Maintaining this model is recommended, as it supports clear communication and ongoing education for both current and future ADA riders.

**Embracing Dynamic Scheduling** - The scheduling platform provided by RideCo is highly effective in optimizing on-demand service by maximizing passenger trips per vehicle hour. Operators must actively collaborate with RideCo to ensure the system is calibrated for optimal performance. Operators should also leverage RideCo's data-driven insights to identify areas of increased demand and adjust resources as needed, such as (a) deploying additional vehicles or scheduling more drivers during peak periods, (b) evaluate maximum ride time constraints, (c) transfer coordination, (d) adjusting pickup windows, and ( e) evaluating the mix of advanced reservation versus same-day mix. Achieving an effective balance between operational constraints, workforce availability, and system optimization will require ongoing coordination and refinement, and will be led by the Client Representative.

**One Mobile Application** - The RideCo mobile application is highly customizable and is currently configured to reflect the branding of individual jurisdictions. While this supports local identity and is understood by the same people who use the system regularly, it can turn off potential users, looking to travel outside their town. Fragmented branding makes difficult for future users to understand system connectivity. It also makes it difficult to recognize what services are available to them.

To enhance customer experience, a unified, regional RideCo mobile app is recommended. A single interface improves clarity, increases awareness of services, and reduces perceived barriers to use. This also aligns with the TIES and SRTP strategy to maximize promotional marketing effectiveness by utilizing a single countywide brand and collateral.

RideCo's platform can support a unified front-end customer experience while maintaining separate, agency-specific configurations on the back end (allowing providers to retain operational control). RideCo's platform will use geofencing to determine which provider is responsible for fulfilling a trip. When a rider requests a trip, the system assigns it to the appropriate operator based on origin, destination, and service rules. The software is structured so that each participating agency operates within its own "tenant" on the back end.

**One Phone Number** – In addition to the one mobile app, a single regional phone number should be created. Modern call center software enables the use of one centralized phone number while allowing call takers to remain distributed across multiple locations. There are a few solutions that support this approach.

RideCo is designed to integrate call center technology through its open API architecture and specific features. RideCo can work alongside existing call center technology to handle transit reservations and customer support.

Aside from RideCo, the two main options for one-number call center integration are:

- **Intelligent/Geofence routing** can automatically direct incoming calls to the most appropriate agent or agency based on predefined rules and real-time conditions, rather than assigning calls to the next available representative.
- **Interactive Voice Response (IVR)**, (i.e. phone tree), can be used to guide callers through a menu of options using keypad or voice commands. This allows calls to be categorized and routed appropriately before reaching a live agent.

**Localized Dispatching** – To support a stronger focus on customer service (and less resource attention to dispatch consolidation) dispatching functions will remain at the local level. Agencies can continue dispatching for both demand-response and fixed-route operations, avoiding the need to separate functions.







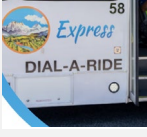

Maintaining local dispatch however, requires regional consistency for regional ride requests. This includes standardized customer service policies (discussed in the following section) and reducing manual intervention in RideCo’s automated dynamic scheduling. RideCo can apply a centralized trip brokerage logic where a rules-based, algorithm-driven layer determines how regional trips are allocated across the system. Under this model, each agency retains control over its own operations (vehicles, drivers, and day-to-day dispatch decisions) while the platform enables regional optimization where appropriate. RideCo also supports standardized data structures, enabling information sharing across agencies while keeping certain datasets separate.

However, it would be prudent to reconsider consolidated dispatching in the future after progress on all strategies occurs, regardless of whether there is a transition to full consolidation or not.

**Service Branding** - In addition to developing one mobile app, the Client Representative will convene agencies to create a regional branding initiative centered on customer service and improving regional mobility. This effort should articulate the intended outcomes of brand uniformity, *namely*, to remove existing barriers and make transit easier to understand for riders who currently travel across jurisdictional boundaries and increase mobility choice . The goal is to increase continuity between operators. Operators would retain their existing branding, and this initiative would be in addition. Roles and responsibilities associated with this effort are detailed in the Strategy Detail section.

The Client Representative will review current agency branding, service names, and logos; identifying customer pain points such as confusion around service boundaries, eligibility, and booking processes; and assessing communication channels, including the RideCo app, the agencies’ websites, call center practices, and printed materials. This process should reveal inconsistencies and help with policy uniformity (discussed later in this chapter). A key point to investigate is public perception of “who various services are for.” Awareness that local cities operated local bus service that was open to all (as opposed to just “for seniors” or “for students”) was a perception issue raised in the SRTP.

Below is a chart listing all the various on-demand systems, their nomenclature, and their logos.

Town	Type of Service	Service Name	Logo/Fleet/Branding
Simi Valley	ADA/DAR	ADA/DAR	
Simi Valley	On-Demand	Simi Valley Transit On-Demand	
Thousand Oaks	Dial-a-Ride	T.O Dial-a-Ride	
ECTA	Dial-a-Ride	ECTA CONNECT	
Camarillo	Dial-a-Ride	CAT Dial-a-Ride	
Moorpark	Dial-a-Ride	Senior Dial-A-Ride Program	
Valley Express	Dial-a-Ride	Dial-a-Ride	
Gold Coast	Dial-a-Ride	Go Access	

The next step involves developing branding elements that are applied across the system. These include the service name, tagline, visual identity, and messaging guidelines. Suggestions on uniform branding are included in the Strategy Detail section.

## Uniform policy and policy alignment

Establishing uniform policies is critical in a countywide multi-agency system because they create consistency for riders, improve operational efficiency, and enable RideCo to work effectively across jurisdictions. Specifically, policy review should include the following:

**No-Shows / Late Cancellations Policy** - These policies protect system capacity. When riders miss trips or cancel too late, vehicles and driver time are wasted—capacity that could have served other riders. Agencies should agree to leave within five (5) minutes of someone no-showing (and label it as a No-Show). Agencies should also agree to deem a ride as a ‘late cancellation’ if the trip is cancelled within two (2) hours before scheduled pick up. Agencies should implement a three-strikes to suspension program, with the ability to appeal. No-shows and Late-Cancellations should not exceed 10% of all trips per month.

**Dwell Time** - All agencies should implement the same dwell time (how long a vehicle waits at pickup) which directly impacts schedule reliability and prevents delays from cascading across the system. Dwell time should be no more than 5 minutes.

**Mix of Advanced Reservations / Subscriptions / Same-Day** - Balancing trip types are important to efficiency and equity. Advanced reservations improve planning, subscription rides support frequent riders, and same-day trips increase flexibility and customer satisfaction. All agencies should adhere to a defined mix of these three types of rides. It is important to note; the FTA does not allow agencies to have more than 50% of rides fall under subscription.

**Negotiation Times** - Negotiating trip pick-times is an area of transit operations that many demand-response agencies struggle to manage. It is established in ADA Paratransit service models to aid in matching demand with supply, moving rider trip requests from high-demand times to times when there is available vehicle capacity that can better serve that trip. Specifically, FTA ADA Circular states, “*A true negotiation consider the rider’s constraints. While some trips have inherent flexibility (e.g., shopping, or recreation), other trips have constraints with respect to when they can begin (e.g., not before the end of the individual’s workday or not until after an appointment is over).*”<sup>1</sup> The Client Representative can lead agencies to ensure customer service representatives are doing this when appropriate.

**Fare Uniformity** - Fare consistency is one of the most visible aspects of a “seamless” system. It (a) eliminates rider confusion, (b) simplifies payment systems and future integration, and (c) supports transfers across agencies without friction. Specific fare uniformity recommendations can be found in the Strategy Detail section RideCo integrates with point-of-sales system and is implemented with all Ventura County transit agencies, with the exception of Valley Express (who is working towards implementation). This recommendation is consistent with the regional fare structure strategy detailed in the SRTP, which holds that the slight price variations among providers in Ventura County provide no clear benefit to the various agencies nor meaningfully affect affordability for riders, either.

## Regional Service Model Evaluation

Over the years, one seat paratransit rides have been requested by the community and has been a strategy recommended by both the Coordinated Plan and the TIES. A countywide, regional DAR model that provides one seat rides across the county for paratransit passengers does not have to require a single agency (or all agencies) to assume responsibility for disproportionately long or higher-cost trips. There is a range of

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/Final\\_FTA\\_ADA\\_Circular\\_C\\_4710.1.pdf](https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/Final_FTA_ADA_Circular_C_4710.1.pdf)

service models to allocate trips, ensuring that service is optimized across jurisdictions while maintaining cost-effectiveness and operational balance.

The chart below describes three main service models and their associated costs, which can fulfill regional service requests without local integration.

	<b>Regional Trip Brokerage</b>	<b>Regional Overlay* Service (third party contractor)</b>	<b>Lead Agency + Contracted Fleet</b>
<b>How it Works</b>	Central entity receives all regional trip requests and assigns them to the most appropriate provider	Separate countywide service operates alongside local DAR services	One agency manages a regional service, often with dedicated fleet
<b>Roles of Providers</b>	Handle regional / long-distance / cross-boundary trips	Operate a dedicated regional (private operator) service across jurisdictions	Operate vehicles and drivers for regional trips under contract
<b>Best Use Case</b>	Multi-agency regions with frequent intercity travel	Areas needing a simple regional layer without restructuring local service	Regions wanting stronger control and branding
<b>Advantages</b>	Seamless customer experience; efficient trip allocation; reduces transfers	Easy to implement; clear structure; consistent regional trips	High consistency; centralized oversight; strong branding
<b>Potential Tradeoffs</b>	Requires strong coordination and governance	Possible duplication of resources if not integrated	More complex procurement and management
<b>Comparative Cost</b>	<b>\$</b> Leverages existing agencies' fleet and drivers	<b>\$\$</b> Adds a new layer of service for regional service	<b>\$\$\$</b> Central entity operates/ contracts a regional fleet

### **About Regional Service Overlay/Private On-Demand Transportation Providers**

Private on-demand transportation providers, including Transportation Network Companies, like Uber and Lyft, as well as other private on-demand firms, can take on operational risks and service models that local public transit agencies find difficult or undesirable to manage directly. Two examples include:

**Onward** - Onward provides assisted, "door-through-door" rideshare services for seniors and individuals with mobility or cognitive impairments and offering companionship. Onward focuses on specialized, high-touch transportation designed for healthcare appointments, groceries, and personal errands. Specific functions include:

- Door-Through-Door Service: Drivers provide physical support from the rider's home to the destination and back.
- Companion Drivers: Drivers are trained to assist with mobility or cognitive limitations.
- Caregiver Support: Their platform offers tools for caregivers to manage transportation and rider preferences.
- Scheduling: Provides scheduled, recurring transportation rather than on-demand only.

**UZURV** - is an Adaptive Transportation Network Company that provides specialized, pre-scheduled, and on-demand door-to-door rides, focusing on seniors, people with disabilities, and healthcare patients. It partners with transit agencies and provides vetted drivers for paratransit services.

- Accessible Transportation: Offers wheelchair-accessible vehicles to meet specific mobility needs.
- Pre-Scheduled Rides: Specializes in booking, paying for, and scheduling rides in advance via mobile app or phone.
- Partnerships: Works with transit agencies and healthcare providers to offer transport services.

## Cost Allocation Model

Depending on what service model is agreed upon, a cost allocation model will need to follow. This is an important part of planning regional trips, and it is important for jurisdictions to understand what it will cost them to serve rides under an integrated model. Cost allocation models must (a) fairly distribute costs among jurisdictions, (b) reflect actual service usage, and (c) ensure transparency and sustainability in ongoing operations and budgeting. A strong cost allocation plan typically combines operational data, financial data, and performance goals.

Service Model	Cost Model	Cost Details	Explanation
<b>Regional Trip Brokerage</b>	Trip-Based Cost Allocation	Cost = fully allocated cost per trip x number of regional trips provided	Pay for what is delivered, easy to track, transparent
	Passenger Time/Mile Allocation	Adds weight for long distance/high-cost rural trips	Prevents agencies with long trips from being undercompensated, addresses equity
<b>Regional Overlay Service</b>	Regional Pool Funding	All agencies contribute to a shared regional service budget	Overlay is a shared regional asset. Allocations based on population and ridership
	Zone-Based Cost Sharing	Costs allocated by service hours or miles	Reflects geographic usage of overlay service
	Per-Trip Subsidy Contribution	Agencies pay a set subsidy per trip origination in their area	Pay for what is delivered, transparent
<b>Lead Agency/ Contracted Fleet</b>	Fully allocated cost recovery	Lead agency calculates cost per hour, mile, trip	Predictable budgeting, easy to administer contractually
	Minimum Guarantee + Variable Cost	Agencies pay a base contribution plus variable cost per trip	Coers fixed costs and reflects actual usage

## Contract Enforcement and Centralized Reporting

To move towards a more regional DAR system while maintaining local control, the most effective approach is to start with targeted, low-risk joint activities and actions that create consistency.

The most practical, low-hanging fruit opportunities include the following:

Function	Responsible Party
<b>Branding RideCo regional mobile app/point of sale system</b>	VCTC
<b>Customization: Opening up RideCo on the back-end to measure regional performance metrics</b>	VCTC
<b>Integrated call center technology</b>	All local transit providers
<b>Develop centralized NTD reporting for regional rides</b>	VCTC
<b>Customer Service Training Programs</b>	All local transit providers
<b>Countywide Travel Training Program</b>	All local transit providers
<b>Future Regional Ride Service Model</b>	VCTC, All local transit providers
<b>Future DAR vehicle procurement</b>	VCTC, reimbursement by local transit providers

## Role of TRANSCOM

TRANSCOM (Transit Operators Advisory Committee) serves as Ventura County’s primary advisory forum for coordination among transit operators and local agencies. The committee provides a venue to collaborate on regional transit planning and develop recommendations related to funding, service delivery, and system improvements. In support of VCTC’s mission to enhance regional mobility, TRANSCOM undertakes technical and advisory responsibilities, drawing on representatives from multiple transit and governmental organizations. The committee meets monthly.

While TRANSCOM brings together a regional perspective, there is an opportunity to strengthen its impact by focusing on more tangible, action-oriented outcomes, particularly in the area of regional customer service improvements. The recommended Client Representative should take a more active leadership role in facilitating TRANSCOM meetings in the near term. This would include guiding discussions and advancing initiatives such as the implementation of the principles listed above, regional branding, and service delivery models, with the goal of translating coordination into measurable improvements for riders.

## Developing a Memorandum of Understanding

VCTC and the nine demand-response programs should enter into one Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), outlining the responsibilities of each party regarding improving customer service and implementing the strategies listed above. A sample MOU can be found in the Strategy Detail section.

## Summary

Improved customer service and a Ventura County regional DAR one seat pilot program should evaluate the service models, cost allocation approaches, and customer service improvements listed in this plan, because each one directly affects the system’s feasibility, agency buy-in, and rider experience.

First, selecting an appropriate service model (such as trip brokerage, overlay service, or a lead agency approach) defines *how* regional trips will actually be delivered. Different models offer varying levels of coordination, operational complexity, and scalability. By piloting a defined model, agencies can test how well regional trips can be accommodated without fully restructuring existing services. This reduces risk while providing real-world data on demand, travel patterns, and operational impacts.

Second, establishing a clear and equitable cost allocation model is critical for maintaining trust among participating agencies. Regional DAR service often introduces longer and more expensive trips that cross jurisdictional boundaries, raising concerns about who pays for what. A well-defined cost framework—whether based on trips, service hours, or shared regional funding—ensures transparency and fairness. This, in turn, makes agencies more willing to participate in a pilot and supports long-term sustainability if the program expands.

Finally, focusing on customer service improvements—such as a single phone number, coordinated branding, consistent policies, and potentially a shared app—helps demonstrate immediate value to riders. Even if backend systems remain decentralized, a more seamless and unified customer experience can significantly reduce confusion and improve accessibility. This is especially important in a pilot phase, where visible benefits help build public support and political momentum.

## STRATEGY DETAIL

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### Hiring a Client Representative

VCTC should contract a Client Representative to assist with both customer service improvements and adding a piloted regional countywide DAR program. The client representative will act as (a) a neutral party, (b) the primary liaison between VCTC and its transit providers, and (3) ensure the goals of improved customer service are met.

**Responsible Party:** Ventura County Transportation Commission

**Length of Contract:** 2 years

**Best practices for VCTC and the Client Rep to follow:**

- Define role clearly
- Structure contract for phased deliverables
- Support role with guidance and direction from lead agency (VCTC)
- Include stakeholder engagement responsibilities
- Require coordination with current legal teams
- Require performance tracking
- Allow for scope adjustments
- Encourage and support each jurisdiction's strengths
- Address each jurisdiction's weaknesses

**When:** Immediately following Plan adoption

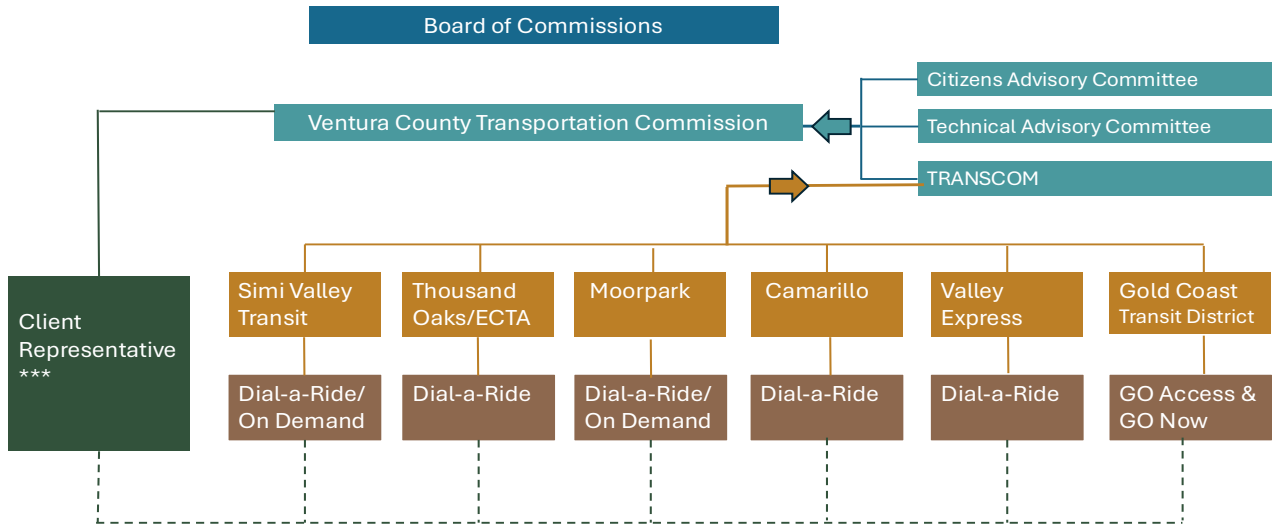
**How:** This is envisioned as a contracted position and not as a VCTC employee. Appendix A provides an example of a Job Description for this position. An initial workplan will need to be prepared by the Client Rep after the position commences, annually updating the workplan over the envisioned two-year timeframe.

**Cost:** \$150,000 to \$175,000 annually, inclusive of a small direct expense budget, largely for local travel and envisioned as a time-limited contract of two years.

**Cost Sharing/ Cost Responsibility:** VCTC is responsible for funding the Client Representative. The jurisdictions will share the benefits of that oversight and leadership role (similar to how VCTC rolled out RideCo for countywide use).

**Initial Table of Organization:** Once the Client Representative is hired, the position will report to VCTC on a contractual basis and maintain established partnerships and communication channels across the County. The figure below illustrates the organizational structure envisioned for reporting purposes. This structure evolves as the Client Representative and participating agencies determine the future of DAR services.

## Integration Organization Chart



\*\*\* Client Representative will coordinate Dispatchers, Supervisors, Drivers and Call Takers for all DAR Services

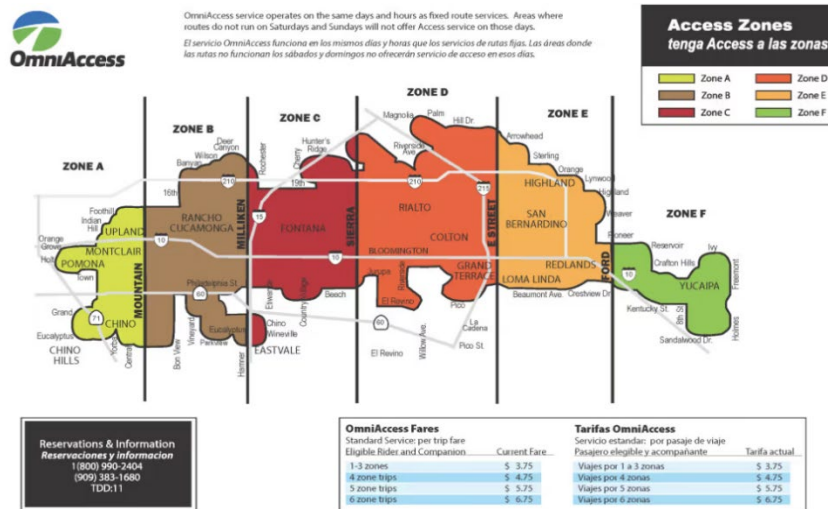
## Fare Policy and Allocation Model

There are a variety of fare policies and allocation modes that a countywide dial-a-ride program can take. The fares should follow what is set forth in the SRTP and can be further determined in the policy setting effort recommended by this plan.

### What other cross-jurisdictional agencies are doing

Riverside Transit Agency (RTA), based in Riverside, California, operates in a region that is comparable to Ventura County in terms of geography, population density, traffic congestion, and vehicle wear and tear. RTA provides DAR services across a broad area of Western Riverside County, serving multiple cities and navigating high-traffic corridors. To determine fares, RTA uses a zone-based system with a base fare of \$3.50. Riders are charged an additional fee for each zone traveled, up to a maximum fare of \$10.50 per one-way trip.<sup>2</sup>

OmniAccess, the DAR service provided by Omnitrans in San Bernardino County, also has a similar operation to RTA, traversing multiple jurisdictions in a populated area of southern California. The image shows an example of the zones they travel through, as well as the associated fares by zones.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.riversidetransit.com/index.php/dial-a-ride/what-is-dial-a-ride>

<sup>3</sup> <https://omnitrans.org/services/access-ada/>

There are two models for fare allocation, one based on mileage, and one based on zones.

### **Mileage-Based Fare Allocation**

Mileage-based allocation assigns fares proportionally to the miles traveled on each trip. Ventura County is roughly 40 miles across, below is a sample of what a mileage-based fare cost allocation can look like for a DAR user. The base fare for anyone leaving their home would be \$4.00 with a \$5.00 increase for every 10 miles traveled.

<b>Base Fare</b>	<b>1-10 Miles</b>	<b>11-20 Miles</b>	<b>21-30 Miles</b>	<b>31-40 Miles</b>	<b>Total Maximum One-Way Trip</b>
<b>\$4.00</b>	\$5.00	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$24.00

### **Advantages of Mileage Cost Fare Allocation**

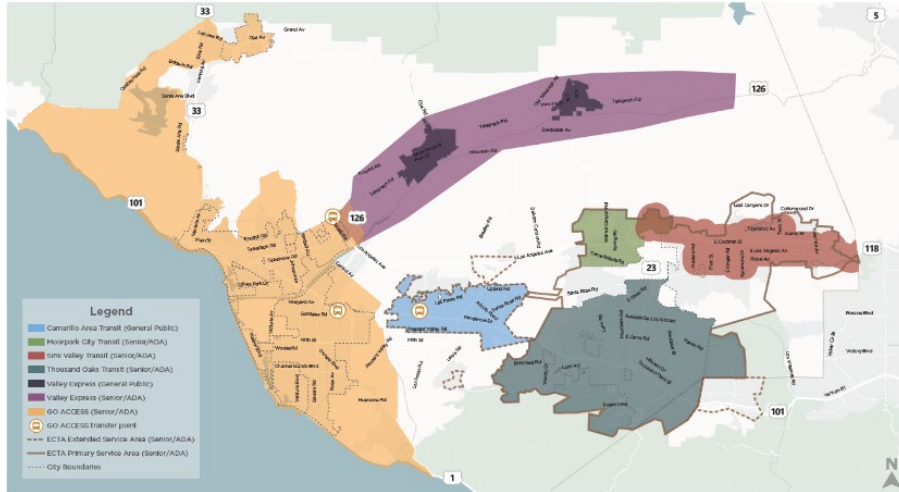
- Riders pay for what they use.
- Longer trips use more resources (driver time, fuel, vehicle hours), so pricing by distance feels fair to both riders and the agency.
- Helps prevent subsidizing long trips disproportionately compared to short, local trips.
- Mileage often correlates with operating costs (fuel, labor hours, maintenance), especially in suburban counties.
- Works well in counties with large geographic spread, multiple cities, and rural edges.

### **Concerns of Mileage Cost Fare Allocation**

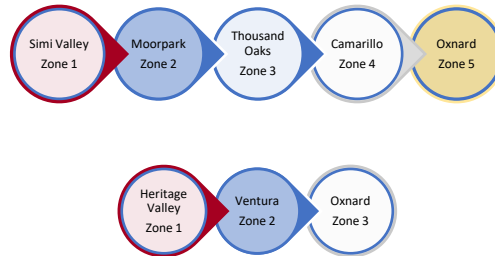
- Harder to explain: Riders may not know how far their trip is in miles, leading to confusion about fare costs. Compared to flat fares, mileage-based pricing requires more explanation and communication.
- Requires accurate geocoding and distance calculations for every trip.
- Potential equity concerns in rural areas. Riders in rural or underserved areas may have to travel farther for basic services, meaning they pay more — despite having fewer local options.

### **Zone-based Cost Fare Calculation**

A zone-based fare allocation for DAR services is a system that divides the service area by logical groupings (in this case, primarily the cities and nearby unincorporated developments) and bases cost-sharing on the number of zones a trip crosses. The Ventura County DAR service map below shows color-coded areas that could be the basis for a DAR fare zone and each zone would be a designated price.



### Examples of Dial-a-Ride Zones



### Advantages of Zone-Based Cost Fare Allocation

- Easier for riders to understand. Riders can be shown a zone map to estimate fare, and clear visual boundaries make it easier to explain than per-mile pricing.
- Scalable for large geographic areas.
- Predictable and transparent - Fares and cost shares can be pre-calculated by zone pairing.
- Accountants/funders can plan around fixed fare bands (e.g., Zone 1 to Zone 3 always costs \$X).
- Simplifies jurisdictional cost-sharing - When allocating operating costs across cities or subregions, zone boundaries make it easier to apportion based on trip origins/destinations.

### Concerns of Zone-Based Fare Allocation

- Zone boundaries can feel arbitrary to riders if they don't match real travel patterns.
- Trips near zone borders can seem unfairly priced.
- May not reflect actual mileage or service cost variations as precisely as distance-based models.

The above information on fare cost allocation does not take into the consideration of an agency's Transportation Development Act (TDA) farebox recovery requirement nor travel time related to congestion.

These are examples to provide guidance for the Client Rep and the agencies to decide what is the best approach to calculating fares.

## Uniform Branding

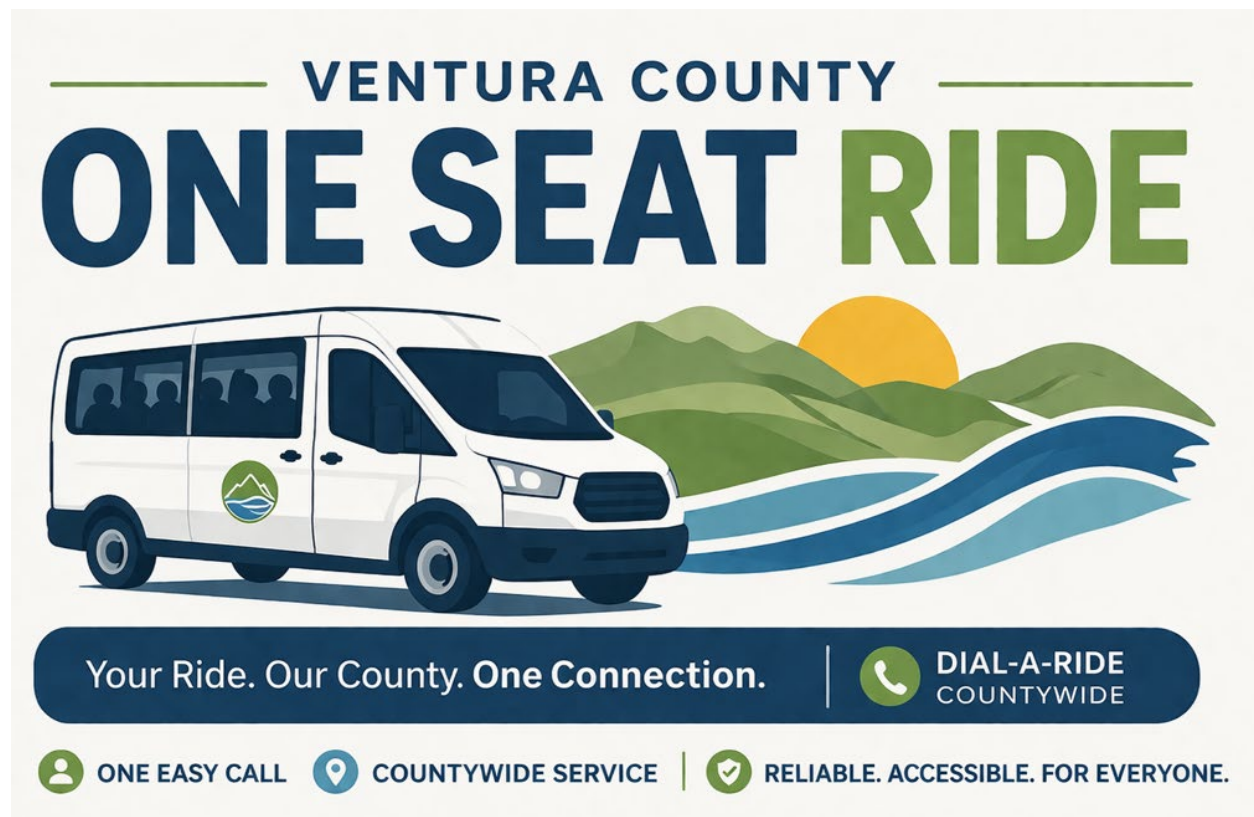
The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Branding Toolkit (with a rural/demand response focus) discusses that branding is the foundation of customer understanding and awareness. <sup>4</sup>

Their guidance emphasizes that all public-facing information should be clear, accessible, and easy to understand, ensuring that riders of varying abilities, languages, and backgrounds can use the service. Transit agencies are required to provide meaningful access to information for individuals with limited English proficiency and to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities through tools such as translated materials, large print, audio formats, and accessible digital content. Using plain language is strongly encouraged.

In addition, communication is especially important during service changes and emergency situations. Agencies should proactively inform the public and stakeholders through outreach methods such as surveys, meetings, and direct notifications.

### Naming Conventions/Logos

Below is a sample concept of what the naming and a logo could look like for regional trips. The colors consider the colors from all the various Ventura County providers. The imagery considers the water, mountain and sun in Ventura County, and the language conveys a simple message – that one seat rides are now available to travel across the County.



<sup>4</sup> <http://cloud.nationalrtap.org/Toolkits/Marketing-Toolkit/How-To-Guide-for-Marketing-Transit/Strategies-for-Marketing-Public-Transit/Fundamental-Communications>

## Memorandum of Understanding Example

### Purpose

This MOU establishes a cooperative framework among Ventura County transit agencies (“Parties”) to coordinate the provision of a regional dial-a-ride (DAR) service. The intent is to improve cross-jurisdictional mobility, enhance customer experience, and increase operational efficiency while preserving each Party’s independent governance, operational control, and service delivery structure.

### Principles

This MOU’s principles are explained in detail in the *“Improving the current Ventura County dial-a-ride programs customer experience and increasing regional mobility”* plan.

### Scope

The Parties agree to collaborate in the following areas:

- Regional trip coordination and/or a service model agreed upon by all parties
- Shared customer-facing tools (one call number/one mobile app)
- Standardized rider policies
- Data sharing and reporting
- Branding and customer communication
- Each Party retains responsibility for its own fleet, personnel, contractor management, and daily operations.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Lead Agency

VCTC, in conjunction with its contracted Client Representative, will be the designated Lead Agency and shall: facilitate coordination meetings, oversee implementation of shared technologies, administer any jointly procured contracts if feasible, develop regional performance metrics and reporting templates, and act as a central point of contact for regional service issues.

#### Participating Agencies

Each participating agency shall:

- Continue to operate and manage its own DAR service, including drivers, vehicles, and dispatch
- Provide service within its jurisdiction and, where agreed, fulfill regional trips
- Accept and perform inter-agency trips based on mutually agreed protocols
- Participate in a shared call center system or coordinated call routing
- Provide consistent rider information aligned with regional standards
- Work toward consistency in:
  - No-show/late cancellation policies
  - Fare structures
  - Service hours and booking windows

- Provide agreed-upon operational and performance data
- Participate in regional reporting and evaluation efforts

### **Joint Responsibilities**

The Parties collectively agree to:

- Develop and maintain regional service standards
- Establish trip allocation protocols, including:
  - Which agency serves which trips
  - Cost allocation methodology (e.g., per trip, per mile, negotiated rates)
- Coordinate service planning and adjustments
- Participate in joint procurement opportunities, such as:
- Implement a regional branding strategy

**Cost Sharing and Financial Arrangements** - Each Party shall remain financially responsible for its own operations. The costs associated with regional trips shall be reimbursed based on a mutually agreed formula. The future shared system costs (e.g., software, call center) may be split proportionally (e.g., by population, ridership, or usage), or funded through grants or external sources.

**Governance Structure** - The existing TRANSCOM Committee and Client Representative will oversee implementation and policy alignment, the review of performance metrics, and resolve any operational issues.

**Term and Termination** - This MOU shall remain in effect for five years.

## Client Representative Contract Job Description Example

**Reports To:** VCTC

**Classification:** Full-Time, Exempt / Contract

**Salary Range:** \$125k - \$175k

### Position Summary

The Client Representative is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the planning, implementation, and operational alignment of regional on-demand rides across multiple jurisdictions, providers, and platforms, specifically; with the cities of Simi Valley, Camarillo, Moorpark, Thousand Oaks; as well as the Valley Express and Gold Coast regions. This position serves as the program's lead liaison with service contractors, RideCo (scheduling software), local jurisdictions, and regional partners to ensure ADA compliance, service quality, and policy consistency.

### Key Responsibilities

#### Strategic Planning & Integration

- Develop service model for regional trip making
- Align eligibility criteria, fare policies, scheduling parameters, and service areas

#### Contract & Vendor Oversight

- Monitor performance of selected service model
- Coordinate with RideCo, dispatch, and call centers to ensure interoperability

#### Policy & Compliance

- Ensure adherence to ADA (49 CFR Part 37), Title VI, and FTA compliance requirements
- Standardized policies on no-shows, advance reservations, cancellations, and service delivery

#### Stakeholder Engagement

- Facilitate TRANSCOM meetings related to regional trip making with participating agencies and stakeholders
- Lead outreach to community organizations, riders with disabilities, and local jurisdictions
- Serve as the central point of contact for cross-agency issues or service escalation

#### Reporting & Funding Support

- Compile operational data and produce regular performance and compliance reports
- Assist with preparing documentation for grant applications and reporting (e.g., 5310, LCTOP)
- Identify opportunities for funding coordination and cost-sharing across services

## Qualifications

### Minimum Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree in public administration, transportation planning, business, or related field
- 5+ years of experience in public transit, mobility management, or contract oversight
- Strong understanding of ADA paratransit regulations and demand-response operations

### Desired Skills:

- Experience with transit scheduling/dispatch software (e.g., Via, RideCo, Trapeze, Ecolane)
- Knowledge of FTA funding sources and reporting requirements
- Strong interpersonal and negotiation skills for managing contracts and interagency relations
- Ability to manage multiple projects and stakeholders simultaneously

### Work Environment

This position may involve a hybrid of office, remote, and field work. Occasional travel to partner jurisdictions, public meetings, and contractor sites is required.



Item #8

April 8, 2026

**MEMO TO: TRANSIT OPERATORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRANSCOM)**

**FROM: CLAIRE GRASTY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC TRANSIT  
AUBREY SMITH, PROGRAM MANAGER – REGIONAL TRANSIT  
PLANNING**

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR OPERATOR APPROVAL TO UTILIZE SENATE BILL  
(SB) 125 INTEREST EARNINGS FOR VENTURA COUNTY’S FREE  
FARE PROGRAM (FFP)**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Approve the use of regional and each operator’s respective interest earnings from available SB 125 interest to support the continued implementation of the Ventura County Free Fare Program.

**BACKGROUND:**

Senate Bill 125 (SB 125) provided supplemental transit operating funds to transit operators statewide to address revenue shortfalls and support post-pandemic service recovery. VCTC administers SB 125 funds, which include Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) and Zero Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP) on behalf of Ventura County operators, consistent with the allocation formulas and reporting requirements established by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA).

The countywide Free Fare Program (FFP), which includes Youth Ride Free, College Ride and Free Fare Days, was designed to increase ridership, reduce financial barriers to transit use, and support local/regional mobility and air-quality goals. The program continues to demonstrate strong popularity and consistent year-over-year growth. The program is funded primarily through the annual distribution of Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) funds and has been recently supplemented with SB 125 funds.

The FFPs currently cost a little under \$3 million a year, with expenses increasing each year due to growing popularity. Historically, these programs have been funded primarily through the LCTOP, which typically has provided a little over \$2 million annually over the past few years. However, program costs now significantly exceed LCTOP allocations, creating a substantial funding gap. To address this shortfall, SB 125 funds have been used on a temporary basis. Compounding this challenge, Cap-and-Trade/Cap-and-Invest revenues, which support LCTOP, are currently projected at only about 65% of their historical average. Furthermore, recent legislative changes to the Cap-and-Invest program prioritize funding for Tier 1 and Tier 2 categories and if revenues are insufficient to fully fund these tiers, Tier 3 programs, including LCTOP, will see substantially reduced funding. Given ongoing challenges primarily related to costs that have exceeded available/eligible funding, additional resources are needed to continue fully supporting projected program costs.

VCTC staff brought to Transcom the request to dedicate interest from SB 125 funds to the Free Fare Programs in December and again in February. Transcom members deferred the request first to have more time to review and subsequently to allow time for operators to provide the interest amounts to VCTC.

### **DISCUSSION:**

As part of VCTC's fund management responsibilities, SB 125 funds are held in VCTC accounts and accrue interest until disbursement. This includes interest earned on funds for projects VCTC leads, as well some on funds allocated to the operators prior to their distribution. Operators also accrue interest on the SB 125 funds they have received, directly for their own projects. In an effort to identify ways to utilize eligible funding, staff reached out to the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to confirm whether the utilization of interest accumulated from SB 125 funds would be an eligible expense. CalSTA staff confirmed that interest can be applied to any previously approved project or a new project that is eligible per the TIRCP guidelines. Interest earnings from SB 125 funds represent an eligible and appropriate funding source for the Free Fare Program.

Interest earnings from SB 125 Year 1 funding allocation have continued to accrue throughout the December accounting period. Because these earnings are tied to operator-specific allocations, VCTC must obtain approval from each operator before applying the interest toward the Free Fare Program.

The FFP has generated nearly \$50,000 in interest of SB 125 funds since funds were received. The operators cumulatively have generated over \$1.5 million in interest. VCTC has over \$300,000 in interest generated from other regional projects.

Based on current spending rates, it is expected that the SB 125 and LCTOP funds will not fully cover FY 26-27 expenditures, in large part due to the decrease in LCTOP funds. Additionally, by FY 27-28, all SB 125 funds thus far allocated to Free Fare Programs will have been fully expended and LCTOP funds are only expected to cover half of the cost of the program.

Program costs are expected to grow as ridership continues to increase and as some operators increase their fares in accordance with the Short Range Transit Plan.

As such, staff is recommending that operators dedicate a portion of SB 125 interest generated from their own allocations. If approved, VCTC will also dedicate the interest generated from VCTC-led SB 125 funded regional projects. Staff suggest dedicating 50% of the current interest generated in FY 26-27 and the remaining interest in FY 27-28. This should allow the program to continue through FY 27-28 and help address the LCTOP cash flow issue, as LCTOP funds are not received until the middle of the fiscal year.

Use of interest earnings for the Free Fare Program is consistent with SB 125's intent to support transit operations and ridership recovery. The Free Fare Program directly advances these objectives by:

- Increasing system accessibility for low-income and transit-dependent riders
- Supporting ridership growth across all operators
- Reducing fare-related barriers for youth, seniors, and other priority populations
- Enhancing regional mobility and reducing vehicle miles traveled
- Leveraging existing state funds without requiring additional local contributions

Each agency would show the SB 125 interest as a deduction on the FFP invoice on an annual basis and include back up.

This action does not affect the underlying SB 125 principal allocations and does not require additional local match or operator funding. All expenditures will be tracked and reported in accordance with SB 125 requirements and VCTC financial policies and procedures. Approval of this item would require an amendment to the existing reimbursement MOU.



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Item 9

April 8, 2026

**MEMO TO: TRANSIT OPERATORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**FROM: VANESSA SCHOENEWALD, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING**

**SUBJECT: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
PROGRAMMING PROCEDURES**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Receive and file

**BACKGROUND:**

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), as the region's federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, is responsible for selecting projects funded through several Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) programs, including the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ).

Following the SCAG Regional Council's approval of project selections for these funds, SCAG is responsible for ensuring various federal compliance requirements are met by project sponsors throughout the postaward period. These responsibilities include regional programming and obligation authority (OA) management.

In collaboration with the county transportation commissions (CTC), SCAG developed and adopted in February 2026 new Programming Procedures for FHWA-administered federal funding to guide post-award activity across the SCAG region. These procedures are intended to prevent the lapse of federal funds, ensure consistency with federal timelines, and support the region's ability to meet statewide delivery targets.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITMENT:**

This item supports the VCTC Strategic Plan Goal B: Transportation Services, Strategy B6 Coordinate with Caltrans, Ventura County, and cities to prioritize projects and submit grant application(s) for goods movement projects based on the recommendations of the Ventura County Freight Corridors Study.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The newly adopted SCAG Programming Procedures outline detailed requirements and expectations for all agencies receiving STBG, CMAQ, or CRP funds selected through the SCAG-administered call for projects processes. These procedures are designed to work in tandem with SCAG's existing program guidelines and include five key topic areas:

- **Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) Programming Requirements:** Projects must be programmed in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program in the year funds are expected to be obligated or transferred. Implementing agencies and CTCs must ensure the FTIP remains current.
- **Obligation Deadlines and Management:** Any project programmed with STBG or CMAQ funds that has not been identified as SCAG-selected by December 2026 must obligate those funds by December 2026. Otherwise, the STBG/CMAQ funds will be considered lapsed, and the unclaimed funds will become available for reprogramming to other SCAG-selected projects. SCAG-selected is defined as a project that was awarded in a prior or current call for projects.
- **Post-Award Project Changes:** VCTC has delegated authority to approve CRP/CMAQ/STBG funds for cost increases when funds are available as a result of project savings/cancellations within the respective county. Shifting of funds across SCAG-selected or SCAG Contingency List projects must be done in collaboration with project sponsors and are subject to approval by VCTC.
- **Scope Changes:** Any changes to the project scope from what was submitted in the SCAG application will require SCAG approval. Major additions or reductions to the project scope may be required to go through a subsequent call for projects process.
- **Project Delays:** VCTC has delegated authority to approve delay requests up to the delivery deadline for the call for projects in which the project was awarded funding or on the Contingency List (i.e., Sept. 30, 2029, for all projects within the 2023-2026 call for projects). CTCs must coordinate with SCAG to ensure sufficient OA and apportionment are available in the requested year and financial constraint requirements are met. There is no guarantee that federal funds will be available in the requested year and may result in a loss of funding.

- Deliverability and Agency Performance: Agencies with a history of timely delivery may receive priority for contingency funding or advancement requests. Conversely, agencies with repeated delays may see reduced access to future federal opportunities.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact to VCTC.



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Item 10

April 8, 2026

**MEMO TO: TRANSIT OPERATORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TRANSCOM)**

**FROM: DOLORES LOPEZ, REGIONAL TRANSIT PLANNER**

**SUBJECT: ADA CERTIFICATION SERVICES PROGRAM MONTHLY UPDATE**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Receive and file the monthly ADA Certification services report(s) and program update.

**DISCUSSION:**

Mobility Management Partners (MMP) is VCTC's contracted service provider for ADA Paratransit Eligibility Certification services.

Attached is the March ADA Paratransit Certification Services Reports from MMP for review at this TRANSCOM meeting.

March 2026								
		Mar.	Feb.	Jan.	Dec	Nov	Oct	
Call Center	Inbound ADA Calls	469	328	343	320	356	510	RideCo launched August 1, 2025
	Outbound ADA calls	168	111	156	118	69	29	
	Average hold time (in seconds)	1.06	0.44	0.54	0.23	0	0.01	
	Outbound Area Transmittals	4	5	1	3	2	2	
	Inbound Area Transmittals	14	9	13	25	6	17	
Applications Received	Recertification	77	38	67	42	50	47	Riders requesting service outside of Ventura County
	New Applications	58	48	38	29	54	62	Riders requesting service into Ventura County
Applications Received by Service Area	Camarillo Area	14	5	9	5	12	12	<b>Applications by Language</b> 
	Gold Coast Area	54	44	46	35	47	57	
	Valley Express Area	4	3	5	3	2	3	
	Moorpark Area	2	2	5	1	3	4	
	Simi Valley Area	26	20	15	11	18	17	
	Thousand Oaks	33	12	25	16	22	16	
	Out of County	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Completed Determinations by Evaluation Type	In-Person Interviews with Physical Assessment	2	1	0	2	2	0	<b>Evaluations by Age and Determination Type</b> 
	In-Person Interviews with Cognitive	7	0	4	1	3	3	
	Special Circumstance (no Interview)	41	25	25	24	47	37	
	Over 85+ (no interview)	4	1	3	6	7	12	
	Interviews: Phone: 7, In-Person with no assessment: 0	7	12	6	11	14	15	
	Short-term Certification (60 days)	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Recertifications	62	34	60	30	37	44	
	Completed Determinations	123	73	98	75	110	111	
Cost per Determination	\$189.85	\$319.89	\$238.29	\$321.17	\$212.29	\$210.37		
Delays in Processing (Cumulative)	Due to Incomplete application by client	7	5	3	2	5	3	<b>In-person Interviews by Eligibility and Assessment Type</b> 
	Pending Professional Evaluation (PE)	6	11	6	8	10	18	
	Applications that failed to meet 21 day rule	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Applicants awaiting interviews	9	5	0	5	2	7	
Assessments	<b>Assessment Categories</b>	<b>Total</b>						<b>Determinations by Eligibility Type</b>
	Physical Assessment	2						
	Cognitive Assessment	7						
	Interview only with No Assessment (In-person)	0						
	No Shows for Interview (In-Person)	0						
	Total In-Person Interviews that were Cancelled	0						
<b>Determinations by Eligibility Type</b>							<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Unconditional (including S.C., Over 85+ , Phone interviews)							119	97%
Conditional							0	0%
Temporary							4	3%
Denial							0	0%
Short Term (including Emergency)							0	0%