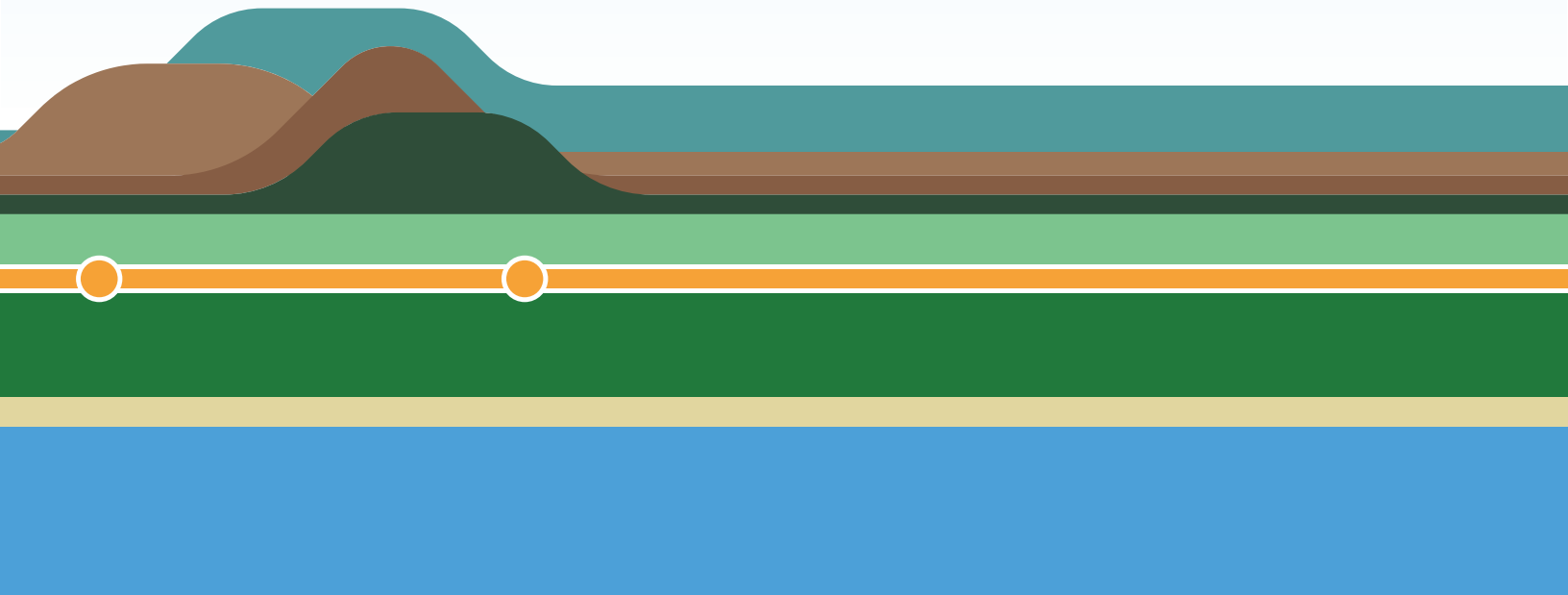


# VENTURA COUNTYWIDE SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

2025-2034



MARCH 2026 FINAL REPORT

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TRANSIT PLANNING INC.



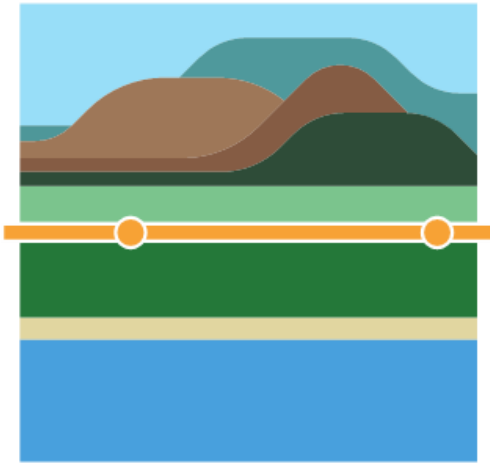
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# VENTURA COUNTYWIDE SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Short-Range Transit Plan for 2025–2034 (SRTP) is a comprehensive assessment of public transportation programs offered in Ventura County. It identifies the transit needs of residents and employees throughout the region, evaluates how the transit system currently aligns with those needs, and recommends service improvement strategies over the next ten years. In keeping with best practices, VCTC is conducting this SRTP update to the prior version completed in 2015. Like the previous SRTP, VCTC took the opportunity to consider all of the separate transit operations collectively. This updated SRTP is more comprehensive in its approach to treating each of the independent services as part of a whole network and developing recommendations to strengthen and enhance that network in ways that should benefit both the local travel needs and expand opportunity for regional travel.



The existing Ventura County transit network is geographically extensive. Every jurisdiction includes a fixed-route network, and dial-a-ride programs are available countywide. Ventura County communities provide these services despite a constrained funding environment, with no countywide revenue stream to supplement state and federal funds.

Riders in Ventura County rate their transit services highly. Responses to the on-board survey conducted as part of this effort indicated high levels of satisfaction with the comfort of the service and driver courtesy and very little concern about safety on the system. The College Ride, Youth Ride Free, and Free Fare Day programs are highlights of a progressive approach to attracting riders among demographics that would most benefit from transit. Throughout the county, seniors are eligible for dial-a-ride service, which helps support mobility in communities especially with newer residential developments that are isolated from community centers.

The existing transit framework in Ventura County is significant in reach. Currently, about half of Ventura County residents live a short walk—five minutes or less—from a convenient local bus route and have access to a regional bus network that serves Ventura County and makes connections into Los Angeles and Santa Barbara Counties. While the geographic reach is extensive, the local and regional services are scheduled and designed separately and schedule connectivity is not always a high priority.

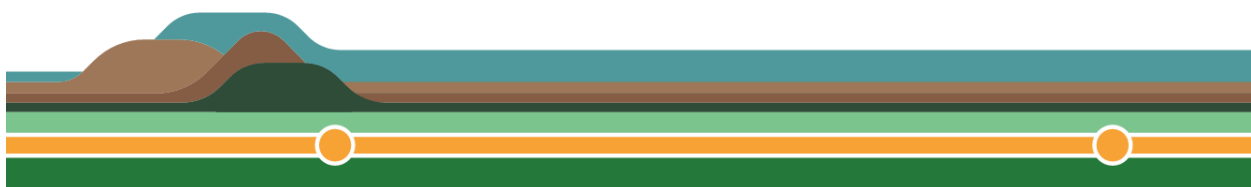
Despite all of these strengths, most current transit services are attracting fewer riders compared to a decade ago, even when setting aside the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is partly explained by reductions and changes to many services that took place between 2015–2019 to try to better balance revenue hours with ridership to improve productivity. While these efforts at rebalancing make sense individually, collectively they appear to have resulted in a substantial decline across many routes.

Although the total service operated today is not much lower than in 2019, the selective reductions in frequency and hours over the last decade mean that trips take longer, transfers are less convenient, and riders may see transit as less reliable than driving or getting a ride. Individual changes across all routes have been made without sufficient coordination to maintain connections between Intercity and local routes, further increasing travel time for riders who need to reach a destination beyond their hometown.

Agencies across the nation have seen greater success in attracting ridership with service designs that focus on predictable, direct, and more frequent transit that operates for more of the day.

With each local transit service directed independently by their respective city or agency, their focus tends to remain within their own jurisdiction rather than on the big picture goal of regional ridership. This division of focus may miss opportunities for increased ridership and cross functionality, and make it more difficult to see the kinds of collective impacts described above. Successful transit depends on not only regular riders, but also on trips made by many occasional riders that are harder to quantify and capture through on-board surveys and engagement.

All of these circumstances can be improved through adjustments to routes, schedules, and allocation of resources between demand-response and fixed-route services. **During this analysis, we found no evidence to support the idea that fixed-route service cannot succeed.** Much of the identified opportunity to improve transit in a way that attracts more riders should be achievable through shifting existing resources and modifying basic operations. In the long term, given the population, traffic congestion and environmental protection goals affecting Ventura County, greater investment in transit will create a stronger network that is more useful to people for more reasons, essential for growing and sustaining ridership.



The Short Range Transit Plan for 2025–2034 identifies specific route modifications for the existing routes that have the greatest opportunity for improvement and should be able to attract significantly more riders than they do today. This includes routes among several providers including Camarillo, Moorpark, Valley Express, and VCTC Intercity.

Bolstering these routes will not only improve their ridership and cost-effectiveness but also support more riders connecting with other routes across the county.

A vision is set forth for the later timeframe of this Plan, and beyond, to add new services and extend operating hours to maximize flexibility for riders, which will further increase ridership and support long-term planning and environmental goals.

The Plan includes both local and regional strategies tailored to the specific circumstances identified throughout this two-year study.

A tremendous amount of collaboration and insight from staff at each of the partner cities and agencies is reflected in this work.

The Plan offers a roadmap for staff to better evaluate progress and course-correct appropriately.

It incorporates needs identified by the public through surveying and in-person engagement. The Plan preserves aspects of the transit service that are the most important to existing riders while offering a vision for attracting new riders by expanding the availability to serve more purposes.

Marketing the service to raise awareness to the general public and remind residents and businesses of the value and opportunities transit provides is integral to the success.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The **Short-Range Transit Plan for 2025–2034** (SRTP) is a comprehensive assessment of public transportation programs offered in Ventura County. It identifies the transit needs of residents and employees throughout the region, evaluates how the transit system currently aligns with those needs, and recommends service improvement strategies over the next ten years. Eight distinct operations within the county are examined in depth:

- Camarillo Area Transit
- Kanan Shuttle
- Moorpark City Transit
- Simi Valley Transit
- Thousand Oaks Transit
- Valley Express
- VCTC Intercity
- East County Transit Alliance (ECTA)

**Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD)** conducted a separate SRTP in 2024, which is summarized in this document without further analysis. **Thousand Oaks Transit** also internally developed proposed service changes, which are summarized in the Thousand Oaks section.

### The report is structured as follows:

A discussion of **Methodology** presents our approach to understanding Ventura County’s transit as it currently is: the analysis techniques, the data sourced, and conventions used. A significant element of the approach was extensive **Engagement and Outreach** with community members and stakeholders.

The **Summary of Related Plans** identifies existing transportation planning documents from across the region and summarizes the relevant strategies that should be considered by this SRTP.

The **Countywide Overview** provides context on the demographics, travel patterns, and transit service (including governance and organizational structure) in the county. It also provides a high-level discussion of feedback collected during the engagement phase.

**Countywide Strategies** presents service recommendations at the county level.

The **Community-Specific Chapters** each focus on a distinct geographic area within Ventura County, or VCTC Intercity and ECTA, which are regional services and are discussed as such. The community chapters delve in depth to the following four main topics:

- The **Market Assessment** describes the community characteristics that contribute to transit ridership opportunity and demand including demographic and economic data, the built environment, and the travel patterns within the community and among its neighbors.

- The **Service Evaluation** describes the fixed-route and demand-response services operating within each community, along with an operational and financial analysis.
- The **Gaps and Opportunities** section highlights takeaways from the market assessment and service evaluation that guide the recommendations offered in the SRTP.
- The **Service Recommendations** section presents strategies to address the specific context of each community and connect to the larger countywide recommendations.

## Conventions used in this report

### TERMINOLOGY

The following is a list of important transit service concepts with definitions and, when appropriate, explanations of how this evaluation addresses them:

**Fixed-route** bus services operate on a published schedule along a specific route. Buses stop only to pick up and deliver passengers at specific locations. Passengers must review the schedule in advance and get to the bus stop before the bus arrives.

**Demand-response** service is reservation-based and will pick up and drop off an individual passenger (or small group) at the time and place of their choosing (within a defined service area). The primary categories of demand-response service are:

- **ADA Paratransit** service is required by federal law. The intent is to provide mobility comparable to that of the fixed-route system to passengers whose disability prevents them from using the existing fixed-route bus for any portion of their desired trip. Federal law requires transit agencies to offer paratransit within at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of any fixed-route stop, at times of day comparable to the fixed-route service. All agencies in Ventura County have opted to offer their federally mandated paratransit service to seniors aged 65 and above, as well as ADA-eligible riders. Most of these agencies also offer this service beyond the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius required by law. **In this report, the term “paratransit” is used to describe the service offered to ADA-eligible riders and seniors**, although others may use the word paratransit to broadly refer to all demand-response services.
- Many communities also offer **Dial-a-Ride** programs. Some of these have broader eligibility than paratransit but are otherwise similar point-to-point services. Dial-a-Ride (DAR) programs must be accessible but are not necessarily limited only to people with disabilities.
- **Microtransit** is effectively the same type of service as Dial-a-Ride, but riders can request a trip on their smartphone (or by calling the agency). This allows the rider to book a trip closer to their desired travel time. Paratransit and Dial-a-Ride programs traditionally require riders to request their trips at least a day in

advance. The software that powers microtransit allows for dynamic dispatching and makes scheduling easier for passengers and helps agencies to provide “on demand” service where feasible. It can be incorporated into traditional DAR and even paratransit programs, and represents a recent and evolving innovation.

**Service span** is how much of the day transit service is offered; for example, between 4:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. In this report, we generally round the span of service to the nearest half-hour of when the first route begins and when the last route ends. **The service spans described in this report are all based on 2023 scheduled departures** (using GTFS data) unless otherwise noted.

**Service frequency** is how often a bus departs a stop on a given fixed-route heading in one direction. Some routes only operate limited numbers of trips per day; generally, any service that operates less than once an hour is not described in terms of frequency.

**Revenue hours and miles** are the hours and mileage each day that service is available to the public for passenger pick up and drop off. **Transit productivity** is measured by dividing the average daily number of passenger boardings by the revenue hours operated. **Passengers per revenue mile** is also often reported, but this statistic is more useful in urban environments.

Buses that are driving, but not in passenger (revenue) service are “**deadheading.**” Buses deadhead between the garage and the first or last stop of the day, or sometimes between routes. Generally, deadhead hours and miles should be minimized where feasible.

**Walkability** is generally used to refer to how easy or difficult it is to reach nearby destinations either on foot or using personal mobility assistance devices like a wheelchair. Walkability is used rather than “accessibility” to help distinguish when the report is discussing required access for people with disabilities, which is an important topic specific to public transit vehicles and services.

**Fiscal Years:** Governmental agencies typically follow a fiscal year that begins on July 1 and concludes the following June 30<sup>th</sup>. For brevity, this report will refer to fiscal years only by the year they end. For example, Fiscal Year 2022/2023 begins on July 1, 2022, and ends June 30, 2023; in this report, it is abbreviated FY23.

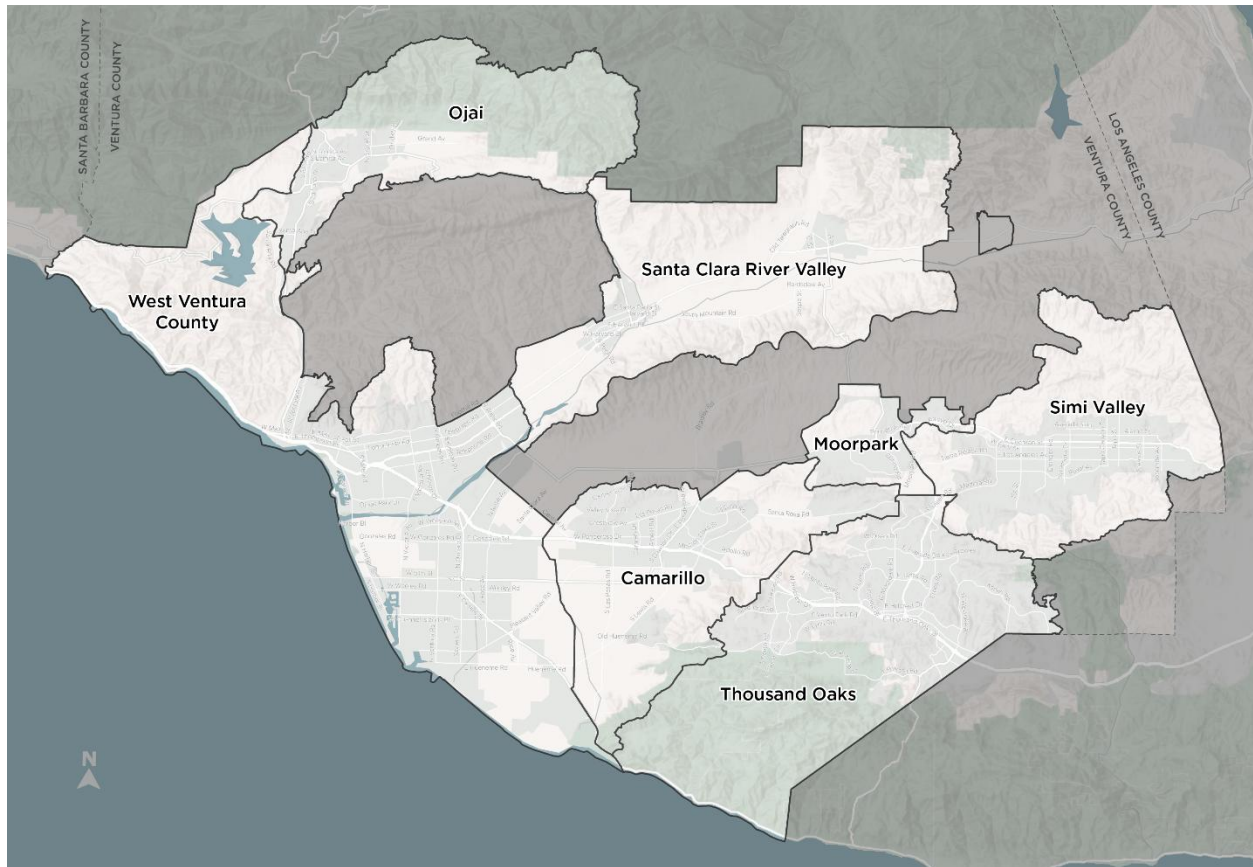
## MARKET ANALYSIS SUB-AREAS – DEFINITIONS AND EXTENTS

The overall SRTP study area was defined as the developed areas of Ventura County. The community-specific market assessments in this report are each focused on these sub-areas within the larger study area. These chapters focus primarily on local circulation within each sub-area and are delineated by transit agency or operator. Table 1 defines the sub-areas, and Figure 1 shows their extents.

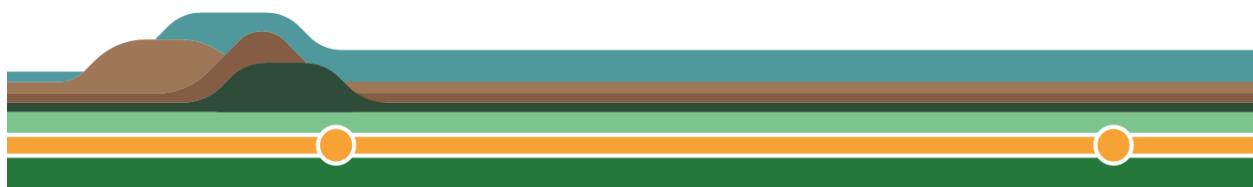
**Table 1: Market Analysis Sub-Area Definitions**

<b>Sub-Area</b>	<b>Primary Service Provider</b>	<b>Communities</b>
<b><i>Camarillo</i></b>	Camarillo Area Transit	Camarillo, Somis, and adjacent areas of unincorporated Ventura County
<b><i>West Ventura County</i></b>	Gold Coast Transit District	Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Saticoy, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Oakview, and adjacent areas of unincorporated Ventura County
<b><i>Moorpark</i></b>	Moorpark City Transit	Moorpark
<b><i>Ojai</i></b>	Ojai Trolley	Ojai, Mira Monte, Meiners Oaks
<b><i>Simi Valley</i></b>	Simi Valley Transit	Simi Valley
<b><i>Thousand Oaks</i></b>	Thousand Oaks Transit	Thousand Oaks, Casa Conejo, Oak Park, and adjacent unincorporated areas of Ventura County
<b><i>Santa Clara River Valley</i></b>	Valley Express	Fillmore, Santa Paula, Piru, and adjacent areas of unincorporated Ventura County
<b><i>Countywide</i></b>	Ventura County Transportation Commission	Ventura County

**Figure 1: SRTP Market Analysis Sub-Areas**



Note: Sub-areas were defined at the Census block group level to encompass the core fixed-route and demand-response service areas for each transit agency within Ventura County.



## 3. METHODOLOGY

At the highest level, the analysis approach for this SRTP consisted of the following steps/themes:

- **Measure** – Develop a detailed picture of things as they currently are (describe the existing conditions).
  - Observe/articulate the details of existing routes and services, ridership patterns
  - Research the local context—geography, population, demographics, history
- **Evaluate** – what parts of the picture are good? What parts are weaker?
  - Compare current performance to past performance, to similar markets, to industry standards
  - Engage with the community to understand their needs, where those needs are being met, and where they are not
- **Identify** – Where are the gaps & opportunities?
  - Are there areas where existing service is misaligned with community need?
  - Are there lessons to be learned/applied from industry best practices?
- **Recommend** – Develop clear, detailed solutions to address all of the above

The SRTP team considered the steps above for each individual community sub-area, as well as for the county as a whole. This section presents details about the techniques and data used at each step of the analysis. The results of the analysis are presented in the countywide and community-specific sections, respectively.

### Measure

#### SUMMARY OF RELATED PLANS

A foundational first step is to understand the work that has come before. To this end, the SRTP team dug into plans already in place in Ventura County, looking for themes, patterns, and existing goals. This step also considered previous analysis to see what could be applied to the current SRTP, and what could be adjusted/updated.

#### MARKET ASSESSMENT

A transit market assessment uses demographic and economic data, travel data, and maps to investigate where transit service might best support people’s travel needs. Transit can be valuable for the many different trips that make up daily life—commuting to work or school, but also accessing medical services, running errands, and connecting to recreational activities (i.e. Beach Bus). Particularly in Ventura County, where many people live and work in different locations, transit should address trip purposes beyond commuting. For transit

servicing jobs, the category can affect service design (professional and service jobs tend to fit better with local transit while agriculture and manufacturing/warehousing may require a different approach).

Transit agencies operating with constrained resources face the competing needs of geographical reach and frequency of service. To inform this decision, a market assessment considers two groups more specifically: **people who are less likely to drive** (students and seniors), and **people who could most benefit from affordable transportation** (low-income and zero-car or single-car households).

The analysis team evaluated the demographics, employment generators, and travel patterns for each community sub-area within Ventura County, as well as patterns countywide, to identify transit gaps and opportunities.

The analysis also considered the built environment of each community to identify factors that influence transit design. Older (pre-WWII) development typically features residential and commercial land uses in walking distance to one another. Development from the 1950s and later often features distinct land uses separated by larger roads, and fewer destinations within a short walk of one another. These differences affect the optimal design of transit.

#### DATA SOURCES

The supporting analyses draw on data from a variety of sources, including:

- **2022–2023 Streetlight data** – this data uses connected vehicle data sourced from vehicle models that support location tracking via GPS to provide anonymized origin–destination data. This report used data estimating average weekday travel at the block group level.
- **Replica’s** activity–based travel demand model data to supplement Streetlight data in capturing origin–destination travel patterns across the county. Replica combines multiple datasets including Census, location data, travel surveys, and customer activity data to represent activities and travel behavior. This analysis uses Spring 2024 data unless otherwise noted.
- **2021 U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics (LEHD) data** to determine the total jobs per square mile for census blocks within each community, and the breakdown of jobs by sector for each community. This dataset provides publicly available, anonymized summaries of the locations of employers and employees, based on data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and Unemployment Insurance. This report primarily uses the LEHD Origin–Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) to review employment data by Census block. This analysis aggregated the job sectors into the following categories:
  - Professional Services
  - Service Industry

- Industrial/Logistics
- Agriculture/Mining
- **2021 U.S. Census OnTheMap data** to analyze the number of employed residents working elsewhere, working and living in the same community, or workers in the community who live elsewhere. U.S. Census OntheMap data is compiled from the LEHD LODES dataset described above and provides inflow and outflow diagrams for residents and workers in U.S. cities.
- **Cities and transit agencies' Annual Financial Reports (ACFR)** to identify top employers for each community.
- **2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates** to develop the **transit propensity index**, which combines population density, job density, senior and youth populations, and vehicle-light and low-income households to create a score that indicates how likely a census block group is to have transit riders.

When the SRTP analysis began in early 2024, the most recently available Census data at the time were the 2021 ACS products. More recent data is unlikely to have changed enough to materially affect plans and concepts for the SRTP.

## FIXED-ROUTE AND DEMAND-RESPONSE TOPICS

Both the countywide and community-specific chapters describe the operations of existing fixed-route and demand-response service, touching on ridership, service productivity, and operational costs. Each chapter discusses the geographical coverage of the particular system, including transfer locations to neighboring or regional service.

### DATA SOURCES

All agency data (such as routes, frequency, and service span) were provided by the agencies and represent a snapshot of service as of 2023–2024. The project team also conducted interviews with individual agencies and have incorporated their feedback and insights throughout this report. Other data sources are noted as applicable.

## Evaluate

### SERVICE EVALUATION

This section describes the transit services operated by the agency and evaluates the performance statistics going back ten years. Each service is evaluated within the specific context of its community—factors like size, built environment, and role within the region. The communities examined represent a variety of population densities and job densities. The evaluation also notes the extent to which existing service is commensurate with the community's specific characteristics.

#### *DATA SOURCES*

All agency data (such as ridership and financial data) were provided by the agencies and represent a snapshot of service as of 2023–2024. The project team also conducted interviews with individual agencies and have incorporated their feedback and insights throughout this report. Other data sources are noted as applicable.

### ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

The SRTP team conducted community engagement at several stages throughout the project. The intent was to go beyond the quantitative service data, to qualitatively understand the issues, experiences, and needs that people face in using transit across Ventura County. Engagement also sought to gauge community reactions to initial concepts for the Plan. Appendix A provides a detailed breakdown of specific engagement activities, which took place in three phases. It also presents a comprehensive discussion of survey results.

#### *PHASE 1 - INITIATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS*

Phase 1 of engagement began in December 2023 and January 2024, with the goals of identifying specific transit needs, helping set the direction for the SRTP, guiding the data analysis, as well as refining targets and topics for additional surveys later in the project. Engagement during this phase took a variety of forms, targeting a variety of audiences. The team held **workshops and focus groups with project stakeholders**, including transit agency staff, the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), the Transit Operators Advisory Committee (TRANSCOM), local educational institutions, and local employers.

#### *PHASE 2 - SURVEYING RIDERS AND NON-RIDERS*

Phase 2 deployed targeted surveys to different audiences, with the goal of further defining the needs and opportunities to pursue in developing transit improvements. Between February and April of 2024, the project team distributed **rider surveys on board buses** across most of the County (except for Gold Coast Transit and Ojai Trolley buses). Surveys

were distributed in English, Spanish, and Mandarin, and the effort resulted in a total of 753 responses.

An **online survey targeted at the general public and non-riders** went live in Spring 2024, promoted through a combination of e-blasts and social media. Of the 600 responses, about 450 were from Ventura County residents, with most of the rest from LA County residents, and a few from Santa Barbara County residents.

In Summer 2024, the project team led **another survey, specifically sent to dial-a-ride and paratransit riders**. This survey was distributed both by mail and online to residents across Ventura County who have used one or both of these services.

Appendix A presents the results of all these surveys in detail, including the demographic characteristics of respondents, as well as specific feedback received.

### *PHASE 3 - INPUT ON SERVICE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS*

Using input and results from Phases 1 and 2, the consultant team developed an initial round of service concepts and brought those draft concepts back to the public, agency staff, and project stakeholders. Phase 3 engagement took place between Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, and gathered feedback on these initial concepts, to help influence the final Plan.

### *DATA SOURCES*

Unlike the market assessments and summary of current service and performance metrics, which relied on existing data from a variety of sources, the engagement phases sought to **generate new data**, in the form of survey responses and qualitative feedback. The project team then analyzed this data in detail to understand patterns, and gain a deeper understanding of the community experience.

## Identify

### GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

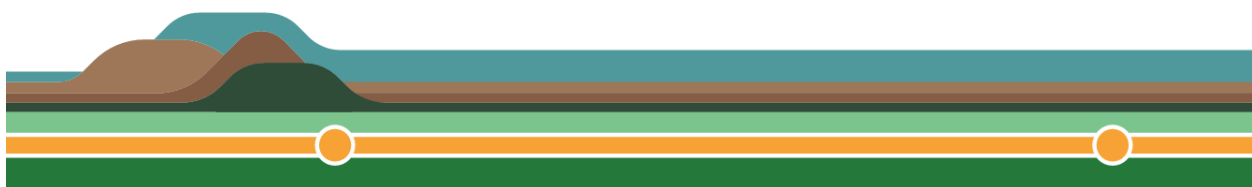
The next step was to connect this new deeper understanding of community context (from the market assessments and engagement feedback), with the detailed snapshot of how transit actually functions in each sub-area (from the service evaluations and engagement feedback). This allowed the SRTP team to uncover potential misalignments between transit service as it is currently provided, and the transportation needs and goals of the local community. These findings and observations inform the service recommendations in the SRTP.

## Recommend

Building on all the assessments and analysis from prior sections, the SRTP team developed comprehensive recommendations for improving transit service—both at the countywide level and for each specific sub-area. These recommendations take a variety of forms, from specific tools and metrics that agencies can use to better understand an individual route’s performance, to guidance on service and route design built on principles from industry best practices, to suggestions for outreach and advertising strategies.

### ADVISORY NATURE OF SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The SRTP recognizes that service planning involves complex operational, financial, and policy considerations that vary by community and operator. The service recommendations presented in the following section are intended to provide planning-level guidance and conceptual service options to support local and regional transit goals. These community-specific recommendations are not prescriptive and are not required to be implemented. Each transit operator and jurisdiction retains full authority over its respective services. Any potential implementation would require additional analysis, community outreach, coordination with partner agencies, and other applicable factors. The recommendations are intended to inform future decision-making and support ongoing efforts to enhance transit service, connectivity, and rider experience.



## 4. SUMMARY OF RELATED PLANS

### Analysis of Ventura County Transit Comprehensive Plans

Ventura County's transit landscape is shaped by a series of strategic plans, each contributing an approach to enhancing the region's transportation network. While all plans share overarching goals of improving infrastructure, sustainability, and accessibility, they differ in focus and execution. These plans collectively inform the approach to regional transit planning in addition to the local goals and priorities.

The **Ventura County Active Transportation Plan (2024)** is a master plan and policy document that aims to increase active transportation use in the County. The plan includes guidelines for transit stops and first/last mile elements.

The **VCTC Strategic Plan (2023)** sets a framework for Ventura County's transportation system through fiscal year 2027/2028, focusing on a more connected, resilient, equitable, and user-friendly transportation system for Ventura County.

The **Ventura County Transit Integration and Efficiency Study (2023)** evaluated opportunities for better coordination between transit providers to improve administrative efficiency and support better outcomes for riders. The study considered integration of bus transit operations in Ventura County and focuses on practical measures to enhance service delivery and resource management.

The **Ventura County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2023)** and its earlier version from 2013 emphasize multi-modal transportation solutions and the transition to low-emission vehicles. Both plans aim to integrate various modes of transport, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and promote transit-oriented development.

In 2023, agencies in Ventura County developed **Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Rollout and Implementation Plans** as required by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) mandate. These reports include detailed plans of the technology, needs, and strategies that will help each agency transition to a ZEB fleet.

The **VCTC Transit Asset Management Plan (2022)** concentrates on the maintenance and upgrading of transit system assets. This plan aims to keep vehicles, stations, and infrastructure in optimal condition to support reliable service delivery.

Addressing the needs of transit-dependent populations, the **VCTC Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (2022)** emphasizes accessibility and equity. This plan is complemented by **VCTC Communities Connected (2020)**, which focuses on improving overall connectivity across the county.

The **VCTC Intercity Five-Year Service Plan (2015)** outlines strategies for enhancing intercity transit services, focusing on service quality and expansion between cities. The **VCTC Triennial Performance Audit (2020-2022)**, provides a retrospective evaluation of transit system performance, offering recommendations for improvement based on historical data.

Environmental sustainability is a central theme in the **Ventura County CEQA Vehicle Miles Traveled Adaptive Mitigation Program (2023)**. This plan specifically aims to mitigate vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with broader sustainability goals outlined in the comprehensive plans.

The **Ventura County Regional Transit Study (2012)** and the **Ventura County Short Range Transit Plan (2015)** provided analyses and short-term strategies for improving the transit system. The 2015 Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) is the direct predecessor of this current effort.

The **Simi Valley Transit Short Range Transit Plan (2017)** offers an example of a city-specific plan and zeroes in on operational improvements and service expansions specific to Simi Valley.



## Key Takeaways

Ventura County's transit-related plans share common goals of sustainability, infrastructure enhancement, and accessibility, while they differ in their specific focuses and methods. Table 2 summarizes the recommended strategies that appear across these plans, and highlights which plans have common objectives.

### BETTER BUS SERVICE, BETTER BUSES

A common theme in plans developed before the COVID-19 pandemic is the **improvement of bus service schedules and service consistency**. Since adoption in 2018 of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit regulations, plans placed a greater focus on emission reduction and prioritizing the transition to lower-emission vehicle fleet.

### MULTIMODAL IMPROVEMENTS

**Infrastructure enhancements, particularly for bicycles and pedestrians**, are another recurring strategy, coinciding with the passage of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which provides substantial funding for a wide range of transportation infrastructure projects, including active transportation infrastructure and Complete Streets initiatives.

### ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH AFFORDABILITY

The **implementation of reduced fare programs** is a common strategy to increase transit affordability and boost ridership, reflecting an emphasis on making public transportation more accessible and equitable. This emphasis on equity has become even more pronounced in light of the pandemic and social justice movements, highlighting the need to support essential workers and vulnerable populations.

### MAKING TRANSIT THE BETTER OPTION

Plans frequently mention the goal of **developing or upgrading transit centers with timed connections to improve network integration and connectivity**, underscoring the importance of central nodes for efficient transit operations. Alongside these efforts, several plans include **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies** aiming to optimize the use of transit resources and reduce congestion through measures such as incentivizing off-peak travel.

### SETTING GOALS AND MEETING THEM

Finally, many plans emphasize the need for **robust performance tracking and goal-setting mechanisms**, ensuring that strategies are effectively implemented and continuously improved upon.

**Table 2: Related Plans Strategy Matrix**

	Transition to a lower-emission vehicle fleet (electric, hybrid)	Implement Complete Streets principles to enhance the safety of vulnerable road users	Optimize transit routes to increase connectivity and efficiency	Consolidate transit services and/or routes	Improved transit service schedule consistency and reliability	Enable the execution of transit-oriented development initiatives	Pilot and implement a reduced fare program	Enhance infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians	Develop or upgrade transit centers to improve network integration	Implement TDM strategies	Track goals and implement performance measures
<i>VCTC Intercity Five-Year Service Plan (2015)</i>											
<i>Ventura County Short Range Transit Plan (2015)</i>											
<i>Simi Valley Transit Short Range Transit Plan (2017)</i>											
<i>VCTC Communities Connected (2020)</i>											
<i>VCTC Triennial Performance Audit (2020-2022)</i>											
<i>VCTC Transit Asset Management Plan (2022)</i>											
<i>VCTC Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (2022)</i>											
<i>VCTC Strategic Plan (2023)</i>											

	Transition to a lower-emission vehicle fleet (electric, hybrid)	Implement Complete Streets principles to enhance the safety of vulnerable road users	Optimize transit routes to increase connectivity and efficiency	Consolidate transit services and/or routes	Improved transit service schedule consistency and reliability	Enable the execution of transit-oriented development initiatives	Pilot and implement a reduced fare program	Enhance infrastructure for bicycles and pedestrians	Develop or upgrade transit centers to improve network integration	Implement TDM strategies	Track goals and implement performance measures
<i>Ventura County Transit Integration &amp; Efficiency Study (2023)</i>											
<i>Ventura County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2023)</i>											
<i>Ventura County CEQA Vehicle Miles Traveled Adaptive Mitigation Program (2023)</i>											
<i>ZEB Strategy and Rollout Plans (2023)</i>											
<i>Ventura County Active Transportation Plan (2024)</i>											

## 5. COUNTYWIDE OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the demographics, travel market, and existing transit service in Ventura County, as well as a summary of feedback gathered during several phases of community engagement.

### Ventura County

Ventura County has a population of 845,255 and is home to nearly 300,000 jobs.<sup>1</sup> While most people commute to work by driving alone, 10 percent of employed residents carpool to work. Fewer than three percent of employed residents in Ventura County take public transit, walk, or bike to get to work.

Between 2015 and 2021, Ventura County saw a small increase in total population and a small decrease in jobs. During this same period, the county became more diverse, with a nine-point increase in the percentage of non-white residents (based on people identifying two or more races). However, the proportion of people of Hispanic heritage, Black/African American populations, and Asian populations all remained about the same. Meanwhile, average household income and car ownership increased slightly. Table 3 provides additional details on Ventura County's demographic changes.

**Table 3: Ventura County Demographics**

Ventura County	2015	2021
<i>Total residential population</i>	840,833	845,255
<i>Senior citizens (ages 65+)</i>	110,084 (13%)	132,487 (16%)
<i>Youth (ages 10–17)</i>	96,502 (11%)	93,540 (11%)
<i>Persons with Disabilities</i>	85,878 (10%)	92,203 (11%)
<i>Persons Below Poverty Level</i>	80,854 (10%)	71,418 (8%)
<i>White Population</i>	662,754 (79%)	592,773 (70%)
<i>Black/African American Population</i>	15,063 (2%)	15,486 (2%)
<i>Asian Population</i>	59,508 (7%)	61,322 (7%)
<i>Hispanic Population</i>	349,799 (42%)	366,211 (43%)
<i>Language Spoken at Home (ages 5+)</i>		
<i>Speak only English</i>	484,117 (62%)	497,124 (62%)

<sup>1</sup> ACS 5-year estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin–Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Ventura County	2015	2021
<i>Speak Spanish</i>	239,140 (30%)	237,361 (30%)
<i>Speak other languages</i>	63,368 (8%)	63,178 (8%)
<i>Low-income individuals</i>	80,854 (10%)	74,418 (8.6%)
<i>Car-light households<sup>1</sup></i>	52,991 (20%)	40,292 (15%)
<i>Zero-vehicle Households</i>	12,503 (5%)	11,610 (4%)
<i>Jobs</i>	304,532	298,476
<i>Mean Travel Time</i>	25.8 minutes	26 minutes
<b>Means of Transportation to Work</b>		
<i>Drove Alone</i>	77.1%	76.1%
<i>Carpooled</i>	12.6%	9.5%
<i>Public Transportation</i>	1.3%	0.8%
<i>Walked</i>	1.9%	1.6%
<i>Biked</i>	0.7%	0.4%
<i>Worked from Home</i>	6%	10.7%
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$77,348	\$94,167

Note:

<sup>1</sup> Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.  
 Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

## The Post-Pandemic Travel Market

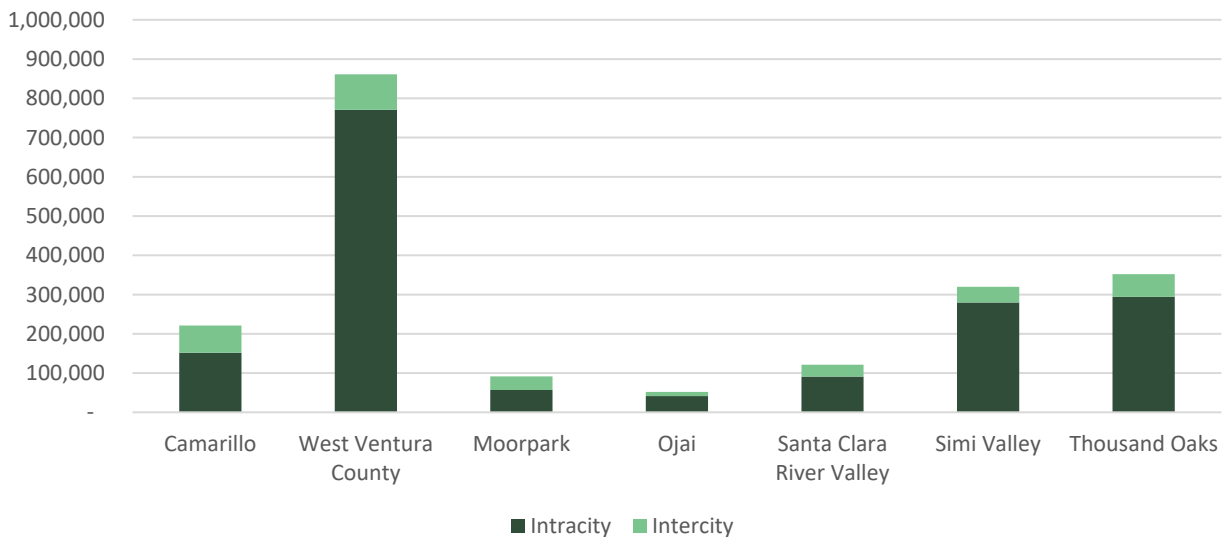
The COVID-19 pandemic measurably altered travel patterns, particularly in work travel for people who previously had office-based jobs. The most significant change in Ventura County commute patterns between 2015 (when the previous SRTP was completed) and 2021 was the increase in the number of residents who worked from home, which grew by nearly five percent. As a result, all other commute modes saw a drop in percentage points, with the largest declines occurring in the “drove alone” and “carpooled” mode choices. According to the most recent travel estimates produced by Replica, travel to work on a typical Thursday in spring 2025 represented 13.5% of all trips beginning in Ventura County, down from 14.3% in 2019.

Although more people work from home at least sometimes, **car ownership has increased compared to 2015**. The share of car-light households in the County—defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle—decreased by five percentage points between 2015 and 2021.

Despite these changes, travel in the county still fundamentally follows a familiar framework. First, based on an analysis of Streetlight origin–destination data **there is almost always more travel activity within a given city than there are trips to another**. People usually go to school locally, buy groceries locally, go out for dinner, and get their hair cut locally. This pattern is particularly true in Ventura County, where most cities east of Oxnard and Ventura are relatively separate from one another.

Second, although people often think of commuting as one of the most important markets for transit to serve, **work trips usually make up no more than a quarter of a given individual’s travel.**<sup>2</sup> Transit can successfully serve work trips, but most transit agencies/operators have seen a substantial decline from office workers who now work from home at least a few days a week.

**Figure 2: Intracity vs. Intercity Trips for Trips Originating in Each Sub–Area**



Streetlight Data, 2022

Across all communities in Ventura County:

- **Over half of vehicle trips start and end within the same community.** The specific percentage of local trips ranges from 62 to 90 percent across the communities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, “Summary of Travel Trends: 2022 National Household Travel Survey,” 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Streetlight Data, 2022.

- **A community's next most common trip destination is typically its neighboring communities.**<sup>4</sup> 97 percent of trips start and end in the same community or a neighboring community.
- **Overall, most of the areas identified with the highest transit propensity scores are served by at least one transit stop.**<sup>5</sup> However, there are some areas of significant travel within communities that are underserved or not served at all by fixed-route service, like the communities along Las Posas Road west of Arneill Road in Camarillo and Madera Road in southwestern Simi Valley.
- **Over 75 percent of employed residents commute to work outside of their home community**<sup>6</sup> (in other words, fewer than 25 percent of residents in Ventura County live and work in the same community). Generally, the communities with more jobs available (like Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, and Simi Valley) have a lower percentage of employed residents working outside city boundaries, while the opposite is true for communities with fewer jobs.
- **Around half of the areas with the highest job density are served by at least one transit stop.**<sup>7</sup> The largest employers are often located along major arterial roads or regional connector roads like state highways. However, **agriculture, industrial, and manufacturing jobs (in communities like Camarillo, Santa Paula, and Moorpark) are further away from main roads and are often not served by transit.**

The communities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and Ventura are the most densely built and populated, with the greatest degree of walkability and mix of land use that supports people using transit for many purposes. Because these areas also feature regional job centers and social services, many people travel to these communities from other parts of the county, too.

Most cities in the County are separated by stretches of farmland and open space (often mountainous). Regional destinations include shopping centers in Camarillo and Thousand Oaks; Simi Valley is home to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and a high concentration of jobs; Moorpark College, California State University Channel Islands, California Lutheran University, and Oxnard College draw students from across the county; Ojai is a recreational and tourism destination. Smaller communities (including Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, and Moorpark) may rely on neighboring communities for services, healthcare, and schools.

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<sup>4</sup> Streetlight Data, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Fehr & Peers Transit Propensity Index, 2024; ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> US Census OntheMap, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021; Fehr & Peers, 2024.



## Existing Transit Service

Ten distinctly branded transit agencies operate within Ventura County. Nine of these agencies offer fixed-route service, while ECTA is a subregional, intercity Dial-a-Ride service operated through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks and Ventura County. The City of Camarillo also participates in ECTA for the purpose of coordination but has not elected to participate in the cost sharing agreement.

Approximately 60 percent of Ventura County residents live within a quarter mile of local bus service coverage. Most operators in the county provide local circulation within developed urban and suburban areas. VCTC Intercity routes, meanwhile, connect between cities within the County, as well as neighboring regions. VCTC Intercity also makes limited stops within each community, supplementing the transit service provided by local circulators. More rural areas of the County generally do not have bus service within walking distance.

These local transit services are complemented by regional service from both within and outside of Ventura County. Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) both operate regional services into Thousand Oaks. VCTC Intercity services provide connections to communities within Los Angeles County (including Chatsworth, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village, and Woodland Hills) and within Santa Barbara County (including Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, and Goleta). Simi Valley operates a bus route between Moorpark College and Chatsworth in Los Angeles County, and the Kanan Shuttle operates partly within Agoura Hills in Los Angeles County as well. Metrolink and Amtrak provide intercity and regional rail service, which is described in more detail in later sections.

## FIXED-ROUTE BUS SERVICE

Some services, like Camarillo Area Transit, Ojai Trolley, and Moorpark City Transit, focus exclusively on local circulation via one to two fixed routes, while other operators, like Simi Valley Transit and Valley Express, operate routes that provide connections to adjacent cities in addition to local circulation. Table 4 presents the fixed-route services within the study area as they were in 2023.

**Table 4: Fixed-Route Bus Services**

Service Provider	Unique Routes	Service Area		Communities Served
		Area <sup>1</sup> (square miles)	Service Population <sup>2</sup>	
<b><i>Camarillo Area Transit</i></b>	2	4.6	57,000	Camarillo
<b><i>Gold Coast Transit District</i></b>	17	40.1	424,900	Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Saticoy, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Oakview, Ojai, and adjacent areas of unincorporated Ventura County
<b><i>Kanan Shuttle</i></b>	1	2.6	21,400	Oak Park, Agoura Hills
<b><i>Moorpark City Transit</i></b>	2	4.9	35,000	Moorpark
<b><i>Ojai Trolley</i></b>	1	4.6	17,500	Ojai, Mira Monte, Meiners Oaks
<b><i>Simi Valley Transit</i></b>	3	13.6	128,400	Simi Valley, Chatsworth (LA County), Moorpark College
<b><i>Thousand Oaks Transit</i></b>	6	13.2	131,600	Thousand Oaks, Casa Conejo, Westlake Village, Malibu (summer route), Ventura Harbor (summer route)
<b><i>Valley Express</i></b>	7	6.3	50,400	Fillmore, Santa Paula, Piru, Moorpark
<b><i>VCTC Intercity</i></b>	18	18.5	386,900	Camarillo, Carpinteria, Fillmore, Goleta, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Santa Barbara, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Ventura, Woodland Hills (Los Angeles), Saticoy, UCSB, CSU Channel Islands, and adjacent areas of unincorporated Ventura County

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Defined as the area in square miles of the 10-minute walkshed around all existing bus stops.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated residential population plus jobs within a half mile of an existing bus stop, using Remix.

Source: Transit agency websites, 2024; Remix; Fehr & Peers, 2023.

Table 5 offers context on the range of service levels (revenue hours) and an average of how many trips are made relative to the service levels (boardings per revenue hour). The individual chapters dedicated to each provider delve further into their routes.

**Table 5: Fixed-Route Operational Characteristics for FY23**

Service Provider	Annual Ridership	Annual Revenue Hours	Average Boardings per Revenue Hour
<i>Camarillo Area Transit</i>	24,550	5,280	4.6
<i>Gold Coast Transit District</i>	2.96 million	186,565	15.9
<i>Kanan Shuttle</i>	35,625	2,604	13.7
<i>Moorpark City Transit</i>	25,758	5,804	4.4
<i>Ojai Trolley</i>	36,691	4,316	8.5
<i>Simi Valley Transit</i>	161,404133,634	26,993	5.0
<i>Thousand Oaks Transit</i>	152,351	21,823	7.0
<i>Valley Express</i>	37,193	6,489	5.7
<i>VCTC Intercity</i>	365,900	59,221	6.2

Source: Transit agency data, 2024; GCTD 2023 NTD Annual Agency Profile.

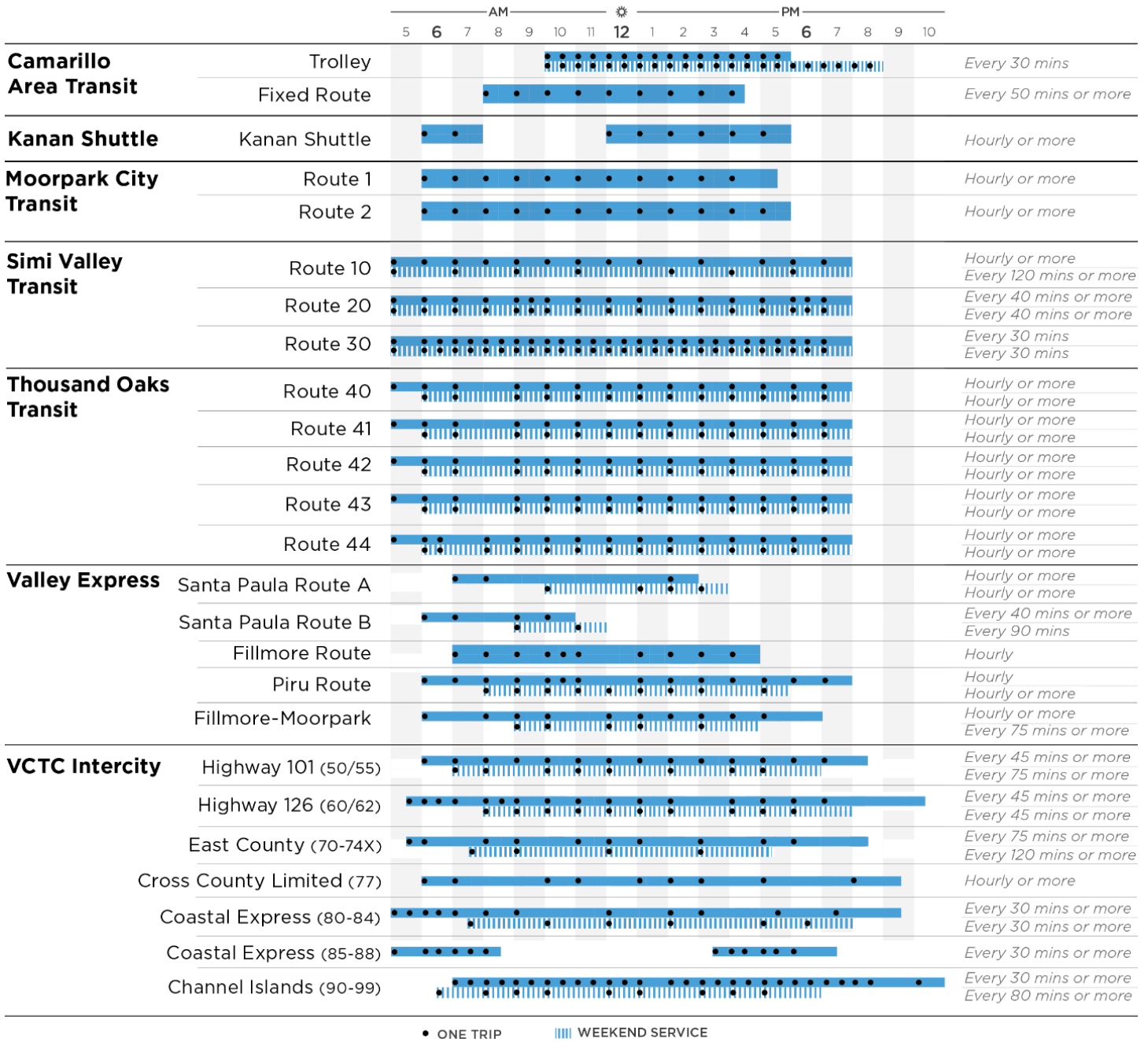
GCTD operates the highest frequency local bus network, as its service area comprises the most urban portion of the county. VCTC Intercity is unique among the providers in its service design of limited-stop/express buses that have historically been commuter-focused. Most other operators provide local circulator routes that generally operate on hourly headways and often are designed as a loop and/or hub-and-spoke system where the routes converge hourly at a central location to facilitate coverage across the city. Special services such as seasonal routes to the beach are not included in this SRTP.

Nearly all bus routes in Ventura County outside of Oxnard and Ventura end service before 8:00 p.m. Saturday service is offered only by Thousand Oaks Transit, Simi Valley Transit, Ojai Valley Express and on select Valley Express, Camarillo Area Transit, and VCTC Intercity routes. Sunday service is offered only by Ojai and on select Valley Express, Camarillo Area Transit, and VCTC Intercity routes. The service spans of the different operators are summarized in Figure 3.

Since the pandemic, operators across the region have struggled with lower ridership, but have seen no corresponding decrease in operating costs. In some cases, operating costs increased. This leads to operating costs per revenue hour that continue to trend upwards.

Figure 3: Span of Service by Transit Agency

### Span of Service



Note: GCTD span of service varies by route. Most routes operate seven days a week between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. with peak frequencies ranging from 20 minutes to 60 minutes.  
 Source: Transit agency data, 2024.

## DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICE

Most communities in Ventura County offer Dial-a-Ride (DAR) programs within their respective city boundaries. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires operators to provide ADA Complementary Paratransit service within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of any fixed-route service. In most communities this paratransit requirement is met by the DAR program. All communities in this study have chosen to expand the availability of paratransit to seniors, regardless if they have a disability, although this is not required by law. Several communities also choose to extend the DAR program to the general public. The East County Transit Alliance (ECTA) represents a special agreement between the cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks, and Ventura County to offer a premium intercity DAR service. The City of Thousand Oaks serves as the fiscal agent and operator for the ECTA service. The City of Camarillo participates in ECTA for the purpose of coordination but has not elected to participate in the cost sharing agreement. Instead, Camarillo provides direct service to and from Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Thousand Oaks, as well as transfers to/from Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) via Camarillo Area Transit (CAT) for Camarillo residents 65 and older and individuals with a disability. The ECTA service provides trips to/from Camarillo for its riders as well as to points west via a transfer with GCTD.

Microtransit is an emerging type of demand-response service. It pairs traditional DAR operation with the on-demand scheduling capability of modern technology to dynamically assign trips to vehicles as rider requests come in. Microtransit typically serves only local trips, and often uses smaller, minivan-style vehicles. GCTD and Moorpark had launched microtransit services at the beginning of the SRTP development, and Simi Valley Transit launched its own program in 2025.

Additionally, Ventura County makes use of the Access for All grant program, which funds projects to expand on-demand wheelchair-accessible transportation services for those unable to use typical ride-sharing options like Uber and Lyft. VCTC administers this state-funded program and has contracted with Ventura Transit System (VTS) to provide on-demand transportation service using wheelchair-accessible vehicles 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, anywhere within Ventura County for individuals who use wheelchairs and seek on-demand transportation.

More information on demand-response services in Ventura County is provided in Table 6 and Table 7.

**Table 6: Demand-Response Services**

Service Provider	Demand-Response Offerings	Service Area (square miles)	Service Population <sup>1</sup>	Communities Served
<b>Agoura Hills</b>	ADA Paratransit/ Senior (50+) Dial-a-Ride, AH-GO	91.4 <sup>2</sup>	207,784	Agoura Hills, Malibu Lake, and for increased fare, Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks, and Oak Park
<b>Camarillo Area Transit<sup>3</sup></b>	General Dial-a-Ride (no eligibility requirements)	19.8	100,100	Camarillo and for a subset of riders, Oxnard and California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI)
<b>East County Transit Alliance<sup>4</sup></b>	ADA Paratransit /Senior (65+) Dial-a-Ride	146.7	414,071	Moorpark, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Santa Susana Knolls Extended service area: Camarillo, Somis, CSUCI, Agoura Hills
<b>Gold Coast Transit District</b>	ADA Paratransit/Senior (65+) Dial-a-Ride, GO ACCESS Zones, Late Night Safe Rides	108.8	495,287	Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Saticoy, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Oakview, Ojai, and adjacent areas of unincorporated Ventura County
<b>Kanan Shuttle</b>	None	-	-	-
<b>Moorpark City Transit</b>	ADA Paratransit /Senior (65+) Dial-a-Ride, MCT On Demand	12.5	48,900	Moorpark
<b>Ojai Trolley</b>	None	-	-	-
<b>Simi Valley Transit<sup>5</sup></b>	ADA Paratransit/Senior Dial-a-Ride (65+), SVT On Demand	31.8	149,476	Simi Valley, Chatsworth, Moorpark College
<b>Thousand Oaks Transit</b>	ADA Paratransit/Senior (65+) Dial-a-Ride	75.9	214,454	Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village, Agoura Hills, and adjacent areas of unincorporated Ventura County
<b>Valley Express</b>	General Dial-a-Ride (no eligibility requirements)	74.0	76,822	Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, and adjacent areas of unincorporated Ventura County
<b>VCTC Intercity</b>	None	-	-	-

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Approximate residential population and jobs in the portion of demand-response service area within Ventura County.

<sup>2</sup> Only accounts for the portion of the service area within Ventura County.

<sup>3</sup> Service area and service population correspond to the general public DAR boundary, which is the Camarillo city limits.

<sup>4</sup> Service area and service population correspond to the primary ECTA service area.

<sup>5</sup> Service area and service population correspond to the senior/ADA service area. SVT On Demand serves a subset of destinations.

Source: Transit agency websites, 2024; Remix; Fehr & Peers, 2023; ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

**Table 7: Demand-Response Operational Statistics for FY23**

Service Provider	Ridership <sup>1</sup>	Revenue Hours	Boardings per Revenue Hour
<i>Agoura Hills (LA County)</i>	2,012	Not available	Not available
<i>Camarillo Area Transit</i>	42,811	15,387	2.8
<i>East County Transit Alliance</i>	8,051	5,955	1.4
<i>Gold Coast Transit District</i>	84,895	39,677	2.1
<i>Moorpark City Transit<sup>2</sup></i>	16,251	5,805	2.8
<i>Simi Valley Transit</i>	45,432	8,932	5.1
<i>Thousand Oaks Transit</i>	26,686	14,531	1.8
<i>Valley Express</i>	16,097	14,101	1.1

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Ridership is defined as the total number of unlinked passenger trips.

<sup>2</sup> Moorpark data shown includes all senior, ADA, and microtransit (MCT On-Demand).

Source: Transit agency data, 2024.

## PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

### METROLINK

Metrolink operates seven lines of commuter rail service in the Los Angeles region. The Ventura County Line includes stations in East Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Moorpark, and Simi Valley, and seven stations in Los Angeles County (Chatsworth, Northridge, Van Nuys, Burbank-Bob Hope Airport, Downtown Burbank, Glendale, and Los Angeles Union Station). Service operates Monday-Friday between 5:00 a.m. and approximately 8:30 p.m. There are eight weekday southbound trains to Los Angeles and eight weekday northbound trains from Los Angeles; five of these round trips operate only as far as Moorpark, stopping short of Camarillo, Oxnard, and East Ventura, while the other three trains serve all stations. In October 2024, Metrolink launched its Metrolink Reimagined schedule redesign which sought to spread service more evenly throughout the day and provide better bi-directional service. While overall train frequency in Ventura County remains the same, schedule adjustments were made to include mid-day service extending beyond Moorpark to Ventura.

Additionally, through an agreement with Amtrak/Pacific Surfliner known as the Codeshare program, select trains accept Metrolink tickets in order to provide a more robust schedule. The Codeshare program allows passengers to use a single ticket to travel seamlessly on both Metrolink and Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains along shared routes, providing greater flexibility and connectivity expands between L.A. Union Station and Ventura – Downtown/Beach stations. The Amtrak/Pacific Surfliner serves the Ventura Downtown/Beach station instead of the Ventura East Metrolink station, but otherwise serves the same Ventura County stations.

*PACIFIC SURFLINER/AMTRAK*

Amtrak operates the Pacific Surfliner, an intercity rail line between San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, and San Diego, which serves the Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Moorpark and Simi Valley stations. Six northbound trains and six southbound trains operate daily. Thanks to the Rail 2 Rail Program, a ticket-sharing agreement with Metrolink, Metrolink Monthly Pass holders and passengers on Amtrak Pacific Surfliner can seamlessly transfer between trains on overlapping routes along the Ventura County and Orange County lines without additional fares. These partnerships enhance the benefits of ongoing schedule coordination between Metrolink and Amtrak, improving regional rail integration and connectivity across southern California.

The Amtrak Coast Starlight train operates one daily round-trip between Los Angeles and Seattle with Ventura County stops only in Oxnard and Simi Valley.



## EXISTING FARE STRUCTURE

Each agency sets base fares and policies individually, and any similarities between agencies are presumed to be coincidental. However, there is a level of regional coordination, led by VCTC, to offer youth and college rider fare subsidies across the county and select Free Fare days. Student subsidies and Free Fare Days are funded by the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) which was established to provide operating and capital assistance for transit agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility, with a priority on serving disadvantaged communities. VCTC also established a countywide fare media, VCbuspass, previously known as Smart Card. This initiative allows riders to pay for any transit in Ventura County with a single card or app. Table 8 and Table 9 offer more details on fare policies across operators.

**Table 8: Agency Single-Ticket Fares and Discounts**

Service Provider	Regular	Discounted <sup>1</sup>	Child <sup>2</sup>	Student/Youth	College Students
<b>Camarillo Area Transit</b>	\$1.00	\$0.50 <sup>3</sup>	Free	Free	Free
<b>Gold Coast Transit District</b>	\$2.00	\$1.00 <sup>4</sup>	Free	Free	Free
<b>Kanan Shuttle</b>	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b>Moorpark City Transit</b>	\$1.00	Free	Free	Free	Free
<b>Ojai Trolley</b>	\$1.50	\$0.75 <sup>4</sup>	Free	Free	Free
<b>Simi Valley Transit</b>	\$1.50	\$0.75	Free	Free	Free
<b>Thousand Oaks Transit</b>	\$2.00	\$0.50	Free	Free	Free
<b>Valley Express</b>	\$1.25	\$0.60	Free	Free	Free
<b>VCTC Intercity<sup>5</sup></b>	Zone 1: \$1.75 Zone 2: \$4.00	Zone 1: \$0.80 Zone 2: \$2.00	Free	Free	Free

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.

<sup>2</sup> Most agencies define child as five years of age and under. Valley Express applies child fares for riders under five and Ojai Trolley applies child fares for riders under 45 inches tall.

<sup>3</sup> Free for Leisure Village residents.

<sup>4</sup> Free for seniors ages 75 and over.

<sup>5</sup> 10% off for all riders purchasing fare through VCbuspass.

Source: Agency websites, 2024.

Metrolink and Amtrak use distance-based fares, so the costs between specific stations vary, but as of 2024, one-way fares are generally between \$5.50 (Simi Valley to Moorpark) and \$10.25 (Simi Valley to East Ventura) for a regular full-price ticket.

**Table 9: Fixed-Route Pass Availability**

Service Providers	Passes				Payment Methods		
	Day	Week	Month	Ticket pack	Cash <sup>2</sup>	Passes	Smart-phone
<i>Camarillo Area Transit</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Gold Coast Transit District</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Kanan Shuttle</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>Free</b>	<b>Free</b>
<i>Moorpark City Transit</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ojai Trolley</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Simi Valley Transit</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
<i>Thousand Oaks Transit</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Valley Express</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓
<i>VCTC Intercity</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> All agencies offer regular and reduced pricing on passes.

<sup>2</sup> All agencies except for GCTD and TOT require exact change if paying with cash. GCTD and TOT provide credit in the form of a ticket with the remaining balance, which can be used on a future trip.

<sup>3</sup> Monthly pass includes unlimited fixed-route and local Dial-a-Ride trips. No fixed-route-only pass available. CAT only offers stored value for fixed-route and Dial-a-Ride via the VCbuspass.

Source: Agency websites, 2024.

## TRANSFER POLICIES

Transit agencies in Ventura County coordinate transfer policies to enhance connectivity in the region. Most agencies offer free transfers between routes they operate, typically valid for a single trip or within a two-hour window, with a few exceptions. For instance, VCTC Intercity charges an additional fare of \$1.50 for transfers to VCTC Zone 2 routes (Coastal Express and Conejo Connection). The transit agencies in Ventura County also offer free transfers to VCTC Intercity services where applicable. The transfer agreement among Ventura County transit operators also allows fixed-route riders to transfer for free between Simi Valley Transit and Moorpark City Transit, between Valley Express and Moorpark City Transit, and between Ojai Trolley and GCTD. No other transit services connect to each other in Ventura County. Metrolink and Amtrak tickets are accepted as free transfers when boarding VCTC Intercity, GCTD, and Simi Valley Transit bus routes.

## Governance and Organizational Structure

Organization and governance of transit in Ventura County generally falls into these categories:

**City-administered services** – These are run by a city’s government, with the city council typically acting as the transit board. They are either run as their own distinct

department, or housed under another city department (typically public works). Camarillo Area Transit, Ojai Trolley, Simi Valley Transit, Moorpark City Transit, and Thousand Oaks Transit are all City-administered services.

**Independent agencies** – These are typically formed and defined by a state legislative act and have their own governing board representing their service area. This category includes GCTD, VCTC, and the County of Ventura:

GCTD is a special transit district formed in 2013 by AB 664 and has a governing board made up of representatives from the County of Ventura and the four cities it serves. GCTD was founded in 1973 under a Joint Powers Agreement and was originally known as South Coast Area Transit (SCAT).

VCTC is the regional transportation planning agency (RTPA). It coordinates all public transportation service planning in the County, and oversees federal and state public transportation funds. VCTC is also the state-designated County Transportation Commission for administering local sales tax allocations for transit operations. VCTC directly operates transit service (as well as administering the Valley Express service), meaning that the Board (the Commissioners) also serves as the board for VCTC Intercity service. This is not typically the role of an RTPA or CTC.

The County of Ventura is a funding partner and stakeholder for transit throughout the County, including the Kanan Shuttle, the Valley Express, Ojai Trolley, and some GCTD services. While the County does not directly operate any transit services, the County Board of Supervisors acts as the governing body overseeing these partnerships.

**Services defined by third parties and operated by another agency** – This category includes Kanan Shuttle, Ojai Trolley, and Valley Express. These are unique cases in which a service was developed in response to a community need and is overseen and/or funded by one agency, but fully administered by another party.

The County of Ventura funds and manages the Kanan Shuttle in Oak Park as a contracted service with Thousand Oaks Transit.

Valley Express, which is administered and funded by VCTC, serves the cities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and the County (representing Piru) through an advisory (Heritage Valley Policy Advisory Committee) and a technical committee (Heritage Valley Technical Advisory Committee), but the service is otherwise fully administered by VCTC.

ECTA is administered by the City of Thousand Oaks (Thousand Oaks Transit) through an MOU with the Cities of Moorpark and Simi Valley and the County of Ventura.

Table 10 summarizes these agency governance structures.

**Table 10: Agency Governance Structures**

Service Provider	Governance Structure	Fixed-Route Operator	DAR Operator
<b><i>Camarillo Area Transit</i></b>	City Public Works Department	RTW Management	Contracted with RTW Management
<b><i>East County Transit Alliance<sup>1</sup></i></b>	Memorandum of Understanding between the Cities of Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Moorpark, and County of Ventura	MV Transportation	Contracted with MV Transportation
<b><i>Gold Coast Transit District</i></b>	Special District	Directly operated	In-house
<b><i>Kanan Shuttle<sup>1</sup></i></b>	County Public Works Agency	MV Transportation	N/A
<b><i>Moorpark City Transit<sup>1</sup></i></b>	City Public Works Department	MV Transportation (Ops only) <sup>2</sup>	Contracted with MV Transportation <sup>3</sup>
<b><i>Ojai Trolley</i></b>	City Public Works Department	Directly operated	N/A
<b><i>Simi Valley Transit</i></b>	City Public Works Department	Directly operated	In-house
<b><i>Thousand Oaks Transit</i></b>	City Public Works Department	MV Transportation <sup>4</sup>	Contracted with MV Transportation
<b><i>Valley Express</i></b>	Cooperative Agreement between the Cities of Fillmore, Santa Paula, the County of Ventura, and VCTC	MV Transportation	Contracted with MV Transportation
<b><i>VCTC Intercity</i></b>	Regional Transportation Planning Agency, FTA Designated Recipient	Contracted with RATP Dev	N/A

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Operator contracts are managed by Thousand Oaks Transit.

<sup>2</sup> Contracts vehicle maintenance out to Thousand Oaks Transit.

<sup>3</sup> The City contracts with Transdev to operate the microtransit service, MCT On Demand, and with RideCo to provide the scheduling software and app.

<sup>4</sup> Contractor performs maintenance on leased vehicles only. Vehicle maintenance on City-owned vehicles is performed in-house.

## On-Board Service Quality

Community engagement for the SRTP spanned over a year of ongoing outreach, connecting with agency staff, committees, councils, and stakeholder organizations across the region to define the quality of service and experience. Engagement activities included multiple phases of in-person and virtual workshops. These efforts were supported by a strong response to surveys directed towards transit riders, DAR riders, and the non-riding public.

One component was an extensive on-board rider survey conducted in 2024 (discussed previously in Chapter 3) with very positive findings. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.56 out of 4 possible points.<sup>8</sup> **The highest satisfaction scores went to the courtesy of the bus drivers, and to feelings of safety on board the bus.** Areas with the lowest ratings were bus schedules being readily available, and the need to transfer on their trip. However, even the areas with the lowest scores had average ratings higher than 3 out of 4, indicating general satisfaction with the bus service overall.

The project team led engagement in each community, and analyzed the feedback at the countywide level. Appendix A presents a comprehensive discussion of engagement activities, feedback received, and demographics of respondents.

### ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The issues that came up most frequently, and across multiple audiences include:

**Awareness of transit options is a significant barrier to increasing ridership.**

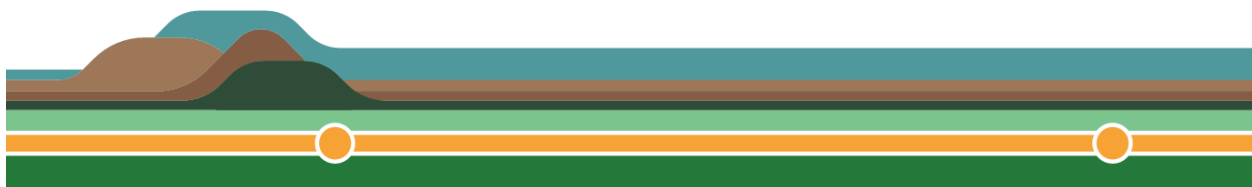
The engagement team received feedback about the general public’s unfamiliarity with what services are available to whom, and how easy or difficult it may be for different segments of the public to interpret or trust the information that is available. Core market segments such as college students, seniors, people whose first language is not English, and people with disabilities engage with transit differently, engage with media differently, and would benefit from more directly relevant marketing and promotion.

**Span of service and low bus route frequency significantly limit interest and ability for potential riders to use transit.**

Infrequent service may result in long travel times for destinations beyond someone’s local community. People are often unable to use transit to attend social and cultural events or travel to jobs outside traditional daytime hours, because transit service on at least one leg of the trip ends too early or connections might be missed.

<sup>8</sup> Survey results do not capture feedback regarding GCTD, as survey respondents were not asked about their experience with this transit service.

<p><b>College students and seniors are at different stages in their life, but often have similar motivations to use transit.</b></p>	<p>These include transit’s affordability, disinterest or inability to drive (which may include lack of access to a car), and the need to access services, jobs and entertainment/cultural activities. In Ventura County, students and seniors generally live in communities farther from urban centers, where transit service may be less frequent or have limited coverage, leading to longer travel times.</p>
<p><b>Reaching key Ventura County destinations is (or is perceived to be) difficult and time-consuming.</b></p>	<p>This is a function of the issues discussed above: public awareness, ability to plan a trip across multiple providers, and the reality that service levels and schedules vary widely and are not coordinated between providers.</p>
<p><b>Stakeholders and riders identified many desired programmatic recommendations to attract more riders to transit.</b></p>	<p>Beyond improving availability and coordination of service, improvements to travel training, marketing and promotions, online information, engagement with leadership at organizations and schools, and other improvements will promote the current services and boost ridership.</p>



# 6. COUNTYWIDE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE TRANSIT

## Countywide Assessment and Recommendations

Those who use transit in Ventura County are satisfied with their experience, but total ridership and average productivity are low, while operating costs have continued to rise. While the pandemic drastically reduced ridership, several routes were already underperforming before that point. However, looking only slightly further back to 2013–2015, nearly all services in the county had significantly stronger ridership and productivity. Fundamentally there is no reason transit—even with the limited resources available in Ventura County—cannot be at least as successful today.

The region would benefit from greater investment in frequent transit that serves its most dense and active areas. However, many of the ideas presented in this report do not require order-of-magnitude increases in transit spending that would strain city budgets.

Connect span of service to opportunity

**The greatest benefit for fixed-route transit is to offer a more consistent frequency and span of service** in every community. This would mean both operating slightly later overall, and providing enough service regularity to enable easy connections across routes.

1. Travel data clearly shows that in every community, local trip activity at 8:00 p.m. is roughly equal to volumes at 8:00 a.m., yet nearly all service across the County winds down by 7:00 p.m.
2. College students are a significant rider market, yet many routes do not operate late enough for students to return home from evening classes.
3. Long-distance trips by transit take longer, and if local service has ended by the time regional service arrives, riders have no connection for the final leg of their journey.

Getting home is as important as getting there

**Service that ends at 7:00 p.m. or earlier may prevent people from using transit even for trips earlier in the day, because they will not be able to get home.** Transit is most successful when it works for a wide variety of people with different trip purposes, whether working a job that ends after 5:00 p.m. or attending community events. Evening

	<p>ridership will always be lower than peak commuter hours, but its relationship to daytime productivity should not be underestimated.</p>
<p>Thinking regionally, locally</p>	<p><b>Local routes can and should serve as a first/last-mile connection for Intercity routes, Metrolink and Amtrak.</b> This can be accomplished not only by extending service at least through 8:00 p.m., but also by offering consistent, clockface headways countywide. This would support predictable (and potentially timed) connections to regional service. There is no dispute that local travel is the primary focus for the local systems, but there is little evidence that strategic adjustments to timing and span to make better regional connections would harm existing riders. Meanwhile, these changes would certainly attract more riders who might want to travel regionally.</p>
<p>Consistency and predictability are invaluable when service is infrequent</p>	<p>Consistent clockface headways (trips that begin at regular, repeating intervals—for example, on the hour or on the half-hour) offer the most predictability and simplicity for riders. <b>Make the schedule memorable and predictable:</b> If you know the bus always passes your house seven minutes after the hour, it simplifies the planning needed to take the bus.</p> <p>For most riders, the difference in whether the bus comes every 50 minutes or every 60 minutes is irrelevant. The closer to an hour a route design is, the more sense it makes to design service to be on clockface intervals.</p> <p>Cities sometimes operate routes at regular intervals but skip an entire hour in the middle of the day to accommodate operator breaks. Bus operators certainly deserve their breaks, but doing this makes the transit service less useful. Reevaluating runcutting (the process of taking a full day’s schedule of bus trips and dividing it into individual work shifts for drivers) may allow for drivers to have breaks without breaks in the schedules.</p>

Reserve demand-response service for where it fits best

Nationwide, many cities are excited about the prospect of using microtransit to expand transit service to more residents. Microtransit can dramatically expand coverage and provide a more direct service for the individual. However, microtransit cannot achieve the cost efficiency that a fixed-route network can in a dense environment.

In Ventura County, all cities have the road network and population to support fixed-route transit, even if current ridership appears to favor microtransit. When microtransit is widely available in the same areas as fixed route services—especially when it is priced the same as, or lower than the bus routes—microtransit will draw riders away from fixed route buses. This may cause fixed route service to underperform, even if it would otherwise be successful.

Every community has some areas or times of day when microtransit *will* be the best option. This includes neighborhoods that are far from main roads, or perhaps in the evenings when ridership is lower.

Microtransit that is thoughtfully designed and priced to accommodate riders who truly need an on-demand trip will help cities offer a high degree of mobility without breaking the bank.

**Offering both a large-scale microtransit program and fixed-route service may not represent the most effective use of resources.**

Look back at long-term performance, and to peer communities for rationale

Planners must **be cautious not to mistake low-performing fixed routes as the sole indicator that dial-a-ride or microtransit are the best options.** The SRTP analysis found that every route in the County was either attracting a strong rider base before the pandemic, or had clear opportunities for redesigns that would improve ridership. When examining transit outcomes across California and the United States in 2023–2024, it is easy to find communities comparable to the cities in Ventura County with transit route networks that attract more riders and have greater productivity. Additional investment in Ventura County’s fixed-route network should have potential for significant ridership growth.

Successful and cost-efficient fixed route requires a minimum level of service

Reducing transit service in response to low ridership often leads to a feedback loop in which (rather than balancing productivity) reduced service causes ridership to decline even further. When transit service operates only hourly, **reducing individual underperforming trips eliminates choice and flexibility, which are important in serving a wide variety of riders.** Although reduced service can seem like a prudent cost-saving measure, the analysis found several examples of routes that operate such a thin schedule that they attract almost no riders. However, this should not be seen as an indicator that a route is simply not useful; the SRTP analysis suggests that most of these examples have a clear travel market. Rather, other factors, such as overlapping and underpriced microtransit/DAR services, could be contributing to low ridership. When a route operates only sporadically, it is impractical to draw conclusions on the route’s usefulness based on ridership alone.

Accountability will reduce wasted effort

**For demand-response programs, enforcing policies to reduce no-show trips and late trip cancellations will improve trip scheduling and contribute significantly to better productivity.** Enforcement requires clear, consistent, and continuing communication with riders, as well as follow-up by call centers and dispatchers. Abuses to these policies, or even casualness in cancelling unneeded trips, translates into wasted vehicle revenue hours. Although it may not seem like a big issue for any given trip, these continued one-offs contribute to larger trends of unproductivity.

Invest in communications and marketing

When a business finds that fewer customers are coming in the door, it can rarely afford to continue operating indefinitely without finding ways to attract new customers. **Transit providers must invest time in reminding the community that their service is a great option for getting around.** This is especially true as several Ventura County operators run transit routes that currently experience low ridership, even though they feature thoughtfully designed service and moderate frequency.

Small cities with highly successful transit services often promote themselves to city council, at college and high school events and fairs, adult education programs, community events, and more. Most transit services in Ventura County would benefit from refreshed websites and brochures, greater investment in web- and app-based

tools like GTFS (General Transit Feed Specification), and a stronger social media presence. Regular communication with school district administrators, after-school clubs, senior center program directors, and other community leaders can help educate people about transportation resources. A countywide transit ambassador could easily fulfill this role for multiple agencies, and help promote existing service, changes resulting from this SRTP, and future programs.

Planners should also not consider their primary riders (students, seniors, people with low income, etc.) as the *only* people who can benefit from transit. Plenty of people who have higher incomes and access to cars would still prefer not to drive for every trip. This idea is supported by comments from non-riders surveyed across the county, and consistent with other transit studies nationally.

#### Plan for safe walk access to stops

Every community in Ventura County has areas in which **improvements to safe pedestrian crossings and access to bus stops will greatly benefit and complement improved transit routes and schedules.** Specific issues vary by community, but analysis in each community identified challenges with stop locations differing on opposite sides of the road—due to lack of infrastructure for a bus stop, a pedestrian crossing, or both. A persistent challenge for much of the county is rectifying the rapid development of cities in the 1960s through the 1990s when planning and development practices overwhelmingly favored car-centered design. This resulted in most of Camarillo, Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Thousand Oaks growing with massive residential developments that limited walkable connectivity to the major streets. Many homes are physically close, but functionally far, from the nearest bus stop. Over time, cities should identify and take advantage of every opportunity to establish pedestrian paths, gateways, paseos, and safe crosswalks. Such efforts benefit transit, public health, safety, and air quality.

## Performance Standards for Transit Services

A well-designed transit network should attract a variety of people with a variety of reasons for travel. Too often, people see “buses driving around empty,” and incorrectly interpret that there is no demand for transit. Low utilization does not necessarily reflect low demand. It may instead indicate that people are unaware of, or unable to use the service in its current form. These issues can be addressed directly.

Context-appropriate performance standards, based on analysis of community sub-areas, address three general types of service: local fixed-route, regional or intercity routes, and demand-response service. Each standard describes the guiding principles of service design which should be met to support a successful outcome, then recommends minimum thresholds at which that service should typically perform. Following the recommended thresholds are strategies to attract ridership to different types of service.

When considering route performance, operators should first:

- Confirm that the route’s design follows all appropriate guiding principles
- Verify that they have implemented as many of the ridership growth strategies as is feasible.

If these conditions are met, and the service still fails to attract sufficient ridership, it is reasonable to conclude that the service may be fundamentally underperforming, and more significant actions are warranted.

Following the performance standards for the three service categories is a brief section that provides the research and historical performance basis for these recommendations.

### LOCAL FIXED ROUTE OPERATING PRIMARILY ON ARTERIAL OR NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

#### *GUIDING PRINCIPLES*

- ✓ The route should connect a variety of land uses (homes, schools, commercial centers).
- ✓ Locate stops along the route such that they are a short walk to many destinations and/or residential areas.
- ✓ The route should operate at least hourly throughout the day.
- ✓ Operate service on a predictable, clockface schedule throughout the day without gaps in the schedule.
- ✓ Design routes to be relatively direct, and take advantage of walkable communities to provide more frequent, straight-line service.
- ✓ Routes should connect to other routes in places where transferring is easy, safe and understandable. Connections should be timely and/or facilitated by well-trained, well-resourced, helpful operators.

- ✓ Transfer centers should be co-located with other land uses that are destinations in and of themselves.
- ✓ When routes serve middle and high schools, plan service so that the bus arrives shortly before the morning bell, and so that return service aligns with both the regular and early release bell. Stops should be a short and safe walk from the school.

**MINIMUM PERFORMANCE THRESHOLDS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL FIXED ROUTES:**

Local routes that follow these guiding principles should expect the following outcomes at a minimum:

- **Average daily productivity of at least 6 passengers per revenue hour.<sup>9</sup>**
- Peak ridership periods, typically falling between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., and between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., and;
- At least a few riders on each trip throughout the day, even if certain trips are significantly lower than peak periods.
- When ridership and crowding are monitored by time of day, loading standards generally should not exceed 1.2 passengers per seated capacity for more than two peak hours per day.

For any local route there will naturally be peak and off-peak ridership periods. A peak-heavy ridership pattern could still average 6 passengers per revenue hour, even if nearly all the ridership is only on the first and last trips of the day, and all the trips in the middle are nearly empty. This is why monitoring both the average daily statistics and statistics by trip are important. On the other hand, planners should not eliminate any trips, including individual low-productivity trips, without considering the strategies below.

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<sup>9</sup> This is the minimum standard for rural and suburban communities; below this level, demand response service may be a better fit in these communities. For urban, denser areas like Oxnard or Ventura, we would expect the minimum standard to be at least 10 passengers per revenue hour.

**STRATEGIES TO INCREASE RIDERSHIP**

The strategies outlined below are invaluable for the success of transit service.

<p><b>Develop an outreach and promotions approach</b></p>	<p>Conduct outreach to local school districts and after-school programs to promote service and seek input for improvements.</p> <p>Cross-promote service enhancements on regional routes (Intercity, Metrolink, and Surfliner) to expand the audience of regular and occasional riders who directly benefit from improved connections at train stations.</p> <p>Promote and provide incentives for current DAR users to try new fixed routes; offer travel training through community organizations such as senior programs, libraries, schools/after-school programs, and local business associations.</p> <p>Connect with local businesses for input and promotional opportunities. How does the new span of service support employee access to work? Offer promotions for businesses to be featured “on the route” to riders and vice versa.</p>
<p><b>Monitor regularly, and allow new services time to establish ridership</b></p>	<p>Evaluate services monthly, and report outcomes to council, committees, and community organizations.</p> <p>In addition to soliciting input from the operating staff (and contractors, if applicable), administrative staff should ride the service to better understand the on-board experience, and consider potential opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>Avoid making major changes to routes within the first 12 months of operation, except to resolve clear and present barriers to attracting riders.</p>
<p><b>Avoid eliminating individual trips from a regular, hourly-or-better schedule, even if ridership on an individual trip is low on average.</b></p>	<p>Any route will have some trips that only attract a few riders, but the availability of these trips has an immeasurable importance for riders in ensuring “freedom” to use transit. While an individual may rarely take the last bus home, or never ride at 11:00 a.m., the availability of those trips means they know it will be there if something changes in their plans.</p>

If reducing service is absolutely necessary, begin first by considering reductions in the earliest and latest service that consistently attract fewer than six passengers per trip before creating inconsistent daytime schedules. Consider opening DAR or microtransit to the general public as an alternative.

Use great caution in reducing daytime trips in an otherwise regular schedule. If the route primarily serves a peak trip generator like a school or shift-based employer, and no other trip purposes, service could be reduced to peak-period trips only. Another strategy would include operating the route only seasonally, or offering a two-season schedule with more frequent in one period and a limited schedule during the other. Service must always remain open to the public and follow all other federal and state regulations for the operation of public transit service.

**If ridership remains low after the first 12 months and outreach strategies were employed...**

If the service design, outreach, and partnerships fail to resolve low ridership, consider a more significant service redesign. For example, if ridership is strong only on certain trips during peak hours and fails to attract any riders in the middle of the day, a peak-only service may be truly warranted.

If the route, in combination with other local routes, is truly failing to meet the performance thresholds above, *and* is not also competing with a dial-a-ride/microtransit program serving the same area, consider discontinuing fixed-route service in favor of general-public DAR. A high-performing DAR program achieves a daily average of five passengers per revenue hour but will not likely achieve any higher productivity on a daily average basis.

## REGIONAL OR INTERCITY ROUTE OPERATING PRIMARILY ON MAJOR ARTERIALS AND HIGHWAYS

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The service design principles for regional and intercity routes are different than local bus routes, and the thresholds for success should be considered differently. Regional routes may feature various combinations of the following principles:

- ✓ Operate service primarily between major transit hubs, park-and-rides, central urban areas, and major employment or activity centers.
- ✓ Service should be direct as possible, using the shortest and/or fastest route from major origin to major destination, with only limited service through residential areas.
- ✓ Service should rely heavily on park-and-ride access and/or dependable connections from other transit services.
- ✓ Service should operate hourly but rarely more frequently, except in the peak hours for the most significant destinations like major employment hubs and universities.

**The more specialized an intercity route is in its destinations served**, the more crucial it is to have a nearly guaranteed ridership base. For example, a route that primarily serves a major employment center (such as a business park) will only be successful if there is a strong relationship between the transit agency and the employers being served, because the travel demand to the business park is likely concentrated to a few hours each day. The success of limited-purpose routes has diminished greatly since the pandemic.

When a regional service operates on **major arterials** between multiple communities with a wide **variety of origins and destinations**, it is important to offer a balance of local and arterial stops so people can walk to nearby places. Passing local destinations without offering any stops may not be worth the time-savings on the bus schedule.

When a regional service serves primarily **connection hubs (transit centers)**, it is imperative that service operates frequently and with timed connections to local services at that hub. Routes that connect transit hubs and no other destinations are not likely to be successful.

Nationally, intercity and regional transit service has been trending towards **regular, bi-directional service** in recent years. Even if off-peak (or “reverse commute”) service attracts substantially fewer riders, it may be a better use of resources than the deadheading service or long out-of-service layovers required by peak-direction-only service.

### MINIMUM PERFORMANCE THRESHOLDS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR REGIONAL/INTERCITY SERVICES:

- **For peak-direction, commuter-focused service**, individual trips should attract greater than 50% of seated capacity on average. If individual trips consistently

approach 90% of seated capacity, consider the market potential for expanded service.

- Intercity service typically cannot accommodate greater than 100% of seated capacity (no standees). Interested riders will not continue to seek the service if they are turned away from full buses.
- In the post-pandemic context, many employers offer greater flexibility for working from home, which may lead to significant swings in transit demand, especially on Mondays and Fridays. This suggests a need to monitor data by day of the week, and also promotes the idea that a more sustainable model is to offer service designs that fulfill a wider variety of trip purposes.
- **For bi-directional, all-day regional service**, daily average ridership should be 10 passengers per revenue hour or higher, and should be monitored on a per-trip basis.
  - Avoid cancelling individual trips unless they consistently attract fewer than 6 passengers per trip.
- Monitor loading along the route to avoid pass-ups due to full buses.

*STRATEGIES TO INCREASE RIDERSHIP*

**The fundamental strategies for attracting greater ridership to intercity and regional routes are the same as for local routes**, with greater emphasis on developing and maintaining partnerships with employers and institutions that are directly served. Additional considerations to consider include:

<b>Develop employer and institutional benefits</b>	<b>Develop and maintain personalized agency-to-employer connections</b> to understand what benefits could be offered to employees, what the current in-office or remote work patterns are, and to periodically provide updated materials to help employees learn and consider the transit network.
<b>Emphasize the value of unlimited transit benefits</b>	With business and institutional partners, emphasize that <b>pass programs provide employee benefits beyond the workday commute</b> . Unlocking unlimited transit use helps open up options for getting around town on days off, making it easier to use transit for running errands, getting to doctor’s appointments, and participating in recreational activities.
<b>Cross-promote</b>	Connect with other regional transit service providers, tourism promoters, entertainment venues, and social media influencers to expand the reach of the intercity services beyond employees and students.

	<p>A clear example of this strategy is including the Cross County Limited service in promotions with Metrolink services, so that people across Southern California are aware that trips into Ventura County are possible most hours of the day.</p> <p>VCTC has already been cross promoting its services with regional events and entertainment venues, which is an excellent strategy to continue to expand.</p>
<p><b>Operationalize connectivity</b></p>	<p>Refer to the local fixed route strategies for Intercity routes as well. Place particular emphasis on <b>coordination with local routes</b>. While maintaining connections between Intercity routes and local routes across multiple communities is challenging, an easy way to lose ridership is to consistently arrive just moments after the once-an-hour local bus has left the transfer point. Regular coordination, monitoring of schedules, and developing protocols for interagency dispatch communication will help ensure feasible connections. This is especially critical for the last runs of the day.</p>

## PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICES

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For demand-response service the top priority should be per-trip efficiency.

- ✓ Prioritize demand-response service for persons with disabilities. Ensure the program meets ADA requirements and FTA guidance above all. Federal law prohibits capacity being a limitation for serving ADA-eligible trips.
- ✓ Limit extended demand-response service (beyond the 3/4-mile required distance from fixed routes) to where and when fixed route service is less effective:
  - Routes historically failing to capture above five passengers per revenue hour despite meeting service design principles
  - Portions of routes or areas (either all day, or during early morning or nighttime) where bus stops simply attract few to no riders even if other areas of the route are successful
- ✓ Price service to reflect its value and purpose within the system:
  - Where trips fulfill complementary paratransit service, price at double the fixed-route fare
  - Where DAR service is the only service available (areas that have no fixed routes nearby), price at least the same as fixed routes in the same region

- Where demand-response service is open to the general public and a trip begins and ends within the fixed route area, price DAR as a premium service (greater than double the base fare)
- ✓ Use technology to support efficient service delivery, but focus on consistent application of policy and procedure with staff regardless, of the technology application
- ✓ Maximize awareness and usability of the fixed route system so that even people who may qualify for DAR service can use fixed routes when they are able

**MINIMUM PERFORMANCE THRESHOLDS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICES:**

When the overall system design, inclusive of fixed-route and demand-response service, meets the principles described, demand-response service should meet the following:

- Paratransit and senior-focused DAR programs should average at least 2.5 passengers per revenue hour
  - For higher-density urban and suburban areas, programs should strive for 3.5 or greater passengers per revenue hour
  - When calculating revenue hours for demand-response-type service, all service between the beginning of the first trip and the end of the last trip should be counted as revenue hours; deadheading between consecutive trips is included in revenue hours
- Microtransit programs serving the general public should:
  - Serve 100% of paratransit-eligible trips
  - Daily average of at least 3.0 passengers per revenue hour
  - Achieve average satisfaction ratings of at least 4/5
  - Have shared rides represent at least 40% of all rides served
  - Balance available vehicle capacity (sometimes measured as “failed searches” where users are unable to request a trip) with total program budget
  - Meet the published response time for 95% of trips

**STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY**

Transit providers, whether a city or a regional agency, should have clear and distinct purposes defined between fixed route services and demand-response services. When both are provided in the same areas and at the same times for the purpose of offering more choice to the public, the inevitable outcome is a majority of people choosing demand-response which is better for the individual but less cost efficient for the provider. Planners should codify the principles described above so that the mission of the public transit service an agency or city provides is clearly communicated to the public and city leadership.

Greater detail on the performance of demand-response services is provided in the companion Demand-Response Integration Plan.

## BASIS FOR PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Two key themes emerged from this SRTP which support the recommendations and the minimum performance standards. First, when reviewing potential peer agencies using National Transit Database (NTD) information for recent years, many regions in California and beyond are achieving strong efficiency metrics (passengers per revenue hour) and high total ridership relative to their service population. Second, and perhaps more importantly, Ventura County itself has historically performed far better than it had in 2023–2024.

Based on NTD data, there is clear support for the Ventura County fixed route network average to achieve at least 13 passengers per revenue hour. The average productivity across comparable regions was 13.2 passengers per revenue hour in 2024–2025, up from an average of 11.0 in 2023. Furthermore, Ventura County agencies historically achieved this level collectively in 2012–2013. A table of relevant comparison NTD statistics for 2023 is provided at the end of this section.

For local fixed routes in Ventura County, the recommended minimum threshold is 6.0 passengers per revenue hour. While NTD statistics show that some comparable regions in California had a fixed-route average of as low as 3.3 passengers per revenue hour, most comparable systems were performing better than 4.0 passengers per revenue hour on average. Looking back historically to 2013, the lowest agency average in Ventura County was 6.2 passengers per revenue hour.

Below this level, demand-response service may be a better fit. When considering performance of comparable agencies, demand-response service can at best achieve a daily average of five passengers per revenue hour. In 2023–2024, the average productivity for demand-response service in comparable regions was 2.2 passengers per revenue hour, with individual agencies ranging from 1.0 to 3.3 passengers per revenue hour, except for the City of Escalon, which achieved 5.5 passengers per revenue hour. In Ventura County, the average passengers per revenue hour for demand-response services was 2.6 in 2023–2024.

For VCTC Intercity, the recommended average daily productivity minimum threshold is 10 passengers per revenue hour. This threshold is based on commuter bus performance over the last 10 years in similar regions and ridership recovery trends across transit services. In 2024–2025, the average for commuter bus services in regions with common characteristics was 7.8 passengers per revenue hour compared to 14.3 passengers per revenue hour in 2012–2013. The statewide market for commuter services has been slower to recover, but if they were to achieve a similar recovery rate as the Motor Bus (MB) category, commuter bus service would have an average productivity of just over 10 passengers per revenue hour.

The performance standards above describe a minimum threshold at which any individual route or service should be evaluated for corrective action, but the bar to strive for should be significantly higher. Historical performance in Ventura County and productivity relative to

investment per capita in similar communities provide evidence that Ventura County has a total level of service that could attract more ridership if it was more effectively allocated and marketed.

The table below shows 2023 NTD statistics for agencies in California that have some comparability to Ventura County either as a whole or represent individual agencies that are part of a similarly sized region. The white/blue shading in the table includes groupings of agencies in regions where one or more operators provide fixed route service. In several cases, there may be several additional operators that exclusively provide demand-response service, which were excluded from the table. Although the statistics focus primarily on agencies operating in UZAs of less than one million population, some additional examples were included. No agencies were included that operate in the major urban areas of Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange County, or San Diego.

The table shows the service area and population for context to the range that occurs in Ventura County. The vehicles operated in maximum service (VOMS) provides context for how many fixed route buses are running during a peak period. The project team estimated vehicle revenue hours per capita (not an NTD statistic), which calculates the annual revenue hours per 1,000 population in the service area. This is a normalized measure of investment in transit service, which can provide some context for how the amount of service operated may translate to average productivity. Of course, fixed route productivity is not the only measure of performance, but is better to use in this limited context than total ridership or other metrics.

**Table 11: California Comparison Agency and Ventura County Statistics (NTD 2023)**

Agency	UZA <sup>1</sup>	Service Area (square miles)	Population	Fixed Route VOMS <sup>2</sup>	VRH per Capita <sup>3</sup>	FR Boarding s per VRH
<b>The Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority</b>	Antioch, CA	73	333,000	52	485	6.2
<b>Kern Regional Transit</b>	Bakersfield, CA	132	155,249	26	276	3.6
<b>Golden Empire Transit District</b>			500,977	51	433	14.4
<b>Central Contra Costa Transit Authority</b>	Concord—Walnut Creek, CA	176	627,597	77	297	13.0
<b>Imperial County Transportation Commission</b>	El Centro, CA	19	179,329	18	214	16.1
<b>City of Fairfield, California</b>	Fairfield, CA	41	505,849	13	71	7.1

Agency	UZA <sup>1</sup>	Service Area (square miles)	Population	Fixed Route VOMS <sup>2</sup>	VRH per Capita <sup>3</sup>	FR Boardings per VRH
<b>City of Fresno</b>	Fresno, CA	159	591,531	106	721	19.2
<b>SunLine Transit Agency</b>	Indio—Palm Desert—Palm Springs, CA	152	474,031	47	386	14.0
<b>City of Madera</b>	Madera, CA	21	66,225	11	213	4.4
<b>Stanislaus Regional Transit Authority</b>	Modesto, CA	70	550,660	65	372	11.0
<b>Napa Valley Transportation Authority</b>	Napa, CA	20	138,000	16	336	7.8
<b>Antelope Valley Transit Authority</b>	Palmdale—Lancaster, CA	85	349,050	48	455	7.0
<b>City of Santa Clarita</b>	Santa Clarita, CA	78	273,078	44	384	18.3
<b>Riverside Transit Agency</b>	Riverside—San Bernardino, CA	609	1,907,166	77	174	12.3
<b>Western Contra Costa Transit Authority</b>	San Francisco—Oakland, CA	514	64,925	21	878	8.6
<b>Marin County Transit District</b>			262,321	59	695	14.5
<b>City of San Luis Obispo</b>	San Luis Obispo, CA	14	47,063	15	652	16.8
<b>San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority</b>			278,348	22	188	13.4
<b>Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District</b>	Santa Barbara, CA and Lompoc, CA	55	199,668	63	845	26.9
<b>City of Lompoc</b>	and Santa Maria, CA	10	54,379	8	300	3.3
<b>City of Santa Maria</b>		27	150,201	21	365	8.0
<b>City of Santa Rosa</b>	Santa Rosa, CA	79	174,523	18	390	18.9
<b>San Joaquin Regional Transit District</b>	Stockton, CA and Manteca, CA	92	793,229	60	186	14.8
<b>City of Manteca</b>		20	81,345	4	158	3.8
<b>Solano County Transit</b>	Vallejo, CA	40	151,705	15	279	10.7

Agency	UZA <sup>1</sup>	Service Area (square miles)	Population	Fixed Route VOMS <sup>2</sup>	VRH per Capita <sup>3</sup>	FR Boardings per VRH
<b>Victor Valley Transit Authority</b>	Victorville--Hesperia--Apple Valley, CA	132	344,288	47	510	4.1
<b>Tulare County Regional Transit Agency</b>	Visalia, CA	38	268,040	26	378	6.1
<b>Average</b>					<b>394</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Ventura County Agencies (NTD Data)</b>						
<b>City of Camarillo</b>	Camarillo, CA	22	68,374	2	77	4.6
<b>Gold Coast Transit District</b>	Oxnard--San Buenaventura (Ventura), CA	77	374,827	49	498	15.9
<b>Ventura County Transportation Commission (Valley Express stats only)</b>	Oxnard--San Buenaventura (Ventura), CA	77	209,877	5	31	5.7
<b>City of Ojai</b>	Oxnard--San Buenaventura (Ventura), CA	77	7,628	2	566	11.2
<b>City of Simi Valley</b>	Simi Valley, CA	32	126,356	6	214	6.0
<b>City of Thousand Oaks</b>	Thousand Oaks, CA	80	415,154	7	53	7.0
<b>City of Moorpark</b>	Thousand Oaks, CA	80	35,975	2	161	4.6
<b>Aggregate population</b>			<b>1,238,191</b>	<b>Average:</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>8</b>

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Census Urbanized Area

<sup>2</sup> Service area population as defined in the NTD annual agency profile

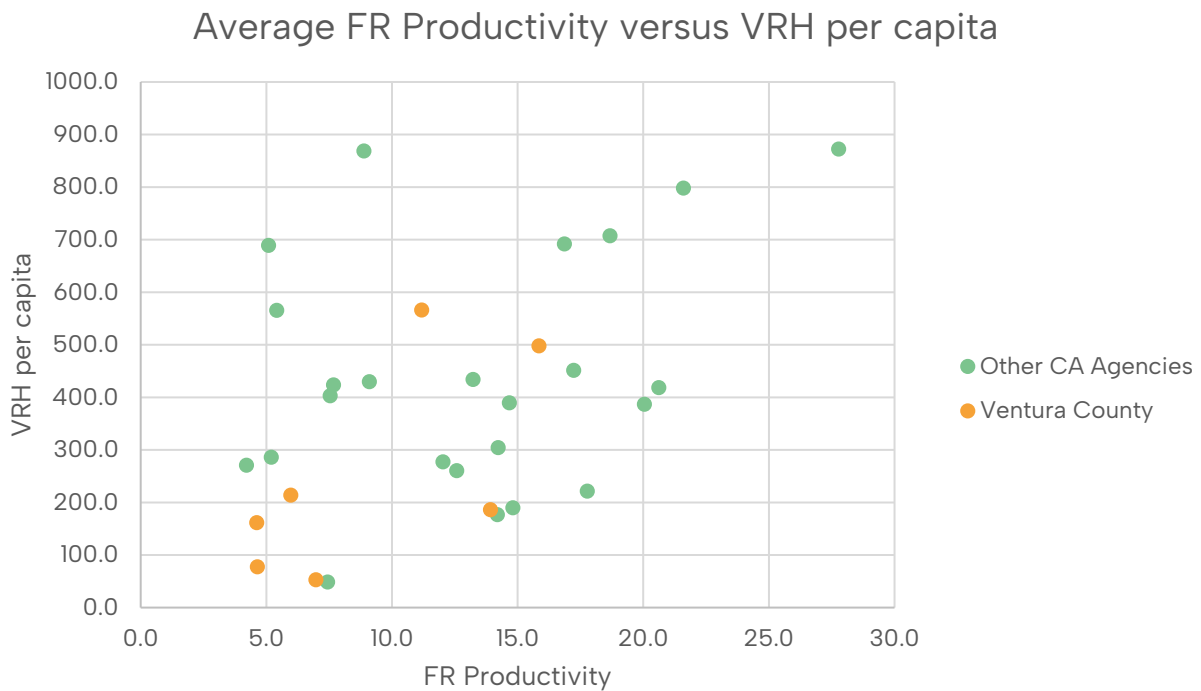
<sup>3</sup> Vehicles operation in annual maximum service

<sup>4</sup> Vehicle revenue hours per capita

<sup>5</sup> Weighted average by annual revenue hours

Finally, Figure 4 below visualizes the NTD data, comparing the boardings per VRH along the x axis (“FR Productivity”) and the VRH per capita. This scatterplot suggests that generally a greater investment in service hours per capita leads to higher overall productivity, but also that many agencies have comparable investment levels and achieve similar or better outcomes. Although there are a few outliers with very high investment and relatively low productivity, most of the examples fall to the right (more productive) than the Ventura County agencies. Even without a detailed examination of the comparison services, this suggests that a revitalized transit network in Ventura County with sufficient marketing and other strategies should be a more cost-effective and successful outcome.

**Figure 4: Investment and Productivity**



Source: NTD Monthly Service Data and Operating Expenses, June 2025; Fehr & Peers

## Developing an Integrated Network

Many of the current challenges facing transit in Ventura County can be addressed with interagency collaboration and thoughtful strategies at the countywide level, to better leverage and connect resources and services. This type of collaboration will require commitment, collaboration, and a certain degree of discipline and patience among staff, riders, stakeholders, and political leadership.

In addition to the individual service recommendations in later chapters, all Ventura County transit agencies and operators should implement the following actions to facilitate a more integrated network:

### In the near term

**All services should shift to a common annual service planning cycle** that prepares well in advance for a schedule update each August, ahead of the new school year.

- Preparation for this schedule change should begin no later than May of each year, with a review of the prior 12 months of service performance metrics by each agency of their services.
- Identify aspects in need of improvement (on-time performance, safety, etc.) both through a review of data, and by soliciting input from managers, bus operators, and riders.
- In the spring, city/agency staff members should communicate with local schools and other community stakeholders to review performance, solicit input, and identify any planned changes in the upcoming year schedule.
- Coordinate draft schedule changes and service priorities through the TRANSCOM workshop in June. Focus on interagency route connections.
- Finalize schedule changes by early July and begin promotion of updated schedules. Republish schedules and refresh materials even if local service is not modified.
- Implement service changes ahead of the new school year.

Avoid making major mid-cycle schedule and route changes, except in extenuating circumstances.

**Develop a uniform template for published transit information**, such as schedule materials, maps, naming conventions, pamphlet design, and website organization.

- Each city or agency can continue to have its own unique branding, but a consistent standard of design for communicating transit information will benefit all.
- City websites are often very strict about the use of templates. This may seem to be a limitation for transit information, which is quite different from information from most other city departments. However, since most transit in this SRTP is operated by cities, these decision-makers are well-positioned to collaborate on a consistent hierarchy and organization of transit information. Consistency across providers helps riders navigate between services.

**Develop a standardized route identification system that evokes a single network.** The proposed routes and long-term route concepts in the SRTP offer a suggested numbering and naming structure that would help emphasize a more connected regional system, making it slightly easier for new users to navigate without disrupting existing riders. The suggested numbering structure is adapted from the existing numbers:

- Gold Coast services would retain route numbers 1-29 (although not all numbers are currently in use) and Ojai Trolley would be included in this group
- Simi Valley routes would eventually be renumbered sequentially from 30-39
- Thousand Oaks routes would retain numbers 40-49, and Kanan Shuttle would be included in this group
- VCTC service on US-101 will continue to use numbers 50-59
- VCTC and Valley Express routes will use numbers 60-69, applying numbering to Valley Express routes
- Moorpark service and Intercity routes in the East County area will use numbers 70-79
- VCTC Coastal Express routes will use numbers 80-89
- Camarillo and CSUCI routes will use numbers 90-99

This structure minimizes the potential for overlapping route numbers between different agencies (although there currently are only a few examples of this). It also maintains the existing numbering scheme for as many routes as possible. Services can still carry branding beyond the route number (such as “Trolley”).

### In the medium term

If the revitalization of the fixed route network is successful, **resources should be invested in providing uniform Saturday, and then Sunday services.** While not every route needs to operate seven days a week, weekend service is important in offering choice and mobility.

Continue to implement TIES recommendations that facilitate greater functional integration of transit operations. These include:

- Combine as many procurements as possible to improve administrative efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and compatibility between operations
- Coordinate transition to zero-emissions fleets. Coordinating on the technology and energy infrastructure will improve resilience and support future integration efforts; failure to do so could needlessly hamper integration
- VCTC should assume a more direct role in countywide transit service planning and coordination
- Develop a training consortium for common skill sets, such as bus operator training, maintenance, dispatching, and service administration
- Pursue shifting VCTC Intercity operations to a GCTD facility as part of the zero-emissions bus transition
- Align performance management software and metrics for all agencies to uniformly provide data and monitor progress
- Develop and deploy annually a standardized rider survey for all services

### In the long-term

**Move towards consolidation of transit administration and oversight** into regional groups or potentially a single, countywide agency. If the outcomes of the fully implemented SRTP are successful, it will prove that local and regional services can coordinate to form a more functional network—with greater ridership than is achieved with each community focused exclusively on its own priorities. Shifting to fewer, consolidated agencies reduces duplicative efforts and simplifies interagency coordination. This does not preclude the community and city leaders from directing their transit service and seeking locally tailored solutions. The long-term plan is envisioned as “Alternative 2” in the Transit Integration & Efficiency Study.

## Partnership Opportunities

Included as an appendix to this SRTP is a detailed Partnership Plan, which defines a framework for meaningful and insightful engagement between public transit and non-transit organizations. The Partnership Plan addresses three key components:

1. Engaging current and potential partners across multiple sectors,
2. Promoting awareness and engagement around all things transit, and
3. Systematically strengthening and maintaining relationships among stakeholder partners to enhance and sustain benefits to all parties.

Enhancing mobility for communities and accessing new riders are key motivations for building strong partnerships between public transit agencies and community organizations of all types. Community-based organizations are often the “trusted messengers” who can pass along information to their constituents on how-to-use and where-to-find public transit services.

Strengthened partnerships can improve access and will aid Ventura County residents as they seek to discover what public transportation services offer and will encourage new transit ridership. In time, this may also support expanding transit’s funding base to increase transit coverage and frequency.

Effective partnerships will recognize the importance of satisfying two principles:

1. The partnership realizes an intersection of benefits; for example, there is benefit to the Ventura County transit operators in securing access to potential riders and benefit to partners in improving mobility of its constituents.
2. The collaborative partnership is cultivated via some level of continuing interaction and exchange of information.

Where VCTC and the Ventura County transit operators can offer something of value to their partners, this can promote trust. The value or benefit most readily offered is information. This can include:

- Information about the public transportation network and improvements being made
- Free fare promotions for target groups (e.g., free youth fares)
- Special fare promotions for all ridership (e.g., free fares on Transit Equity Day or Earth Day)
- General information on how to access public transportation
- Specific information on how to use electronic fare tools
- Specific information on how to use trip planning tools (i.e. Google Transit, Transit App, etc.)

Potential partners can be encouraged to see that such information will benefit their students, employees, human services clients and more. Additional benefits outlined for partners could include:

- Availability of FTA Section 5310 grant funding, for private, non-profits and municipalities to support transportation aiding for seniors and persons with disabilities
- Technical support in securing FTA Section 5310 grant funding awards
- Transit agency participation in partner fairs and community gatherings
- Training of agency personnel in how to plan trips or connect with public transit
- Discounted fare packages and subsidized fare opportunities

VCTC and others around the county have always relied on some levels of partnership and already perform many valuable strategies for attracting riders. The full Partnership Plan describes a more comprehensive framework for carrying out communications and strengthening partnerships that will benefit transit providers and attract more ridership. The key points of the framework are:

1. Identify potential partners based on three levels of engagement frequency and priority, through which partnership strategies are organized.
2. Understand the various audiences the Plan intends to reach and design effective communication tools and approaches accordingly
3. Use incentives to invite partners and encourage engagement
4. Invest in dedicated staff to carry out these functions

## Countywide Fares and Passes

The subject of fares and passes presents some opportunities for coordinated countywide strategy. Initially, these recommendations are unique to each operation but have the goal of aligning into a countywide structure over time. The first stage of recommendations (“Fares and Passes Phase 1”) are described in the individual community sections that follow.

In the long term, the SRTP recommends a revised fare structure for all services across the County, to be phased in before the end of the ten-year period and ideally much sooner. This is described as “Phase 2” in the individual community sections, allowing time for individual transit operations to phase in changes to pricing appropriate for the local context.

The recommended long-term fare structure (“Fares and Passes Phase 2”) includes the following elements:

- Within five years, all agencies operate on the same fare platform with a **uniform** base price-per-boarding for any **fixed route**, and a uniform senior and ADA discount price.
  - For local routes, the proposed price is \$2.00, with the discounted price for people with disabilities and seniors (aged 65 and up) at \$1.00.
  - For VCTC Intercity routes with service **within** Ventura County, the proposed price is \$3.00 and discounted fares would be \$1.50.
  - For VCTC Intercity routes with service **beyond** Ventura County, the proposed price is \$6.00 and discounted fares would be \$3.00.
  - Discounts would be offered as a standard across all agencies for seniors aged 65 and up, people with disabilities, and Veterans at 50% of the base fare. Additional unique discounts without strong justification should be discontinued.
  - Any other categories with discrepancies between the agencies should be streamlined within the first three years.
- **Complementary paratransit** will continue to serve certified-eligible riders whose disability prevents them from using fixed-route service, for trips that begin and end within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of the fixed-route network.
  - Complementary paratransit trips will charge double the comparable fixed-route fare for the full trip (the maximum allowed by law).
  - Discounts will not be offered for paratransit trips
  - Personal care attendants (PCAs) may accompany a paratransit rider at no cost.
- For agencies offering **dial-a-ride or microtransit service**, the following pricing scheme should apply:
  - Trips that fit the definition of complementary paratransit are priced as described above, at double the comparable fixed-route fare.

- Define *premium pricing zones for areas that overlap the fixed route network*. For non-ADA-eligible trip requests with both ends of the trip in the premium zone, price on-demand *local* service at \$5.00 (moving to \$6.00 in Phase 2, as described in the local service plans).
- Regardless of ADA eligibility, DAR/microtransit service operating in areas where there is no fixed-route network, or at times when the routes are not operating, *could* be priced more comparably to a fixed-route trip as no other option is available. However, because microtransit still represents a premium offering, the SRTP recommends cities price the service consistently as a premium offering or \$5.00 in Phase 1, regardless of the fixed route network.
- Long-distance DAR trips between two communities, that do not otherwise qualify as complementary paratransit trips on the route network, should be priced at double the premium fare, in this case, \$10 each way (moving to \$12 in Phase 2).
  - This would apply to the current ECTA service area, Camarillo trips to CSUCI and the ECTA service area, GCTD service to Camarillo, their transfers to Valley Express, or ECTA and Valley Express transfers to GCTD.
  - Note that this is not a recommendation that DAR be offered universally to the general public across Ventura County, only how fare changes would apply for current “extended” DAR services.
- The uniform base fare across agencies will include countywide fare capping—a threshold beyond which riders taking multiple trips within a certain timeframe would not pay additional fare. It represents a maximum amount that a rider would pay for trips taken within a defined period of time. Fare caps are structured differently for different services:
  - Local and regional (within Ventura County) fixed routes
    - Daily fare cap of \$6—equivalent to 3 local boardings per day.
    - Monthly fare cap of \$64—equivalent to 32 local boardings per month or 8 boardings per week.
  - Regional/Intercity (beyond Ventura County; formerly Zone 2)
    - No daily fare cap.
    - Monthly fare cap of \$192—equivalent to 32 long-distance boardings (for travel beyond the County) per month, or 8 per week.

## BEYOND PHASE 2

Conduct ongoing annual countywide monitoring of fare data and ridership performance, and plan for increases at least every five years. GCTD has reported plans to review its fare structure annually, which is a good practice for preparing the community that prices may adjust over time. In practice, most agencies do not adjust their fares annually. Typically, it should become clear over the course of a few years that economic conditions and rider

value of the service would justify a fare increase. Historically cities in Ventura County have leaned towards keeping fares low for too long, which may appear to benefit riders in the moment, but over time makes it increasingly hard for providers to address fiscal realities. Agencies need time and data from the outcomes of this SRTP to re-establish a locally-appropriate policy for fare recovery ratio, recognizing that circumstances will differ between GCTD, long-distance Intercity, and other local and regional routes.

## BASIS FOR FARE STRUCTURE

Analysis in the SRTP identified several key factors affecting current transit riders and service levels, that influence the proposed countywide structure.

### *ISSUES AFFECTING RIDERS*

1. Transit riders are likely to represent low-income households, both in absolute terms and relative to the overall county population. Having to pay full fare for every trip could limit some riders from using transit more often.
2. Despite potential financial constraints, the majority of riders use transit several days a week.
3. Although many riders use transit daily, the transit network outside of Oxnard and Ventura is infrequent and requires long travel times, meaning many riders are only able to make a single round-trip a day.
4. If the combination of services offered by different providers formed a more dependable countywide network (coordinated connections and consistent, on-time service), there would be more opportunity for riders to use both a local fixed route and a regional Intercity route each day. This would expand travel opportunities, but would result in a higher daily cost for the rider.
5. Monthly, daily, or other multi-ride passes are available, but for very low-income riders, the up-front cost of a pass is a barrier, so they end up paying more for transit in the long term. Fare capping is a modern, technology-based approach to addressing this inequity that VCTC has already been exploring as a countywide program. Fare capping allows the user to pay as they go, rather than up front, and their fares being capped once they hit the monthly pass amount, removing the upfront cost barrier.

Sufficient fare data on passengers by fare type, pass utilization, and transfer utilization was not available for several providers, which is an issue that should improve with application of technology and coordinated practices currently planned or recommended by the SRTP. Better data and reporting in the future will help further refine the fare concepts outlined by the SRTP to fit the outcomes.

*ISSUES AFFECTING PROVIDERS*

1. Transit providers in Ventura County rely heavily on California Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds. Historically, TDA funds included a requirement for providers to meet a minimum farebox recovery ratio (the proportion of the operating costs paid for by riders) based on the service type. This requirement has been suspended since the pandemic, but the uncertainty weighs on staff who must find other revenues or budgeting strategies to backfill funds.
2. The cost of providing service has grown dramatically since the pandemic, which further exacerbates the gap that farebox revenues traditionally filled.
3. Cities and agencies offer local passes, while VCTC has spearheaded efforts to provide an integrated countywide pass. This is common in most multi-agency regions, but comes with challenges in negotiating shares of fare revenue based on ridership.
4. Communities locally and nationally have been experimenting with microtransit, but are often pricing microtransit comparable to (or even less than) fixed route service in order to attract riders. Basic economic principles would price microtransit significantly higher than fixed route service, especially when both are offered in the same area. Microtransit is significantly less cost-efficient than fixed route service, so as it becomes more popular (total ridership grows), the total cost will quickly outpace the total cost of fixed route service.

*HOW THIS PLAN ADDRESSES FARE EQUITY AND COST ISSUES*

- Implementing **fare capping** significantly decreases the total cost of transit for riders who use the service the most frequently, without requiring a higher up-front expense. It also acts as a reward for using transit more often, since after meeting the cap, rides become essentially free.
- The “**multiplier**” for fare capping is set to accommodate the average rider who rides at least three days a week, assuming a single-round trip a day. Every trip after about three weeks would be free, **incentivizing further ridership growth**. Based on the collective analysis in the SRTP, increasing ridership should take priority over revenue growth.
- For **low-income riders** who must use transit daily, fare caps would be a significant discount; riders who have access to weekend service would benefit even more.
- A daily fare cap is also set so that **riders who must depend on multiple routes** in a single day are also not disproportionately burdened. The daily cap is set at three trips, which would benefit someone whose travel requires at least two routes; their final leg on the return trip and any other transit use that day would be free. This has a similar effect to the existing free transfer policy with the added benefit of integrating with modern technology for measuring and reporting effectiveness.

- The planned countywide fare increases will not only better align user price with the growing cost of providing service, but also **apply better pricing principles** based on regulation and economic incentives. Pricing should incentivize users to take the higher-capacity and more cost-efficient services (fixed routes) over DAR/microtransit, but when agencies can and choose to offer DAR/microtransit, it should be available at a price that people can afford when they have no other option.
- Some agencies offer **locally-specific unique discounts** beyond the federally-required categories and the countywide pass programs. Offering more discounts to the base fare opens the door for operator interpretation, increased boarding delay to provide proof of eligibility, disparities in policies between operators and complexity in tracking data. If there are reasons to justify specific additional discounts for categories of riders, these could be handled through discounted bulk pass sale programs in partnership with organizations that represent these rider categories.

## FARE MODELING

The subsequent chapters estimate the outcome of the Phase 2 fare pricing on fixed route revenue, accounting for changes to service frequency and amount of population with access to fixed routes. Although this is a high-level exercise, it is an initial step in developing a fare model that can be used and updated over the next ten years to assist the SRTP participants in planning. The model incorporates elasticity factors for ridership in response to fare changes, service frequency, and population access. The model also has an assumption for the effect of fare capping based on the estimated (or known) proportion of riders who ride frequently enough to reach the cap. The assumptions in this version of the model are based on what the SRTP found and can be adjusted in the future with better observed data.

The estimated ridership and fare revenue outcomes are only intended to serve as an indicator to help guide staff in setting expectations and measuring progress. The actual revenue outcomes will differ greatly depending on the total ridership and the proportion of riders eligible for discounts or using passes or fare capping.

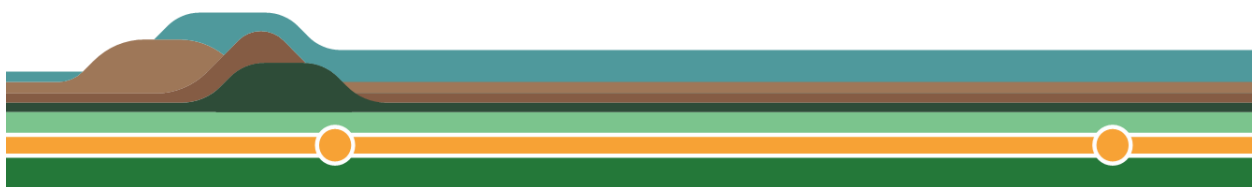
## Integration with City Planning

An important strategy for long-term sustainability of transit is to ensure community and capital planning processes integrate with transit, much as this SRTP has considered and incorporated an array of other plans. During the SRTP process, we found several positive examples of cities planning long-term development in ways that support their investment in transit, such as planning for reuse and infill development around malls and low-density commercial districts. Staff in Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Camarillo identified examples of current residential developments that are located away from the historic center of development, but may represent opportunities to better connect the community and increase ridership. Meanwhile other communities are discussing potential redevelopment of malls and developing new downtown-like districts. It is important to recognize that a dense “urban” center is not a prerequisite for transit to succeed, but these land use planning approaches further improve the value of (and need for) a strong transit network.

Much has been written elsewhere on the topic of how to best align land-use planning and redevelopment to encourage walkable, healthy communities with lower vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) and greater use of transit. In short, cities throughout Ventura County must:

- Improve safe, walkable access between bus stops and nearby land use.
- Update General Plans to foster redevelopment of underutilized commercial areas and malls.
  - Adopt best practices for form and function that bring buildings close to the street.
  - Increase the number and diversity of land uses that someone can access from the nearest bus stop by permitting and incentivizing development along the existing transit network.
- Consider opportunities for transit-oriented development near major transit hubs, specifically including the train stations in each community.
- Identify congested traffic areas and implement transit-priority treatments to keep buses moving on-time and reliably throughout the community.
- Institutionalize involvement of transit staff in development plan review processes, and ensure SRTP and transit planning objectives are integrated in development policy and review procedures.

**This concludes the countywide strategies section. The following chapters offer community or agency-specific analysis and recommendations.**



# 7. CAMARILLO



## Market Assessment

The Camarillo sub-area (see Figure 1) has a population of 84,000 and 39,000 jobs. Compared to Ventura County overall, the Camarillo sub-area has a larger percentage of senior residents, and a smaller percentage of low-income, car-light households, and youth.

Despite being relatively centrally located, significant hill ranges and farmland isolate Camarillo's developed area somewhat from the neighboring communities.

The Camarillo Metrolink station connects Camarillo by rail to Union Station in Los Angeles which connects to other counties in the region. Eight round trips, a combination of Metrolink and Pacific Surfliner trains, pass daily through this station. VCTC Intercity bus service runs through Camarillo and connects to most surrounding communities and to CSUCI. This is also true for the Coastal Express service to Santa Barbara and Goleta.

**Table 12: Camarillo Sub-Area Demographics**

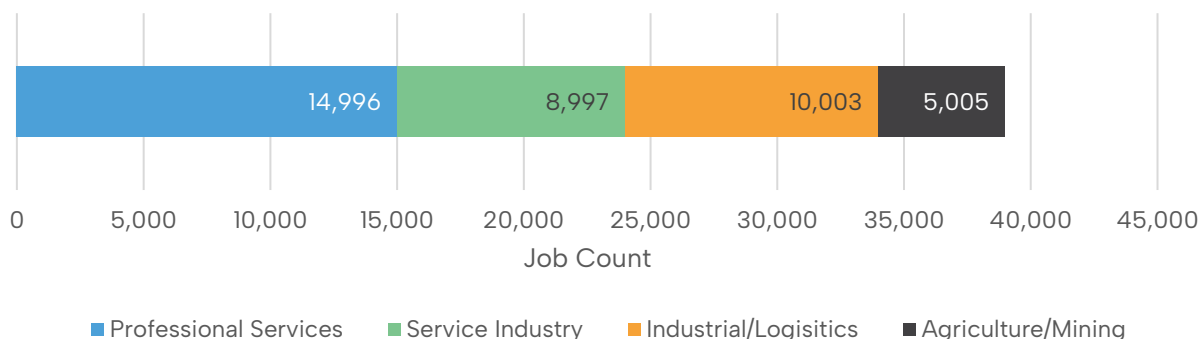
	Camarillo Sub-Area	Percent Share	
	Count	Camarillo Sub-Area	Ventura County
<i>Residential population</i>	83,373	-	-
<i>Senior citizens (ages 65+)</i>	17,233	21%	16%
<i>Youth (ages 10-17)</i>	7,867	9%	11%
<i>Low-income individuals<sup>1</sup></i>	5,413	7%	9%
<i>Households</i>	29,554	-	-
<i>Car-light households<sup>2</sup></i>	3,668	12%	15%
<i>Jobs</i>	39,001	-	-
	Camarillo Sub-Area	Ventura County	
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$109,861	\$94,167	

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Denominator of the percent share statistics is persons in housing units.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

**Figure 5: Camarillo Sub-Area Jobs by Industry**

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Jobs in the Camarillo sub-area skew towards professional service and service industries, though there is also a sizable manufacturing sector. Most people who work in the Camarillo sub-area—nearly 80 percent—commute to their jobs from other communities, primarily the Ventura-Oxnard area and Thousand Oaks. Similarly, most employed residents in the Camarillo sub-area—81 percent—commute to other communities for work.

Job density in the Camarillo sub-area is highest in the areas surrounding US Highway 101, State Route 34, Las Posas Road, and Ponderosa Drive. Most of the Camarillo sub-area's major employers are located no more than a mile from one of the regional highways. On the other hand, four of the Camarillo sub-area's top ten employers, Cal Coast Construction, Hi-Temp Insulation Inc., Teledyne Scientific & Imaging LLC, and Golden State Medical Supply, are located more than a mile away from a transit stop.

About two-thirds of all vehicle trips in the Camarillo sub-area begin and end within the community. The Outlets and the main commercial strip along Ventura Boulevard are a regional draw. The built environment consists primarily of residential developments with limited connectivity to main roads, and retail and other non-residential land uses concentrated near US-101 and along Lewis Road (State Route 34). There are very few "mixed use" areas. Additionally, there are several schools in the area not currently well-served by transit.

## TRIP DISTRIBUTION

Destinations of Trips from Camarillo Sub-Area

**221,200**

Trips Originate in Camarillo Sub-Area

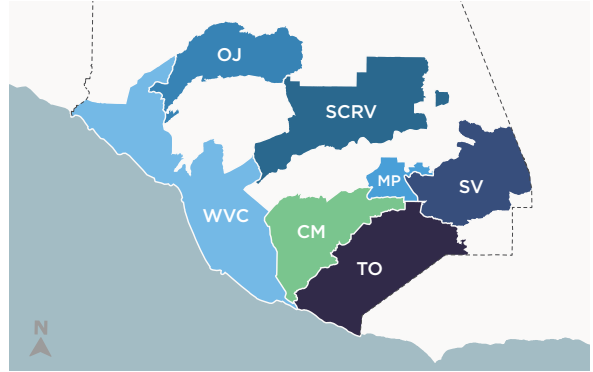
**11%**

Of Ventura County Trips Originate in Camarillo Sub-Area

Stay Within Camarillo Sub-Area → **151,700**

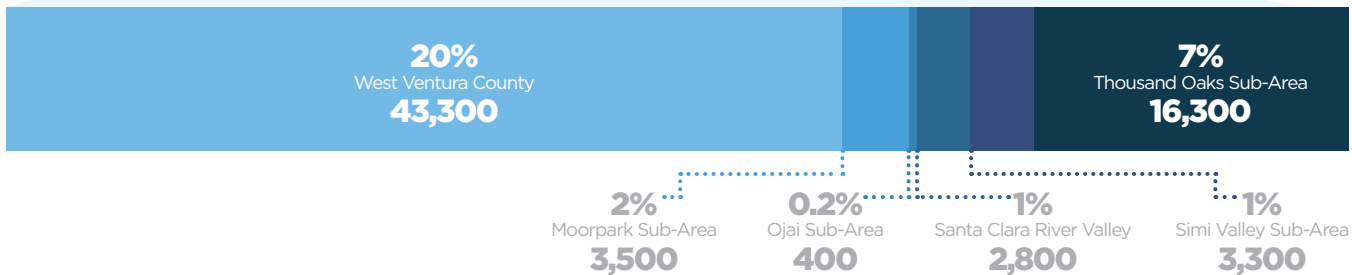
**69%** Of Camarillo Sub-Area Trips

To External Destinations **69,500**



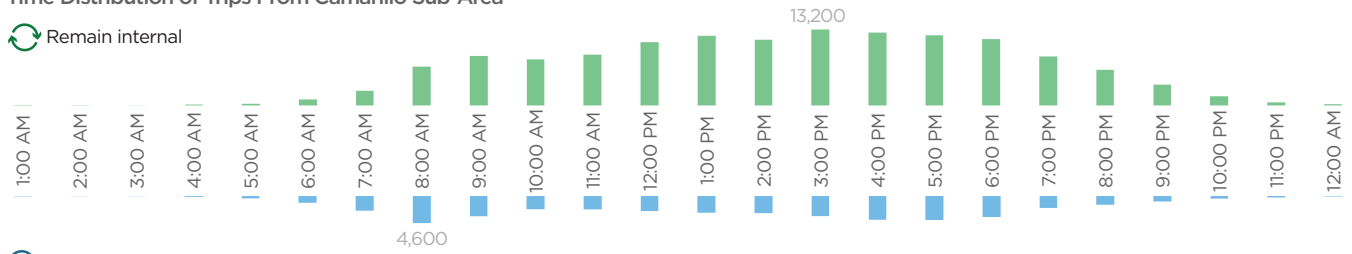
**31%**

Of Camarillo Sub-Area Trips End Externally



### Time Distribution of Trips From Camarillo Sub-Area

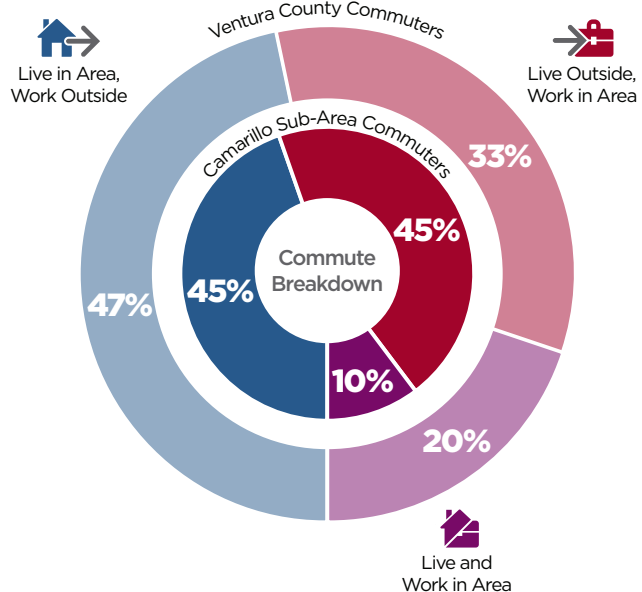
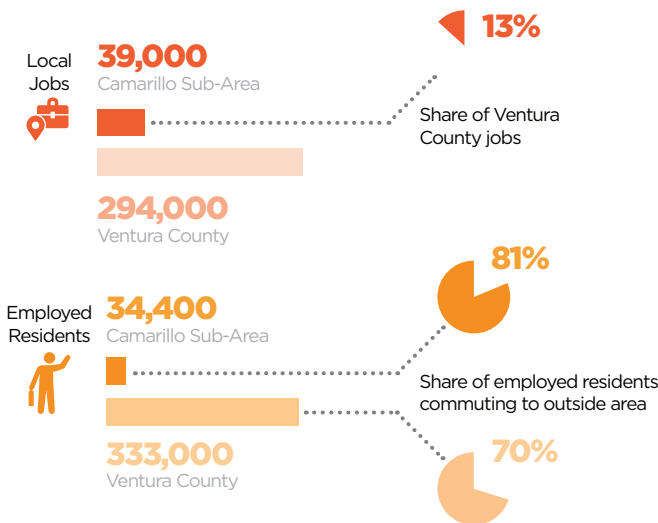
Remain internal



End externally

## JOBS INFLOW/OUTFLOW

Camarillo Sub-Area Jobs Flow Compared to Ventura County



## Service Evaluation

The City of Camarillo operates Camarillo Area Transit (CAT). CAT service includes fixed route service and a Dial-a-Ride program that is open to the general public.

### CAMARILLO AREA TRANSIT: FARES

The City currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

**Table 13: Agency Single-Ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type**

Service Type	Regular	Discounted <sup>1</sup>	Child (5 & under)	Student/Youth <sup>3</sup>	College Students <sup>3</sup>
<b>Fixed Route</b>	\$1.00	\$0.50 <sup>2</sup>	Free	Free	Free
<b>Dial-a-Ride</b>	\$3.00	\$2.00	Free	Free	Free

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.

<sup>2</sup> Free for Leisure Village residents.

<sup>3</sup> CAT services are free for youth 18 and under, those over 18 enrolled in high school, and college students due to VCTC Youth Ride Free Program and College Ride Program, which are funded through June 2026. In the absence of these programs, student/youth and college students would pay regular Fixed Route and Dial-a-Ride fares.

Source: Agency websites, 2024.

### CAMARILLO AREA TRANSIT: FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

CAT operates two fixed routes; the route serving more residential areas of the city is called “Fixed Route” while the other is called the “Trolley Route”.

#### SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

The Fixed Route is a weekday-only bus service that connects Leisure Village, an age-restricted community for persons aged 55 and above, to retail, medical, and community destinations west of State Route 34. This bus runs approximately once an hour between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday.

The Trolley operates on weekdays and weekends at 30-minute service frequency between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (and until 9:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday). The Trolley links retail and dining destinations along Ventura Boulevard between Camarillo Town Center and the Camarillo Metrolink Station. Both routes run along a loop but serve distinct areas of the City and have limited overlap.

The Camarillo Metrolink Station is the City’s hub for regional transit connections. VCTC Intercity Highway 101, Cross County Limited, and Channel Islands routes and Santa Barbara Airbus all stop at the Camarillo Metrolink Station. The Trolley currently serves the Metrolink Station but the CAT Fixed Route does not. Fixed Route riders can transfer to the Trolley at the Ponderosa Center but must ride almost the entirety of the loop to reach the Metrolink Station stop.

**FIXED ROUTE**

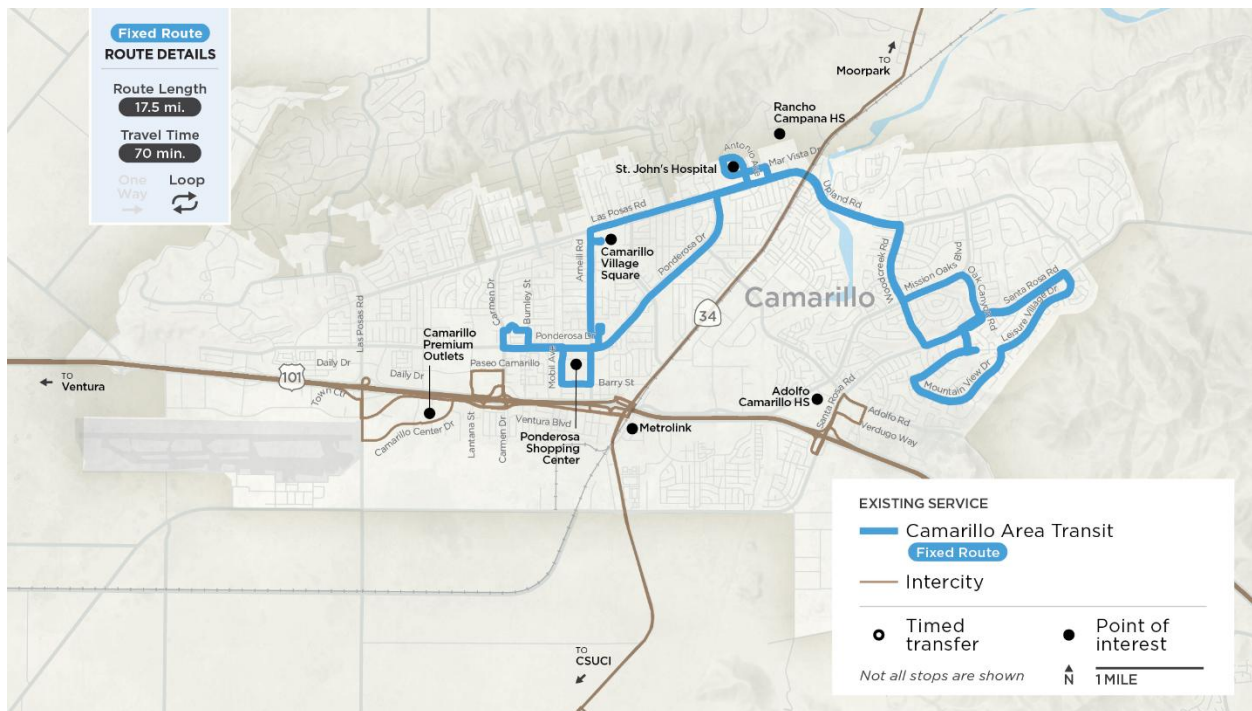
The Fixed Route operates along various primary arterials like Upland Road, Las Posas Road, and Ponderosa Drive as well as some local roads, with 10-12 designated stops depending on the trip. The route makes an additional four stops within Leisure Village on every other trip. The Fixed Route serves the Leisure Village retirement community, several shopping plazas, and community assets such as Camarillo Library and the Community Center, facilitating access, particularly among seniors, to key retail and community facilities in Camarillo. Riders can transfer to the Trolley at the Ponderosa Plaza stop.

Outside of Leisure Village, the stops served by the routes are almost exclusively at non-residential destinations and almost no neighborhood-serving stops except for homes that happen to be close to the plazas and community assets noted above.

Camarillo Area Transit suspended fare collection during the COVID-19 pandemic but continued operating the Fixed Route. CAT resumed fare collection in July 2021.

In FY23, Fixed Route had 24 average daily boardings.

**Figure 6: Camarillo Fixed Route**



## TROLLEY

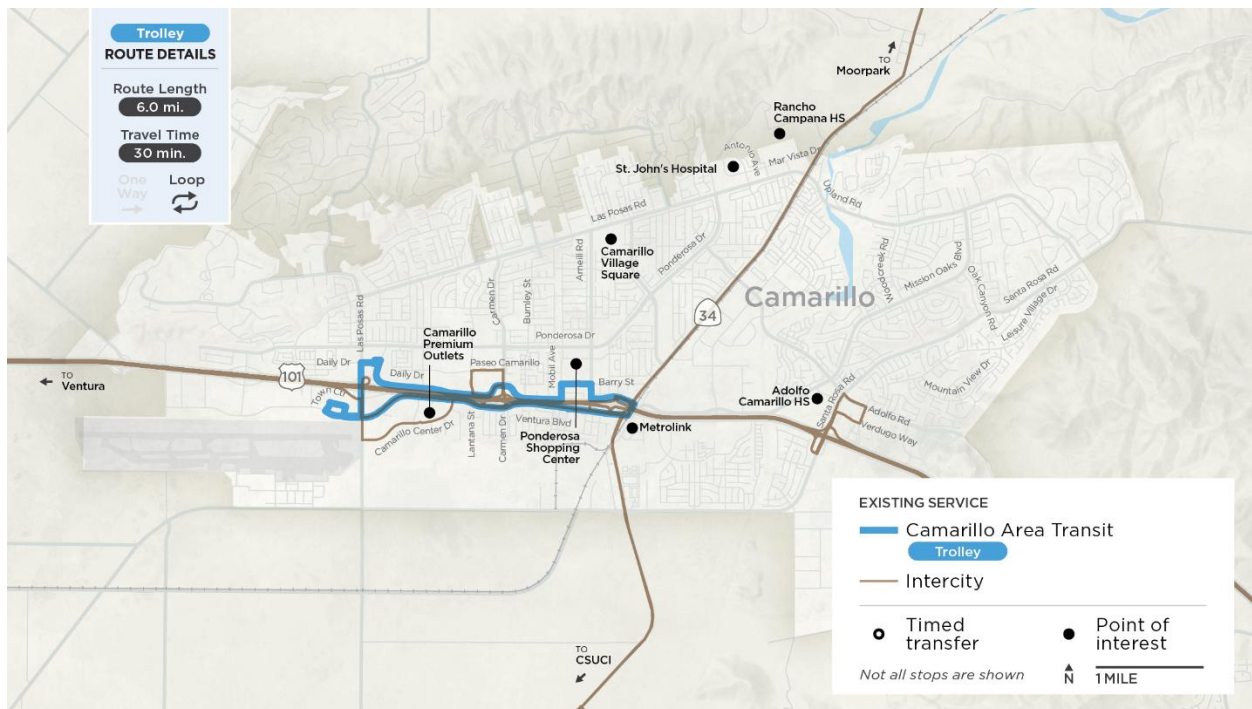
The Trolley operates primarily along Daily Drive and Ventura Boulevard, making ten stops along its counterclockwise loop route. The route begins at the Metrolink station, connecting to regional transportation options, and runs westbound along Daily Drive until the Camarillo Town Center, at which point it loops back to the Metrolink station along Ventura Boulevard. The route serves the same stops consistently throughout the day. Riders can transfer to the Fixed Route at the Ponderosa Center stop.

The Trolley route serves the few residential areas immediately along its route but is generally not available to most residents, even when considering a connection to the Fixed Route.

Camarillo Area Transit suspended the Trolley between March 25, 2020, and June 2020 due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Otherwise service levels and schedules have remained consistent.

In FY23, the Trolley service had 51 average daily boardings.

**Figure 7: Camarillo Trolley**



## *RIDERSHIP*

Camarillo Area Transit total annual fixed-route ridership was approximately 24,550 in FY23. Between FY14 and FY23, total annual ridership reached a high of 84,876 in FY16 and a low of 13,793 in FY14 (prior to implementation of the Trolley). FY23 represented the lowest year of fixed-route ridership including the current two routes. Camarillo Area Transit ridership saw large growth between FY14 and FY16 after which it began to steadily trend downward by 1-5% each year until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The agency suspended its Trolley route for three months in Spring 2020 but otherwise did not change the level of service provided in response to the pandemic. Nevertheless, ridership saw a steep decrease beginning in FY20 and has decreased every year since. Total fixed-route ridership in FY23 represented less than a third of pre-pandemic ridership. The Trolley saw a much larger decline during the pandemic, although this is partly because the Fixed Route ridership has historically been so low. Average daily ridership in FY23 on the Trolley is nearly twice the Fixed Route, but in 2019 average ridership on the Trolley was more than six times the Fixed Route.

## *SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY*

Over the last five years, service productivity (in terms of passenger trips per revenue hour) decreased by 68% overall and showed no indicators of recovery several years after the onset of the pandemic. The Trolley is more productive than the Fixed Route in terms of passenger trips per revenue hour, although averaging fewer than six passenger trips per revenue hour is relatively low for a service with 30-minute frequency. The Fixed Route service, despite operating through a significant residential portion of the City and connecting destinations such as the library and shopping centers, carries fewer than three passengers per revenue hour which is very low for any route as compared to industry norms.

The systemwide average fare per unlinked passenger trip was \$0.68, which is approximately two-thirds of Camarillo Area Transit's regular one-way fare. The average fare revenue per trip was higher for the Fixed Route compared to the Trolley in FY23. While the Trolley accounted for 75% of ridership in FY23, it only accounted for 71% of fare revenue.

**Table 14: Camarillo Area Transit Fare Revenue by Route, FY23**

Route	Farebox Revenue	Average Fare Revenue per Trip (Collected)	Regular One-Way Fare (Price)
<b>Fixed Route</b>	\$4,699.86	\$0.77	\$1.00
<b>Trolley</b>	\$11,920.18	\$0.65	\$1.00

Source: Camarillo Area Transit, 2024.

### ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY

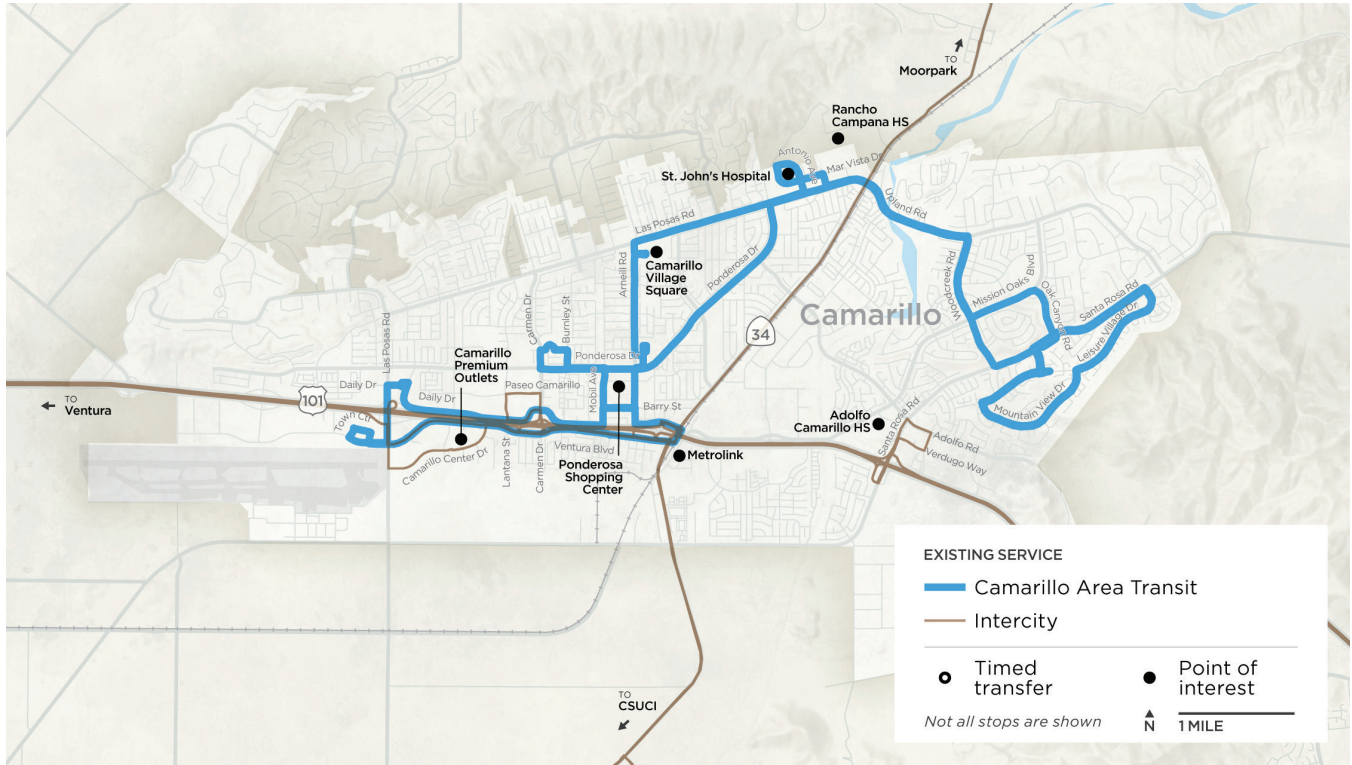
In the course of the on-board survey, Camarillo Area Transit received a total of 34 responses. Most people who responded to the survey were satisfied with their overall experience of bus service in Camarillo, rating it 3.88 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus operators and the safety on board the bus. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were bus schedules being readily available and difficulty understanding the service information. However, even the areas with the lowest score had an average rating over 3, indicating overall general satisfaction with the CAT's service. A majority of riders responded that there is nothing preventing them from using the bus more. Those that did note factors preventing them from using the service more cited that the bus does not travel when or where they need it.

### EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Between FY17 and FY23, CAT's annual operating costs more than doubled, while annual ridership decreased 70%. The growth in operating costs accelerated beginning in FY21 in response to operating contract price increases. These increases were a common industry trend during the post-pandemic period. Operating costs per trip increased five-fold over the last five years, while operating costs per revenue hour doubled. These datapoints illustrate a trend of declining ridership and increasing operating costs in the face of stable revenue hours and revenue miles.

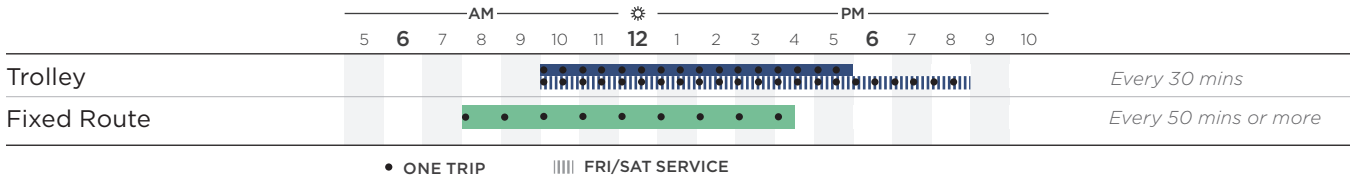
This substantial jump in operating costs actually brings Camarillo Area Transit closer to its peers in transit. Prior to FY21, CAT's average costs were far lower than others in Ventura County, and were generally low compared to the industry average in California (based on NTD data). The current cost of \$130 per revenue hour is more typical of similar operations in the region for FY23.

## AGENCY ROUTE MAP



## SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

### Service Span

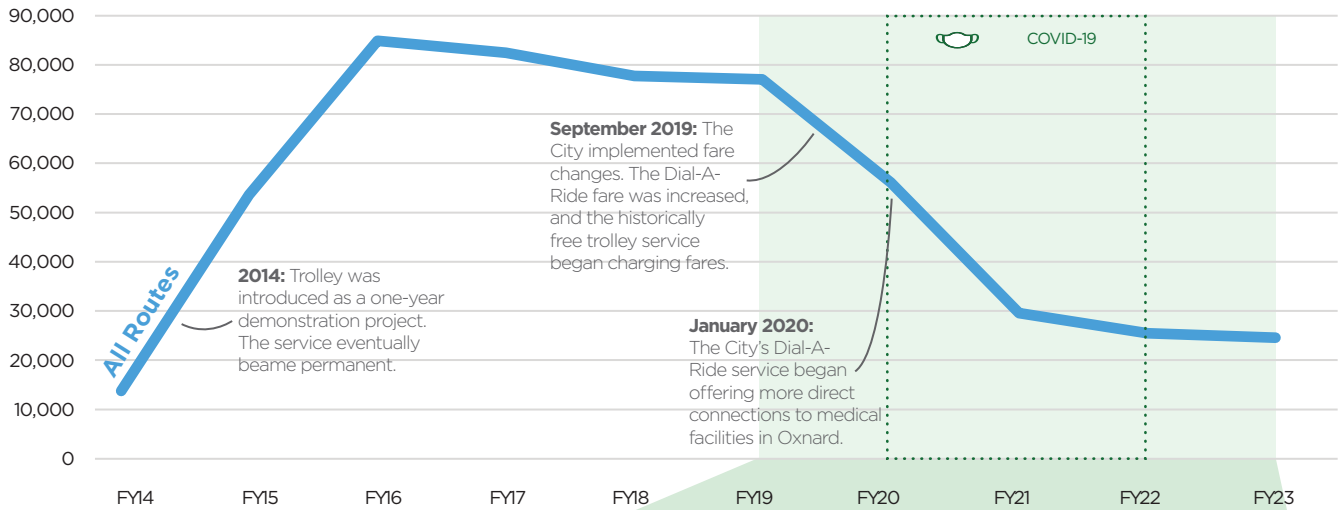


### Route Productivity FY23

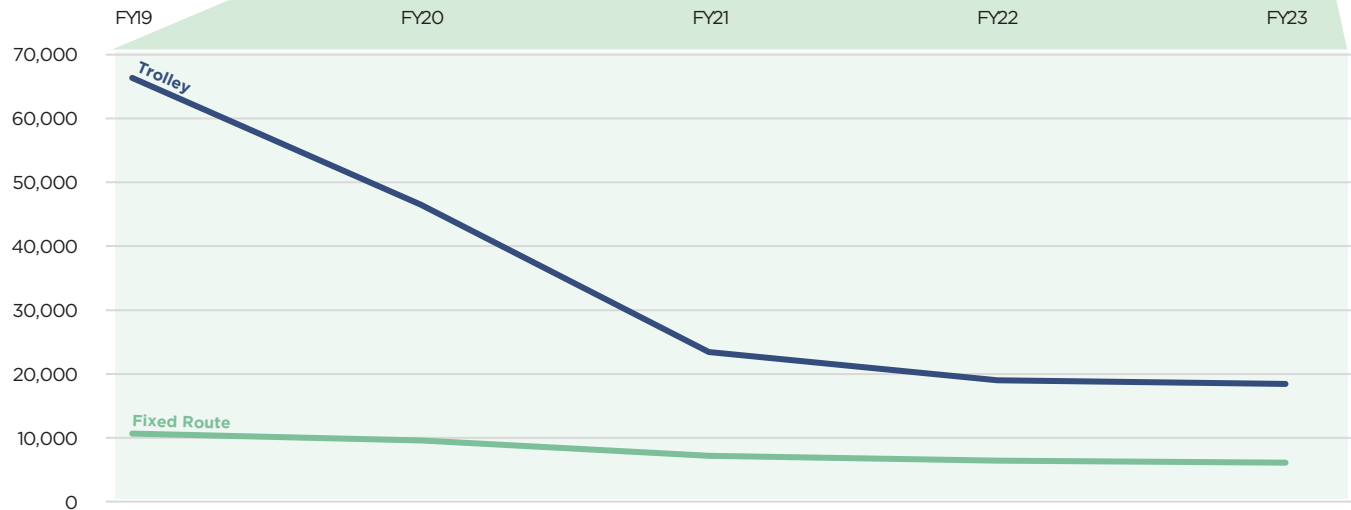
Route	Annual Ridership	Passengers per Revenue Hour			Revenue Hours			Operating Cost per Boarding
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	
Trolley	18,446	5.8	4.5	5.2	2,215	572	400	\$22.31
Fixed Route	6,104	2.9	N/A	N/A	2,093	N/A	N/A	\$46.12

## AGENCY RIDERSHIP

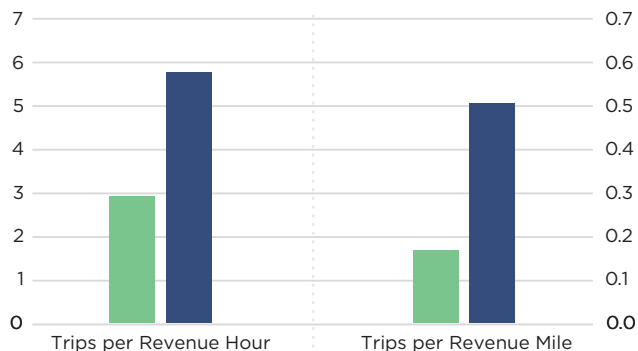
FY14 - FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership



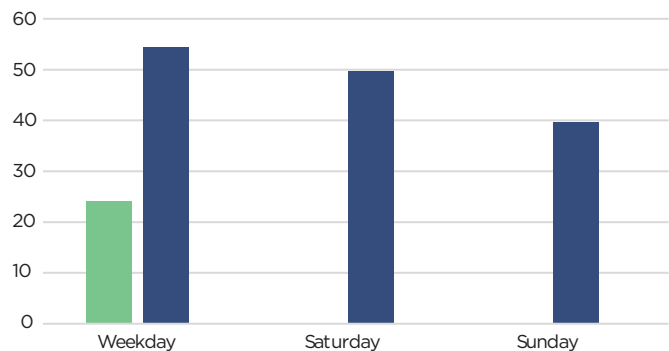
FY19 - FY23 Ridership by Route



FY23 Passenger Trips by Revenue Hour and Revenue Mile

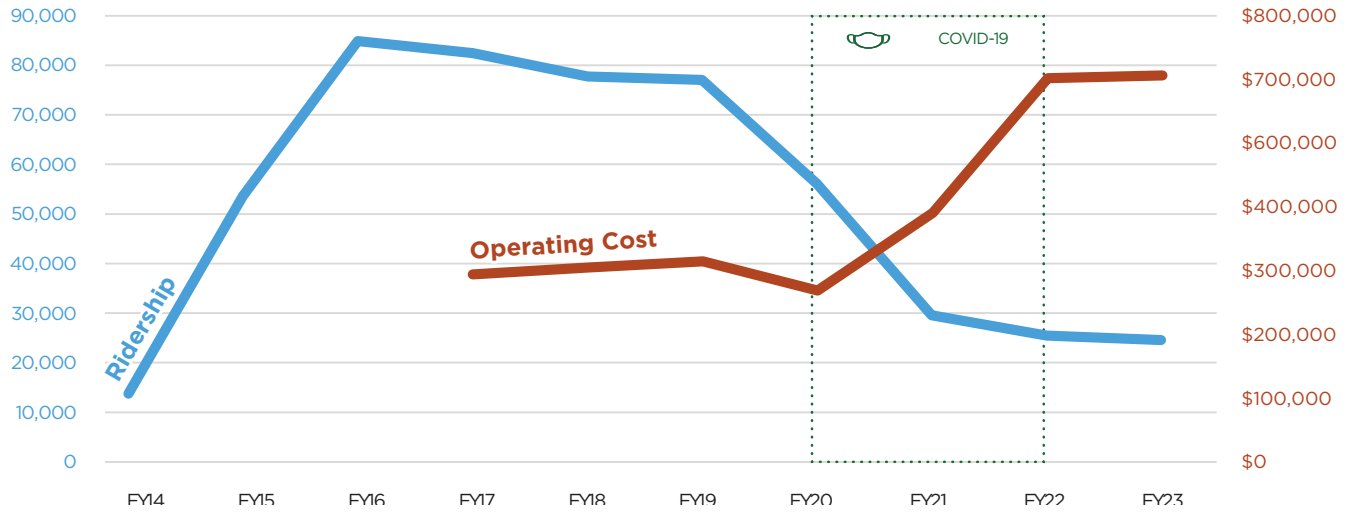


FY23 Average Daily Ridership

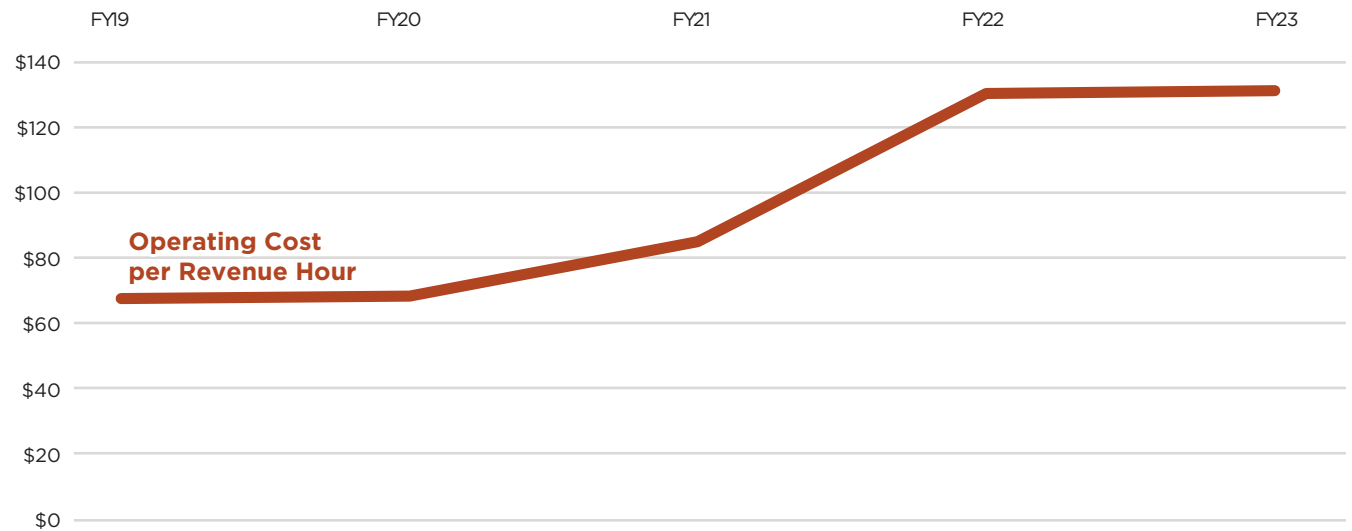


## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY14-FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership in Relation to Annual Operating Cost



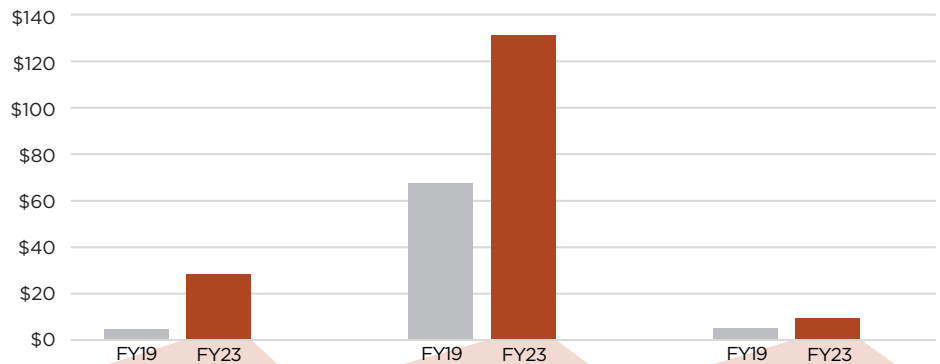
FY19 - FY23 Annual Fixed Route Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



FY19 and FY23 Systemwide Operating Costs

**\$359,426**  
FY19 Fixed Route Operating Cost

**\$693,037**  
FY23 Fixed Route Operating Cost



FY23 Operating Cost by Route

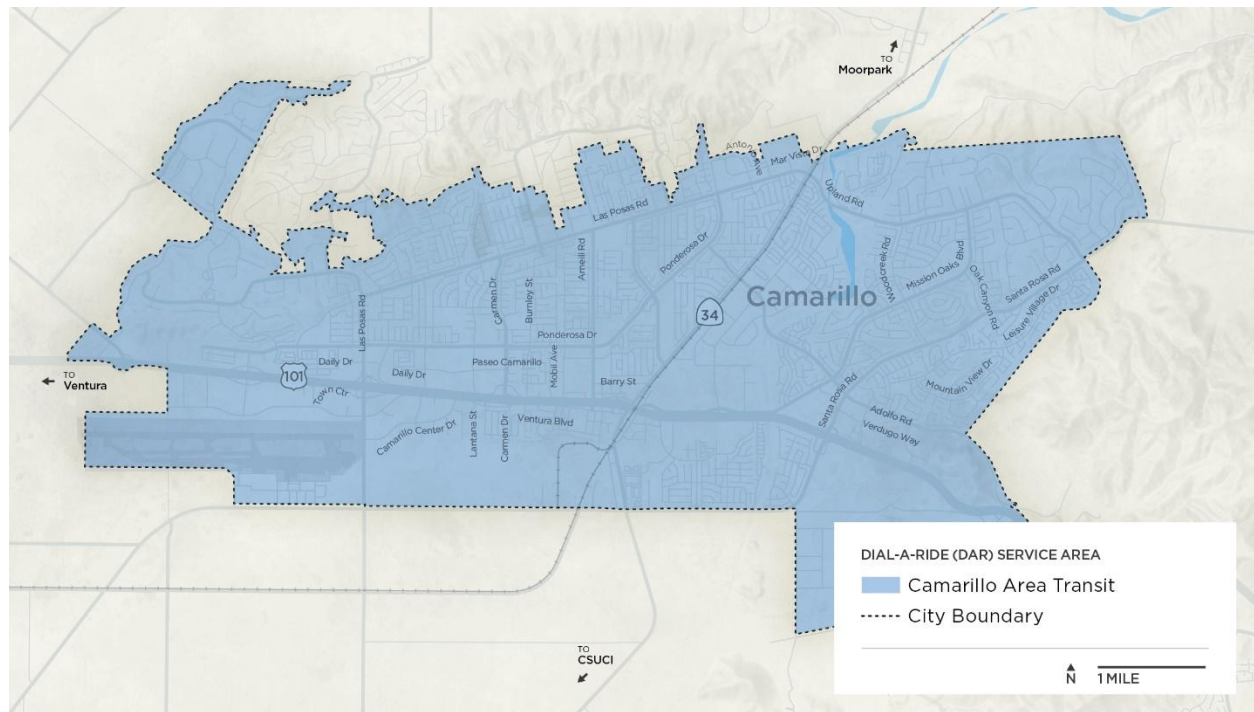
Route	Operating Cost	Operating Cost per Boarding	Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Operating Cost per Revenue Mile
Trolley	\$411,548.90	\$22.31	\$129.13	\$11.27
Fixed Route	\$281,488.78	\$46.12	\$134.51	\$7.73

## CAMARILLO AREA TRANSIT: DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICE

Camarillo Area Transit operates a program that combines senior/ADA-paratransit with a general public Dial-a-Ride (DAR) service.

### RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

**Figure 8: Camarillo Dial-a-Ride Service Area**



Note: ADA-certified riders and seniors can travel beyond City limits via the CAT Dial-a-Ride service to select destinations. Student riders can also use CAT Dial-a-Ride for trips to and from CSUCI.

Camarillo Dial-a-Ride provides trips throughout the city to the ADA population and seniors. If there is space available in the schedule, members of the general public can reserve Dial-a-Ride trips. Program managers indicate that the Dial-a-Ride service serves general trips because the fixed-route service is limited and does not cover many areas of the city.

The Dial-a-Ride service area extends beyond Camarillo city limits for ADA-certified riders and seniors as well as CSUCI students. ADA-certified riders and seniors may travel to select destinations within Oxnard, limited by 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Oxnard Boulevard and Highway 101. Camarillo Dial-a-Ride also serves CSUCI, about seven miles from City Hall, providing trips to students.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Key performance metrics for Camarillo’s Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 15.

**Table 15: Camarillo Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics**

Camarillo Dial-a-Ride	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Passenger Trips</b>	97,403	75,537	40,380	42,010	42,811
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	28,280	22,454	13,359	14,422	15,387
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	505,638	421,571	287,773	297,202	301,354
<b>Operating Cost</b>	\$1,709,016	\$1,955,844	\$2,160,167	\$2,125,224	\$2,381,590
<b>Passengers per Hour</b>	3.4	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.8
<b>Passengers per Mile</b>	0.19	0.18	0.14	0.14	0.14
<b>Cost per Passenger</b>	\$17.55	\$25.89	\$53.50	\$50.59	\$55.63
<b>Cost per Hour</b>	\$60.43	\$87.11	\$161.70	\$147.36	\$154.78
<b>Cost per Mile</b>	\$3.38	\$4.64	\$7.51	\$7.15	\$7.90

Source: Camarillo Area Transit, 2024.

DAR passenger trips are slowly increasing after the pandemic, however overall operating costs are outpacing the number of trips. Notably, the cost per passenger has increased by \$38 in the last four years and the cost per hour by 156% from \$60.43 in FY19 to \$154.78 in FY23. Productivity is holding steady at 2.8 passengers per hour, but lower than pre-pandemic efficiency.

## OPERATIONS TOPICS

Camarillo Dial-a-Ride is a component of the City of Camarillo’s Public Works Department, Transit Division and contractor-operated by RTW Management, who secured a four-year contract with the City in May 2024. Concurrent with the shift to RTW, the scheduling and dispatching transitioned to RideCo’s software platform. The analysis in this section was completed prior to this, during the time that RATP operated the service.

## RESOURCES

The previous contractor had some difficulty hiring and retaining drivers during 2023 and earlier, particularly under the old contract where wages were not competitive. Despite the staffing challenges, the current contractor reports they have been able to fill driver positions and have enough vehicles to meet trip demand. On-time performance has not suffered.

## DAR TRIP SCHEDULING AND DISPATCHING

Trip reservations, for this advance reservation service, can be made by riders between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Peak demand for making reservations tends to be in the afternoons, between 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Riders may call up to two weeks in advance, but no more. Dispatch creates a two-week schedule at a time.

The previous contractor had been using in-house, “home grown” scheduling software that supports a manual scheduling process. With the new operations contract, the program transitioned onto VCTC’s RideCo scheduling software platform.

Excessive no-show trips and late cancellations have impacted productivity. Riders making reservations more than a week in advance sometimes do not show up and don’t notify dispatch. In the previous system, riders did not get reminders about their trips, though they could call to check on a vehicle’s location. Under RideCo, which has an app that riders can use to track their vehicle, initial data showed a reduction in rider “no shows.”

Managers report there have been few changes in rider patterns since the pandemic other than the general decline in demand for trips, down 56%.

### DAR TRANSFERS

CAT has policies and procedures that enable Camarillo riders with ADA certification to transfer onto GCTD’s senior/ADA Dial-a-Ride service, GO ACCESS, and travel farther into the GCTD service area. Vehicles meet at St. John’s Regional Medical Center in Oxnard, and are coordinated through dispatch. According to some riders surveyed, CAT vehicles are on time and GCTD vehicles frequently late. Delays in transferring riders can negatively affect both the rider’s customer experience and the agency’s operations effectiveness.

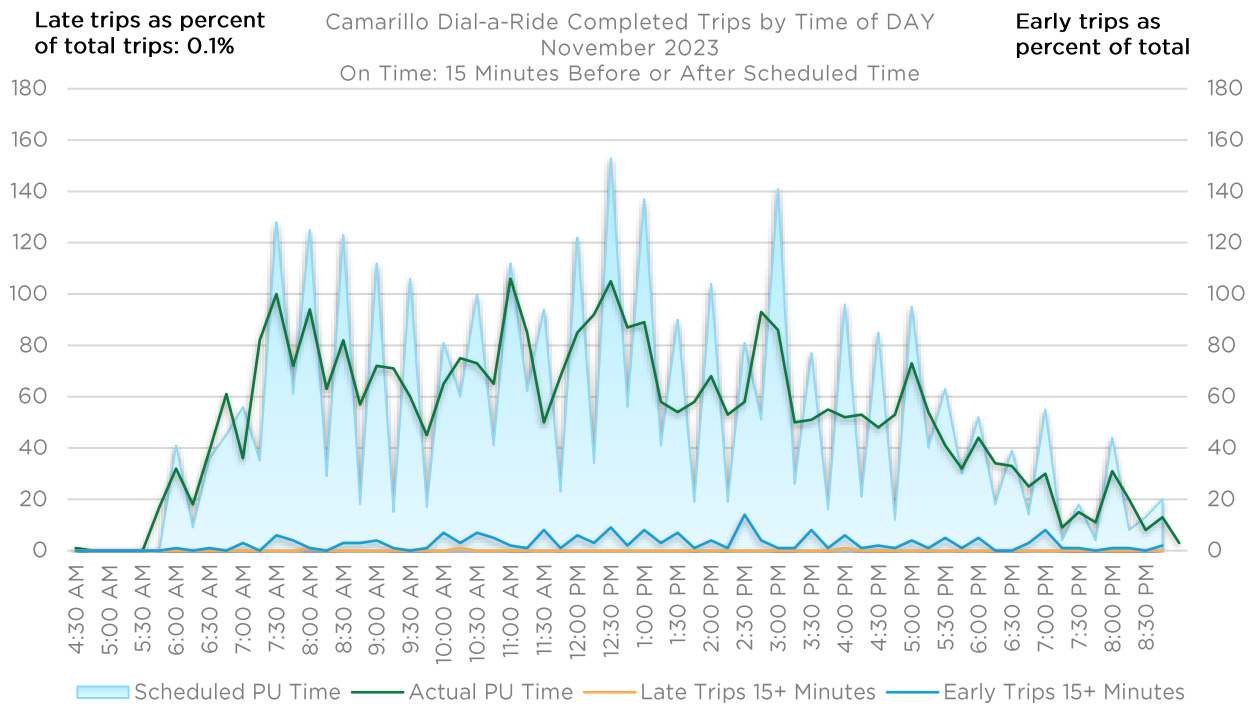
Passengers may book their return trip with GO ACCESS and be brought directly to their destination in Camarillo through a service called “Direct Service to Camarillo” provided by GCTD. Camarillo Dial-a-Ride has no role in or coordination with ECTA.

### DAR ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented below. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. The analysis determines on-time performance by calculating the total number of actual pick-up times that fall outside of a 30-minute “on-time” window, defined as the 15 minutes before the scheduled time to 15 minutes after.

Trips for Camarillo Dial-a-Ride include all local demand-response trips. Peak demand typically begins around 7:30 a.m., with additional peaks at 11:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and 5:00 p.m. On-time performance has been managed well with only 5.2% of pick-ups being early and 0.1% of vehicles arriving late. It should be noted that Camarillo’s service contractor operates to an on-time window of 20 minutes, compared to the 30-minute window of this analysis.

**Figure 9: Camarillo Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance**



n = 3,428

Source: Camarillo Area Transit, 2024.

## Camarillo Area Transit: Gaps and Opportunities

### PEOPLE



#### SENIORS

Camarillo has a substantial senior population. The Fixed Route is oriented mostly toward connecting Leisure Village residents to key destinations throughout the city, but is underutilized. Seniors are able to easily use the DAR service. The \$2.00 senior/disabled DAR fare is apparently worth the value for more direct service, even though Leisure Village residents ride the Fixed Route for free.



#### GENERAL POPULATION

Many residents have jobs elsewhere, but lots of trips are made within the city. Getting around by car is fairly fast and easy. Good bus service needs to cover more area and be relatively fast/frequent to compete for local trips. The Fixed Route also does not connect effectively to the regional transit services that might support commuters or other regional travelers. Fixed Route stops are very limited for serving neighborhoods outside of Leisure Village.



#### STUDENTS

Although the Fixed Route operates near both local high schools, service doesn't cover enough of the city or times of day to be useful for most students. After-school destinations like Boys & Girls Club are not served. The Fixed Route service span is also too short to help students (and the general public) who often need to get home in the late afternoon and evenings.

### PLACES



#### COVERAGE

Much of the city has no access to any scheduled bus service, but can use the general public DAR. The Trolley route is relatively successful in its short loop, but would likely benefit from connections to a route serving other areas of the city.



#### WALKABILITY

The Fixed Route operates through most of the eastern area where walk-access to stops is relatively poor and does not serve other neighborhoods that are relatively dense and a short walk from main arterials. The Trolley serves the more walkable Old Town and dense commercial districts but is not a close walk to most neighborhoods north of US-101.



#### REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

Service connections between Camarillo Fixed Route and Trolley are limited. Fixed Route does not directly connect to Metrolink or regional bus. Trolley does technically connect to regional services (Metrolink and Santa Barbara Airbus) but begins operation late in the morning, missing the opportunity for regional jobs access in both directions.

## SERVICE DESIGN



### *FIXED-ROUTE DIRECTNESS*

The Trolley route benefits from being a relatively short and frequent loop. The Fixed Route service is generally an indirect service which attempts to serve a wide variety of senior-serving destinations for a population that is more likely to use the DAR program.



### *FIXED-ROUTE FREQUENCY*

The Trolley frequency is a strength of Camarillo's transit service. The Fixed Route is as frequent as possible for its service design, but does not attract riders for other reasons described.



### *SPAN*

The Trolley service span is generally well aligned to its intended market and is one of the few transit routes outside of the Oxnard-Ventura area operating later into the evenings on Fridays and Saturdays. However, the Trolley only begins at 10:00 a.m. despite being the only local route connecting to the train station, with morning trains coming in much earlier. The Fixed Route span is closely aligned with its senior-focused travel market, and extending the span in its current configuration would not likely attract more riders.



### *Balance of Services*

Camarillo Area Transit has a conflicting service design for its Fixed Route. The route is clearly designed to serve the Leisure Village residents, who also benefit from the DAR service. Although there is a significant price difference, this is apparently not an incentive for most riders to use the Fixed Route. Meanwhile, much of the city that could walk to a scheduled bus instead rely on the general public DAR. A city of this size and built environment would typically swap these options, reserving the DAR program for the large senior community and aligning the

fixed-route service to cover more of the general population more cost-effectively.

General public DAR could continue to be offered in neighborhoods without fixed-route service, but should otherwise be reserved for seniors and people with disabilities. Additionally, coordination with the Leisure Village community could establish scheduled shopper shuttles, and group trips through the DAR program that would further improve efficiency.

## Camarillo Area Transit: Service Recommendations

This section provides recommendations for transit services operated by Camarillo Area Transit (CAT) or by other operators within their service area, including the design and operation of its fixed-route services, the structure of its demand-response program, funding strategies, and capital planning. The SRTP vision for CAT proposes substantial changes to the fixed-route services and rebalancing resources between services via policy changes for the Dial-A-Ride program.

1. Maintain existing Trolley route
2. Maintain a fixed route service for the Leisure Village community
3. Introduce two new fixed-route loops operating in opposite directions, once an hour
4. Modify fare structure and policy to incentivize riders to use new route network
5. Adjust VCTC Intercity service to improve connections and fill coverage gaps

### ROUTE CHANGES

This SRTP recommends expanding fixed-route service to more Camarillo neighborhoods and improving connections between services. The proposed concept maintains the current Trolley route, and adds two new, overlapping loops in opposite directions serving the center of the city. A Leisure Village route would remain in place, with staff adjusting the route where needed to complement the new fixed routes and reduce dependence on the Dial-A-Ride service. The proposed new routes are identified on the following map as Route 90, Camarillo Loop (Clockwise), and Route 91, Camarillo Loop (Counterclockwise). The Camarillo Trolley is identified alternatively as Route 92 and the Leisure Village route is identified as Route 93, consistent with the recommended renumbering concept in the Countywide Strategies.

The new bi-directional loops would operate hourly from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays, with no weekend service. The Trolley would continue its current service: running every 30 minutes from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. The Leisure Village route would maintain its operating hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



**Table 16: Overview of Proposed Changes to Transit Service in Camarillo**

Key Change	Benefits	Considerations
<b><i>New fixed-route service operates two loops in opposite directions covering central Camarillo</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Population within a quarter mile of a transit stop will increase from 18,000 to 33,000</li> <li>– Relatively dense neighborhoods a short walk from major arterials will gain access to fixed-route service</li> <li>– Connects high schools, Boys &amp; Girls club, parks, jobs, and businesses with an easy-to-understand and predictable service</li> <li>– Creates network of routes along with Trolley and Intercity services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Will require new bus stop infrastructure at many locations</li> </ul>
<b><i>Regular hourly service on both fixed route loops between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased frequency will make bus service more competitive with car travel for local trips</li> <li>– Expanded span of service will enable more students and commuters to use transit to get to/from home</li> <li>– Better matches regional transit span with connecting services at Metrolink station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Trolley route will continue to operate with 30-minute headways and current span of service</li> <li>– Each new loop is once an hour in opposite directions; a bus departs the train station every 30 minutes, covering most of the City.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Timed transfers between Trolley and both fixed-route loops</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improved access to shopping and dining destinations along the Trolley route, which is not within walking distance of most neighborhoods north of US-101</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–</li> </ul>
<b><i>Tiered pricing structure for citywide Dial-A-Ride</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Maintains a Dial-A-Ride option for all Camarillo residents</li> <li>– Maintains discounted Dial-A-Ride for seniors and people with disabilities, as well as all Leisure Village residents</li> <li>– Incentivizes riders to use the expanded fixed-route system</li> <li>– Maximizes effectiveness of transit funding to serve the most people, while maintaining citywide coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Current Dial-a-Ride users may be unenthusiastic about a scheduled route compared with point-to-point trips, and may be unwilling or unable to pay for higher on-demand trip prices.</li> <li>– Dial-A-Ride fares will increase for Camarillo residents living within a quarter mile of a fixed route transit stop if they do not qualify for senior/ADA fare</li> </ul>

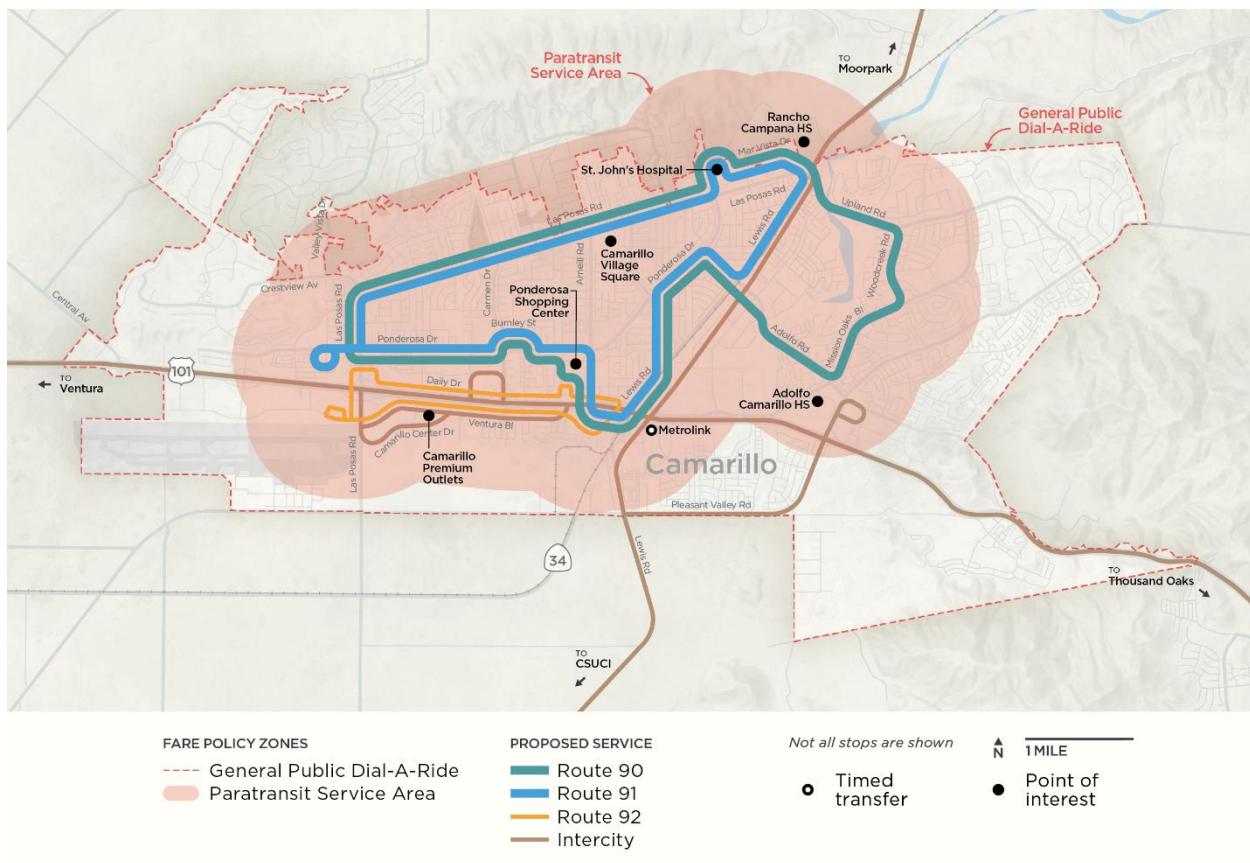
## PROPOSED FARES AND POLICY CHANGES

The proposed fare system for Camarillo Area Transit would include an initial base increase, and a later additional increase to sustain the added investment in the system. Price increases should occur in two phases over at least two years. The Phase 1 fare change would occur in conjunction with the launch of the new bus routes. The Phase 2 fare change should be implemented two years later, allowing time for the new service to become established. See the performance standards and monitoring section for more implementation guidance.

**Table 17: Proposed Fare Changes, Phase 1 & 2**

	Bus Routes Current	Dial-A-Ride Current	Routes Proposed Phase 1	Dial-A-Ride Proposed Phase 1	Routes Proposed Phase 2	Dial-A-Ride Proposed Phase 2
<b>Base Fare</b>	\$1.00	\$3.00	\$1.50	\$3.00 for trip with one end outside of the route area. \$5.00 for general public trip with both ends near a route.	\$2.00	\$4.00 for trip with one end outside of the route area. \$6.00 for general public trip with both ends near a route.
<b>Senior (65+) and People with Disabilities (ADA)</b>	\$0.50	\$2.00	\$0.75	\$3.00	\$1.00	\$3.00
<b>Leisure Village Resident</b>	Free on Fixed-Route	No special pricing	Free on Fixed-Route	No special pricing	No special pricing	No special pricing

Figure 11: Proposed CAT Fixed Route Concept and Fare Zones



### OTHER PROGRAM CHANGES

- Set DAR reservation and scheduling policy to **serve non-ADA trips within the fixed route area only "space permitting."** This will ensure that system capacity remains available for ADA-certified users. The City may continue to offer DAR service to the general public, but should be clear that at peak times trips may be unavailable or have longer wait times for service. Microtransit apps are typically capable of redirecting the user to the fixed-route service.
- Work with Leisure Village, the senior center, the library, and others to **organize group DAR trips** that meet the community's needs. Many similarly age-restricted communities organize programmed weekly (or more frequent) DAR trips for grocery shopping, to senior centers, or other regular off-site activities. This method provides more predictable service for the community, improves social interaction, and supports external programs. CAT receives the benefit of more consistent operation and resource allocation, and should achieve higher productivity and cost-efficiency as a result. This approach also reduces the impact of discontinuing a route by essentially offering a community-focused "route" that only operates as needed, and does not affect requirements for complementary paratransit.

## SERVICE CHANGES FOR OTHER OPERATORS IN CAMARILLO

Camarillo will continue to serve as a regional hub for VCTC Intercity routes and regional passenger rail from the Metrolink train station. Intercity route changes in Camarillo are summarized below. Refer to the VCTC Intercity section for detail.

- Coastal Express routes to be streamlined. Improved service patterns will offer bi-directional service to Santa Barbara County, with peak trips beginning and ending in Camarillo.
- CSUCI service to operate Route 99 (Camarillo/CSUCI/Oxnard) daily and discontinue other CSUCI-based service.
- Cross County Limited (Route 77) to add limited arterial stops on Lewis Road to facilitate direct service to walkable destinations and additional connecting opportunities to new Camarillo routes.
- New East County Route (Simi Valley/Thousand Oaks/Camarillo) to add limited arterial stops on Pleasant Valley Road for additional route coverage.

## SUMMARY AND BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The planned service and fare changes will reallocate underutilized service in Camarillo to areas where fixed route service should perform better than the current design, and DAR productivity will be maintained or improved. Mobility will remain available to all residents by maintaining the DAR program's current service area. Shifting to a price-incentive model should shift many trips in the center of town to the fixed route services.

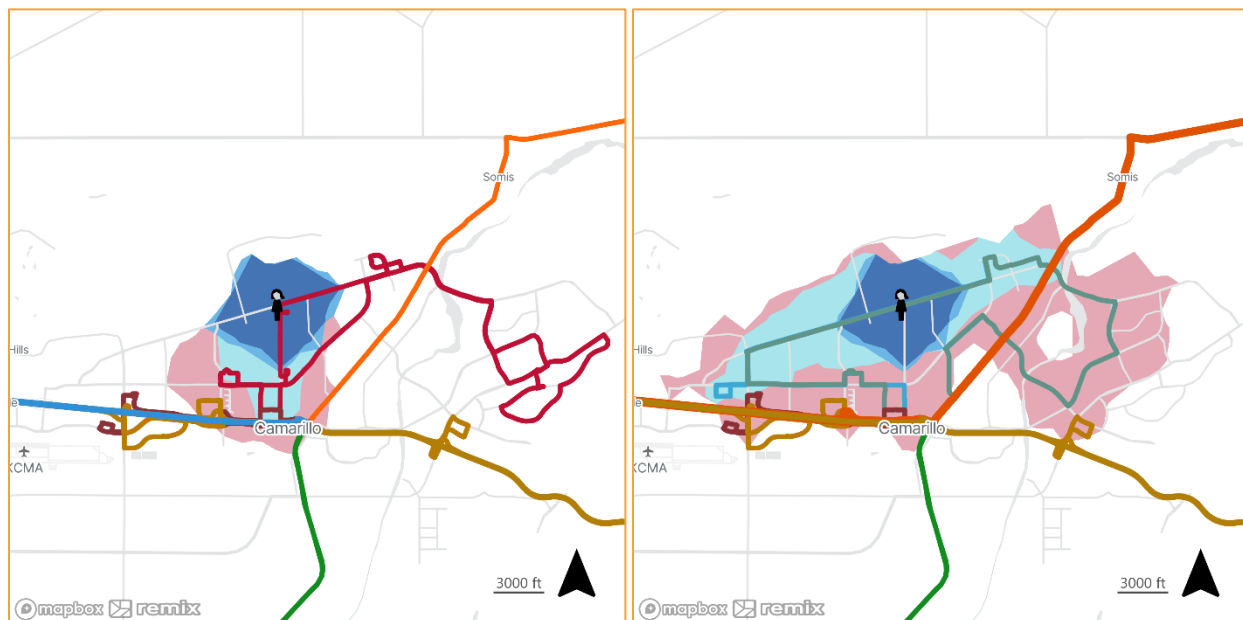
This plan is intended to address these existing gaps and opportunities:

- Several areas with denser neighborhoods and businesses are currently without access to any scheduled bus service.
- The existing Fixed Route is focused on Leisure Village (and free to residents there), but data indicates Leisure Village residents primarily use the Dial-A-Ride service. Fixed Route ridership overall has been historically very low.
- The Trolley route serves the walkable Old Town and dense commercial districts and is relatively successful in its short loop. It would likely benefit from connections to a route serving other areas of the city, making it useful for more residents.
- The citywide general public DAR program is one of the largest in the region per capita. It is not the most cost-efficient service model for the center of a city.
- Camarillo High Schools are not currently served by routes connecting to neighborhoods or after-school opportunities.

Creating a network that serves the most dense, walkable areas with timely connections should substantially boost ridership on both fixed-route services, improving the cost-effectiveness of transportation dollars spent per capita.

One way to visualize the significant benefits expected from the proposed routes is how far someone should be able to reach in an hour on transit. This analysis is performed using Remix, a transit route planning application, which calculates how far you can get in a typical hour based on the existing or planned transit schedule. The two graphics below compare someone standing at the corner of Las Posas Road and Arneill Road. On the left, the current Fixed Route access is shown, and on the right is the proposed route concept.

**Figure 12 Transit Access Shed in Camarillo: Current and Proposed Service**



Source: Remix Transit, Fehr & Peers

As shown, the person would be able to travel the length of Las Posas Road in either direction within about 20 minutes including average wait time for the bus. Within an hour most of the city is accessible, including the train station and connections along the Trolley route.

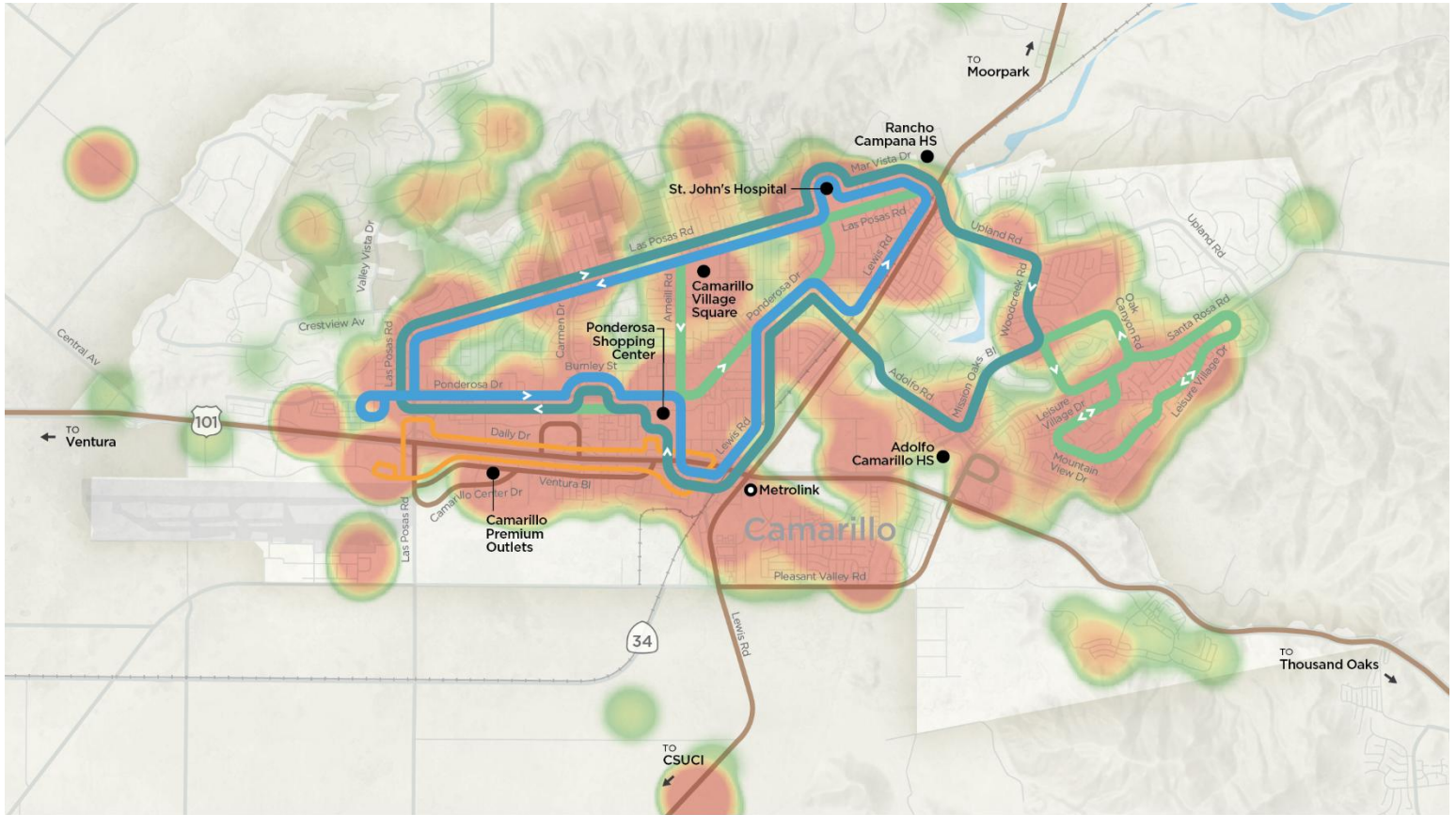
## Financial Analysis of Recommendations

Without any other changes, the proposed fixed route system represents a \$700,000 increase in annual operating cost for the agency due to the addition of 5,000 annual revenue hours needed to operate hourly all-day weekday service on the proposed fixed route loops, and reinvesting revenue hours from the discontinued service. This estimate assumes the Fixed Route's current operating cost of \$134.51 per revenue hour and that the proposed Fixed Route service would operate for 14 hours on weekdays.

The proposed changes to the policies and pricing for the Dial-A-Ride program are designed to absorb this increase in fixed route operating resources, and to support a successful outcome where the more cost-efficient route service attracts more ridership. The purpose is to ensure Dial-A-Ride is available for the people who cannot use the fixed-route service due to a disability and for people in areas with no access to fixed-route service. Any additional capacity on the Dial-a-Ride program could remain available for the general public on a first-come, first-served basis. If successful, this should reduce demand on the Dial-A-Ride program sufficiently to shift resources to the proposed routes, as described below.

Origin-destination data for the current Dial-A-Ride service, shown below, indicates most Dial-A-Ride trips in Camarillo start or end along the proposed Fixed Route loops or Trolley route. A high-functioning route system should continue to serve that travel demand as well, or in some cases better than the current Dial-a-Ride program.

Figure 13: Camarillo Dial-A-Ride Trip Origins



PROPOSED SERVICE

- █ Route 90
- █ Route 91
- █ Route 92
- █ Intercity

MODIFY AND MAINTAIN

- █ Route 93

SENIOR/ADA DIAL-A-RIDE (DAR)

Pick-Ups LOW HIGH

Not all stops are shown

- Timed transfer

▲ N 1 MILE

- Point of interest

A 30% reduction in Dial-A-Ride revenue hours could fund the proposed changes to the fixed route service, as shown in Table 18. Reallocating Dial-A-Ride resources into fixed route improvements could also **increase the number of total riders the city's transit program serves**. CAT carried 43,000 Dial-A-Ride passengers in FY23, which corresponds to approximately 2.8 passenger trips per revenue hour. A 30% reduction in revenue hours would amount to 13,000 fewer annual Dial-A-Ride passenger trips, which should instead be absorbed by the new routes and Trolley.

The proposed changes to the fixed route service would expand the population living within a quarter mile of a transit stop by 18,000 (an 86% increase over the existing route coverage), while also improving fixed route frequency, span of service, and timed connections to other routes. **In addition to absorbing many current Dial-A-Ride trips, this should also attract many more new riders.**

**Table 18: Operating Cost Estimates for Proposed Camarillo Area Transit Service Changes**

Transit Service	Daily Operating Hours <sup>1</sup>		Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Annual Revenue Hours		Annual Operating Cost	
	Current	Proposed		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
<b>Fixed Route</b>	8	14	\$134.51	2,093	7,140	\$281,500	\$960,500
<b>Trolley</b>	8-11	8-11	\$129.13	3,187	3,187	\$412,000	\$412,000
<b>Dial-A-Ride</b>	13-15	13-15	\$154.78	15,387	11,001	\$2,382,000	\$1,703,000
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	20,667	21,328	\$3,075,500	\$3,075,500

Note:

<sup>1</sup> Ranges represent differences in weekday and weekend span of service.

## FARE AND RIDERSHIP ANALYSIS FOR FIXED ROUTES

The proposed design for Camarillo is a significant change from historic conditions. The estimate accounts for the increased population with access to transit and the improved frequency of the existing routes. A limitation of this methodology is that it assumes the current split of riders by fare category remains the same. However, the proposed service for Camarillo specifically anticipates growing ridership among full-fare adults at a faster rate than seniors. The fare model is designed to re-calibrate in the future with better data based on the rider fare category proportions. A range is presented showing what may be possible if the proposed plan achieves the target average of 13 passengers per revenue hour. The total ridership outcome is comparable to other cities operating a similar level of service.

	Ridership	Passengers/RSR	Fare Revenue
Existing (FY23)	25,472	2.5	\$16,620
<b>Proposed Plan (Service-based estimate)</b>	<b>59,580</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>\$68,700</b>
<b>Proposed Plan (High Performance Outcome)</b>	<b>134,250</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>\$116,000</b>

## Capital Plan

Implementing these transit service recommendations will require modest investments in new stop infrastructure, however the bulk of CAT’s capital needs over the next 10 years will go towards its transition to a fully zero-emission fleet, which must be completed by 2040 to comply with California Air Resource Board’s (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation.

### FLEET AND FACILITIES

CAT operates a fleet of 18 buses and vans, including one trolley, and plans to begin transitioning to a mix of battery electric shuttlebuses, passenger vans, and minivans in FY27.<sup>10</sup> The fixed-route services rely on two vehicles (one for each route), while the remaining 16 vehicles are used for the Dial-A-Ride service. According to the agency’s 2023 Camarillo Area Transit Zero Emission Bus Rollout Plan for Innovative Clean Transit (CAT ICT Rollout Plan), CAT expects to maintain a fleet of 18 vehicles once it transitions to a 100% zero emission fleet, but will shift towards a larger share of passenger vans (relative to buses) due to a preference for more maneuverability and current ridership levels.

The estimated range of the battery-electric vehicles evaluated in the CAT ICT Rollout Plan ranged from 105 miles for an electric trolley, 130 miles for an electric cutaway bus, 200 miles for an electric passenger van, to 316 miles for an electric minivan/SUV. With these ranges in mind, the 2023 Plan expected to rely on Dial-A-Ride vehicles to serve the Trolley and Fixed Route routes for portions of the day, while the dedicated fixed route vehicles perform mid-day charging. The recommended transit service changes discussed in the previous section of this plan would require further reallocation of Dial-A-Ride vehicles to fixed route services.

The expanded fixed route system may require up to six dedicated vehicles once CAT transitions to a 100% zero emission fleet. To achieve hourly headways, the proposed Clockwise Loop and Counterclockwise Loop would each need one dedicated vehicle. Similarly, the Trolley route can operate with 30-minute headways with one vehicle. However, the maximum range of existing battery electric cutaway buses and trolleys is less than the daily expected mileage per vehicle on these routes, as shown in Table 19, so each route would require two battery electric dedicated vehicles.

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<sup>10</sup> City of Camarillo, “Camarillo Area Transit Zero Emission Bus Rollout Plan for Innovative Clean Transit.” May 25, 2023.

**Table 19: Battery Electric Vehicle Requirements for Proposed SRTP Fixed Route Concept**

Proposed Transit Service	Vehicles Needed to Achieve Proposed Frequency	Daily Weekday Mileage per Vehicle <sup>1</sup>	Daily Weekend Mileage per Vehicle <sup>1</sup>	Battery Electric Vehicle and Range <sup>2</sup>	Battery Electric Vehicles Required
<i>Clockwise Loop</i>	1	180	N/A	105 (Motiv Shuttle)	2
<i>Counterclockwise Loop</i>	1	160	N/A	105 (Motiv Shuttle)	2
<i>Trolley</i>	1	100	130	105 (Motiv Trolley)	1-2
<i>Dial-A-Ride</i>	11	80	70	160 (Ford E-Transit)	11

## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Daily mileage per vehicle for fixed route services is equal to the length of one trip multiplied by the number of daily trips, rounded up to the nearest ten. For DAR, daily mileage per vehicle was estimated based on current annual revenue miles, operating days/hours, and estimated daily vehicles in operation.

<sup>2</sup> CAT identified four EV options in the CAT ICT Rollout Plan: Motiv Power Systems Trolley, Lightning ZEV4, Lightning ZEV3, Rivian RIS. Lightning eMotors went out of business in 2024, so vehicle range estimates for the Lightning ZEV4 were replaced with the range estimates for the Motiv Shuttle on the company's website and vehicle range estimates for the Lightning ZEV3 were replaced with range estimates for the Ford E-Transit cargo van.

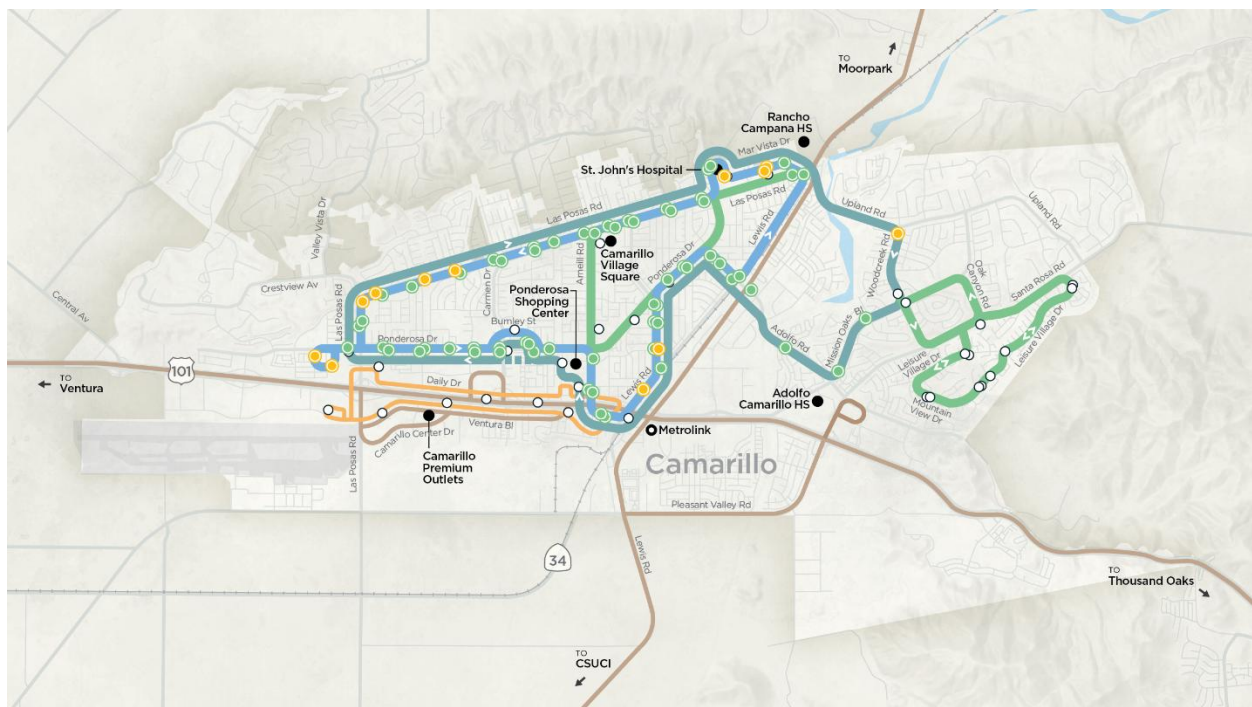
CAT expects to charge its future battery electric fleet exclusively using plug-in charging at a new bus depot that it would either own or lease. The current fleet is housed at RTW Management facility, which is at the corner of Dawson Drive and Dawson Place. Two potential locations for the bus depot were identified as part of the CAT ICT Rollout Plan. The first potential site was a vacant lot on Ventura Boulevard, and the second site was an underutilized portion of the Camarillo Metrolink parking lot. Both options would include 18 charging ports with estimated construction timelines ranging from 10 months to upgrade the vacant lot to 18 months to rework the Camarillo Metrolink parking lot. The CAT ICT Rollout Plan identified Metrolink as the preferred site due to its proximity to the operator's headquarters and lower estimated cost.

## STOP INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed routes could be implemented largely with the addition of bus stop signage, a relatively low-cost first step. Certain locations may require more extensive infrastructure before being served, because accessibility to the stop needs to be addressed, including in some cases provision of marked crosswalks or other safety enhancements.

VCTC is currently conducting a countywide stop assessment and improvement program that can coordinate this information with the existing conditions to provide more detailed insight into the actual required improvements prior to commencing service.

The City of Camarillo noted in the development of this concept a concern about introducing new bus stops on Las Posas Road, where people do not currently expect buses to come to a full stop and prevailing speeds are 35MPH or higher. In addition to a public awareness campaign ahead of service start-up, enhanced signage and lane markings could be considered in coordination with the bus stop improvement plan.

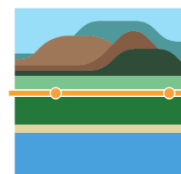


- PROPOSED STOP INFRASTRUCTURE TREATMENT**
- Keep
  - Remove
  - Install sign only
  - Widen sidewalk

- PROPOSED SERVICE**
- Route 90
  - Route 91
  - Route 93
  - Route 92
  - Intercity

▲ N 1 MILE

## 8. WEST VENTURA COUNTY



This section provides an assessment of the regional travel market and transportation context in the West Ventura County sub-area. It also summarizes the recently completed independent SRTP of Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD), the primary service provider in the sub-area. Lastly, it covers GCTD's demand-response service.

### Market Assessment

The West Ventura County sub-area (see Figure 1) includes the cities of Ventura, Oxnard, and Port Hueneme, as well as adjacent unincorporated areas of Ventura County. The area is bordered by Camarillo to the east, Carpinteria to the northwest along the coast, Santa Paula to the northeast, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The area is generally characterized by older development, with grid-based neighborhoods and distinct downtown centers.

The West Ventura County sub-area is the most populous sub-area in Ventura County, accounting for nearly half of the county's total population. Relative to the other sub-areas, West Ventura County has a higher percentage of low-income households and car-light households, a lower median household income, and a lower share of senior citizens.

**Table 20: West Ventura County Sub-Area Demographics**

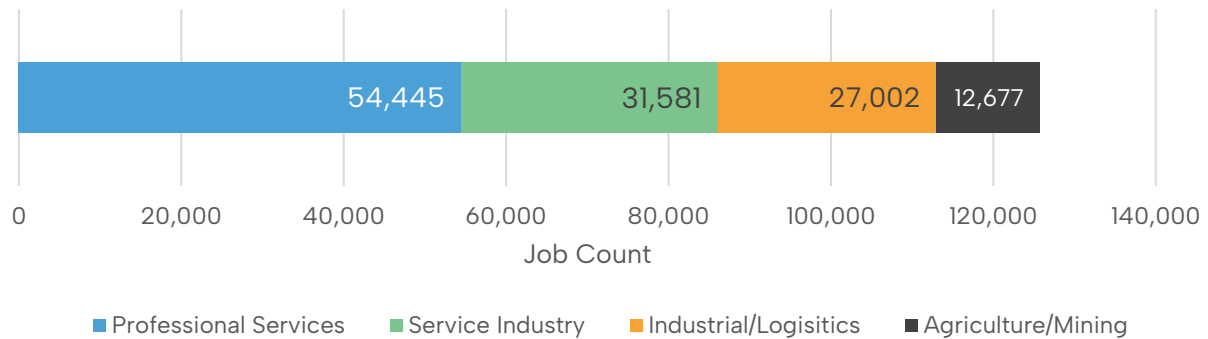
	West Ventura County Sub-Area	Percent Share	
	Count	West Ventura County Sub-Area	Ventura County
<b>Residential population</b>	352,324	-	-
<b>Senior citizens (ages 65+)</b>	44,896	13%	16%
<b>Youth (ages 10-17)</b>	40,360	11%	11%
<b>Low-income individuals<sup>1</sup></b>	35,586	10%	9%
<b>Households</b>	104,254	-	-
<b>Car-light households<sup>2</sup></b>	18,921	18%	15%
<b>Jobs</b>	125,705	-	-
	West Ventura County Sub-Area	Ventura County	
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$84,087	\$94,167	

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Denominator of the percent share statistics is persons in housing units.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

**Figure 14: West Ventura County Sub-Area Jobs by Industry**

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

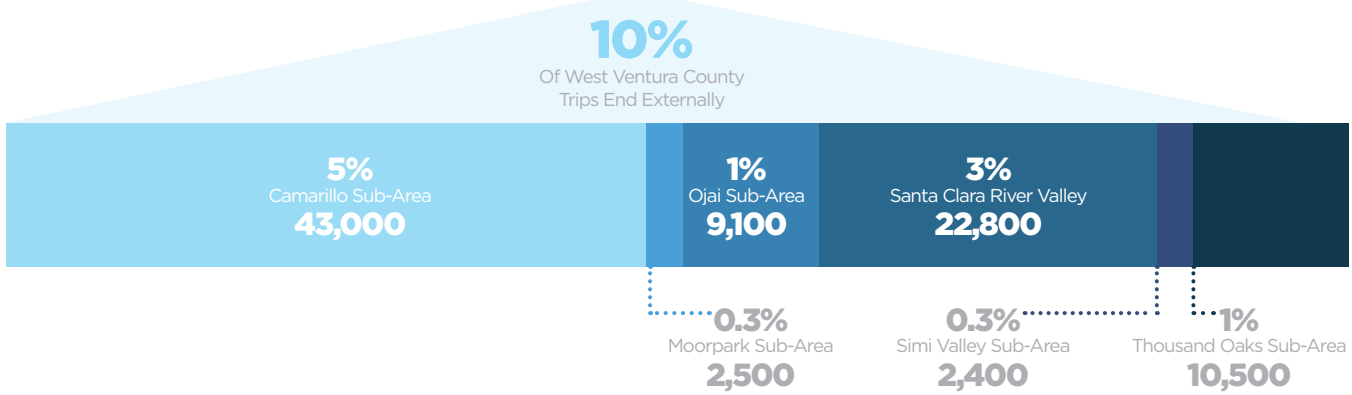
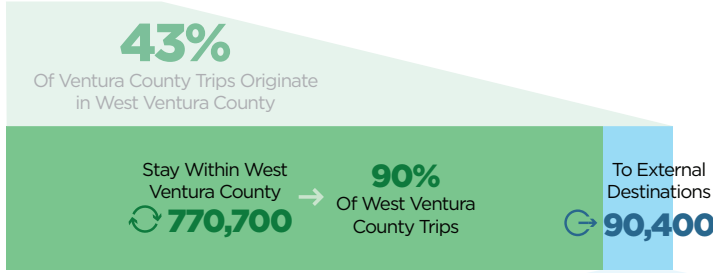
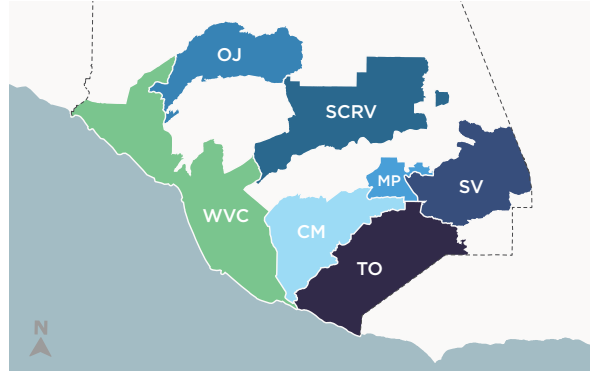
The top employment industries within West Ventura County are professional services and the service sector, followed by the industrial/logistics and agriculture/mining sectors. Due to the size of the West Ventura County sub-area and its range of jobs and services, a very high proportion of trips beginning there also end in the sub-area (90 percent). Other common destinations are the Camarillo sub-area, which accounts for five percent of trips, and the Santa Clara River Valley sub-area, which accounts for three percent of trips.

In addition to having the largest residential population, the West Ventura County sub-area is also the biggest employment center in Ventura County. It is home to over 125,000 jobs, accounting for around 42 percent of the jobs in the study area. However, 56 percent of employed people living in West Ventura County commute out of the area for work.

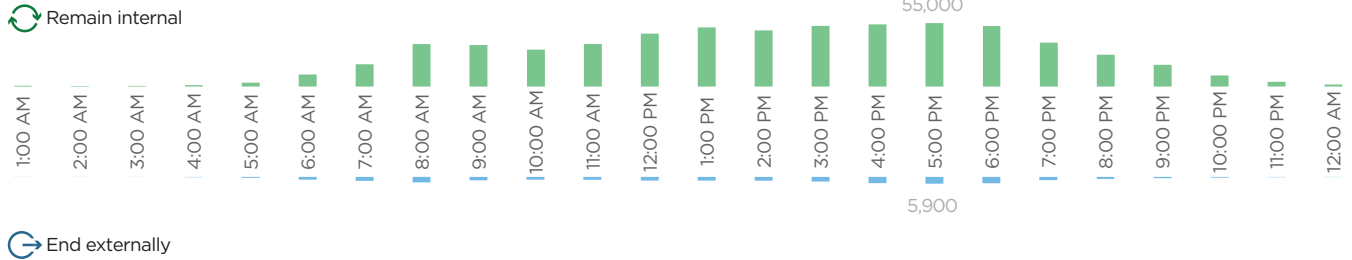
## TRIP DISTRIBUTION

Destinations of Trips from West Ventura County

**861,100**  
Trips Originate in West Ventura County

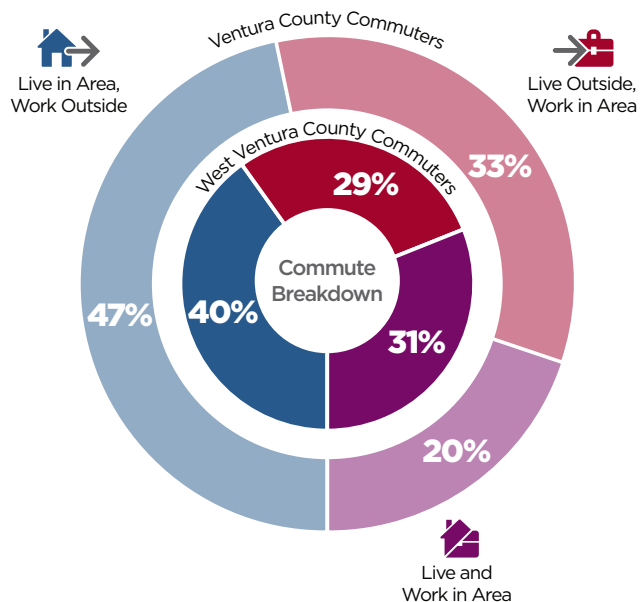
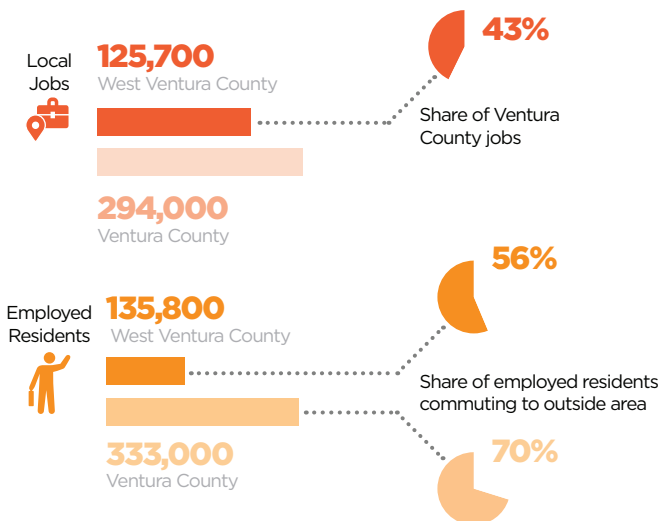


### Time Distribution of Trips From Gold Coast Sub-Area



## JOBS INFLOW/OUTFLOW

West Ventura County Jobs Flow Compared to Ventura County



## Service Evaluation

### GOLD COAST TRANSIT DISTRICT: FARES

Gold Coast Transit currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

**Table 21: Agency Single-Ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type**

Service Type	Regular	Discounted <sup>1</sup>	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
<b>Fixed Route</b>	\$2.00	\$1.00 <sup>2</sup>	Free	Free	Free
<b>Paratransit</b>	-	\$4.00	-	-	-

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.

<sup>2</sup> Free for seniors ages 75 and over.

Source: Agency websites, 2024.

### GOLD COAST TRANSIT DISTRICT: FIXED-ROUTE SRTP SUMMARY

The Gold Coast Transit District Short Range Transit Plan (GCTD SRTP) for FY2026–2030 provides a structured framework to guide transit services in West Ventura County over the next five years. Adopted in December 2024, the GCTD SRTP aims to meet evolving community needs by focusing on five key goals:

1. Improving mobility through extended services and optimized connections
2. Enhancing customer experience with simplified routes and schedules
3. Advancing sustainability through zero-emission buses and reduced vehicle miles traveled
4. Promoting equity by prioritizing low-income and minority communities
5. Ensuring financial sustainability by optimizing resources and securing funding

The GCTD SRTP market assessment highlights southern Oxnard and midtown Ventura as areas with the highest transit demand due to the population density and activity levels in these areas.

An evaluation of current services reveals that ridership has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. Routes 1, 6, and 21 comprise almost half of all ridership. Community outreach, which included bilingual surveys, engaged riders and non-riders to determine priorities such as improving on-time performance, increasing frequency, and enhancing bus stop safety.

The GCTD SRTP proposes several key recommendations. The proposed fixed-route service changes focus on improving frequency and span of service by reallocating resources from eliminated, duplicative routes. The recommendations increase weekday service frequency on six routes, increase weekend service frequency on seven routes, and improve transfer times at key transfer points. The plan notes that these service changes may present

opportunities to scale back on-demand service in South Oxnard and overnight but also identifies three new potential zones where microtransit may make sense due to travel demand and built environment characteristics. Marketing and outreach efforts would complement these service changes through website improvements, targeted campaigns for diverse demographic groups, and enhanced signage across the transit system.

GCTD studied the feasibility of creating a Transit Opportunity Corridor (TOC) in parallel with the development of the SRTP. The TOC would provide high-frequency, rapid transit bus service between major destinations, and incorporate features such as transit signal priority, dedicated bus lanes, and enhanced bus stop amenities between Ventura Transit Center and Oxnard College.

The GCTD SRTP's implementation is phased over five years. Year one focuses on foundational planning, marketing, and infrastructure upgrades. Incremental route adjustments, extended service hours, and microtransit options in underserved areas would be introduced in the subsequent years. Year five involves performance evaluations and adjustments based on observed outcomes. The TOC is not included in this five-year implementation plan but will be included in the Long Range Financial Plan. The financial plan assumes an operating budget of about \$39 million in Year 1 increasing to about \$44 million over the course of the five-year period and \$42.9 million in capital investment. The GCTD SRTP anticipates a 20% increase in ridership as a result of the proposed enhanced services and marketing efforts.



## GOLD COAST TRANSIT DISTRICT: DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICE

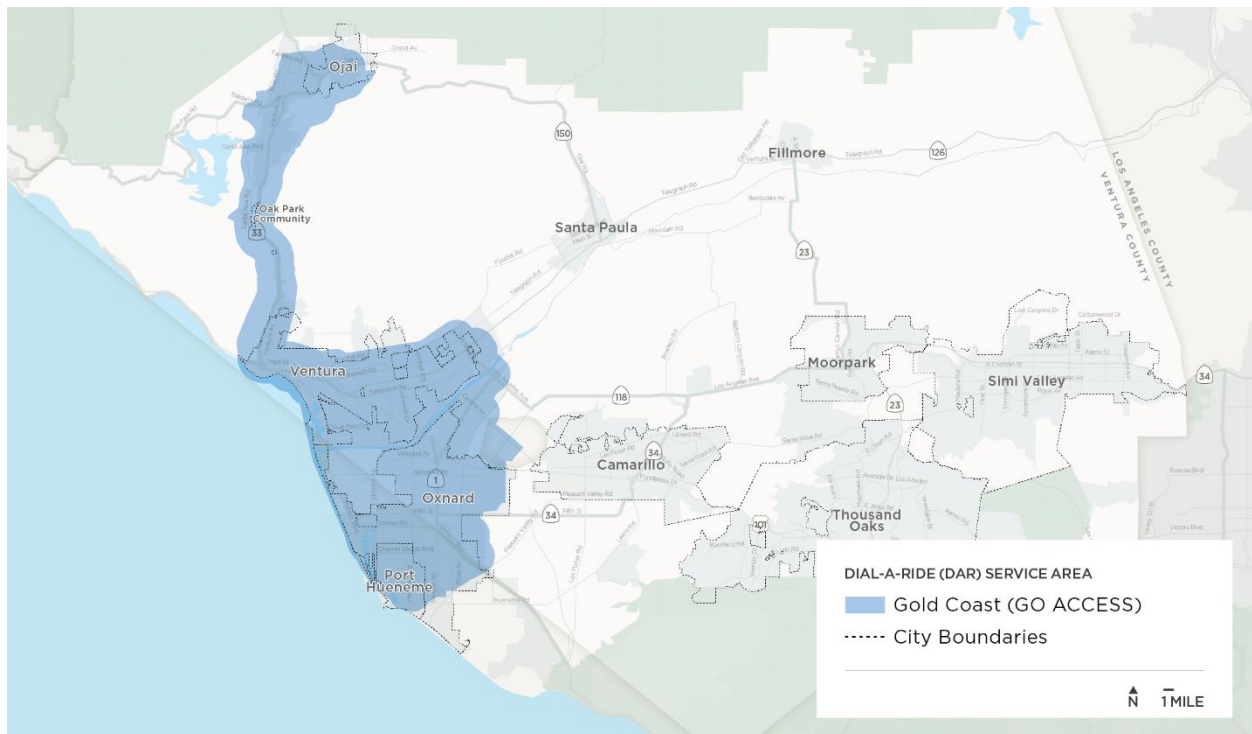
GCTD operates GO ACCESS demand-response service for ADA-eligible riders and seniors.

### RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

GO ACCESS is an ADA complementary paratransit program, serving people certified as ADA eligible and seniors aged 65 or over, within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of GCTD's fixed-route service. GO ACCESS does accommodate trip requests on a case-by-case basis that are beyond the strict  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile boundary from the fixed-route network. GO ACCESS does not provide trips to the general public.

A map of the paratransit service area is shown in Figure 15 encompassing the communities of Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ojai and the unincorporated areas of the county.

**Figure 15: Gold Coast GO ACCESS Service District**



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Gold Coast GO ACCESS are shown in Table 22.

**Table 22: Gold Coast GO ACCESS Performance Metrics**

Gold Coast GO ACCESS	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Passenger Trips</b>	117,456	95,295	61,907	75,596	84,992
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	50,227	39,935	29,951	41,409	39,737
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	777,069	619,953	511,051	562,865	634,550
<b>Operating Cost</b>	\$3,507,119	\$2,896,684	\$2,294,343	\$2,355,210	\$3,529,348
<b>Passengers per Hour</b>	2.3	2.4	2.1	1.8	2.1
<b>Passengers per Mile</b>	0.15	0.15	0.12	0.13	0.13
<b>Cost per Passengers</b>	\$29.86	\$30.40	\$37.06	\$31.16	\$41.53
<b>Cost per Hour</b>	\$69.83	\$72.53	\$76.60	\$56.88	\$88.82
<b>Cost per Mile</b>	\$4.51	\$4.67	\$4.49	\$4.18	\$5.56

Source: Gold Coast Transit District, 2024.

The largest of the nine demand-response programs examined in this study, GO ACCESS provided almost 85,000 trips in FY23, about 1,600 trips per week. GO ACCESS is at about 72% of its FY19 ridership of 117,000 and has been steadily increasing. Productivity is 2.1 passengers per hour, a level it has been at or close to over the past 3 years. Revenue hours at almost 40,000 are 21% below their FY19 peak of 50,000 hours.

Cost per passenger of \$42 in FY23 is 39% above its \$30 cost per rider in FY19, the lowest of the ADA paratransit systems in this study. Annual total operating costs of \$3.5 million have grown minimally, by less than 1%, since FY19. Overall, GO ACCESS performance measures are quite favorable.

In discussing the 10% to 12% annual increases in ridership since 2020, GTCD managers anticipate that this return of riders will level off. This is reportedly due to changes in trip-making patterns since the pandemic, for example decreased daily trip volumes for:

- Riders traveling to adult day health care facilities
- Students with disabilities traveling to college campuses
- Older adults traveling to some senior center activities

## OPERATIONS TOPICS

## MOVING TO A NEW OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Since initiating this Countywide SRTP, GO ACCESS brought its contracted demand-response program in-house. This change included hiring the contractor's 35 drivers as

GCTD employees. The program operates from the GCTD yard located at 1901 Auto Center Drive in Oxnard. This policy decision by the GCTD Board of Directors was described as cost-neutral and will provide the District with increased management control.

#### TRIP RESERVATION AND SCHEDULING FUNCTION VIA ECOLANE

GCTD manages trip reservations and trip dispatching through a call center with six (6) full-time representatives. The call center uses Ecolane software, which management finds satisfactory for the following reasons:

- Efficiencies through shared ride dispatching wherever possible
- Ease of use by schedulers and dispatchers
- Same day, dynamic schedule optimization during the day-of-service
- Reservations can be made via the web or via a call to dispatch
- Fare payment accounts to which funds can be deposited by the rider or family members and debited as trips are taken; funds can be re-loaded via the telephone; meaning riders do not need to carry cash

#### OPERATIONS-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

**Communications with Riders:** Riders are sent an electronic message/automated call the night before the trip, then receive an automated call on the day of the trip with the scheduled pick-up time, and a second automated call right before the vehicle arrives. This later communication is synced to the vehicle's location, and reflects actual pick-up time.

**Top Trip Generators:** Medical trips and medical appointments continue to be top trip purposes. Among these are trips into Community Memorial in Ventura, the Veterans Administration community-based outpatient clinic in Ventura, and various dialysis centers.

## Gold Coast Transit District: Gaps and Opportunities

Because GCTD conducted a separate SRTP, this section instead focuses on market and operational opportunities related to other communities in the County accessing opportunities in the Ventura and Oxnard area.

### PEOPLE



#### SENIORS

The Oxnard and Ventura area have a greater degree and diversity of healthcare and civic functions than most other communities in the County. VCTC Intercity is the primary connector to other communities, and its focus on commuters and students could be expanded to seniors with partnerships with healthcare providers and senior-focused programs.



#### GENERAL POPULATION

Likewise, because the Oxnard–Ventura area has the greatest density and diversity of destinations in the County, there are a wide variety of reasons the general public need to travel here from neighboring communities. This is the ideal circumstance for a successful transit service.



#### STUDENTS

College students live and work throughout the County and often have widely varied schedules. Continuing to provide regular connecting service through CSUCI, as well as to other schools like Ventura College and Oxnard College, helps support young adults. Additionally, the Youth Ride Free program has been a major driver of GCTD's ridership gains.

All of these demographics would generally benefit from more regular bi-directional service provided by VCTC Intercity, and from a later span of connecting service in other communities. The communities that would benefit the most from this model are the Santa Clara River Valley and Camarillo; the former representing a larger proportion of disadvantaged populations who would benefit from affordable and reliable transit, and the latter representing the closest major community which also has significant socioeconomic ties to the Ventura–Oxnard area. Although connections further to the east are important, the longer distances and lower overall travel market do not appear to justify direct express service, for example, from Simi Valley or Thousand Oaks to Oxnard.

The combined area of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and Ventura is quite large. The key destinations are already directly connected by Intercity service (the County Complex, or the Esplanade, for example) where riders can transfer to GCTD services for other destinations.

## Relationship to Gold Coast Transit District SRTP

The GCTD Short Range Transit Plan (FY26–FY30) followed a similar overall approach to this Countywide SRTP. The Plan can be found online at <https://www.gctd.org/about/reports-projects/>. The GCTD Plan included a travel market analysis, extensive public engagement, analysis of every route in the network, and developed recommendations for the individual routes and a vision for the whole service area with a five-year phased implementation.

As of 2024, GCTD ridership had already recovered to approximately 90 percent of its pre-2020 average. While GCTD has a network of many routes, 50 percent of the system ridership can be found on only three of the sixteen routes.

The GCTD Plan did not extensively address travel demand for trips into or out of its own service area, although the market assessment found that most residents work outside the service area (a finding consistent with this SRTP). The GCTD Plan recommends improving frequency and clockface scheduling throughout the network. These recommendations are also consistent with themes in the Countywide SRTP.

The GCTD Plan set goals that are similar and complementary to those envisioned for the rest of the county, including:

- Extending service later into the evening and improving connections to regional routes
- Improving system legibility
- Improving route directness and reducing travel time for long-distance trips to attract new riders
- Providing greater opportunity for low-income residents to use transit

The GCTD fixed-route service recommendations included improving frequency to 30-minute headways throughout the day on five routes, while two routes offer service every 20 minutes. Overall, the GCTD Plan recommended reallocating resources to provide more consistent, clockface headways on all weekday routes, and eliminating periodic gaps in service or irregular headways. The GCTD Plan also proposed improved weekend frequencies by discontinuing service on certain underutilized routes, with the overall goal of significantly better, more consistent headways on other routes with similar coverage.

The GCTD Plan advised scaling back or reallocating its existing South Oxnard microtransit service to avoid overlapping and competing modes in areas, and at times when fixed routes are proposed for improvement. This strategy is consistent with the recommendations in the Countywide SRTP. The GCTD Plan identified three other areas that may be considered for microtransit in the future, although none of them have a clear relationship to the Countywide SRTP. No areas of strong fixed-route potential were identified for transition to microtransit.

The GCTD Plan envisions what it calls a “transit opportunity corridor,” a long-term strategy to significantly enhance quality of transit service. The opportunity described focuses exclusively on identifying transit priority street design, improved stops, and branding and does not appear to address potential integration with local land use and street design policies. The recommended corridor alignment would follow Oxnard Boulevard to the Esplanade and then continue into Ventura past the Government Center and then west along Telegraph. The opportunity corridor is not included within the five-year Gold Coast Plan. When implemented, this would further improve an existing service spine that connects to most VCTC Intercity regional routes with connections at the Esplanade.

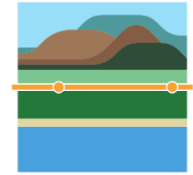
## Summary of GCTD and Countywide SRTP

The GCTD Plan independently identified many of the same topics that the Countywide SRTP has addressed. Most important are:

- Improving frequency on routes that have the greatest potential for attracting riders by reducing service on indirect routes with low utilization, and focusing service on major arterials that have better walk-access to a wider range of places
- Considering repurposing or reducing microtransit service where fixed-route service will be improved. This will ensure the success of the fixed routes and potentially shift microtransit to areas that were identified as harder to serve with the route network
- Improving headways on weekdays and weekends, by using resources more efficiently to offer consistent headways throughout the day, and closing schedule gaps
- Improving timed connections and frequency of connections to Intercity routes to serve the population that works outside of the GCTD service area

The GCTD bus network itself will undergo a series of improvements over five years, but the coverage and access it provides will ultimately be similar to today’s network. For the Countywide SRTP, the proposed improvements to VCTC Intercity services should benefit from, and integrate well with, the GCTD Plan. With the proposed improvements to local circulation in neighboring communities—especially in Camarillo, as both the closest city and an employment hub—GCTD riders should realize significant reductions in overall travel time and more frequent opportunities to travel throughout the day.

## 9. KANAN SHUTTLE



This section briefly describes the market served by Kanan Shuttle and then offers an evaluation of its service and opportunities to sustain funding for this service.

### Market Assessment

Kanan Shuttle is designed primarily to serve neighborhood schools and the residential areas along Kanan Road in the Oak Park area of unincorporated Ventura County, which is within the Thousand Oaks sub-area (see Figure 1), and Agoura Hills. Its schedule coincides with bell times to meet the needs of its intended users. The Kanan Shuttle is a focused, corridor-based service in a densely populated area of unincorporated Ventura County with service extending into Los Angeles County in the City of Agoura Hills. The route has connections to Metro and LADOT bus routes to the east serving Los Angeles County. VCTC Intercity service also operates through the area but the nearest stops served are in Thousand Oaks.

Practically speaking, there are no alternative routes or roads to consider serving, which makes this service distinct from other services evaluated in the SRTP. Beyond the current service area is primarily hillside and mountainous area with low-density residential development. The route connects to the nearest major commercial center in Agoura Hills. Any further extension beyond this area would disrupt the shuttle's ability to efficiently serve the Kanan Road corridor.

### Service Evaluation

Kanan Shuttle is a fixed-route circulator operating in the Oak Park area of unincorporated Ventura County and Agoura Hills in Los Angeles County.

#### KANAN SHUTTLE: FARES

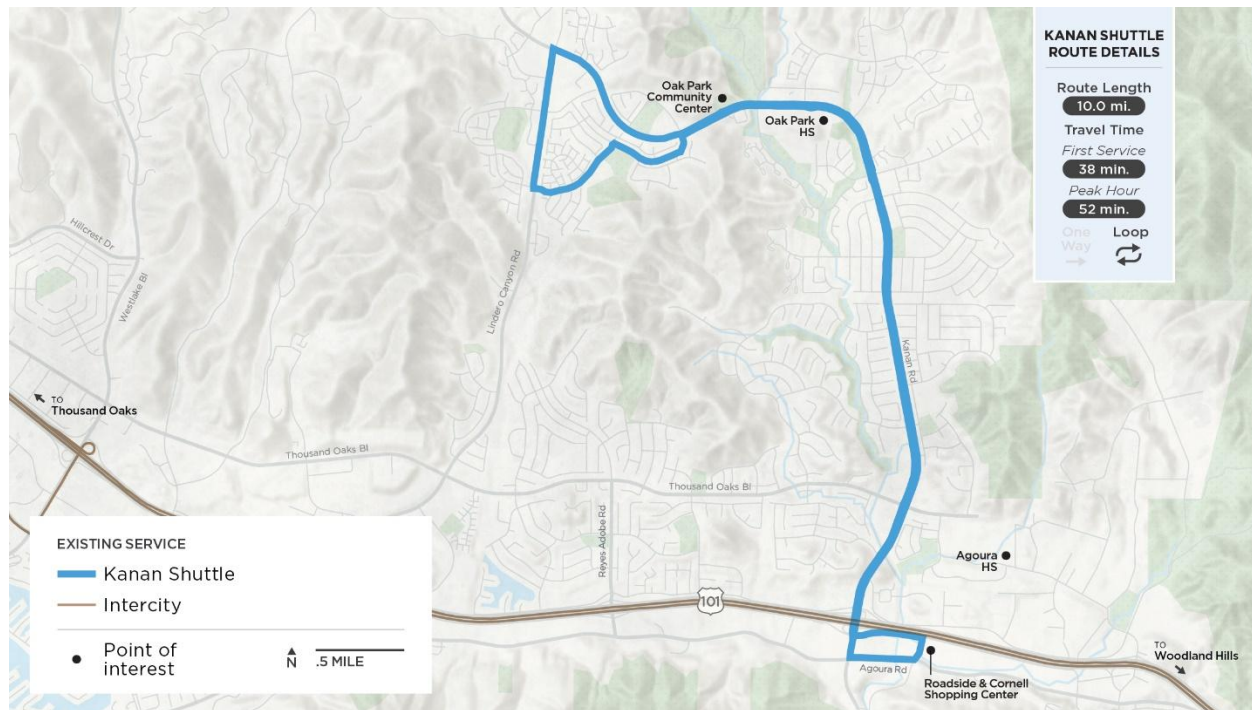
Kanan Shuttle operates fare-free.

#### KANAN SHUTTLE: FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

##### *SERVICE AND SCHEDULES*

Kanan Shuttle is operated by the County of Ventura in partnership with the City of Agoura Hills, Oak Park Unified School District, and the Oak Park County Service Area #4. Its route runs along Kanan Road in Oak Park, from Roadside Drive to Lindero Canyon.

Figure 16: Kanan Shuttle



Kanan Shuttle provides fare-free transportation for the community. The shuttle serves neighborhood schools and their surrounding residential areas, as well as some retail, the Oak Park Community Center, and the Oak Park Library. The service operates on weekdays, excluding designated holidays, from 6:45 a.m. to 5:40 p.m. and offers 13 daily trips. Many of these trips are timed to coincide with school start and end times to reduce traffic during school commute hours.

### RIDERSHIP

Kanan Shuttle recorded 36,267 fixed-route riders in FY23. Ridership over the past decade peaked at 79,613 in FY18 and reached a low of 7,159 in FY21. Ridership grew between FY15 and FY18 but declined by 14% in FY19, followed by a sharp drop due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The low point most likely coincided with schools being mostly remote. Service was reduced by half during the pandemic, contributing to the decline in ridership. Recovery began in FY22, with ridership rebounding to 53% of FY19 levels by June 2023. In FY23, Kanan Shuttle averaged 142 daily boardings.

### SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

Passenger trips per revenue hour declined from 14.2 to 12.6 over the past five years. Kanan Shuttle underwent schedule changes during this time period, including the elimination of unproductive trips and Saturday service in September 2019, and the addition of a trip in August 2022 to align with updated school bell times.

Kanan Shuttle was the most productive transit service in FY23 in Ventura County after Gold Coast Transit District. The system averages 10 revenue hours and 115 revenue miles per weekday, with productivity levels of 12.6 passenger trips per revenue hour and 1.1 passenger trips per revenue mile.

### *EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW*

Kanan Shuttle's operational expenditures have fluctuated over the past decade, peaking in FY19 before sharply decreasing in FY20 due to service reductions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These fluctuations likely reflect adjustments to service in response to changing demand. Conversations with the County indicated that in the past, with occasional crowding issues at school bell times, service was sometimes expanded. Of course, since that time service has been pared back to fit the ridership levels and demand during the pandemic years.

The service's operating cost per revenue hour also spiked following the onset of the pandemic—in line with other agency trends. This increase was driven in part by higher operational costs associated with enhanced cleaning protocols and social distancing measures. FY23 operating costs per revenue hour suggest Kanan Shuttle is trending back towards pre-pandemic levels of financial efficiency but has not yet fully recovered.

The Kanan Shuttle is primarily funded through the California Transportation Development Act (TDA). Historically, the Oak Park Unified School District and the City of Agoura Hills contributed funding annually to help the County's operation meet its TDA-required 20% farebox recovery ratio. However, according to County staff, these funding contributions were discontinued following the pandemic.

## **Kanan Shuttle: Gaps and Opportunities**

Kanan Shuttle has an important, focused role in providing local travel (predominantly for students) in the Oak Park community. With few logical alternatives to the service design, the most important opportunity for the County is to resume funding partnerships with the school district and the City of Agoura Hills to ensure sustainability of the route. Although other non-student members of the community also use the service, the ridership trends during the pandemic clearly indicate that students rely heavily on the service and the school district contribution is vital.

## **Kanan Shuttle: Transit Service Recommendations**

The Kanan Shuttle is a specialized local circulator service. Its primary market has been local students, and to a lesser degree, residents, providing access to shopping and services.

Financial resources for Kanan Shuttle have become a significant concern. The service currently operates an irregular schedule. It is limited to a few trips in the early morning

(departures starting between 6:45 a.m. and approximately 8:30 a.m.), then transitions to somewhat more regular service between 12:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Several trips operate only on school days.

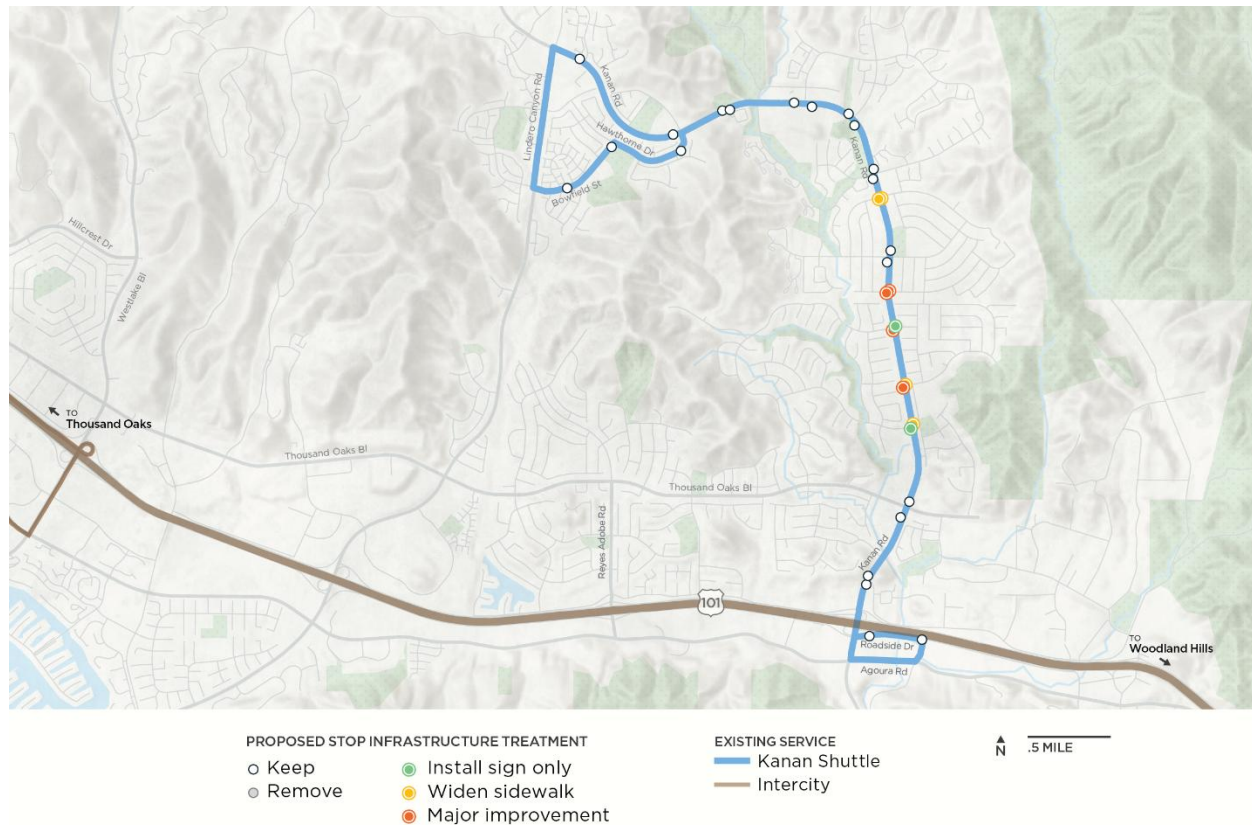
While this service design is tightly oriented to its primary ridership market of students, it does significantly limit the usefulness of the Shuttle for other purposes. The route makes connections to the regional transit network (LA Metro local buses and LADOT Commuter Express) in Agoura Hills, although the limited Kanan Shuttle schedule hampers the effectiveness of this regional connection.

In the near term, no service changes are recommended. The constraint of funding resources for the long-term sustainability of the service is the paramount concern to address.

**Long-term** modifications to consider include:

**Table 23: Long-term Proposed Changes to Kanan Shuttle Service**

Long-Term Concept	Benefits	Considerations
<b><i>Add infill stops on Kanan Road at Laro Drive, Eagleton Street, Fountainwood Street, Tamarind Street, Smoke Tree Ave</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extends access to Kanan Shuttle to additional neighborhood areas and local destinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most new stops would require construction of short sidewalk segments along Kanan Road on at least one side of the street</li> <li>- Several stops would be added in the City of Agoura Hills</li> </ul>
<b><i>Expand schedule to operate regular hourly service between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular service in the community with in-fill stops would make the Kanan Shuttle more useful for a variety of riders and trip purposes</li> <li>- Expanded span would support connections to LA Metro route on Thousand Oaks Boulevard and Commuter Express route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expanded schedule would incur significant cost</li> <li>- Agoura Hills offers a dial-a-ride/microtransit program that people may prefer over expanded schedule</li> </ul>

**Figure 17: Proposed Stop Infrastructure for Kanan Shuttle Long-Term Concept**

## Financial Analysis of Recommendations

No near-term changes to service are recommended. However, it is imperative that the County of Ventura maintain a shared funding agreement with the local schools being served and the City of Agoura Hills, which previously provided funding support for the service. During the pandemic, the previously existing funding agreements were discontinued and were not in effect as of 2024. If students continue to be the primary market for the service, and the school district is not providing other transportation, it is reasonable for the schools to be a funding partner at least proportional to the trips which operate exclusively on school days.

Reaching a funding agreement with the City of Agoura Hills could include discussion of capital improvements to add neighborhood-serving bus stops as described above. Two of these infill stops could be implemented with the addition of bus stop signage and another four could be implemented through widening the existing sidewalk and installing bus stop signage. Four locations will require more extensive infrastructure before being served, because accessibility to the stop needs to be addressed, including in some cases provision of marked crosswalks or other safety enhancements. This would be a relatively small

investment for permanent improvements to residential mobility for the City Agoura of Hills and increase potential ridership for the Kanan Shuttle.

There are considerations of the proportion of service that could affect a funding agreement with the City of Agoura Hills. First, nearly half of the daily route miles are within Agoura Hills, although the County staff reported that ridership from stops in Agoura Hills is relatively low. Increasing the regularity of service and adding proposed stops could improve that outcome and better balance the benefits that Agoura Hills receives from the service.

A second challenge is that other options are available to Agoura Hills including the city's own dial-a-ride program which also serves destinations in Oak Park and other nearby areas. Overlapping services may limit the city's interest in contributing funding to the Kanan Shuttle unless there is a clearly distinct market and use case. The Kanan Shuttle would be more cost-efficient but is comparatively limited in its coverage area.

If funding agreements cannot be reached to sustain the service, the County should consider alternative service models.

1. Kanan Shuttle service could be discontinued and the onus for student transportation would fall, arguably appropriately, to the school district. School transportation in California is a somewhat complicated subject; however, if the majority of the purpose for Kanan Shuttle is to serve school students, and the route attracts few other riders at any time of day, the most fiscally conservative alternative would be to discontinue the general public service.
2. Maintaining general public mobility in Oak Park could be achieved in partnership with the City of Agoura Hills' DAR program. The County could reallocate some or all of its Kanan Shuttle budget to support an expanded DAR program.
3. A hybrid option would maintain limited Kanan Shuttle service only during the school season in the morning and mid-afternoon, to provide sufficient capacity at peak times while operating an expanded DAR program throughout the year that would provide mobility outside the Kanan Shuttle hours. The DAR program in this model would not serve the schools during the Kanan Shuttle hours.

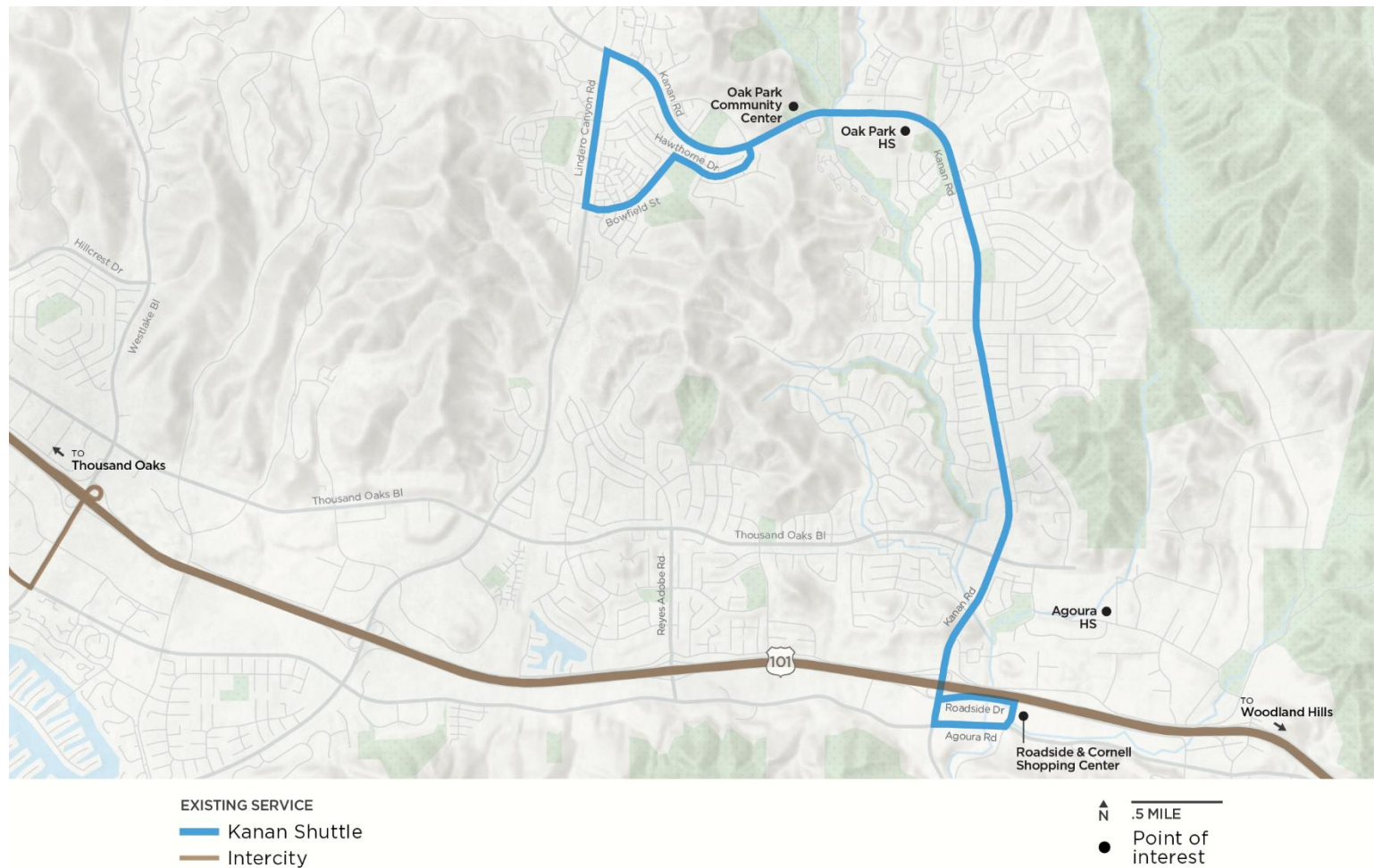
These alternatives would not relieve the County from funding transportation in Oak Park, but would instead reduce overall expenses to only providing limited service when it is most needed, or otherwise for seniors and people with disabilities in partnership with the City of Agoura Hills.

Ultimately, this SRTP strongly recommends the three parties work together to develop a long-term funding agreement and continue to invest in the Kanan Shuttle including filling the current schedule gaps. This recommendation is consistent with other aspects of the SRTP that argue in favor of consistent and robust transit route networks that serve a variety of trip purposes throughout the day.

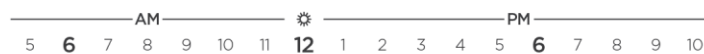
**Table 24: Operating Cost Estimates for Proposed Long Term Kanan Shuttle Service Changes**

Transit Service	Daily Operating Hours <sup>1</sup>		Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Annual Revenue Hours		Annual Operating Cost	
	Current	Proposed		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
<b><i>Fixed Route</i></b>	7	13	\$165	2,570	4,836	\$426,000	\$798,000

Figure 18: Kanan Shuttle Route and Span of Service



### Span of Service



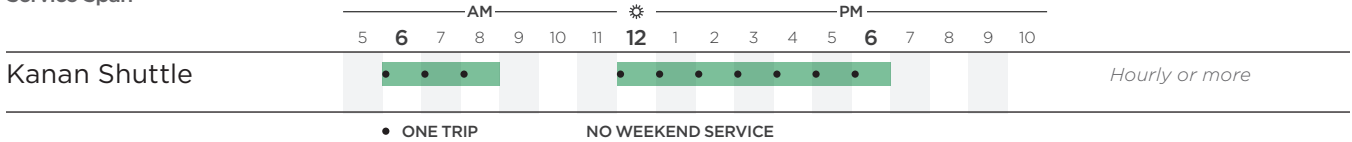
• ONE TRIP    |||| SCHOOL SESSION

## AGENCY ROUTE MAP



## SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

### Service Span

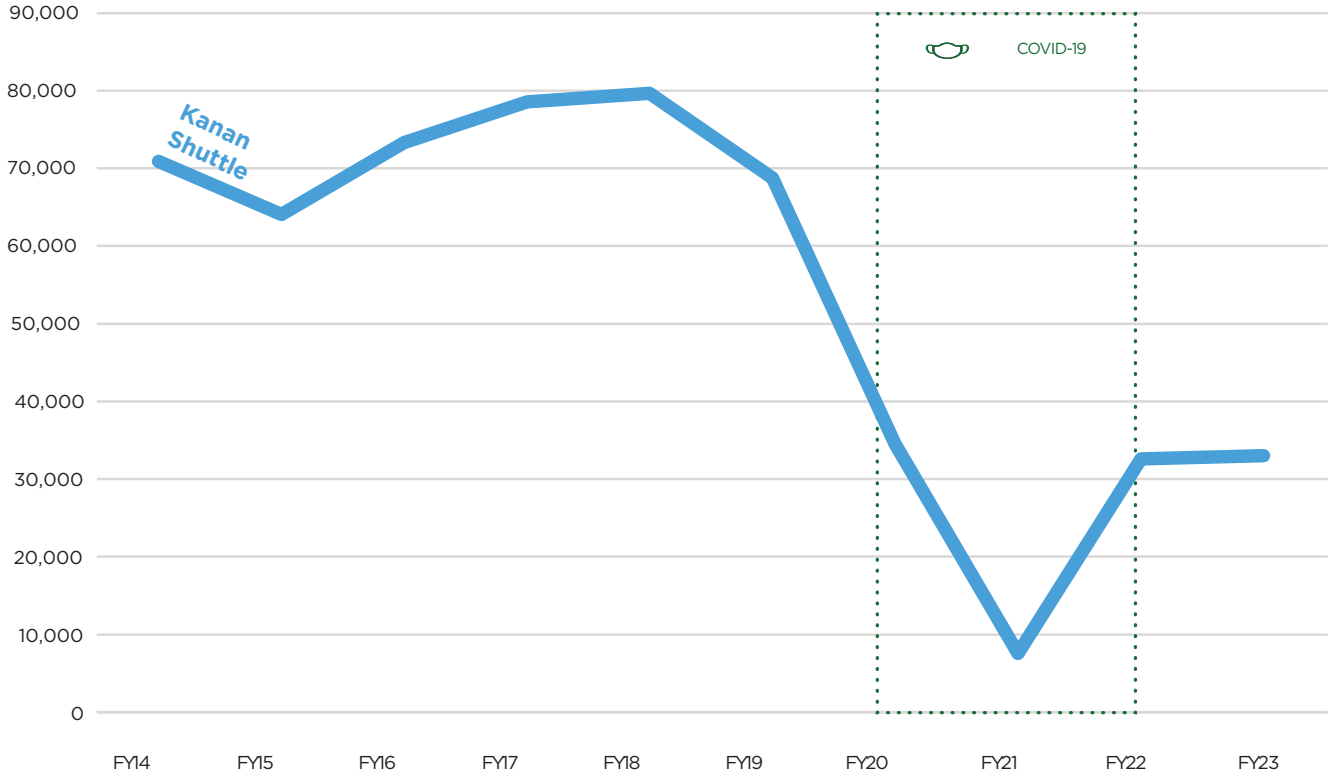


### Route Productivity FY23

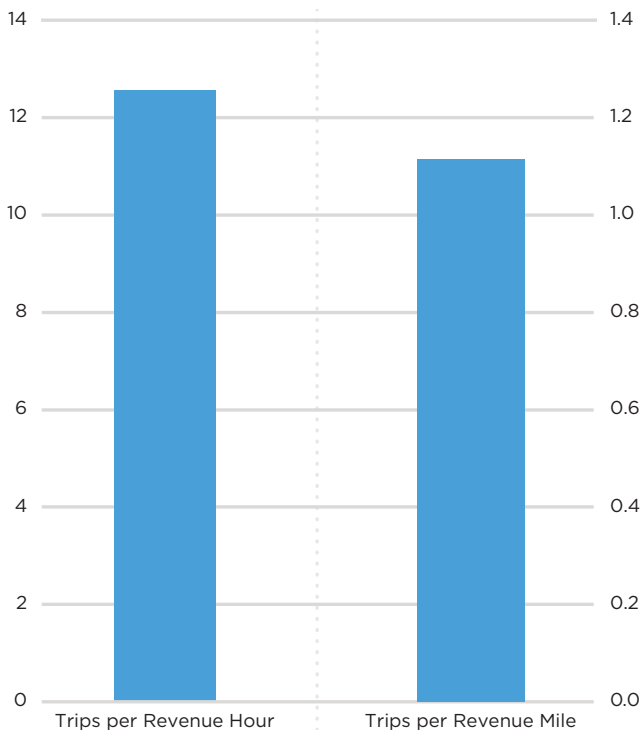
Route	Annual Ridership	Passengers per Revenue Hour			Revenue Hours			Operating Cost per Boarding
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	
Kanan Shuttle	32,729	12.6	N/A	N/A	2,604	N/A	N/A	\$8.32

## AGENCY RIDERSHIP

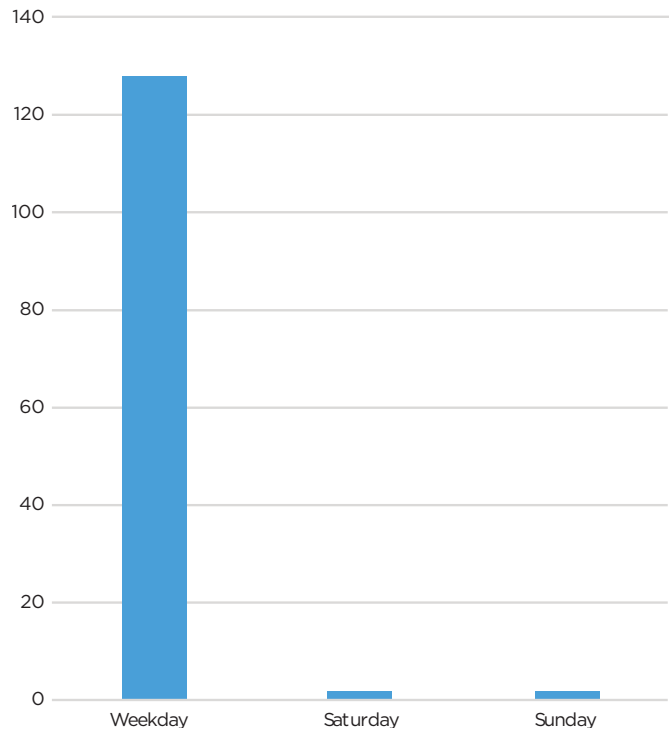
FY14 - FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership



FY23 Passenger Trips by Revenue Hour and Revenue Mile



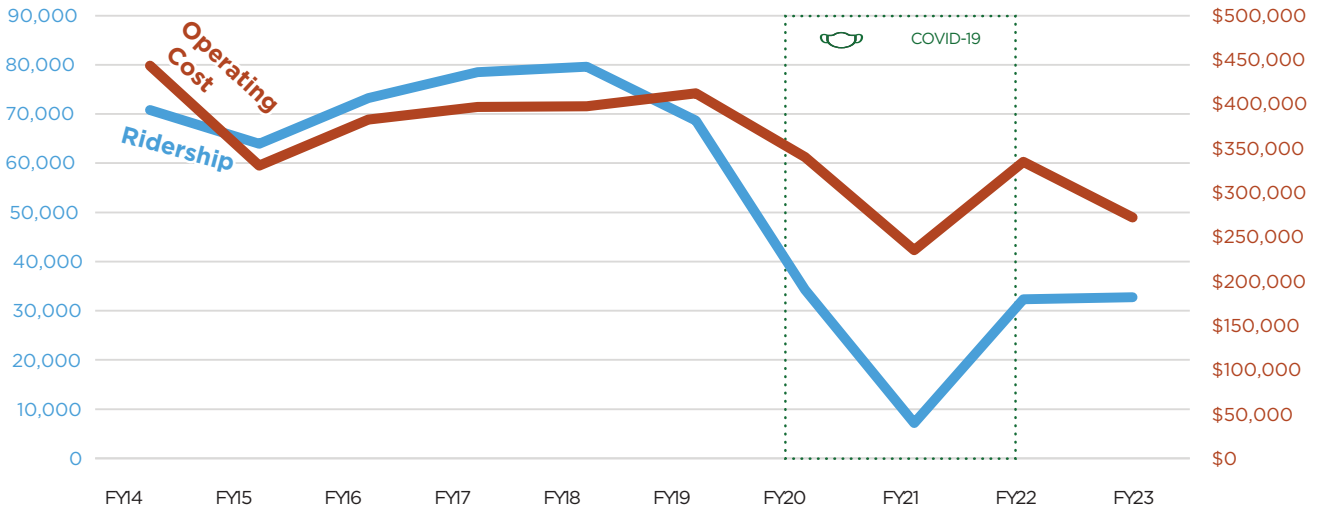
FY23 Average Daily Ridership



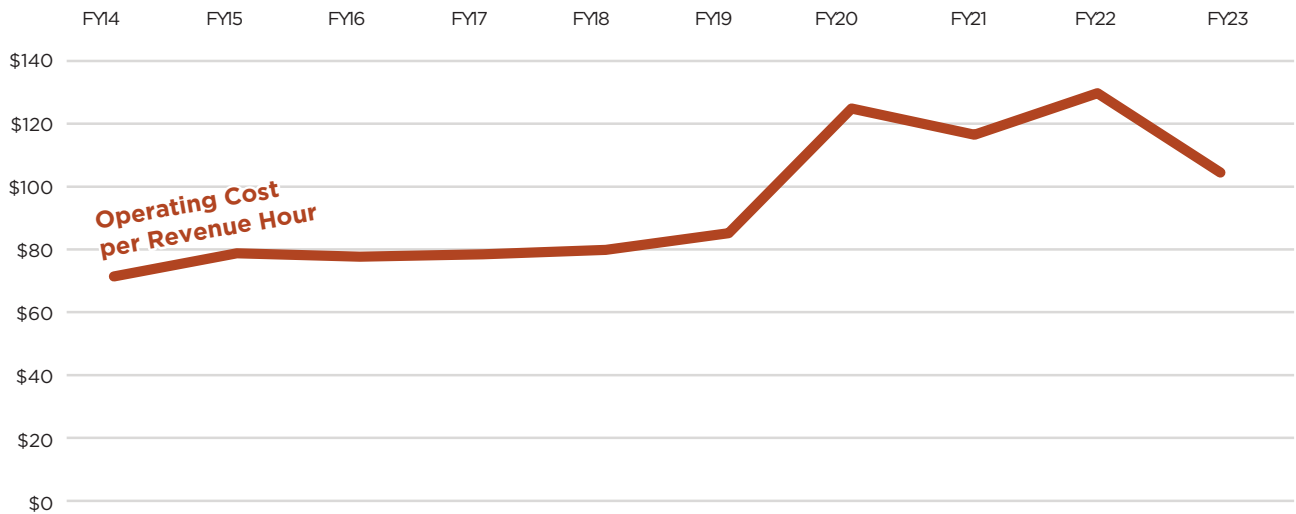
■ All Routes

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY14-FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership in Relation to Annual Operating Cost



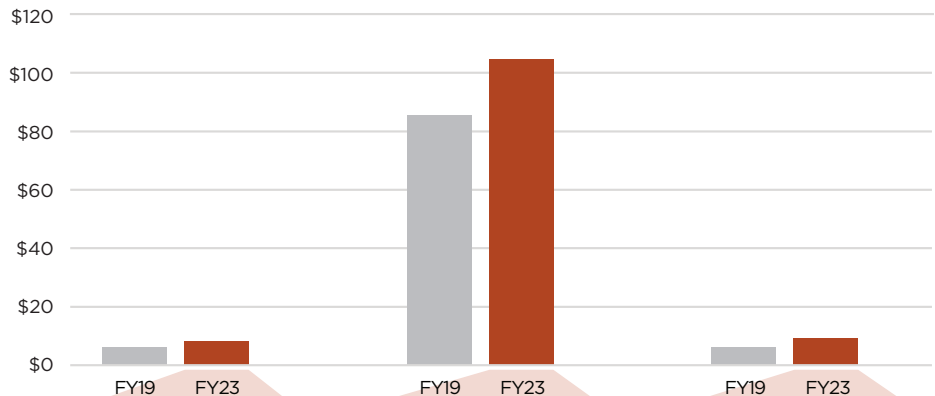
FY14 - FY23 Annual Fixed Route Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



FY19 and FY23 Systemwide Operating Costs

**\$412,360**  
FY19 Fixed Route Operating Cost

**\$272,181**  
FY23 Fixed Route Operating Cost



FY23 Operating Cost by Route

Route	Operating Cost	Operating Cost per Boarding	Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Operating Cost per Revenue Mile
Kanan Shuttle	\$272,181.00	\$8.32	\$104.52	\$9.27

# 10. MOORPARK



## Market Assessment

The Moorpark sub-area (see Figure 1) has a residential population of 36,000 and 13,000 jobs. The Moorpark sub-area has a lower percentage of low-income and car-light households and a lower percentage of seniors than the County overall. The Moorpark sub-area also has a median household income almost \$35,000 higher than the median household income for Ventura County.

Moorpark is in northeastern Ventura County and is bordered by Simi Valley to the east, unincorporated Santa Rosa Valley and the City of Thousand Oaks to the south, and Fillmore to the north. Moorpark is generally separated from its neighbors by hilly and mountainous terrain on all sides, or farmland to the west. California State Route 118 connects Moorpark with Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks. State Route 23 is a two-lane highway north through the mountains to Fillmore, but in Moorpark and further south it is a multi-lane freeway that connects to Thousand Oaks.

**Table 25: Moorpark Sub-Area Demographics**

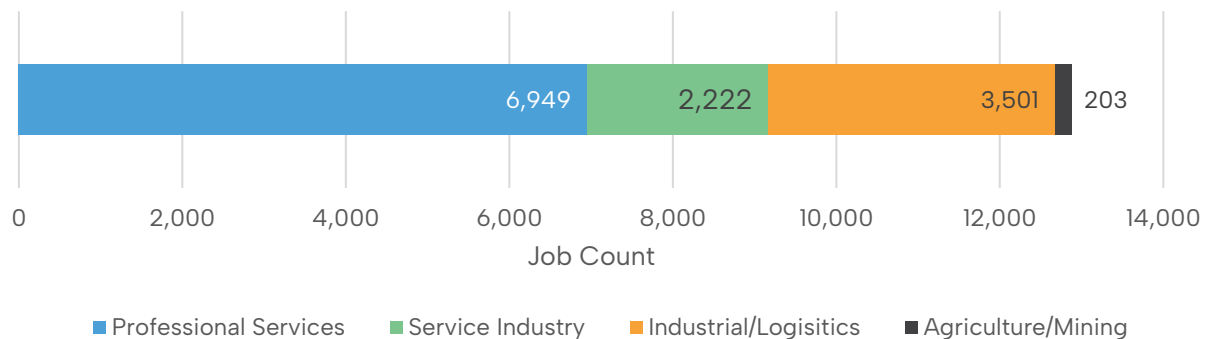
	Moorpark Sub-Area	Percent Share	
	Count	Moorpark Sub-Area	Ventura County
<b>Residential population</b>	35,929	-	-
<b>Senior citizens (ages 65+)</b>	5,056	14%	16%
<b>Youth (ages 10-17)</b>	3,938	11%	11%
<b>Low-income individuals<sup>1</sup></b>	1,815	5%	9%
<b>Households</b>	11,463	-	-
<b>Car-light households<sup>2</sup></b>	929	8%	15%
<b>Jobs</b>	12,875	-	-
	Moorpark Sub-Area	Ventura County	
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$129,375	\$94,167	

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Denominator of the percent share statistics is persons in housing units.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

**Figure 19: Moorpark Sub-Area Jobs by Industry**

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Jobs in the Moorpark sub-area are mostly in professional services, but there are also a significant number of jobs in the industrial/logistics and service sectors. An inflow-outflow analysis of employment in the Moorpark sub-area finds significant traffic coming both to and from the Moorpark sub-area for work. Ninety percent of Moorpark sub-area residents commute elsewhere for work, and over 10,000 people who live in other communities commute to the Moorpark sub-area for work. Moorpark's Metrolink station sees 13 daily round trips on Metrolink/Pacific Surfliner, connecting Moorpark to Union Station in Los Angeles. VCTC Intercity bus service connects to Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, and Oxnard/Ventura from Moorpark Station.

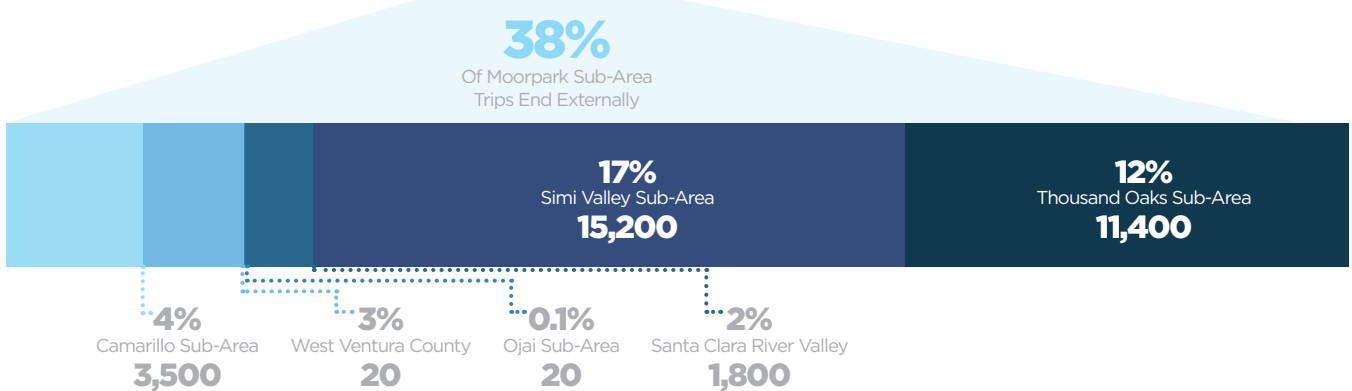
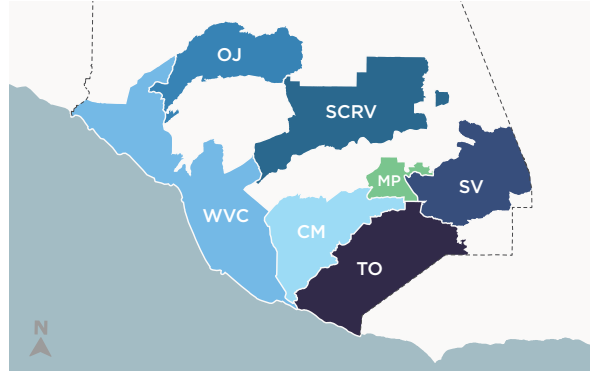
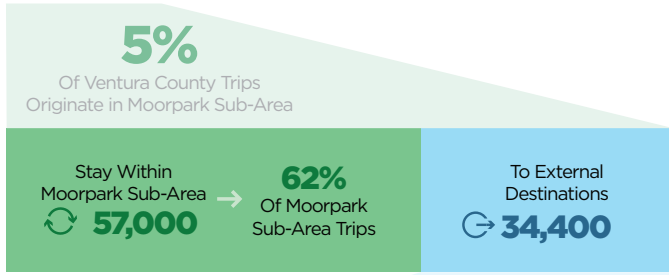
The Moorpark sub-area has a higher rate of trips to other communities in Ventura County. About 60 percent of trips begin and end in the Moorpark sub-area. The sub-area generally has fewer commercial and community resources (healthcare, entertainment, etc.) compared to other cities in the region. Simi Valley (17% of trips) and Thousand Oaks (12% of trips) are the most common destinations for trips outside the sub-area.

Within the City of Moorpark, the area north of the Arroyo features a grid-pattern development with a mix of residential, light industrial, and commercial land uses. The area south of the Arroyo is almost exclusively newer residential developments with winding streets, which results in less connectivity to arterial streets. The areas along State Route 118 have the greatest population and job density in the Moorpark sub-area, as well as higher shares of youths. These areas therefore likely have the most potential transit riders. Most of the Moorpark sub-area's top employers are within half a mile of California State Routes 34 and 118 and operate in the corporate, service, and manufacturing sectors. The job density and distribution of major employers along these corridors illustrate the importance of these state routes for travel to, from, and within the Moorpark sub-area.

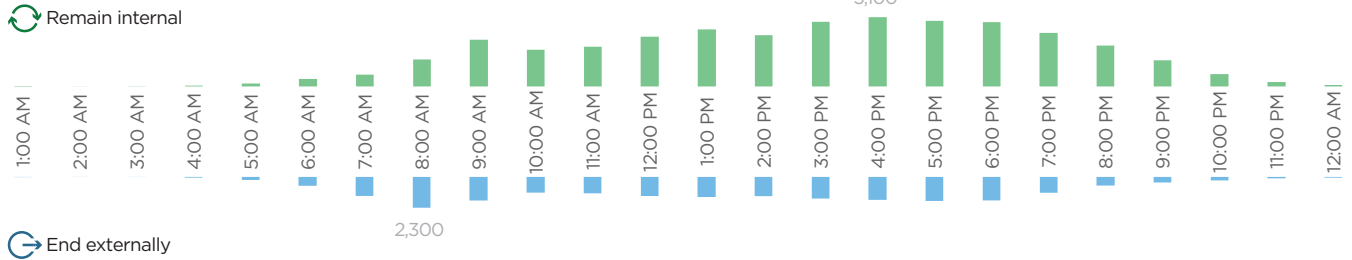
## TRIP DISTRIBUTION

Destinations of Trips from Moorpark Sub-Area

**91,400**  
Trips Originate  
in Moorpark Sub-Area

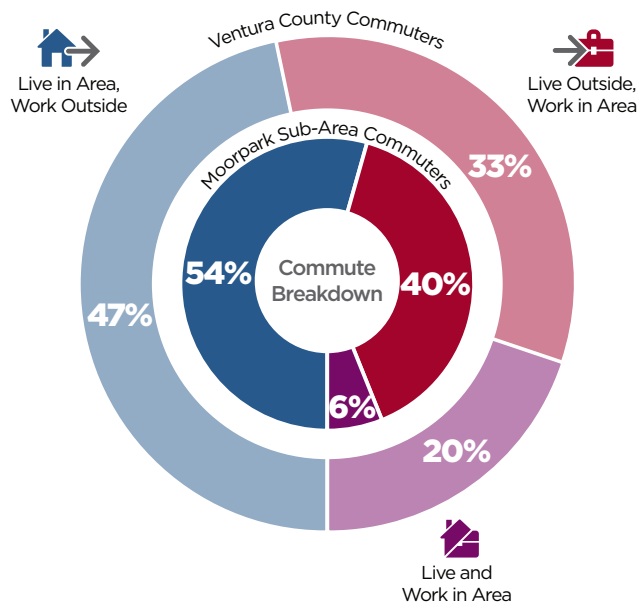
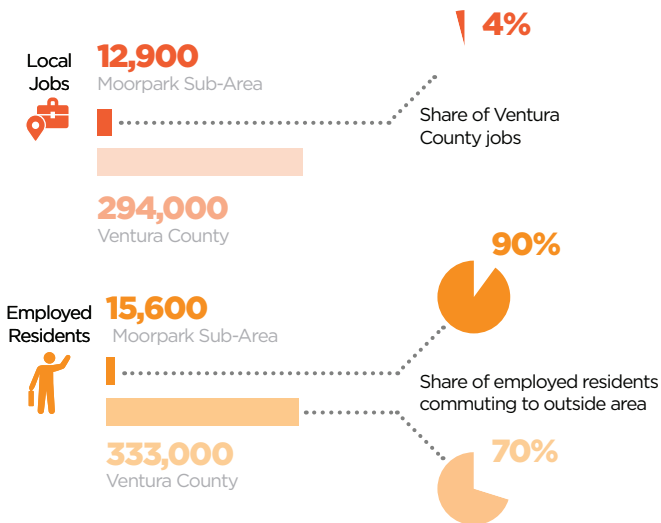


## Time Distribution of Trips From Moorpark Sub-Area



## JOBS INFLOW/OUTFLOW

Moorpark Sub-Area Jobs Flow Compared to Ventura County



## Service Evaluation

The City of Moorpark operates Moorpark City Transit (MCT). Existing service includes one local fixed-route, a senior/ADA-paratransit and general public dial-a-ride service, and an on-demand microtransit service called MCT On Demand. The fixed route and MCT On Demand are open to the general public, while senior/ADA dial-a-ride riders must be at least 65 years old or have a disability. At the time of this analysis, MCT operated two loop routes in opposing directions, but Route 2 was discontinued in 2025 due to budget constraints. Route 2 is evaluated here, but is not included in the “existing condition” for the proposed concept.

### MOORPARK CITY TRANSIT: FARES

The City currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

**Table 26: Agency Single-Ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type**

Service Type	Regular	Discounted <sup>1</sup>	Child (5 & under)	Student/Youth	College Students
<b>Fixed-Route</b>	\$1.00	Free	Free	Ages 6–14: \$1.00 High school students: Free <sup>2</sup>	Free <sup>2</sup>
<b>Dial-a-Ride</b>	–	\$2.00	–	–	–
<b>MCT On Demand</b>	\$1.00	\$0.50	Free	\$1.00	Free

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.

<sup>2</sup> MCT fixed-route services are free for high school and college students due to VCTC Youth Ride Free Program and College Ride Program, which are funded through June 2026.

Source: Moorpark City Transit website, 2024.

### MOORPARK CITY TRANSIT: FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

#### SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

The fixed-route service is contracted through the City of Thousand Oaks for operations and operates Monday through Friday between 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., excluding designated holidays. Route 1 and Route 2 operated along the same route but in opposite directions, connecting residential and commercial areas, schools, and civic centers within Moorpark. Both routes operate with 60-to-75-minute headways. MCT discontinued Route 2 in 2025 and updated the Route 1 schedule to better align with Moorpark High School bell times.

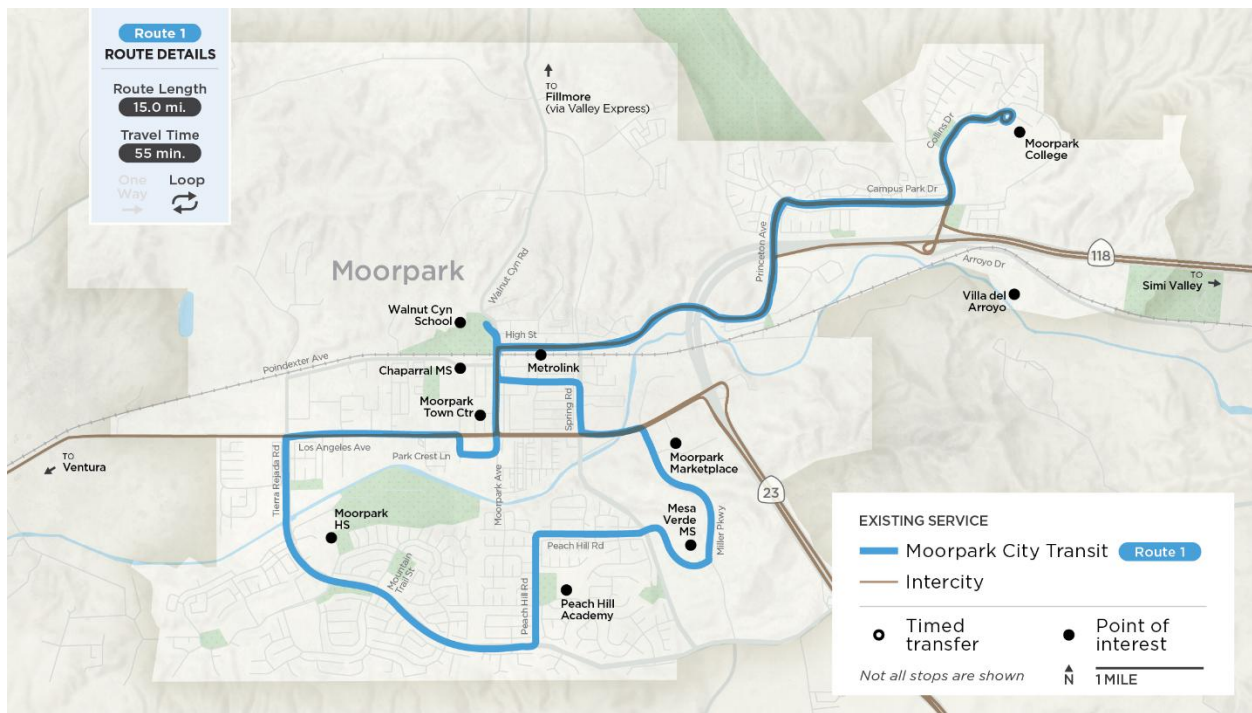
VCTC Intercity’s East County and Cross County Limited routes and Valley Express’ Fillmore–Moorpark route connect to other parts of the region and supplement MCT by providing additional transit service throughout the day between Moorpark College and Moorpark Station. The Fillmore–Moorpark route also stops at Moorpark Marketplace. Additionally, Simi

Valley Transit provides service between Simi Valley and Moorpark College. Riders can transfer from MCT Route 1 to these regional services at Moorpark Station, Moorpark Marketplace, and at Moorpark College.

**ROUTE 1**

Route 1 connects residential areas and commercial centers within the city, beginning its counterclockwise loop at the Civic Center in front of the Moorpark Community Center. The route operates from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on weekdays. Key destinations include Moorpark City Hall, Moorpark Town Center, Mission Bell Plaza, Moorpark High School, Moorpark Station, and Moorpark College. In FY23, Route 1 had 61 average daily boardings.

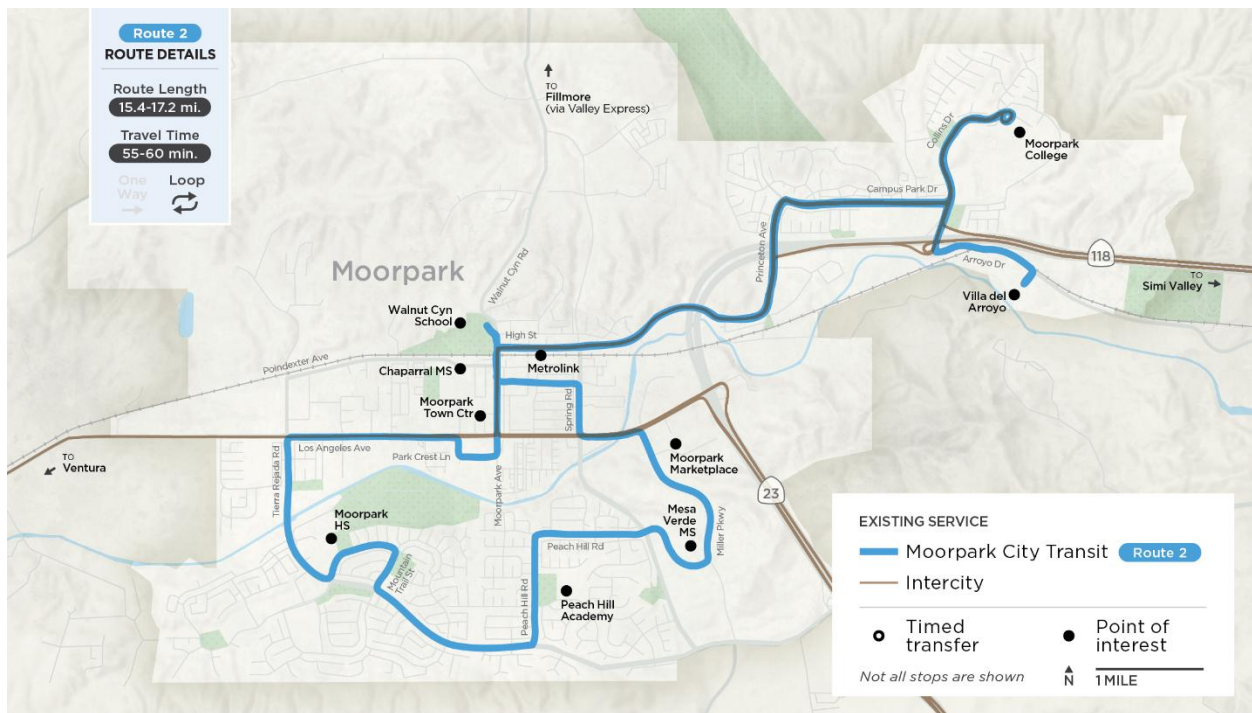
**Figure 20: Moorpark Route 1**



## ROUTE 2

Route 2 operated along the same route as Route 1 and also begins at the Civic Center<sup>11</sup>, but travels in the opposite direction from Route 1. The route operated from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays. Route 2 served most of the same stops as Route 1 but not Moorpark High School or Moorpark Town Center. Route 2 made additional stops in residential areas and served the Villa del Arroyo community on six of its 11 daily trips. In FY23, Route 2 had 39 average daily boardings. Following cancellation of this route, the Villa del Arroyo stop was added to Route 1.

**Figure 21: Moorpark Route 2**



<sup>11</sup> Route 2 begins at the Civic Center with the exception of the first trip of the day, which begins at Moorpark College.

## *RIDERSHIP*

Moorpark City Transit's fixed-route ridership peaked in FY15 with a ridership of 71,170, and has since been steadily declining. In August 2013, the City initiated a three-year demonstration program to extend service hours and introduce Saturday service for fixed-route services, which initially contributed to a small increase in ridership. However, service productivity decreased as ridership did not increase in proportion with service hours. In response, Moorpark City Transit cut service hours in FY16 and then again in FY17. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic reduction in ridership. By FY21, ridership hit a low of 14,040. In August 2021, the City revised its schedule to make the Moorpark Civic Center the first and last stop, aiming to streamline operations. Despite these efforts, the ridership recovery post-pandemic has been slow; FY23 ridership was just over 50% of FY19 ridership levels.

Route 1 accounted for 61% of the total ridership, while Route 2 represented 39%. Though the two routes essentially form the same loop in opposite directions, only Route 1 serves Moorpark High School, which may affect these ridership trends, as high school and college students account for 60% of Moorpark City Transit's fixed-route riders.

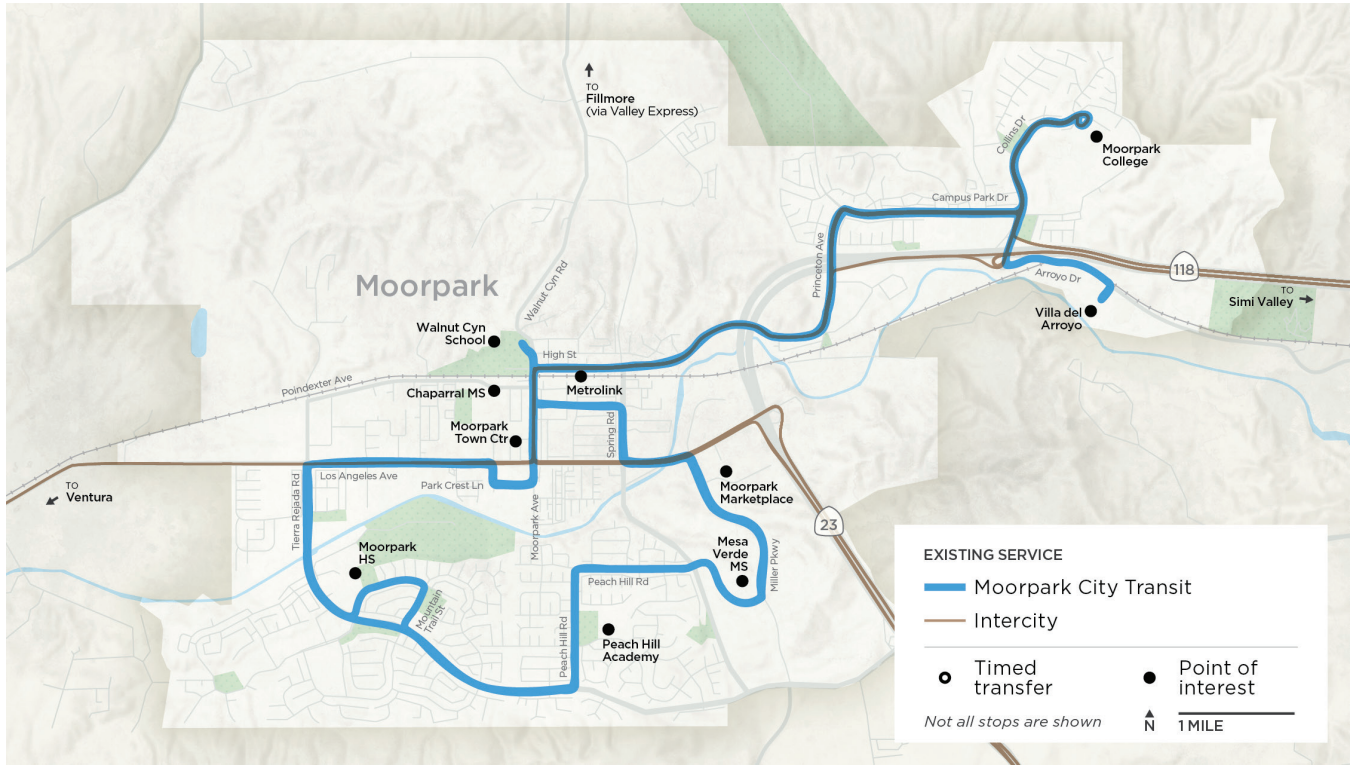
## *SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY*

Over the past five years, systemwide service productivity has declined significantly, with trips per revenue hour and trips per revenue mile both decreasing by approximately 50%. While service levels fluctuated between FY19 and FY23, ridership consistently declined (except in FY22 when a schedule adjustment temporarily improved productivity). In FY23, the fixed-route service carried an average of 4.4 passengers per revenue hour. Route-level productivity data was not provided by the city.

## *EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW*

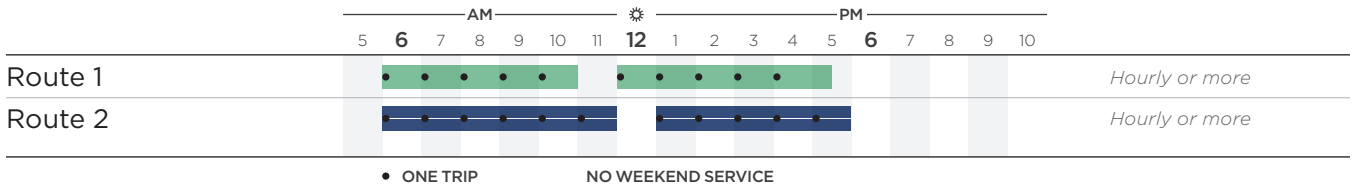
Annual operating costs have increased every year since FY19, despite ridership declines, leading to rising costs per passenger trip and per revenue hour. Annual operating costs in FY23 were 50% higher than FY19 while the operating cost per passenger trip nearly tripled. Prior to FY19, operating costs and ridership had followed a similar trend. Rising costs over the last five years highlight the need to reevaluate the current service to identify opportunities for increased productivity.

## AGENCY ROUTE MAP



## SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

### Service Span

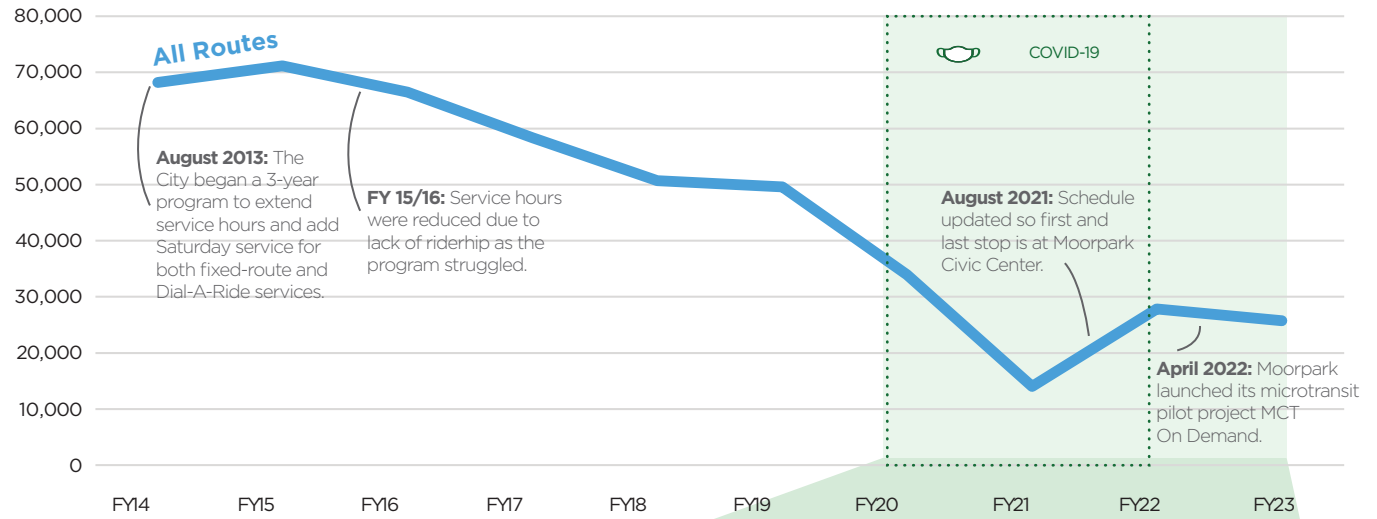


### Route Productivity FY23

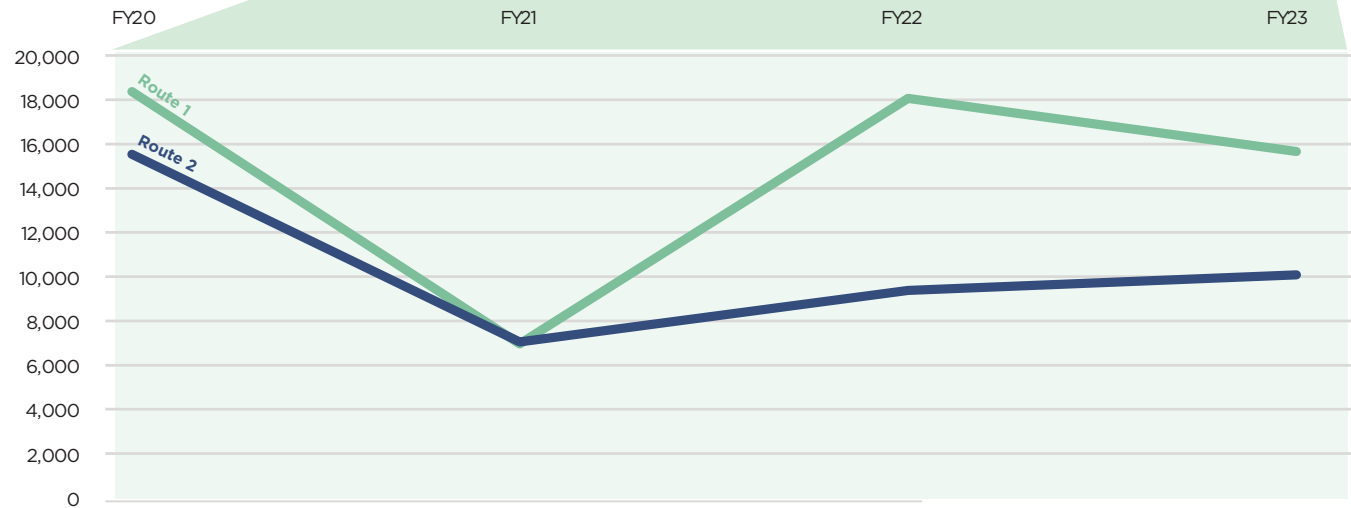
Route	Annual Ridership	Passengers per Revenue Hour			Revenue Hours			Operating Cost per Boarding
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	
Route 1	15,665	4.4	N/A	N/A	5,804	N/A	N/A	\$29.54
Route 2	10,093							

## AGENCY RIDERSHIP

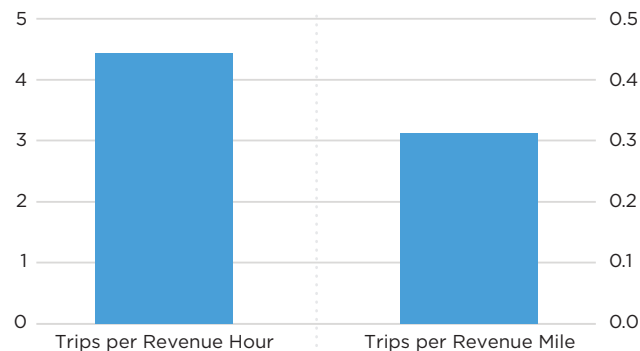
FY14 - FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership



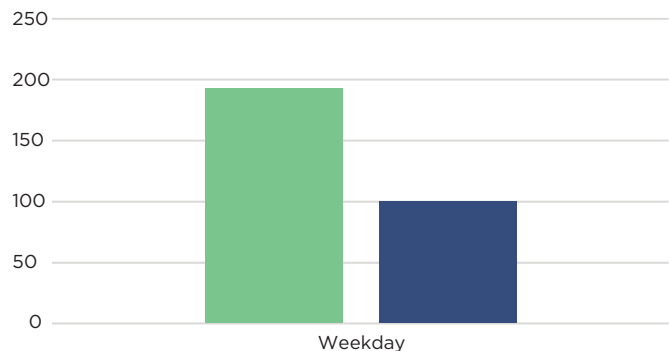
FY19 - FY23 Ridership by Route



FY23 Passenger Trips by Revenue Hour and Revenue Mile



FY23 Average Daily Ridership



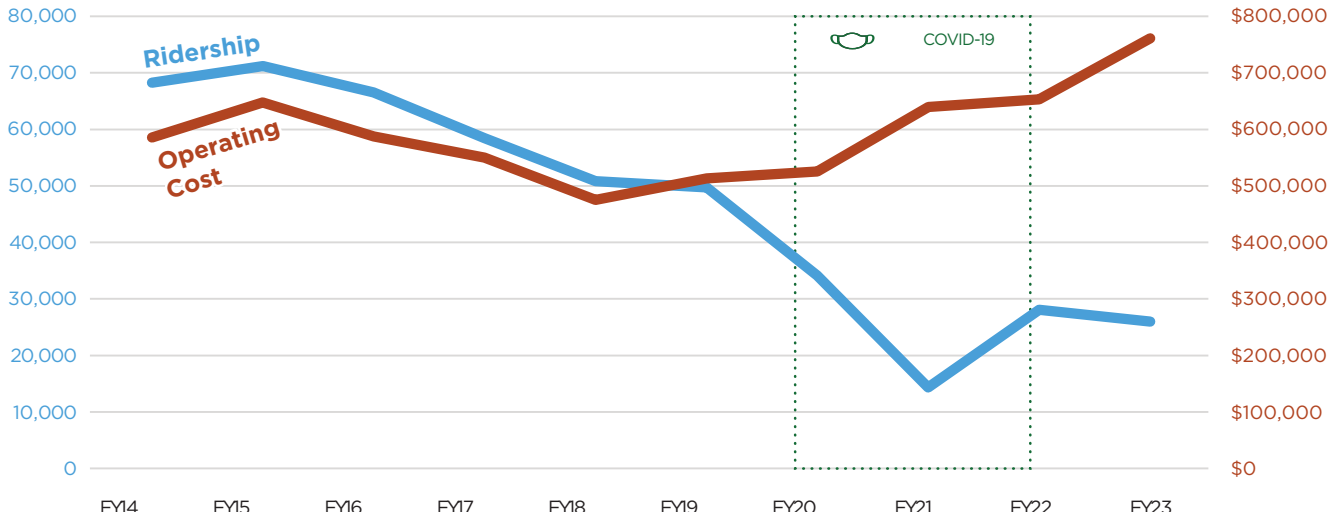
■ All Routes

■ Route 1

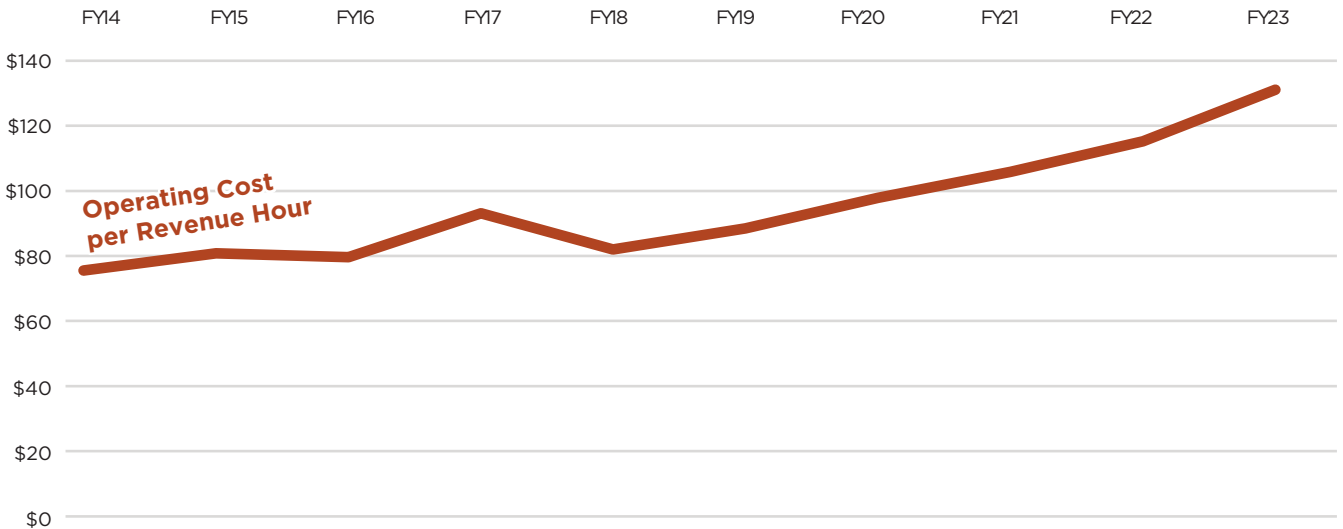
■ Route 2

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY14-FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership in Relation to Annual Operating Cost



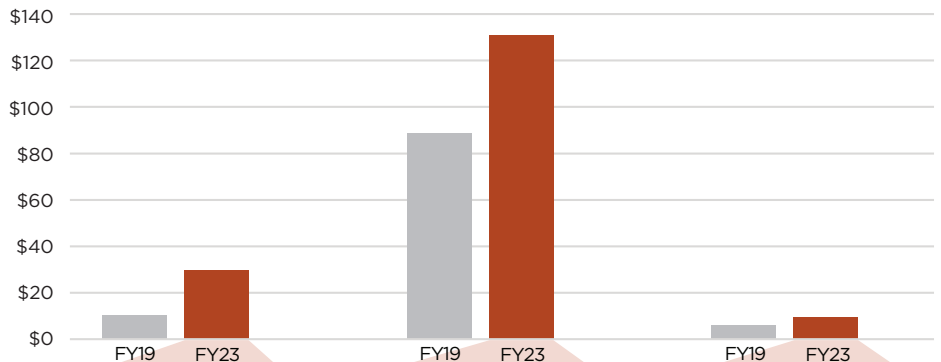
FY14 - FY23 Annual Fixed Route Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



FY19 and FY23 Fixed Route Operating Costs

**\$511,694**  
FY19 Fixed Route Operating Cost

**\$760,870**  
FY23 Fixed Route Operating Cost



FY23 Operating Cost by Route

Route	Operating Cost	Operating Cost per Boarding	Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Operating Cost per Revenue Mile
All routes	\$760,870	\$29.54	\$131.10	\$9.22

## MOORPARK CITY TRANSIT: DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICE

Moorpark City Transit operates a Dial-a-Ride program that serves both senior/ADA-paratransit riders and the general public. They also operate MCT On Demand, a microtransit service launched in April 2022.

### MOORPARK DIAL-A-RIDE

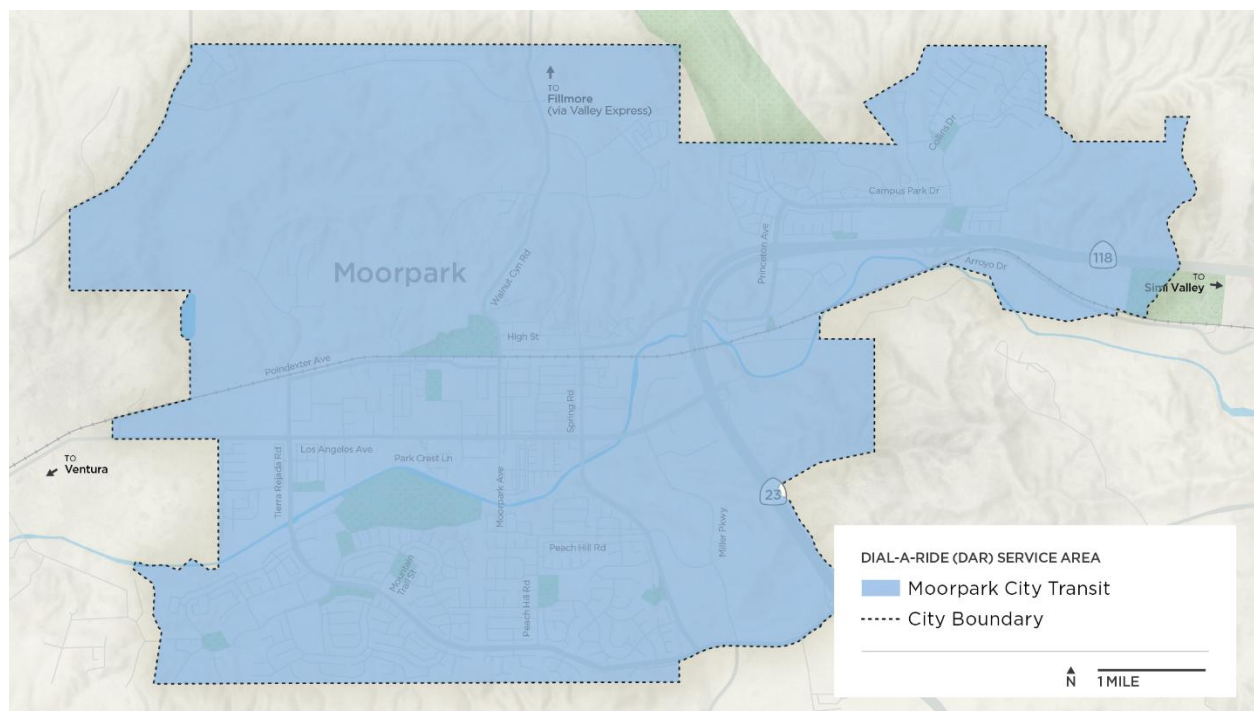
In November 2024, Moorpark’s DAR program switched software providers from Trapeze to RideCo. The analysis presented in this section reflects operations prior to that change.

### RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Moorpark Dial-a-Ride (DAR) has a long history of providing ADA complementary paratransit service to Moorpark residents with disabilities, through its coordinated agreement with Thousand Oaks.

The program expanded around 2015, around the same time as other demand-response programs in the County. The service area for DAR trips is contiguous with its city boundaries, as shown in Figure 22.

**Figure 22: Moorpark Dial-a-Ride Service Area**



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Moorpark’s Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 27.

**Table 27: Moorpark Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics**

Moorpark Senior Dial-a-Ride	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<i>Passenger Trips</i>	1,701	1,111	1,280	625	608
<i>Revenue Hours</i>	3,426	3,213	629	289	307
<i>Revenue Miles</i>	68,685	64,408	13,551	4,893	4,619
<i>Operating Cost</i>	\$64,299	\$57,798	\$70,687	\$41,182	\$40,828
<i>Passengers per Hour</i>	0.50	0.35	2.0	2.2	2.0
<i>Passengers per Mile</i>	0.02	0.02	0.09	0.13	0.1
<i>Cost per Passenger</i>	\$37.80	\$52.02	\$55.22	\$65.89	\$67.15
<i>Cost per Hour</i>	\$18.77	\$17.99	\$112.38	\$142.50	\$132.99
<i>Cost per Mile</i>	\$0.94	\$0.90	\$5.22	\$8.42	\$8.84

Source: Moorpark City Transit, 2024.

Moorpark DAR is the smallest operation in the County, providing roughly 12 trips per week and just 600 trips in FY23. This is in large part due to the success of Moorpark’s microtransit service, MCT OnDemand, which costs less to operate and requires no reservations, but serves trips on the day of request. Nonetheless, for seniors and persons with disabilities who want to ensure they have a trip (via an advance service) or for those who cannot walk to a MCT OnDemand pick-up location, DAR remains a preferred method of travel. As is typical with small Dial-a-Ride programs, the 600 trips are likely a small group of individuals making recurring trips.

Cost per trip at \$67 is 78% higher than the pre-pandemic system cost per trip of \$38. Revenue hours have been dramatically cut, from 3,400 to 300 revenue hours, reflecting an equally drastic decline in ridership from 1,700 to the current 600 annual passenger trips.

Operating costs have been more resistant to the decreases, only decreasing 37% from \$64,000 in FY19 to \$41,000 in FY23. This is largely because Moorpark contributes to the overhead costs of the coordinated system as contracted through an MOU for ECTA with the Cities of Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley and the County.

## OPERATIONS TOPICS

### OPERATIONS-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The central issue managers spoke to is how the Dial-a-Ride system does – or doesn’t – integrate with the MCT On Demand. The Dial-a-Ride service is an ADA complementary paratransit program, required to complement Moorpark’s fixed-route service. A key structural difference between the Dial-a-Ride service and MCT On Demand is that MCT On Demand does not directly go to riders’ homes but works from a large network of defined pick-up locations at existing bus stops and other well-lit areas. Although MCT On Demand has the capability to transport mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters, at this time, MCT On Demand does not have enough vehicles to serve as the ADA complementary service without affecting on time performance.

### RESOURCES - PERSONNEL AND VEHICLES

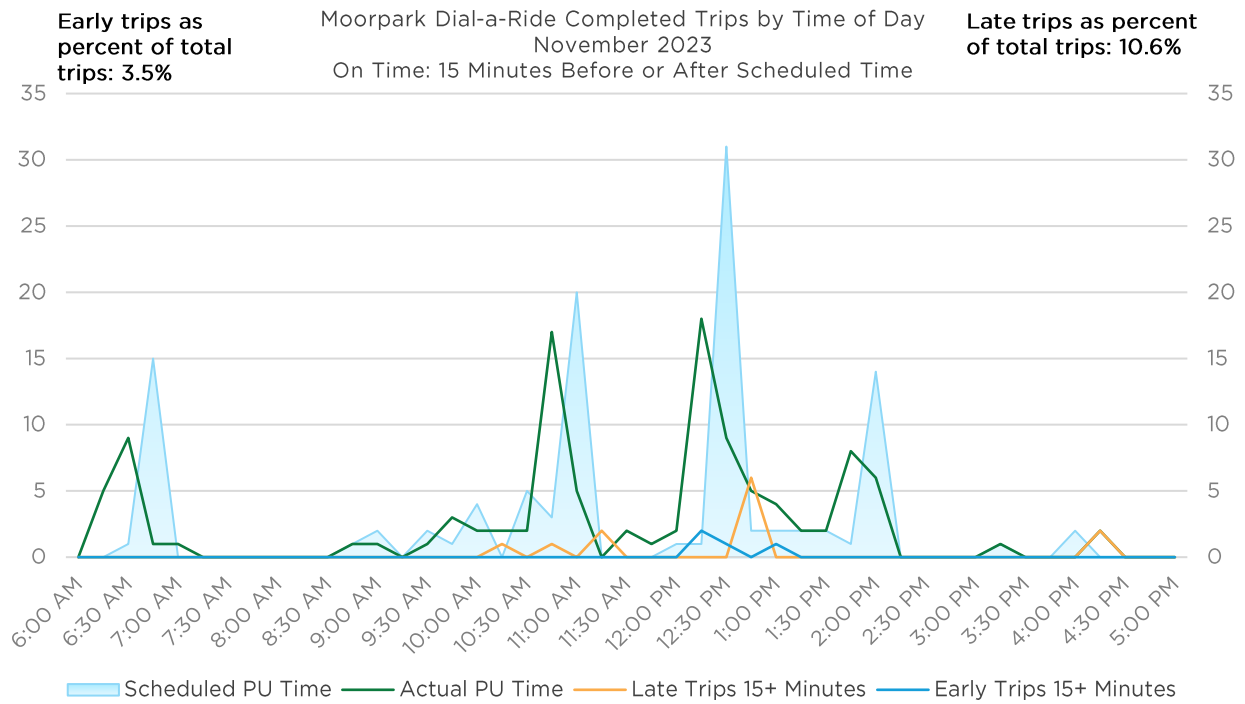
The Moorpark Dial-a-Ride is a contracted service with the City of Thousand Oaks and MV Transportation with seven to eight dedicated drivers for both Thousand Oaks’ and Moorpark’s Dial-a-Ride programs. MV Transportation has four dedicated call takers and three full-time dispatchers that support the programs under contract. The City of Moorpark has a fleet of two minivans with a carrying capacity of four passengers and a cutaway vehicle with a carrying capacity of nine passengers dedicated solely to its MCT On Demand service, which is operated by Transdev.

### ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented in Figure 23. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. The analysis determines on-time performance by calculating the total number of actual pick-up times that fall outside of 30-minute “on-time” window, defined as 15 minutes before the scheduled time to 15 minutes after.

The distribution of trips throughout the day for Moorpark’s dial-a-ride service is sporadic, with multiple scheduled trips between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. followed by a period of very low activity until mid-morning. Demand peaks at 12:30 p.m., which is also when the highest instance of late trips occurs. Almost 11% of all trips are late, while 3.5% of pick-ups arrive early.

**Figure 23: Moorpark Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance**



n = 113 Total

Source: Moorpark City Transit, 2024.

*MCT ON DEMAND*

## RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

MCT On Demand, which began in 2022, is a new microtransit program providing same-day trips within the City of Moorpark. Moorpark residents are eligible to use the service and can travel between more than 100 pick-up points within the City of Moorpark.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for MCT are shown in Table 28.

**Table 28: MCT On Demand Performance Metrics**

MCT On Demand	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<i>Passenger Trips</i>	-	-	-	572	15,643
<i>Revenue Hours</i>	-	-	-	916	5,498
<i>Revenue Miles</i>	-	-	-	3,594	-
<i>Operating Cost</i>	-	-	-	\$85,530	\$574,001
<i>Passengers per Hour</i>	-	-	-	0.6	2.8
<i>Passengers per Mile</i>	-	-	-	0.16	-
<i>Cost per Passenger</i>	-	-	-	\$149.53	\$36.69
<i>Cost per Hour</i>	-	-	-	\$93.39	\$104.40
<i>Cost per Mile</i>	-	-	-	\$23.80	-

Note:

MCT On Demand launched in 2022, so data is not available for prior years.

Source: Moorpark City Transit, 2024.

In 2020, MCT's fixed-route service saw a dip in productivity, and the city had been interested in exploring ways to cut back fixed-route service. Microtransit was seen as a means to serve riders that might be impacted by a reduction in service. As a result, MCT On Demand launched in April 2022, providing almost 600 trips over its first three months of service. Ridership grew to almost 16,000 trips in FY23 over a full year of service with a cost per trip of \$36.69, the lowest cost per trip among the county's demand-response programs. The operating cost of \$574,001 is inclusive of First Transit (the operating contractor) and RideCo software costs (RideCo costs have since been covered through a countywide contract with VCTC) but does not include City of Moorpark administrative costs.

## OPERATIONS TOPICS

Pick-up locations are within a 5-minute walk to or from most areas of the city. There are currently more than 100 designated pick-up locations that all meet the criteria of being: accessible and safe, located on main roads avoiding cul-de-sacs, and large enough to pick up multiple riders at a given location.

### TRIP RESERVATION AND SCHEDULING FUNCTION

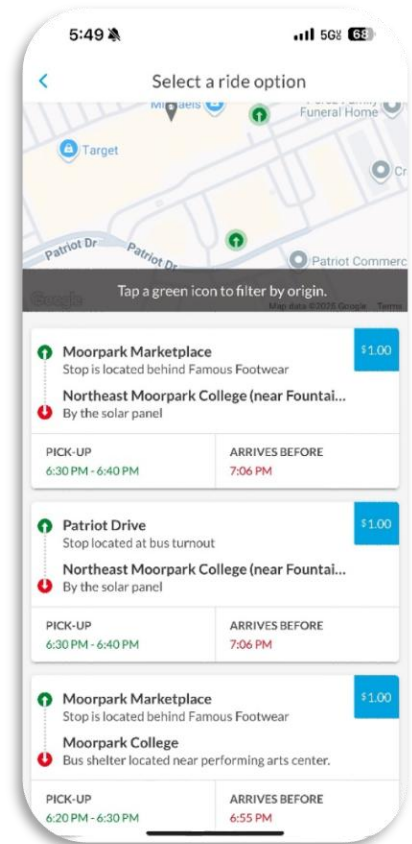
On-demand trips are scheduled primarily through the program's mobile app but can also be booked by using a computer, or by calling the dispatcher directly. Through the app, a rider may receive multiple options for pick-up locations, depending on vehicle availability at the requested time.

The RideCo scheduling software optimizes every 20 seconds, matching the rider to the closest vehicle with available capacity to provide the trip. The software's "time snapping" function attempts to group as many trips together as possible, maximizing the vehicle's capacity and improving efficiency.

### OPERATIONS-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Trips are generally offered within one hour of the requested time with an on-time window of 10 minutes following the provided pick-up time. Ninety percent of trip requests are received through the mobile app. One out of every five trip requests returns a failed search for the requested pick-up time. The failure rate is highest during the 3:00 p.m. timeframe when school ends.

The scheduling software prioritizes drop-off time. Currently 96 percent of drop-offs are on time compared to 87 percent of pick-ups. The program is nearly at capacity, needing an additional vehicle and driver to meet growing demand.



## Moorpark City Transit: Gaps and Opportunities

### PEOPLE



#### SENIORS

Bus routes cover most of the community, but the DAR service and microtransit also serve the whole city. Seniors regularly use DAR, and while they may be less apt to use an app, integrated microtransit and DAR is a possibility. Pricing between services is not well-aligned, with the senior/ADA DAR fare at \$2, while the same group can ride MCT On Demand for only 50 cents.



#### GENERAL POPULATION

Although the bi-directional loop model provided good coverage across the city, the stop spacing and alignment between the two directions was inconsistent from Los Angeles Avenue south. The travel market for circulation within town for most adults is likely limited, so more efficient service into the center of town and back home would be the most useful. On-Demand service priced at \$1 incentivizes people to use microtransit, leaving no clear reason to also offer fixed route in a community this size.



#### STUDENTS

Only one of the two routes directly connected the high school to residential areas of the City; Route 2 did not have a stop within 1,500 feet of an entrance. With service only once an hour, alignment to the school bell schedule is critical. Microtransit would be attractive for app-savvy students but less efficient for the service. Other cities have encountered significant challenges with microtransit availability around high school bell times.

### PLACES



#### COVERAGE

Route coverage is quite good. However, the Villa del Arroyo Mobile Home Park is served only on limited trips, and other neighborhood streets are also only served on some trips or in only one direction. Overlap of microtransit with the fixed routes is likely to decrease productivity, although microtransit expands access to the outskirts that are too far to walk to the bus.



#### WALKABILITY

Stops on the two fixed routes are not always co-located, making it harder to use in both directions. Another significant limitation is that most homes in the southern portion of the city are in developments with few access points to the main road, meaning many homes are physically close to the route but practically a long walk to reach a bus stop.



#### REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

MCT routes provide direct connections between routes and to regional services including Metrolink, Valley Express, and VCTC Intercity bus.

## SERVICE DESIGN



### FIXED-ROUTE DIRECTNESS

The bi-directional loop covering the entire City is generally a good model for this built environment. However, the roadway design south of Los Angeles Ave also limits consistent bus stops in both directions, which actually creates some significant gaps where neighborhoods would practically only be able to use one loop without a very long walk in the opposite direction. Improvements to stop and safe crossing infrastructure could alleviate these gaps.



### FIXED-ROUTE FREQUENCY

The roughly hourly pulse is an appropriate design for the community based, on the population and built environment. Adjustments to timing could ensure service to the high school works for a majority of students. Also, offsetting schedules from Moorpark College from the VCTC and Valley Express routes could help improve the effective frequency and provide more choice for college students rather than having four different buses departing campus at the same time every hour.



### SPAN

Route service ends by 6:00 p.m. This is quite early considering the college campus as a major destination. Although travel activity is low given the characteristics of the community, trip activity remains consistent from its peak at 4:00 p.m. through about 7:00 p.m. Coordination with VCTC and Valley Express could ensure service for Moorpark College is available to connect to the train station and downtown later in the evenings, or the microtransit program could fill this role.



### Balance of Services

Moorpark's microtransit program, which has nearly replaced the DAR program, has been a success in attracting riders and expanding mobility across the city. However, its pricing and design are at odds with the fixed-route service which is more efficient for carrying higher volumes of passengers, especially students.

A community the size of Moorpark is likely best suited to operate either fixed-route service or general public microtransit (i.e. MCT On Demand) but not both. Alternatively, microtransit could complement the fixed-route service by increasing the price for trips that begin and end within walking distance of the fixed route, and/or by extending the span of service later in the evening.

## Moorpark City Transit: Service Recommendations

This section provides recommendations for transit services operated by Moorpark City Transit (MCT) and other operators within their service area, including the design and operation of its fixed route services, the structure of its demand-response program, funding strategies, and capital planning. The SRTP vision for MCT focuses on streamlining the fixed-route services and policy changes for the microtransit program.

Near-term recommendations:

1. Redesign existing Route 1 to limit service geographically to the core of the city, but with greater frequency
2. Integrate information with other regional services that continue to provide coverage in the northeast of the city, to Moorpark College
3. Modify microtransit fares to incentivize use of fixed routes in core area
4. Streamline VCTC Intercity service and enhance frequency of Cross County Limited

Long-term recommendations:

- Implement new route connecting Moorpark College, downtown, and Thousand Oaks

*During the final development of the SRTP, the City of Moorpark informed VCTC that it does not support the recommendations in this chapter. As noted in the Methodology chapter, these recommendations are advisory and reflect the consultant team's professional analysis of best practices, data and local conditions. The recommendations are not binding requirements for the City to modify its current services. The report also notes that other jurisdictions attempting to operate both fixed-route and microtransit services simultaneously have consistently experienced higher overall costs and significant declines in fixed-route productivity and ridership.*

*If the City determines that microtransit is the preferred service model, the consultant recommends monitoring Route 1 using the Countywide Strategies framework and, if appropriate, reallocating fixed-route resources to support a microtransit-focused approach.*

*The City would also like VCTC to continue to provide direct service between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks and would not be interested in running this service directly. The ultimate service provider of this route is yet to be determined. While transit between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks may require a transfer in the future based on the recommended plan, the current VCTC East County Route has chronically underperformed and there is more travel demand between Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks than Moorpark and Thousand Oaks which has informed the recommendations. The plan takes a countywide view of transit in its recommendation, recognizing that Moorpark benefits*

*from neighboring local transit providers in a way that is unique in the county. Final route configurations will consider these recommendations but will ultimately be shaped by community and stakeholder input and are not yet finalized.*

## ROUTE CHANGES

This SRTP recommends streamlining MCT's fixed-route services that overlap regional routes. The short-term recommendations recognize the City's available budget and emphasis on microtransit. The proposed changes involve reallocating service to offer fixed route more frequently in the denser center the city, and enhancing coordination and connectivity with regional providers that will continue to connect Downtown Moorpark with Campus Park Drive and Moorpark College.

### NEAR-TERM CONCEPT

The proposed fixed-route concept would discontinue both Route 1 and Route 2 and replace them with a more limited Central Loop. The Central Loop would provide frequent service, operating clockwise with 30-minute headways. The Central Loop is identified in the following map as Route 71 consistent with the regional renumbering scheme described in the Countywide Strategies.

Discontinuing the current routes would reduce MCT's route coverage north and east of the I18 freeway, along Campus Park Drive to Moorpark College. However, because the college is a regional destination, there are already three other routes providing service between the campus and the Moorpark Metrolink station: VCTC Intercity East County service, VCTC Intercity Cross County Limited service, Valley Express Fillmore-Moorpark service. Long-distance regional routes could also serve the in-town ridership connection that is currently made by MCT Routes 1 and 2. Areas that would lose route service entirely, such as the Villa del Arroyo mobile home park, would continue to be served by MCT On-Demand microtransit, which data shows the residents are already using due to inconsistent route service and competing pricing.

Microtransit could better complement the proposed fixed route services if MCT increased the price for MCT On-Demand trips that begin and end within walking distance of a fixed route. MCT On-Demand has had success in attracting riders and expanding mobility across the city. However, its pricing and design are at odds with the fixed-route service which is more efficient for carrying higher volumes of passengers, especially students. A community the size of Moorpark is likely best suited to only operate one service or the other, but a tiered pricing structure would help reduce competition between the services.

*LONG-TERM CONCEPT*

A new Moorpark–Thousand Oaks route would connect Moorpark College to key destinations in Moorpark and offer timed transfers to the South Loop as well as to VCTC Intercity and Thousand Oaks Transit services in Thousand Oaks. This new route would also address a service gap associated with the VCTC Intercity transit service recommendation to route the East County services directly to Thousand Oaks from Simi Valley rather than to Thousand Oaks via Moorpark. This route is also identified on the following map as Route 72. The operator of this route is undetermined at this time.



**Table 29: Overview of Proposed Changes to Transit Service in Moorpark**

Key Change	Benefits	Considerations
<p><b><i>MCT Fixed-route service redesigned to only serve center of town, with other regional services retaining coverage to northeast and College area</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shorter travel times to/from Moorpark schools</li> <li>- Reduces overlap between multiple providers to Moorpark College, and maintains service between Moorpark College and the city’s retail plazas</li> <li>- Enhances connections to regional route network including Metrolink and VCTC for most residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service would be reduced for the Villa del Arroyo community, which would instead rely on MCT On Demand service</li> <li>- Moorpark riders need to rely more heavily on the network of service providers to travel across town, as opposed to a single route today</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Regular service between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rebalanced services with increased fixed-route network frequency in the center of town should perform well</li> <li>- Expanded span of service will enable more commuters to use transit to get to/from home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proposed Route 71 at 30-minute headways will benefit more from implementation of the long-term plan to restore all regional connections, given the higher proportion of travel from Moorpark to other cities</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Timed transfers between MCT fixed-route services and other local/regional transit services</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With frequent Central Loop service, offering dependable transfers to regional services including for local trips to the College should result in similar trip times as current service design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requires transferring routes (and to a different provider) as opposed to the current one-seat ride</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Tiered pricing structure for MCT On Demand and Dial-A-Ride (see below)</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintains DAR/microtransit option for all residents</li> <li>- Maintains discounted DAR/microtransit for seniors and people with disabilities</li> <li>- Incentivizes riders to use the fixed-route system</li> <li>- Maximizes effectiveness of transit funding to serve the most people while maintaining citywide coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MCT On-Demand fares will increase for Moorpark residents living within a quarter mile of a fixed-route transit stop if they do not qualify for senior/ADA fare</li> </ul>

## PROPOSED FARES AND POLICY CHANGES

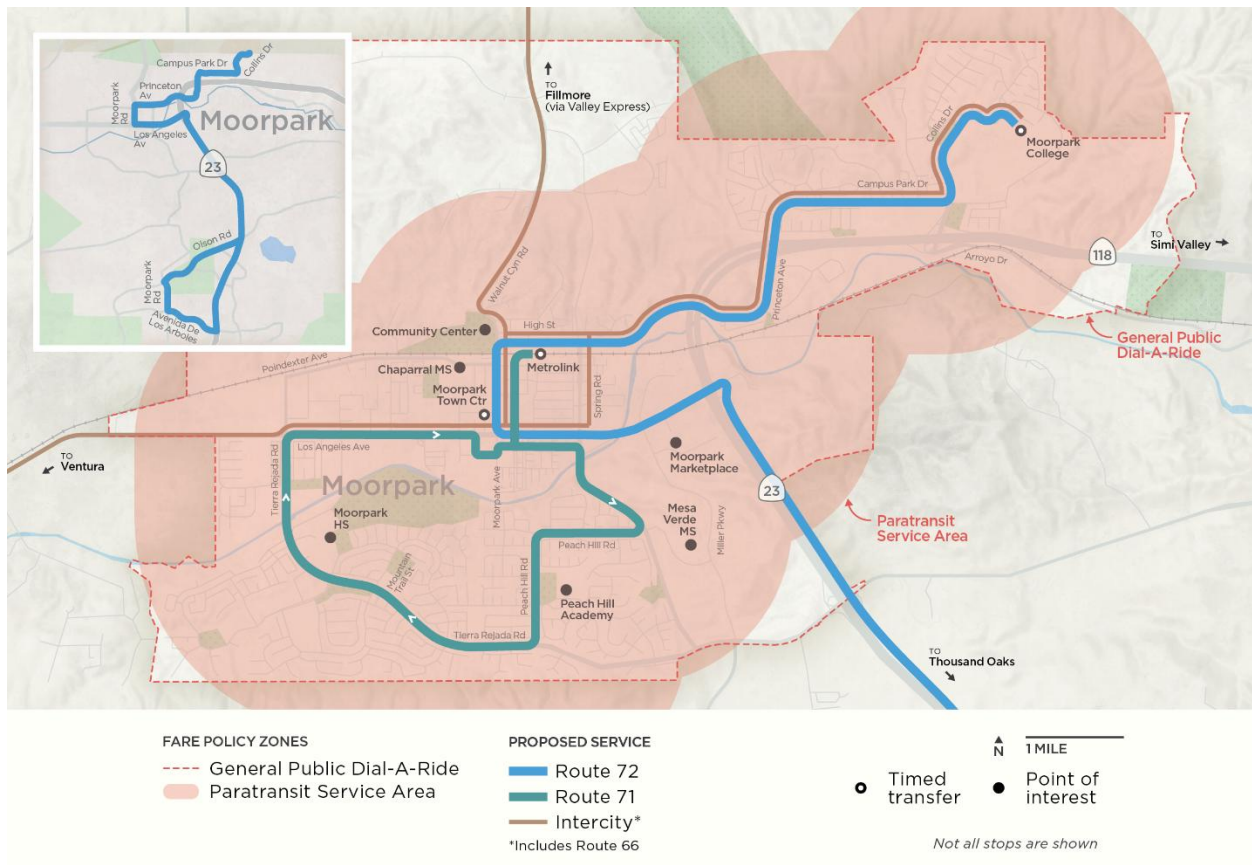
The proposed fare structure for Moorpark City Transit should be phased in to reflect the principles of the SRTP. This includes phasing in price increases to the On-Demand service to reflect its value and incentivize use of the remaining fixed route services (including routes provided by others with service in Moorpark). Rather than a jump from \$1.00 to \$5.00 for all riders, Phase 1 proposes an increase to \$3.00 for trips with at least one end outside the core route area, and \$5.00 for trips with both ends in the core route area. To ease the transition, MCT On Demand could phase the increase from \$1.00 to \$2.00 in the first year and then to \$3.00 the following year. During this time, the bus route base fare should increase to \$1.50.

The Phase 2 fare change should be implemented two years later, allowing time for the new service to become established. See the section on performance standards and monitoring for more implementation guidance. The table below outlines the phased price increases for fixed route and for MCT On Demand.

**Table 30: Proposed Fare Changes, Phase 1 & 2**

	Bus Routes Current	Demand-Response Current	Bus Routes Proposed Phase 1	Demand-Response Proposed Phase 1	Bus Routes Proposed Phase 2	Demand-Response Proposed Phase 2
<b>Base Fare</b>	\$1.00	MCT On Demand: \$1.00	\$1.50	\$3.00 for general public trips outside route area.  \$5.00 for general public trips with both ends near a route.	\$2.00	\$4.00 for general public trips outside route area.  \$6.00 for general public trips with both ends near a route.
<b>Senior (65+) and People with Disabilities (ADA)</b>	\$1.00	MCT On Demand: \$0.50  DAR: \$2.00	\$1.00	MCT On Demand: \$3.00  DAR: \$3.00	\$1.00	MCT On Demand: \$3.00  DAR: \$3.00

**Figure 25: Proposed MCT Fixed Route Concept and Fare Zones**



**OTHER PROGRAM CHANGES**

Adjust MCT On Demand reservation and scheduling policy to **serve general public trips within the fixed route area only “space permitting.”** This will ensure that system capacity remains available for ADA-certified users on the DAR service. Microtransit apps such as RideCo and Via are capable of redirecting the user to the fixed-route service.

## SERVICE CHANGES FOR OTHER OPERATORS IN MOORPARK

Multiple operators connect in Moorpark, providing regional service in all directions. Moorpark is also the terminus for several Metrolink Ventura County Line trains which operate to and from Los Angeles; only a limited number of additional trains continue west between Moorpark and the City of Ventura. The VCTC Intercity Cross County Limited route serves as an additional connector extending service west of Moorpark. The SRTP proposes reallocating services between providers in the area so the Cross County Limited can serve that role more clearly. Refer to the VCTC Intercity section for more detail. The Valley Express Fillmore–Moorpark route began operation in 2024 and runs through Moorpark to Moorpark College; this service is assumed to continue operation, with some route improvements recommended in Fillmore. See the Valley Express section for detail. Recommended changes to regional services in Moorpark include:

- Cross County Limited (Route 77) service discontinued east of Moorpark College; Simi Valley Transit Route 10 continues to connect east to Simi Valley
- Cross County Limited adds limited infill stops in Moorpark to provide more direct access to local origins and destinations
- Cross County Limited schedule enhanced to fill gaps in Metrolink schedule between Moorpark and City of Ventura in both directions
- Intercity East County (Route 70–74) discontinued; service between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks replaced with new route in the long-term (*see VCTC Intercity chapter for more detail on why this route is proposed to be discontinued*)

## SUMMARY AND BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The planned short-term recommendations address the current resources available to Moorpark, and rely on coordination with regional services to provide a fixed-route network serving the same area.

- With service only once an hour, alignment to the school bell schedule is critical. Offering a more frequent and shorter loop in the core area of town should improve reliability for school access, and an additional trip opportunity within the hour.
- High school demand tends to crush-load microtransit programs at the beginning and end of the day with ridership that a fixed route can easily accommodate.
- MCT can also consider providing tripper routes to the schools to provide additional service frequency and capacity and to additional locations.
- Historically, MCT with two routes was able to attract over 71,000 annual riders.
- The bi-directional loop model provided good coverage across the city. However, the stop spacing and alignment between the two directions was inconsistent, creating some gaps where neighborhoods are only able to use one of the routes without a very long walk in the opposite direction.

- The routes end service by 7:00 p.m., which is early considering the college campus is a major destination.
- Overlap of microtransit with the fixed routes likely decreases productivity, although microtransit expands access to the outskirts that are too far to walk to the bus.
- MCT Routes 1 and 2, VCTC Intercity Cross County Limited and East County routes, and the Valley Express Fillmore–Moorpark route all serve Moorpark Station and Moorpark College. Routes coming from across the region reflect the importance of providing direct transit to the College, but having three to five routes covering the same short corridor from the Moorpark train station is not an effective use of the collective resources. Because the regional routes are coming from longer distances, they are better suited to continue providing one-seat rides to the College for their riders and could coordinate to also serve local demand from the center of Moorpark. This frees MCT resources to serve other local needs without actually reducing the level of service to the College.

The recommendation to modify Intercity services that connect Moorpark to neighboring communities is addressed in more detail in the Intercity section.

In developing the SRTP, the City has emphasized that MCT On Demand has been very popular, and the recommendations to shift resources back to bolster the fixed route network are not aligned with current expectations. The City can prioritize its microtransit service if that reflects the preferences of the community and City leaders. **The SRTP strongly advises following best practice if microtransit is the preferred design by discontinuing the remaining MCT route or reduce to only operate around high school bell times** as its higher capacity can alleviate crush demand for microtransit.

Fundamentally the basis for the SRTP recommendation to refocus on fixed route is in providing a stronger regional transit network. The same fixed route network in Moorpark just ten years ago performed well within standards (carrying an average of 9.0 passengers per revenue hour according to NTD data), and would likely perform even better in conjunction with network changes around the region. Given the operating model and vehicle capacity, microtransit is not capable of achieving a 9-passenger-per-revenue-hour level. Although a microtransit program could theoretically achieve a higher total number of daily riders, the maximum productivity is around 5.0 passengers per revenue hour. The cost to carry the same total daily ridership MCT carried ten years ago utilizing microtransit instead of fixed route would be several times higher than it currently has budgeted, because more vehicles and drivers would need to be deployed to meet peak demand. Without deploying additional vehicles at peak times, riders begin to experience high wait times.

## Financial Analysis of Recommendations

The near-term recommendations for transit service in Moorpark should be implementable within the current operating budget for the single remaining route, while the long-term recommendation would increase annual operating costs by about \$300,000. This assumes the budget adjustment to discontinue Route 2 service. Additional funding may be needed to expand the daily span of service, which is recommended to maximize connectivity to VCTC Intercity routes and Metrolink services. However, if the City continues to operate the microtransit program, later evening hours on microtransit is potentially a similar or more affordable option to maintain connectivity after peak demand hours.

### NEAR-TERM RECOMMENDATION

At the time of the original analysis, the near-term proposed changes represented a decrease in annual operating cost of about \$300,000 by decreasing fixed-route service to a single route served by one vehicle, which Moorpark has since implemented. This estimate assumes no change to the fixed route's current operating cost of \$131.10 per revenue hour, or to the revenue hours for the Dial-A-Ride service and MCT On Demand. The City's adopted budget includes \$450,000 in FY26 and \$500,000 in FY27 to operate the remaining route, in line with the consultant estimates.

Note that since the SRTP began, staff reported the total cost of the MCT On Demand program increased from approximately \$574,000 annually to \$748,000 – more than MCT spent on its entire, two-route fixed route service in FY23. The City has budgeted \$795,000 for FY27 microtransit operation ("Pilot mobility project"). The SRTP advises the course of action laid out to streamline fixed route services in conjunction with other operators and implement a tiered pricing structure to help stabilize cost increases.

**Table 31: Operating Cost Estimates for Proposed Near-Term Moorpark Transit Service Changes**

Transit Service	Daily Operating Hours		Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Annual Revenue Hours		Annual Operating Cost	
	Current	Proposed		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
<i>Fixed Route</i>	12	14	\$131.10	5,804	3,570	\$761,000	\$468,000
<i>Dial-A-Ride</i>	10-12	10-12	\$110.36	379	379	\$42,000	\$42,000
<i>MCT On Demand</i>	11	11	\$104.40	5,498	5,498	\$574,000	\$748,000
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	11,681	21,328	\$1,377,000	\$1,258,000

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATION

Without other changes, the proposed long-term fixed-route system represents a \$300,000 increase in annual operating cost for the implementing agency due to the addition of 1,000 annual revenue hours needed to operate the new routes on consistent schedules and with an extended span of service. This estimate also assumes no change to the Fixed Route's current operating cost of \$131.10 per revenue hour or to the revenue hours for the Dial-A-Ride service and MCT On Demand. The proposed Route 71 would operate for 14 hours every weekday throughout the year, and the Route 72 Moorpark-TO route would operate for 14 hours every weekday and 11 hours each weekend day.

To mitigate this increase in fixed route operating resources, and to support a successful outcome where the more cost-efficient route service attracts more ridership, the proposed plan would change the policies and pricing for the MCT On Demand program to reflect its role as a premium, more resource-intensive service. General public riders whose origin and destination lie along the fixed route network would pay a higher cost for their rides. This structure incentivizes use of the fixed route service where possible, and frees up capacity on MCT On Demand to provide a better service for those willing to pay more.

Usage of Moorpark's senior and ADA Dial-A-Ride program is quite low, due to MCT On Demand absorbing some of the demand. In the proposed structure, seniors and ADA riders would still enjoy discounted fares on MCT On Demand and not be subject to the price increase for trips along the fixed route service. The Dial-A-Ride program would remain available to seniors and ADA riders who want to be picked up at their door rather than at a virtual stop, or who aren't comfortable using the MCT On Demand app.

Origin-destination data for the current MCT On Demand service indicates most microtransit trips in Moorpark start or end along the proposed fixed routes, suggesting the proposed fixed route system could be a cost-efficient alternative for many MCT on Demand trips.

Figure 26: Moorpark City Transit Senior/ADA Dial-A-Ride Trip Origins

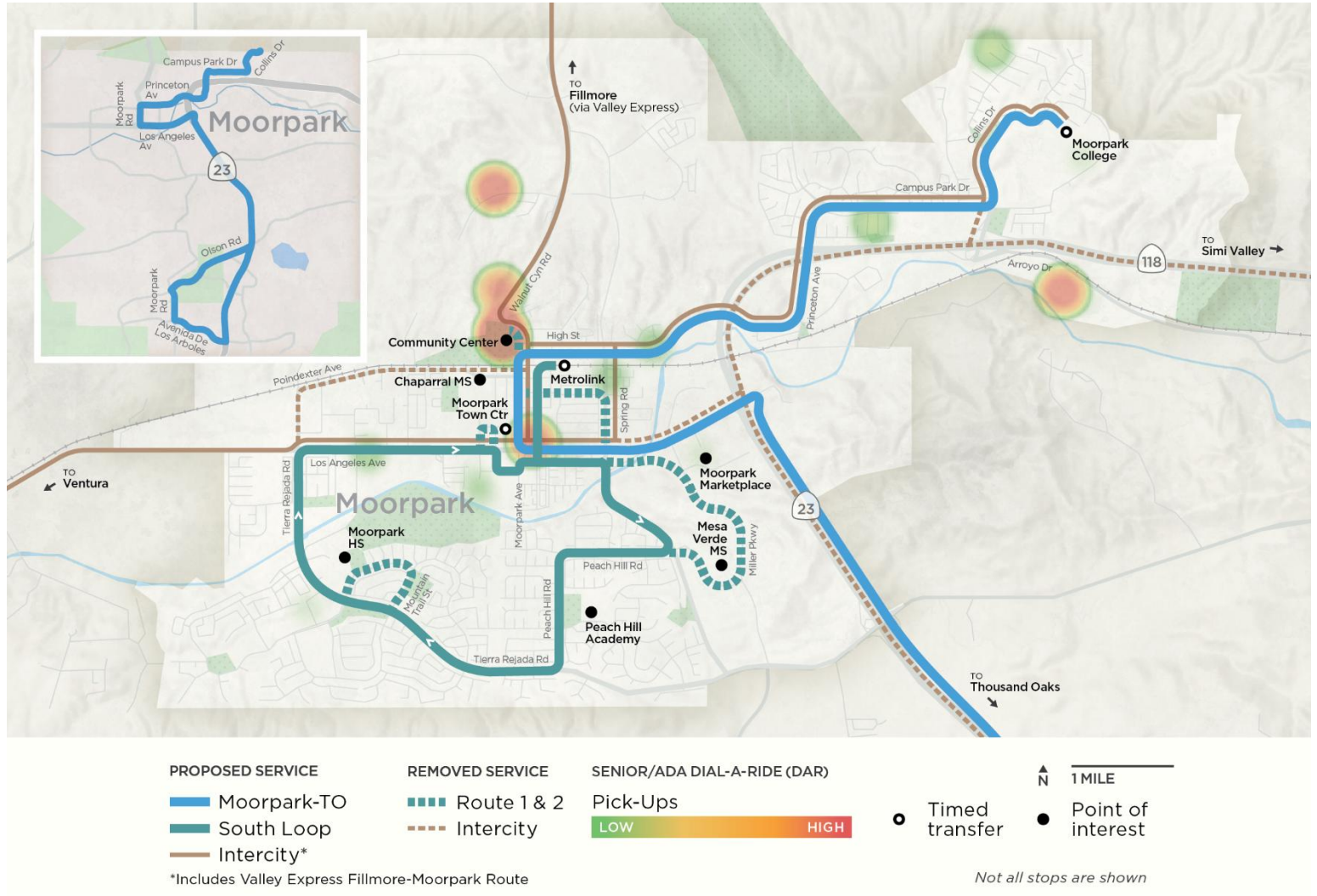
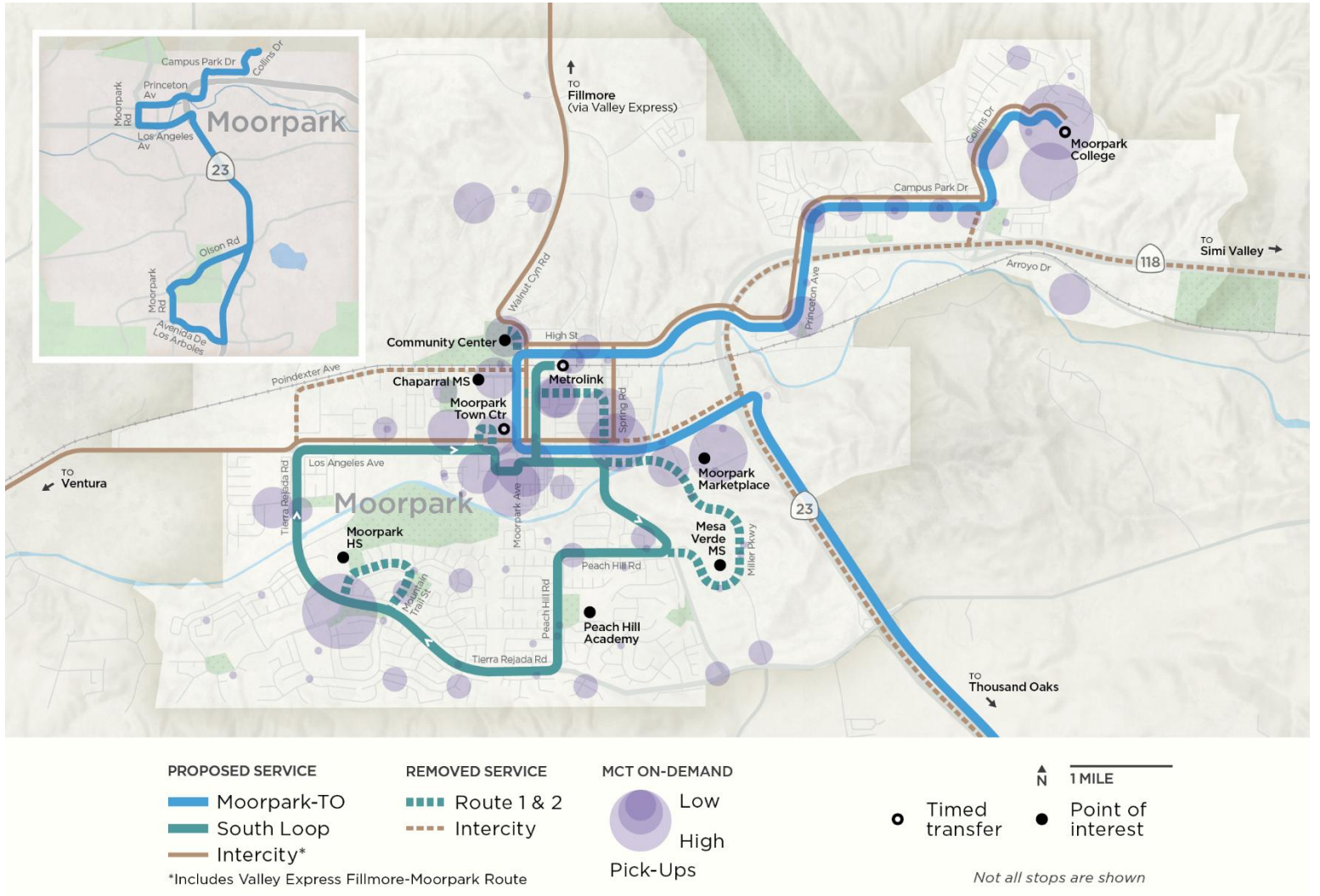


Figure 27: MCT On Demand Trip Origins



A reduction in MCT On Demand revenue hours could partially fund the proposed changes to the fixed-route service, as shown below. Reinvesting a portion of microtransit funds into fixed-route improvements could increase total riders served, by offering higher quality fixed-route service which has capacity to carry far more riders. MCT On Demand carried 16,000 passengers in FY23, which corresponds to approximately 2.8 passenger trips per revenue hour. A 25%–40% reduction in revenue hours would amount to about 10,000 annual microtransit passenger trips.

On the other hand, the proposed changes to the fixed-route service improve fixed-route frequency, span of service, and timed connections to other routes, including Thousand Oaks Transit routes. In addition to absorbing many current MCT On Demand trips alongside pricing changes, this should also attract many more new riders.

Table 32 shows the estimated operating cost in the case of a 30% reduction in MCT On Demand revenue hours. These estimates are based on the FY23 data and may not reflect more recent cost increases on these services.

**Table 32: Operating Cost Estimates for Proposed Moorpark Area Transit Service Changes**

Transit Service	Daily Operating Hours <sup>1</sup>		Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Annual Revenue Hours		Annual Operating Cost	
	Current	Proposed		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
<b>Fixed Route</b>	12	11-14	\$131.10	5,804	8,284	\$761,000	\$1,086,000
<b>Dial-A-Ride</b>	10-12	10-12	\$110.36	379	379	\$42,000	\$42,000
<b>MCT On Demand</b>	11	11	\$104.40	5,498	3,848	\$574,000	\$411,000
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	11,681	21,328	\$1,377,000	\$1,539,000

Note:

<sup>1</sup>Ranges represent differences in weekday and weekend span of service.

## FARE AND RIDERSHIP ANALYSIS FOR FIXED ROUTES

The proposed design would significantly alter where MCT offers fixed route service and shift more responsibility to other operators. A range is presented showing what may be possible if the proposed plan achieves the target average of 13 passengers per revenue hour. The total ridership outcome is comparable to other cities operating a similar level of service.

	Ridership	Passengers/RSH	Fare Revenue
Existing (FY23)	27,447	4.7	\$28,231
<b>Proposed Plan (Service-based estimate)</b>	<b>23,243</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>\$19,000</b>
<b>Proposed Plan (High Performance Outcome)</b>	<b>50,713</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>\$44,100</b>

## Capital Plan

Some investments in new stop infrastructure would be required to implement either the short-term or the long-term plan, however, the transition to a fully zero-emission fleet, which must be completed by 2040 to comply with California Air Resource Board’s (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation, is the primary driver of MCT’s forecasted capital expenditure.

### FLEET AND FACILITIES

MCT’s service is operated by Thousand Oaks Transit. It currently uses a fleet of five Compressed Natural Gas vehicles for its fixed route service, and twelve cutaway vehicles that are shared between the dial-a-ride and microtransit services. According to VCTC’s 2022 Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan, which touches only on their fixed-route fleet, they intended to begin transitioning and downsizing their fleet of five vehicles to four 30-ft electric vehicles in 2023 due to decreased fixed-route ridership.<sup>12</sup> The VCTC ZEB Strategy and Rollout Plan<sup>13</sup> indicates that Moorpark will partner with Thousand Oaks Transit for their transition planning, but Moorpark’s transition is not covered in Thousand Oaks Transit’s ZEB Rollout and Implementation Plan.<sup>14</sup>

Further analysis is not provided in this SRTP due to insufficient data.

### STOP INFRASTRUCTURE

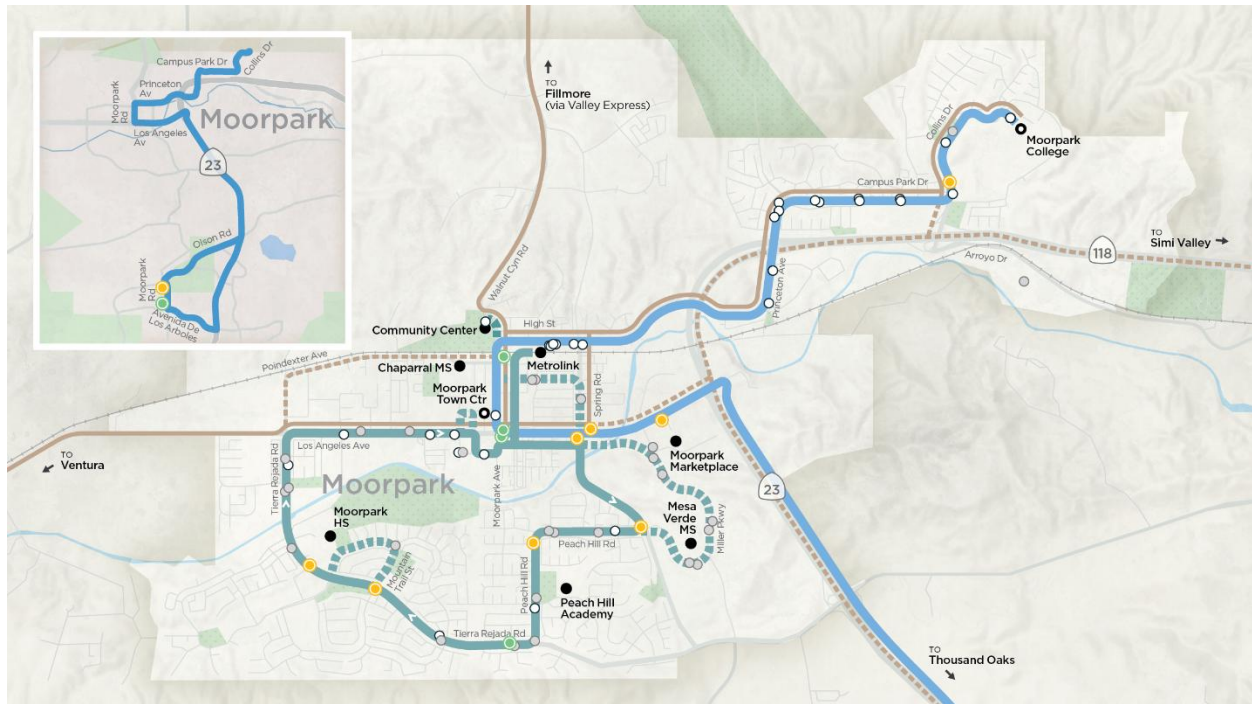
The proposed fixed-route services overlap significantly with existing fixed-route services, reducing the amount of investment that will be needed for new stop infrastructure. Much of the investment in stop infrastructure will be associated with the removal of existing bus stop signage—the Proposed Route 71 Central Loop will make fewer deviations and consolidate or move a subset of existing stops to improve operational efficiency and crossing safety—and new stops associated with the Moorpark–Thousand Oaks long-term concept. A third of the new stops along the proposed routes could be implemented largely with the addition of bus stop signage, a relatively low-cost first step. Certain locations will require more extensive infrastructure before being served, because accessibility to the stop needs to be addressed, including in one case the provision of marked crosswalks or other safety enhancements.

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<sup>12</sup> Ventura County Transportation Commission, “Transit Asset Management Plan.” October 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Ventura County Transportation Commission, “Ventura County Transportation Commission ZEB Strategy and Rollout Plan.” May 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Thousand Oaks Transit, “ZEB Strategy and Final Report.” June 2023.



- PROPOSED STOP INFRASTRUCTURE TREATMENT**
- Keep
  - Remove
  - Install sign only
  - Widen sidewalk

- PROPOSED SERVICE**
- Moorpark-TO
  - South Loop
  - Intercity\*

- REMOVED SERVICE**
- Route 1 & 2
  - Intercity

- ▲ N
- 1 MILE
- Point of interest

\*Includes Valley Express Fillmore-Moorpark Route

# 11. SIMI VALLEY



## Market Assessment

The Simi Valley sub-area (see Figure 1) is the second most populous sub-area in the study area and the fourth most populous sub-area in Ventura County overall with just shy of 130,000 residents. The Simi Valley sub-area is also an important employment center for the County, with nearly 37,000 jobs. The demographics of the Simi Valley sub-area are similar to Ventura County averages in the percentage of the population who are senior citizens or youth, as shown in Table 33. The sub-area has a lower percentage of car-light households and a higher median income than the County average.

Simi Valley is in eastern Ventura County and is bordered by Thousand Oaks to the south, Moorpark to the west, and Los Angeles County to the east, with mountains and the Santa Clara River to the north. California State Route 118 connects Simi Valley with Moorpark and the San Fernando Valley. Simi Valley's Metrolink station sees 13 daily round trips on Metrolink/Pacific Surfliner connecting the City to Los Angeles. VCTC Intercity bus service connects Simi Valley to Thousand Oaks and to Camarillo onto Ventura, both via Moorpark.

**Table 33: Simi Valley Sub-Area Population Statistics**

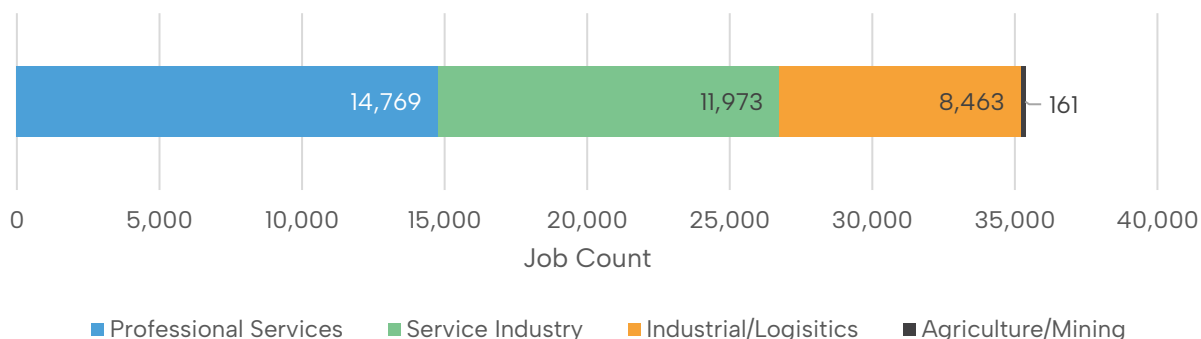
	Simi Valley sub-area	Percent Share	
	Count	Simi Valley sub-area	Ventura County
<i>Residential population</i>	128,593	-	-
<i>Senior citizens (ages 65+)</i>	20,357	16%	16%
<i>Youth (ages 10-17)</i>	13,976	11%	11%
<i>Low-income individuals<sup>1</sup></i>	9,606	8%	9%
<i>Households</i>	44,503	-	-
<i>Car-light households<sup>2</sup></i>	5,334	12%	15%
<i>Jobs</i>	35,366	-	-
	Simi Valley sub-area	Ventura County	
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$103,438	\$94,167	

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Denominator of the percent share statistics is persons in housing units.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

**Figure 28: Simi Valley Sub-Area Jobs by Industry**

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Most jobs in the Simi Valley sub-area are in professional services and the service sector, but there are also many jobs in the industrial and logistics sectors. The jobs in the Simi Valley sub-area account for around 12 percent of the jobs in the study area. The inflow-outflow employment numbers indicate significant traffic coming to and from the Simi Valley sub-area for work. Over 80 percent of Simi Valley sub-area residents commute elsewhere for work.

A very high proportion of trips begin and end in the sub-area (87 percent), despite the high proportion of residents who commute and local jobs that are filled by commuters.

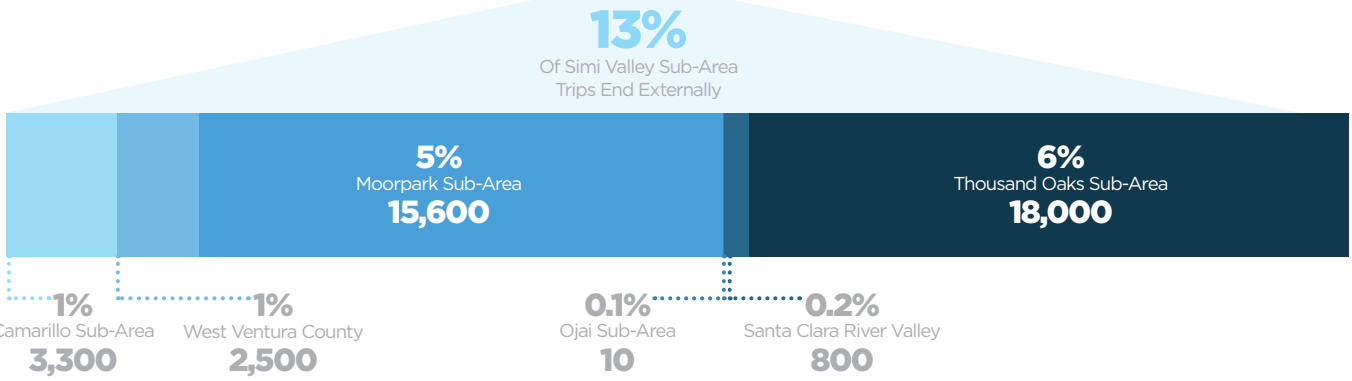
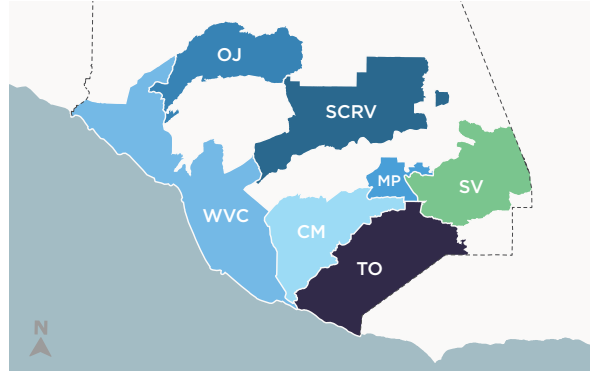
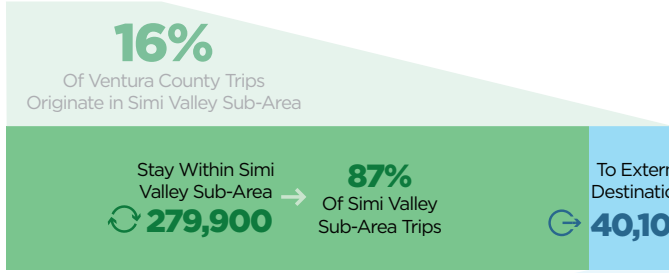
Job density in Simi Valley is highest in the areas surrounding State Route 118 and East Los Angeles Avenue, which run east-west through the community. Most of the census blocks with high job density have at least one transit stop. The job density and distribution of major employers along these corridors illustrates the importance of these routes for trips in Simi Valley. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library is a regional attraction to the southwest of the city.

The City of Simi Valley is oriented in an east-west direction with mountainous terrain to the north and south. Los Angeles Avenue is the primary east-west local street through the entire city, and the road network and built environment forms mostly a grid of neighborhood blocks with more curvilinear roads and lower density housing towards the hills to the south. The areas in Simi Valley with more potential transit riders are typically found along State Route 118 and East Los Angeles Avenue.

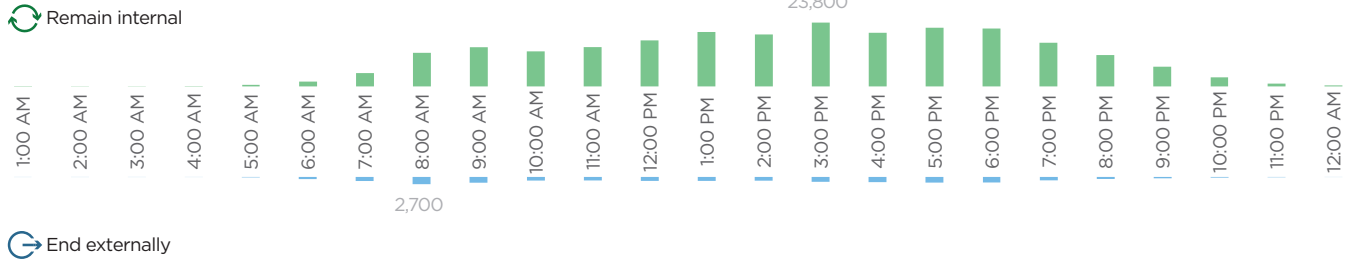
## TRIP DISTRIBUTION

Destinations of Trips from Simi Valley Sub-Area

**320,000**  
Trips Originate  
in Simi Valley Sub-Area

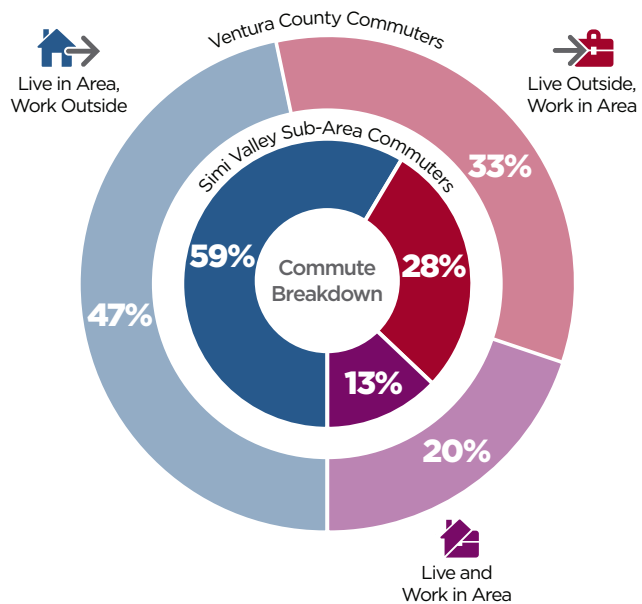
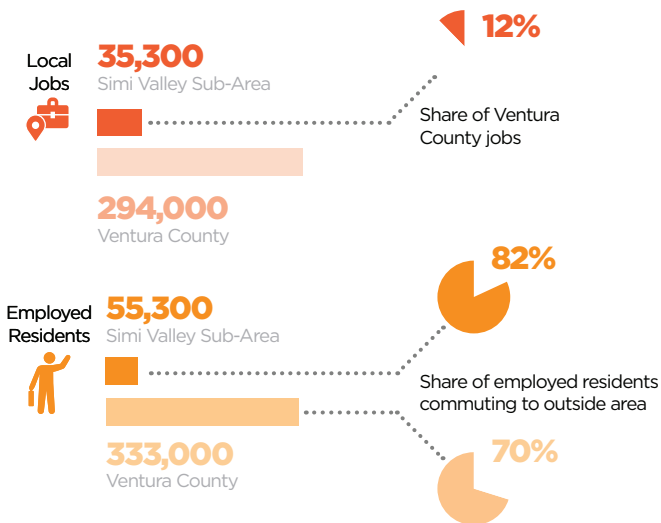


### Time Distribution of Trips From Simi Valley Sub-Area



## JOBS INFLOW/OUTFLOW

Simi Valley Sub-Area Jobs Flow Compared to Ventura County



## Service Evaluation

The City of Simi Valley operates Simi Valley Transit, providing public transit service consisting of three fixed routes and an ADA/senior Dial-a-Ride service.

### SIMI VALLEY TRANSIT: FARES

The City currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

**Table 34: Agency Single-Ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type**

Service Type	Regular	Discounted <sup>1</sup>	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
<b>Fixed-Route</b>	\$1.50	\$0.75	Free	Free	Free
<b>Dial-a-Ride</b>	-	\$2.00	-	-	--

Note:

<sup>1</sup> Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.

Source: Agency websites, 2024.

### SIMI VALLEY TRANSIT: FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

Simi Valley Transit previously operated four routes, which in 2020 were consolidated into three routes: Route 10, Route 20, and Route 30. Route 10 and Route 20 are focused on circulation within city limits, while Route 10 connects destinations within the City to Moorpark College and the Chatsworth Metrolink Station.

#### SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

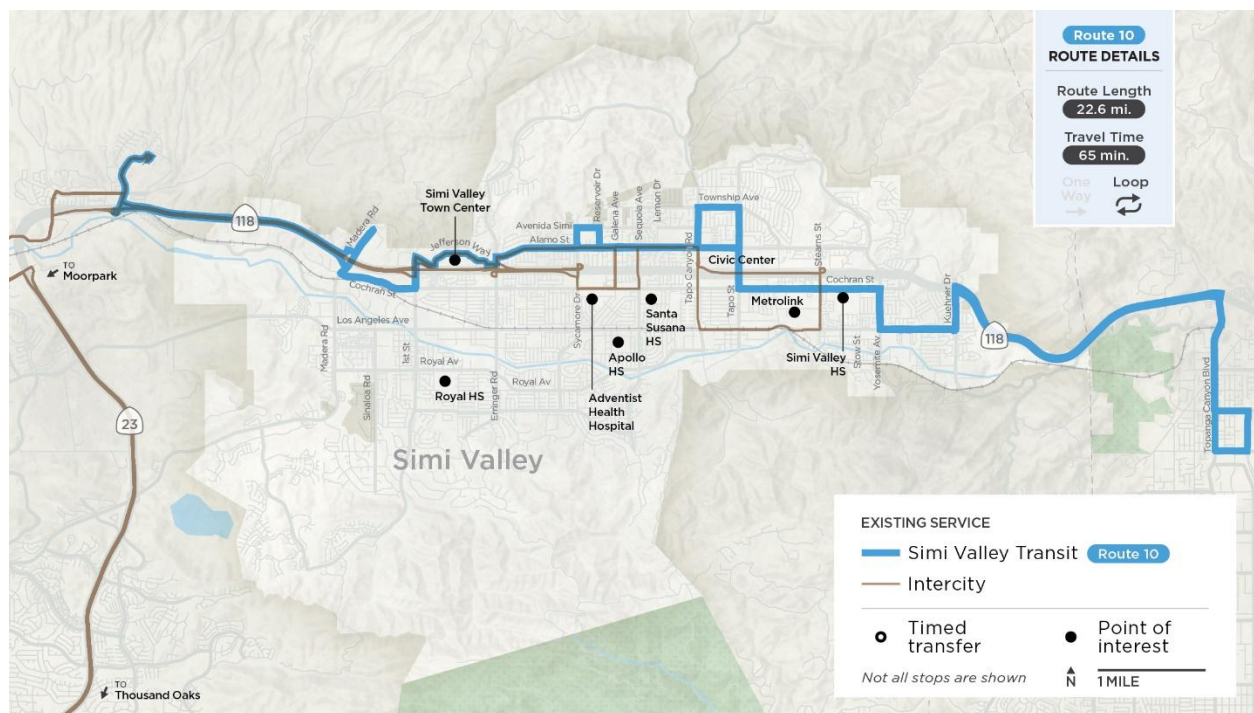
The Simi Valley Transit service span is Monday through Saturday from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., excluding designated holidays. Route 30 runs every 30 minutes on the half hour, while Route 20 and Route 10 have less regular schedules, with Route 20 alternating between 40 minute and 68 minute headways, and Route 10 having irregular headways mostly over an hour. Route 10, which operates from Moorpark College to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station in Los Angeles, has its first trip at 5:00 a.m., while Route 20 and Route 30 begin at 5:30 a.m.

VCTC Intercity's Cross County Limited route supplements Simi Valley Transit service within Simi Valley on weekdays. The Cross County Limited stops at Simi Valley Metrolink Station, Simi Valley Civic Center, Simi Valley Park & Ride, and Simi Town Center. VCTC Intercity's East County routes also serve Simi Valley, but only stop at Simi Town Center and at the Simi Valley Park & Ride on some trips. All of Simi Valley Transit's fixed routes serve the Simi Valley Civic Center, where riders can transfer to the Cross County Limited. Route 10 serves Simi Town Center and Route 30 serves Simi Valley Park & Ride, where riders can transfer to the East County and Cross County Limited routes.

ROUTE 10

Route 10 provides a link between Moorpark College and the Chatsworth Metrolink Station, primarily serving students and commuters. The route operates from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 5:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Saturdays. It travels along key roads such as Cochran Street, Yosemite Avenue, Los Angeles Avenue, and Topanga Canyon Boulevard, covering 35 stops. Other key destinations include the Simi Valley Town Center, Simi Valley Hospital, Simi Valley Civic Center, El Paseo Simi, Tapo Plaza, and Simi Valley High School. In FY23, Route 10 had 121 average daily boardings.

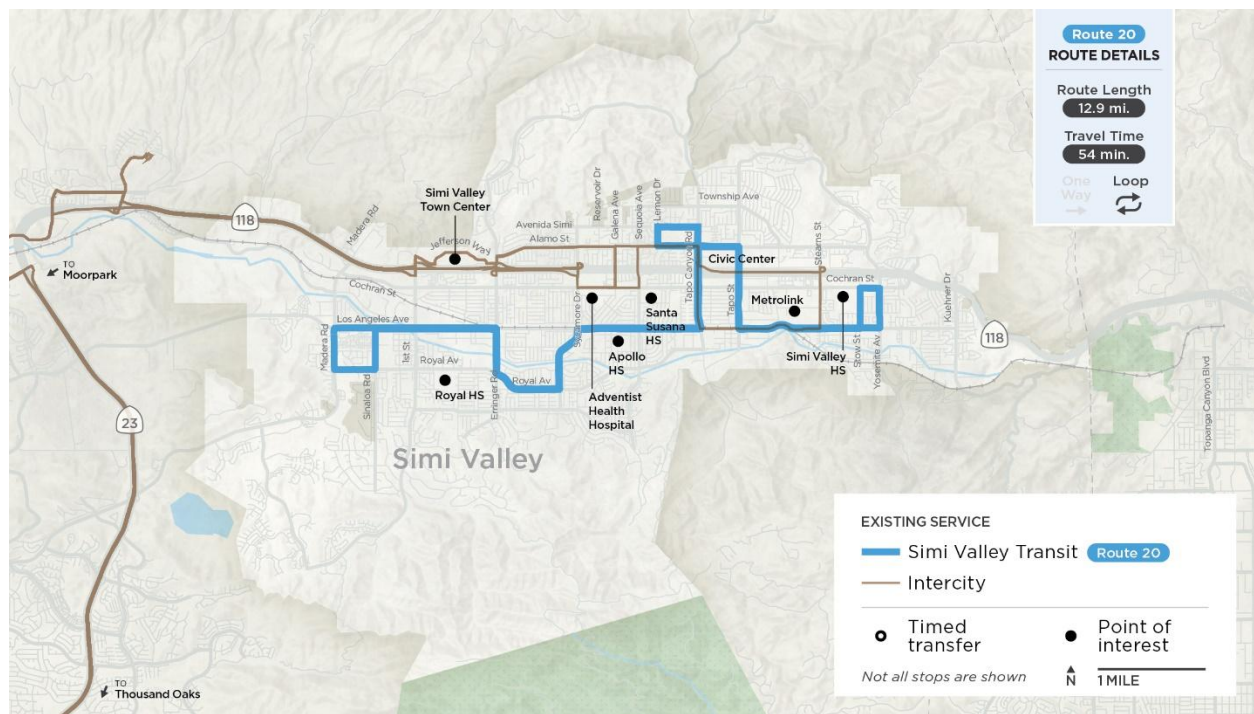
Figure 29: Simi Valley Route 10



ROUTE 20

Route 20 connects residential and commercial areas within Simi Valley, facilitating access to local businesses and community services. The route operates from 5:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays, at intervals ranging from 40 to 68 minutes. It runs primarily along Los Angeles Avenue and Royal Avenue, with 31 stops. Important stops include the Civic Center and Avenida Simi, Alamo Street and Tapo Canyon Road, Tapo Street and Cochran Street, Los Angeles Avenue and Tapo Street, the Simi Valley Metrolink Station, and Madera Road and Los Angeles Avenue. In FY23, Route 20 had 130 average daily boardings, the highest of the three Simi Valley Transit Routes.

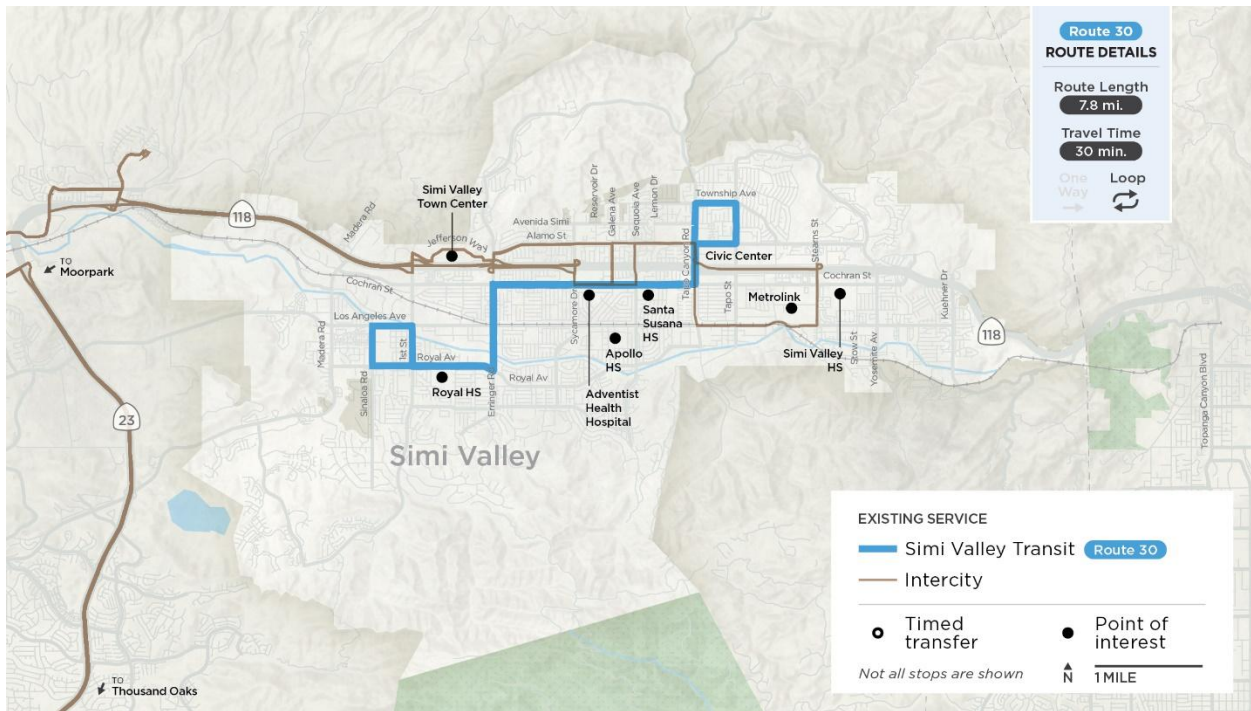
Figure 30: Simi Valley Route 20



ROUTE 30

Route 30 serves essential community and civic locations, ensuring residents have access to critical services and shopping areas. This route follows Cochran Street and Royal Avenue, with 24 stops. Important stops include Cochran Street and Stow Street, Fourth Street on Los Angeles Avenue, Simi Valley Civic Center, Metrolink Simi Valley, Los Angeles Avenue and Sinaloa Road, and Royal Avenue and Sycamore Drive. In FY23, Route 30 had 97 average daily boardings.

Figure 31: Simi Valley Route 30



## *RIDERSHIP*

Over a ten-year period, total annual ridership reached a high of 378,452 in FY15 and a low of 121,642 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in FY21. Simi Valley Transit ridership experienced some growth during FY17 after introducing daily and monthly transit passes. However, ridership continued to decline in the following years. To address this issue, in March 2020, just before the pandemic, the agency implemented service changes aimed at reducing operating costs and increasing ridership and fare revenue. Evaluating the impact of these changes was challenging due to the onset of the pandemic and corresponding steep drop in ridership. The agency also suspended fare collection beginning April 10, 2020, and reinstated it on September 1, 2021. Fixed-route ridership has been trending upwards since the low in FY21, however, FY23 ridership only represented half of pre-pandemic ridership, and only a third of the peak in the last ten years. The reason for inconsistent ridership in the years 2014–2019 is unknown.

While it is not possible to make a direct route-to-route comparison of ridership pre- and post-pandemic, nor compare the effectiveness of the restructured route system, we can note that the system was seeing declining ridership under the old routes and how the ridership shares among the new routes have fluctuated as we emerge from the pandemic.

Route 20 accounts for 37% of total boardings across all routes, with the highest average daily ridership for both weekdays and Saturdays.

## *SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY*

Over the last four years, service productivity decreased at the system level. Passenger trips per revenue hour decreased by 50%. As discussed in the previous section, Simi Valley Transit did not reduce its service levels during or after the pandemic; however, ridership has continued to decrease, leading to a decline in service productivity.

On weekdays, Route 20 is the most productive route in terms of trips per revenue hour. However, during weekends, Route 10 exhibits the highest productivity.

The systemwide average fare per unlinked passenger trip was \$0.75, which represents half of Simi Valley Transit's regular one-way fare. The average fare revenue per trip was higher for Route 10 and lowest for Route 20 in FY23. While Route 20 accounted for 37% of ridership in FY23, it only accounted for 31% of fare revenue. Table 35 summarizes average fare revenue per trip for each route by dividing each route's fare revenue for FY23 by unlinked passenger trips for the same period.

**Table 35: Simi Valley Transit Fare Revenue by Route, FY23**

Route	Farebox Revenue	Average Fare Revenue per Trip (Collected)	Regular One-Way Fare (Price)
<b>Route 10</b>	\$39,041.88	\$1.05	\$1.50
<b>Route 20</b>	\$31,152.06	\$0.78	\$1.50
<b>Route 30</b>	\$29,482.61	\$0.98	\$1.50

Source: Simi Valley Transit, 2024.

### *ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY*

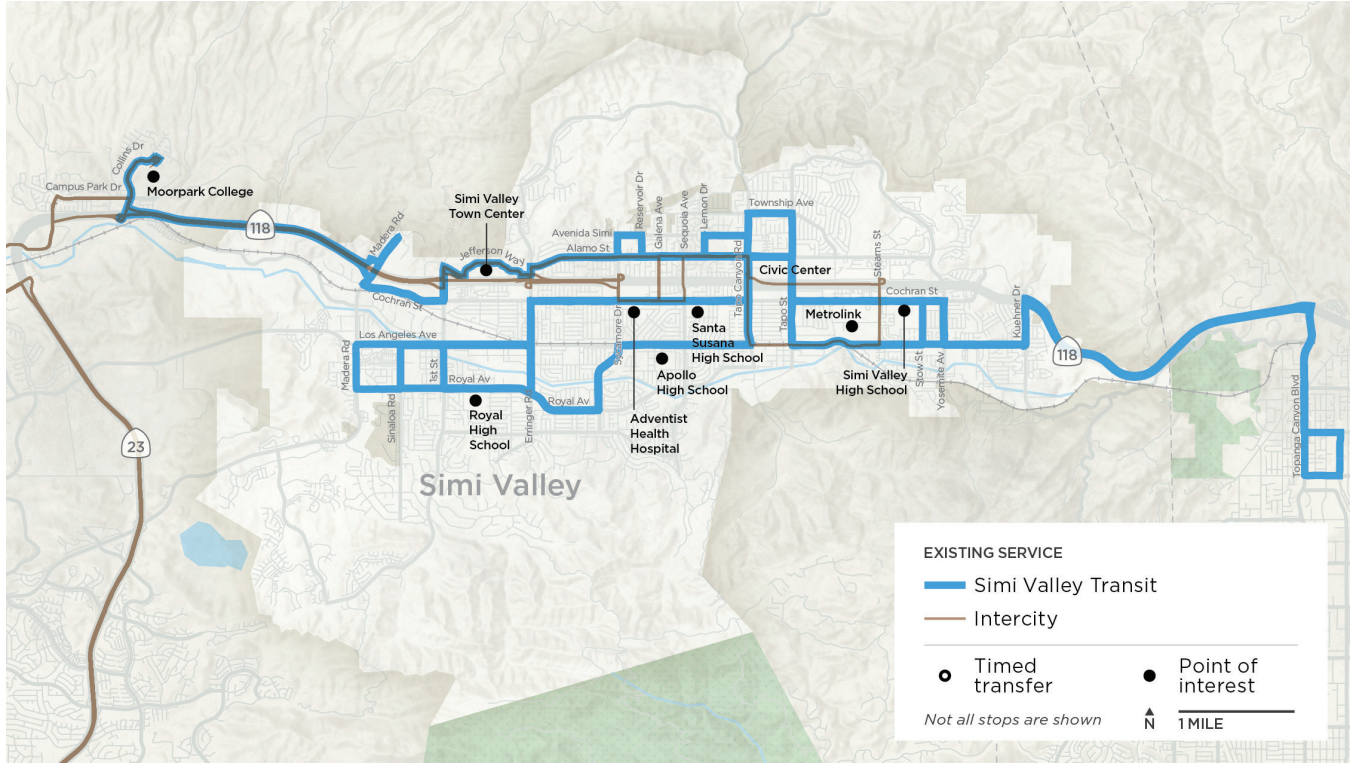
Simi Valley Transit received a total of 155 on-board survey responses. Most respondents to the survey were satisfied with their overall experience of bus service in Simi Valley. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.42 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus operators and the safety on at bus stops. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were bus schedules being readily available and the need to transfer during a journey.

### *EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW*

The City directly operates Simi Valley Transit, one of few cities in the County to do so. Between FY14 and FY23, annual operating costs increased 49% while annual ridership decreased 62%. Operating costs increased despite a 5% decrease in revenue hours during the same period.

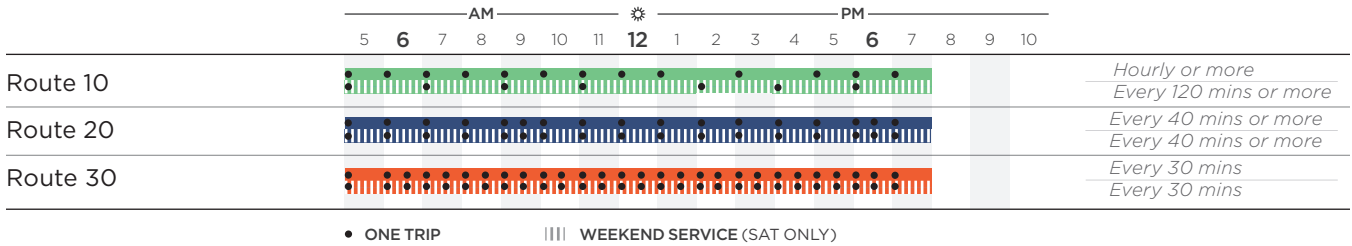
Operating cost per trip more than doubled over the last five years, while operating cost per revenue hour increased by 30%. These trends are in line with those of other operators in the region: declining ridership and increasing operating costs in the face of stable revenue hours. However, based on the data available and consistent with findings from prior analyses such as the Triennial Performance Audits, Simi Valley reports one of the highest operating costs per revenue hour of any transit operation. The reasons for such a high rate are unclear based on observed factors.

## AGENCY ROUTE MAP



## SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

### Service Span

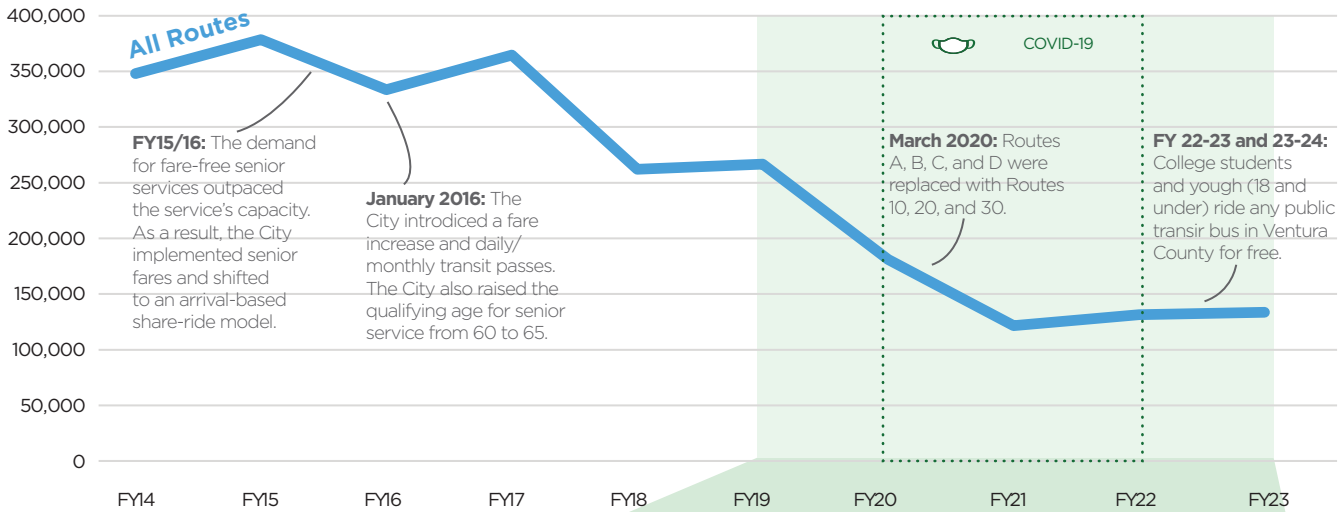


### Route Productivity FY23

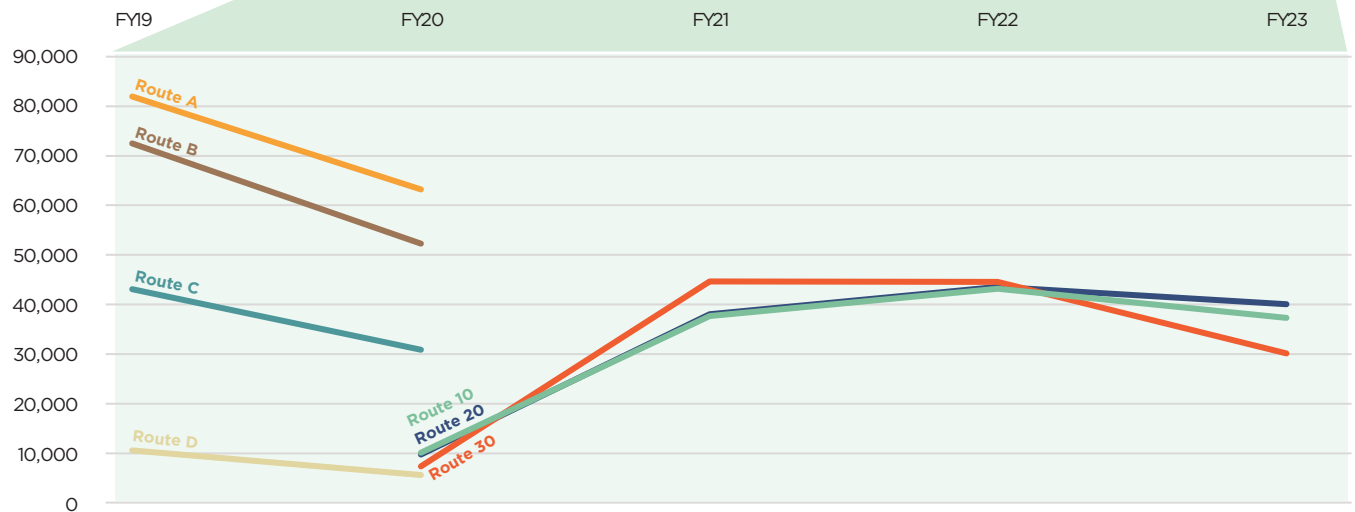
Route	Annual Ridership	Passengers per Revenue Hour			Revenue Hours			Operating Cost per Boarding
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	
Route 10	37,270	4.7	4.1	N/A	8,163	837	N/A	\$46.79
Route 20	40,017	5.6	3.1	N/A	8,192	1,657	N/A	\$47.69
Route 30	30,109	5.5	2.8	N/A	6,773	1,371	N/A	\$52.40

## AGENCY RIDERSHIP

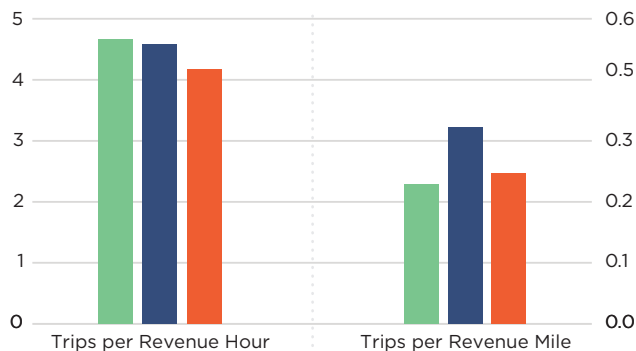
FY14 - FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership



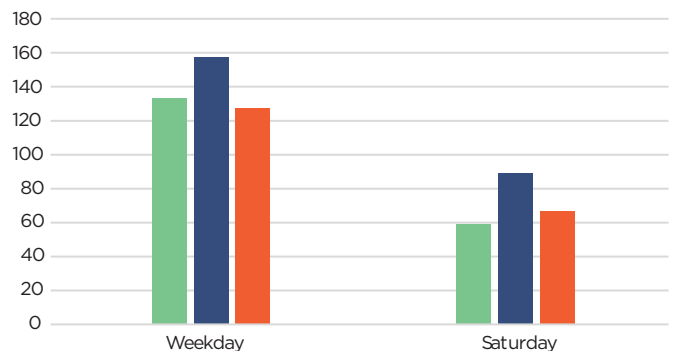
FY19 - FY23 Ridership by Route



FY23 Passenger Trips by Revenue Hour and Revenue Mile



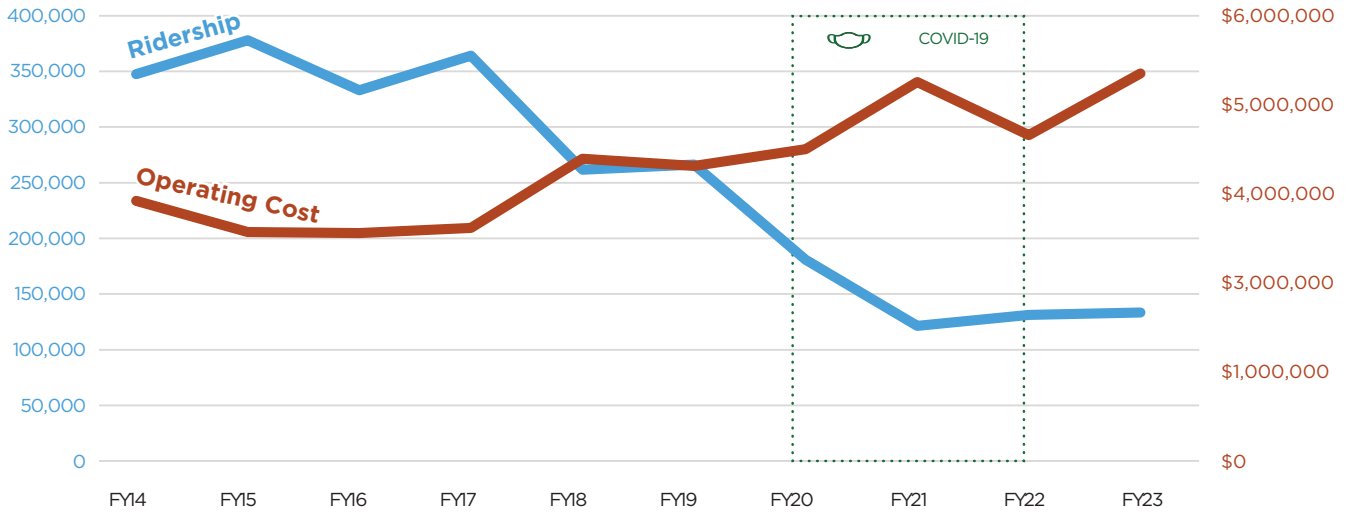
FY23 Average Daily Ridership



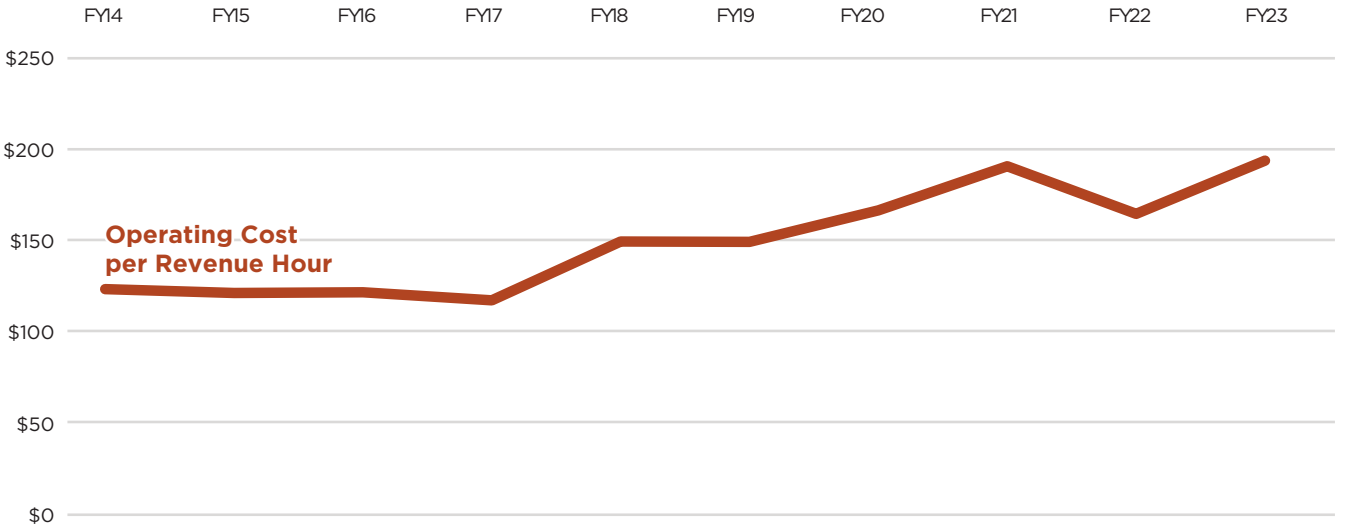
■ Route 10    
 ■ Route 20    
 ■ Route 30

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY14-FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership in Relation to Annual Operating Cost



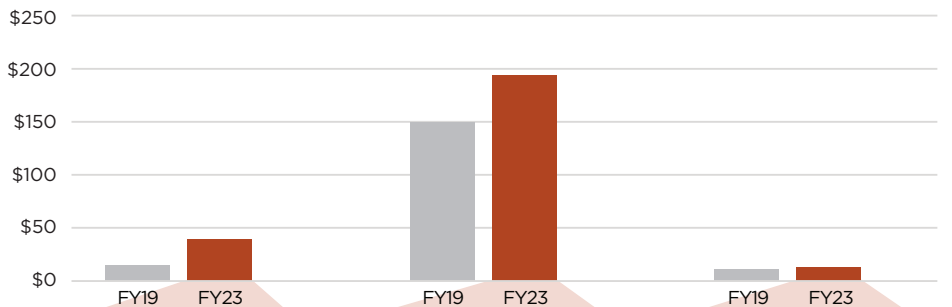
FY14 - FY23 Annual Fixed Route Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



FY19 and FY23 Systemwide Operating Costs

**\$3,983,139**  
FY19 Fixed Route Operating Cost

**\$5,229,922**  
FY23 Fixed Route Operating Cost



FY23 Operating Cost by Route

Route	Operating Cost	Operating Cost per Boarding	Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Operating Cost per Revenue Mile
Route 10	\$1,743,795	\$46.79	\$193.75	\$13.03
Route 20	\$1,908,267	\$47.69	\$193.75	\$13.03
Route 30	\$1,577,860	\$52.40	\$193.75	\$13.03

Note: Operating cost per revenue hour and per revenue mile for each route was estimated based on overall fixed route operating cost, revenue hours, and revenue miles

## SIMI VALLEY TRANSIT: DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICE

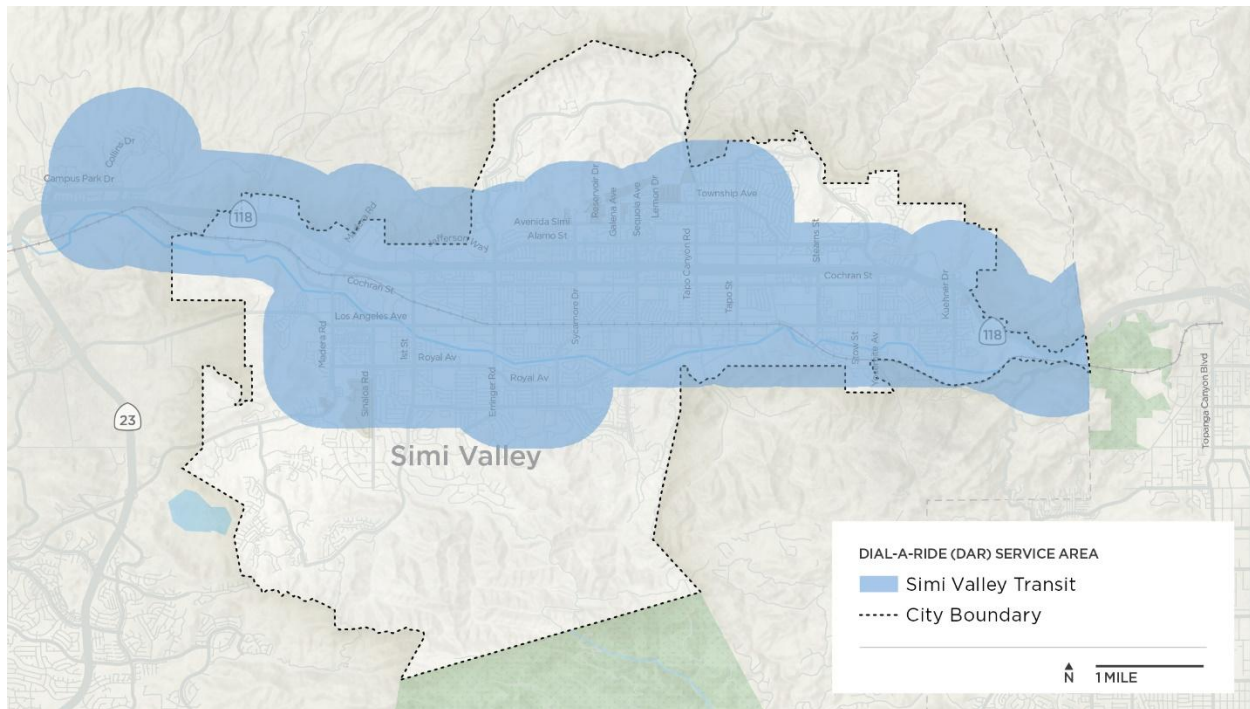
### RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Simi Valley directly operates an ADA complementary paratransit program for persons certified as ADA eligible, as well as those over the age of 65. Figure 32 shows the extent of the service area.



In Summer 2025, they launched Simi Valley Transit On Demand, a pilot program open to the general public offering same-day booking within designated service zones. The analysis in this section was completed before this launch and does not reflect Simi Valley Transit On Demand operations.

**Figure 32: Simi Valley Transit Dial-a-Ride Service Area**



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Simi Valley Transit’s Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 36.

**Table 36: Simi Valley Transit Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics**

Simi Valley Transit Dial-a-Ride	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Passenger Trips</b>	40,651	27,305	20,370	33,238	45,432
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	17,226	13,205	5,790	7,807	8,932
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	159,508	121,557	71,397	104,842	127,077
<b>Operating Cost</b>	\$3,195,938	\$2,773,761	\$1,887,724	\$2,180,872	\$2,359,602
<b>Passengers per Hour</b>	2.4	2.1	3.5	4.3	5.1
<b>Passengers per Mile</b>	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4
<b>Cost per Passengers</b>	\$78.62	\$101.58	\$92.67	\$65.61	\$51.94
<b>Cost per Hour</b>	\$185.53	\$210.05	\$326.03	\$279.35	\$264.17
<b>Cost per Mile</b>	\$20.04	\$22.82	\$26.44	\$20.80	\$18.57

Source: Simi Valley Transit, 2024.

The number of passenger trips has increased to its highest point in five years, having rebounded from a 50% loss of ridership during the pandemic. This increase was achieved while cutting revenue hours in half resulting in the highest productivity measure of all Ventura County demand-response programs at 5.1 passengers per hour. Much of this has been attributed to the migration to Ecolane’s dynamically optimizing scheduling software that aims to maximize shared rides and efficiently deploy vehicles.

Operating costs decreased significantly during the pandemic but have since increased to almost \$2.4 million annually, although still lower than in FY19 and FY20. The increase in ridership and management of operating costs has decreased the cost per passenger to \$52, the lowest point over the past five years. However, the current total operating cost coupled with a reduction in revenue hours equates to the highest cost per hour of all the County’s demand-response programs at almost \$265.

## OPERATIONS TOPICS

Simi Valley is looking to either expand its service area south of the city at 1<sup>st</sup> Street, or address this current gap with public microtransit. Simi Valley can handle current demand, reporting no denials in the system, and no-shows are not a current problem. However, there are some late paratransit pick-ups due to group trips. The migration to Ecolane scheduling software has dramatically improved service efficiency and service quality, but the city would like to further reduce vehicle miles traveled and rider travel times.

There is concern by the city that ECTA intercity trip costs are rising and would like to explore whether Simi Valley could provide those trips at a lower cost.

## RESOURCES

Simi Valley operates its Dial-a-Ride program with a fleet of 12 city-owned paratransit vehicles, running 8 or 9 vehicles in peak service. For the fixed-route and Dial-a-Ride services together, Simi Valley Transit relies on three full-time employees and one part-time employee. They employ 11 paratransit drivers, and one to two supervisors to oversee paratransit operations.

## TRIP SCHEDULING, DISPATCHING AND RIDER NOTIFICATIONS

Trip reservations can be made between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays. Call-takers receive trip requests and schedule directly in the Ecolane scheduling platform. Return trips are scheduled at the time of the initial trip booking where trips can be scheduled up to one week in advance.

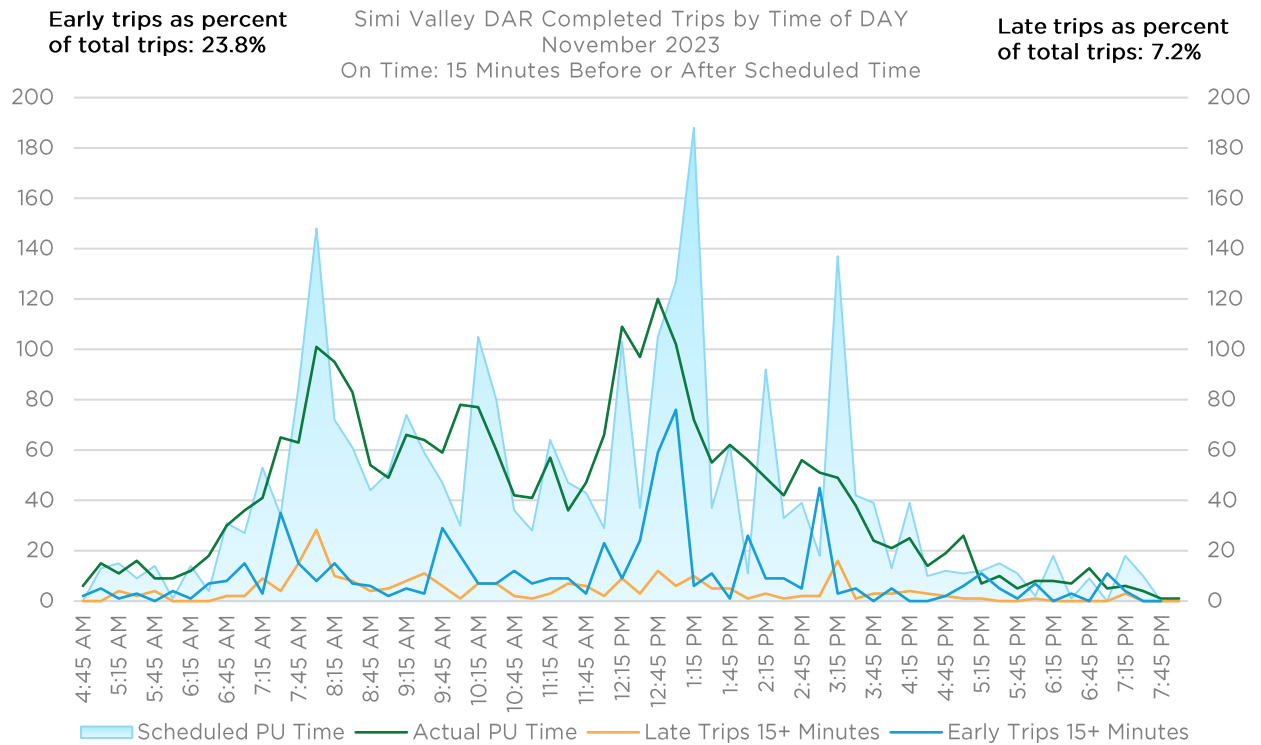
Ecolane sends text message notifications generated by the system with the actual time of pick-up about five minutes prior to the driver's arrival.

## ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is shown in Figure 33. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. The analysis determines on-time performance by calculating the total number of actual pick-up times that fall outside of a 30-minute "on-time" window (from 15 minutes before the scheduled time to 15 after).

As seen in the performance data for Simi Valley, the Ecolane scheduling software effectively optimizes trip delivery, achieving an impressive rate of 5.1 passengers served per hour. However, the analysis of trips served by time of day shows that almost a quarter of all pick-ups are arriving prior to the 30-minute on-time window to manage demand, and 7% of trips are late.

**Figure 33: Simi Valley Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance**



n = 2,569

Source: Simi Valley Transit, 2024.

**MICROTRANSIT**

The City has been interested in exploring microtransit options to reach areas of Simi Valley that are currently underserved by existing transit. The new Simi Valley Transit On Demand service began serving the western portion of the city including the Wood Ranch area in 2025.

## Simi Valley Transit: Gaps and Opportunities

### PEOPLE



#### SENIORS

Existing routes cover much of the community and provide basic access for seniors aligned with the areas of greatest population, while the DAR program is also a well-used and efficiently operated alternative. Simi Valley also delineates the services in price, with the more on-demand DAR program cost of \$2 compared to only 75 cents for seniors to use the fixed-route buses.



#### GENERAL POPULATION

Simi Valley's population and built environment suggest a potential to support more frequent transit service. Considering how much travel activity begins and ends in the city, and how much ridership has declined since its most recent peak ten years ago, the current frequency and service design may simply be insufficient to attract a wider range of riders with a variety of trip purposes.



#### STUDENTS

Routes were redesigned in 2020 to provide more direct service for the high schools and coverage for several middle schools. Like many cities in Ventura County, student ridership is an important market that requires monitoring to ensure trips are aligned to school bells as best as possible.

### PLACES



#### COVERAGE

Much of the City is within walking distance of the routes, and the DAR program generally follows the required  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile radius from the route. The southwest Wood Ranch area is underserved as are other neighborhood areas along the southern and northern edges.



#### WALKABILITY

Because coverage is prioritized, most of the community is currently in walking distance to a route. Due to the size and development pattern of the city, bus stops are sometimes spaced relatively far apart along large and high-speed roads that may be dangerous or uncomfortable to cross.



#### REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The City has a Metrolink station which is not centrally located and not walkable to many homes or businesses, serving more as a Park & Ride. Regional Intercity bus routes make only limited stops at the Civic Center and west end of the City. Transit connectivity to Thousand Oaks is poorer than to Moorpark or Camarillo.

## SERVICE DESIGN



### FIXED-ROUTE DIRECTNESS

Simi Valley Transit routes are relatively direct, mainly turning off corridors to serve major destinations like the Civic Center or schools. However, despite long and straight main roads, the routes are less corridor-based than might be expected because the route network is relatively thin for a community of this size and density. With greater investment in transit, a network of four to six routes could provide more direct straight-line service relying on timed connections on a grid pattern that would benefit riders by providing shorter trips to destinations across town.



### FIXED-ROUTE FREQUENCY

Service frequency varies widely; Route 10 is hourly with some gaps, while Route 20 and 30 are much more frequent but also not consistent with one another. Although the routes are generally timed for transfers at the Civic Center, the unequal frequency between the routes could limit the effectiveness of these connections. Relative to the size and population, an additional route with all routes running consistently timed headways may be more valuable than running three routes according to their base cycle time. For example, Route 30 is the lowest-ridership route despite having the best frequency.



### SPAN

The route network span of service is relatively similar to most Ventura County communities. Based on the travel market analysis, there may be justification to offer service through 8 p.m. (an additional hour) to capture more of the overall trip activity. Simi Valley is a relatively large city, and the travel market data suggest travel volumes at 8:00 p.m. are relatively similar to those at 8:00 a.m.



### Balance of Services

The City has traditionally only offered its DAR program as a complementary paratransit service around fixed routes, which is generally the best balance when transit funds are limited. However, the City plans to implement a microtransit program in 2025.

Microtransit is a great opportunity to extend service coverage to areas that are underserved by fixed-route buses, but care must be taken to avoid the microtransit service overlapping fixed routes, especially when they are already underutilized relative to the population density.

## Simi Valley Transit: Service Recommendations

This section provides recommendations for transit services operated by Simi Valley Transit (SVT), including the design and operation of its fixed route services, the structure of its demand-response program, funding strategies, and capital planning. The SRTP vision for SVT focuses on long-term investment in route frequency, and expanding coverage to provide a more robust fixed-route network.

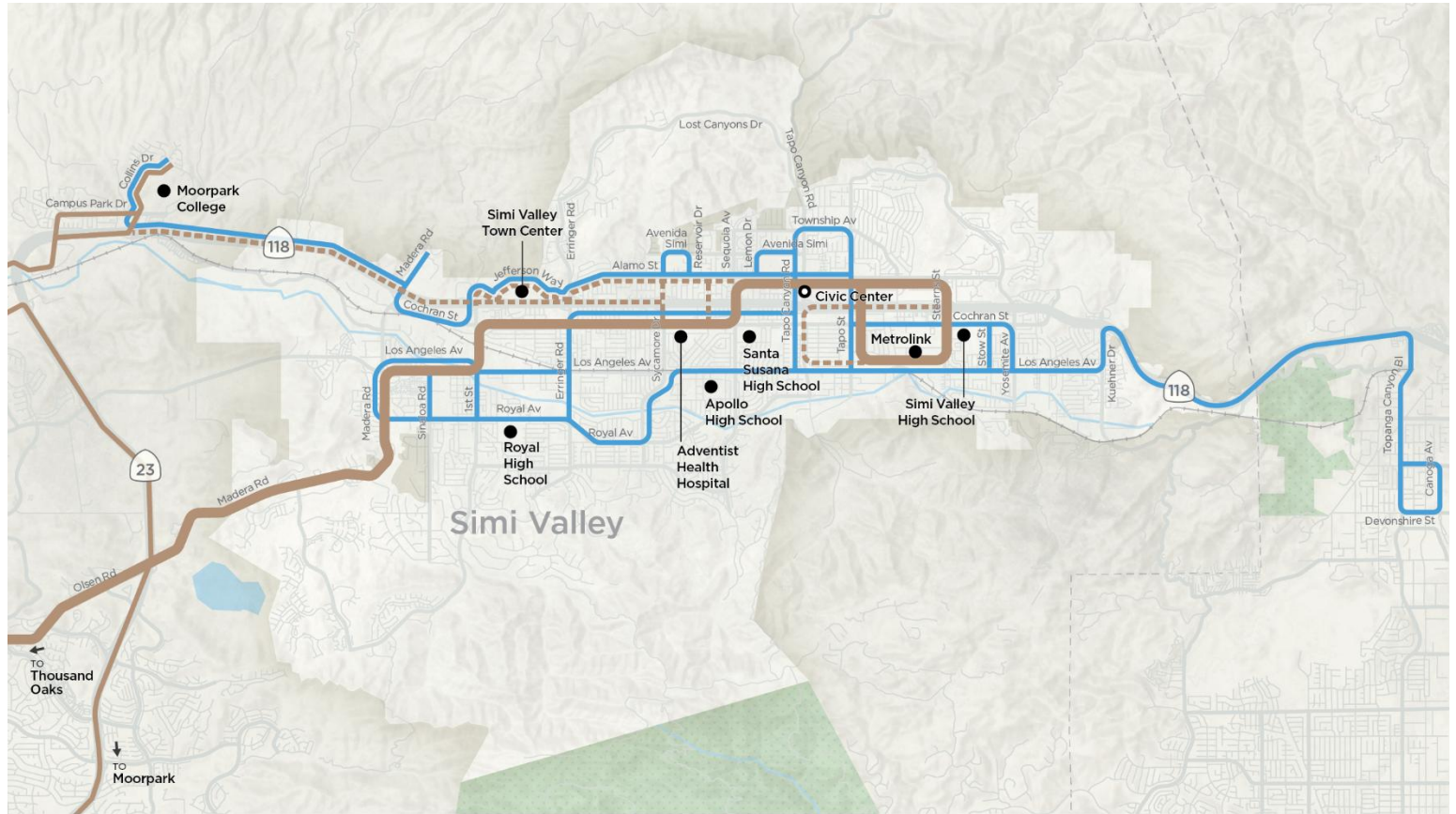
1. Maintain existing Simi Valley routes in the near-term and plan for fare increase
2. Streamline VCTC Intercity service and replace the current East County route with new service direct to Thousand Oaks via Madera Road
3. Monitor planned microtransit service to ensure stability and growth for fixed routes
4. Plan for long-term investment in fixed-route service

### ROUTE CHANGES

This SRTP recommends maintaining Simi Valley's existing route network, which was introduced as a first-phase redesign in 2020 and subsequently disrupted by the pandemic. During discussion for this SRTP, City staff were most interested in allowing more time for the current network to become established, and are introducing a new microtransit service to expand coverage to neighborhood areas unserved or hard to reach by the routes.

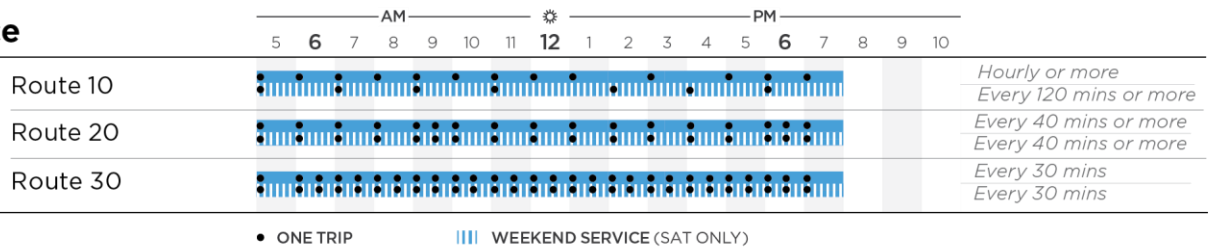
In the near term, investments should focus on closing schedule gaps, and adjusting routes to provide more consistent headways throughout the day. Although the current network ostensibly connects at the Civic Center, only Route 30 operates on a consistent headway throughout the day, limiting the effectiveness of connections between routes. SVT should further refine its current routes to facilitate clock-face, 30-minute headways with a consistent pulse from the Civic Center. The current span of service until approximately 8:00 p.m. is better than some communities, and should be maintained or extended as resources are available.

Figure 34: Simi Valley Transit Routes and Span of Service



### Span of Service

#### Current Routes



## LONG-TERM INVESTMENT

With a population over 125,000 and a mostly grid-based and densely built city, Simi Valley should be able to support a more robust fixed-route network. Current data shows examples of cities of this size (or even smaller) operating more transit service per capita, which attracts higher productivity and ridership. Based on NTD data, cities across the U.S. with a population between 75,000 and 150,000, and a service area comparable to Simi Valley, average 16 vehicles in maximum operation for fixed-route service, compared to Simi Valley's six vehicles. Similar cities operate an average of 50,000 vehicle revenue hours a year, compared with Simi Valley's 42,000 hours in 2023. While some of the highest-performing examples in this category include communities with major state universities, there are several examples without such a large market (including Santa Maria, Porterville, and Monterey-Salinas Transit in California) that still offer a higher degree of investment per capita, and in turn have higher productivity and overall ridership.

Investing in expanded routes is the best action to attract significant and sustained ridership to all routes. With only three routes, significant areas of the city will remain underserved. The core area of the city is reasonably uniform in density, and land uses are very segregated. This means any bus routes must travel relatively long distances through neighborhood areas before reaching any other kind of destination—shopping centers, medical centers, job centers, schools, etc. The existing three bus routes must necessarily wind and loop their way through the city, resulting in disproportionately long travel times on transit.

With a greater investment in expanded routes and frequency, Simi Valley's road network should support a small grid-based network that provides more linear service along major arterials, with connections at major intersections. Such a design would provide more direct trips for riders, whether they are trying to reach the nearest grocery store or get across town. In contrast, the current hub-and-spoke system with multiple loops requires riders to travel to the Civic Center to reach an area served by a different route, even if the Civic Center is not really on the way to their final destination.

The SRTP envisions a long-term conceptual network of six routes::

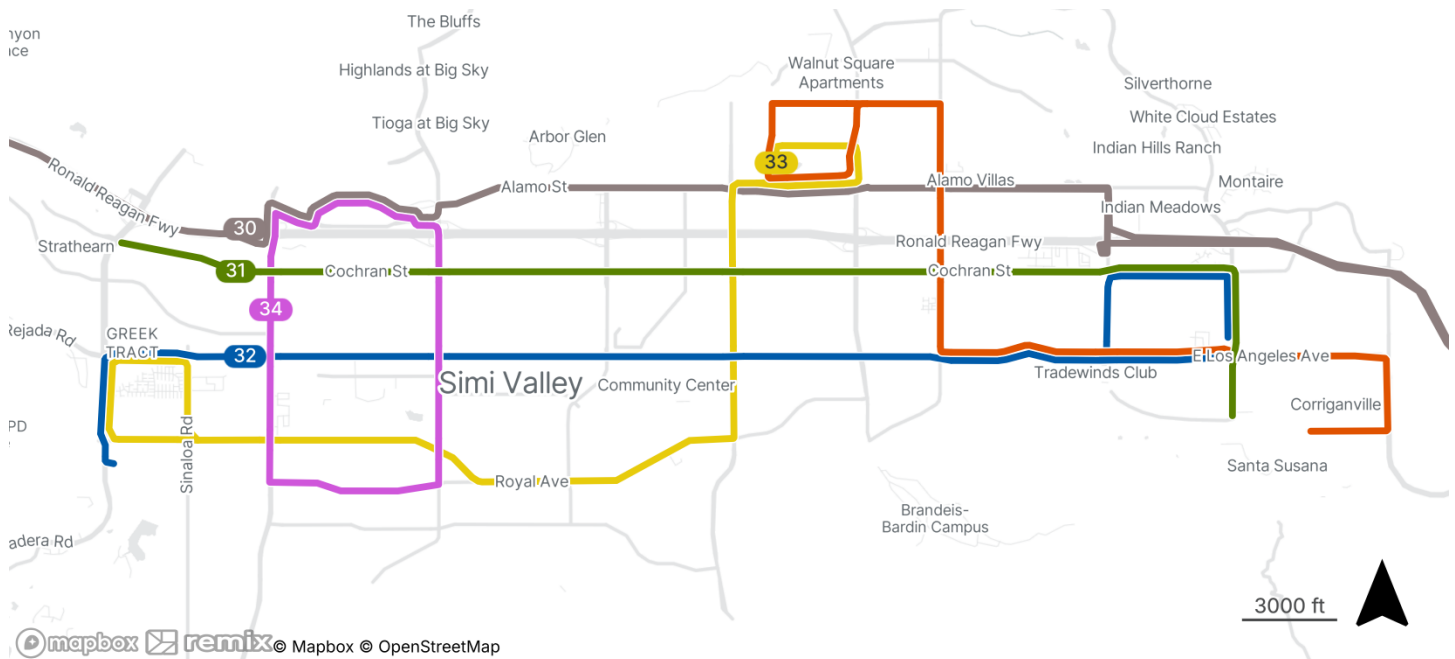
1. **Proposed Route 30** East-west route between Moorpark College, Simi Valley via Alamo Street, and Chatsworth on 60-minute headways
2. **Proposed Route 31** East-west route on Cochran Street on 30-minute headways
3. **Proposed Route 32** East-west route on Los Angeles Avenue on 30-minute headways
4. **Proposed Route 33** East-west route on Royal Avenue and Sequoia Avenue to the Civic Center on 30-minute headways
5. **Proposed Route 34** North-south loop on the west end on First Street and Erringer Road on 30-minute headways

- 6. **Proposed Route 35** East end route serving the southeast corner (Katherine/Kuehner) to the Civic Center via the Metrolink Station and Tapo Street on 30-minute headways

A network like this would significantly streamline trips for riders, with each line connecting to multiple grocery stores and schools, while maintaining connections outside of the city to the east and west. The network would create a grid, offering connecting opportunities that don't rely on all transfers occurring at the Civic Center, while still providing several routes to that area.

Operating this network would require approximately 10-12 conventional buses for the proposed headways. While operating with fewer buses and longer headways would significantly reduce the operating cost, that would significantly limit connecting opportunities between routes and therefore severely hamper the effectiveness of such a network.

**Figure 35 Long Term Simi Valley Transit Concept**



**Table 37: Overview of Proposed Changes to Transit Service in Simi Valley**

Key Changes	Benefits	Considerations
<b><i>Improve frequency of Routes 10 and 20 to operate consistent headways of 30 minutes each</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accomplishes goal set in City's 2019 SRTP</li> <li>- Provides better connectivity between routes</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Long Term: Invest in significant expansion of fixed routes to create an arterial-based network with half-hourly headways</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expands route coverage to consistently cover the dense core of the city</li> <li>- Straightens routes for more direct service along major roads</li> <li>- Provides predictable connections for changing routes without traveling significantly out of direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would incur significant financial investment, additional vehicles and staff</li> <li>- Could reduce the need for microtransit in the long term</li> <li>- Will require new bus stop infrastructure at many locations</li> </ul>

## PROPOSED FARES AND POLICY CHANGES

The proposed fare system for Simi Valley Transit would include an initial base increase to \$2.00 and introduce a tiered zone system for the general public microtransit service. A Phase 2 fare change proposes further increasing the price for the microtransit service when both ends of the requested trip overlap with the fixed-route service. This second phase change would ideally be in conjunction with increased fixed-route frequency. Currently, only some areas of the city are served by fixed routes operating every 30 minutes. If Route 20 is increased to every 30 minutes and schedule gaps are reduced, this may be an opportunity to implement the Phase 2 pricing. See the section on performance standards and monitoring for more implementation guidance.

**Table 38: Proposed Fare Changes, Phase 1 & 2**

	Bus Routes Current	Dial-A-Ride Current	Routes Proposed Phase 1	Dial-A-Ride Proposed Phase 1	Routes Proposed Phase 2	Dial-A-Ride Proposed Phase 2
Base Fare	\$1.50	ADA/Senior Only	\$2.00	General public microtransit: \$4.00 for trip with one end outside of the route area.  \$5.00 for general public trip with both ends near a route.	\$2.00	General public microtransit: \$4.00 for trip with one end outside of the route area.  \$6.00 for general public trip with both ends near a route.
Senior (65+) and People with Disabilities (ADA)	\$0.75	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$3.00	\$1.00	\$3.00

### OTHER PROGRAM CHANGES

Simi Valley should modernize the design of its published schedule, maps, and other promotional and informational materials. The current route maps are difficult to interpret and could use a better design to show clearly the route, geographic reference points that help orient the reader, and opportunities to connect to other routes in the network.

### Balancing Microtransit and Fixed-Route Service

There are many areas of the city that are difficult to serve with fixed routes. Some neighborhoods are well into the hills, with winding roads and long distances to travel to other destinations. Most residential developments are effectively walled-in or gated communities, which limit opportunities to walk to the nearest major street corner bus stop.

Microtransit is a good option to expand coverage to a much larger area, where density is lower and the street grid is not prevalent.

City staff should continue to maintain the current design of the microtransit program to focus the service area in parts of the city that do not have and may not support a strong route network, and to price the service above the fixed route base fare.

### SERVICE CHANGES FOR OTHER OPERATORS IN SIMI VALLEY

Simi Valley Transit and VCTC routes to Moorpark currently have significant route overlap, although the Intercity routes do not serve most local stops. In consideration of SVT's intention to continue operating its Route 10 service between Moorpark College and Simi Valley, the opportunity to streamline overlapping Intercity service can be reinvested elsewhere. Connecting service between Simi Valley and Moorpark will remain, and long-distance service remains through Metrolink and Surfliner trains. Refer to the VCTC Intercity section for detail.

- Elimination of Cross County Limited (Route 77) service east of Moorpark College (no service in Simi Valley).
- East County (Route 70-74) service discontinued.
- New East County Route (Simi Valley/Thousand Oaks/Camarillo) which extends direct connection between Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, adding limited-stop service along Madera Road and through Thousand Oaks on Moorpark Road.
- New East County Route which adds limited stop coverage on Cochran Avenue for some local service in Simi Valley.

## SUMMARY AND BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The short-term plan for Simi Valley is to maintain the existing SVT routes and rely on streamlining and new VCTC Intercity routes to improve ridership. Ridership between Moorpark and Simi Valley will shift to Route 10, where some riders previously would have ridden VCTC Cross County Limited. The redesigned Intercity East County service will offer new connections for local service. In 2025, SVT launched a microtransit service to expand its coverage area to address an underserved portion of the city.

SVT should consider a brand refresh and updated informational materials.

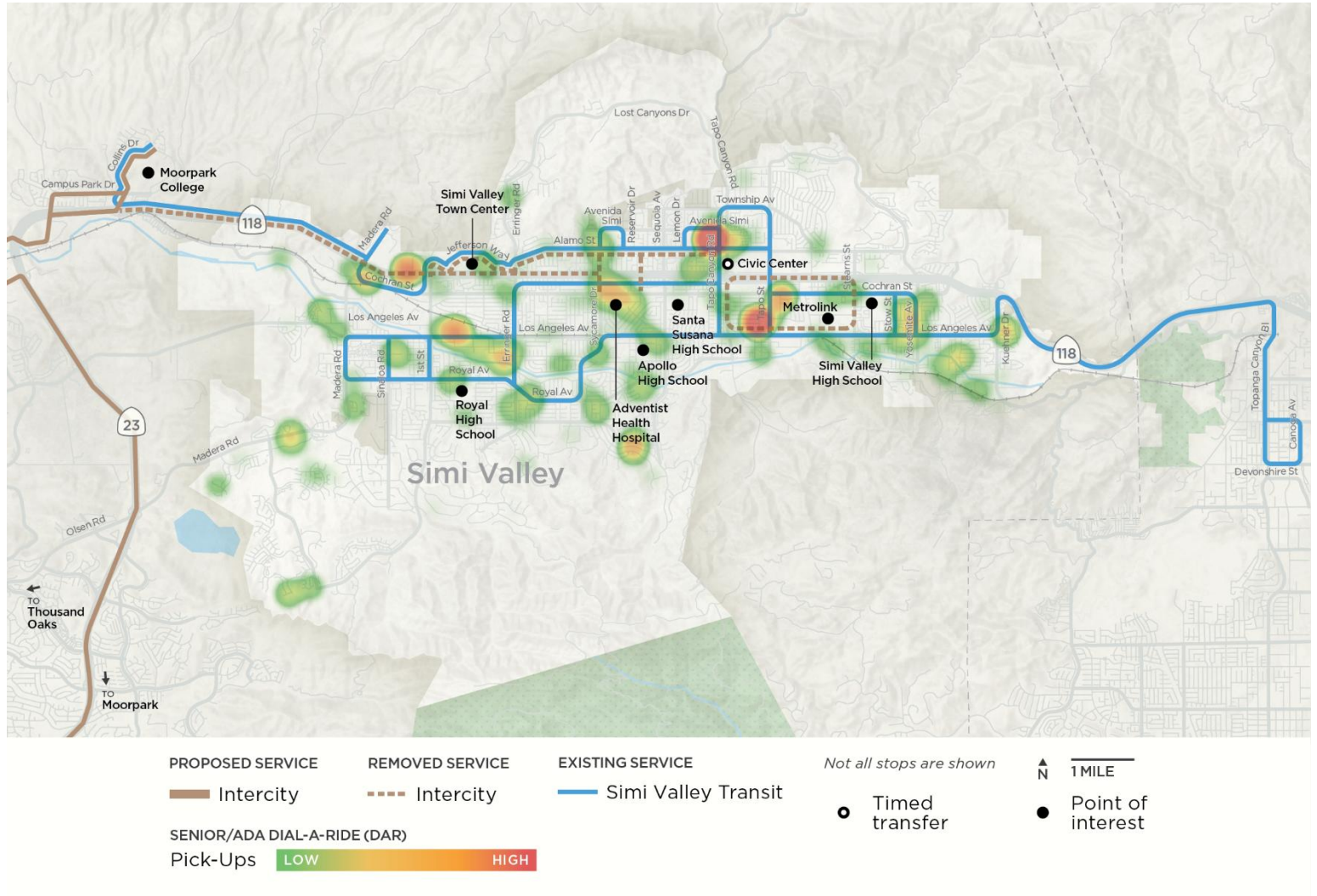
Long-term investment in transit should address these gaps and opportunities:

- Need for clockface schedules on existing routes
- Need for consistent frequency between existing routes to form a connected network
- Development of a more robust fixed-route network commensurate with the core city area, which would serve over 70,000 people and many jobs
- More linear service that relies on frequency and transfers to serve many destinations efficiently, and offers more direct service along major streets, rather than relying on a few limited routes to circuitously serve many destinations

The proposed Long-Term concept is a significant investment compared to the service offered today. While Simi Valley is a heavily auto-oriented community, there are examples elsewhere in California of cities with a comparable built environment that offer a much more robust transit network and achieve far higher ridership, countering the argument that the current ridership is not sufficient to justify greater investment.

The market analysis found that Simi Valley has one of the highest proportions of travel that stays within the sub-area at 87%, with nearly 280,000 daily trips beginning and ending in the city and surrounding area. This represents an enormous opportunity to enhance non-automotive mobility.

Figure 36: Simi Valley Transit Senior/ADA Dial-A-Ride Trip Origins



## Financial Analysis of Recommendations

Using the current estimated cost per revenue hour for SVT, the long-term concept with six routes is estimated to cost between \$10 and \$12 million annually, including weekend service. The long-term concept is intended to function more as a grid that would require all of the routes to be in place at the intended 30-minute headways for effectiveness, because riders may need to rely on transfers depending on their destination.

Route	Population	Jobs	Proposed Weekday Headways (minutes)	Max. Buses	Total Annual Revenue Hours	Total Annual Estimated Cost (millions)
30 Moorpark College to Chatsworth via Alamo	16,800	4,800	60	3	9,400	\$1.99
31 Cochran	19,100	6,000	30	2	9,400	\$1.99
32 Los Angeles	23,000	7,900	30	2	9,400	\$1.99
33 Royal/Sequoia	18,100	3,100	30	2	8,300	\$1.78
34 1st and Erringer Loop	5,900	1,400	30	1	4,800	\$1.10
35 Civic Center-Metrolink	20,400	4,600	30	2	9,400	\$1.99
<b>Total</b>				<b>12</b>	<b>50,700</b>	<b>\$10.85M</b>

A fixed route network at this level would be expected to attract significantly more ridership in total and on a passengers per revenue hour basis. Based on NTD Monthly reported data available as of June 2025, some examples in California to guide expected outcomes include WestCat (Western Contra Costa), San Luis Obispo, Santa Rosa, and Solano County.

Although conditions and circumstances for each of these agencies vary in many ways from Simi Valley, they each represent agencies operating between about 30,000 and 70,000 annual revenue hours and are achieving at least 9 passengers per revenue hour or higher (in some cases in the high teens to low 20s). WestCat and Santa Rosa are similar in terms of the character of the residential development and built environment as well as the size of service area. WestCat carried approximately 501,000 passenger trips with about 56,000 annual revenue hours. Santa Rosa served over 1.4 million passenger trips with approximately 74,000 annual revenue hours.

At 9 passengers per revenue hour with this conceptual fixed route network, Simi Valley Transit would serve over 456,000 annual boardings, significantly higher than any prior year at least back to 2014. With a grid operating every 30 minutes as proposed, achieving 13

passengers per revenue hour is a reasonable expectation, which would result in approximately 659,000 annual boardings.

## FARE AND RIDERSHIP ANALYSIS FOR FIXED ROUTES

The fare analysis below for SVT compares near-term outcomes anticipated from the Phase 2 fare increase to a \$2.00 base fare and implementation of fare capping. As shown, fixed route ridership should be expected to decrease slightly in response to a fare increase with no service improvements.

Additionally, a revenue estimate is provided using the same factors for the long-term concept of a high-investment transit system.

	Ridership	Passengers/RSH	Fare Revenue
Existing (FY23)	131,295	5.5	\$99,677
<b>Near-Term, No Change</b>	<b>126,574</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>\$115,000</b>
<b>Near-Term (High Perf. Outcome)</b>	<b>311,562</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>\$271,000</b>
<b>Long-Term (High Perf. Outcome)</b>	<b>659,100</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>\$573,000</b>

## Capital Plan

In the near-term, no major changes are expected for SVT. Most of SVT's capital needs over the next 10 years are expected to support the transition to a fully zero-emission fleet, which must be completed by 2040 to comply with California Air Resource Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation.

Implementation of the Long-Term concept would require an investment in additional fleet vehicles and potentially stop upgrades where service is being extended to new streets. A detailed capital plan for the Long-Term concept is not provided given the high level of the concept and no identified funding for operation. The Long-Term concept is not expected to be implemented within the timeframe of this SRTP, although the hope is to put the plan in motion over the next ten years.

## FLEET AND FACILITIES

According to the SVT Zero Emission Bus Rollout Plan (2023), SVT has a fleet of 11 fixed route buses and 12 paratransit cutaway buses, all of which use CNG fuel.<sup>15</sup> SVT expects to maintain a similar fleet size once it transitions to a 100% zero emission fleet. The ZEB transition was anticipated to begin with procurements in 2024 and spread out across multiple orders through 2034 to achieve the complete transition. The ZEB Rollout Plan anticipated upgrades to the City's existing maintenance facility for charging.

A detailed ZEB operating analysis for the Long-Term concept would be required after refining and validating the routes.

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<sup>15</sup> City of Simi Valley, "Simi Valley Zero Emission Bus Rollout Plan." 2023.

# 12. THOUSAND OAKS



## Market Assessment

The Thousand Oaks sub-area (see Figure 1) is the second largest sub-area in Ventura County in terms of population and jobs, after the West Ventura County sub-area. It has a population of approximately 148,000 and is home to about 62,000 jobs. The Thousand Oaks sub-area has a lower percentage of low-income households and car-light households than the County average, and it has higher incomes than the rest of the sub-areas, with a median income \$38,000 above the county's.

Thousand Oaks is located in southeastern Ventura County and is bordered by Los Angeles County to the south and east, the City of Moorpark to the north, and the City of Camarillo to the west. Thousand Oaks is separated from Camarillo by mountainous open space and the Conejo Grade. However, the City is relatively contiguous to Oak Park (County of Ventura), Westlake Village, and Agoura Hills (LA County) to the east.

**Table 39: Thousand Oaks Sub-Area Demographics**

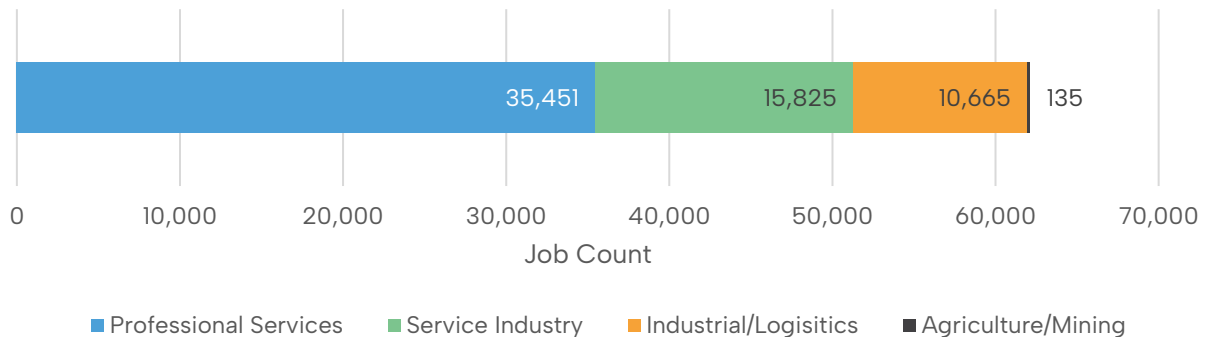
	Thousand Oaks Sub-Area	Percent Share	
	Count	Thousand Oaks Sub-Area	Ventura County
<b>Residential population</b>	148,477	-	-
<b>Senior citizens (ages 65+)</b>	28,289	19%	16%
<b>Youth (ages 10-17)</b>	15,811	11%	11%
<b>Low-income individuals<sup>1</sup></b>	9,212	6%	9%
<b>Households</b>	53,784	-	-
<b>Car-light households<sup>2</sup></b>	6,516	12%	15%
<b>Jobs</b>	62,076	-	-
	Thousand Oaks Sub-Area	Ventura County	
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$132,578	\$94,167	

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Denominator of the percent share statistics is persons in housing units.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

**Figure 37: Thousand Oaks Sub-Area Jobs by Industry**

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

This sub-area accounts for 37% of all Ventura County jobs outside the West Ventura County sub-area. About 41,000 people live in Thousand Oaks and commute elsewhere for work, while about 42,000 employees work in Thousand Oaks but live elsewhere. This sub-area is the second biggest attractor of jobs from other communities in Ventura County. Inflow-outflow numbers indicate significant traffic coming to and from Thousand Oaks for work.

Job density in Thousand Oaks is highest in the areas surrounding US-101 and State Route 23, which run east-west and north-south through the community. Most of Thousand Oak's top employers are located along these two major routes. However, there is also significant employment traffic associated with California Lutheran University, which is to the north and relatively far from either highway.

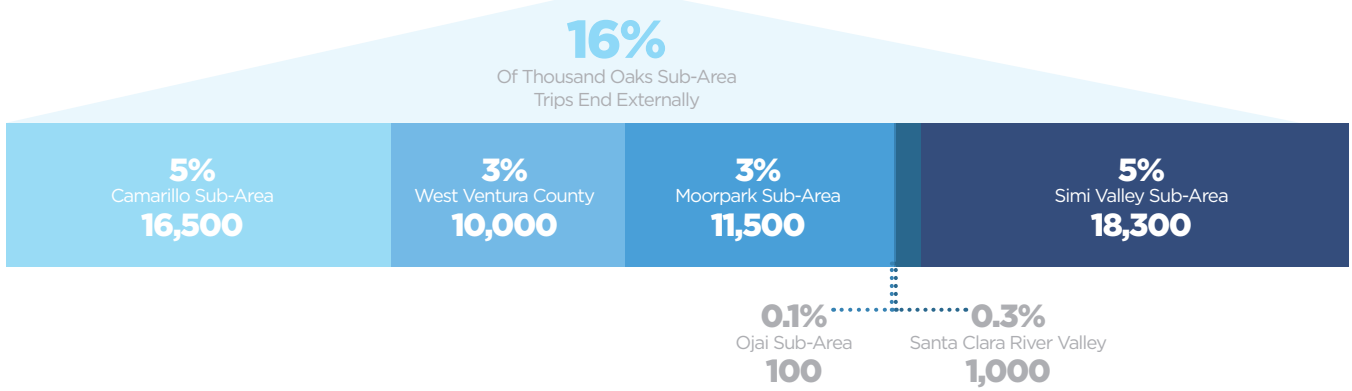
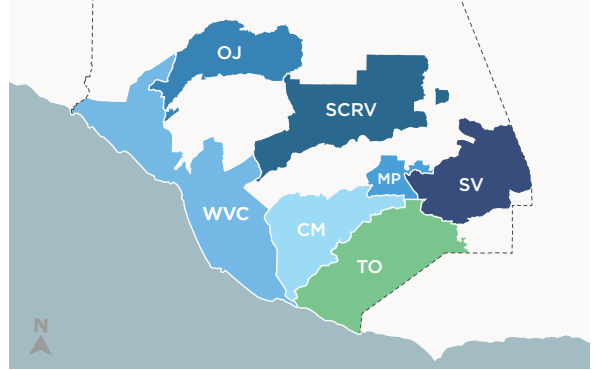
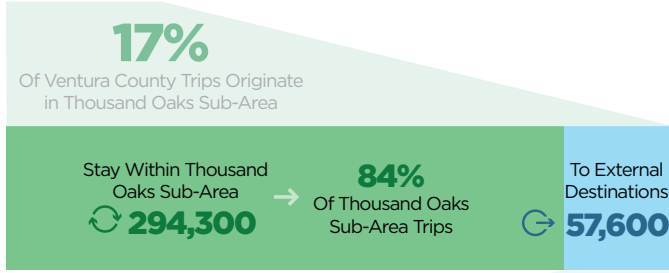
Despite the job inflow/outflow, about 84% of all vehicle trips in the Thousand Oaks sub-area begin and end within the community. Other common destinations from the sub-area are the Simi Valley and Camarillo sub-areas with five percent of trips each. The size of the developed area and its significant amount of commerce and services account for the high proportion of local travel.

US Highway 101 connects Thousand Oaks to Los Angeles County and Camarillo. California State Route 23 connects the community with Moorpark and continues south from Westlake Village towards Malibu. VCTC Intercity routes connect to the greater region. There is no Metrolink station in Thousand Oaks, but both LA Metro and LADOT operate transit service from Los Angeles to the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center.

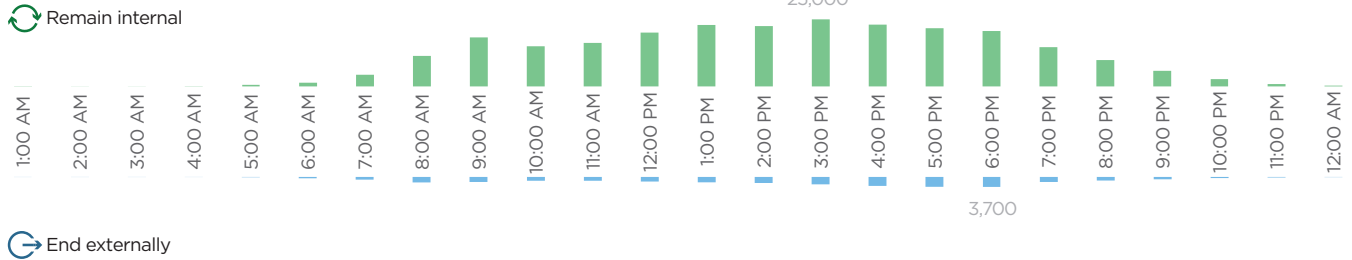
## TRIP DISTRIBUTION

Destinations of Trips from Thousand Oaks Sub-Area

**351,900**  
Trips Originate in  
Thousand Oaks Sub-Area

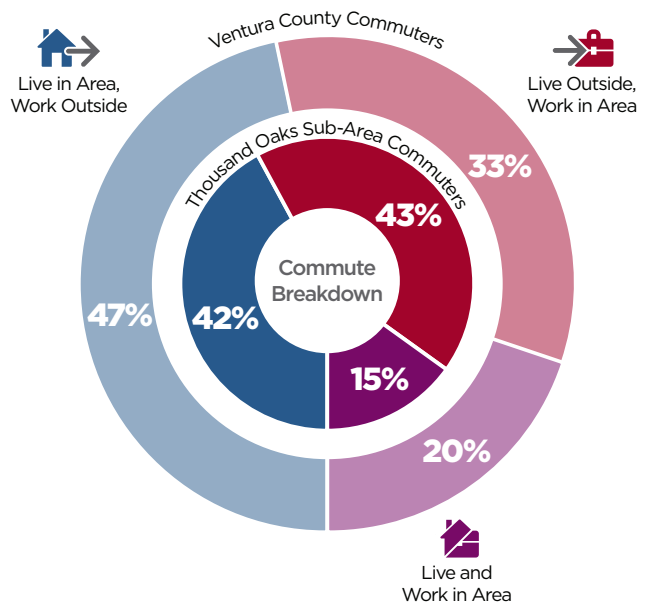
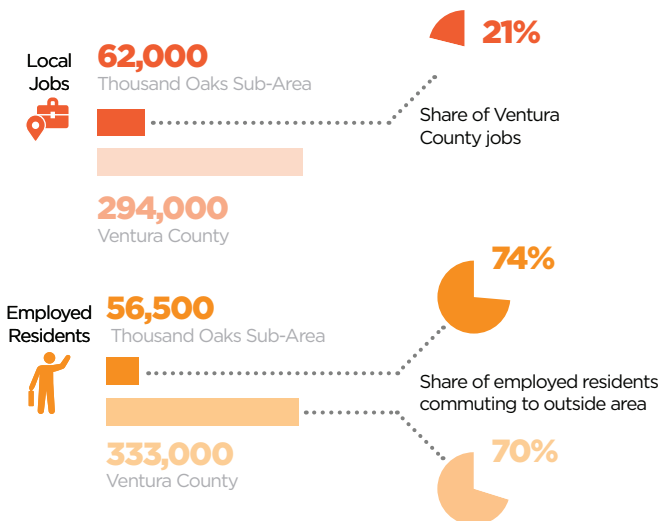


## Time Distribution of Trips From Thousand Oaks Sub-Area



## JOBS INFLOW/OUTFLOW

Thousand Oaks Sub-Area Jobs Flow Compared to Ventura County



## Service Evaluation

The Thousand Oaks Transit service comprises fixed routes, ADA paratransit, and dial-a-ride service. Thousand Oaks Transit also administers or operates other services under contract, including the Kanan Shuttle, some of Moorpark City Transit, and the ECTA DAR program.

### THOUSAND OAKS TRANSIT: FARES

The City currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

**Table 40: Agency Single-Ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type**

Service Type	Regular	Discounted <sup>1</sup>	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
<b>Fixed-Route</b>	\$2.00	\$0.50	Free	Free	Free
<b>Dial-a-Ride</b>	-	\$4.00	-	-	-

Note:

<sup>1</sup> Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.

Source: Agency websites, 2024.

### THOUSAND OAKS TRANSIT: FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

The City of Thousand Oaks Transit fixed-route bus service covers 80 percent of the City and consists of five bus routes and one seasonal beach bus route to Zuma Beach and Ventura Harbor. The City contracts with MV Transportation to operate their fixed-route service.

#### SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

Thousand Oaks Transit's fixed-route bus service operates from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The network of bus routes pulses approximately hourly throughout the day, with some additional early-morning trips that operate on weekdays only.

The fixed-route network is structured as a combination of loop and linear routes, prioritizing coverage and allowing for easy transfers at key hubs. The service provides access to major residential neighborhoods, business centers, shopping districts, and educational institutions within Thousand Oaks. Key routes also extend into nearby areas, such as Westlake Village and unincorporated sections of Ventura County, expanding accessibility for riders traveling between Thousand Oaks and neighboring communities.



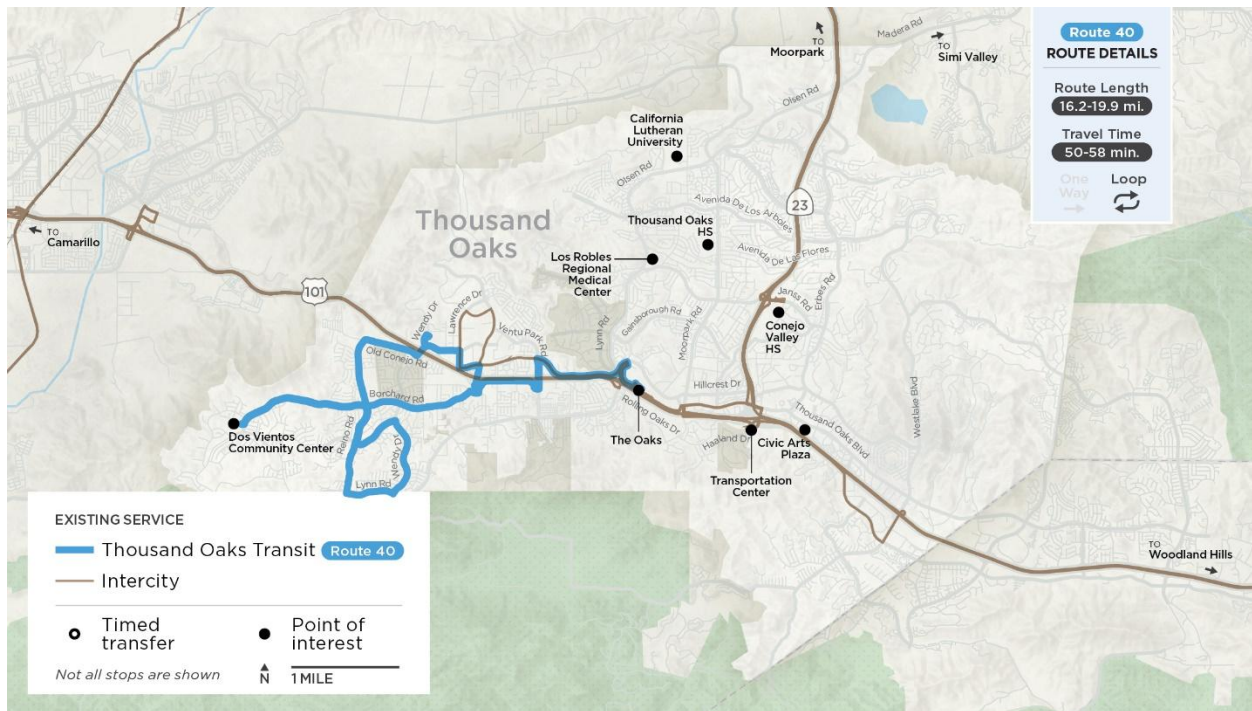
VCTC Intercity's East County and Highway 101 routes provide regional service to the Thousand Oaks community via transit stops at The Oaks Shopping Center and the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center (TOTC). All of Thousand Oaks Transit's routes serve The Oaks, and a subset also serve the Transportation Center. VCTC Intercity provides regional connections from Thousand Oaks to Moorpark, Simi Valley, Ventura, Oxnard, and Woodland Hills in LA County. VCTC's East County service provides additional local service within Thousand Oaks, extending beyond The Oaks to make four stops around Conejo Industrial Park.

ROUTE 40 - NEWBURY PARK

Route 40 serves the southern and western neighborhoods of Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park. This route features 30 stops along Borchard Road and Reino Road. Key destinations include retail centers, the Thousand Oaks Community Center, and Newbury Park High School. In FY23, Route 40 had 135 average daily boardings, the highest of all Thousand Oaks routes. Compared with other routes in the network, Route 40 connects a slightly wider range of land uses on its route: neighborhoods, commercial areas, civic, and school destinations.

Route 40 connects with other routes and services at The Oaks.

Figure 38: Thousand Oaks Route 40

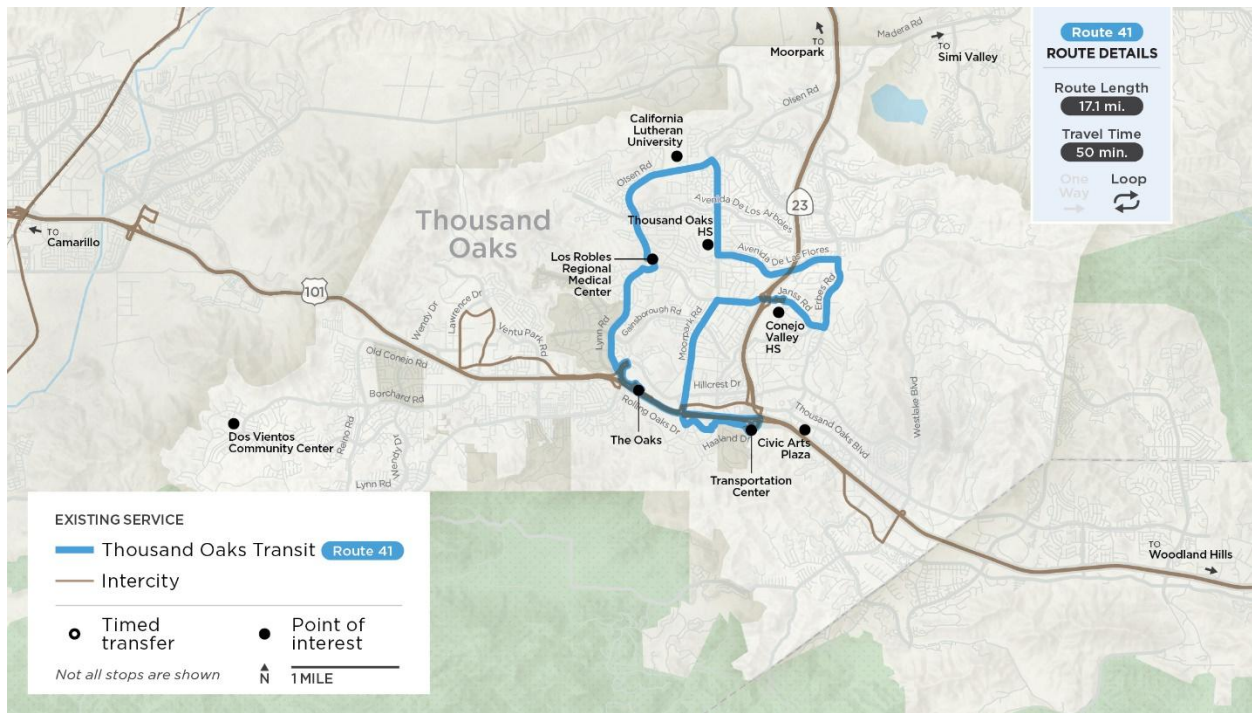


ROUTE 41 - MIDTOWN A

Route 41 provides east-west transit coverage through central Thousand Oaks, serving 17 stops along Lynn Road, Avenida de los Arboles, Moorpark Road, and other key corridors. The route includes stops at Rolling Oaks Drive, Gainsborough Road, and Wilbur Road, among others. Route 41 mostly serves residential areas, as well as destinations including Los Robles Hospital, California Lutheran University (Cal Lutheran), Thousand Oaks High School, the Teen & Senior Centers/Library, and the Transportation Center.

Transfer points at The Oaks and the Transportation Center facilitate connections to other routes and regional transit services.

Figure 39: Thousand Oaks Route 41

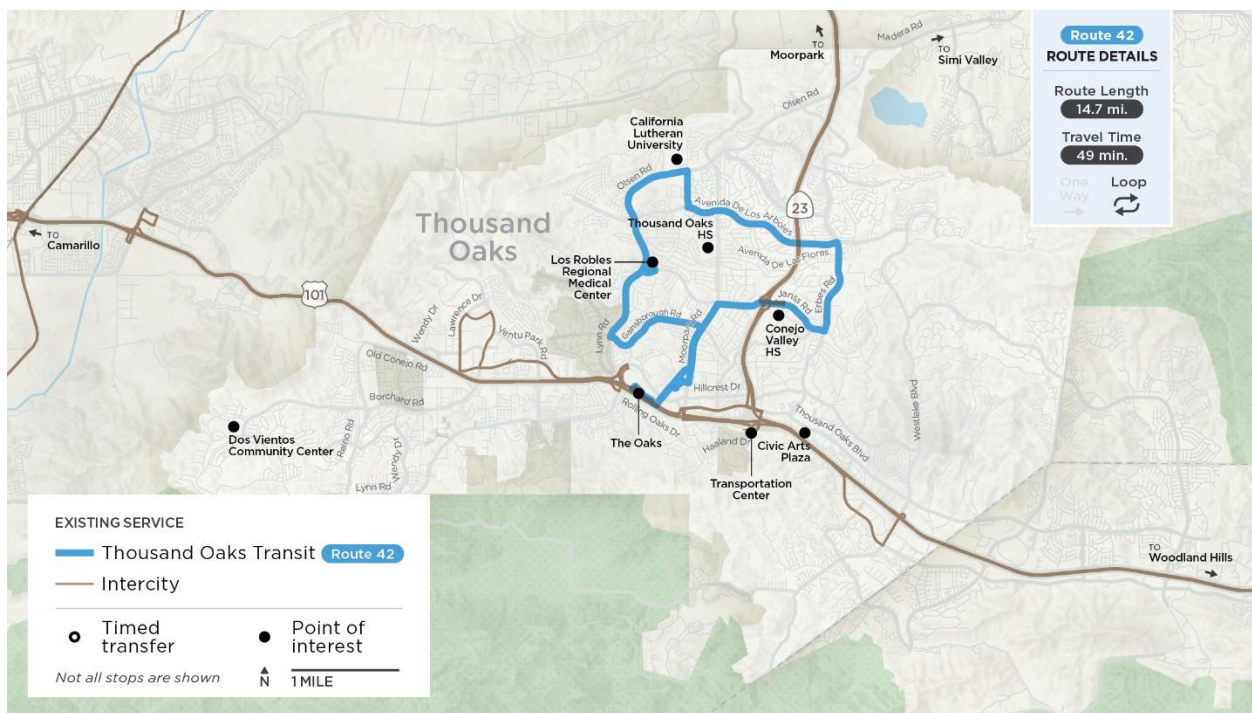


ROUTE 42 - MIDTOWN B

Route 42 offers east-west coverage through central Thousand Oaks, complementing Route 41 with a distinct alignment while serving many of the same major destinations. This route includes 22 stops, traveling along key thoroughfares such as Janss Road, Avenida de Los Arboles, Olsen Road, Erbes Road, and Moorpark Road. Route 42 serves mostly residential areas, as well as destinations including Conejo Valley High School, California Lutheran University (Cal Lutheran), Thousand Oaks High School, and Los Robles Hospital.

Route 42 connects with other routes and services at The Oaks.

Figure 40: Thousand Oaks Route 42

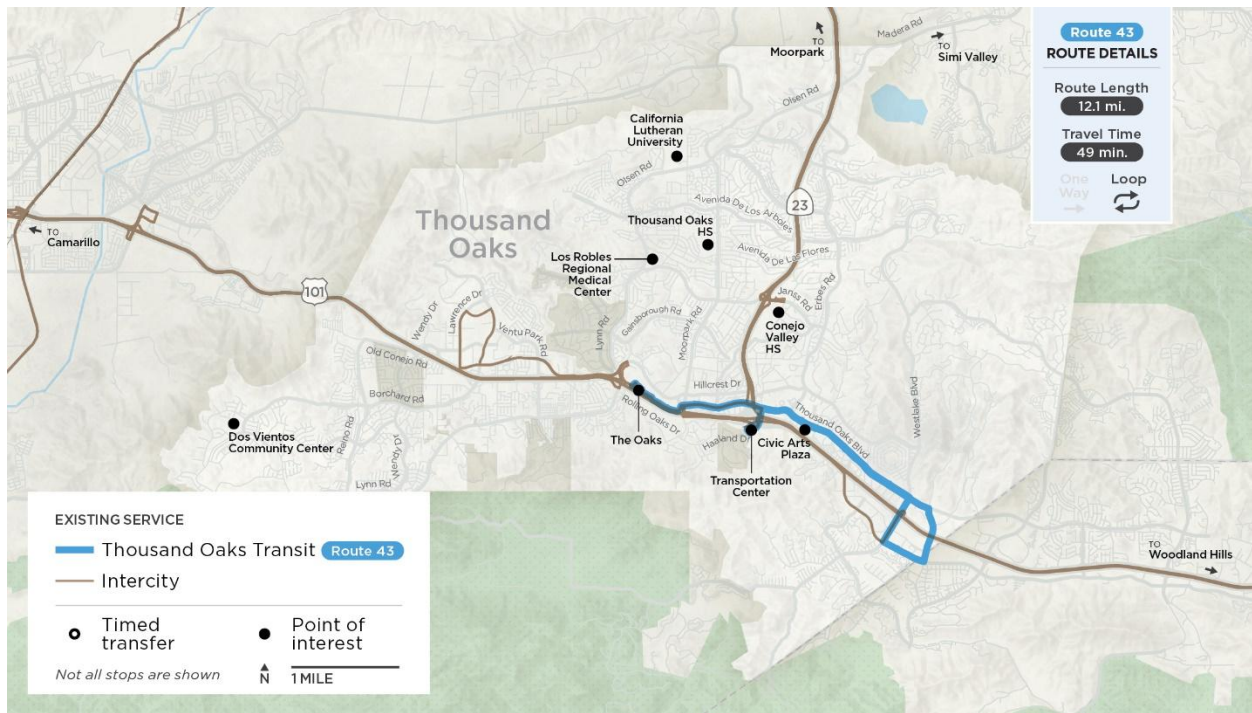


ROUTE 43 - TOB EXPRESS

Route 43 provides service to the southeast corner of the city along Thousand Oaks Boulevard. Destinations include the Civic Arts Plaza, Grant R. Brimhall Library, and key retail centers. Route 43 has relatively fewer homes within a short walk of its stops than most other Thousand Oaks routes, but as a hub-and-spoke network, residents from areas to the north or west can connect to this route to reach the commercial district to the east. This is reflected as Route 43 has the second-highest ridership in the network after Route 40. During FY23 Route 43 saw an average of 123 daily boardings.

The route also features transfer points at The Oaks and the Transportation Center.

Figure 41: Thousand Oaks Route 43

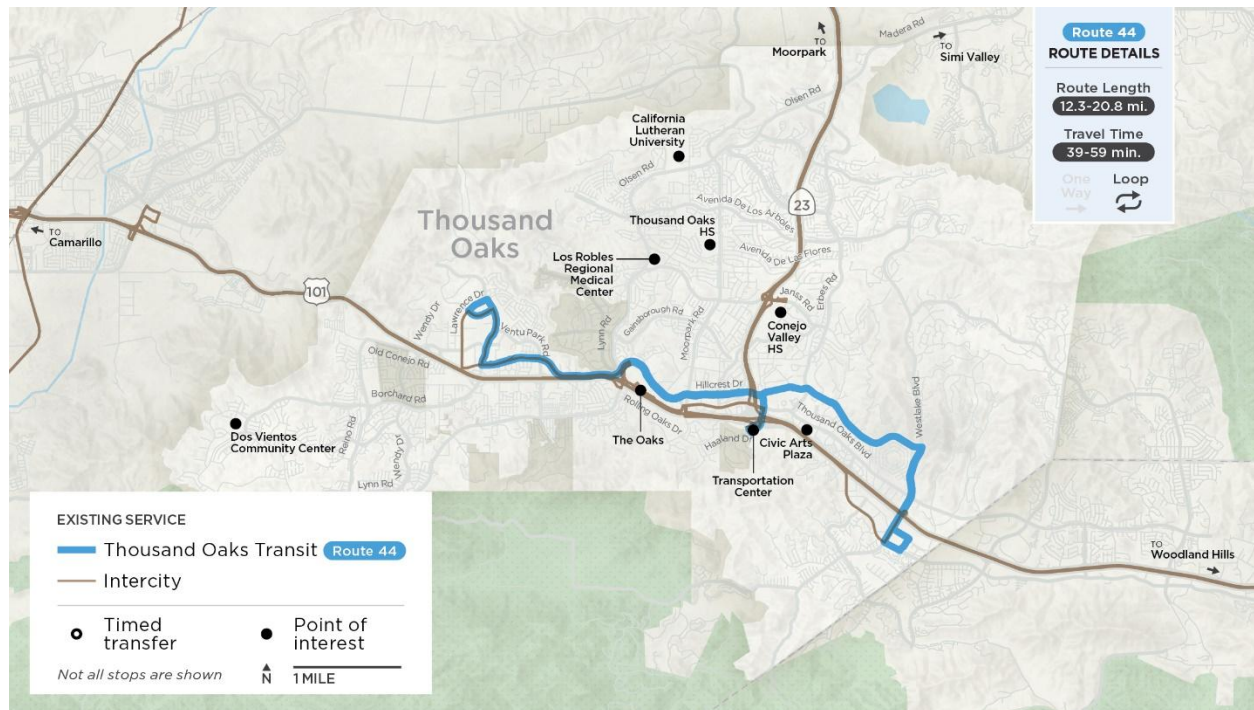


**ROUTE 44 - CROSSTOWN**

Route 44 offers east-west coverage across Thousand Oaks, connecting the Transportation Center with destinations in Westlake and Newbury Park. This route includes 35 stops on Rancho Conejo Boulevard and Hillcrest Drive, among other roads. Key destinations include Colina Middle School, Amgen, Westlake High School, and the surrounding business parks. Route 44 had an average of 53 daily boardings in FY23, the lowest of all routes.

In contrast with most other Thousand Oaks routes, Route 44 operates more directly along a single major corridor. It is the only route not to divert from Hillcrest Drive to serve the main bus stop at The Oaks, meaning riders transferring to other routes must happen at other on-street stops or at the Transit Center. These are potential contributors to the lower ridership, as is the land use within walking distance. For example, although the east end of the route is close to many homes south of Hillcrest Drive, the land use to the north (or to the east of Westlake Boulevard) is generally low density residential or open space. Likewise, a long stretch of Hillcrest Drive from The Oaks to Ventu Park Road runs along US-101 rather than homes or businesses.

**Figure 42: Thousand Oaks Route 44**



## *RIDERSHIP*

Annual ridership for Thousand Oaks Transit was relatively stable from 2014 until about 2018. Some operational adjustments to vehicle service hours and miles during this time corresponded to fluctuations in ridership, but a decrease in ridership in FY19 preceded the steep drop brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership dropped sharply to its lowest point of 70,606 in FY21. Service adjustments, including fare-free operations and reduced service hours, were implemented to address the challenges of the pandemic while maintaining essential services.

Ridership began to recover in FY22, with steady growth into FY23 and stabilization in FY24. By FY23, total ridership was approaching its pre-pandemic conditions. All routes have seen positive growth in FY24 compared with the low point in FY21.

Route 40 has the highest ridership on weekdays, accounting for 28% of weekday trips. However, Route 43 sees higher ridership on weekends, with 26% of all weekend trips. Although Routes 41 and 42 have a similar alignment, Route 41 captures a higher share of ridership on both weekdays and weekends. Finally, Route 44 has the lowest share of ridership, accounting for only 10% of weekday trips and 14% of weekend trips.

## *SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY*

Compared to transit agencies in the region, Thousand Oaks Transit has been more successful in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Service productivity increased at the system level to an average of 7.0 passenger trips per revenue hour, a 5% improvement compared to FY19. The Service Evaluation graphics on the following pages illustrate that route-level productivity ranges from 10.2 passengers per hour on Route 40 to fewer than 4 passengers per revenue hour on Route 44. Route 43 is the most productive Saturday route with 6.9 passengers per hour, and all routes on Saturdays range between 40 and 80 riders.

The systemwide average fare revenue per unlinked passenger trip in FY23 was \$0.53, which is 71% lower than the base fare of \$2.00. This disparity suggests that a significant proportion of the ridership are eligible for discounted rates or free trips (for example, students). Table 41 summarizes average fare revenue per trip, which divides total fare revenue for FY23 by total unlinked passenger trips for the same period.

**Table 41: Thousand Oaks Transit Fare Revenue by Route, FY23**

Route	Farebox Revenue	Average Fare Revenue per Trip	Regular One-Way Fare
40	\$22,199.83	\$0.53	\$2.00
41	\$18,415.73	\$0.60	\$2.00
42	\$15,566.28	\$0.63	\$2.00
43	\$22,728.95	\$0.59	\$2.00
44	\$10,411.11	\$0.63	\$2.00

Source: Thousand Oaks Transit, 2024.

#### *ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY*

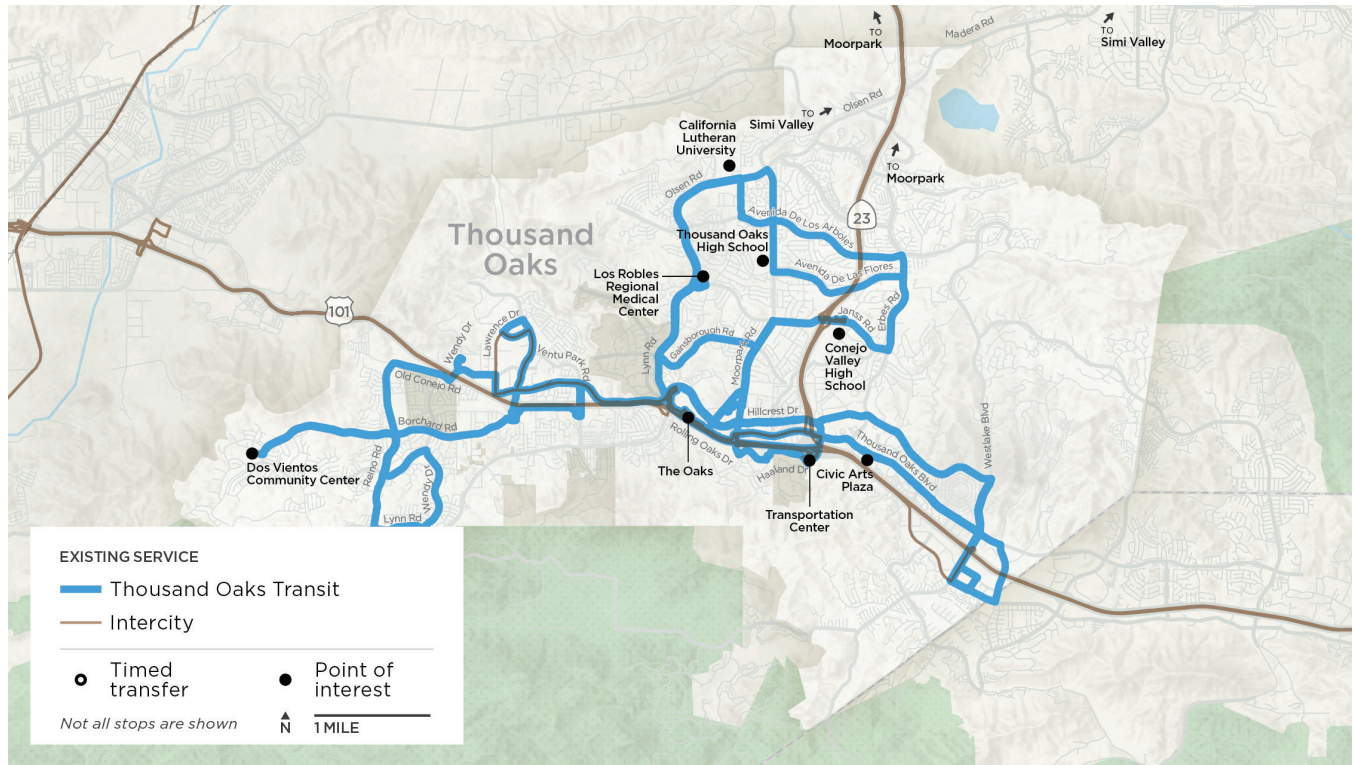
Thousand Oaks Transit received a total of 88 on-board survey responses. Most respondents to the survey were satisfied with their overall experience of bus service in Thousand Oaks. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.49 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus operators and the safety onboard the bus. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were the need to transfer during a journey and bus schedules being readily available.

#### *EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW*

Between FY14 and FY23, annual operating costs rose by 141%, while annual ridership decreased by 9%. Although the cost increase is steep, Thousand Oaks has fared better than many agencies in terms of attracting riders back to transit following the pandemic, allowing them to maintain overall productivity and cost efficiency.

Operating costs per trip increased by 11% over the last five years. Similarly, operating costs per revenue hour and per revenue mile rose by 16% and 18%, respectively.

## AGENCY ROUTE MAP



## SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

### Service Span

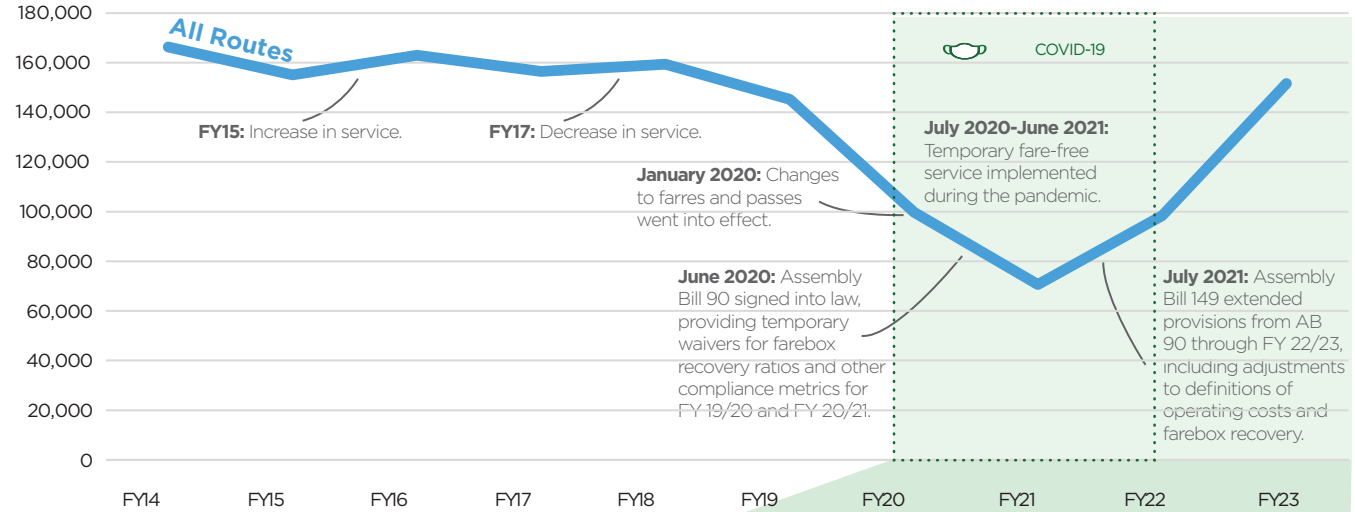


### Route Productivity FY23

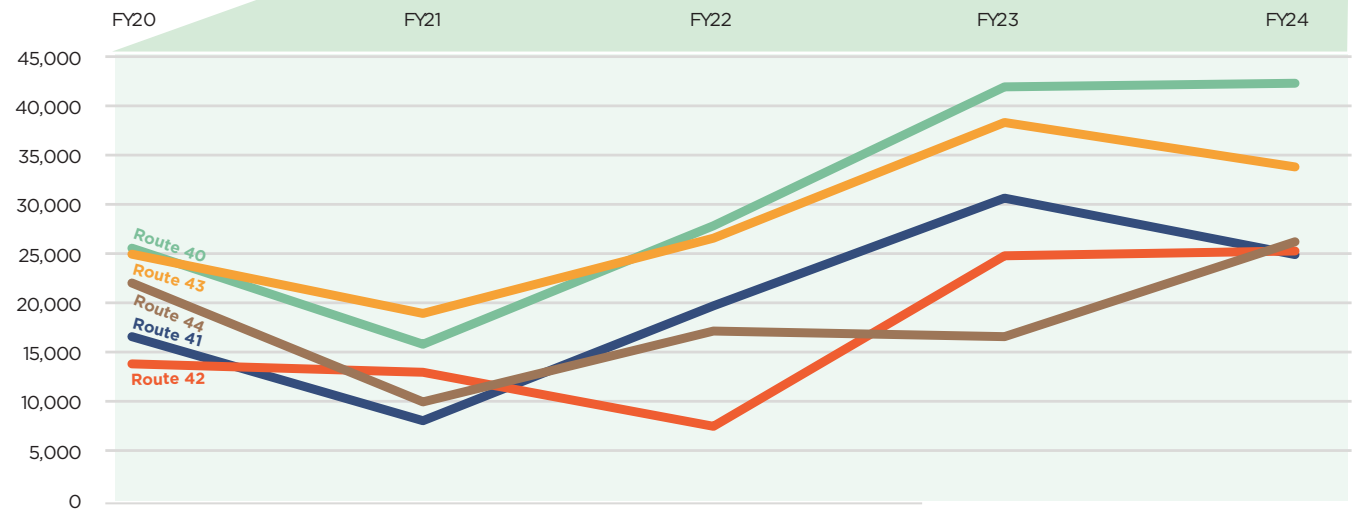
Route	Annual Ridership	Passengers per Revenue Hour			Revenue Hours			Operating Cost per Boarding
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	
Route 40	41,898	10.2	6.3	N/A	3,715	641	N/A	\$15.09
Route 41	30,624	7.4	5.1	N/A	3,703	628	N/A	\$20.59
Route 42	24,774	5.8	4.8	N/A	3,719	636	N/A	\$25.52
Route 43	38,315	9.1	6.9	N/A	3,718	640	N/A	\$16.51
Route 44	16,552	3.8	3.8	N/A	3,710	639	N/A	\$38.17

## AGENCY RIDERSHIP

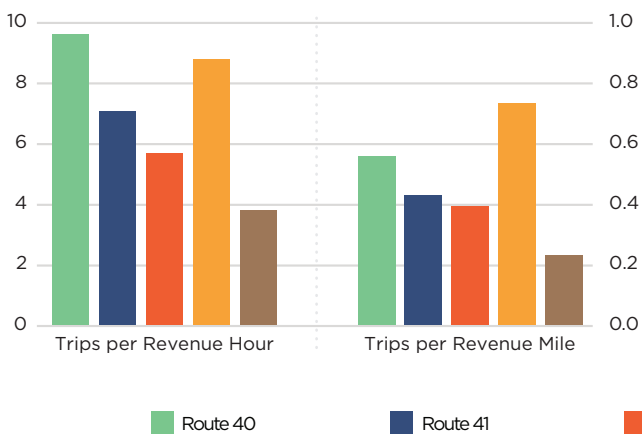
FY14 - FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership



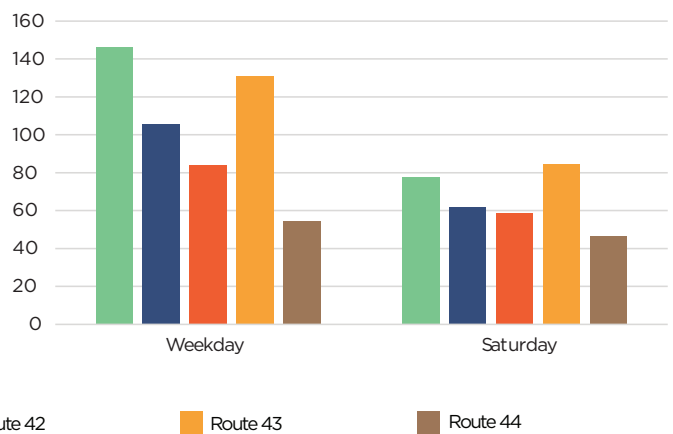
FY19 - FY23 Ridership by Route



FY23 Passenger Trips by Revenue Hour and Revenue Mile

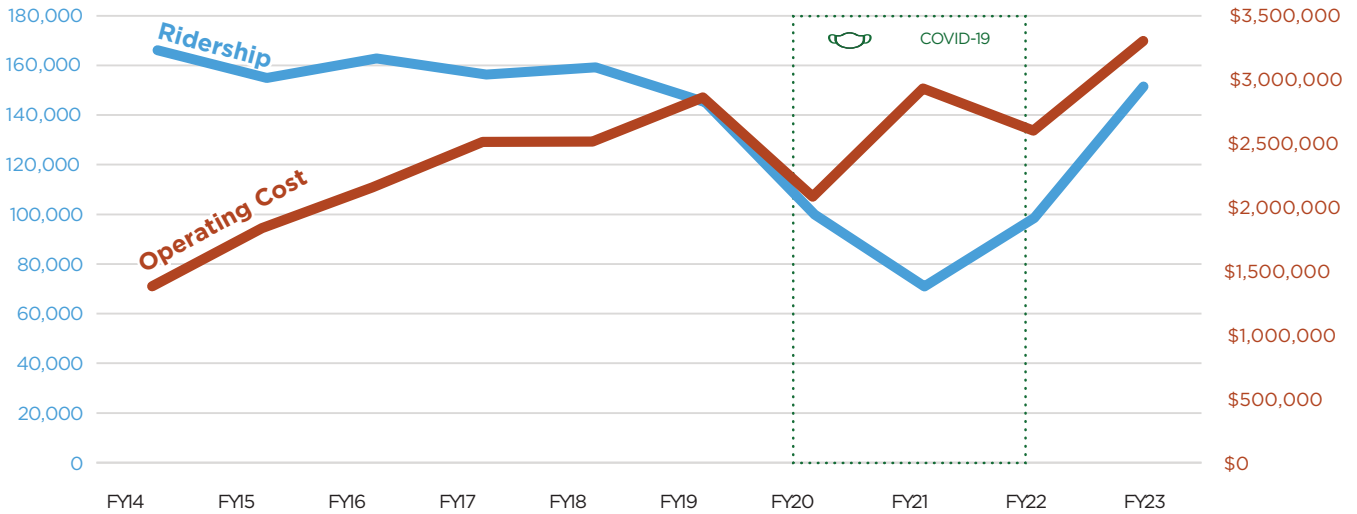


FY23 Average Daily Ridership

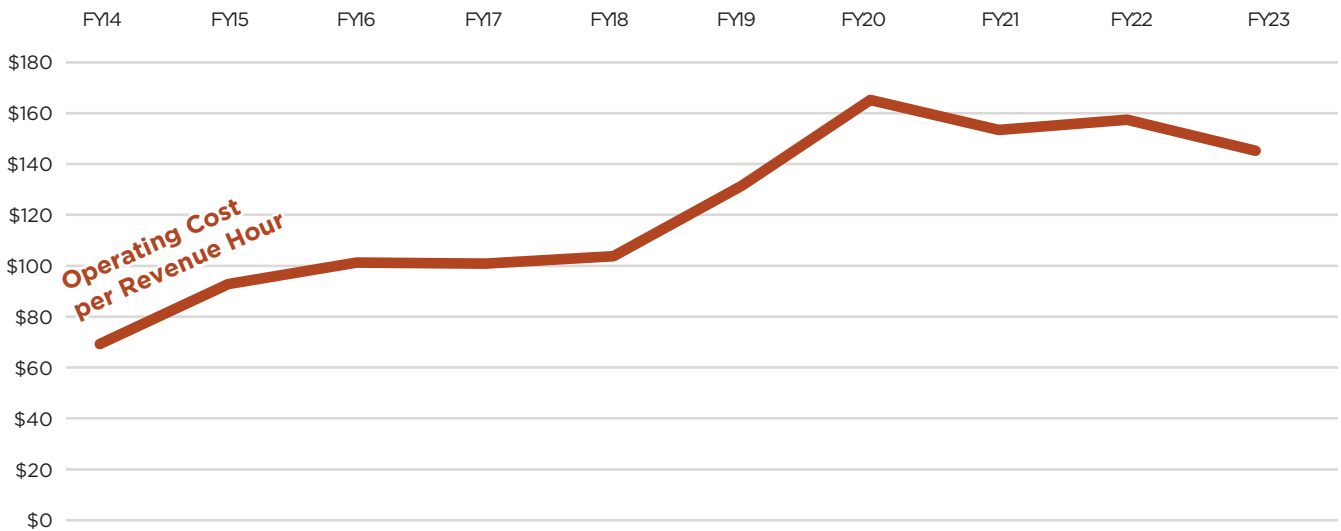


## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY14-FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership in Relation to Annual Operating Cost



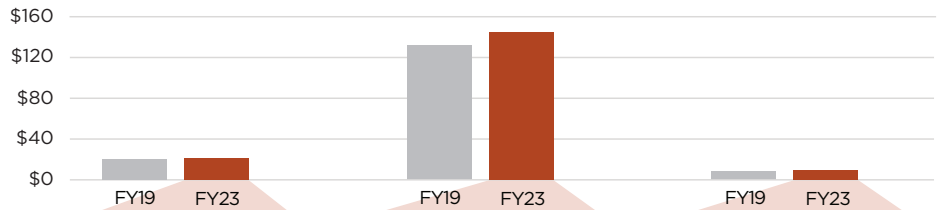
FY14 - FY23 Annual Fixed Route Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



FY19 and FY23 Systemwide Operating Costs

**\$2,861,911**  
FY19 Fixed Route Operating Cost

**\$3,159,399**  
FY23 Fixed Route Operating Cost



FY23 Operating Cost by Route

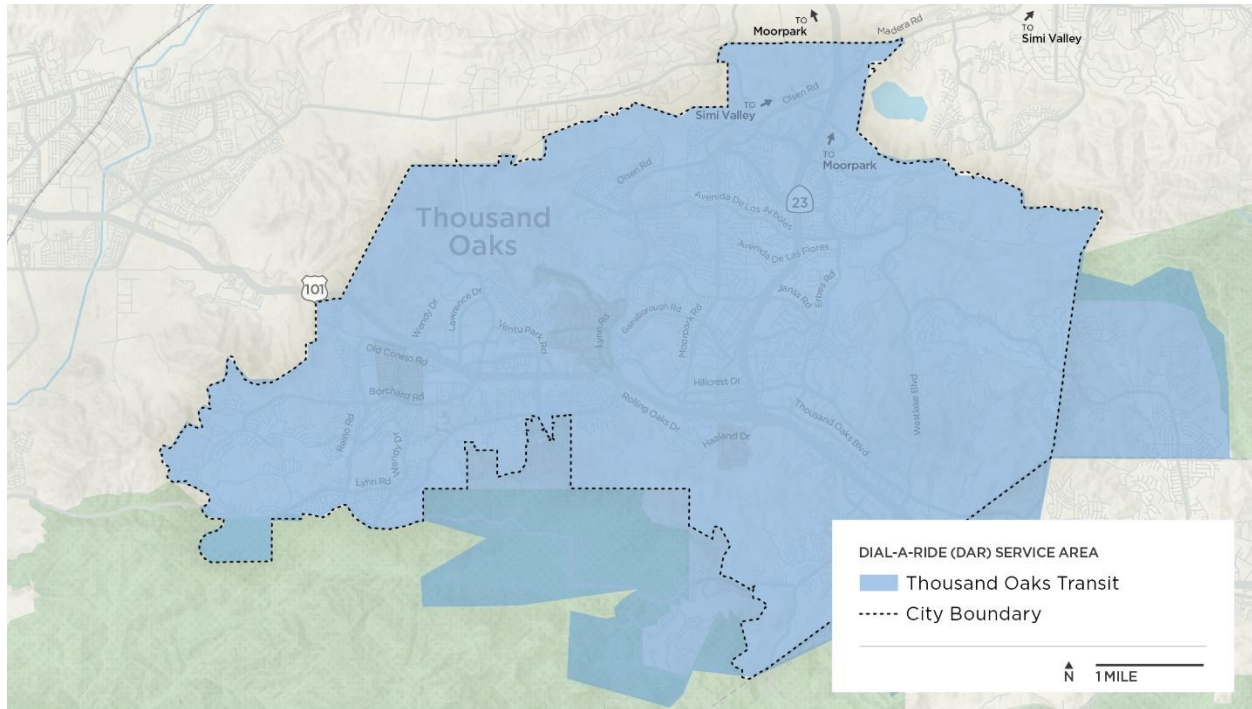
Route	Operating Cost	Operating Cost per Boarding	Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Operating Cost per Revenue Mile
Route 40	\$632,366.96	\$15.09	\$145.15	\$8.36
Route 41	\$630,461.37	\$20.59	\$145.56	\$8.76
Route 42	\$632,260.81	\$25.52	\$145.18	\$9.95
Route 43	\$632,490.57	\$16.51	\$145.13	\$11.98
Route 44	\$631,819.51	\$38.17	\$145.27	\$8.78

## THOUSAND OAKS TRANSIT: DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICE

### RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride (TO DAR) is an ADA complementary paratransit program, serving persons certified as ADA and seniors (ages 65+). Figure 43 shows the extent of the service area.

**Figure 43: Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride Service Area**



Trips that originate within the city but travel outside the city are served by the East County Transit Alliance (ECTA) Intercity dial-a-ride.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Thousand Oaks' Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 42. In November 2024, Thousand Oaks' DAR program switched software providers from Trapeze to RideCo. The analysis presented in this section reflects operations prior to that change.

**Table 42: Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics**

Thousand Oaks DAR	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Passenger Trips</b>	62,855	43,548	32,469	30,488	26,686
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	26,868	19,501	17,869	15,158	12,233
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	377,898	293,920	309,543	238,679	218,130
<b>Operating Cost</b>	\$2,306,029	\$2,031,936	\$1,946,223	\$2,194,138	\$2,220,548
<b>Passengers per Hour</b>	2.34	2.23	1.82	2.01	2.2
<b>Passengers per Mile</b>	0.17	0.15	0.10	0.13	0.1
<b>Cost per Passenger</b>	\$36.69	\$46.66	\$59.94	\$71.97	\$83.21
<b>Cost per Hour</b>	\$85.83	\$104.20	\$108.92	\$144.75	\$181.52
<b>Cost per Mile</b>	\$6.10	\$6.91	\$6.29	\$9.19	\$10.18

Source: Thousand Oaks Transit, 2024.

Passenger trips have continually declined since 2019, while overall operating costs have remained roughly even. Revenue hours have decreased more than 50% since 2019 and revenue miles have decreased by 40%. With constant operating costs and reduced revenue hours, the operating cost per hour has increased by 110% or almost \$100 since FY19, and costs per mile have increased by over \$4.00 in the last four years.

## OPERATIONS TOPICS

Thousand Oaks has a significantly sized demand-response program, although at 27,000 annual trips in FY23, it is down 57% from its pre-pandemic level of 62,000 annual trips. The City of Thousand Oaks is the hub of a multi-community system, holding contracts as the operator for the City of Moorpark and ECTA services, as well as Los Angeles County small programs in Oak Park (Ventura County) Agoura Hills, Oak Park, and Westlake Village (LA County)

## RESOURCES

Staffing generally associated with the Thousand Oaks demand-response program (with some overlap to the other services), includes four call-taker positions receiving calls on one dial-a-ride number and one fixed-route number.

The program currently has 35 drivers, compared to 60 positions pre-pandemic, for both fixed-route service and dial-a-ride combined. Notably, the 60% reduction in revenue hours

since the pandemic has reduced the numbers of drivers needed. Current driver positions associated with TO-managed demand-response services are:

- 7 to 8 drivers for Dial-a-Ride (for Thousand Oaks and Moorpark)
- 2 to 3 drivers for ECTA Dial-a-Ride

Each driver is qualified to drive any vehicle, to ensure easy changes as necessary during the service day.

#### TRIP SCHEDULING, DISPATCHING AND RIDER NOTIFICATIONS

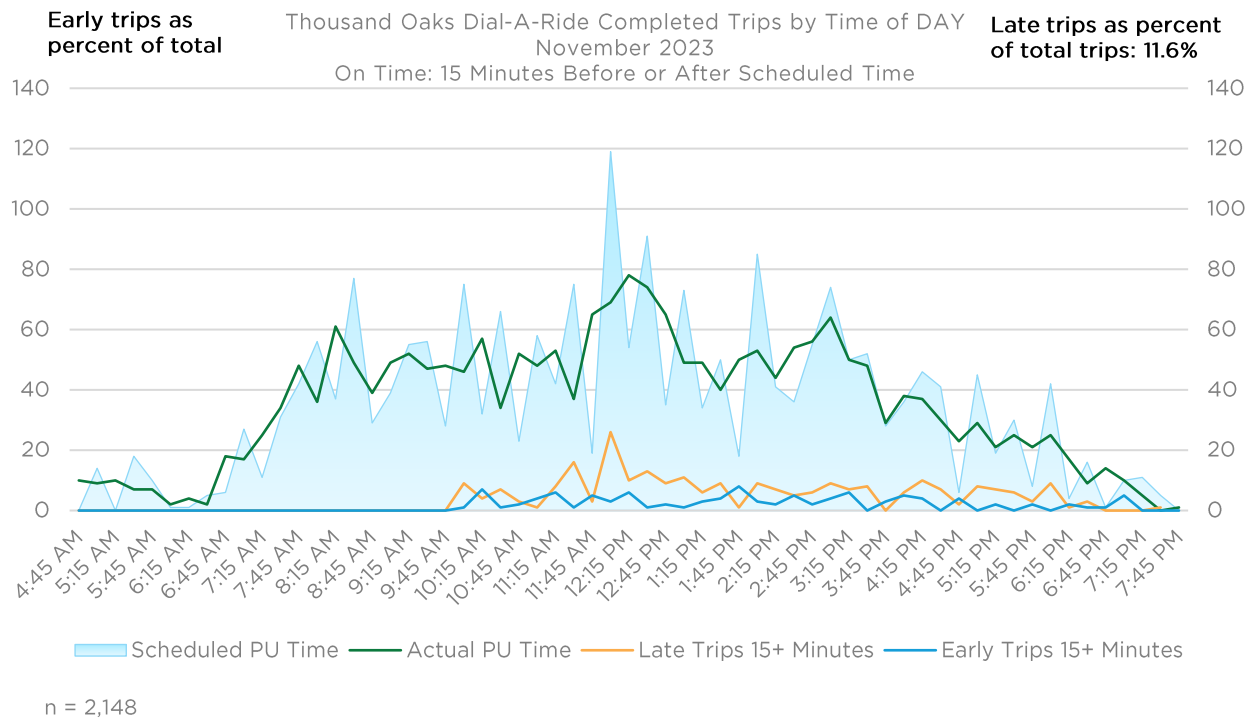
At the time of this analysis, Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride used Trapeze to book/schedule trips, and to provide driver manifests which are downloaded to vehicle tablets. Since then, Thousand Oaks has switched to RideCo.

#### ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips by time of day during November 2023 is presented in Figure 44. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. The analysis determines on-time performance by calculating the total number actual pick-up times that fall outside of a 30-minute “on-time” window (from 15 minutes before the scheduled time to 15 minutes after).

Trip demand for Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride is steady throughout the morning and peaks in the early afternoon, with trip bookings nearly doubling at noon. The system is shown to be over capacity in the afternoon and struggles with late trips throughout the afternoon. Almost 5% of all trips are early, while late trips account for almost 12% of trips delivered.

**Figure 44: Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance**



Source: Thousand Oaks Transit, 2024.

**TRANSFERS**

Transfers between demand-response services are seen to be a necessary option for those needing to make longer cross-county trips, even if ridership numbers are small. Thousand Oaks Transit managers do not see one-seat rides (on demand-response) as either financially realistic or practical in terms of losing a vehicle from the immediate service area to make the long trip.

## Thousand Oaks Transit: Gaps and Opportunities

### PEOPLE



#### SENIORS

Routes consistently cover the majority of the community ensuring basic access, but most homes are not a short walk to a bus stop and the fixed-route service may be difficult for people with limited mobility. The City reserves its DAR program specifically for seniors and people with disabilities which ensures capacity for the residents who are most likely to need mobility support.



#### GENERAL POPULATION

Coverage and frequency of routes is quite good given the population density, and despite the built environment limiting walking access to service. The routes are generally oriented to connect the more residential northern areas to the civic and commercial destinations in the southern/central areas, and to regional transit connections.



#### STUDENTS

Middle and high schools are served by routes, but the walk access for most homes may be a barrier for many students, and the large geography of the City can be challenging to align service schedules with school start and end times.

### PLACES



#### COVERAGE

Overall service coverage is good – much of the City is near at least one route, and the design is oriented to make the most efficient trips despite large, winding, hilly roads. Most service funnels through the economic center parallel to US 101.



#### WALKABILITY

Walkability is a major challenge for the community. Bus stops are relatively infrequent along each route, as are safe road crossing opportunities. Most homes are not a short walk to the nearest bus stop. Many businesses are set far back from the main road by large parking lots.



#### REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The City has no direct train connection and relies more on VCTC Intercity service to Moorpark or Camarillo for longer-distance regional connections. Connectivity to Simi Valley is limited (and runs via Moorpark first), despite Simi Valley being a more substantial travel market. Northeast Thousand Oaks and some portions of Newbury Park are underserved.

## SERVICE DESIGN



### *FIXED-ROUTE DIRECTNESS*

Thousand Oaks operates a hub-and-spoke system where routes generally converge at The Oaks and riders from one part of town must transfer to reach another. This is a common service design, but can make service seem indirect. For example, riders from the mostly-residential northern reach of the city almost certainly have to transfer for most trips unless their final destination is at or near The Oaks, because most non-residential land uses are to the east and west along Thousand Oaks Boulevard.



### *FIXED-ROUTE FREQUENCY*

All routes effectively operate on an hourly pulse from The Oaks, which is ideal for predictability and guaranteed transfers in a hub-based network. More frequent service is always ideal, but given the built environment and character of the city, hourly frequency has still attracted consistent ridership compared to ten years ago. As student ridership is likely a significant market, predictable schedules timed with school bells is more important than operating service slightly more often.



### *SPAN*

The route network span of service is relatively similar to most Ventura County communities, with services beginning somewhat earlier. Based on the travel market analysis, there may be justification to offer service through 8 p.m. (an additional hour) to capture more of the overall trip activity.



### *Balance of Services*

Thousand Oaks offers substantial coverage for its senior/ADA DAR program, which is sensible given the built environment which presents a significant challenge for people with limited mobility to walk to a bus route.

The eligibility and fares between the fixed-route and the DAR program are delineated such that people who can use the bus routes are incentivized to by its lower cost. Thousand Oaks does not offer DAR to the general public nor does it have a general public microtransit service.

## Thousand Oaks Transit: Service Recommendations

This section provides recommendations for transit services operated by TOT and other operators within their service area. The SRTP vision for TOT incorporates a near-term plan developed by City of Thousand Oaks staff.

1. Implement changes to route structure to support transition to battery-electric bus fleet
2. Replace Intercity East County route with new service direct to Simi Valley via Olsen Road
3. Plan for long-term land use and infrastructure to support fixed routes

### THOUSAND OAKS TRANSIT ROUTE MODIFICATIONS

Concurrent to the development of this SRTP, TOT conducted their own internal service review, and developed a series of proposed changes to their route structure.

Several factors drove TOT's review and proposed changes. First, their current routes/service were designed before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore do not account for the significant changes in travel patterns that have persisted since that time.

Second, the review and proposed changes account for considerations required by the agency's upcoming shift toward the use of Battery Electric Buses (BEB), which is in turn a response to the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate put forth by California Air Resources Board (CARB). The current generation of BEBs have a shorter range compared to traditional buses. Many of the proposed changes to TOT's routes and services reduce the mileage required to complete a single route and incorporate charging opportunities into the structure of the system and schedule.

Third, TOT staff hope the proposed changes will streamline service in a way that improves on-time-performance for each of their routes.

The proposed changes affect each of TOT's existing five routes, and would introduce a new, sixth route (Route 45: Newbury Park – Rancho Conejo). Changes to the existing routes involve removing/adjusting underused stops, eliminating sections of some routes, and adjustments to trip timing. The new sixth route would help replace the service coverage being removed from other routes.

The changes also represent a shift in strategy for the overall functioning of the fixed-route system. The current service design sought to accommodate transfers by having four out of the existing five routes begin their trips at Oaks Mall. The unintended result of this strategy is repeated patterns of bus stacking and congestion in the nearby parking lot. It also means that trips only depart from the mall once an hour. The proposed changes would shift the start/end points of certain routes and stagger the trip timing to make them more

complementary, rather than directly synced. Under the proposed changes, buses would leave Oaks Mall every 30 minutes. Staff expect these changes to result in a 50% reduction in trip times for passengers who transfer among routes.

At the time of publication, these proposed changes had not been finalized by staff. Further details and maps will be published by TOT when they are ready.

## PROPOSED FARES AND POLICY CHANGES

Thousand Oaks Transit already prices its transit at the recommended near-term levels for fixed-route service. However, the discounted senior/ADA fare on fixed routes, at the time of analysis, was \$0.50, only one-quarter the base fare of \$2.00, rather than half. To align with the Countywide recommended fare structure, the City should consider increasing the senior/ADA fare to \$1.00 to support the “Phase 2” fares recommendation. This still results in a significant price incentive for seniors and ADA-eligible riders to use the fixed route when possible, compared to the \$4.00 per trip DAR price already in place.

Data were not available to identify what proportion of fixed route riders currently would be affected by this change. The TOT fixed route network is heavily used by students, but seniors are also a significant market segment.

No changes are recommended at this time.

### *OTHER PROGRAM CHANGES*

According to staff, Thousand Oaks Transit is developing an updated city transit/system map. Future updates should include the updated Intercity service. More visual clarity about how the individual routes form a network of coverage, where they converge, and how they connect to external transit services would be valuable.

In the long term, the City has a significant opportunity to encourage greater redevelopment and infill development in the areas near US-101 along Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Hillcrest Drive, and nearby areas. By fostering redevelopment and following contemporary urban design principles, the existing transit network will benefit from greater density and land use diversity where all of the routes converge. No network redesign is necessary for this, but the transit leadership should be involved in the long-term land use and street planning process. Better use of roadway and curbspace is essential for redevelopment to fully support better transit use.

A potential and significant opportunity may be the upcoming redevelopment of The Oaks Mall, which has historically served as both a major destination for transit riders and a major transfer site between routes and agencies. In addition to a possible mixed use redevelopment that would add new demand for transit, the City should seek opportunities to site a new transit center to support faster and more reliable connections. Ideally a new transit center at or near the site would be located as close to Hillcrest Drive as possible to

minimize transit drive times and provide centralized access to both the redeveloped property and other nearby destinations. A site redesign with a transit center would be a significant opportunity to develop a walkable, safe connection between new developments and an improving transit network.

## SERVICE CHANGES FOR OTHER OPERATORS IN THOUSAND OAKS

Significant changes are proposed for VCTC Intercity service within Thousand Oaks in conjunction with the market analysis between the cities of Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, and Moorpark. The proposed Near-Term concept for Intercity would discontinue the existing Route 70 East County service and replace it with a new Proposed Route 70 that operates directly between Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks via Madera/Olsen Road. Entering Thousand Oaks, The Proposed Route 70 would operate straight down Moorpark Road and terminate at the Oaks Mall. Along the route, limited stops would be offered only at major arterials.

Proposed Route 70 addresses problems with the existing route design which has failed to attract an appropriate level of ridership. By operating on arterials, the number of destinations people have direct access to is increased significantly, and the opportunity for connections to local routes in both communities is much greater. The Proposed Route 70 closes a service gap for some neighborhoods in both Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, and serves a larger transit market with more direct and frequent service than the existing route. This would also offer a regional bus service near California Lutheran University for the first time. The Proposed Route 70 would maintain connectivity to Metrolink trains by serving the Simi Valley Station.

In the Near-Term, this may result in a gap in service between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks. A Proposed Route 72 was developed to fill this need, but limited resources between the participating agencies may be unable to support both routes initially. The SRTP recommends focusing resources on operating one route frequently enough to attract ridership while staff seek funding to operate the Proposed Route 72.

See the Intercity section of the SRTP for more detail on this route and the justification.

No other changes to Intercity service are proposed in Thousand Oaks.

## SUMMARY AND BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The transit service recommendations for Thousand Oaks address the following key gaps and opportunities:

- Thousand Oaks has a very high proportion of travel (84%) with both a beginning and end of trip in the same area.
- The staff proposal to update the TOT network would support the local circulation needs by using offset timing between routes covering similar neighborhoods to

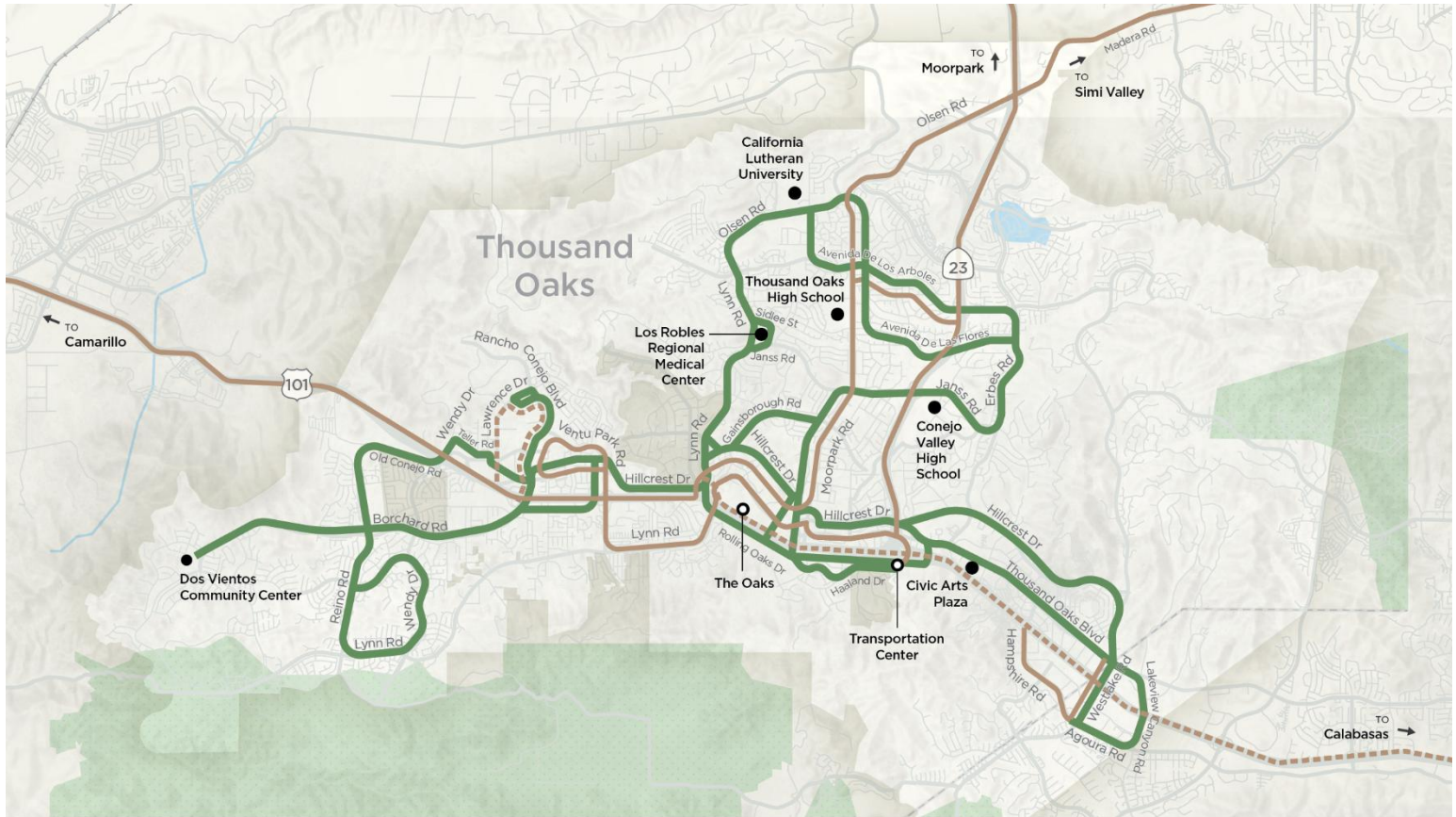
effectively provide more frequent service to the main transit hub, an approach consistent with the SRTP recommendation for Camarillo and Moorpark.

- A hub-based approach for Thousand Oaks has generally been successful relative to the size, density, and built environment of the city. TOT ridership has recovered and represents one of the most productive fixed route networks in Ventura County.
- Intercity service between Moorpark and Simi Valley under the current design is ineffective, carrying very few riders. A new route proposal would realign the service to directly connect the two largest travel markets in the East County, Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley. While there is no question that the existing East County route needs to be changed to attract more riders, the proposed modification could result in a new service gap without partnership between stakeholder communities and VCTC.

## Financial Analysis of Recommendations

Thousand Oaks staff performed financial analysis as part of their recommendations for route changes. They expect the proposed route changes to cost an additional \$200,000 in FY24/25, relative to a total operating cost of \$2,000,000. This change has already been accounted for in their contract amount/budget.

### Thousand Oaks Transit Routes and Span of Service



**PROPOSED SERVICE**  
 — Intercity

**REMOVED SERVICE**  
 - - - Intercity

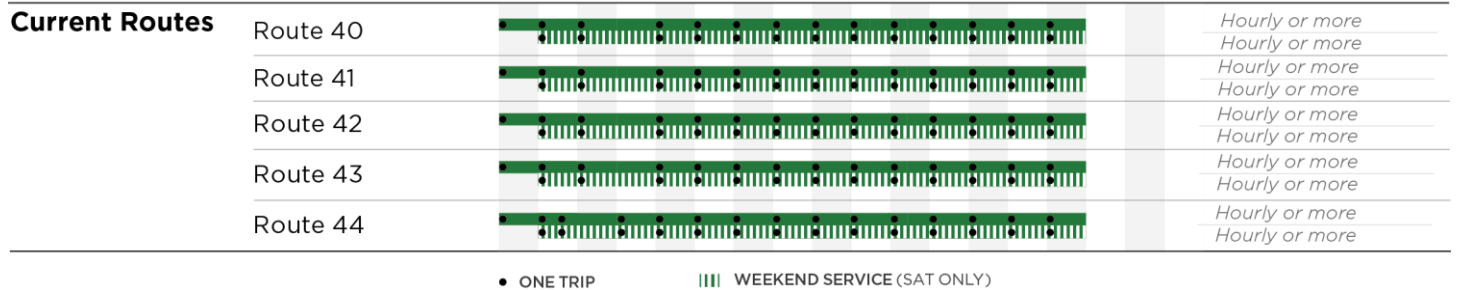
**EXISTING SERVICE**  
 — Thousand Oaks Transit

*Not all stops are shown*  
 • Timed transfer

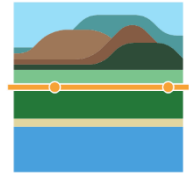
▲ N 1 MILE  
 • Point of interest

\*Includes proposed Moorpark-TO route to be operated by MCT

### Span of Service



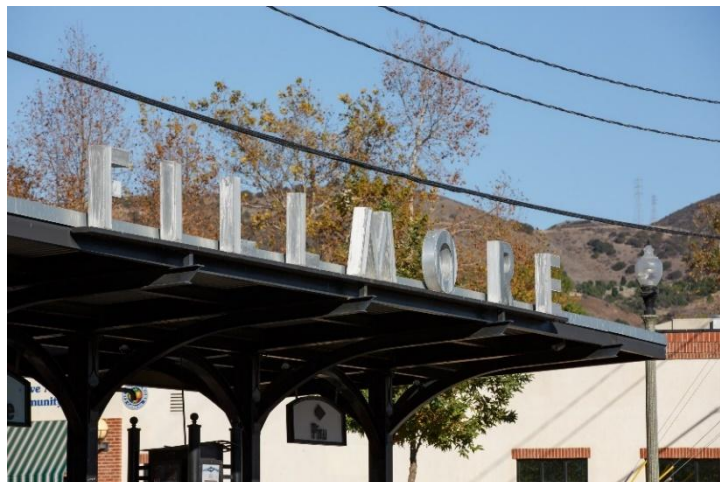
# 13. SANTA CLARA RIVER VALLEY: SANTA PAULA, FILLMORE & PIRU



## Market Assessment

The Santa Clara River Valley sub-area (see Figure 1)—comprised of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and the unincorporated community of Piru—is in north-central Ventura County. Sometimes referred to as the Heritage Valley, the Santa Clara River Valley sub-area is the third smallest community in Ventura County in terms of population (about 52,000 including the three communities) and jobs. The Santa Clara River Valley sub-area has a higher percentage of low-income households than Ventura County overall, as well as a higher proportion of youths and car-light households as shown in Table 43.

California State Route 126 connects the Santa Clara River Valley sub-area with Ventura and Los Angeles County. State Route 150 connects Santa Paula with Ojai, and State Route 23 connects Fillmore with Moorpark. Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru are each separated by six to seven miles of farmland along Route 126. They each have traditional street grids with relatively mixed land uses and walkable streets that reflect pre-war development patterns. Each of these individual communities has experienced significant large-scale housing developments in recent years, expanding their footprint. The recent residential developments feature internal street grids but are located far from the traditional community centers and are comprised exclusively of residential and school land uses. The median household income for the Santa Clara River Valley sub-area is the lowest in Ventura County, almost \$25,000 lower than the County median.



**Table 43: Santa Clara River Valley Sub-Area Demographics**

	Santa Clara River Valley Sub-Area	Percent Share	
	Count	Santa Clara River Valley Sub-Area	Ventura County
<b>Residential population</b>	51,952	-	-
<b>Senior citizens (ages 65+)</b>	6,565	13%	16%
<b>Youth (ages 10-17)</b>	7,546	15%	11%
<b>Low-income individuals<sup>1</sup></b>	6,511	13%	9%
<b>Households</b>	14,866	-	-
<b>Car-light households<sup>2</sup></b>	2,851	19%	15%
<b>Jobs</b>	12,489	-	-
	Santa Clara River Valley Sub-Area	Ventura County	
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$69,205	\$94,167	

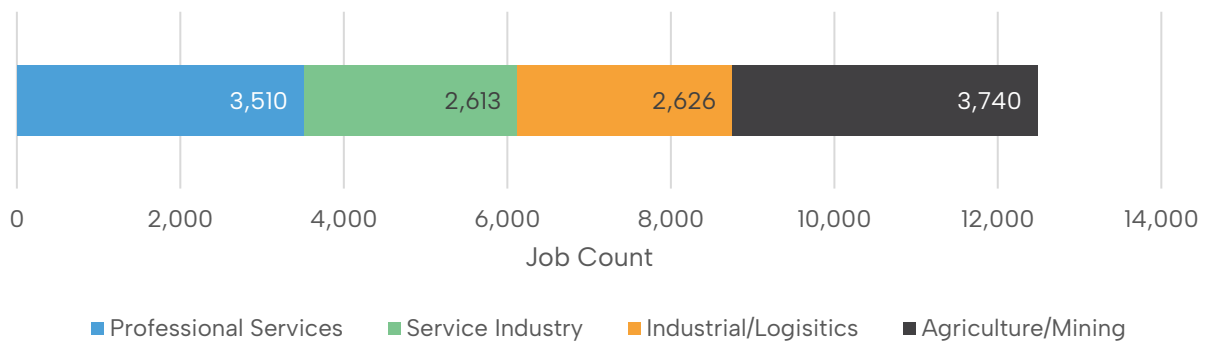
Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Denominator of the percent share statistics is persons in housing units.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021; LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

**Figure 45: Santa Clara River Valley Sub-Area Jobs by Industry**



Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

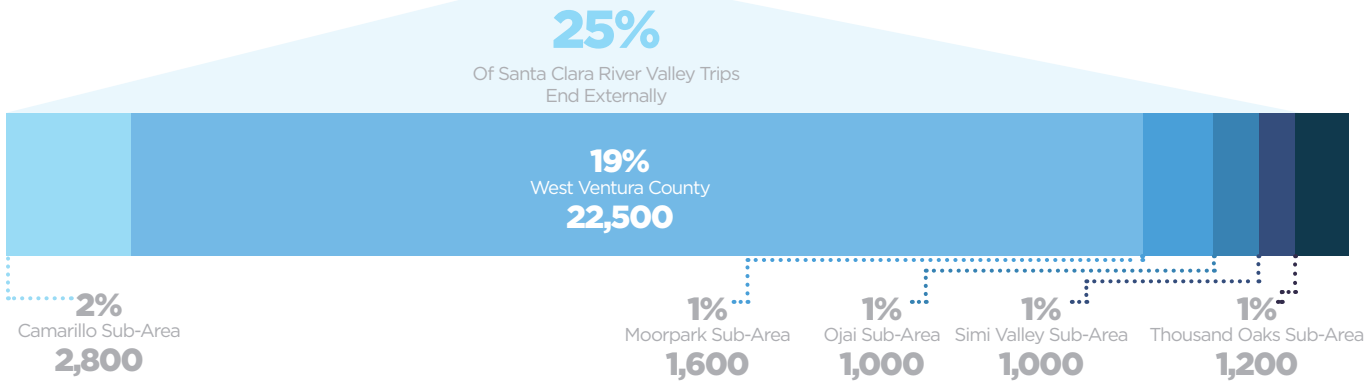
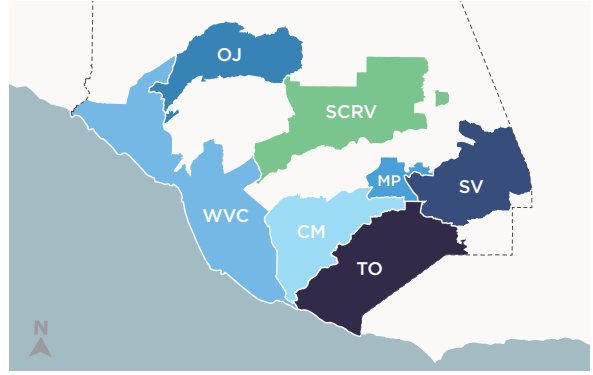
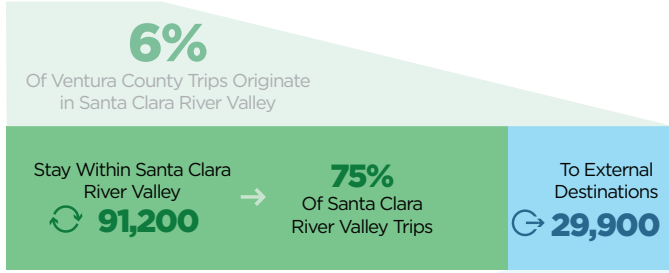
Over 80 percent of Santa Clara River Valley sub-area residents commute elsewhere for work, a higher share than the County overall. Just under 7,000 people commute to the Santa Clara River Valley sub-area from neighboring communities for work. Agriculture and mining account for the largest category of jobs in the community, followed by jobs in professional services, the service sector, and the industrial/logistics sector. Job density is highest in downtown areas of Santa Paula and Fillmore along South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Main Street, and Ventura Street, and along California State Route 126. Many of the Santa Clara River Valley sub-area's top employers are located along these major routes.

Three-quarters of all vehicle trips in the Santa Clara River Valley sub-area begin and end within the area. West Ventura County is an important external destination, accounting for 19 percent of vehicle trips originating in the Santa Clara River Valley sub-area. The high concentration of travel to West Ventura County is likely a direct result of limited routes for crossing the mountain range to the south, and the high degree of services and commerce to the west. Santa Clarita to the east in Los Angeles County is also an important destination for this sub-area but no regular transit service operates between these communities.

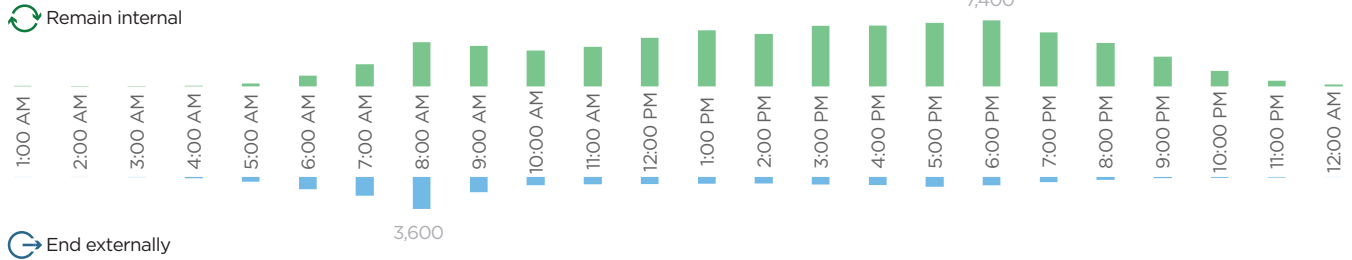
## TRIP DISTRIBUTION

Destinations of Trips from Santa Clara River Valley

**121,100**  
Trips Originate in Santa Clara River Valley

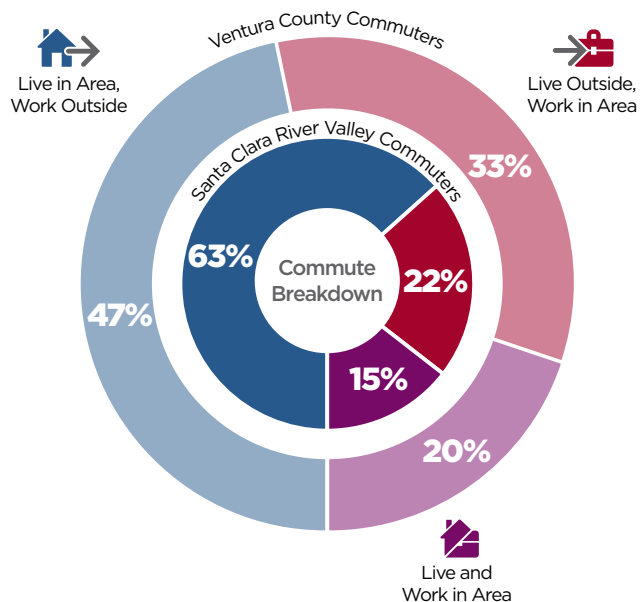
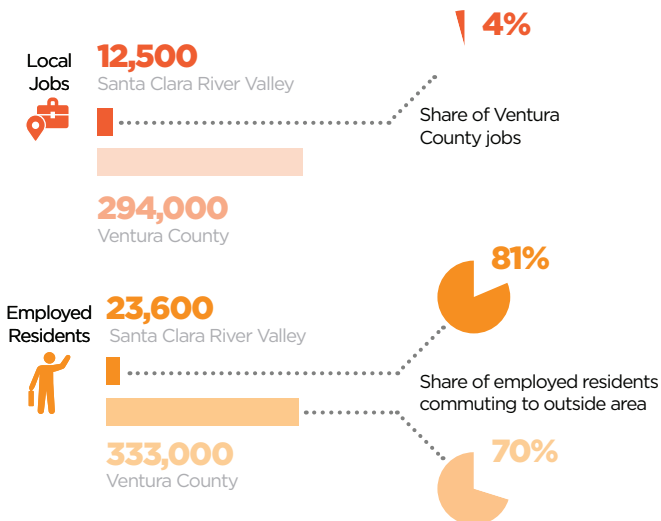


## Time Distribution of Trips From Santa Clara River Valley



## JOBS INFLOW/OUTFLOW

Santa Clara River Valley Jobs Flow Compared to Ventura County



## Service Evaluation

The Valley Express service comprises both fixed routes and dial-a-ride service. Valley Express operates several routes known as “trippers” which are fixed routes open to the public that typically operate to expand service around school bell times. This SRTP has generally not addressed tripper service because of its specialized function. Because these are a more significant portion of the Valley Express service, they are noted in this evaluation where appropriate but are excluded from the future planning.

### VALLEY EXPRESS: FARES

Valley Express currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

**Table 44: Agency Single-Ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type**

Service Type	Regular	Discounted <sup>1</sup>	Child (5 & under)	Student/Youth <sup>2</sup>	College Students <sup>2</sup>
<b>Fixed-Route</b>	\$1.25	\$0.60	Free	Free	Free
<b>Dial-a-Ride</b>	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	Free	Free

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.

<sup>2</sup> Valley Express transit services are free for youth 18 and under, those over 18 enrolled in high school, and college students due to VCTC Youth Ride Free Program and College Ride Program, which are funded through June 2026.

Source: Agency websites, 2024.

### VALLEY EXPRESS: FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

Valley Express operates a fixed-route bus service within Ventura County that serves the cities of Fillmore and Santa Paula, as well as the unincorporated community of Piru.

In late summer 2024, Valley Express implemented a Fillmore–Moorpark route, fulfilling a long-standing request from the community for direct service over the mountains and a connection to Moorpark. The service operates a fairly direct route from the Fillmore Terminal south on State Route 23 to Moorpark, serving a few stops in downtown Moorpark and at Moorpark College, with regular service through 7:00 p.m. as well as limited trips on weekends.

#### SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

Valley Express operates five primary routes, plus two seasonal tripper routes during the school year. The service is administered by VCTC and operated under contract.

Valley Express fixed-route service span varies by route, operating approximately from 6:00 a.m. to 7:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. Weekend service in Santa Paula and Piru runs from 8:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. and from 9:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. between Fillmore and Moorpark. When initially launched, the Santa Paula routes operated on a more consistent all-

day schedule, but by 2017, a decision was made to eliminate any trip carrying fewer than a certain threshold of passengers on average, resulting in an unusually fragmented schedule. The Fillmore, Piru, and new Fillmore–Moorpark routes all operate relatively regular schedules throughout the day.

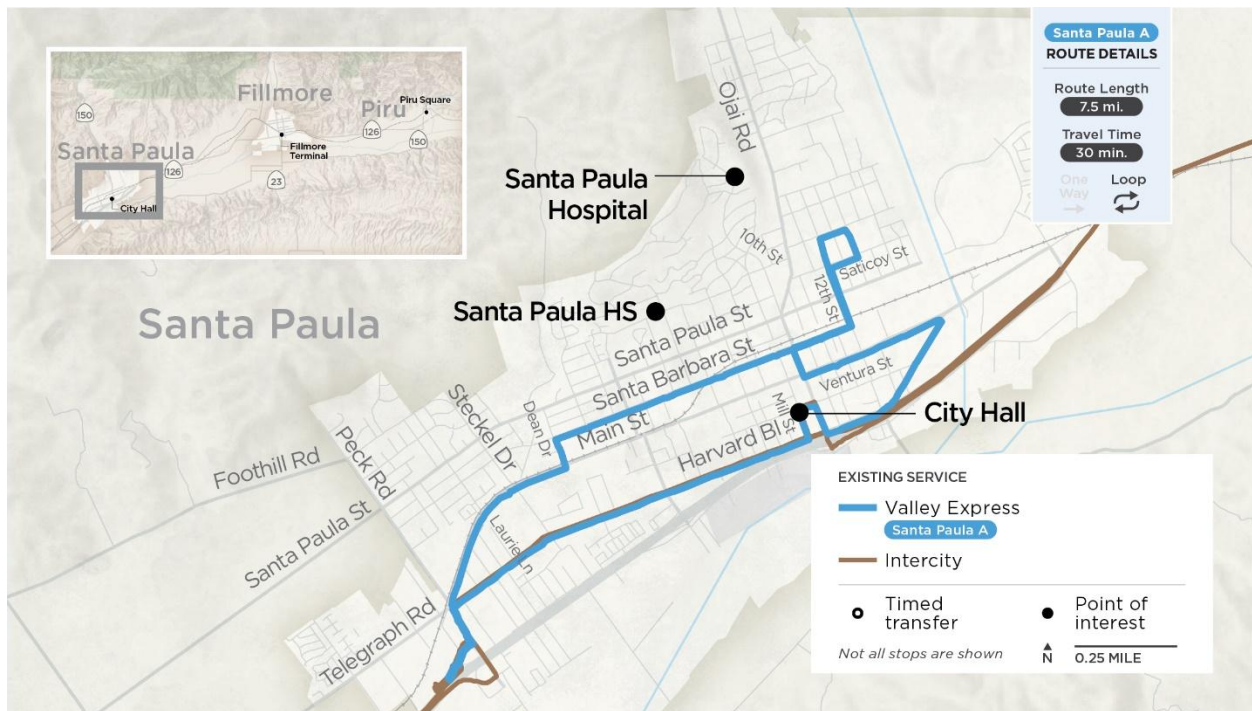
VCTC Intercity’s Highway 126 route provides intercity service within the Heritage Valley as well as regional connections to Saticoy and Ventura. The Highway 126 route operates seven days a week and makes local stops at the former Santa Paula Kmart, Santa Paula DMV, Santa Paula City Hall, and Fillmore Terminal but does not extend to Piru. Riders can transfer from any of the Valley Express fixed routes to the VCTC Intercity service for free.



SANTA PAULA ROUTE A

Santa Paula Route A covers 10th Street, Ojai Road, and Santa Barbara Street with about 32 stops, serving Las Piedras Park and shopping plazas. In FY24, Route A had 3 average daily boardings, likely due to the extremely limited operating schedule.

**Figure 46: Valley Express Santa Paula Route A**



SANTA PAULA ROUTE B

Santa Paula Route B operates along Main Street, Santa Paula Street, and Harvard Boulevard with 27 stops, providing access to Santa Paula Hospital, local schools, and shopping centers. In FY24, Route B had 2 average daily boardings, likely due to the extremely limited operating schedule and long gaps between trips.

Figure 47: Valley Express Santa Paula Route B



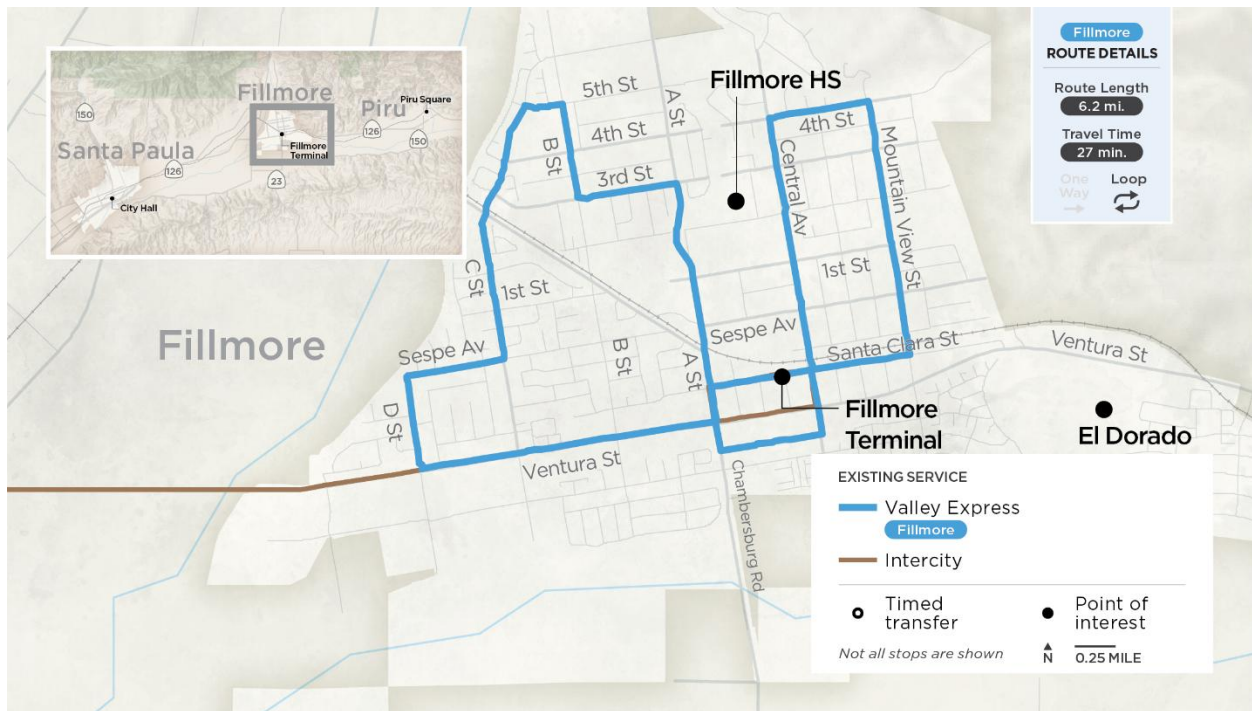
SANTA PAULA TRIPPER

Santa Paula Tripper (not shown) runs once a day during school days starting at 7:00 a.m., along Harvard Boulevard, Santa Paula Street, and 12th Street, with designated stops at or near schools. The bus schedule was updated in January 2023 to better align with school bells. In FY24, the Santa Paula Tripper had 2 average daily boardings, up from 1 average daily boarding in previous years.

**FILLMORE ROUTE**

Fillmore Route runs along Central Avenue, A Street, Mountain View Street, and Ventura Street with 27 stops, connecting to Fillmore Terminal, Library, City Hall, and shopping centers. In FY24, the Fillmore Route had five average daily boardings, which is exceptionally low despite operating relatively consistent service during the daytime. The span is limited with the last trip ending before 5:00 p.m.

**Figure 48: Valley Express Fillmore Route**



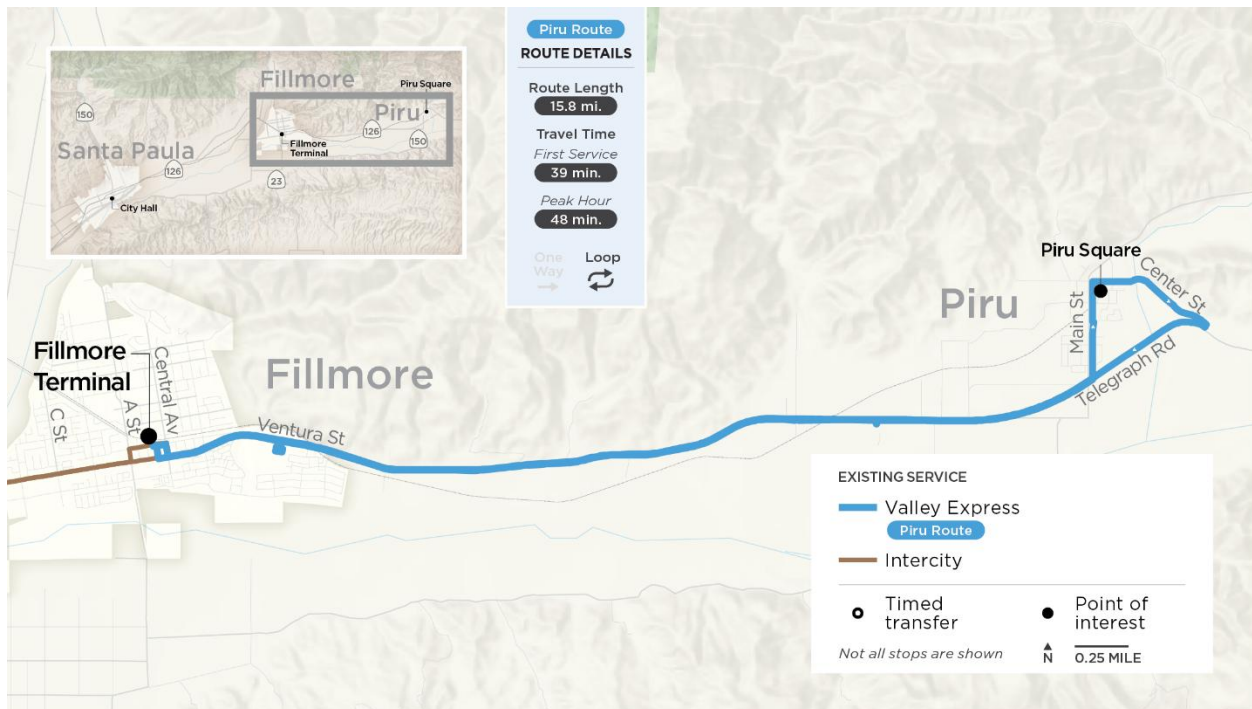
**FILLMORE RIO VISTA TRIPPER**

The Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper (not shown) is a student route that operates on school days. It runs once in the morning and twice in the afternoon, except on Thursdays, when it runs one afternoon trip. The route has 14 stops along various neighborhoods and at Rio Vista Elementary School. In FY24, the Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper had 28 average daily boardings.

## PIRU ROUTE

The Piru Route makes eight stops, linking Piru to Fillmore, and serves locations such as Piru Library and Fillmore Terminal. The route stops at a ninth location, Fillmore High School, twice a day. The Piru Route operates the most trips of any Valley Express service. In FY24, the Piru Route had 80 average daily boardings, the highest of any Valley Express Route. Students account for an estimated 40–50 percent of riders.

**Figure 49: Valley Express Piru Route**



## RIDERSHIP

Valley Express total annual fixed-route ridership was 37,193 in FY23. Total annual ridership is 25% lower than in 2015, with a high of 96,994 in FY16, and a low of 19,094 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in FY21. Valley Express ridership had been trending down even prior to the pandemic. Beginning on March 20, 2020, all Tripper services were suspended and not restored until August 2021. Fixed-route ridership had recovered to 71% of FY19 levels as of June 2023.

The Piru Route has the highest average daily weekday and weekend ridership, accounting for 77% of total fixed-route passenger trips. The Piru Route, along with the Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper, also saw the strongest recovery post-pandemic. The Santa Paula Route B and the Fillmore Route were most affected by the pandemic. These routes lost 90% or more of their ridership between FY19 and FY21 and recovered less than 35% of their pre-pandemic ridership as of June 2023, although it should be acknowledged that even the 2019 ridership for all but the Piru and Rio Vista Tripper routes was very low relative to service hours.

## SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

Over the last five years, service productivity in terms of passenger trips per revenue hour and passenger trips per revenue mile decreased at the system level. Passenger trips per revenue hour decreased by 29%. The Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper is the most productive route on weekdays, exhibiting the highest number of trips per revenue hour. This route caters to a dedicated ridership base – students in Fillmore who rely on it for their daily commute to school. The next most productive route during weekdays is the Piru Route. It operates most frequently and for more hours in the day than the other Valley Express fixed routes.

The systemwide average fare revenue per unlinked passenger trip was \$1.04, which is relatively close to the Valley Express base fare of \$1.25. The average fare revenue per trip was higher for both tripper routes than for the other fixed routes.

**Table 45: Valley Express Fare Revenue by Route, FY23**

Route	Farebox Revenue	Average Fare Revenue per Trip (Collected)	Regular One-Way Fare (Price)
<b>Santa Paula Route A</b>	\$1,004.91	\$0.93	\$1.25
<b>Santa Paula Route B</b>	\$704.09	\$0.88	\$1.25
<b>Santa Paula Tripper</b>	\$393.42	\$1.19	\$1.25
<b>Fillmore Route</b>	\$1,301.62	\$0.97	\$1.25
<b>Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper</b>	\$6,167.61	\$1.21	\$1.25
<b>Piru Route</b>	\$30,167.24	\$1.06	\$1.25

Source: Valley Express, 2024.

### *ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY*

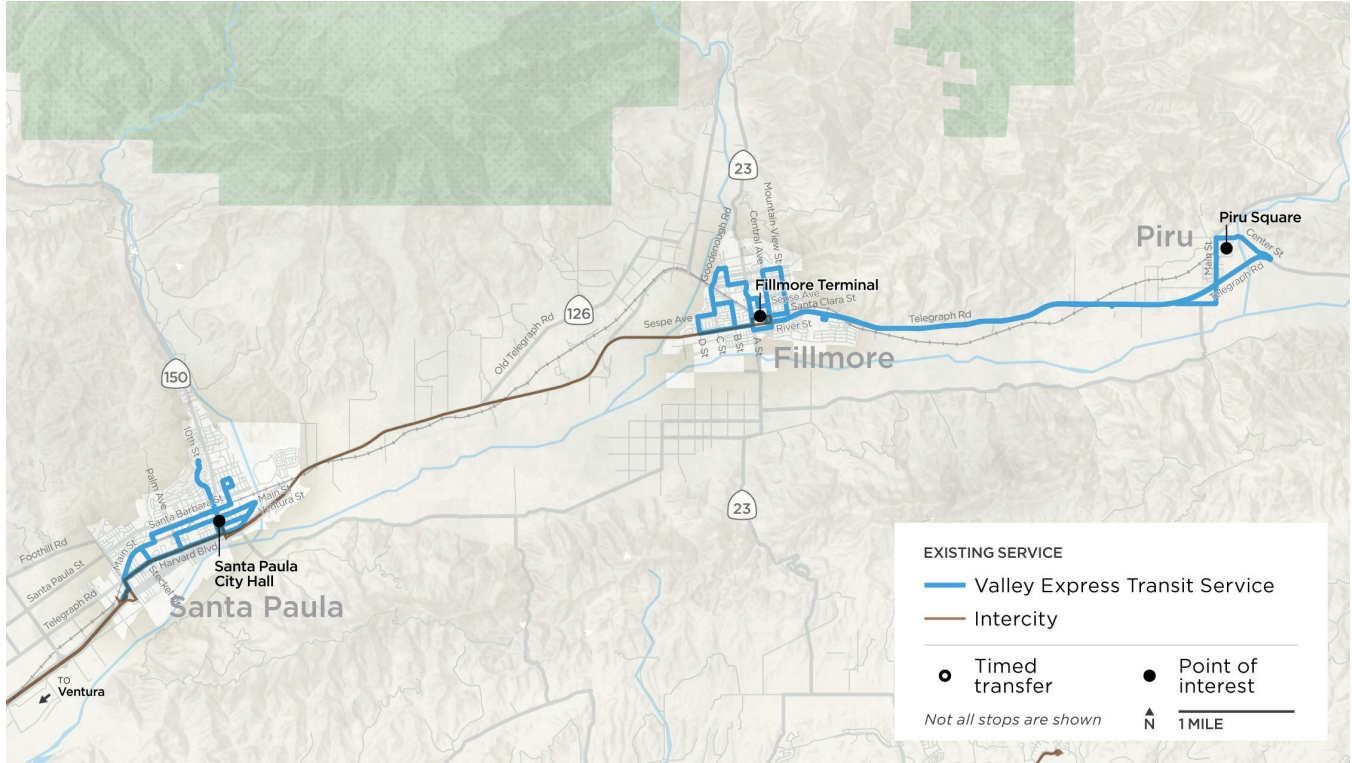
Valley Express received a total of 20 on-board survey responses. Most respondents to the survey were satisfied with their overall experience of bus service on Valley Express. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.75 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus operators and the safety onboard the bus. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were the need to transfer during a journey and bus schedules being readily available. The low number of total survey responses reflects the overall daily ridership across the system and supported by those who responded that a barrier to using Valley Express is the lack of service at some times of day.

### *EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW*

Valley Express invested in new fixed-route service in 2015, which increased total cost but also resulted in a parallel increase in overall ridership. However, fixed-route service cuts were made within a year and resources were redistributed back to general public Dial-a-Ride services. Ridership trends reflect this disinvestment in fixed-route service with a disproportionate drop in ridership compared to the percentage decrease in service hours.

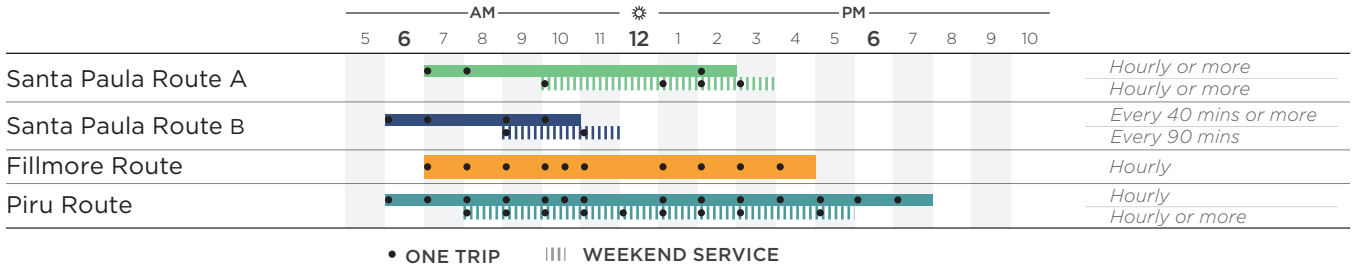
Fixed-route operating costs were relatively stable between FY18 and FY21 but began to increase post-pandemic resulting in a 34% increase from FY19 to FY23. Due to declining ridership since FY16, the agency's fixed-route operating cost per revenue hour has steadily increased each year. Annual operating cost per trip and per revenue hour more than doubled over the last five years. Although the Piru Route has the highest total operating cost among Valley Express routes, it demonstrates the importance of investing in a higher degree of regular service throughout the day by carrying by far the highest number of passengers and recovering relatively quickly from the pandemic.

## AGENCY ROUTE MAP



## SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

### Service Span

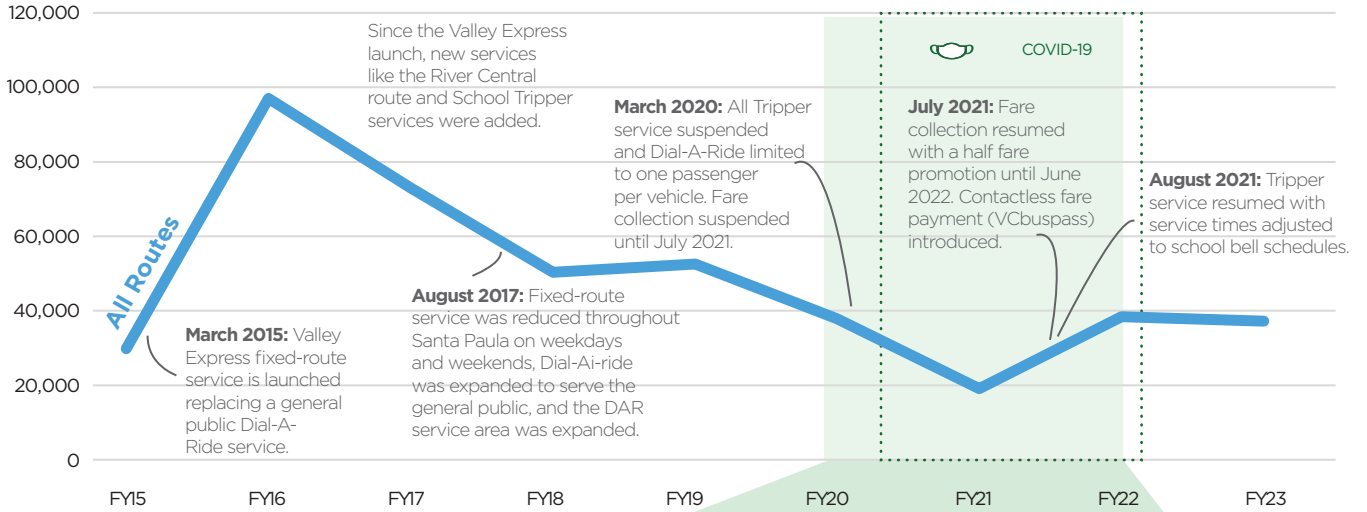


### Route Productivity FY23

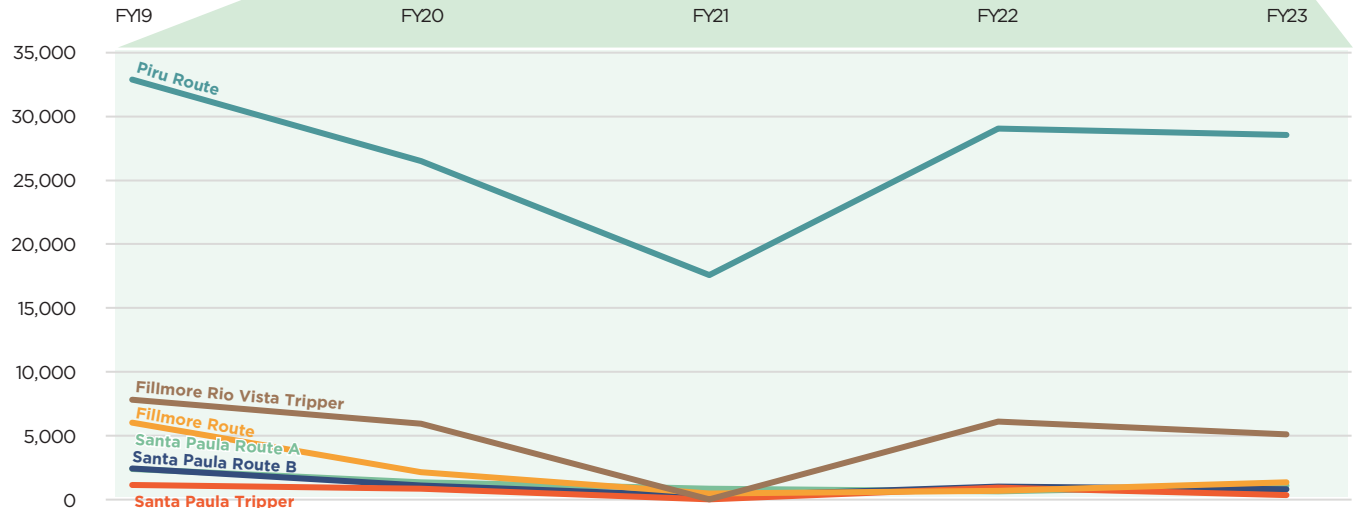
Route	Annual Ridership	Passengers per Revenue Hour			Revenue Hours			Operating Cost per Boarding
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	
Santa Paula A	1,075	2.2	0.4	0.4	493	116	112	\$71.86
Santa Paula B	799	1.1	0.3	0.4	753	56	54	\$71.86
Santa Paula Tripper	330	2.0	N/A	N/A	161	N/A	N/A	\$71.86
Fillmore Route	1,338	1.0	N/A	N/A	1,383	N/A	N/A	\$24.57
Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper	5,084	14.2	N/A	N/A	359	N/A	N/A	\$24.57
Piru Route	28,567	11.9	8.0	6.4	2,410	302	290	\$9.54

## AGENCY RIDERSHIP

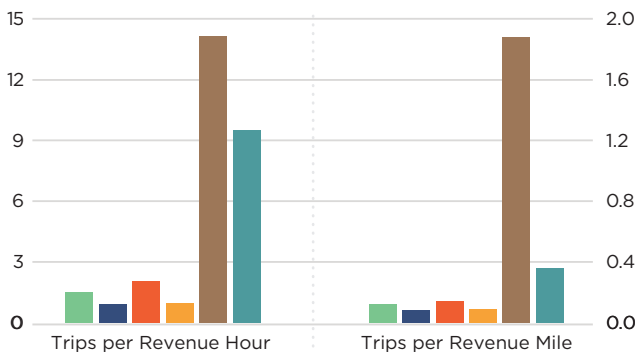
FY14 - FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership



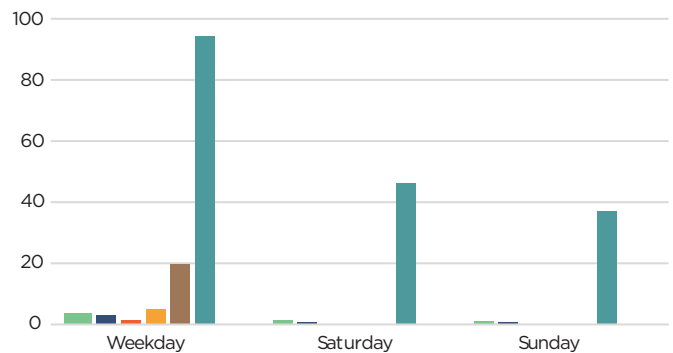
FY19 - FY23 Ridership by Route



FY23 Passenger Trips by Revenue Hour and Revenue Mile

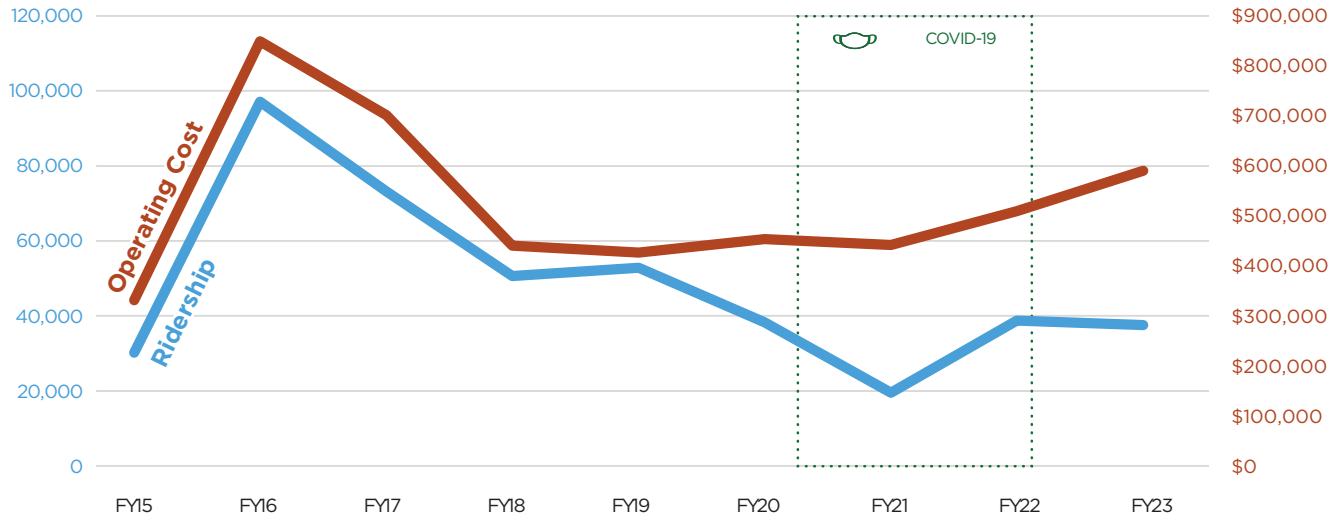


FY23 Average Daily Ridership

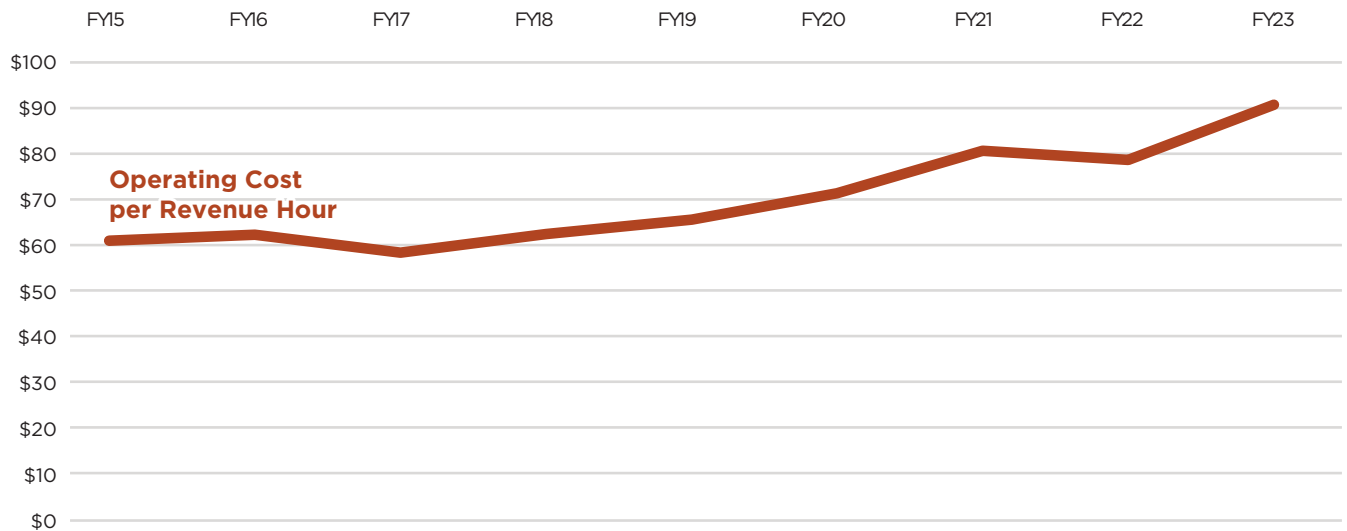


## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

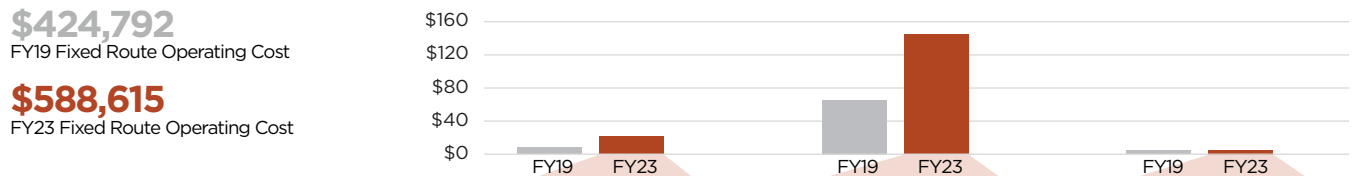
FY14-FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership in Relation to Annual Operating Cost



FY14 - FY23 Annual Fixed Route Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



FY19 and FY23 Systemwide Operating Costs



FY23 Operating Cost by Route

Route	Operating Cost	Operating Cost per Boarding	Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Operating Cost per Revenue Mile
Santa Paula A				
Santa Paula B	\$158,371.67	\$71.86	\$90.75	\$7.67
Santa Paula Tripper				
Fillmore Route				
Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper	\$157,778.10	\$24.57	\$90.60	\$8.73
Piru Route	\$272,465.63	\$9.54	\$90.76	\$3.46

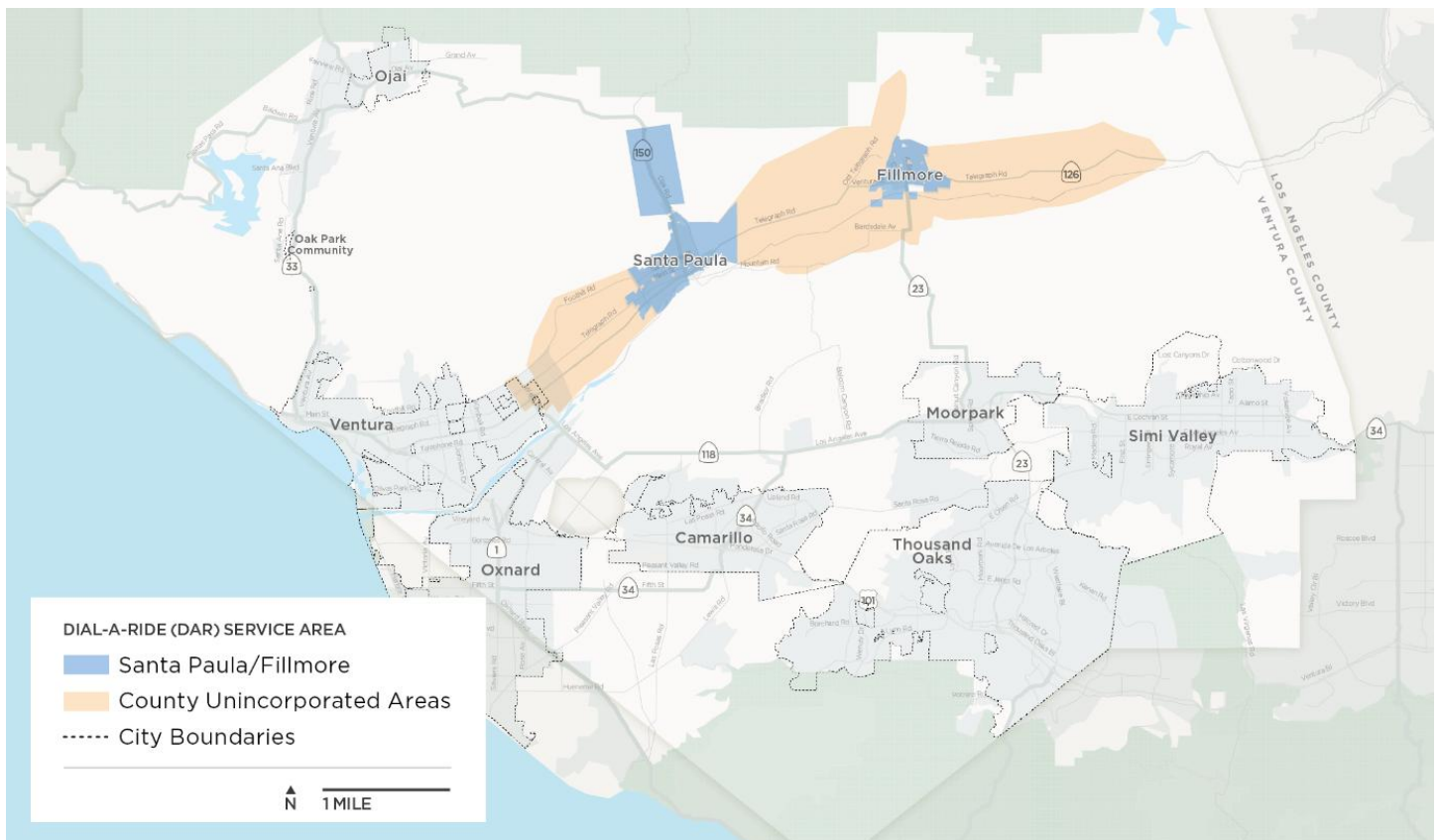
## VALLEY EXPRESS: DEMAND-RESPONSE SERVICE

### RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Valley Express operates an ADA complementary paratransit program, serving persons with disabilities and seniors. The service also provides trips to general public riders if there is availability. There are differences in where riders can travel within the greater Valley Express service area:

- ADA riders and seniors can travel across the Heritage Valley within the service area highlighted in Figure 50. They can also transfer to GCTD’s Dial-a-Ride service at the Valley Express GCTD-GO ACCESS transfer point at Wells Road in Saticoy.
- General public riders can use the Dial-a-Ride service to travel within Santa Paula city limits, within Fillmore city limits, and to/from the ADA zone and the nearest city.

**Figure 50: Valley Express Dial-a-Ride Service Area**



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Valley Express' Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 46:

**Table 46: Valley Express Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics**

Valley Express Dial-a-Ride	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Passenger Trips</b>	36,756	27,435	14,744	17,459	16,097
<b>Revenue Hours</b>	15,436	15,397	11,629	12,443	14,101
<b>Revenue Miles</b>	195,882	177,154	113,108	102,114	96,890
<b>Operating Cost</b>	\$1,012,595	\$1,136,347	\$977,629	\$1,079,652	\$1,282,461
<b>Passengers per Hour</b>	2.4	1.8	1.3	1.4	1.1
<b>Passengers per Mile</b>	0.19	0.15	0.13	0.17	0.17
<b>Cost per Passenger</b>	\$27.55	\$41.42	\$66.31	\$61.84	\$79.67
<b>Cost per Hour</b>	\$65.60	\$73.80	\$84.07	\$86.77	\$90.95
<b>Cost per Mile</b>	\$5.17	\$6.41	\$8.64	\$10.57	\$13.24

Source: Valley Express, 2024.

Ridership on the Valley Express Dial-a-Ride program is slowly rebuilding, still down 56% from FY19 ridership (37,000 annual trips). The service provided just over 16,000 trips in FY23, or roughly 300 passenger trips per week. Productivity is significantly down over that same period, from a high of 2.4 rides per hour to the most recently reported 1.1 rides per hour in FY23. Both indicators may reflect the program's difficulty in hiring sufficient bus drivers. A lack of drivers means the program sometimes struggles to fulfill all requested trips.

Revenue hours are 9% below their pre-pandemic level. Despite increasing revenue hours by 1,000 hours between FY22 and FY23, rider comments note that general public trips are frequently denied. The program prioritizes ADA trips, as is required by law. This means that at peak hours, the system capacity is sometimes unable to accommodate general public requests.

Cost per passenger is \$80/trip, almost three times its pre-pandemic cost of \$28. Cost per revenue hour, now at \$91 an hour, reflects the new operations contract commencing during 2023. Increased operating expense overall contributes to the \$1.3 million annual operating costs, up 27% from FY19. Despite significant reductions in service outputs of revenue hours, fewer than half the revenue miles were provided that year and less than half the trips delivered.

## OPERATIONS TOPICS

Prior to the formation of Valley Express in 2015, demand-response services were provided in the Heritage Valley by VISTA Dial-a-Ride and VCTC Intercity was the area's only fixed-route service provider. Given year-over-year increases in demand for demand-response

trips, in 2015, the HVTAC decided to introduce a fixed-route service (21,070 annual revenue hours) and decrease demand-response service in the Heritage Valley by 68%, from 32,400 revenue hours to 10,500. Concurrently, the Heritage Valley service area for general public demand-response riders was limited to trips which started/ended within ¼ mile of fixed-route service. ADA certified riders were allowed to travel within the communities without restriction.

In October 2015, the HVTAC recommended reducing fixed-route service by almost 30%, while increasing demand-response services about 47%. Demand-response fares were also standardized at this time to \$2.00. HVTAC recognized this would increase demand for paratransit services (an issue they dealt with in the past) but thought the availability of fixed-route services would offset this. The goals stated by HVTAC for these changes were to *"Increase ridership on the Valley Express System as a whole"* and *"maintain or reduce service costs."*

Further changes were made in July 2017 when HVTAC recommended cutting fixed-route service drastically and removing the requirement that general public DAR rides start/end within the 1/4-mile buffer from fixed-route services. The reductions in fixed-route service made at that time (roughly two years after the introduction of the fixed-route network) were based upon ridership levels, specifically whether the route in question routinely performed above or below the threshold of 7.6 passengers per hour.

## RESOURCES

The fleet consists of 15 vehicles (all cutaways of varying sizes), for both fixed-route service and demand-response. Currently, five are regularly used in demand-response service and the others are rotated between the two services.

Valley Express demand-response services operates with three full-time and two part-time employees with responsibilities of call-taking/reservations, trip scheduling, and vehicle dispatch. In addition there are two supervisors over the entire Valley Express program. Staff report that all public-facing positions are held by persons who are bi-lingual in English and Spanish, in an effort to be responsive to a region that is 65%–75% Spanish speaking.

As of May 2024, the program had funding for 16 full-time positions, but only 11 positions were filled. The current driver shortage impacts service, as it limits the times to which trips requests can be negotiated, and the system's ability to provide trips to general public riders.

## TRIP SCHEDULING

ADA riders may make trip reservations up to 7 days in advance. General public riders can only request a trip on the day of service, and it is only served if there is available capacity. Procedures are in place to establish subscription trip reservations for ADA riders. This feature is not available to general public riders.

Prior to switching to RideCo in late 2024, the agency was using TripSpark to computer-assist in trip scheduling and the development of driver manifests, which facilitated day-of-service dispatching. TripSpark did not have geofencing capabilities, so call-takers would work from their knowledge of service area differences between ADA and general public riders and community boundaries to schedule trips. Trip requests were batch scheduled by TripSpark the night before, not leaving any advance reservation trips unscheduled. Paper manifests were prepared for each driver on shift. Reportedly, these were not revised during the day of service, except to advise drivers of cancelled trips or to add-in same-day trip reservations.

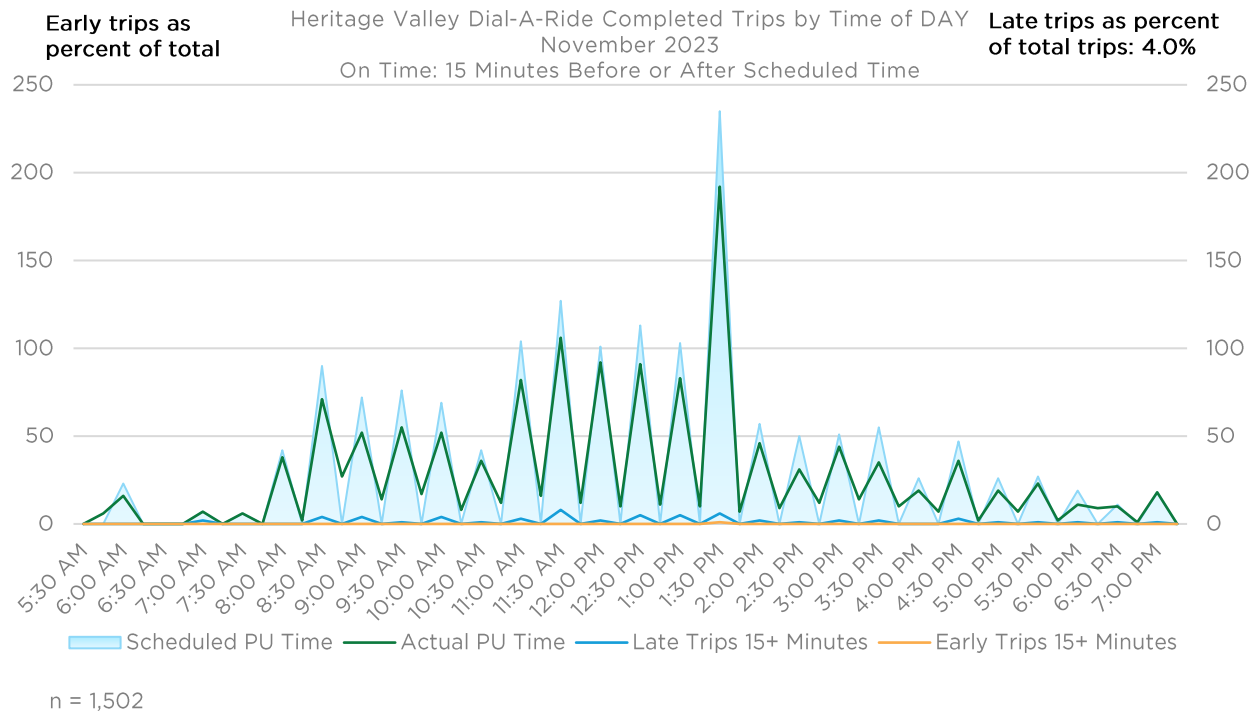
## ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented below. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. The analysis determines on-time performance by calculating the total number of actual pick-up times that fall outside of a 30-minute “on-time” window, defined as 15 minutes before the scheduled time to 15 after.

The on-time performance analysis for Valley Express’ Dial-a-Ride program shows a service pattern of greater demand in the mornings with peak demand at 1:30 p.m. in the afternoon. Trip demand is reduced in the late afternoon, and the last trips are served around 7:00 p.m. Late trips more than 15 minutes beyond the scheduled time represent 4% of all trips served, while only 0.1% of trips were recorded as arriving early, both within the standard for on-time performance.

During the analysis of trip delivery, it was noted that Valley Express is scheduling all pick-ups in 30-minute intervals, every half hour. Improved efficiency can be achieved by reducing booking intervals to no more than 15 minutes, more evenly spreading trip demand over the course of the day.

**Figure 51: Valley Express Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance**



Source: Valley Express, 2024 Transfer Trips.

GCTD has reported the transfer trip level at the transfer location at Wells Road and Telegraph in Oxnard as averaging five to six trips per month. Valley Express management reports that most trips originate in Santa Paula and travel into Oxnard, with fewer trips originating in Oxnard. Valley Express dispatchers coordinate with GCTD dispatchers to arrange the pick-up time, when requested by the rider.

Managers report that the transfers would run more smoothly if the timing of pickups was improved. Several time in the recent past, Valley Express vehicles have had to return to the transfer point for the outbound trip when the GO ACCESS vehicle did not arrive.

## EXPANDING TRIP NEED IN HERITAGE VALLEY COMMUNITIES

Valley Express demand-response covers some growing areas not served by fixed-route service. New developments are planned or underway in areas that include:

- The Bridges housing development in Fillmore
- The Harvest at Limonaria planned community in Santa Paula
- Planned relocation of the Santa Paula Hospital onto Highway 126 expected in three to four years' time.

Common destinations served by this demand-response service include two dialysis facilities in Santa Paula. The Santa Paula Senior Center and the Fillmore Active Adult Center are also recurring trip generators. The Santa Paula Hospital discharge staff and emergency room staff often call Dial-a-Ride to transport patients to their homes.



## Valley Express: Gaps and Opportunities

### PEOPLE



#### SENIORS

Access for seniors and people with disabilities is primarily focused on the paratransit/dial-a-ride service. Route coverage in each community is good and oriented towards key destinations like senior centers and grocery stores, but service frequency and patterns are inconsistent and there is little incentive to use fixed-route options over DAR.



#### GENERAL POPULATION

Coverage and frequency are reasonable for the size and population of Fillmore and Piru. Santa Paula has characteristics like higher population and a dense, walkable core which could support higher levels of transit service. There has been a major expansion of housing in the east end of Santa Paula that is currently underserved by transit.



#### STUDENTS

Middle and high schools are served by routes, and service between Piru and Fillmore is particularly strong. School tripper service is well-used as long as it is aligned to school bell schedule. However, general routes in Santa Paula were not well scheduled to support school travel in past years. A once-a-day service cannot afford to be misaligned to school bells.

### PLACES



#### COVERAGE

Service coverage in Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru is better than expected for relatively compact, walkable towns. However, the routes have not been updated to support newer housing developments that are separated/further from the historic cores in any of the three communities.



#### WALKABILITY

Most of these communities are relatively compact and walkable with older grid development and central main street-style downtowns better suited to transit compared to much of Ventura County. Even newer housing developments are relatively walkable within the developments but are largely separated from the historic neighborhoods.



#### REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The communities are connected to Ventura by VCTC Intercity service and a newly-formed route to Moorpark over the mountains. However, there is no service east to Santa Clarita, nor any direct service to Ojai.

## SERVICE DESIGN



### *FIXED-ROUTE DIRECTNESS*

The Santa Paula routes and the Fillmore route are loops, which are often a reasonable design. However, these towns are fairly compact and walkable, so looping and twisting to provide front-door service to as many unique destinations as possible slows cycle times to the point that many people may be able to walk directly to their destination as fast as the bus could get them there. The expansion of development away from the center of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru presents an opportunity to extend more straight-line service through these towns.



### *FIXED-ROUTE FREQUENCY*

Service levels for these communities does not reflect the minimum level expected to support the demographics, travel activity, and development pattern. The Piru route is successful and operates a regular hourly schedule throughout the day. The Santa Paula routes were initially successful in 2016 with regular service frequency, but ridership dwindled to fewer than a handful of riders a day after schedules were severely cut.



### *SPAN*

The route network span of service is limited and uneven across the services. The Santa Paula routes operate limited trips only until about 3 p.m. and the Fillmore route ends before 5 p.m. Only the Piru and new Fillmore-Moorpark routes operate later. However, the travel market analysis suggests that travel volumes throughout the community actually peak in the 6 o'clock hour and remain relatively high through 8 p.m.



### *Balance of Services*

Local DAR trips are open to the general public in Santa Paula and Fillmore, leaving little incentive for anyone to use the local fixed routes. Conversely, DAR is not available between communities and the VCTC service on 126 and the Piru route are relatively successful compared to other Valley Express routes.

Although DAR is more expensive per trip than the fixed-route service, the difference in price is evidently not enough to incentivize the use of the fixed-route service.

## Valley Express: Service Recommendations

This section provides recommendations for transit services operated by Valley Express, including the design and operation of its fixed-route services, the structure of its demand-response program, funding strategies, and capital planning. The SRTP vision for Valley Express focuses on better aligning fixed-route services with current development patterns, and policy changes for the Dial-A-Ride program.

1. Redesign fixed-route services in Santa Paula and increase to regular all-day operation
2. Combine existing Fillmore loop with Fillmore-Moorpark route, and continue hourly operation
3. Minor modifications for Piru-Fillmore route, with continued hourly operation
4. Modify fare structure and policy to incentivize riders to use new route network
5. Maintain school trippers and regularly review timing and coordination with schools

### ROUTE CHANGES

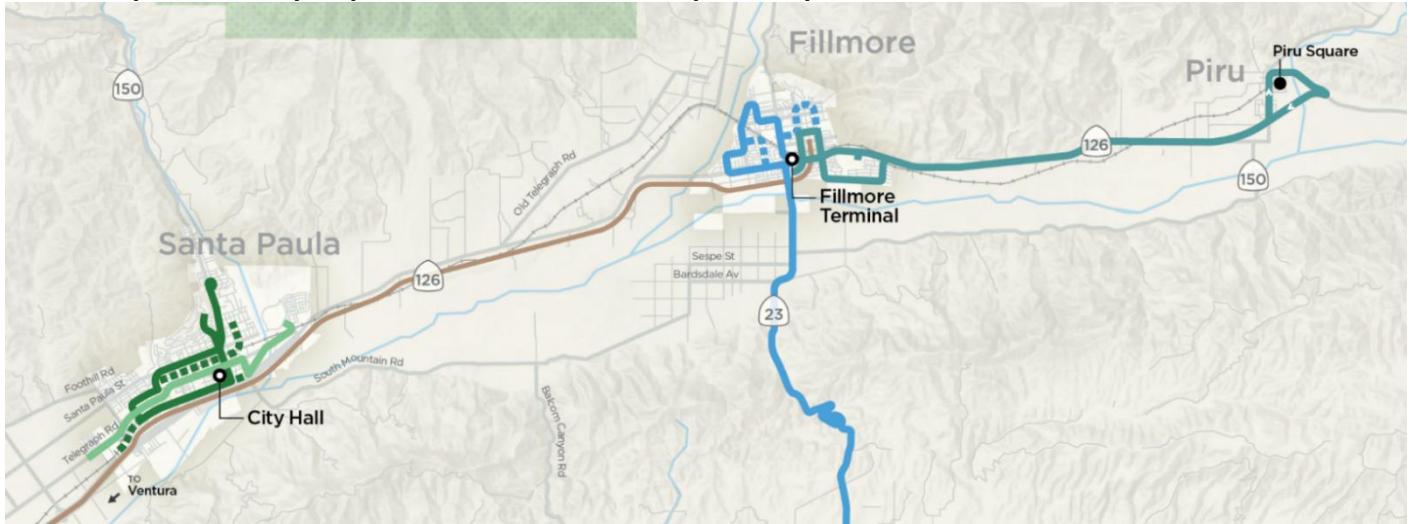
This SRTP recommends updating the local circulator routes to serve the more recently developed areas in the Santa Clara River Valley that are currently underserved by transit, as well as revitalizing fixed-route service in Santa Paula.

The proposed concept redesigns the two routes in Santa Paula to be more direct, while expanding service to newer residential areas such as the neighborhoods along North Ojai Road and the Harvest at Limoneira development. Santa Paula concept Route 61 would operate primarily on Main Street between the Harvest development and the Santa Paula West Mobile Home Park, while Santa Paula concept Route 62 would operate as a loop and serve key destinations like Santa Paula High School and the hospital.

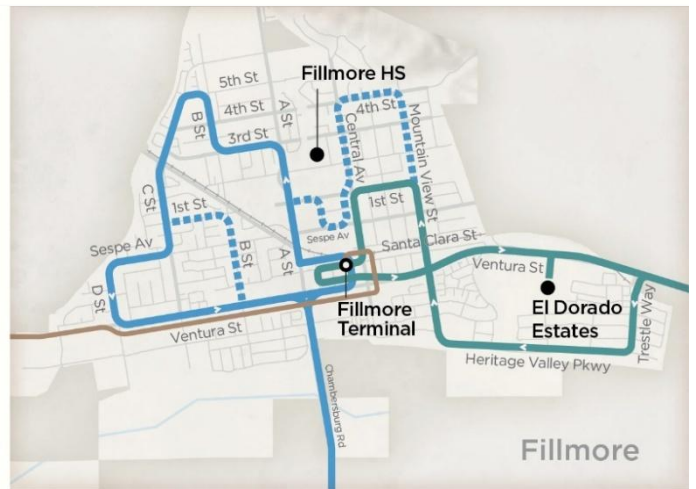
The Piru (proposed number Route 65) and Fillmore-Moorpark (proposed number Route 66) routes would make additional stops in Fillmore. The Piru Route would also expand to serve the Heritage Grove development. The Fillmore-Moorpark and Piru routes would run hourly, while the two routes in Santa Paula could run every 40 minutes. All routes would operate from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekends. The current Fillmore Route, which operates in a loop, would be discontinued.

Valley Express should introduce a tiered pricing structure for citywide Dial-A-Ride. Charging more for general public Dial-A-Ride within areas served by fixed-route service would incentivize riders to use the expanded fixed route system, and reduce overlapping transit services. Today, local DAR trips are open to the general public in Santa Paula and Fillmore, leaving little incentive for anyone to use the local fixed routes.

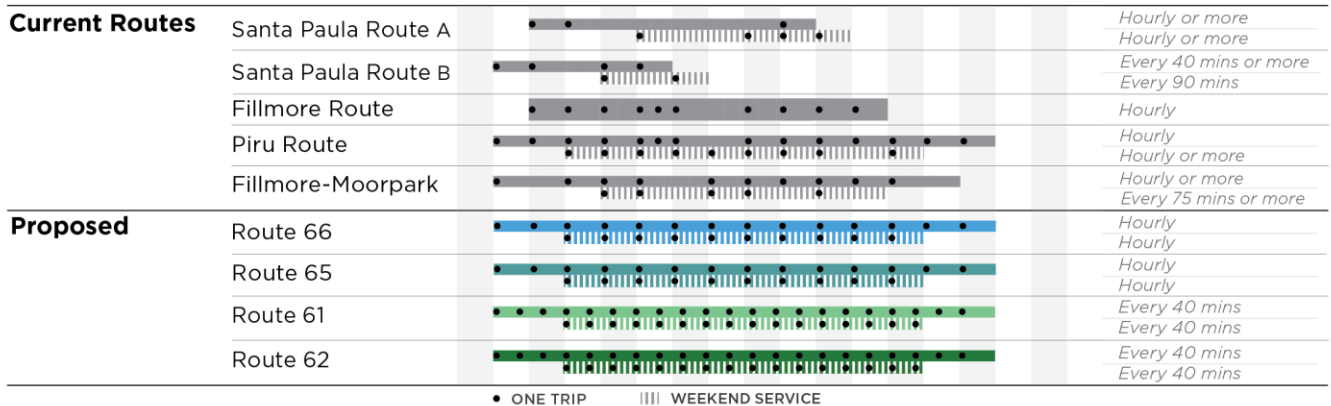
Figure 52: Proposed Valley Express Fixed Route Concept and Span of Service



- PROPOSED SERVICE**
- Route 66 (Blue line)
- Route 65 (Teal line)
- Route 61 (Light Green line)
- Route 62 (Dark Green line)
- REMOVED SERVICE**
- Fillmore Loop (Dotted Blue line)
- Santa Paula A/B (Dotted Green line)
- EXISTING SERVICE**
- Intercity (Brown line)
- Not all stops are shown
- Timed transfer (Circle with dot)
- Point of interest (Black dot)
- Scale: 1 MILE
- North Arrow (N)



**Span of Service**



**Table 47: Overview of Proposed Service Changes in Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru**

Key Change	Benefits	Considerations
<b><i>Redesign local circulator services</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improved routing in Santa Paula and Fillmore will make the system easier to understand and shorten travel times</li> <li>– New stops in residential areas underserved by transit, including Harvest development in Santa Paula and Heritage Grove in Fillmore</li> <li>– Directness and frequency improvements compare better to walking and driving times in town</li> <li>– Reorganization of Fillmore services makes better utilization of service hours from underperforming loop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– VCTC Intercity Highway 126 service will continue to provide intercity connections</li> <li>– Some neighborhood portions of Fillmore may need to walk further to reach redesigned services</li> <li>– Proposed Route 62 may be further streamlined once the hospital is relocated</li> </ul>
<b><i>Regular hourly or better service on all routes between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All-day coverage will make transit a more feasible option for local trips</li> <li>– Expanded span of service will enable more commuters to use transit to get to/from home (currently only Piru Route operates until 8:00 p.m.)</li> </ul>	
<b><i>Tiered pricing structure for Dial-A-Ride</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Maintains a general public Dial-A-Ride option within Santa Paula and Fillmore</li> <li>– Maintains discounted Dial-A-Ride for seniors and people with disabilities</li> <li>– Incentivizes riders to use the fixed-route system</li> <li>– Maximizes effectiveness of transit funding to serve the most people while maintaining citywide coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– General public DAR fares will increase for trips within a quarter mile of a fixed route transit stop if the rider does not qualify for senior/ADA fare</li> </ul>

## PROPOSED FARES AND POLICY CHANGES

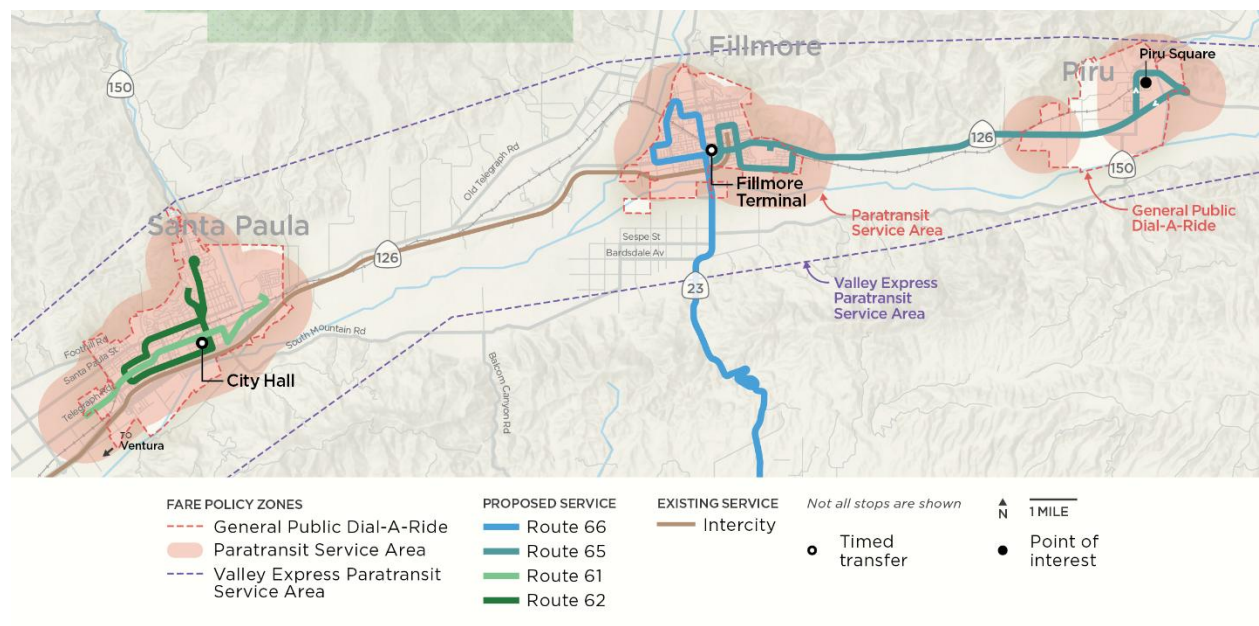
As mentioned above, the proposed fare system for Valley Express would include an initial base increase, changes to the pricing structure, and a later additional increase to sustain the added investment in the system. Price increases should occur in two phases over the course of at least two years, but not more than five. The recommendation is to implement the Phase 1 fare change in conjunction with the launch of the new bus routes. The Phase 2 fare change should be implemented two years later, allowing time for the new service to become

established. See the section on performance standards and monitoring for more implementation guidance.

**Table 48: Proposed Fare Changes, Phase 1 & 2**

	Bus Routes Current	Dial-A-Ride Current	Bus Routes Proposed Phase 1	Dial-A-Ride Proposed Phase 1	Bus Routes Proposed Phase 2	Dial-A-Ride Proposed Phase 2
Base Fare	\$1.25	\$2.00	\$1.50	\$3.00 for general public trips outside route area. \$5.00 for general public trips with both ends near a route.	\$2.00	\$4.00 for general public trips outside route area. \$6.00 for general public trips with both ends near a route.
Senior (65+) and People with Disabilities (ADA)	\$0.60	\$2.00	\$0.75	\$3.00	\$1.00	\$3.00

**Figure 53: Proposed Valley Express Fixed Route Concept and Fare Zones**



### OTHER PROGRAM CHANGES

Adjust DAR reservation and scheduling policy to **serve non-ADA trips within the fixed route area only “space permitting.”** This will ensure that system capacity remains available for ADA-certified users. Valley Express may continue to offer DAR service to the general public, but should be clear that at peak times trips may be unavailable or have longer wait times for service. Microtransit apps such as RideCo and Via are capable of redirecting the user to the fixed-route service.

### SERVICE CHANGES FOR OTHER OPERATORS IN SANTA CLARA RIVER VALLEY

Except for some minor rerouting and stop location updates for the VCTC Intercity Highway 126 service (Route 60), no significant changes for other services are envisioned.

The Fillmore–Moorpark route (Route 66) could potentially expect additional local riders in Moorpark between the downtown area and Moorpark College. As described in the Moorpark City Transit section, the City of Moorpark is recommended to reduce its current fixed-route services where they overlap with the Valley Express and VCTC Intercity routes between the Moorpark Metrolink station and Moorpark College, instead relying on Valley Express and other routes to serve these riders.

### SUMMARY AND BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The planned service and fare changes will reallocate underutilized services in Santa Paula which are severely hampered by circuitous routing and infrequent service. Mobility will remain available to all residents by maintaining the DAR program’s current service area and shifting to a price-incentive model that should shift many trips to the fixed-route services. Additionally, modifications to the Fillmore-based routes will streamline operations and provide more single-seat rides, both within town and to other communities.

The transit service recommendations for Valley Express address the following key gaps and opportunities:

- Service coverage in Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru is reasonable, but the routes could benefit from fewer deviations, considering these are relatively compact, walkable towns.
- The routes have not been updated in any of the three communities to support newer housing developments that are further from the historic cores.
- The route network’s span of service is limited and inconsistent. The Santa Paula routes operate limited trips only until about 3:00 p.m., and the Fillmore route ends before 5:00 p.m. Only the Piru and new Fillmore–Moorpark routes operate later. However, the travel market analysis suggests that travel volumes throughout the

community actually peak in the 6 o'clock hour and remain relatively high through 8:00 p.m.

- Service levels for these communities does not reflect the minimum level expected to support the demographics, travel activity, and development pattern.
- The availability and pricing of general public DAR trips disincentivizes use of local fixed-route services.

## Financial Analysis and Implementation

Without any other changes, the proposed fixed route system represents a \$1,500,000 increase in annual operating cost for the agency due to the addition of 17,000 annual revenue hours needed to operate regular hourly or better service on the redesigned fixed routes. This estimate assumes no change to the fixed route's FY23 operating cost of \$90.71 per revenue hour, and that the proposed fixed-route service would operate for 14 hours on weekdays and 10 hours on weekends throughout the year.

A phased implementation would help mitigate this increase in fixed route operating resources. Beginning with a shorter span of service for the fixed routes, such as 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. will lower the initial cost.

The proposed route and pricing changes should also shift some of the existing demand, and therefore revenue hours from the Dial-A-Ride service. Data for the current Dial-A-Ride service indicates that 82% of Valley Express Dial-A-Ride trips serve general public riders, and **all of those general public trips have an origin along the proposed fixed routes**. This suggests the proposed fixed route system could be a cost-efficient alternative for many general public Dial-A-Ride trips, significantly reducing the number of trips the Dial-A-Ride system needs to serve. Additionally, 82% of senior/ADA Dial-A-Ride trips begin within a quarter mile of fixed route. Some portion of these may also shift to fixed route for riders with greater mobility and interest in paying less for their trip.

Assuming that 30% of the existing Dial-A-Ride volume could shift to fixed route (a relatively conservative assumption, given the above statistics), revenue hours for Dial-A-Ride could reduce by a similar amount. The proposed changes to the fixed route service on the other hand would dramatically improve fixed-route frequency and regularity, span of service, and timed connections to other routes.

Given the necessary level of investment in fixed route services, it is not initially feasible to achieve a budget-neutral version of the recommended investment. However, as detailed above, the increase in operating costs can be mitigated through a reduction in fixed-route span and revenue hours for Dial-A-Ride.

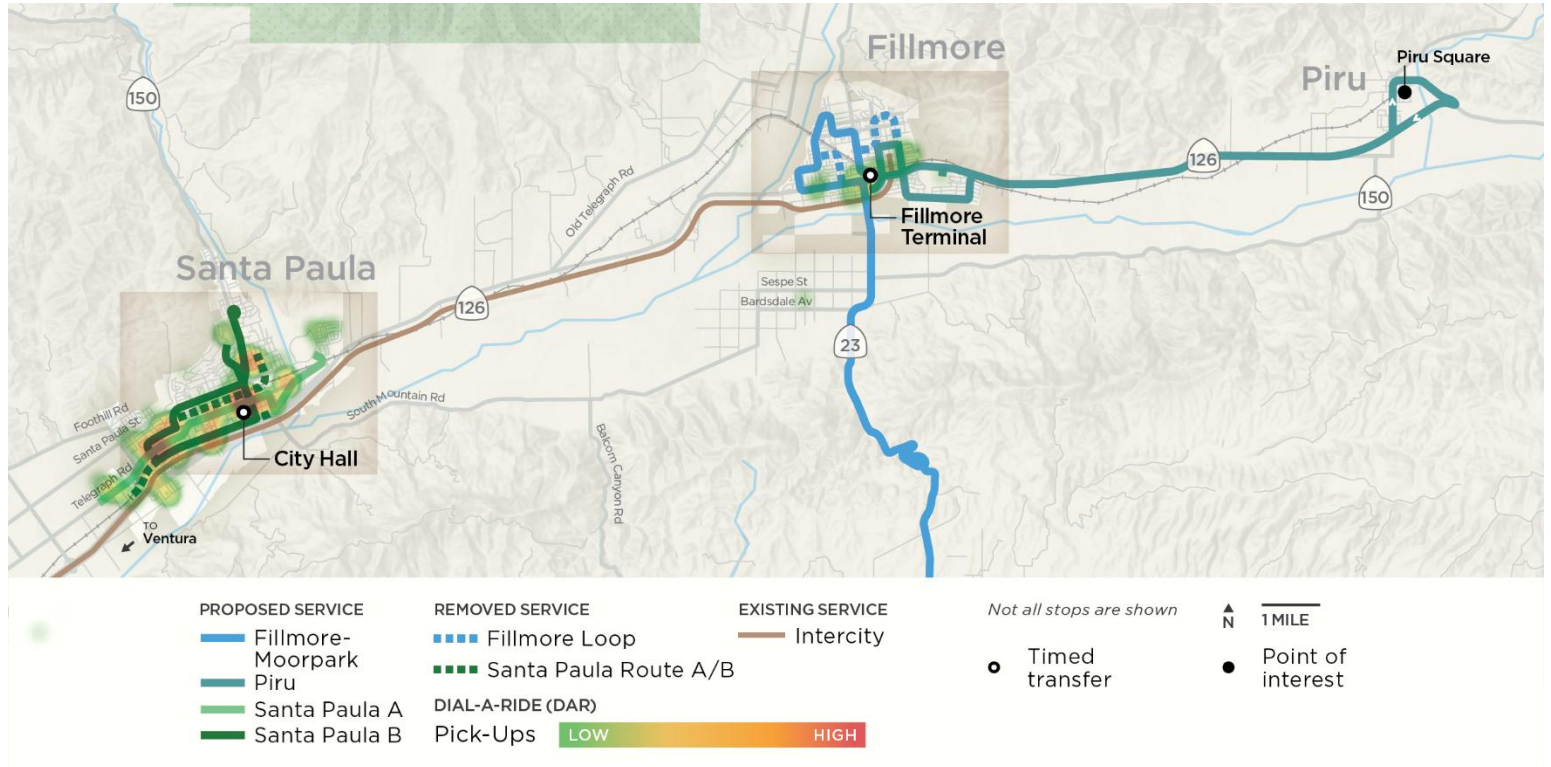
Finally, an evaluation of the current contractor operating practices identified several areas where contract changes including operating more regular and predictable fixed route will

further improve the cost-efficiency. Field observations identified instances where layovers between fixed route trips are excessively long, and where allocation of resources between DAR and fixed route is inefficient. An improved operating contract that incentivizes better performance on the DAR program, along with more direct management of fixed route scheduling and operating procedures, could help keep costs down and lower the DAR cost to help offset the increase in fixed route budget.

**Table 49: Operating Cost Estimates for Fully Implemented Proposed Valley Express Service Changes**

Transit Service	Daily Operating Hours <sup>1</sup>		Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Annual Revenue Hours		Annual Operating Cost	
	Current	Proposed		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
<b>Fixed Route</b>	varies	10-14	\$90.71	6,500	24,000	\$588,500	\$2,138,000
<b>Dial-A-Ride</b>	10-14	10-14	\$90.95	14,000	14,000	\$1,282,500	\$1,282,500
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	20,667	21,328	\$1,871,000	\$3,420,500

Figure 54: Valley Express Dial-A-Ride Trip Origins



## Capital Plan

Capital investment over the next 10 years for Valley Express will encompass some improvements to bus stop infrastructure and initial investment in an all-electric fleet per California Air Resource Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation.

### FLEET AND FACILITIES

Valley Express operates a fleet of 15 gas-powered cutaways and plans to begin transitioning to a fleet of 15 battery electric cutaways FY34.<sup>16</sup> These cutaways are used for both the fixed route (including the tripper service) and the Dial-A-Ride service. According to VCTC's 2023 ZEB Rollout and Implementation Plan, Valley Express intends to maintain a fleet of 15 cutaways after fully transitioning to a zero emission fleet. The planned transition to Battery Electric cutaways is planned to be complete by 2040. The estimated range of the battery electric vehicles evaluated in the VCTC ZEB Rollout and Implementation Plan was 90 miles for cutaways. This plan also estimated the range of fuel cell electric buses (FCEBs) at 160 miles, however, FCEB cutaways are not currently commercially available. Additionally, Valley Express's service is too isolated to leverage GCTD's planned hydrogen fueling facility, and the expenditure to create one accessible to Valley Express would be too large to justify. As a result, the ZEB Rollout and Implementation Plan assumes a future battery electric fleet.

If the range of BE cutaways does not improve in the next 10 years, Valley Express will need to expand its fleet to run the service proposed above. While most of the proposed routes can achieve the desired headways with a single vehicle, the daily weekday mileage required of each vehicle is higher than the range of these vehicles, meaning these routes would require two dedicated battery electric vehicles. Table 50 shows the necessary number of dedicated vehicles per route and the Dial-A-Ride service. With the addition of two spare vehicles, the fleet would need to be 18 battery electric cutaways to provide the proposed service.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ventura County Transportation Commission, "Ventura County Transportation Commission ZEB Rollout and Implementation Plan." May 2023.

<sup>17</sup> The table includes an assumption of spare vehicles for the Dial-A-Ride service. The 18 value is achieved by summing the numbers in the table and adding an addition two spare vehicles for fixed route service.

**Table 50: Battery Electric Vehicle Requirements for Proposed SRTP Fixed Route Concept**

Proposed Transit Service	Number of Vehicles Needed to Achieve Proposed Frequency	Daily Weekday Mileage per Vehicle <sup>1</sup>	Daily Weekend Mileage per Vehicle <sup>1</sup>	Battery Electric Vehicle and Range <sup>2</sup>	Battery Electric Vehicles Required
<i>Piru</i>	1	280	200	90	2
<i>Proposed Route 61</i>	1	190	140	90	2
<i>Proposed Route 62</i>	1	160	110	90	2
<i>Fillmore–Moorpark</i>	2	250	180	90	2
<i>Fillmore Tripper</i>	1	10	0.0	90	1
<i>Santa Paula Tripper</i>	1	20	0.0	90	1
<i>Dial-A-Ride</i>	6	70	60	90	6

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Daily mileage per vehicle for fixed route services is equal to the length of one trip multiplied by the number of daily trips, rounded up to the nearest ten. For DAR, daily mileage per vehicle was estimated based on current annual revenue miles, operating days/hours, and estimated daily vehicles in operation.

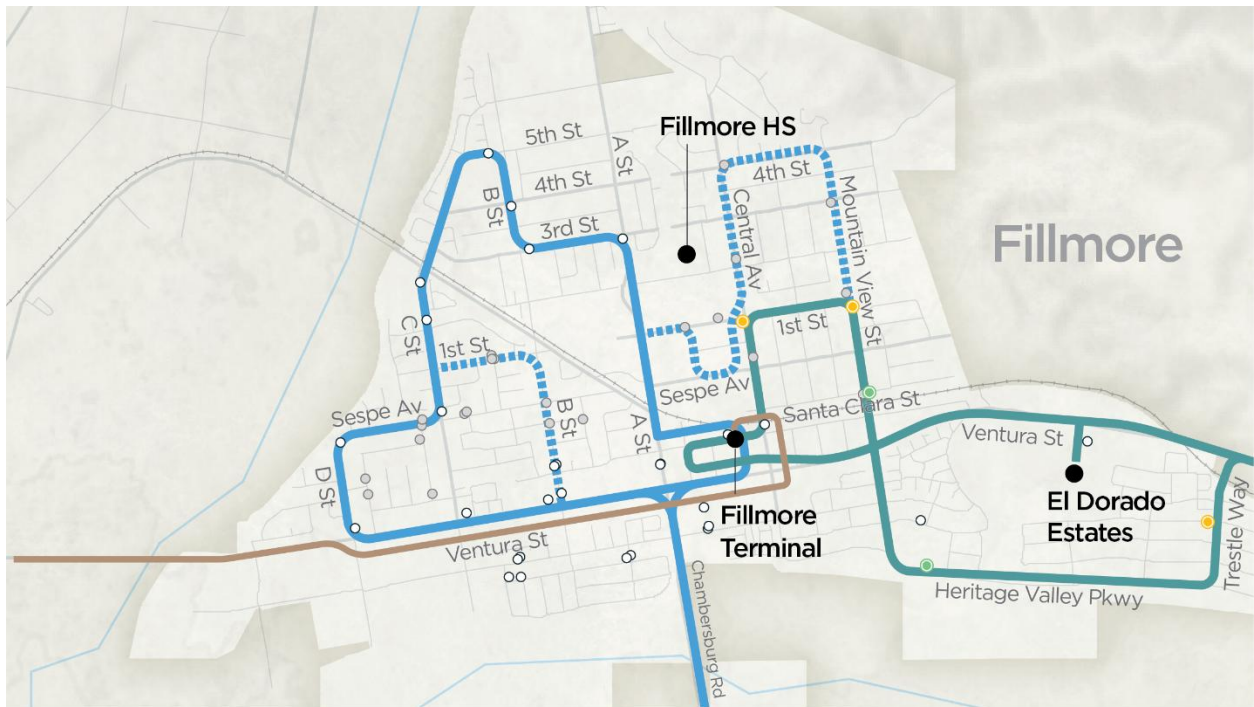
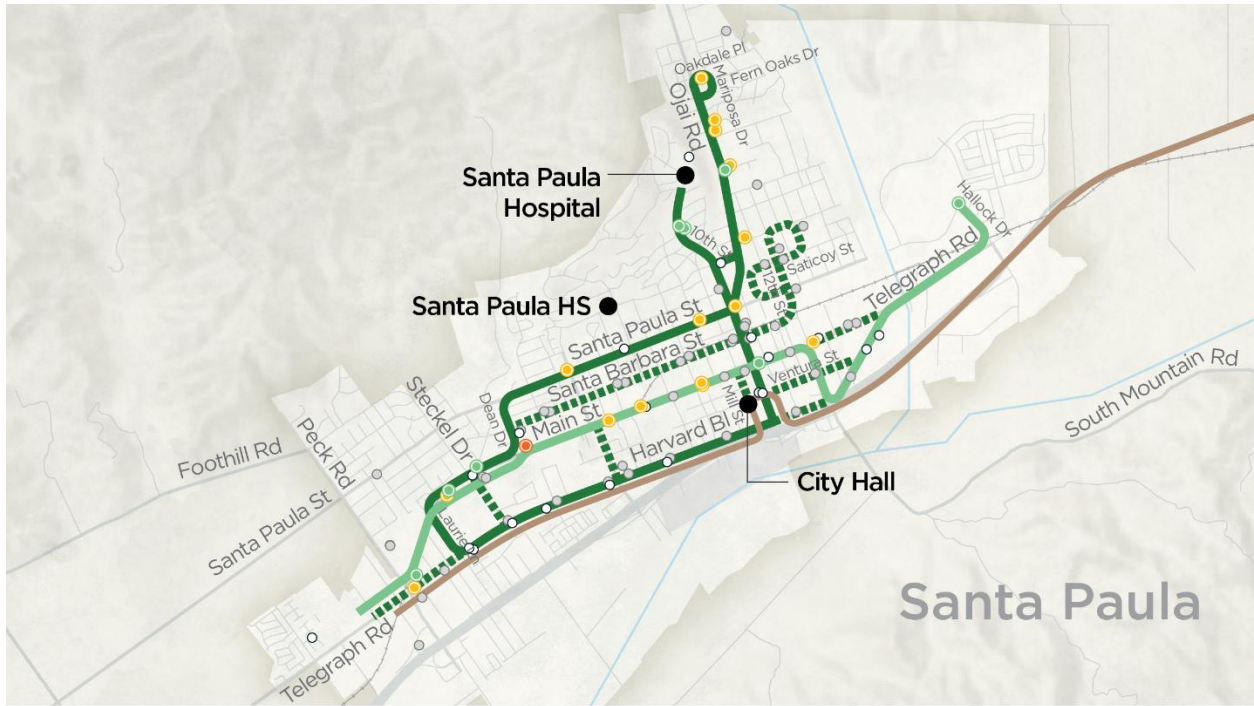
<sup>2</sup> CAT identified four EV options in the CAT ICT Rollout Plan: Motiv Power Systems Trolley, Lightning ZEV4, Lightning ZEV3, Rivian RIS. Lightning eMotors went out of business in 2024, so vehicle range estimates for the Lightning ZEV4 were replaced with the range estimates for the Motiv Shuttle on the company’s website.

Coordination between VCTC and the Valley Express member cities is required to find a location at which to install chargers that can be used to charge the Valley Express fleet. The infrastructure necessary to charge the fleet includes seven chargers and supporting infrastructure outlined in the ZEB Plan, which estimates the cost of deploying this equipment at \$1.58 million in 2023 dollars.

### BUS STOP INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed fixed-route services primarily streamline existing fixed-route services, reducing the amount of investment that will be needed for new stop infrastructure. Much of the investment in stop infrastructure will be associated with the removal of existing bus stop signage—the fixed routes in Santa Paula will make fewer deviations and will no longer operate along Santa Barbara Street. Additionally, a subset of bus stops in northwest Fillmore and in the residential areas between Sespe Avenue and Ventura Street west of A Street will be removed when the Fillmore Route is discontinued in place of expanded service on the Piru and Fillmore–Moorpark routes. A handful of new stops along the proposed routes could be implemented with the addition of bus stop signage, a relatively low-cost first step. Some of the new stops will require sidewalk improvements in addition to bus stop signage. Certain locations will require more extensive infrastructure before being served, because accessibility to the stop needs to be addressed, including in some cases the provision of marked crosswalks or other safety enhancements.

No changes to stops in Piru or Moorpark are required by the SRTP.



- |   |                     |                          |                 |                           |                 |                         |            |
|---|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| <b>PROPOSED STOP INFRASTRUCTURE TREATMENT</b> |                     | <b>PROPOSED SERVICE</b>  |                 | <b>REMOVED SERVICE</b>    |                 | <b>EXISTING SERVICE</b> |            |
| ○ Keep  | ● Install sign only | — Fillmore-Moorpark-Piru | — Santa Paula A | --- Fillmore Loop         | — Santa Paula B | — Intercity             | ▲ N        |
| ○ Remove                                      | ● Widen sidewalk    | — Intercity              | — Intercity     | --- Santa Paula Route A/B | — Intercity     | ● Point of interest     | 0.125 MILE |
|   | ● Major improvement |                          |                 |                           |                 |                         |            |

# 14.VCTC INTERCITY



VCTC Intercity Service connects the communities detailed in this report with one another, and with Santa Barbara County and Los Angeles County. See **Chapter 5** and the individual Market Assessment sections for each operator for a description of the communities and travel markets served by VCTC Intercity.

## Service Evaluation

VCTC operates the VCTC Intercity express routes, which are traditionally long-distance routes with limited stops that cater to commuters. VCTC also administers the Valley Express services, which are addressed separately.

### VCTC INTERCITY: FARES

VCTC currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

**Table 51: Agency Single-Ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type**

Service Type	Regular	Discounted <sup>1</sup>	Child (6 & under)	Student/Youth <sup>3</sup>	College Students <sup>3</sup>
<b>Fixed-Route<sup>2</sup></b>	Zone 1: \$1.75 Zone 2: \$4.00	Zone 1: \$0.80 Zone 2: \$2.00	Free	Free	Free

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.

<sup>2</sup> 10% off for all riders purchasing fare through VCbuspass.

<sup>3</sup> VCTC Intercity services are free for youth 18 and under, those over 18 enrolled in high school, and college students due to VCTC Youth Ride Free Program and College Ride Program, which are funded through June 2026.

Source: Agency websites, 2024.

### VCTC INTERCITY: FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE

#### SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

VCTC Intercity routes comprise an express/commuter bus service in Ventura County featuring six fixed routes with coverage across the County, including Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Saticoy, Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Somis, as well as California State University at Channel Islands (CSUCI). The Coastal Express service extends northwest of Ventura County to Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Goleta, and the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB). The Highway 101/Conejo Connection service extends east of Ventura County to Woodland Hills in Los Angeles County.

VCTC Intercity commuter/express bus service serves park-and-ride or major transit centers with few local street stops, and operates mostly on the highway between communities.

College students and employees at major job centers in the region and in Santa Barbara are the main rider markets and routes are very tightly aligned to the related destinations for these customers with few to no stops oriented directly to residential areas, assuming riders can get to a main stop by being dropped off, driving and parking, or using local connecting transit.

VCTC Intercity routes are grouped into six services:

- Highway 101
- Highway 126
- East County
- Cross County Limited
- Coastal Express
- Channel Islands

Within each of these groups, VCTC operates several distinct route patterns, each of which is described individually below. Note that some of the route variations operating at the time this content was originally drafted have since been discontinued or merged. VCTC has been working to provide a more uniform and legible service, but not all recent changes are reflected in the review of FY23 conditions below.

The services overall form a network of intercity routes within Ventura County and connecting to Santa Barbara or Los Angeles counties.

VCTC Intercity fixed-route **service span** varies by route between the hours of 4:00 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Saturday service is offered between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and Sunday service is limited to three routes: Highway 126, Coastal Express, and Channel Islands. VCTC Intercity does not operate on designated holidays. Most routes operate at a wide range of frequencies, meaning service is distributed unevenly throughout the day.

The end-to-end travel time for most VCTC Intercity routes is over an hour. Many routes have a one-way travel time that varies substantially, often by at least 30 minutes. It is common that a route takes longer during the peak hour due to traffic congestion (as well as higher passenger delay in some cases). Long distance routes along heavily congested routes can suffer significant delays. However, an advantage of express routes is that usually the end of the route is served as “drop-off only,” meaning new passengers are not being picked up and therefore the time estimates may actually be longer than normal conditions.

The following section describes and maps each of the route groups, followed by an analysis of the ridership and performance metrics across all of the routes.

### HIGHWAY 101/CONEJO CONNECTION (50-55)

The Highway 101/Conejo Connection service is made up of routes 50 and 55/55X, which operate along US 101 and collectively serve Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Woodland Hills. Weekday service extends to Woodland Hills to serve cross-county commuters, while weekend service is limited to stops between the Ventura Transit Center and the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center. The Highway 101/Conejo service previously consisted of four additional routes—Routes 51, 52, 53, and 54—which were eliminated in the fall of 2021 due to driver shortages and to improve overall performance. In FY24, the Highway 101/Conejo Connection service had 232 average daily boardings on weekdays and 133 average daily boardings on Saturdays.

**Figure 55: VCTC Intercity Highway 101/Conejo Connection Route 50**

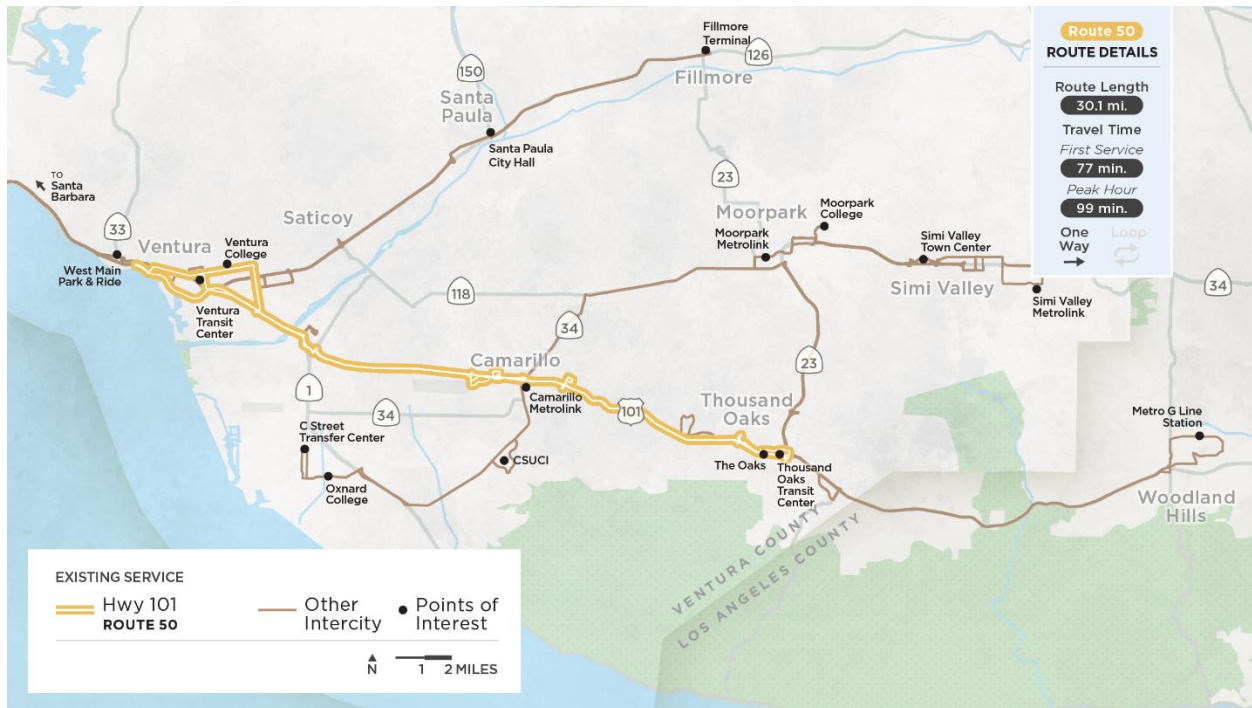
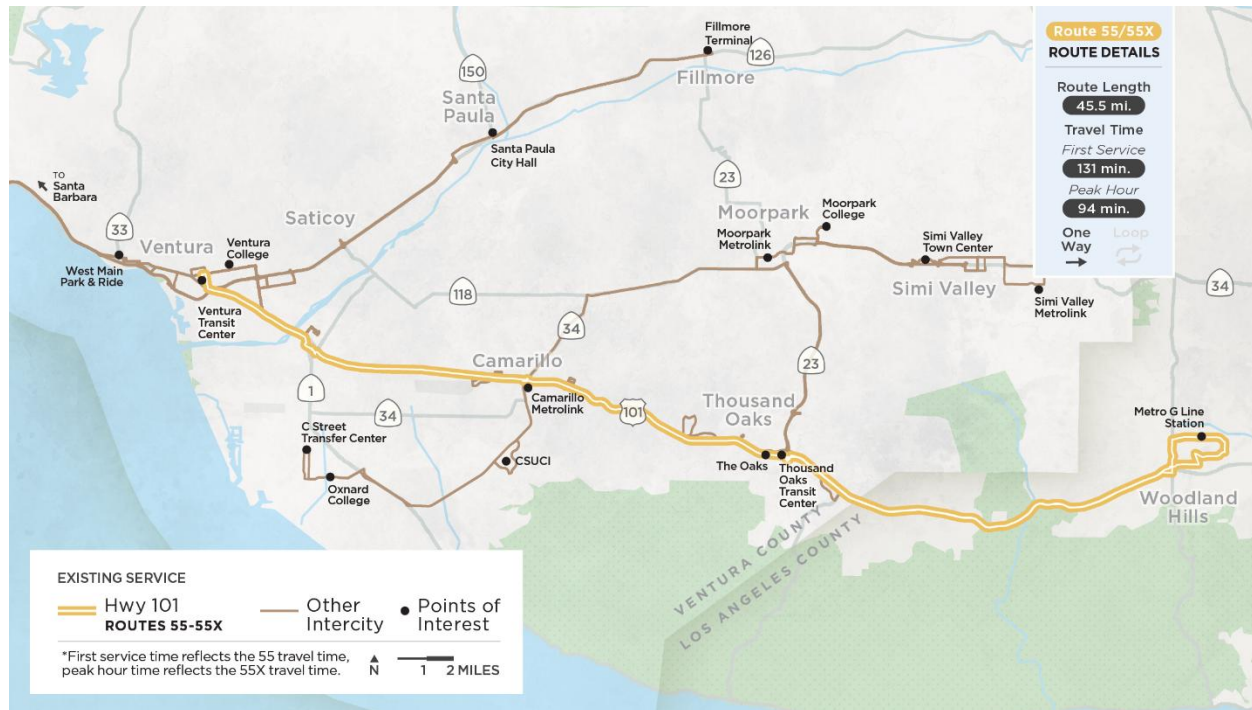


Figure 56: VCTC Intercity Highway 101/Conejo Routes 55/55X



### ROUTE 50-55 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Coastal Express and Highway 126 routes at Ventura Transit Center
  - Cross County Limited and CSUCI routes at Camarillo Train Station
  - East County routes at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center
- Gold Coast Transit District local routes at Ventura Transit Center and the Esplanade Mall in Oxnard
- Camarillo Area Transit at the Camarillo Train Station
- Thousand Oaks Transit at The Oaks and the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center
- LADOT Commuter Express at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center
- LA Metro at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center and in Woodland Hills at the Metro G Line Station

HIGHWAY 126 (60-62)

The Highway 126 service is made up of route 60 and 62, which operate along SR 126 between Ventura and Fillmore. Route 62 was removed in January 2025. The Highway 126 schedule is oriented around connecting residents in Santa Paula and Fillmore to jobs in Ventura but also serves to connect riders traveling between Santa Paula and Fillmore. In FY24, the Highway 126 service had 443 average daily boardings on weekdays, 232 average daily boardings on Saturdays, and 315 average daily boardings on Sundays. The Highway 126 service had the highest post-pandemic ridership of all the VCTC Intercity routes.

Figure 57: VCTC Intercity Highway 126 Route 60

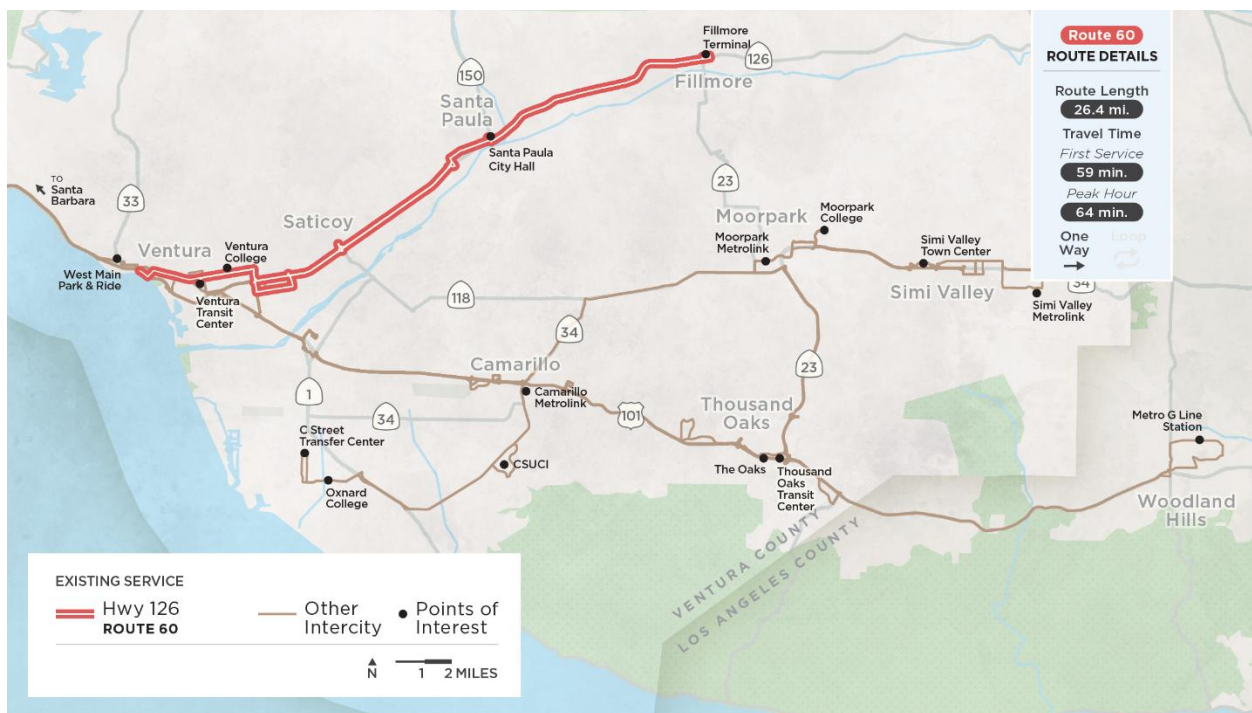
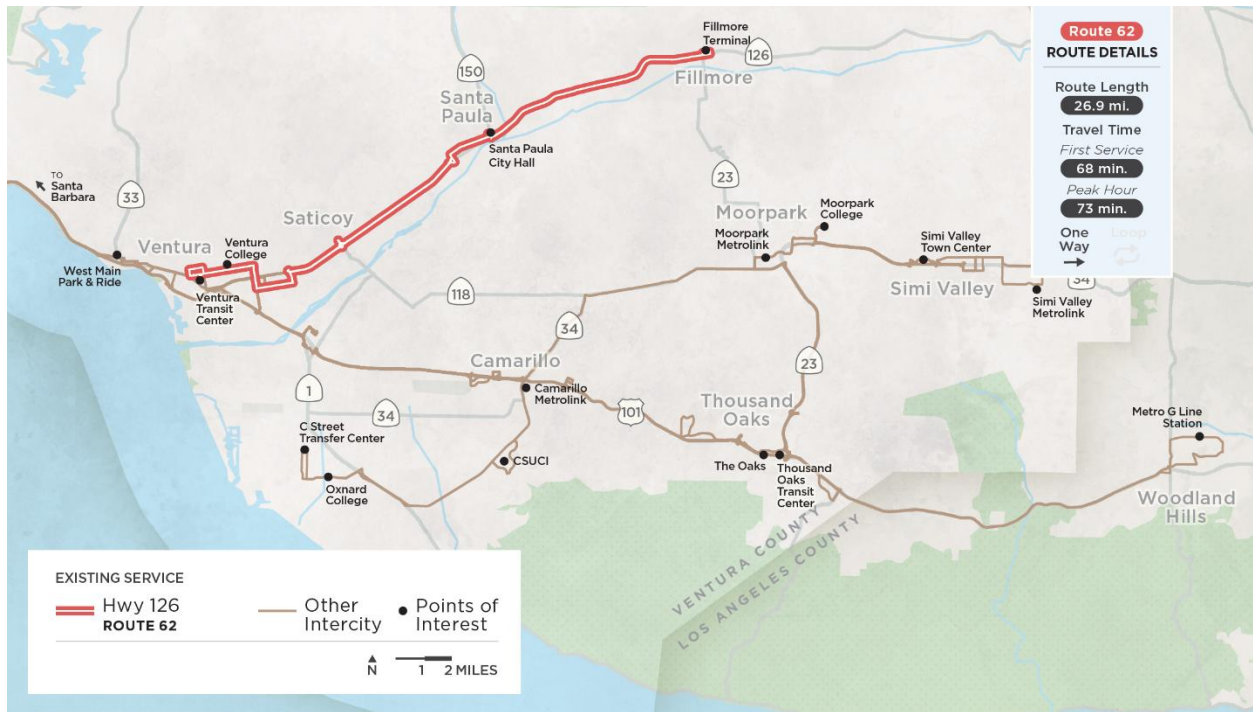


Figure 58: VCTC Intercity Highway 126 Route 62



**ROUTE 60-62 CONNECTIONS**

- VCTC Coastal Express and Highway 101 routes at Ventura Transit Center
- Gold Coast Transit District local routes at Ventura Transit Center
- Valley Express routes in Santa Paula and Fillmore

EAST COUNTY (70-73)

The East County service is made up of routes 70, 72, 73/73X, which operate along portions of US 101, SR 23 and SR 118 between Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley. The stops served by each route vary throughout the day and by direction. There is also substantial overlap among each of the route variants as illustrated in the route maps below. Route 73 is the only variant extending past Oaks Mall, serving Conejo Valley once a day on weekdays in each direction. Route 72 is the only route variant serving the Westlake Plaza and Center, stopping there once a day on weekdays on its northbound route.

The East County routes were updated to 70, 70C, 71, 74, and 74X in August 2024, and no longer include route variants that serve Conejo Valley or Westlake Plaza and Center.

In FY24, the East County service had 64 average daily boardings on weekdays and 16 average daily boardings on Saturdays.

**Figure 59: VCTC Intercity East County Route 70**

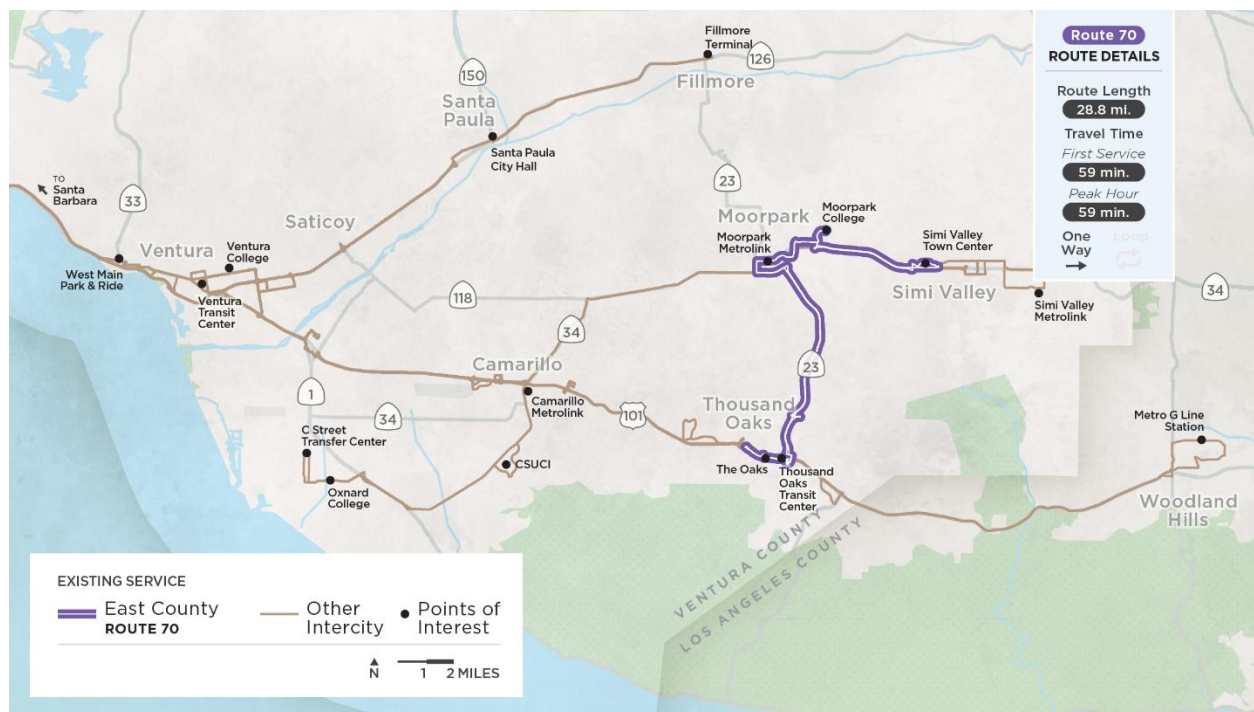


Figure 60: VCTC Intercity East County Route 72

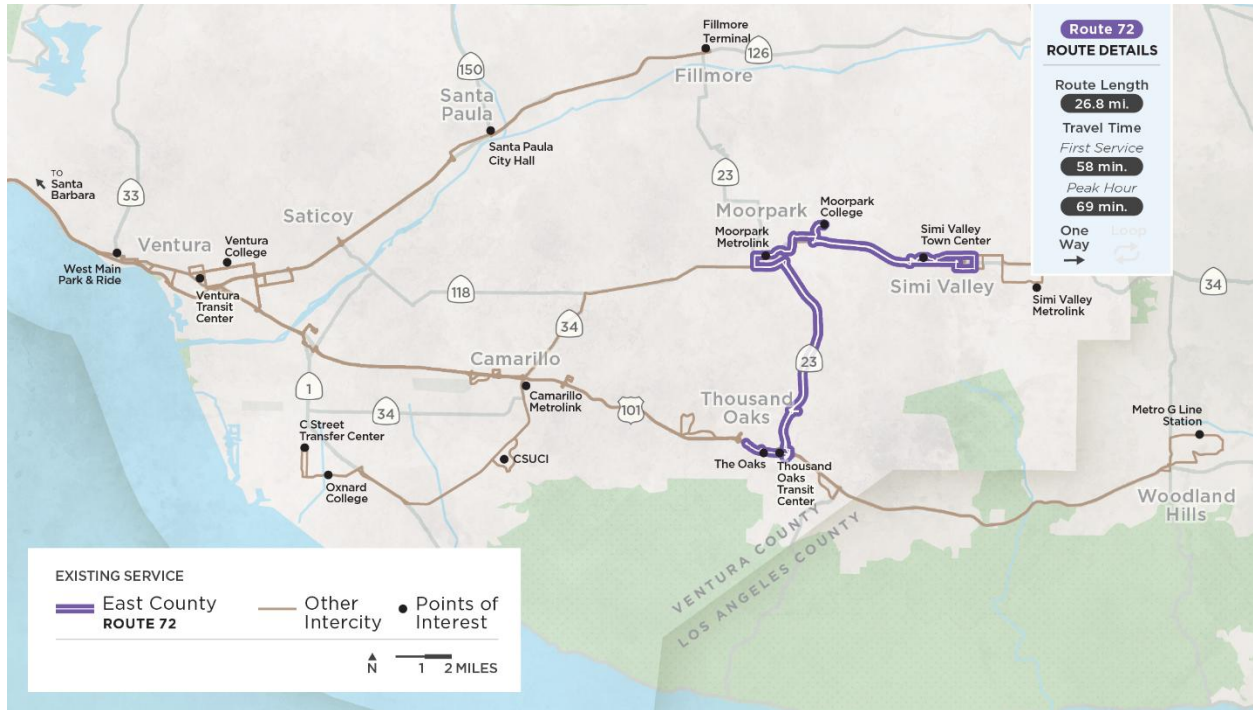


Figure 61: VCTC Intercity East County Route 73

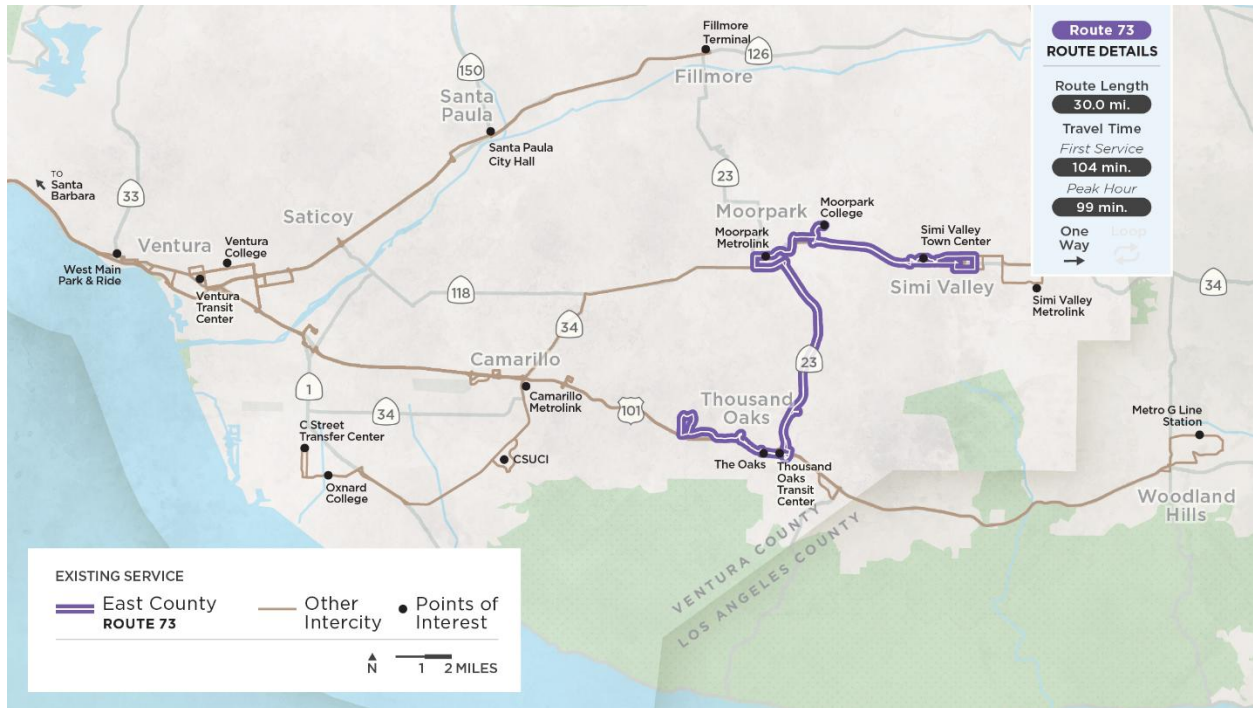
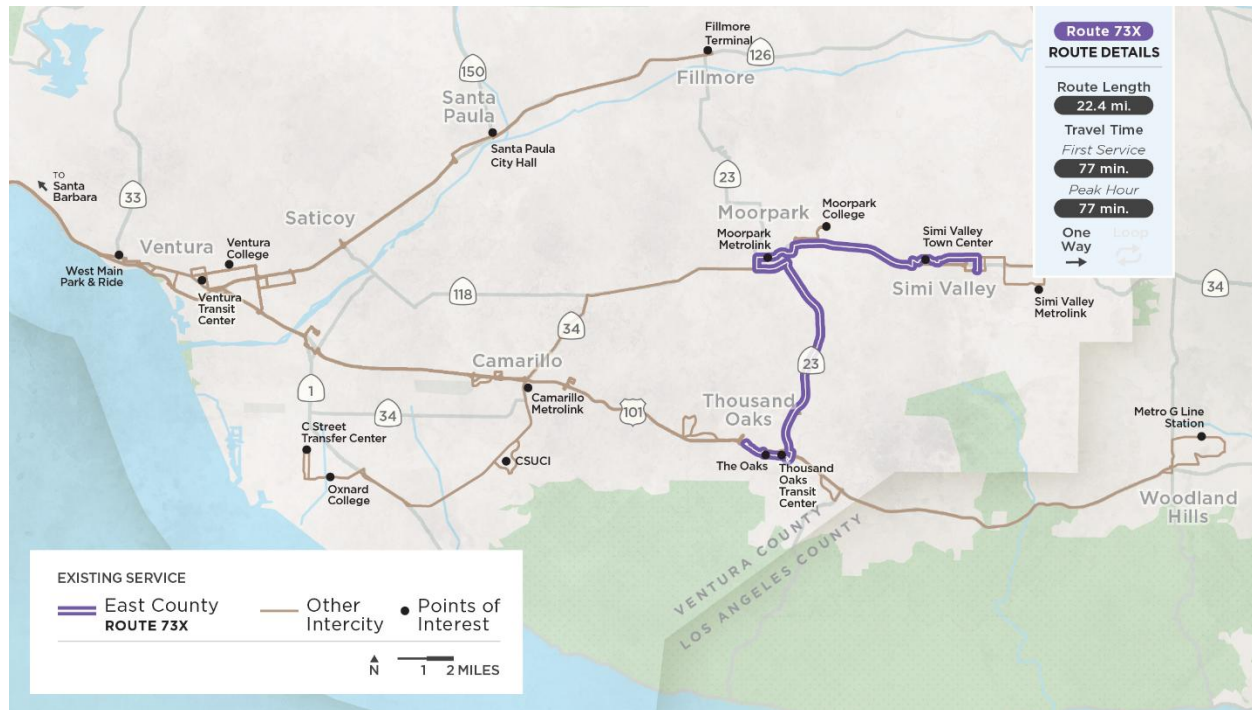


Figure 62: VCTC Intercity East County Route 73X



### ROUTE 70-73 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Cross County Limited in Simi Valley and Moorpark
  - Highway 101 routes at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center and The Oaks
- Simi Valley Transit routes in Simi Valley and at Moorpark College
- Moorpark City Transit routes at Moorpark Train Station and Moorpark College
- Valley Express Fillmore–Moorpark route at Moorpark Train Station and Moorpark College
- Thousand Oaks Transit at The Oaks and the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center
- LADOT Commuter Express at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center
- LA Metro at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center

## CROSS COUNTY LIMITED (77)

The Cross County Limited route is made up of Route 77, which operates along portions of US 101 and SR 118 between Ventura and Simi Valley. Route 77 serves stops in Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Somis, Moorpark and Simi Valley on weekdays only. Westbound service extends to the Ventura Transit Center, passing the Government Center and Ventura College, for most of the day but does not serve stops beyond Camarillo Metrolink after 6:00 p.m. The eastbound and westbound routes have complementary schedules. In FY24, the Cross County Limited route had 95 average daily boardings on weekdays.

**Figure 63: VCTC Intercity Cross County Limited Route 77**



### ROUTE 77 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Highway 126 routes at Ventura Transit Center
  - Highway 101 and Channel Islands routes at Camarillo Train Station
  - East County routes in Simi Valley and Moorpark
- Simi Valley Transit Route 10 at Moorpark College
- Moorpark City Transit routes at Moorpark Train Station and Moorpark College
- Valley Express Fillmore–Moorpark route at Moorpark College and Moorpark Train Station
- Gold Coast Transit District local routes at Ventura Transit Center and the Esplanade Mall in Oxnard
- Camarillo Area Transit at the Camarillo Train Station

COASTAL EXPRESS (80-89)

The Coastal Express service is made up of routes 80/80X, 81/81B, and 84/84U, which extend northwest to Santa Barbara, and routes 85/85C, 86, 87, 88, and 89, which extend northwest to Goleta. Routes 84U, 85C, 87, and 88 also serve the University of California–Santa Barbara (UCSB) bus loop. The Coastal Express routes operate along US 101. Most of the route variants have a southeast terminus in Camarillo, except for routes 80/80X and 88, which only extend eastward as far as Ventura. Route 80/80X is the only route that operates throughout the day, with the remaining variants offering early morning and afternoon service only. In FY24, the Coastal Express service had 353 average daily boardings on weekdays, 100 average daily boardings on Saturdays, and 91 average daily boardings on Sundays.

Figure 64: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Routes 80/80X

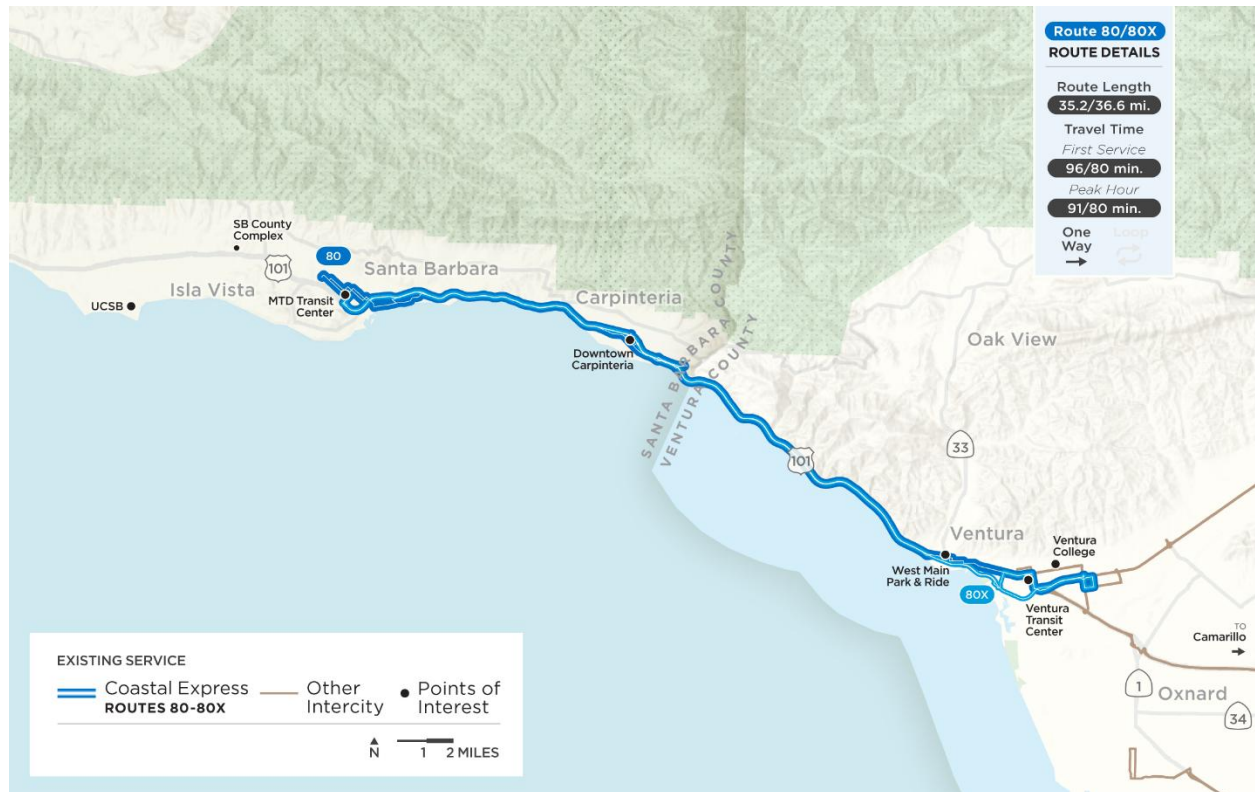


Figure 65: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Routes 81/81B



Figure 66: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Routes 84/84U



Figure 67: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Routes 85/85C

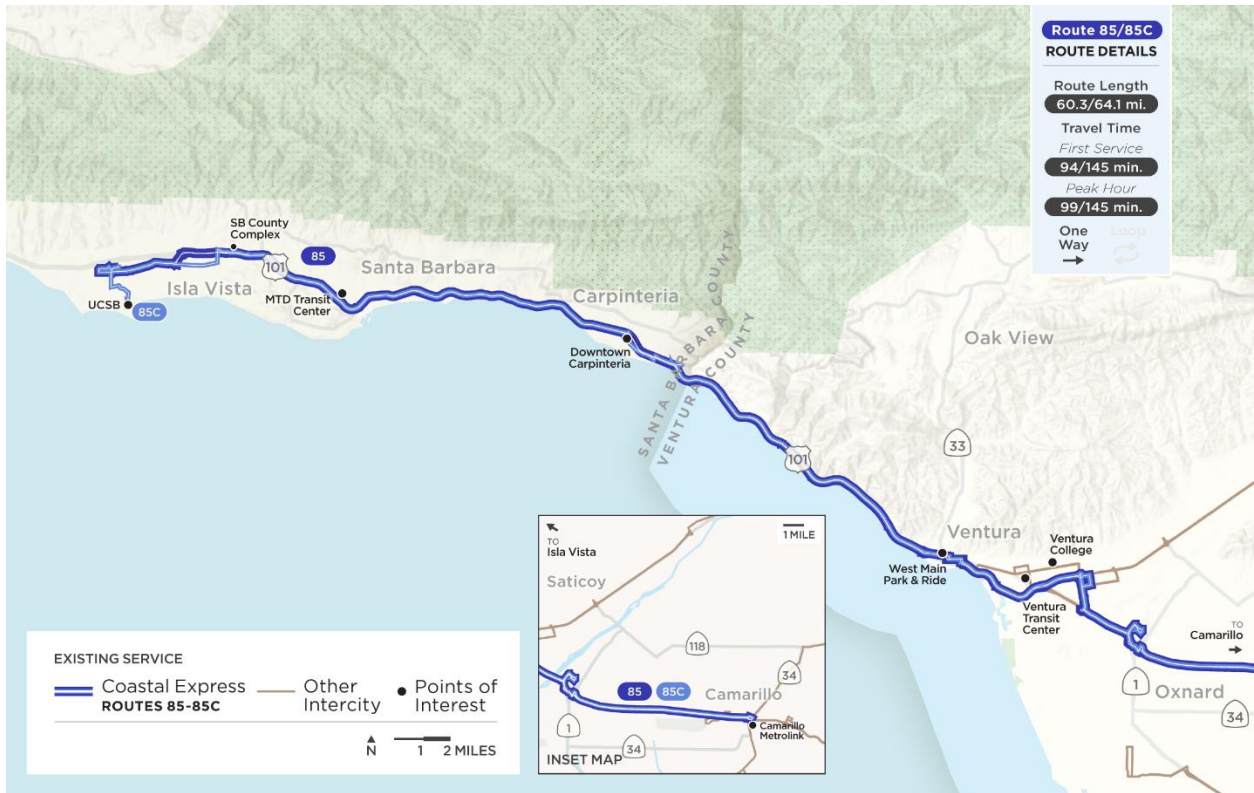


Figure 68: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Route 86

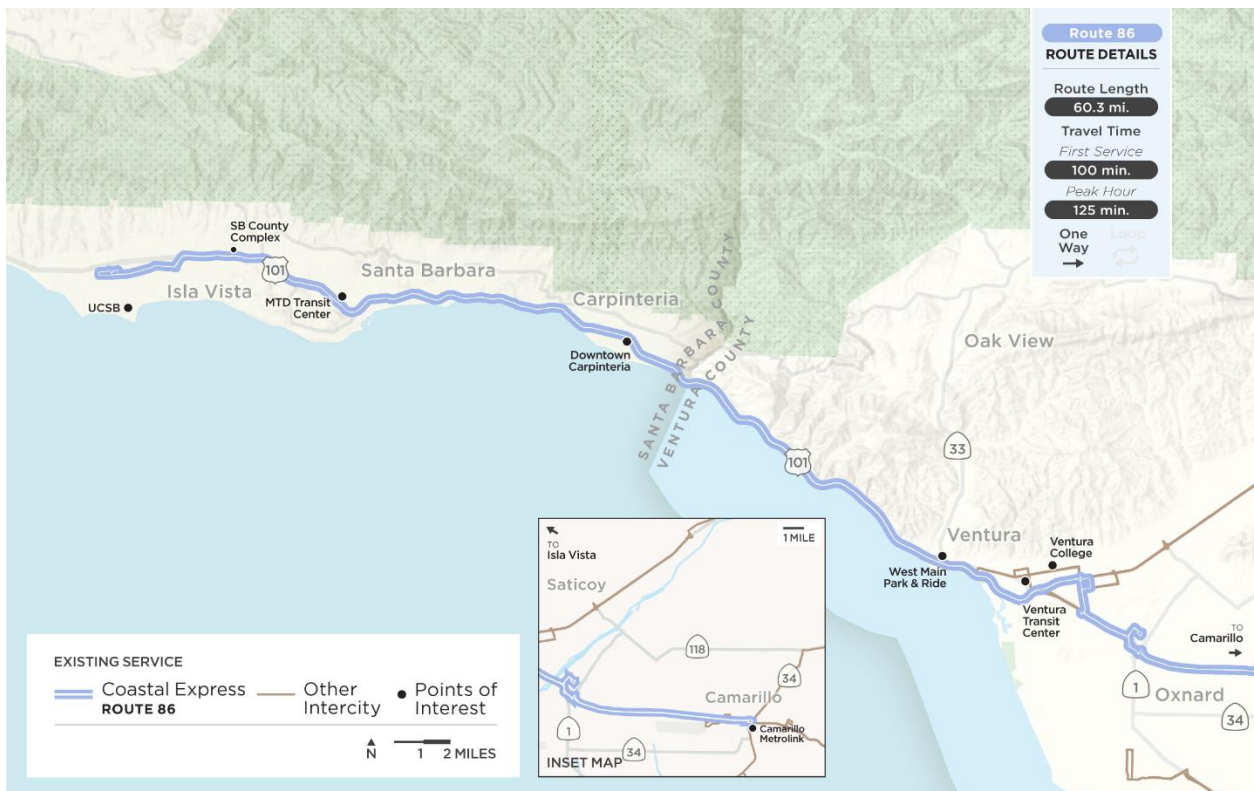


Figure 69: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Route 87

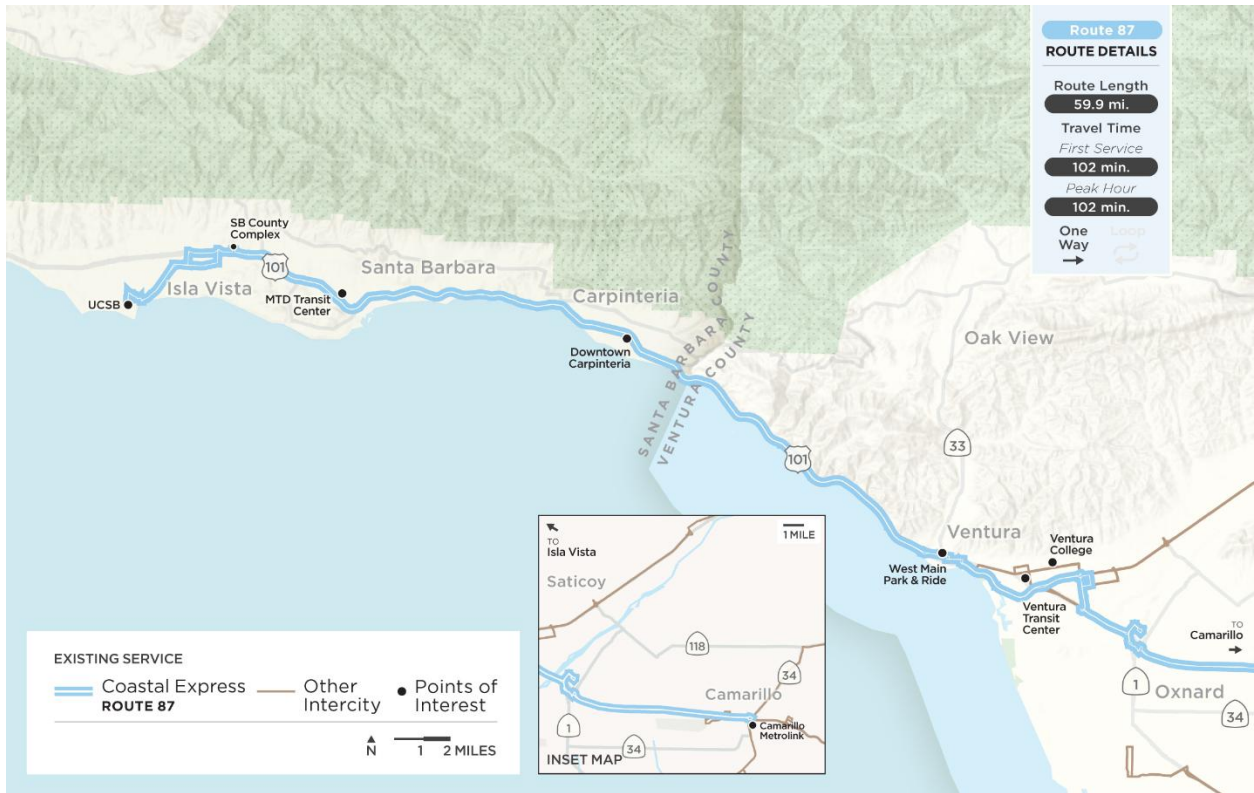


Figure 70: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Route 88

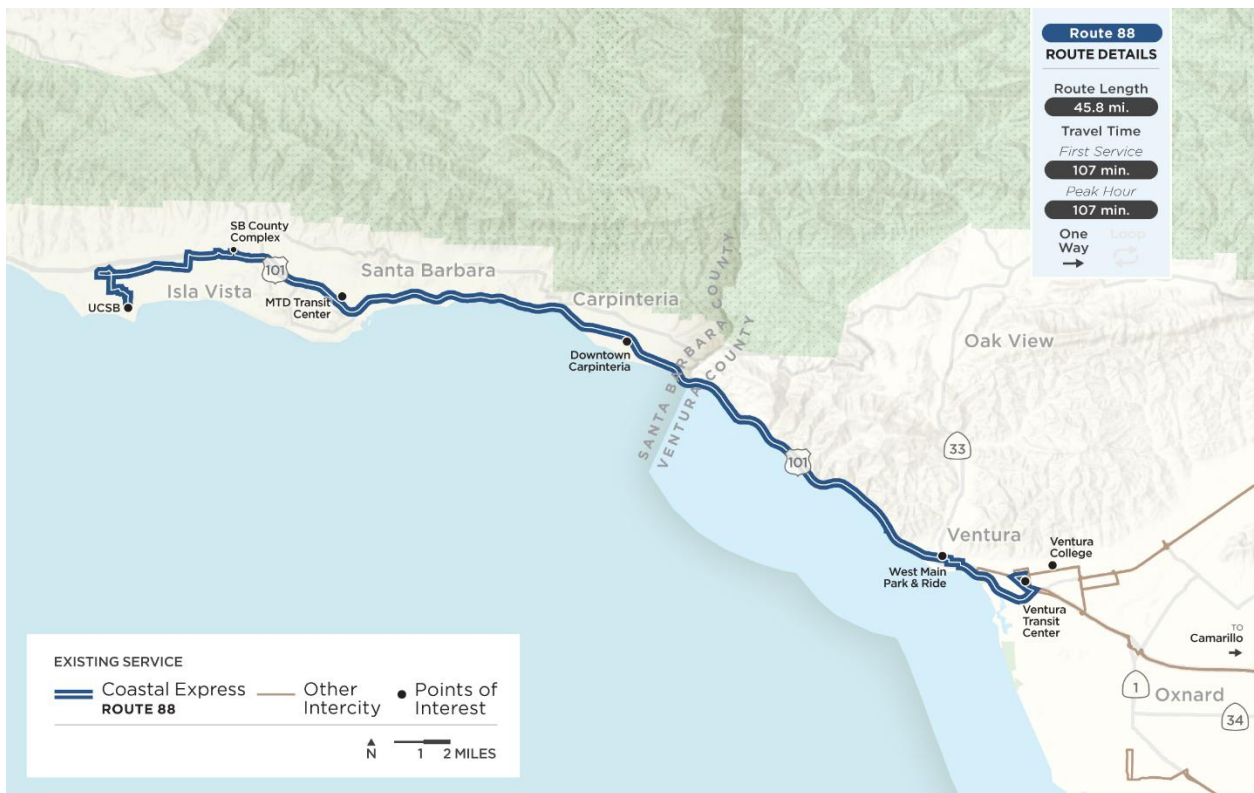
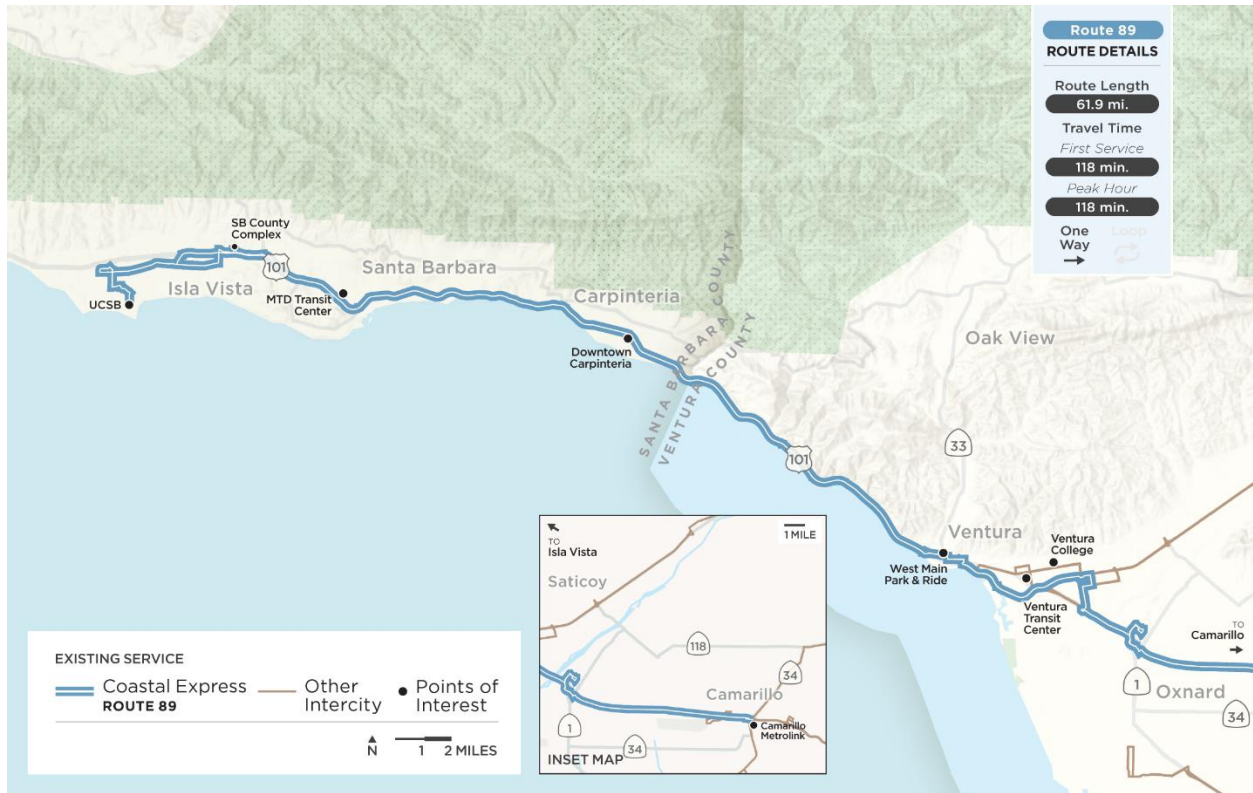


Figure 71: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Route 89



**ROUTE 80-89 CONNECTIONS**

- VCTC
  - Highway 101 and Highway 126 routes at Ventura Transit Center
  - Cross County Limited and CSUCI routes at Camarillo Train Station
- Gold Coast Transit District local routes at Ventura Transit Center and the Esplanade Mall in Oxnard
- Camarillo Area Transit routes at Camarillo Train Station

CHANNEL ISLANDS (90-99)

The Channel Islands service is made up of routes 90, 97, and 99, which run along local arterials in Oxnard and Camarillo. The Channel Islands service operates at the highest and most consistent frequency of all the VCTC Intercity routes. Routes 90 and 97 operate Monday–Thursday, connecting transit centers in Oxnard and Camarillo respectively to the university. Route 99 operates seven days a week when school is not in session and Friday–Sunday during the fall and spring semesters along the combined route of Routes 90 and 97. With a total of five stops, the Channels Islands route also has the fewest stops of all the VCTC Intercity routes.

In FY24, the Channel Islands service had 186 average daily boardings on weekdays, 41 average daily boardings on Saturdays, and 37 average daily boardings on Sundays.

In Summer 2025, VCTC Intercity began operating Route 99 year-round in place of Routes 90 and 97.

Figure 72: VCTC Intercity Channel Islands Route 90

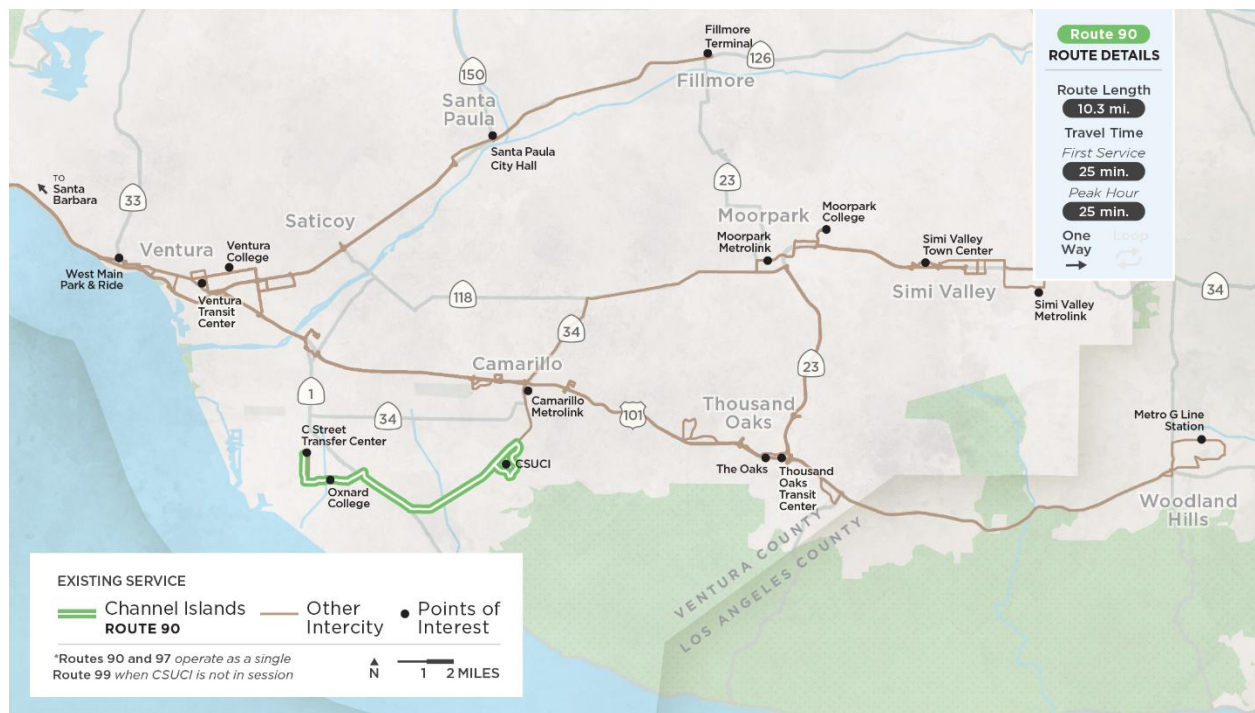
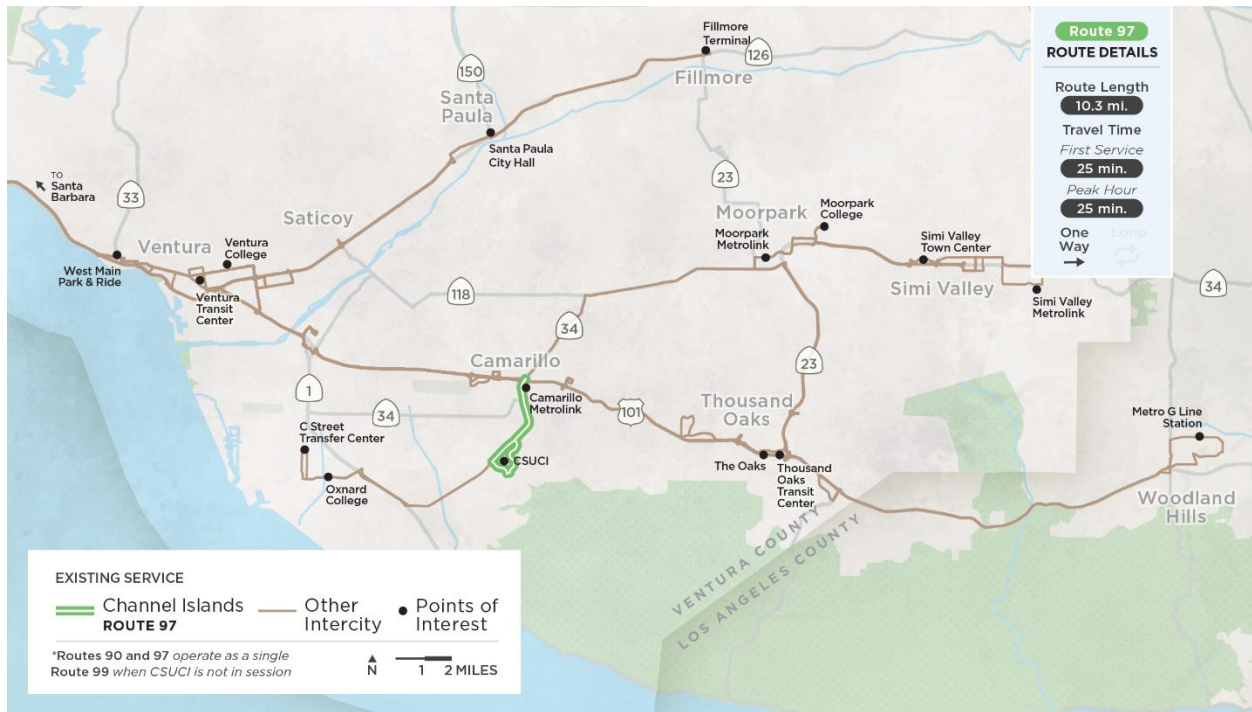


Figure 73: VCTC Intercity Channel Islands Route 97



**ROUTE 90-97 CONNECTIONS**

- VCTC Coastal Express, Highway 101, and Cross County Limited routes at Camarillo Train Station
- Gold Coast Transit District local routes at C Street Transfer Center in Oxnard
- Camarillo Area Transit routes at Camarillo Train Station

### *FIXED-ROUTE RIDERSHIP*

VCTC Intercity total annual fixed-route ridership was 365,990 in FY23. Total annual ridership decreased 56% over the last ten years, with a high of 823,001 in FY14 and a low of 219,378 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in FY21. VCTC Intercity ridership had been trending down prior to the pandemic. Like many transit agencies, VCTC Intercity severely cut service during the COVID-19 pandemic and did not restore service to pre-pandemic levels for a year and a half. Fixed-route ridership as of June 2023 had recovered to 56% of FY19 levels.

The East County (70-73) and Channel Islands (90-99) routes were hit hardest by the pandemic. These routes lost 90% or more of their ridership between FY19 and FY21 and recovered less than half of their pre-pandemic ridership as of June 2023.

The Highway 101 (50-55) routes saw the strongest recovery post-pandemic, serving 82% as many trips in FY23 compared to FY19. Coastal Express and Highway 126 continue to account for the largest share of ridership, with Highway 126 gaining market share over the last five years and surpassing Coastal Express as the highest ridership route.

An analysis of ridership data for the service period July 2023 through January 2024 indicates that Highway 126 and Coastal Express routes have the highest average daily weekday and weekend ridership and together account for 60% of trips. Route 50 is another important service, accounting for 15% of all fixed-route trips.

### *FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY*

Over the last five years, service productivity in terms of passenger trips per revenue hour and passenger trips per revenue mile decreased at the system level. Passenger trips per revenue hour decreased by 40%. Note that for intercity/express services such as these, trips per revenue mile are generally very low because the vehicles travel for many miles on freeways without serving any bus stops, unlike local transit routes.

Highway 126 represents the most productive route on weekdays and weekends in terms of trips per revenue hour. The next most productive routes are Highway 101/Conejo Connection and CSU Channel Islands.

While many transit services see lower weekend productivity, VCTC Intercity's Coastal Express and Highway 126 service actually have higher productivity on weekends. Service operated on Saturdays and Sundays generally excludes early morning trips but is otherwise evenly distributed throughout the day, so the passengers per revenue hour suggests a better balance, as well as serving travel markets that are possibly more diverse than commuters and students.

VCTC Intercity charges passenger fares based on a two-zone system, which is a base fare of \$1.75 for routes that operate only within Ventura County, and a Zone 2 base fare of \$4.00

for routes operating beyond Ventura County to either Los Angeles or Santa Barbara. The systemwide average fare per unlinked passenger trip was \$2.05. All VCTC Intercity routes have a relatively high average fare per passenger trip which is typical for commuter bus services that are less utilized by seniors and children compared with local transit service. The CSU Channel Islands service would be expected to see average fare revenue per trip decrease in terms of *cash* as students ride free as part of the College Ride Program; however, agencies count financial contributions from other sources (in this case, LCTOP<sup>18</sup> funding) or from the schools themselves as the fare revenue.

**Table 52: Fare Revenue by Route, FY23**

Route	Farebox Revenue	Average Fare Revenue per Trip (Collected)	Regular One-Way Fare (Price)
<b>VCTC Routes (50-77 excl. Hwy 126)</b>	\$156,926	\$1.62	Zone 1: \$1.75 Zone 2: \$4.00 (55/55X)
<b>Hwy 126 (60-62)</b>	\$167,542	\$1.49	\$1.75
<b>Coastal Express (80-89)</b>	\$355,815	\$3.26	\$4.00
<b>CSU Channel Islands (90-99)</b>	\$70,171	\$1.48	\$1.75

Source: VCTC Intercity, 2024.

### ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY

VCTC Intercity received a total of 385 on-board survey responses, the most of any agency. Most respondents to the survey were satisfied with their overall experience with VCTC Intercity. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.52 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus operators and the safety on at bus stops. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were bus schedules being readily available and the need to transfer during a journey. However, even the areas with the lowest scores had an average rating over 3, indicating general satisfaction with the VCTC Intercity service overall. As is common with other transit services, frequency and span of service are the main factors riders identified as preventing them from using the bus more often.

<sup>18</sup> The Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) established by SB 862 provides operating assistance to reduce emissions and improve mobility for disadvantaged communities.

*EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW*

Between FY14 and FY23, annual operating costs increased 65% while annual ridership decreased 56%. Operating costs have also increased despite only a four percent increase in revenue hours since FY14.

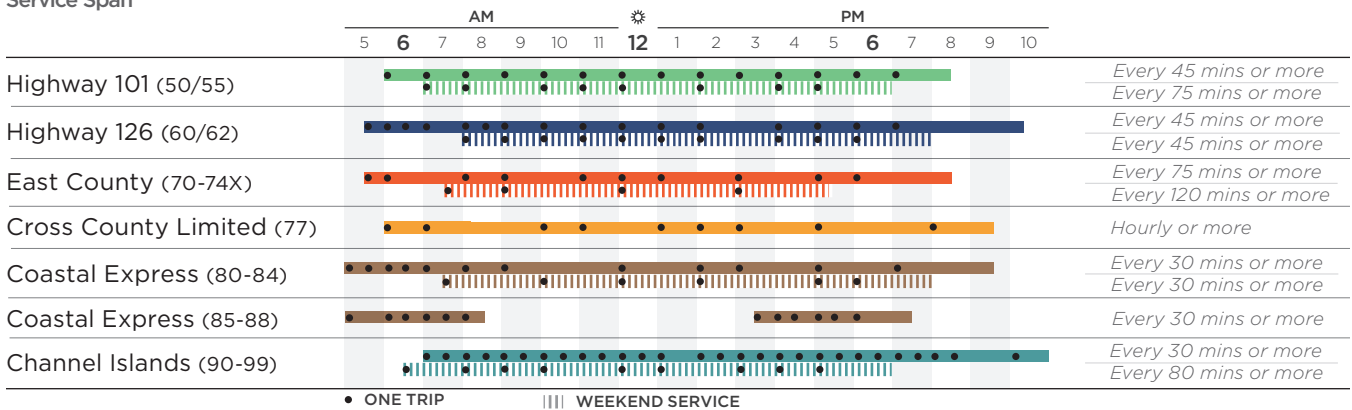
Operating cost per revenue hour rose sharply between FY14 and FY18 and has been slowly rising again since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The two routes with the highest average daily ridership—Highway 126 and Coastal Express—also have the highest operating cost per revenue hour. The East County route, which has the lowest average daily ridership, has the highest operating cost per trip and the second highest operating cost per revenue mile after the Cross County Limited.

## AGENCY ROUTE MAP



## SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

### Service Span

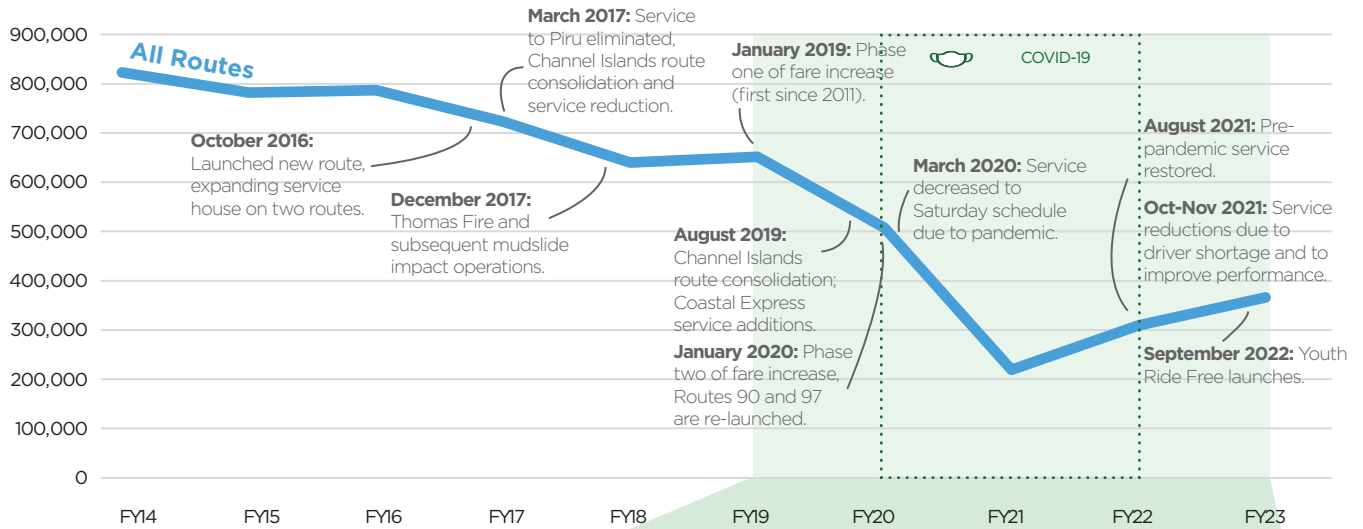


### Route Productivity FY23

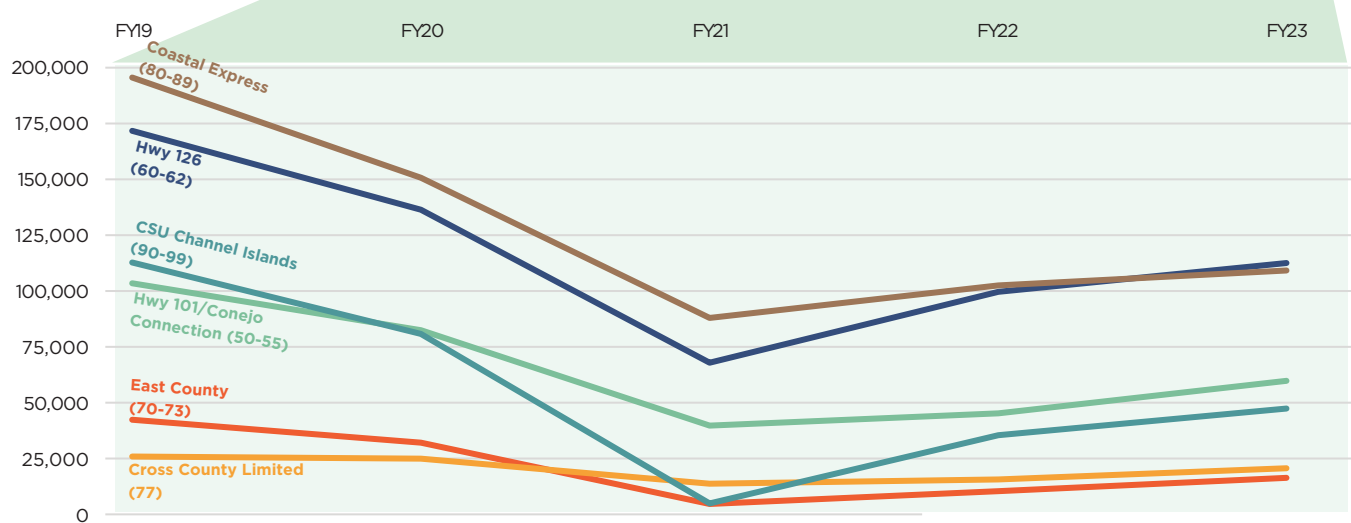
Route	Annual Ridership	Passengers per Revenue Hour			Revenue Hours			Operating Cost per Boarding
		Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	
Highway 101 (50-55)	59,851	6.3	5.2	N/A	8,642	1,070	N/A	\$22.50
Highway 126 (60-62)	112,473	10.3	11.0	14.1	8,398	1,067	1,028	\$13.60
East County (70-73)	16,503	2.8	2.1	N/A	5,654	383	N/A	\$50.60
Cross County Limited (77)	20,664	3.2	N/A	N/A	6,371	N/A	N/A	\$42.70
Coastal Express (80-89)	109,091	5.4	8.0	7.0	18,314	684	635	\$26.40
Channel Islands (90-99)	47,408	7.5	3.8	2.9	5,764	610	601	\$18.70

## AGENCY RIDERSHIP

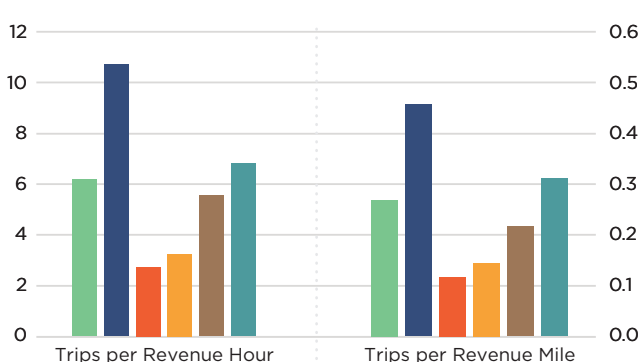
FY14 - FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership



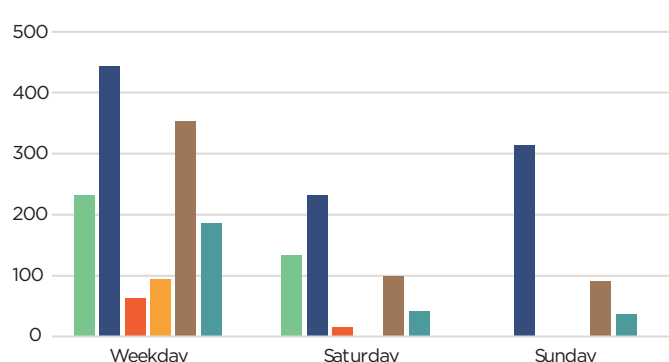
FY19 - FY23 Ridership by Route



FY23 Passenger Trips by Revenue Hour and Revenue Mile

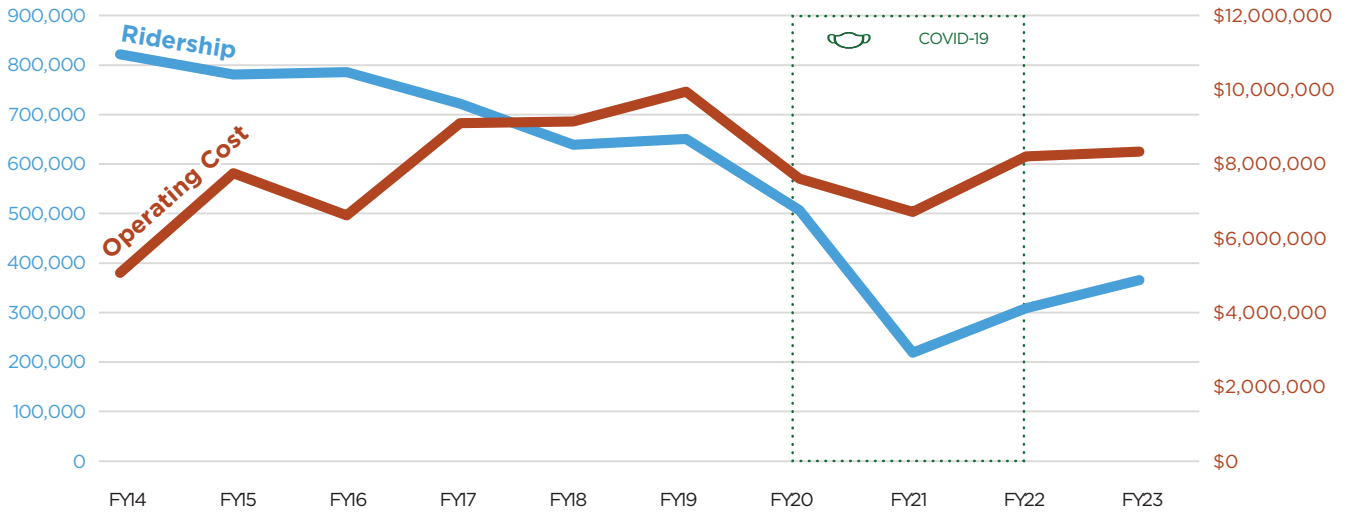


FY23 Average Daily Ridership

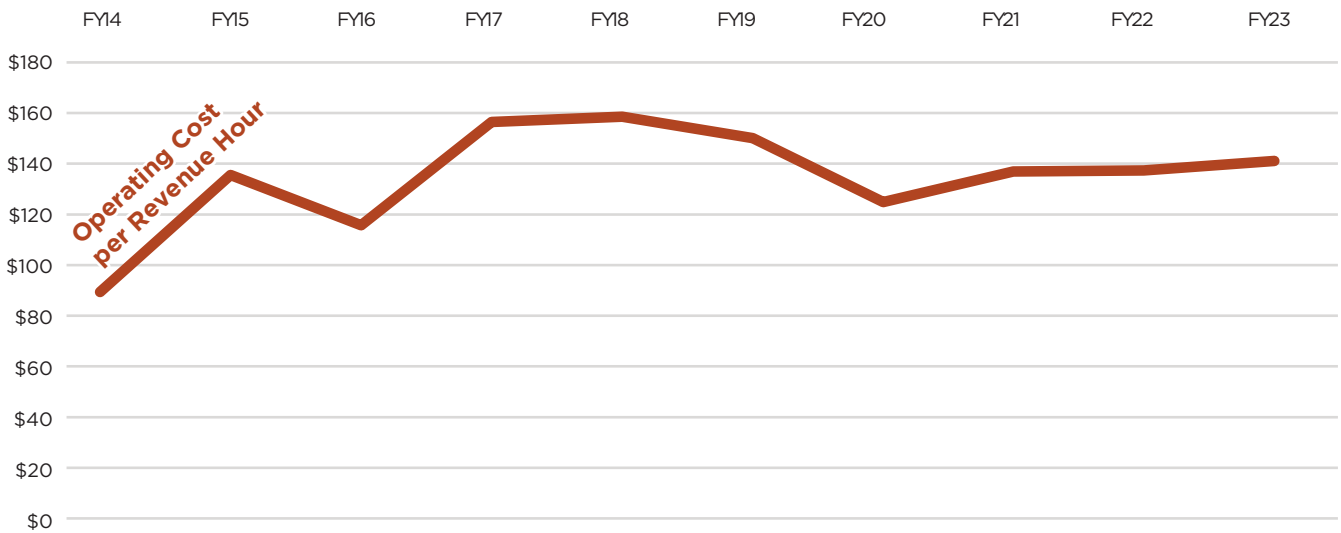


## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FY14-FY23 Fixed Route Annual Ridership in Relation to Annual Operating Cost



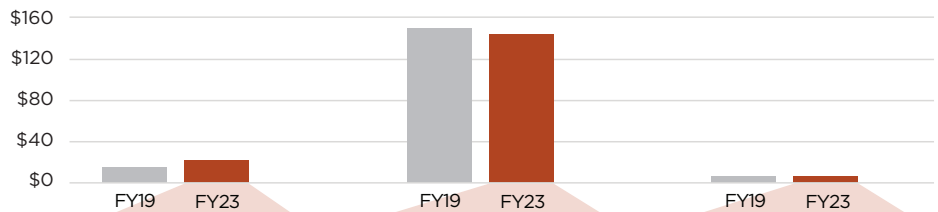
FY14 - FY23 Annual Fixed Route Operating Cost per Revenue Hour



FY19 and FY23 Systemwide Operating Costs

**\$9,965,179**  
FY19 Fixed Route Operating Cost

**\$8,352,000**  
FY23 Fixed Route Operating Cost



FY23 Operating Cost by Route

Route	Operating Cost	Operating Cost per Boarding	Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Operating Cost per Revenue Mile
Highway 101 (50-55)	\$1,344,605.86	\$22.47	\$138.45	\$6.06
Highway 126 (60-62)	\$1,530,726.21	\$13.61	\$145.87	\$6.23
East County (70-73)	\$835,739.41	\$50.64	\$138.43	\$5.94
Cross County Limited (77)	\$881,965.42	\$42.68	\$138.43	\$6.19
Coastal Express (80-89)	\$2,874,732.62	\$26.35	\$146.43	\$5.72
Channel Islands (90-99)	\$884,231.24	\$18.65	\$126.78	\$5.83

## VCTC Intercity: Gaps and Opportunities

### PEOPLE



#### SENIORS

Generally, seniors are not a target market for long-distance express and commuter services. This is not to say no seniors use such routes, but people who are retired are less likely to use routes that are primarily oriented towards job centers and colleges. However, there is potential for these routes to serve other trip purposes if schedules allow for travel in both directions throughout the day and on weekends.



#### GENERAL POPULATION

Travel market analysis for the region shows a huge volume of regional trips between neighboring communities in Ventura County. Intercity routes could capture more general/diverse travel market with more regular schedules and adding some local “walkable” stops in denser areas. As discussed below, the array of route variants may have been beneficial when there was a large group of employees accessing particular job sites, but make the service less useful for everyone else.



#### STUDENTS

30-minute frequency on CSUCI routes yields relatively high productivity, but connecting VCTC routes in Camarillo are much less frequent and may not make regular connections. The only other regular connecting service is the Camarillo Trolley which does not cover most of the city. Moorpark College and Ventura College are relatively well-served by regional transit. There is no direct regional service to Cal Lutheran.



#### COMMUTERS

Intercity’s market is more focused on working adults than local transit. Ridership was declining on commuter-focused routes before the pandemic and has been much slower to recover compared with other travel markets. Much of this is attributable to more flexible or fully remote jobs, although other travel indicators suggest that much commute travel has returned, but ridership has not. Intercity routes have many variations which likely evolved over time to provide direct service to particular job sites. This approach is beneficial when there is a large group of

employees who have specific shift times; however, with declining ridership long predating the pandemic, continual tweaking has led to a confusing array of route variants that make the service less useful for everyone else.

With more flexibility in work schedules, and the results of the intercity travel markets analysis from each of the other community areas, there is strong evidence that Intercity service would benefit most from regularity in all-day frequency, connectivity to local routes, and bi-directional service.

## PLACES



### COVERAGE

VCTC Intercity has the broadest coverage area of all providers, but any given route must trade off how much of each community it can serve directly to balance very long end-to-end travel time. Most routes have very few, or even only one, stop in each community.



### WALKABILITY

The majority of Intercity stops are not walkable to many homes. The commuter-focused routes are generally walkable to major job centers, although certain instances of Intercity routes pass some industrial and commercial job centers without any stops. Even when operating on local arterial streets, local bus stops are very limited. There may be an opportunity to add some infill stops to improve walkable access without significantly slowing service, though this may impact some routes as commuter service and introduce the need to provide ADA complementary paratransit service. Such service could be operated by the existing local paratransit providers.



### REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

VCTC Intercity is the primary regional connector within Ventura County as well as to neighboring counties. Intercity can also provide an “infill” role for Surfliner and Metrolink trips through the County. Connecting to local providers with regularity and predictability should be a high priority to reduce the total trip time between any two neighboring cities.

## SERVICE DESIGN



### *FIXED-ROUTE DIRECTNESS*

Generally express bus services are very direct with few deviations, and Intercity routes follow this model. However, there are also significant stretches of certain routes that operate on local arterial routes past many homes and businesses without any stops. While adding stops can increase total travel time, a balance of limited stops at major intersections could help expand access to service without deviating routes. Avoiding making these stops timepoints will minimize runtime impacts. There is also the example of the East County and Cross County Limited services which are both very direct and limited-stop but attracting very few riders. A balance of frequency, route directness, and stops serving key destinations is important.



### *FIXED-ROUTE FREQUENCY*

Frequency on Intercity routes varies greatly. Other local services operate hourly schedules, but only some VCTC routes operate that consistently. Meanwhile, the higher frequency of the CSCUI route would be more desirable. However, the route doesn't directly connect the college to any destinations other than the train station, and almost no connecting transit is as frequent, making at least half of these trips ineffective for most users. A rebalancing of frequency systemwide could significantly improve the ability for people to use Intercity and local services as a true regional transit network.



### *SPAN*

Many Intercity routes make their last runs by 7 p.m., which may miss some of the regional travel demand that depend on services or classes that end after 8 p.m. Conversely, CSUCI service has operated as late as 10 p.m. but effectively no other transit service is still operating, which likely undermines the usefulness of the later span (riders would get to Camarillo Metrolink and have no transit option to complete their trip from there). Late evening runs will always be less productive but are essential for making earlier bus service attractive to a wide variety of users.



### *Balance of Services*

As a predominantly commuter bus service, Intercity does not have a demand-response program. Within Ventura County, most or all of Intercity stops are within the local DAR service areas and therefore residents have options through their local provider to use these programs if eligible.

## VCTC Intercity: Service Recommendations

This section provides recommendations for transit services operated by VCTC Intercity, including the design and operation of its fixed route services, funding strategies, and capital planning. The SRTP vision for VCTC Intercity focuses on reconfiguring certain existing routes and making schedule adjustments that would attract a broader ridership market.

This SRTP recommends a multiphase approach to enhancing the Intercity route network and strengthen the connections between communities and their local circulator routes.

The near-term phase would rely as much as possible on existing resources through modifying routes and services to maximize ridership growth on underperforming services and relying more on the network of operators in the county to form a regional network.

- Discontinue the existing 70–74x East County group of service patterns and replace them with a new route directly connecting Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks
- Modify the 77 Cross County route to discontinue all stops east of Moorpark College, which is also served by Simi Valley Route 10, and increase frequency
- Implement and refine proposed changes to the Coastal Express service design to streamline into fewer, more consistent service patterns throughout the day

A second, later phase would require greater financial investment in Intercity service to ensure all of the routes operate at least hourly on weekdays and many routes operating a similar frequency on weekends. Included in the later phase is supporting restoration of service between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks, which would be discontinued as part of the proposed near-term changes. In the long-term, a concept for connecting the Heritage Valley to Santa Clarita is also possible.

### ROUTE CHANGES

Three significant changes are proposed to routes in the Near-Term phase, which are described over the next few pages and shown with maps. The justification and considerations (trade-offs) follows this section.

*PROPOSED ROUTE 70 REVISED EAST COUNTY SERVICE*

In the near-term, the existing 70-74 East County services would be discontinued and replaced with a different service design, referred to here as "Proposed Route 70." **The Proposed Route 70 would operate between the Simi Valley Metrolink Station and The Oaks mall in Thousand Oaks.** The Proposed Route 70 would serve limited arterial stops in both communities, primarily at major intersections, adding some walkable service to local homes, maintaining or adding access to regional employment and commercial centers, and offering multiple opportunities to connect with the local transit route networks operated by each city.

The Proposed Route 70 would shift connections for Thousand Oaks to Metrolink from Moorpark to Simi Valley. The route establishes bus service along Madera/Olsen Road and fills gaps in the transit network in Simi Valley.

Service between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks would be shifted to the Proposed Route 72, described below.

The Proposed Route 70 should operate hourly service on weekdays and at least every 90 minutes on weekends. However, the initial phase assumes the budget may limit service to the following periods:

- Weekdays, hourly departures between 6:00AM and 10:00AM
- Weekdays, limited departures at 12:00PM and 1:00PM
- Weekdays, hourly departures between 3:00PM and 7:00PM
- Saturdays service every 70 minutes between 7:00AM and 7:00PM
- Sunday service every 70 minutes between 9:00AM and 6:00PM

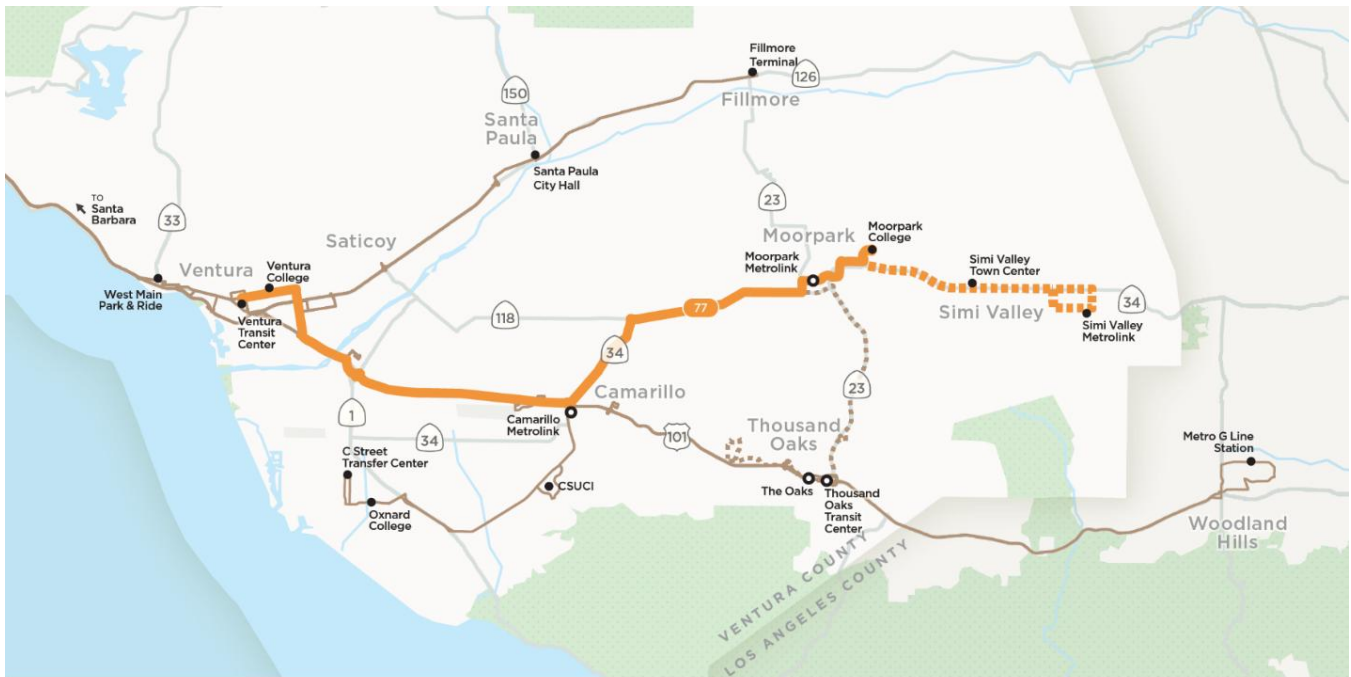
*PROPOSED ROUTE 77 CROSS COUNTY LIMITED IMPROVEMENTS*

A second near-term objective is to optimize overlapping services between Intercity and Simi Valley Transit. **The 77 Cross County Limited would discontinue service between Moorpark College and Simi Valley, and increase to hourly frequency along the remainder of the route between Moorpark and Ventura.** Service between Moorpark College and Simi Valley would be maintained by Simi Valley Transit Route 10.

The modified route supports hourly service with three buses in operation. The current service schedule offers infrequent trips throughout the day and inefficient deployment of up to three buses at times despite the irregular frequency. Operating three buses throughout the day will represent a significant increase in revenue hours (from approximately 28 daily revenue hours to 43), but the utilization of staff time and reduction in deadhead and layover should represent a significant improvement.

The increased frequency better positions Route 77 as an extension of the Metrolink Ventura County Line. The train operates eight daily round trips as far as Moorpark, only three of which continue further west to the East Ventura station. The 77 Cross County Limited, with regular hourly service, provides both a complement to the Metrolink schedule and an alternative in the event of disrupted train service.

Some new stops would be added to the route in Moorpark and Camarillo to help slightly expand access to homes and businesses that would also fill some service coverage gaps and enhance the connectivity to local circulators. This includes stops on Los Angeles Ave in Moorpark west of the train station, and at major intersections on Lewis Road in Camarillo.



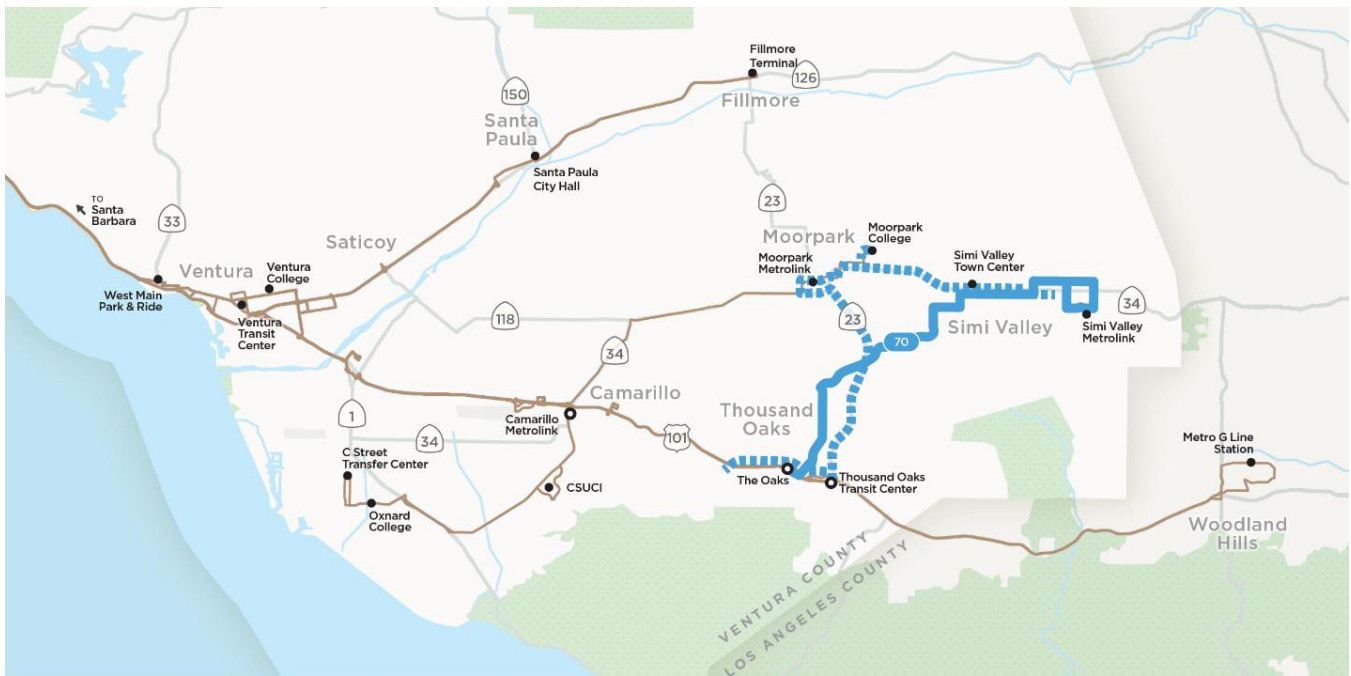
**PROPOSED SERVICE**  
— Cross County Limited **ROUTE 77**

**REMOVED SERVICE**  
— Cross County Limited  
— Intercity

**EXISTING SERVICE**  
— Other Intercity

*Not all stops are shown*  
● Timed transfer  
● Point of interest

Note: SVT will continue to provide service between Moorpark College and Simi Valley via Route 10



**PROPOSED SERVICE**  
— East County **ROUTE 70**

**REMOVED SERVICE**  
— East County

**EXISTING SERVICE**  
— Other Intercity

*Not all stops are shown*  
● Timed transfer  
● Point of interest

Note: SVT will continue to provide service between Moorpark College and Simi Valley via Route 10

Third, VCTC staff have been developing a major revision to the Coastal Express Routes 80–89, implemented in Fall 2025. **The revised Coastal Express service streamlines the route variations into fewer categories operating consistently throughout the day:**

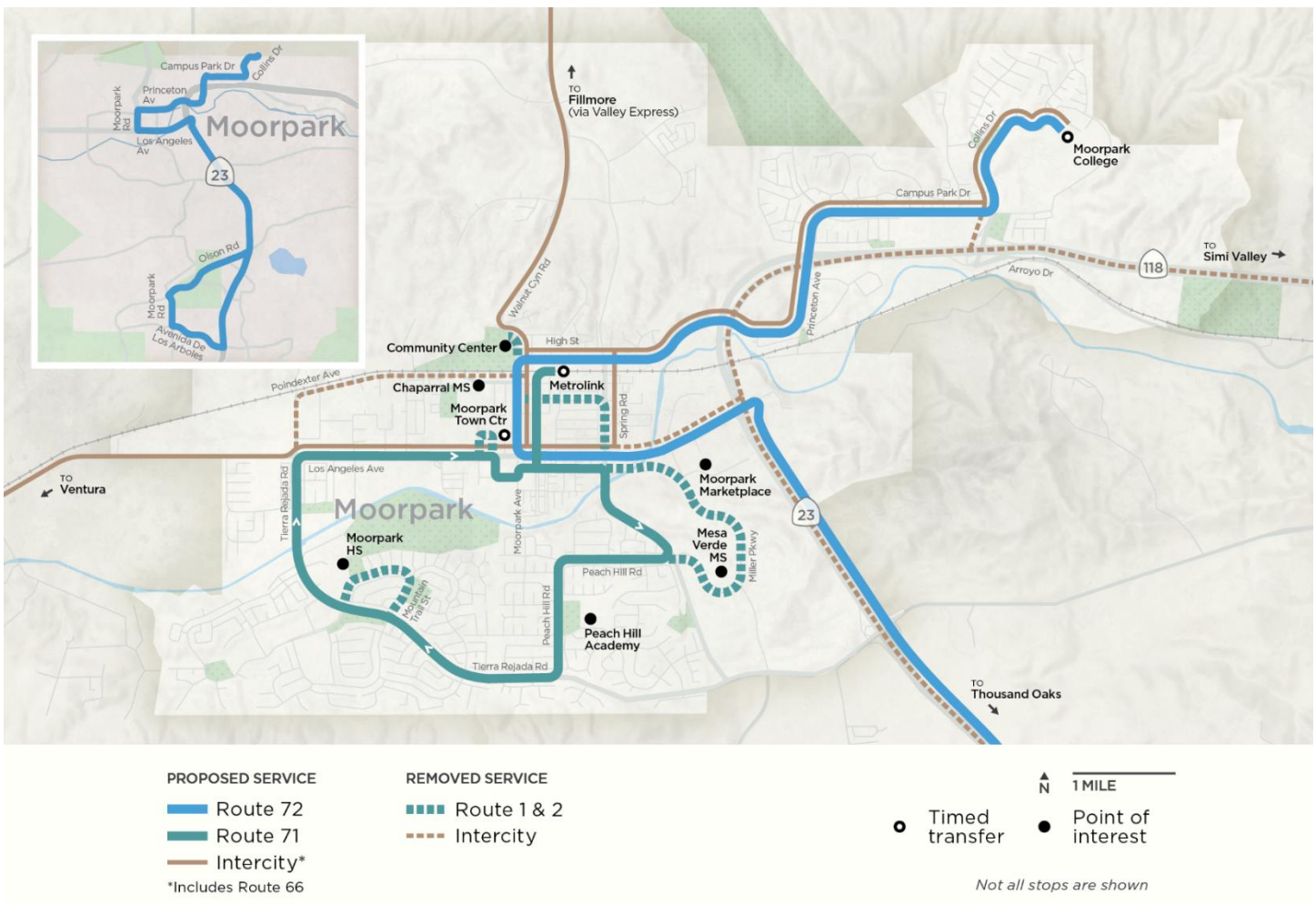
Route	Camarillo	Oxnard	Ventura	Carpin- teria	Santa Barbara Downtown	Cottage Hospital	Goleta (Hollister)	SBA + UCSB
80	●	●	●	●	●	●		
80X	●	●	●		●			
82			●	●	●	●		
85	●	●	●				●	
85X			●		●		●	
87	●	●	●				●	●
87X			●					●

The streamlining maintains service to the most consistently-used stops, enhances connectivity to the airport (a frequent passenger request), and consolidates service to Carpinteria into the group serving downtown Santa Barbara. Service to some destinations is increasing significantly, while other stops that are rarely used and resulted in longer and slower routing (particularly in Carpinteria) were discontinued.

Perhaps most significantly, the proposed Coastal Express schedule repurposes many deadhead hours that result from the current peak commuter-focused service into bi-directional revenue hours. VCTC currently pays the same rate to the contractor for both revenue and deadhead hours between service blocks, but operating revenue service – even if passenger utilization turns out to be lower than the traditional peak-direction trips – is a more efficient use of budgeted service than deadhead. The proposed shift would operate 57 daily trips with only three deadhead trips compared with 20 in the current schedule.

## MOORPARK TO THOUSAND OAKS SERVICE

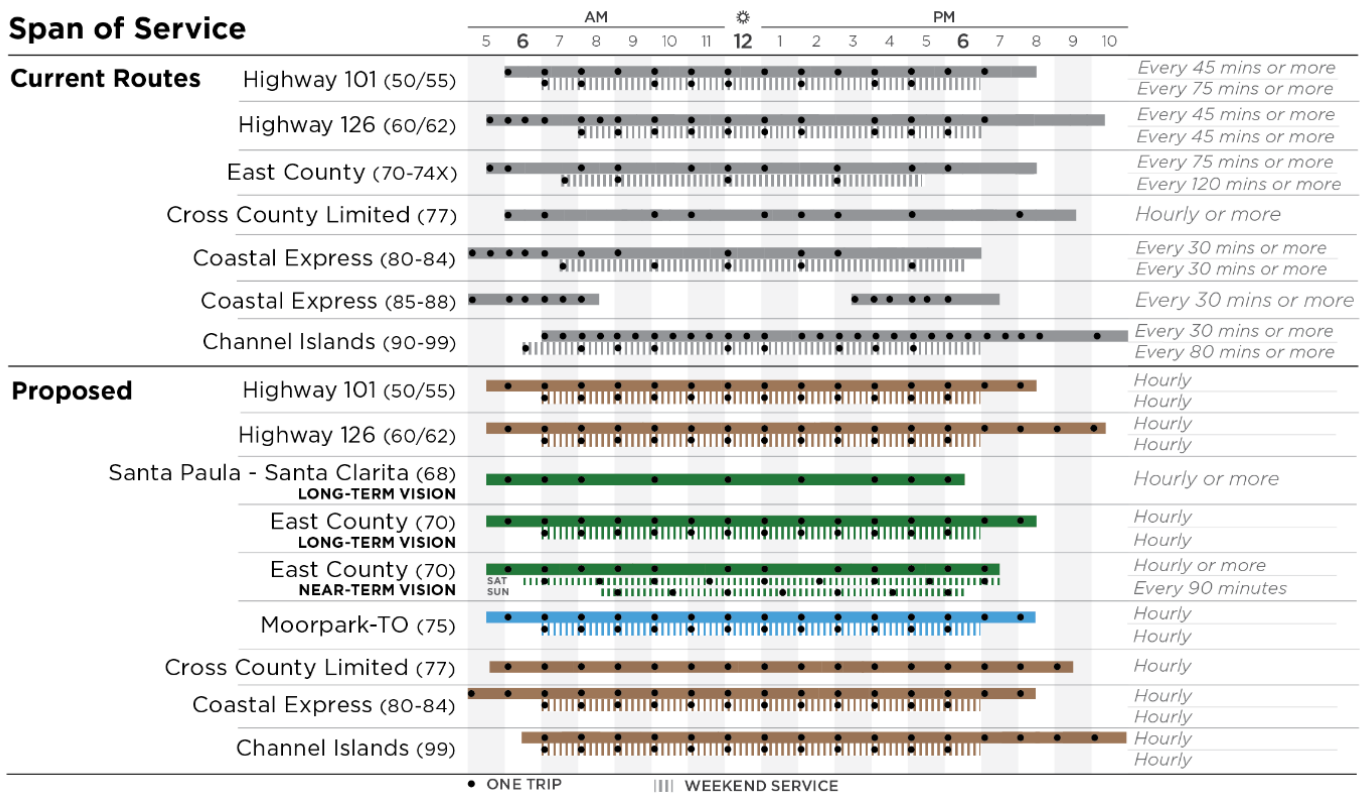
The near-term service plan results in a service gap between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks currently filled by the existing Route 70–74x. The gap should be closed and service restored as soon as possible. **The SRTP developed a concept that would operate service on a “Proposed Route 72” that would connect Moorpark College, the Moorpark Metrolink station, and select destinations in Thousand Oaks via the Moorpark Freeway (Highway 23).** The Proposed 72 attempts to balance coverage with connectivity to Thousand Oaks Transit routes (and Intercity Proposed 70) by operating an hourly schedule that makes a one-way loop through the north part of the city.



An **alternative version of Proposed 72** would stay on the freeway longer to go directly to the Oaks (where connections to all TOT and Intercity Routes are possible) and potentially extend west towards the employment district along Rancho Conejo Boulevard. The travel market analysis suggests that this would serve the most concentrated demand between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks. This alternate version has a longer runtime, which may require additional buses to operate hourly service, or operating service less than hourly frequency. Given the focus of this alternative on a major employment district, it could be operated as peak-period-only service.

This route could be operated by VCTC, MCT, or TOT. The Proposed 72 route as described (not the alternate version) had been intended to operate within the revenue hours previously allocated to MCT Route 2. During the development of the SRTP, the City of Moorpark discontinued Route 2 entirely.

### Span of Service



**PROPOSED SERVICE**

- Moorpark-TO
- East County
- Intercity

**REMOVED SERVICE**

- Intercity

*Note: SVT will continue to provide service between Moorpark College and Simi Valley via Route 10. Moorpark-TO would be operated by MCT*

*Not all stops are shown*

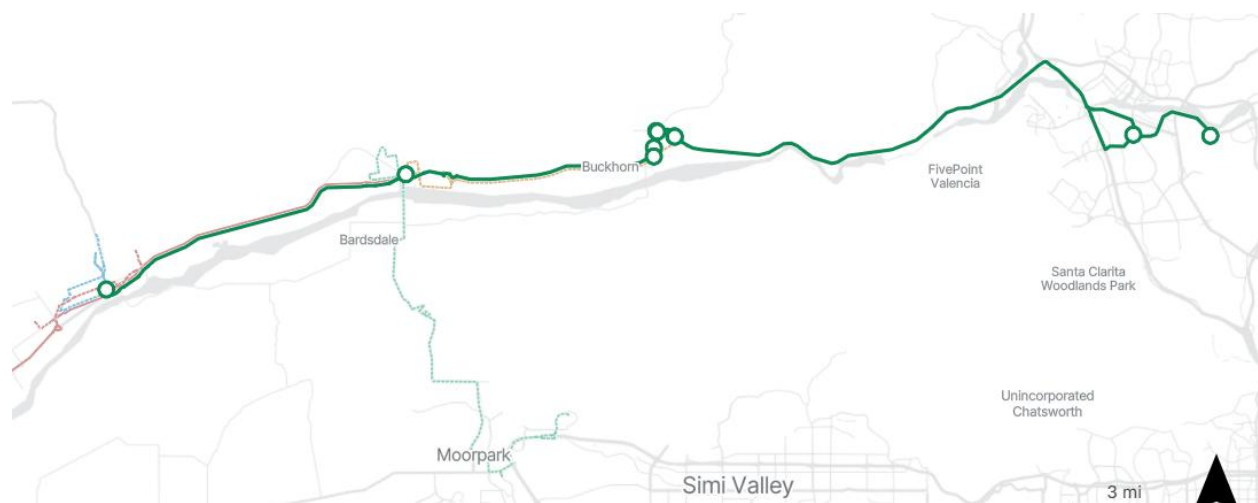
- Timed transfer
- Point of interest

▲ 1 MILE

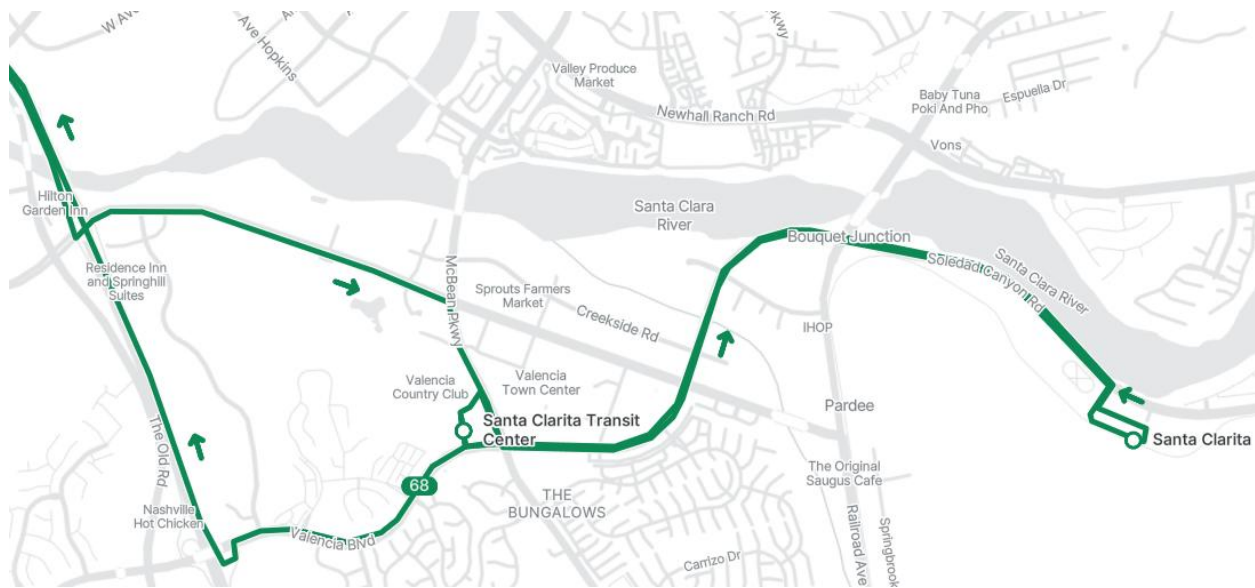
## LONG-TERM SERVICE CONCEPTS

Residents of the Heritage Valley area have long expressed a desire for service east to Santa Clarita in Los Angeles County. This issue has not qualified under VCTC's definition as an Unmet Transit Need as the service runs outside of the county. However, increasing development throughout the corridor and in Santa Clarita support increased travel demand management in the corridor. VCTC should consider long-term development of a **Proposed Route 68 limited express service along Highway 126 potentially from Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru to Santa Clarita.**

This concept would start initially with limited, peak-period trips with one stop each in Santa Paula, Fillmore, and downtown Piru, to the Santa Clarita Transit Center at McBean Parkway and Valencia Boulevard. The route could continue on to the Santa Clarita or Newhall Metrolink stations, although several Santa Clarita Transit routes could also provide this connection if necessary. Running a single-seat connection to Metrolink on the Intercity service would be the most beneficial for riders.



The conceptual route is estimated at approximately 140 minute round-trip runtime, serving only two stops in Santa Clarita. Compared with other destinations Intercity routes serve, Santa Clarita is more sprawling, and it would be difficult to directly serve the major employment centers with a single route. The conceptual route does pass through the highest concentration of employment centers and additional stops could be considered.



## ADMINISTRATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL OPERATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### VEHICLE FLEET

For the service changes proposed, Proposed 70, Proposed 72, and revised 77 Cross County Limited would operate more like limited-stop local routes than VCTC's traditional Intercity regional/commuter style service. This operating style may be better suited to traditional urban transit buses such as a Gillig or New Flyer 40' bus than the commuter coaches VCTC currently operates. Traditional transit buses are more maneuverable and have the advantage of a standard low-floor entry which makes boarding and alighting faster for all passengers. It is also somewhat easier to procure electric and hydrogen urban transit buses than alternative-fuel commuter coaches. Traditional transit buses can still be configured with more comfortable seating for long-distance/highway operation and interior overhead luggage racks if desired. Such a strategy could also align with long-term recommendations to increase coordination between agencies and potentially shift operations of some routes to local operators in the event that consolidation does not proceed. This is described more later in this chapter under *Administration and Oversight of Service*.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

Implementation of Proposed Route 70 shifts the route terminus to the Simi Valley Metrolink train station for all trips, which does not currently have permanent facilities for **operator layover**. VCTC should work with the City to identify a near-term and long-term improvement plan.

The modifications to Route 77 would also shift the eastern layover location from Moorpark College to the Moorpark Metrolink station.

**New bus stops** may need to be established at many locations on Proposed 70 and Proposed 72, as well as proposed infill stops on Route 77. Most of the proposed stops are at the intersection of a major arterial and could be implemented with only the addition of a bus stop sign, although more amenities are always desirable. This can be considered as part of VCTC’s current bus stop improvement plan, and in coordination with the local jurisdiction partners.

Improving reliability of travel time for Intercity routes is also crucial. As car ownership has risen and fewer people are taking transit, traffic congestion has gotten worse. Intercity routes are a valuable alternative, but Intercity routes have few, if any **traffic priority treatments**. Traffic congestion on US-101, CA-126, and likely other highway segments can result in significant expansion of scheduled runtimes during peak periods. While Intercity service alone will not solve congestion, bus only lanes and other strategies can help prioritize the bus to bypass queues and slow zones to maintain more reliable transit travel times throughout the day.

VCTC could work with Caltrans to explore “Bus On Shoulder” (BOS) operations on US-101. There are several long stretches of this freeway with available shoulder widths on both sides and in both directions that may be viable through restriping for peak-period BOS operation. Feasibility studies and pilot implementations for BOS in California include San Diego and Santa Cruz, and according to USDOT, successful applications are found throughout the United States<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Federal Highway Administration, *Use of Freeway Shoulders for Travel – Guide for Planning, Evaluating, and Designing Part-Time Shoulder Use as a Traffic Management Strategy*. May 13, 2020.  
<https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop15023/apa.htm>

### ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT OF SERVICE

The TIES report recommends that VCTC transfer the operation of the Intercity services to GCTD in the long run. According to GCTD, the current operations facility was designed to absorb other operations. TIES envisioned that the East County route could be taken over by an operator in the area to better coordinate with locally-operated service. VCTC should work with its partners to consolidate operation of service as follows:

Route Group	Future Operator	Vehicle Type
Route 50 Highway 101	GCTD	Traditional 40' with highway configuration
Route 60 Highway 126	GCTD	Traditional 40' with highway configuration
Route 70 New Simi Valley-TO	TOT	Traditional 40' (highway configuration optional)
Route 72 New Moorpark-TO	TOT	Traditional 40' (highway configuration optional)
Route 80-87 Coastal Express	GCTD	Commuter Coach
Route 99	GCTD or CAT	Traditional 40'

Regardless of long-term consolidation of operation, effective oversight of the service is essential:

1. Review performance data regularly and ensure contract operator is engaged in meeting standards. There is a balance of maintaining stability in schedules and routes for long enough to fairly evaluate the success of service but not so long that problems go unchecked, as described in the Performance Standards section.
2. For long-distance, hourly (or less frequent) services, attention to on-time-performance is crucial and adjustments to schedules should be made as often as needed. Involve bus operators and contract management staff to ensure operators consistently achieve planned layover and recovery time and reduce slack between timepoints, in association with monitoring performance data.
3. Ensure coordination and connectivity to other bus routes remains a top priority; this is a two-way relationship that, when effectively maintained, benefits everyone.

### Overview of Proposed Service Changes for VCTC Intercity Service

Key Change	Benefits	Considerations
<p><b>Reconfigure East County route to directly connect Simi Valley to Thousand Oaks (Proposed Route 70)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Addresses factors that affect poor performance of East County route: too few stops in each community and operating too infrequently to connect with local transit</li> <li>- Realigns service between the two cities with most substantial travel demand</li> <li>- Operates limited stop service on arterials that will generate both long-distance and medium-distance ridership</li> <li>- Closes service gap between Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks along Madera/Olsen Road</li> <li>- Provides new regional connection to Cal Lutheran</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Creates a service gap between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks.</b> The gap was intended to be filled by replacing Moorpark City Transit’s Route 2 with Proposed Route 72 (below) using the same buses and revenue hours budget. A funding and operating agreement should be sought as soon as feasible.</li> <li>- Operation of commuter bus service on Moorpark Road in Thousand Oaks is a substantial change from the norm. Intercity stops would be limited to only major arterial intersections.</li> <li>- Existing Route 70 was the lowest performing Intercity Route</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implement Proposed Route 72 between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intended to fill service gap created by discontinuing existing Route 70 and replacing with Proposed Route 70</li> <li>- Separating East County service into two separate routes provides more direct service between the largest travel markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Travel demand based on big data suggests Moorpark to Thousand Oaks travel market lower than Simi Valley to Thousand Oaks</li> <li>- Market analysis found trips between Moorpark and Thousand Oaks were strongest to the Amgen campus; discussion with staff revealed that prior attempts to provide transit service to Amgen failed to attract ridership</li> <li>- Proposed route serves few destinations in Thousand Oaks, with hourly frequency using only one bus to make connections to TOT routes.</li> </ul>

Key Change	Benefits	Considerations
<p><b><i>Streamline overlap between 77 Cross County Limited and SVT Route 10 to increase frequency west of Moorpark</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shortens route length to allow for higher frequency service between Moorpark and Ventura</li> <li>- Increased frequency better complements and fills gaps in Metrolink schedule</li> <li>- Reduces overlapping route coverage with SVT</li> <li>- Increases regularity of schedule to attract more riders</li> <li>- Adds limited infill stops to fill some local service gaps in Moorpark and Camarillo, increasing access and ridership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Simi Valley Transit Route 10 would continue to provide fixed route transit service between Moorpark College and Simi Valley</li> <li>- Reduces single-seat ride for some current riders traveling from Moorpark center or points west to/from Simi Valley</li> <li>- Route 77 was the second-lowest performing Intercity route despite a strong route design and significant travel market</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Regular hourly (or better) service on all routes between 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM on weekends</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capture a more general/diverse travel market compared with the historic commuter focus</li> <li>- Expanded span of service will enable more commuters to use transit to get to/from home</li> <li>- Hourly frequency aligns with local transit service better than peak-loaded schedules with service gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding constraints may limit implementing hourly service across all routes in the near and mid-term</li> <li>- Some services may still have the peak ridership demand to require more than once-an-hour trips</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Timed transfers to local transit services</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve connections between services and regional hubs</li> <li>- Better connections should bolster increased ridership on Intercity and local service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timing transfers to local routes can be difficult to initiate and maintain. Although planning practice is proposed in the S RTP to address this, it may never work seamlessly across all possible connections</li> </ul>

Key Change	Benefits	Considerations
<b><i>Infill stops along local arterial streets</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Expands walkable access to Intercity service to more homes and further reduces VMT and traffic congestion</li> <li>– Expands walkable access to certain employment centers, which tend to be clustered in Ventura County cities; some underserved areas are currently passed by Intercity routes without stopping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Locating stops at major intersections along the proposed routes would minimize deviations</li> <li>– Local arterial stops can be considered “flag stops” based on Intercity’s traditional operation; it may take education of both operators and riders to adjust especially where Intercity stops overlap local service</li> </ul>

## PROPOSED FARES AND POLICY CHANGES

The proposed fare system for VCTC Intercity would include an initial base increase to \$2.00 for Zone 1 fares and to \$5.00 for Zone 2 fares (service outside of Ventura County). In a later phase (within five years), Zone 2 fares would increase further to \$6.00. The introduction of fare capping should help alleviate the cost increase for Zone 2 travelers who cannot afford the up-front monthly pass cost but need to ride more than 15 days a month.

	Bus Routes Current	Dial-A-Ride Current	Routes Proposed Phase 1	Dial-A-Ride Proposed Phase 1	Routes Proposed Phase 2	Dial-A-Ride Proposed Phase 2
Base Fare within Ventura County (Zone 1)	\$1.75	N/A	\$2.00	N/A	\$2.00	N/A
Senior (65+) and People with Disabilities (ADA) Zone 1	\$0.80	N/A	\$1.00	N/A	\$1.00	N/A
Base Fare beyond Ventura County (Zone 2)	\$4.00	N/A	\$5.00	N/A	\$6.00	N/A
Senior (65+) and People with Disabilities (ADA) Zone 2	\$2.00	N/A	\$2.50	N/A	\$3.00	N/A

## SUMMARY AND BASIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The planned service changes will realign connections between communities in Ventura County with stronger travel demand patterns, address problems with the current service design for the East County route, and reduce overlapping service with SVT to improve frequency elsewhere. In the long-term, the SRTP provides a roadmap for priority investments in Intercity service beginning with closing schedule gaps across the system.

This plan is intended to address these existing gaps and opportunities:

- The current East County route design fails to attract appropriate ridership levels, due to a combination of several factors and trade-offs. Proposed Route 70 focuses the route on the more substantial travel market between Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks, but this is a trade-off in service between Moorpark and the other two cities that will leave a gap in the network unless resources are found to operate Proposed Route 72.
- Overall ridership on the 77 Cross County Limited is low, and ridership east of Moorpark College to Simi Valley could instead use SVT Route 10. This streamlines overlapping service, allows VCTC to better use three buses to operate hourly headways west of Moorpark, and may help justify a future increase for SVT Route 10 to regular hourly headways consistent with the SRTP principles.
- A model for this approach is VCTC's separately-prepared plan to revitalize the Coastal Express service by repurposing deadhead hours into bi-directional revenue service. This approach should better serve a wider variety of customer trip needs throughout the day, and aligning all Intercity service to follow this model gives people across the region greater flexibility in using transit.
- Several Intercity routes already operate primarily on local arterials and state highways (as opposed to freeway segments), and the proposed improvements would add strategic bus stops to expand access to more potential riders without needing to drive to a park and ride lot or to reach jobs and commercial centers that the route may currently pass without stopping.
- The plan emphasizes the importance of allocating resources to operate all Intercity routes regularly throughout the day. While many routes already do, underperforming service has little chance of success when schedules are sporadic and it undermines the potential of a countywide network. When all services operate throughout the day and make connections (both with other Intercity routes and other local and regional transit), it effectively reduces travel time for riders.
- In the long term, a new route connecting to the Santa Clarita area across Highway 126 will fill an often-requested gap through a corridor that has seen tremendous housing and job development (both in Ventura and Los Angeles counties) in the last ten years, with more planned.

## Financial Analysis of Recommendations

### NEAR-TERM

Balancing the proposed operations of the Near-Term concept (Proposed Routes 70, 72, and 77) with available resources presents a significant challenge.

The near-term concept assumes a significant increase in revenue hours, but the hope is that some of this increase is absorbed by shifting deadhead hours to revenue hours, which VCTC pays the contractor for at the same rate. For Route 70 shifting to the proposed revision with all revenue service beginning and ending in Thousand Oaks, deadhead time should be reduced from approximately 8 hours to an estimated 3 hours, accounting for a peak-only third bus. For Route 77, deadhead should be minimized by beginning and ending service in each direction at Camarillo and performing shift changes there as well. This should reduce deadhead from approximately 7 hours to 1 or fewer, meaning almost half of the increased daily hours are through operational efficiency.

The table below shows how the near-term proposal would shift the hours by service.

	Avg. Weekday Revenue Hours	Avg. Weekday Deadhead Hours	Total Average Daily Hours	Proposed Daily Revenue Hours	Anticipated Deadhead Hours (Change)	Total Daily (Change)
50 Highway 101	31	10	41	No change	No change	No change
55 Conejo Connection	9	3	12	No change	No change	No change
60-62 Highway 126	33	13	47	No change <sup>a</sup>	No change <sup>a</sup>	No change <sup>a</sup>
70-73 East County	22	8	30	30 (+8)	3 (-5)	33 (+3)
77 Cross County Ltd.	25	7	32	44 (+19)	1 (-6)	45 (+13)
80-89 Coastal Express	72	31	103	No change	No change	No change
90-99 Channel Islands	22	6	28	No change	No change	No change
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>+26 (307 total daily)</b>

a. No change is proposed based on 2025 published schedule which includes regular hourly service only on Route 60; this is not necessarily reflected in the FY24 budget

The table below shows estimated operating cost changes only for the proposed service changes in each period (near, mid and long-term). This assumes all other Intercity services remain at similar levels during that period.

### Operating Cost Estimates for Proposed VCTC Intercity Service Changes

Transit Service	Weekday Daily Operating Hours <sup>1</sup>		Operating Cost per Revenue Hour	Annual Revenue Hours		Annual Operating Cost	
	Current	Proposed		Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
<b>Proposed 70</b>	22	30	\$145	5,971	9,940	\$845,149	\$1,450,000
<b>New 77</b>	25	43	\$145	6,380	14,790	\$903,253	\$2,150,000
<b>Near-Term Total</b>	-	-	-	12,351	24,730	\$1,748,402	<b>\$3,600,000</b>
<b>Proposed 70 (Hourly+ Weekend)</b>	30	36	\$145	9,940	11,260	\$1,450,000	\$1,633,000
<b>Proposed 72 (Hourly)</b>	-	14	\$145	-	4,714	-	\$690,000
<b>Mid-Term Total</b>	<i>Includes full service on Proposed 70, New 77, and weekdays on Proposed 72</i>						<b>\$4,473,000</b>
<b>Proposed 68 Santa Clarita Peak-Only (Long-Term)</b>	-	22	\$145	-	5,650	-	\$818,000
<b>Long-Term Total</b>	<i>Includes full service on Proposed 70, Proposed 72, New 77, and Proposed 68</i>						<b>\$5,291,000</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup>Ranges represent differences in weekday and weekend span of service.

A high-level implementation estimate using the Remix transit planning tool estimates the total operating cost for Intercity services with all proposed changes above at approximately \$15 million annually.

## FARE AND RIDERSHIP ANALYSIS FOR FIXED ROUTES

The fare and ridership analysis for VCTC incorporates only the Near-Term concept, inclusive of operating Proposed Routes 70, 72, and 77. The fare analysis includes an estimation of fares for Zone 1 and Zone 2. Due to limitations in the modeling methodology, the ridership outcomes for the proposed Near-Term concept may be substantially underestimated. Considering the Intercity network in FY14 carried over 800,000 total riders, the high-performance outcome is more likely reflective of the proposed level of investment.

	Ridership	Passengers/RSH	Fare Revenue
Existing (FY23)	365,990	6.1	\$750,454
<b>Near-Term (Service-based estimate)</b>	<b>583,086</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>\$1,616,834</b>
<b>Proposed Plan (High Performance Outcome)</b>	<b>1,227,704</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>\$4,790,900</b>

## Capital Plan

Implementing these transit service recommendations will require modest investments in new stop infrastructure, however the bulk of VCTC's capital needs over the next 10 years will go towards its transition to a fully zero-emission fleet.

## FLEET AND FACILITIES

VCTC operates a fleet of 36 diesel commuter coaches and plans to begin transitioning to a mix of battery electric and fuel-cell electric buses (FCEB).<sup>20</sup> According to the agency's 2023 Zero Emissions Bus Rollout and Implementation Plan (VCTC ZEB Plan), VCTC anticipates needing to increase fleet size to 41 total coaches, with 5 near-term BEB coaches supplemented by a fleet of 36 FCEB coaches. The report found that over 40% of Intercity vehicles travel more than 250 miles a day, which is beyond the modeled limit for both BEB and FCEB vehicles. The BEB limit modeled was 190-200 miles per charge, and up to 250 miles for FCEB coaches.

The proposed expanded route system and schedules represent a substantial change from the ZEB modeling assumptions, even in the near-term scenario. The SRTP calls for significant increases in operating hours on Routes 70 and 77. As shown in the table below, Proposed 70 and Proposed 72 are expected to operate within the daily mileage limit for an FCEB, but the revised Route 77 would exceed the limit.

<sup>20</sup> VCTC, "Ventura County Transportation Commission ZEB Rollout and Implementation Plan." May, 2023.

Route 77 operates through the Camarillo Metrolink Station, which is adjacent to the current contractor facility on Dawson Drive. This represents an opportunity to swap vehicles en route without disrupting passenger service.

VCTC is also exploring a partnership with GCTD to eventually access a planned hydrogen fueling facility.

### Battery Electric Vehicle Requirements for Proposed SRTP Near-Term Fixed Route Concept

Proposed Transit Service	Number of Vehicles Needed to Achieve Proposed Frequency	Daily Weekday Mileage per Vehicle <sup>1</sup>	Daily Weekend Mileage per Vehicle <sup>1</sup>	FCEB Range <sup>2</sup>	FCEB Vehicles Required
<b>Proposed 70 (Full weekday)</b>	3	248	N/A	250	<b>3</b>
<b>Proposed 72 (Full weekday)</b>	1	248.5	N/A	250	<b>1</b>
<b>New 77 (Full weekday)</b>	3	348	130	250	<b>4</b>

Notes:

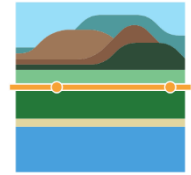
<sup>1</sup> Daily mileage per vehicle for fixed route services is equal to the length of one trip multiplied by the number of daily trips, rounded up to the nearest ten.

<sup>2</sup> VCTC ZEB Rollout Plan identified FCEB range limits at 250 daily miles.

## STOP INFRASTRUCTURE

VCTC generally must partner with local jurisdictions to locate and improve bus stops that it serves independently from other routes. Many new proposed stops are included on Proposed 70, and select new infill stops are identified on the revised Route 77.

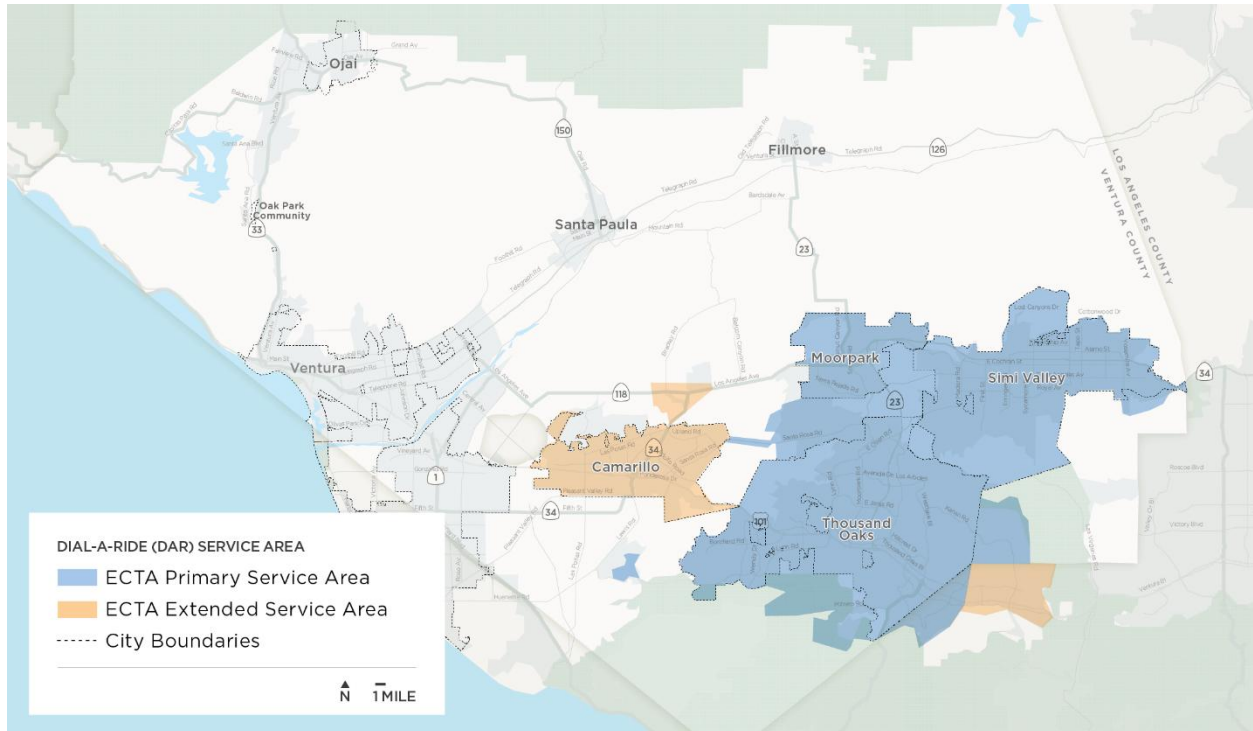
# 15. EAST COUNTY TRANSIT ALLIANCE (ECTA)



This section provides an assessment of ECTA CONNECT (referred to simply as ECTA herein), the cross-jurisdictional demand-response service operating primarily in Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and Moorpark. See the Market Assessment sections of the chapters on those respective communities for an understanding of the demographics, travel patterns, and landscape of those areas.

## Rider Eligibility and Service Area

ECTA represents a special agreement between the cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks and Ventura County to offer a premium intercity DAR service. The City of Thousand Oaks serves as the fiscal agent and operator for the ECTA service. The ECTA service backfills, to some degree, the lack of fixed-route bus service between these neighboring cities. The City of Camarillo participates in ECTA for the purpose of coordination but has not elected to participate in the cost sharing agreement. Instead, Camarillo provides direct service to and from Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Thousand Oaks via CAT for Camarillo residents 65 and older and individuals with a disability. The ECTA service provides trips to/from Camarillo for its riders as well as to points west via a transfer with GCTD. The ECTA service area is shown in Figure 74.

**Figure 74: ECTA Service Area**

Perhaps confusingly, although Camarillo is nominally a part of ECTA, the city is considered the Extended Service Area. Riders who live in the primary service area may travel to and from the extended area (which also includes Agoura Hills in Los Angeles County); residents of Camarillo traveling into the ECTA primary service area are instead served by CAT DAR, which does not necessarily match the fare and eligibility structure of ECTA.

## Performance Indicators

Key Performance Metrics for ECTA are summarized in Table 53. In November 2024, ECTA switched software providers from Trapeze to RideCo. The analysis presented in this section reflects operations prior to that change.

**Table 53: ECTA Performance Metrics**

ECTA CONNECT Dial-a-Ride	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<i>Passenger Trips</i>	21,300	15,571	3,907	7,031	8,051
<i>Revenue Hours</i>	12,140	8,967	1,774	5,115	5,955
<i>Revenue Miles</i>	271,023	218,069	30,736	117,404	129,514
<i>Operating Cost</i>	\$860,744	\$1,020,771	\$424,271	\$683,194	\$809,220
<i>Passengers per Hour</i>	1.75	1.74	2.20	1.37	1.35
<i>Passengers per Mile</i>	0.08	0.07	0.13	0.06	0.06
<i>Cost per Passenger</i>	\$40.41	\$65.56	\$108.59	\$97.17	\$100.51
<i>Cost per Hour</i>	\$70.90	\$113.84	\$239.12	\$133.56	\$135.89
<i>Cost per Mile</i>	\$3.18	\$4.68	\$13.80	\$5.82	\$6.25

Source: ECTA, 2024.

ECTA has experienced a significant drop in ridership since FY19, losing 62% of passenger trips in FY23 compared to pre-pandemic levels. Operating costs have fluctuated due to a reduction in service hours, however current operating costs have returned to pre-COVID-19 levels with lower service utilization, causing increases in all cost indicators. Passengers served per hour dropped to 1.35 while the cost per passenger has risen by 150% since FY19.

## Operations Topics

ECTA resulted from general agreement among East County cities that consolidation with GCTD was undesirable. The current MOU accomplished intercity dial-a-ride trips that addressed identified unmet needs. The City of Camarillo believed their operations already met a high level of service, and that the costs of providing service under the Alliance would likely be higher than what they were paying. For this reason, Camarillo opted to provide its own intercity services. Camarillo continues to support the Alliance as a non-paying member, with voting rights on policy, procedure, and operations but not as a member of the fiscal agreement.

ECTA currently assesses participating jurisdiction costs by rider's home address.

ECTA sets up transfers into Ventura and Oxnard with GCTD at the Camarillo Transfer point and into Los Angeles County with L.A. ACCESS. Camarillo picks up any trip within its city and transfers with GCTD at St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard. This arrangement

alleviates what might otherwise be multiple transfers for a DAR trip from Thousand Oaks to Oxnard into only one transfer.

## RESOURCES

The MV Transportation call center which facilitates ECTA trips has 4 call-taker positions spread across the services it operates. There are 3 full-time dispatchers, an operations manager, and customer service manager that field complaints. The ECTA service has 4 dedicated drivers from a pool of 35 drivers with commercial endorsement that can operate any vehicle. The drivers bid on service for assignments to run.

## TECHNOLOGY

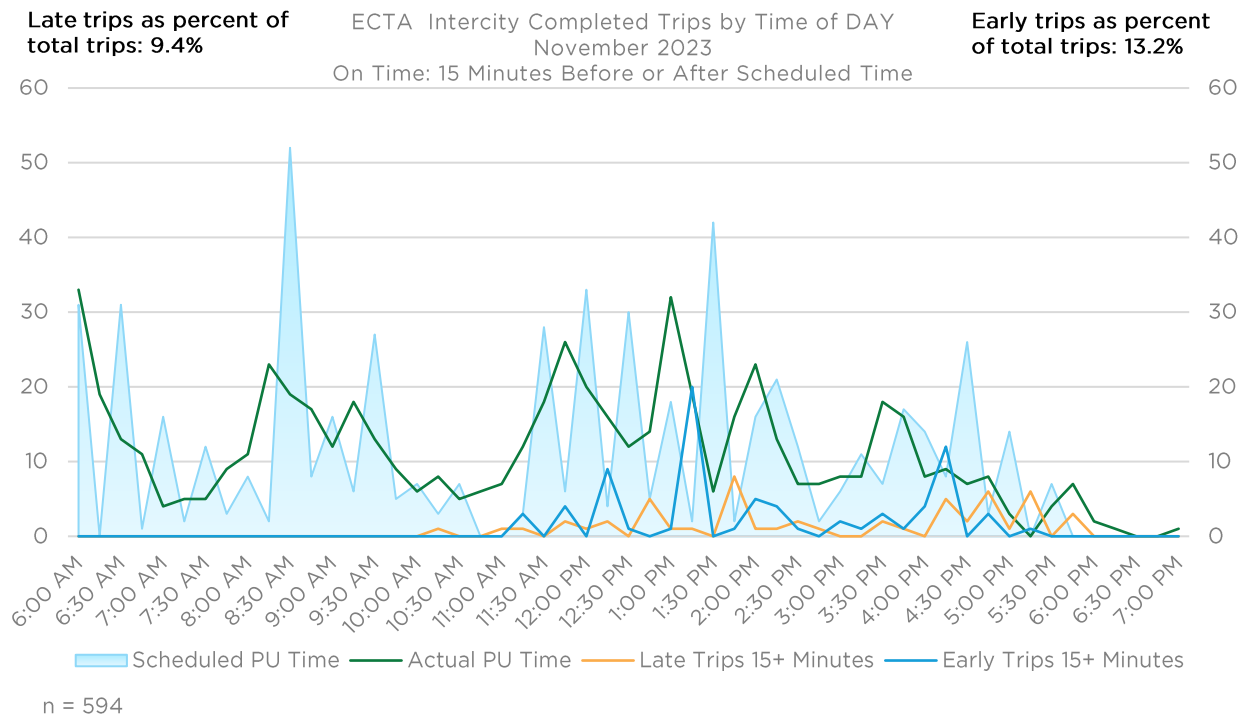
Automated calls are sent to riders 20 minutes before the vehicle's arrival time using the built-in Ripple notification feature. RADAR digital systems are installed on vehicles to ensure safe driving. RideCo scheduling software recently replaced Trapeze for all Thousand Oaks operated services and is anticipated to increase efficiency in service delivery.

## ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented in Figure 75. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. The analysis determines on-time performance by calculating the total number of actual pick-up times that fall outside of a 30-minute "on-time" window, defined as 15 minutes before the scheduled time to 15 minutes after.

ECTA service begins at 6:00 a.m. to ensure the longer-distance trips reach their destination in time for appointments and work shifts. Peak demand is experienced at 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. ECTA manages on-time performance well during the morning, but trips begin to run early and late just before noon with a significant number of trips running late just before the midday peak. Vehicles arriving more than 15 minutes before the scheduled time account for 13% of trips while late trips represent just over 9% of trips. ECTA service is available until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

**Figure 75: ECTA On-Time Performance**



Source: ECTA, 2024.

## ECTA: Fares

ECTA fares increased on January 1, 2025, from \$6.00 to \$8.00 for a one-way trip. The fare remains the same regardless of the distance traveled. Personal Care Attendants with ADA endorsement can ride free of charge when serving as a companion.

## ECTA's Interest and Concerns for Integration

ECTA is currently not interested in expanding its service area, as growing the system is perceived to be more expensive. ECTA also has concerns about its ability to meet TDA farebox requirements, if services were to be consolidated. There are concerns about absorbing Simi Valley's demand-response services given their higher cost pension obligation. However, ECTA is interested in coordinating with its partners to improve working relationships, improve customer service and enhance the rider experience.

## 16. OJAI



The Ojai sub-area (see Figure 1) is in northwestern Ventura County and consists of the Ojai Valley and surrounding mountains. It is relatively distant from other developed areas, separated from them by mountainous open space. Although primarily a residential area, Ojai Valley is known for tourism, attracting visitors with its natural beauty, arts scene, and a variety of wellness and luxury resorts.

The City of Ojai operates the Ojai Trolley, which currently runs a single route variation. In previous years there were two route variations, but one was suspended due to a driver shortage relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Service was initially suspended in FY21, then reinstated, then suspended again in FY23. The currently operational route (Route A) offers hourly service from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., connecting key destinations along Maricopa Highway and Ojai Avenue. This route serves essential locations, including downtown Ojai, and extends to the unincorporated areas of Meiners Oaks and Mira Monte. The temporarily suspended route (Route B) would typically operate with a similar hourly frequency and cover additional areas such as the Ojai Valley Inn. Both routes operate in a loop but cater to some distinct parts of the city.



Ojai Trolley ridership was approximately 36,691 in 2023. Total annual ridership decreased 65% over the last ten years. Like many transit agencies, Ojai Trolley severely cut service during the COVID-19 pandemic and has not restored service to pre-pandemic levels. Ridership had recovered to 51% of FY19 levels as of June 2023.

ADA Paratransit service in Ojai is provided by GCTD GO ACCESS.

Due to vacancies at the City of Ojai during the time this work was conducted, limited information could be obtained about existing service, planned changes, City priorities, or resource constraints.

The Ojai Trolley is a specialized local circulator service. It serves both the typical functions of a local fixed route transit and that of a tourism-supporting circulator. In terms of service design, the Trolley A and B routes provide extensive coverage in the Ojai Valley. Due to the nature of the Ojai Valley geography and road network, there are few practical alternatives for the route that would be more efficient and still provide sufficient coverage to neighborhoods and key destinations.

When operating full service, the half-hour frequency is well-suited for the community and the route design. Ojai Trolley is one of the few local services in the County which operates seven days a week.

The City of Ojai has experienced significant challenges in maintaining the full two-route Trolley service for several years. The most pressing concern is staffing, with an insufficient number of drivers to operate two routes, and some administrative staffing constraints at times. Since the pandemic, Ojai Trolley has only regularly operated the Trolley A route, with hourly headways. The City desires to restore the B route to provide 30-minute headways.

Factors affecting the insufficient staff levels include:

- The City lacks capacity and capability to train prospective applicants to operate a commercial vehicle. The City has partnered with GCTD to provide training and preparation for prospective applicants, but like most agencies of its size, GCTD does not offer rolling or continuous training programs which could significantly delay on-boarding new staff for the Ojai Trolley.
- The City has not classified the Trolley operator positions as full-time, which likely makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified candidates. As a result, for full service the City previously held 12 part-time operator positions. According to past Triennial Performance Audits (TPA reports), driver turnover was a challenge even prior to the pandemic.
- The Ojai Valley has a relatively small population to draw employees from; for any potential employees living outside the area, the long commute may be unattractive for anything less than a full-time position.

Vehicle maintenance has also been a challenge for the service. The City is not properly equipped with facilities and staff to perform more than basic maintenance. Combined with the age of the vehicles and long lead times for procuring new specialty trolley buses, service reliability has suffered. Factors affecting service and vehicle reliability include:

- According to the 2023 TPA report, the City had an unfulfilled mechanic position which required using local contractor or partnering with the County for vehicle maintenance. Additionally, the City's facility and staff expertise may not be sufficient for major repairs, also requiring vehicles to be sent out of the service area.
- The trolley buses are specialty vehicles. Although they share characteristics of a traditional bus, the vehicles are effectively built on a truck chassis with substantial modifications. In some cases, this could result in a vehicle being taken out of service because of a part or mechanical issue that is specific to the trolley (as opposed to the truck chassis), which are harder to source compared with traditional transit buses.

- The current fleet uses propane fuel, which is an uncommon “alternative” fuel that few other vehicles in the region use, and may be hard to find other vendors who are equipped to service propane-fueled vehicles.
- Several trolley buses are 2011 model year vehicles, and have exceeded their useful life. The 2018 trolley buses also reach the end of their useful life in 2025.

## Ojai Trolley: Transit Service Recommendations

The highest priority actions are to stabilize operation and maintenance of the service. Ridership had its recent peak in 2014 at over 105,000 total boardings and had declined to just over 74,000 in 2019. The low ridership since the pandemic, averaging around 35,000 annual riders, is certainly affected by the reduction to a single route and the loss of Sunday service. The City has been working to resolve these issues. Restoration of more frequent and reliable daily service is essential to restoring ridership proportional to the City’s investment.

### STAFFING

According to prior TPA reports, the structure of exclusively part-time drivers was seen as an incentive for applicants who are more likely to be local retirees who prefer to have greater flexibility and consider the job to be a way to serve the community. If sufficiently staffing the Trolley service has been a challenge since at least 2018, consider the following:

1. Offering two full-time fully benefitted positions with a regionally-competitive salary will be more likely to draw a pool of candidates who already have a CDL.
2. Even if applicants do not have a CDL, it is easier to have a smaller pool of drivers to train and easier to retain full-time employees.
3. Attracting full-time employees earlier in their career could support greater retention.
4. While several part-time positions that may be attractive to retirees and others will remain and can fill out the schedule and provide as substitute drivers to cover for absences.

### LICENSING AND TRAINING

The City currently works with GCTD to support training new Trolley operators including obtaining a CDL. This is an ideal strategy for the City, but could create a bottleneck if GCTD is not conducting a training group when Ojai hires new operators.

This issue supports the TIES recommendation for all transit providers in the County to work collaboratively for a universal transit training program that would be capable of offering more continuously rolling training. This could support Ojai’s needs as well as other small operators around the county who only periodically need training. Another solution could be to partner with a private commercial driving school in the region.

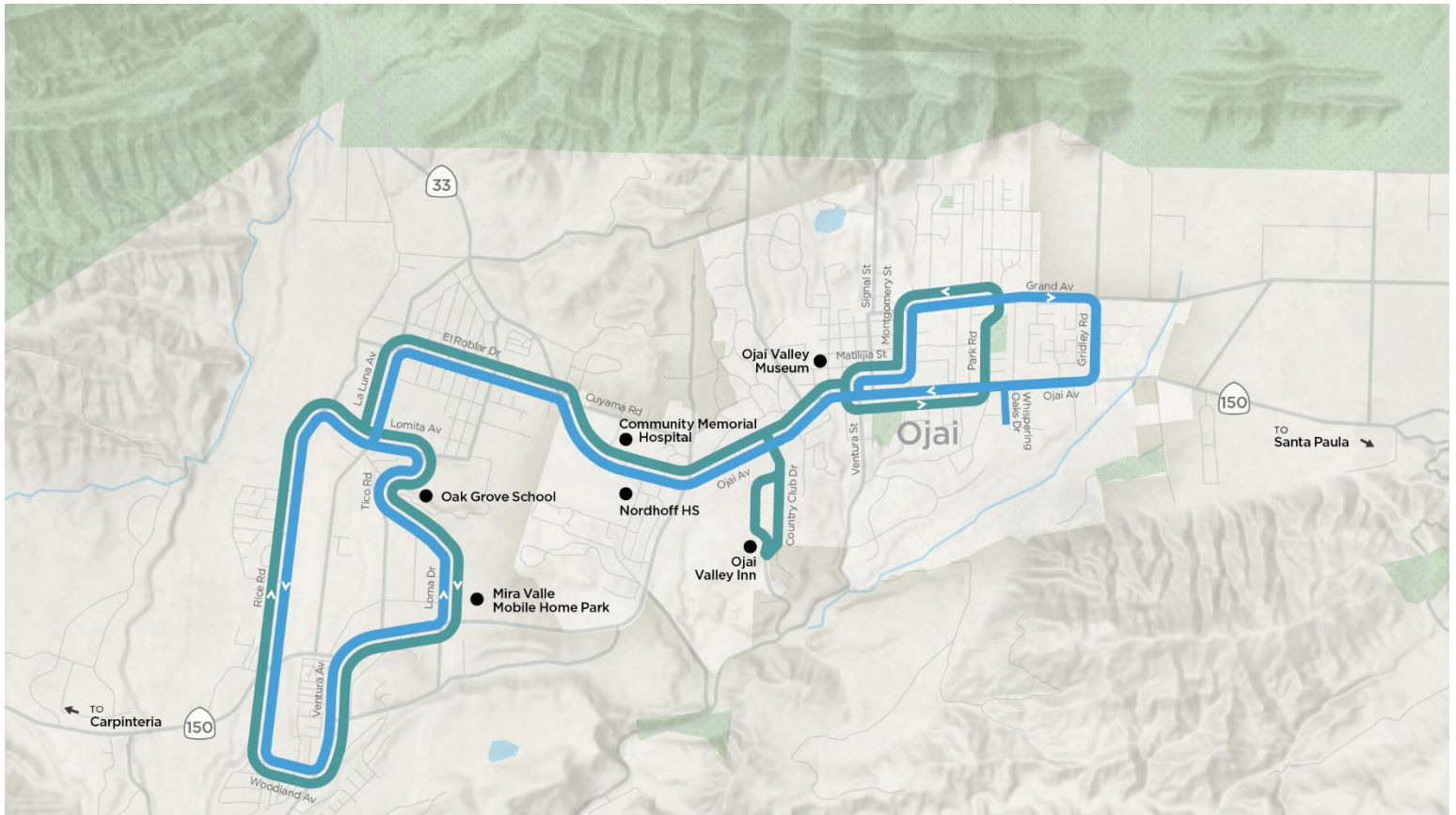
## LONG-TERM RESILIENCE

Given the City's longtime partnership with GCTD, and the City's membership as part of the District, a more resilient approach to service delivery for the long-term would be to transition operation of the Trolley service to GCTD. The City could develop an agreement with the agency to operate the service according to the City's parameters that would ensure it maintains the local and unique qualities and operates according to the City's schedules even if those are distinct from the rest of the GCTD network. The benefits of this conceptual arrangement are:

- A significantly larger pool of qualified operators, which will ensure service operates consistently.
  - This would not preclude GCTD from absorbing the current operator staff including the part-time operators, but would more easily support a transition to operating most of the service with full-time operators.
  - It may be a challenge to maintain the tradition of having part-time locals, including retirees, fill in the trolley schedule and only operate those routes. It may require an agreement to classify some part-time operators differently or otherwise ensure that these current employees are not suddenly expected to be operating other GCTD routes.
- Reliance on GCTD for vehicle maintenance and fleet replacement.
  - This may represent an opportunity to complete the ZEB Transition Plan in partner with GCTD, which is already preparing its facility for electric charging.
  - This would not alleviate the need for electric charging infrastructure in Ojai, as the vehicles would most likely still be garaged for daily service in Ojai, but could bolster long-term heavy maintenance and ensure the mechanic staff necessary for service reliability are available.
- Better connectivity for the Ojai Trolley as a part of the regional transit network.
  - While many people over the years have made connections between Ojai Trolley and the GCTD Route 16 that serves the community, integrating the services under one operation could lead to an even more seamless experience and further attract more riders.

When considering such a partnership, the state of the City's transition to a battery-electric trolley bus fleet must be involved. The ZEB Transition Plan envisions successful operation of electric vehicles by maintaining the City's current three-operator-per-route deployment by having each driver swap vehicles. This allows the first bus deployed each day to charge in the middle of the day, and then resume service with the third driver for the last portion of service each day. A version of this should still be possible with a change to a two-shift-per-route deployment and only using two trolleys per route each day. However, this requires confirmation through additional modeling by a qualified electric bus transition planner using the latest information for the planned fleet.

Figure 76: Ojai Trolley Routes and Span of Service

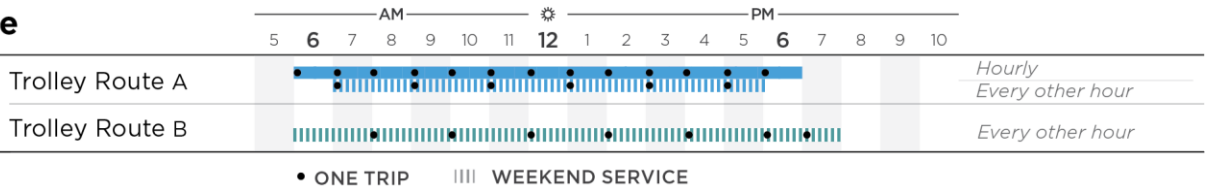


EXISTING SERVICE  
 — Ojai Trolley A  
 — Ojai Trolley B

▲ N  
 — .5 MILE  
 ● Point of interest

**Span of Service**

**Current Routes**



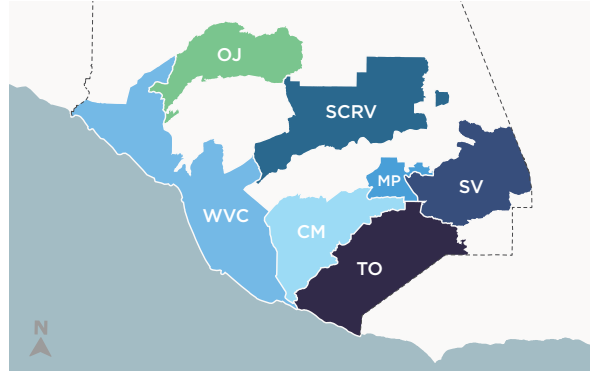
\*Trolley B was suspended when the S RTP was drafted but the City intends to resume service as soon as possible

## TRIP DISTRIBUTION

Destinations of Trips from Ojai Sub-Area

**51,900**

Trips Originate in Ojai Sub-Area



**3%**

Of Ventura County Trips Originate in Ojai Sub-Area

Stay Within Ojai Sub-Area  
**41,300**

→ **80%** Of Ojai Sub-Area Trips

To External Destinations  
**10,600**

**20%**

Of Ojai Sub-Area Trips End Externally

**17%**

West Ventura County  
**9,000**

**1%**

Camarillo Sub-Area

**400**

**0.1%**

Moorpark Sub-Area

**20**

**2%**

Santa Clara River Valley

**1,000**

**0.1%**

Simi Valley Sub-Area

**10**

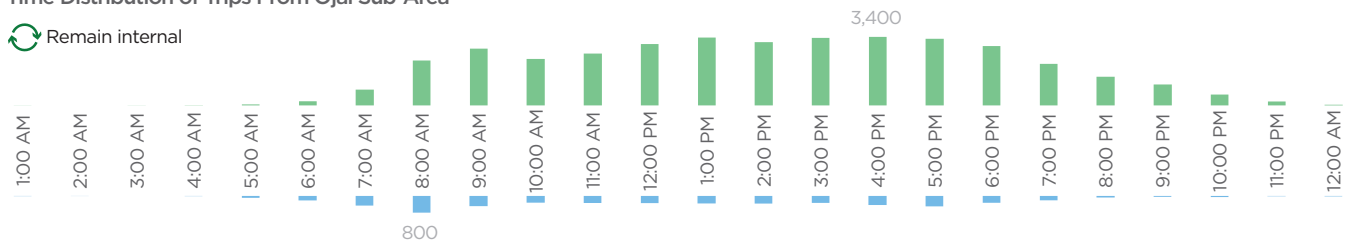
**0.2%**

Thousand Oaks Sub-Area

**100**

### Time Distribution of Trips From Ojai Sub-Area

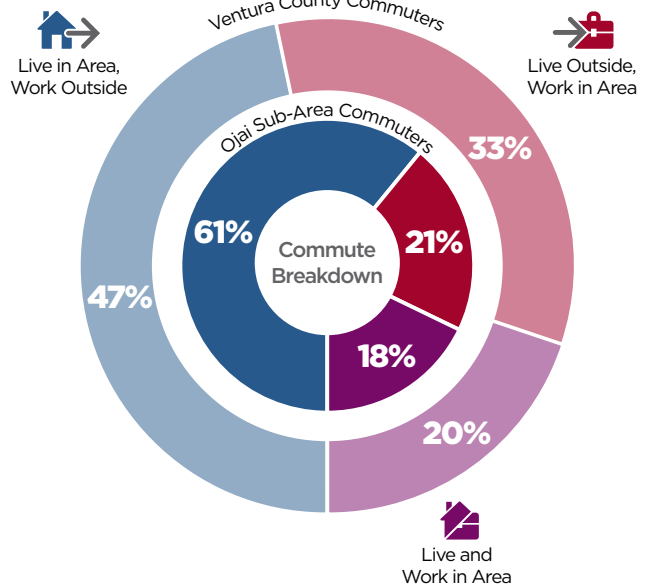
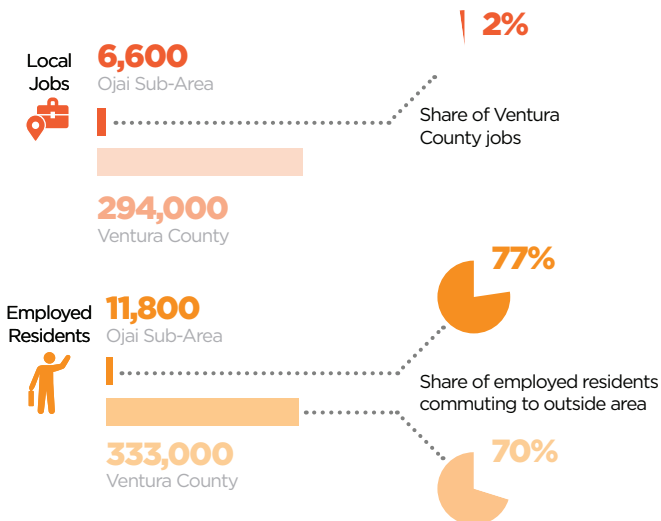
Remain internal



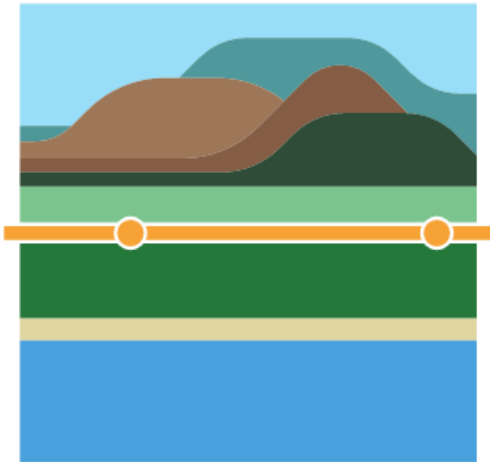
End externally

## JOBS INFLOW/OUTFLOW

Ojai Sub-Area Jobs Flow Compared to Ventura County



# APPENDICES



# VENTURA COUNTYWIDE SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

## Appendix A: Engagement and Outreach

The Ventura County Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) conducted community engagement at several stages throughout the project to better understand the issues and needs that people face in using transit across Ventura County. Engagement also sought to gauge reactions to initial concepts for the Plan. The table below provides an overview of the engagement phases and activities conducted, which took place in three phases.

Phase 1 began with the goal of identifying specific transit needs, in order to set the direction for the SRTP, to guide the data analysis, as well as to refine targets and topics for additional surveys later on. Phase 2 defined the needs and opportunities to pursue in developing transit improvements. Using input and results from Phases 1 and 2, the consultant team developed initial service concepts, and brought those draft concepts back to the public. Phase 3 gathered feedback on these initial concepts, to help influence the final Plan.

**Table 54: Summary of Engagement Activities**

Project Stage	Audience	When	Activities
<b>Phase 1 – Initiation, Identification of Needs</b>	Agency staff and Committees: CTAC, SSTAC, HVTAC, HVPAC, staff	December 2023–January 2024	TRANSCOM regular meeting introduction to SRTP process and initial priorities. Workshop session with transportation-related committees
	General public	January 2024	Combined Unmet Needs/SRTP public listening sessions in Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Moorpark, Simi Valley, Oxnard, Ojai, and Fillmore
	Partner stakeholders	January 2024	Stakeholder focus groups with social services agencies, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), education institutions and employers, and healthcare programs
	Everyone	January 2024	Project website launch and updated periodically
<b>Phase 2 – Surveying Riders and Non-Riders</b>	Fixed-route transit riders	February–April 2024	On-board surveys distributed to riders across VCTC, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Camarillo, Moorpark, and Valley Express routes

	General public	Spring 2024	Online survey promoted through e-blast, social media. Approximately 450 out of about 600 responses were from Ventura County residents.
	Demand-response riders	Summer 2024	Mailed/online surveys distributed countywide to dial-a-ride/paratransit riders
<b>Phase 3 – Input on Service Plan Recommendations</b>	Agency staff	September 2024 – May 2025	TRANSCOM regular meetings, individual community working meetings
	General public	December 2024	In-person and virtual workshops presenting draft service concepts
	Committees: CTAC, SSTAC, HVTAC, HVPAC, staff	November 2024 – February 2025	Updates to committees, staff, and elected leaders on conceptual recommendations

## PHASE 1: INITIATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

The first phase of engagement introduced the project objectives to both the general public and direct stakeholders, and sought input on the specific transportation needs that the SRTP should consider. The activities in this phase involved questions about the mobility challenges people in Ventura face, and what features a transit network would require to reduce barriers to accessing jobs, services, schools, or other needs.

The top issues that came up most frequently and across multiple audiences include:

**Awareness of transit options is a significant barrier to increasing ridership.** The engagement team received feedback about the general public’s unfamiliarity with what services are available to whom, and how easy or difficult it may be for different segments of the public to interpret or trust the information that is available. Core market segments such as college students, seniors, people whose first language is not English, and people with disabilities engage with transit differently, engage with media differently, and would benefit from more directly relevant marketing and promotion.

**Span of service and low bus route frequency significantly limit interest and ability for potential riders to use transit.** Infrequent service may result in long travel times for destinations beyond someone’s local community. People are often unable to use transit to attend social and cultural events or travel to jobs outside traditional daytime hours, because transit service on at least one leg of the trip ends too early or connections might be missed.

**College students and seniors** are at different stages in their life, but often have similar motivations to use transit. These include transit’s affordability, disinterest or inability

to drive (which may include lack of access to a car), and need to access services, jobs and entertainment/cultural activities. In Ventura County, students and seniors generally live in communities farther from urban centers, where transit service may be less frequent or have limited coverage, leading to longer travel times.

**Reaching key Ventura County destinations is (or is perceived to be) difficult and time-consuming.** This is a function of the issues discussed above: public awareness, ability to plan a trip across multiple providers, and the reality that service levels and schedules vary widely and are not coordinated between providers.

**Stakeholders and riders identified many desired programmatic recommendations to attract more riders to transit.** Beyond improving availability and coordination of service, improvements to travel training, marketing and promotions, online information, engagement with leadership at organizations and schools, and other improvements will promote the current services and boost ridership.

Phase 1 was successful in engaging and receiving feedback from stakeholder groups, agency staff, and transportation-related committees, and much of the input summarized above was generated by participants from these groups. Unfortunately, Phase 1 was less successful in engaging the general public, including current riders. Seven community workshops held across the county comprised the primary activities for soliciting input from the general public. Despite the concerted efforts of the consultant team and VCTC staff, these workshops were very sparsely attended.

The following pages categorize the input that emerged from the Phase 1 engagement by themes. The columns to the right show which stakeholder audience raised the issue. **The quantity of marks across audiences is not intended to indicate any level of importance or priority.**

**Table 55: Summary of Phase 1 Feedback**

Input	Agency Staff	CTAC/ SSTAC	Stakeholders	Riders	General Public
<b>Communication and promotion</b>					
Awareness of service availability is poor among the general public.		•	•		•
Material online may not be “senior-friendly.” Reliance on the internet may also underserve Spanish-speaking population.		•	•		
Online search functions like Google Maps do not always accurately reflect current service.			•		
Online information should be integrated into one site; riders aren’t concerned about who operates the service, but how to get to their destination.			•		
Travel training is a useful tool and should be extended to key staff at partner agencies like Behavioral Health Services and schools.		•	•	•	

Input	Agency Staff	CTAC/SSTAC	Stakeholders	Riders	General Public
Fare program awareness may be limited; vendors should be prepared to inform riders about the ability to reload online. Initial rollout of the countywide fare media was bumpy.	•			•	
Agencies have limited investment in marketing and promotion while facing shortage of staff and bus operators.	•				
Perception of safety among general public does not reflect actual, positive experience of riders and should be addressed with better communication.			•		
<b>Fixed-Route Network</b>					
Limited route frequency makes it hard to travel between communities.		•	•	•	•
Long travel times are also a significant barrier to using transit.		•	•	•	
Difficulty in planning transit trips (due to lack of coordination between multiple providers).			•	•	
Travel to regional centers – Camarillo, Ventura, and Oxnard – is difficult from most other communities, and involves disproportionately long travel times.		•	•	•	
Focusing improvement on local service will help intercity utility by reducing transfer times between routes.	•			•	
Current route design, service span, and intercity connections may not match post-pandemic travel patterns.	•			•	
Environmental concerns are not enough to motivate people to use transit; making a more functional service is essential.		•			
Staff are curious about how microtransit is changing opportunity for transit.	•				
On-time performance and reliability are areas for improvement, as is communicating these outcomes to the public.		•			
Bus stop lighting and other infrastructure investments are needed to improve safety.			•	•	
<b>Unserved, underserved, and future destinations</b>					
Currently difficult to use transit to get to Los Angeles County.		•		•	
Bus service coordination with Metrolink could be improved.	•			•	
Requests for service to Kaiser Woodland Hills, but Thousand Oaks past pilot did not generate substantial ridership.		•			
Students have significant travel needs including access to groceries, career support programs, and jobs.			•		

Input	Agency Staff	CTAC/ SSTAC	Stakeholders	Riders	General Public
Better access to community cultural events is a need cited by both students and seniors who have more flexibility in their schedule, but transit service typically is not operating late enough to serve these trips.		•	•	•	•
Transit could improve access to low-income housing (existing and planned). Examples include around Moorpark City Hall, Thousand Oaks downtown revitalization, Simi Valley new housing distributed, Santa Paula East Area 1 and 2 (hospital relocation), and Lewis Road developments near Somis.	•	•			
Future developments near transit may have less on-site parking with the intent to support transit use, but it does not necessarily follow that the nearby transit actually serves the development's needs.			•		
County is building senior housing near CSUCI; transit-supportive land use, but otherwise "in the middle of nowhere."	•				
Transit should support farm workers.			•		
Some residents and isolated communities face food insecurity and need better access to grocery stores, including Ojai, Oak View, Casitas Springs, Cal Lutheran and CSUCI students, and Saticoy residents.			•		
Local agency staff typically hear very little request for intercity or cross-jurisdiction transit.	•				
<b>Camarillo:</b> City receives many requests to expand fixed-route service and staff hope this will control DAR costs. Camarillo is difficult to get around by transit when VCTC services aren't running.	•		•	•	
<b>Fillmore / Piru:</b> No specific input received in this phase					
<b>Moorpark:</b> No specific input received in this phase					
<b>Oak Park:</b> No specific input received in this phase					
<b>Ojai Valley:</b> Need for better access to County services, especially specialty care in Ventura, Oxnard and Camarillo.			•		
<b>Oxnard / Port Hueneme:</b> Ventura County Behavioral Health (Oxnard) is difficult to reach on transit. The Collection is another key destination.		•		•	
<b>Simi Valley:</b> Some underserved areas to the north and south, Madera and Wood Ranch areas. Service is less frequent than desired. City seeks to expand service coverage using microtransit.	•		•	•	
<b>Santa Paula:</b> Service design does not support residents in the north end and along Ojai Road.			•	•	

Input	Agency Staff	CTAC/SSTAC	Stakeholders	Riders	General Public
<b>Thousand Oaks:</b> Cal Lutheran may be underserved. Major employment centers in Thousand Oaks Newbury Park area.			•		
<b>Ventura:</b> VA Clinic is a key destination and a direct shuttle from the Thousand Oaks Goebel Adult Community Center is desired.			•		
<b>Demand-Response and NEMT Service</b>					
Non-emergency medical trips (NEMT) service needed between rural areas and hospitals or specialists. Residents in east end of County often receive medical referrals/providers in Simi Valley, Oxnard, Ventura and need to get across the County for medical trips. Potential users may be unaware of their options through GO Access and ECTA for travel beyond their community.		•			
People don't know what health insurance transportation benefits exist.		•	•		
Many Gold Coast Health Plan members must travel for medical services, and many have young children. The existing benefit covering health care transportation can require reservation a month in advance.		•			
Transfers between dial-a-ride services can substantially increase travel time.		•			
If reaching other communities were easier (better or no transfers), demand might grow but majority of rider trips are within the home community.		•			
Call center staffing shortages were translating into long call wait times and reduced efficiency.	•				
Costs began to jump up substantially as staffing levels and more capacity for DAR service were restored.	•				
Seniors reporting to staff that ECTA fares for intercity DAR trips are high.	•				
GO Access providing direct service to Camarillo has helped minimize costs. However, requests for direct service beyond that is extremely limited.	•				
<b>Staffing</b>					
Operator training improvements needed for serving people using wheelchairs.		•			
Some agencies still struggling with restoring full staffing levels.	•				
Several agencies were anticipating new technology like RideCo to improve efficiency.	•				
<b>Post-Pandemic trip changes</b>					

Input	Agency Staff	CTAC/SSTAC	Stakeholders	Riders	General Public
Gold Coast ridership is increasing in afternoons and early evenings. Most increases are from students and essential workers, thanks in part to the Youth Ride Free program and restoration of pre-pandemic service levels.	•				
Valley Express ridership on Piru Route has returned to pre-pandemic levels as students have returned.	•				
Intercity ridership has been slow to recover. This is likely due to commute-focused services while many jobs are now partly or fully remote. Metrolink faces similar challenges.	•				
Increasing utilization of private transportation providers (Ventura Transit Services, Help of Ojai) and similar challenges with staff and volunteer capacity.		•			
Gold Coast staff observe less travel to local colleges.	•				
DAR ridership has not fully recovered because past programs like Adult Day Healthcare have reduced their scope.	•				
<b>Policy</b>					
Policies should focus on opportunities to expand access and avoid competing for ridership.	•				
Leverage resources to do more rather than identify new investments.	•				
Cost comparisons between agency operations should be apples-to-apples.	•				
Desire to continue free student fares.	•				
Improving multimodal corridors, especially making biking to transit easier through better bike lanes and storage at transit hubs will improve access.			•	•	
Alignment on demand-response trip reservation policy and capacity is desired. Can be difficult for riders in some communities to guarantee a trip without several days advance reservation due to constrained capacity.		•		•	
Forcing uniform policy across will negatively affect some communities for other's benefits. For example, requiring weekend service that isn't supported by funding or ridership, or conversely reducing one community's weekend service to expand other services.	•				

## PHASE 2: GENERAL PUBLIC AND NON-RIDERS ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The SRTP team conducted several surveys, the first of which was an online survey aimed broadly at anyone who might have a transportation interest in Ventura County. It was designed to capture input from both transit riders and non-riders to help guide the SRTP analysis that followed. Stakeholder agencies and project partners promoted the survey, which was hosted on the project website. The survey was translated into Spanish and Mandarin Chinese, and before publication was reviewed by members of the project team who are native speakers of these languages.

About 600 legitimate responses were received; unfortunately, the survey was disrupted by malicious “bot” activity which generated several thousand additional responses. These responses appear to be illegitimate entries attempting to take advantage of the chance to win a gift card reward. Of the apparently legitimate responses, about half included current or recent past riders.

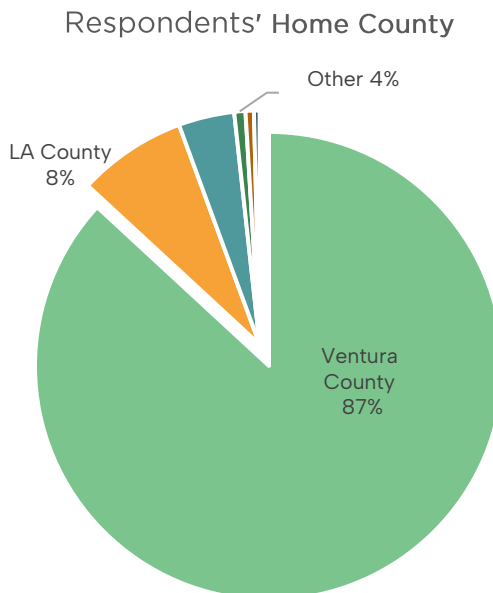


As a group, it is typically difficult to solicit meaningful input on transit from non-riders. They are generally under-informed about the availability of service, and may only think of transit in the abstract. Because of this, the survey design focused on evaluating the respondent’s awareness of the various transit offerings in the County and quantifying what factors most affect their disinterest in using transit.

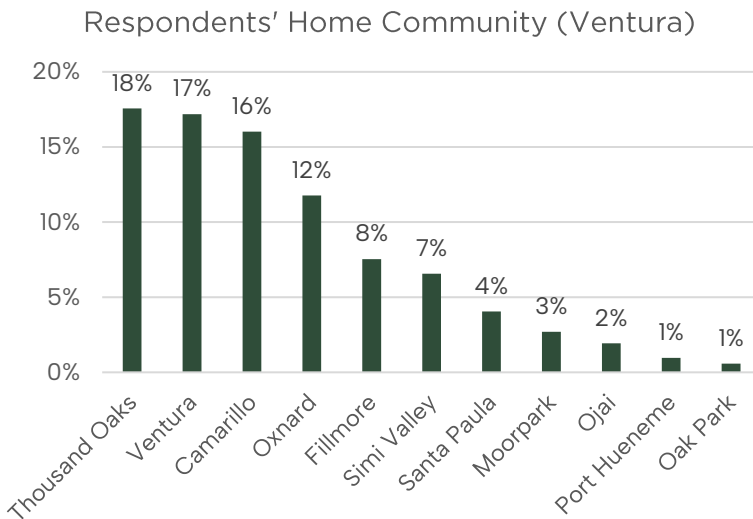
This section begins by reviewing the demographics of all respondents and then focuses on the responses of non-riders. The following section delves further into the transit rider responses and incorporates the results of the surveys distributed on-board the buses around the same period.

ONLINE SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS, ALL RESPONDENTS

The vast majority of respondents were from Ventura County. Despite the Coastal Express and Surfliner connections, very few respondents were from Santa Barbara.

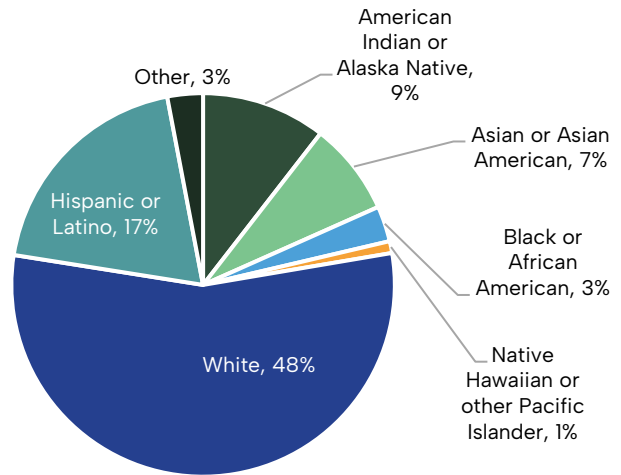


The distribution of respondents did not closely match the distribution of community populations within the County, but generally reflects community size. The exception to this was Simi Valley which was underrepresented compared to its proportion of the county population. Responses were captured from every community.



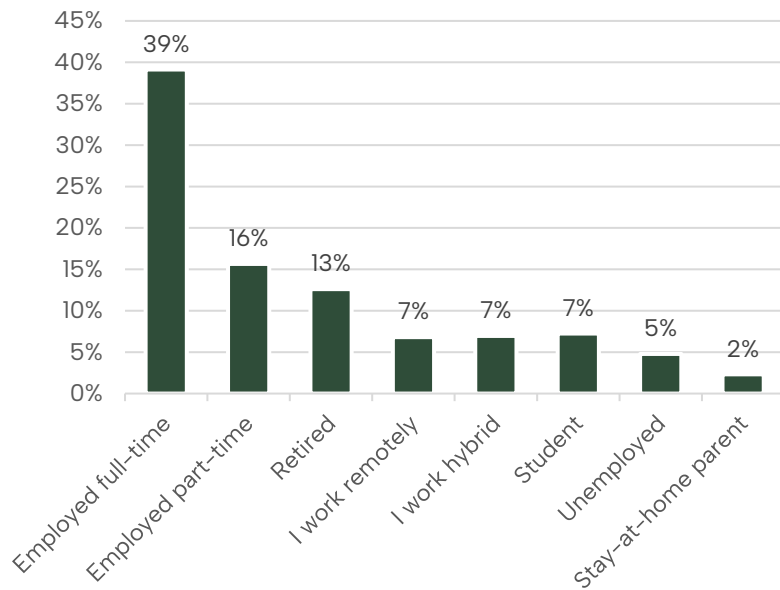
Survey respondents were generally reflective of Ventura County’s demographics. The Census asks about Hispanic heritage independently of race, so it is difficult to compare directly, but the survey responses from Hispanic and Latino residents may under-represent the County population.

Race and Ethnicity



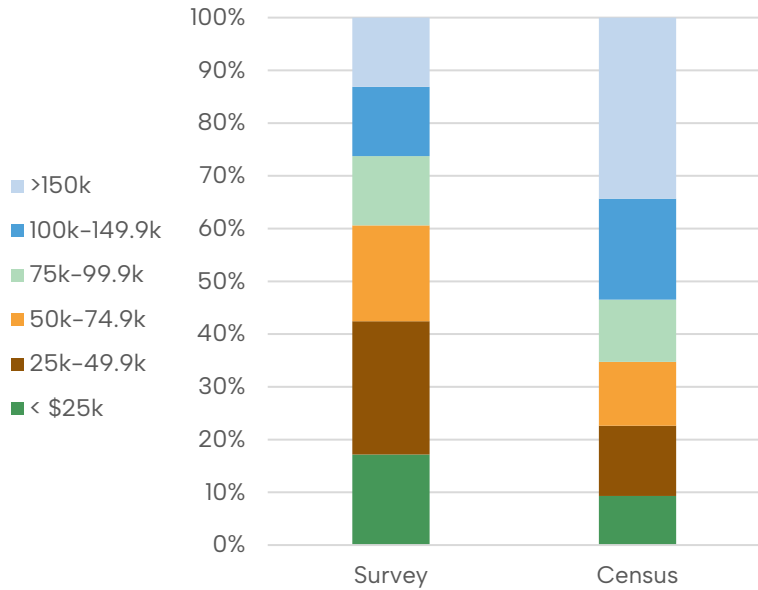
Over 45% of respondents were employed at least part-time. Notably, about 14% of respondents stated they work remotely at least part of the time, which is a key issue stakeholders raised affecting ridership. Respondents could check all that apply, so the 14% who work remotely at least part of the time are a subset of those who are employed at least part-time. Students were under-represented in the overall survey results relative to the proportion of ridership they are believed to comprise.

What best describes your circumstances over the past year?



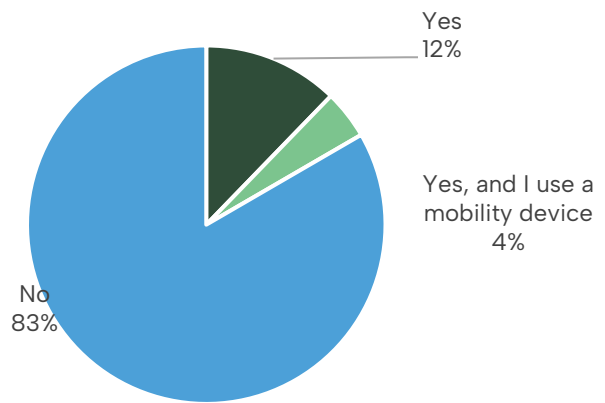
Survey respondents were disproportionately low-income compared to the Census-described County distribution, but respondents were captured across the income range.

What is your household income?

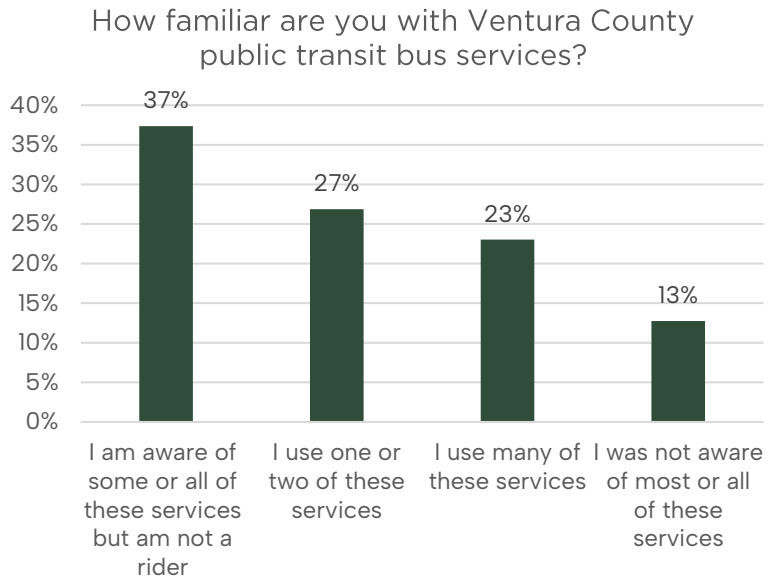


Respondents were marginally more likely to have a disability than the approximately 12% estimated by the 2020 Census for the County population.

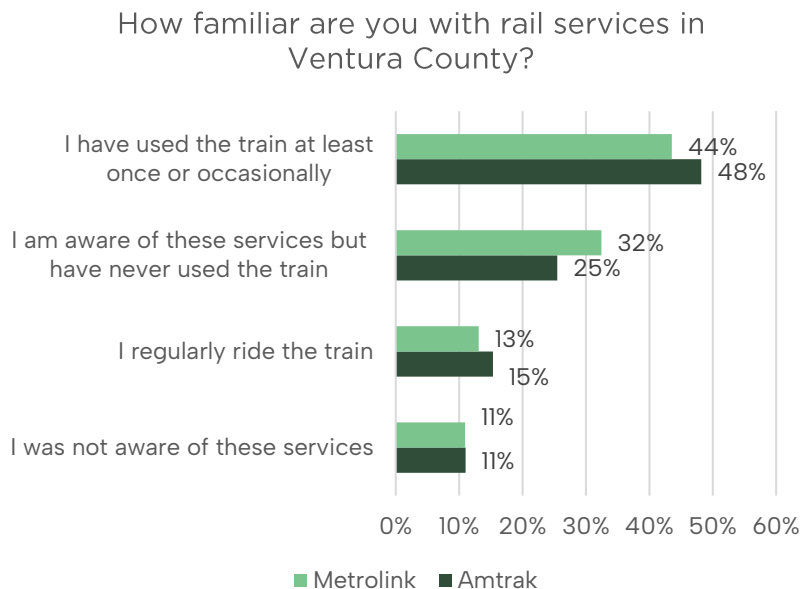
Do you have a disability that impacts your mobility?



When asked broadly about bus service in Ventura County, 13% responded that they were unaware of most or all services, and 37% had some awareness but did not consider themselves riders. These numbers combined mean about half of survey respondents should be considered “non-riders.”



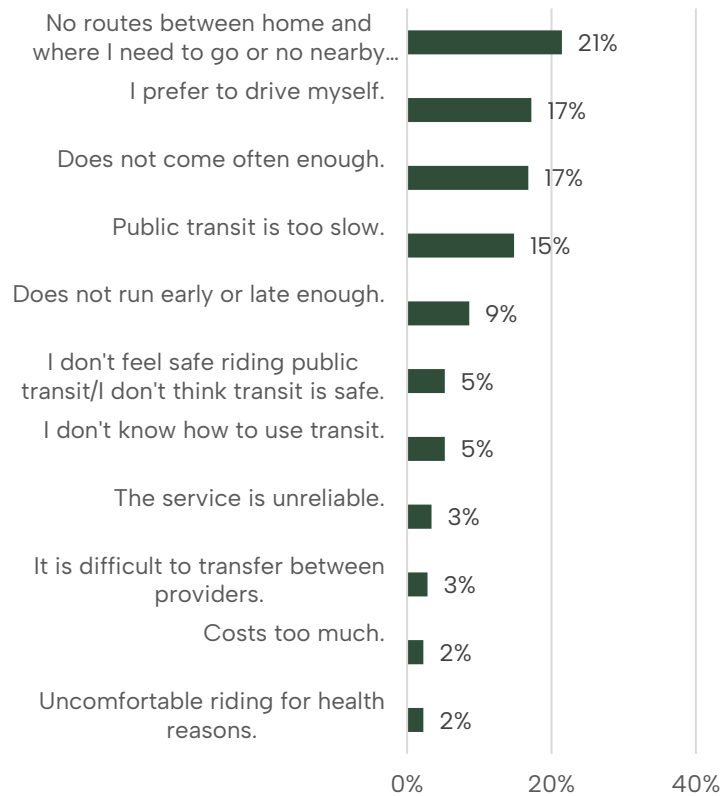
Awareness of the regional rail operations was substantially higher with only 11% claiming no awareness at all, and at least 25% being aware but never having used either Metrolink or the Surfliner. About 57% or more of respondents have used the train at least occasionally.



Respondents cited several reasons for not riding transit, with the most common being the perception that no service near them serves their needs, a preference for driving, and that transit is too slow or too infrequent. Several left comments that were supportive of public transit but simply stated they did not “need” to use transit because they have a car.

Notably, very few cited discomfort related to health which otherwise might have suggested hesitation to use transit following the pandemic. Only about 1% of respondents noted that they used to ride transit, but don’t anymore.

What top 3 reasons best describe why you don’t ride transit often or at all?



**WHY NON-RIDERS DON'T USE TRANSIT**

The survey included open-ended responses in which non-riders expanded upon why they don’t use transit in Ventura County. Some notable quotes from respondents included:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Minor edits to comments were made for clarity, spelling, and grammar.

“Seems like too much work to figure out when I can easily drive myself. But---if there was a simple system that could show me all of these options at a glance, I might consider it.”

“Transferring is essentially impossible because the frequencies are so low. If your bus comes once every hour or more and the train even less frequently it is impossible to use multiple services.”

“Parking is ubiquitous and free in Ventura County which doesn't incentivize taking ... transit.”

“Would love to be able to take the train into LA for evening activities such as concerts, sporting events, etc. but the last service back to Ventura County is way too early which forces us to drive.”

“Too infrequent. Not aligned with big events”

“As a full-time working parent of two, it's difficult to plan your day around transit schedules relative to all of the places we need to be for our family's schedule. It's too hard to make all of the timing work out with less frequency of transit service.”

“The 8:00 bus outside my apartment got cut, so now I get to work too early or too late.”

Although stakeholders in focus groups and interviews were highly concerned about the perception of safety or lack of understanding for how to use transit, each of these were cited by only five percent of survey respondents. Regardless, the specific safety-related experiences that discourage people from riding the bus are crucial to address directly, monitor, and message to the public. This is closely linked with awareness and understanding of how to use the system.

“A coworker described some experiences she had on the bus system in Ventura and I was frightened. Unwanted attention by other riders.”

“I don't feel safe parking and leaving my car at the train station, especially if I'm getting home late, and it's not convenient to take public transit from my home to the train station.”

“I don't have any information about transit, have never heard of friends using it, so I couldn't say whether it is on time, offered often, how much it costs, whether it's safe, or anything else.”

“Fear of speaking a foreign language in a transportation context.”

“I actually WANT to use public transit, it's just really daunting for me, and it feels like it's really inconsistent. I think the biggest thing is just the education aspect for me. If I knew what was available and how to access it, maybe it would change.”

“Wish I had a Buddy to help me the first time.”

Cost, reliability, and transferring between providers were also not top concerns for many respondents, but some respondents provided comments that were specific to the challenges people with limited mobility experience:

“I would like to use transit but a medical condition requires a door-to-door ride not a curb-to-curb ride. I do not qualify for no or low-cost door to door rides.”

“I have medical appointments outside of Camarillo but public transportation is too costly.”

#### *RIDERS: ONLINE AND ON-BOARD SURVEY RESULTS*

The online general public survey received approximately 50% of its responses from people who currently ride transit in Ventura County at least sometimes.<sup>22</sup> Those in this category responded to questions about their experience with the services, specifically addressing safety and comfort, as well as fare products, which were identified as potentially crucial topics for current riders.

Additionally, an on-board rider survey was distributed around the same period which asked about similar topics, plus additional questions about personal travel patterns and service quality.

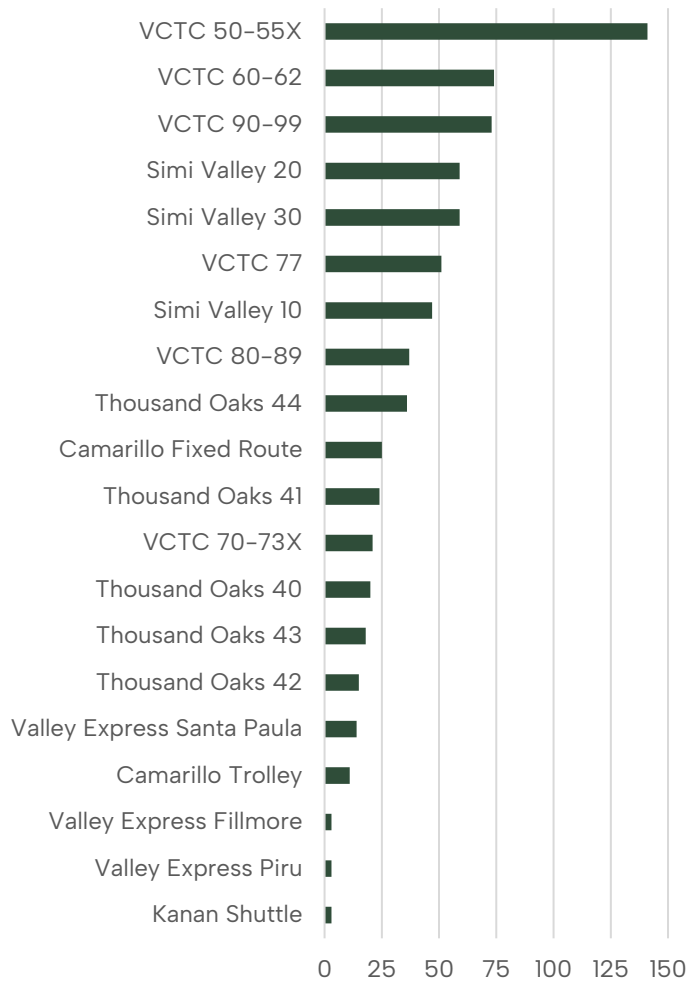
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<sup>22</sup> Respondents who selected “I regularly use transit (daily or weekly)” or “I occasionally use transit (at least once a month).”

The on-board rider survey gathered 753 responses across routes representing Camarillo Area Transit, Kanan Shuttle, Simi Valley Transit, Thousand Oaks Transit, Valley Express, and VCTC Intercity. Surveys were also distributed on Moorpark City Transit routes, but no responses were received.

Gold Coast Transit was excluded because the agency conducted its own SRTP around the same time. Surveys were made available in English, Spanish and Chinese with translations by native speakers on the consultant team. About 14.5% of on-board surveys were completed in Spanish. Only a few Chinese language surveys were returned. The distribution of responses by route is shown at right, and does not closely correspond to ridership distribution, although most routes had at least some responses.

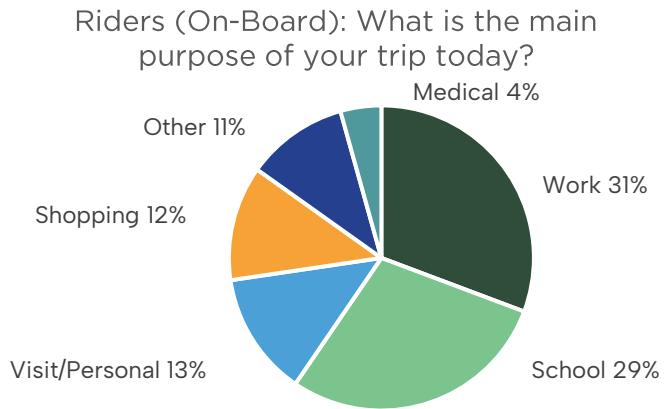
On-board responses by route



This section highlights the responses across both the online and on-board surveys that directly affect current riders and are relevant for attracting future riders.

RIDER DESTINATIONS AND ACCESS TO TRANSIT

Bus riders are using transit primarily for school and work trips: 31% of all trips are work-related, and 29% are school-related. However, this result may also reflect the skew of responses from Intercity routes, which are more likely to serve work trips than local bus routes.



Area colleges, shopping centers, and Metrolink stations account for the largest number of origins and destinations for bus passengers, although origins and destinations are very spread out across the County.

Top Boarding and Alighting Locations of Survey Respondents

Location	Boardings
Moorpark College	16
CSUCI	15
Ventura College	13
Camarillo Metrolink	8
The Oaks	7

Location	Alightings
CSUCI	50
Camarillo Metrolink	25
The Oaks	21
Moorpark College	17
Esplanade Mall	11
Pacific View Mall	10
Ventura College	10

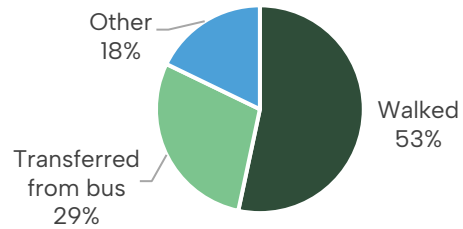
Note that these numbers represent survey responses, not actual boardings. Area colleges are a significant source of ridership in Ventura County.

Approximately half of all riders get to or from the bus by walking, and 29% transfer from or to another bus

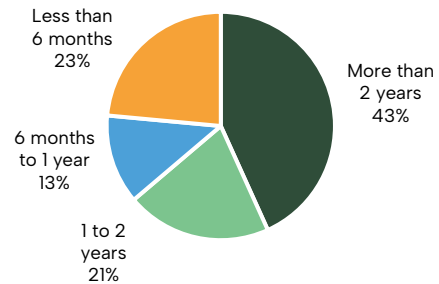
Most respondents have used the bus for at least one year, but 23% began using the system in the past six months. This suggests substantial ridership turnover, and is critically important to consider as total ridership across the county has declined over the last ten years. Ensuring new riders have a reliably high-quality experience is essential to retaining riders long-term. Many general public (online) survey respondents also noted that they were former riders who have since purchased a car, which is perhaps also indicated by only 43% of on-board respondents having been riders for longer than two years. Increasing car ownership has been cited by the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)<sup>23</sup> as a significant variable explaining transit ridership decline.

Transit ridership is predominantly composed of regular customers. As noted, a significant portion of riders are relatively new to the system. When examining the relationship between whether riders were new to the system and their frequency of use, those who began riding in the last 6 months were slightly more likely to respond, “Less than 1 day per week.” Regardless of how long riders have been in the system, the vast majority use transit four or more days a week.

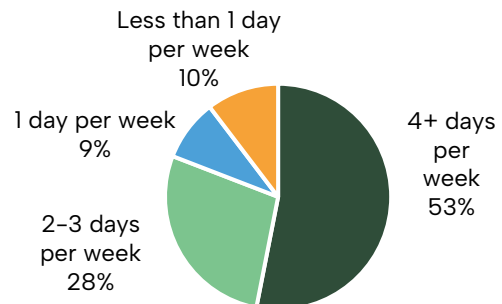
Riders (On-Board): Mode of Access to the Bus



Riders (On-Board): How long have you been riding the bus?



Riders (On-Board): How often do you ride the bus?



<sup>23</sup> Manville, Taylor and Blumenberg. *Falling Transit Ridership: California and Southern California*. UCLA Lewis Center. January, 2018 <https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/falling-transit-ridership-california-and-southern-california/>

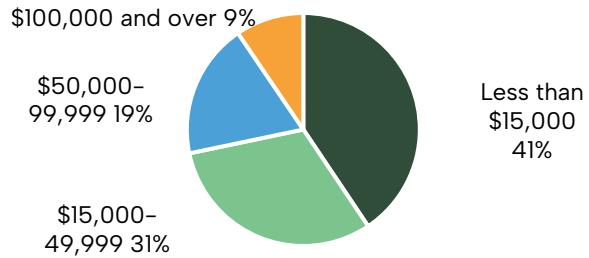
RIDER INCOMES AND RELATIONSHIP TO FARES

Most riders report low incomes, but over one-quarter of riders have household incomes above \$50,000. According to the on-board survey respondents, 41% live in a household with no vehicle, which is a much higher proportion than the county demographics.

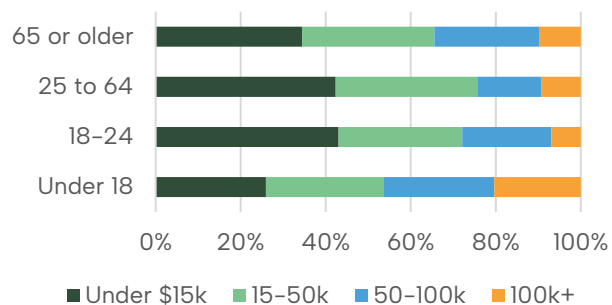
Based on the on-board surveys, transit riders skew towards much lower household income than the overall county demographics, as well as compared to the online survey responses.

The income distribution is relatively similar across age groups in the on-board survey. When cross-tabulating household income to how often the respondent uses transit, people with household incomes above \$100,000 were significantly more likely to use the bus only occasionally, but even 60% of respondents in the highest income bracket use transit almost daily.

Rider (On-Board) Household Income

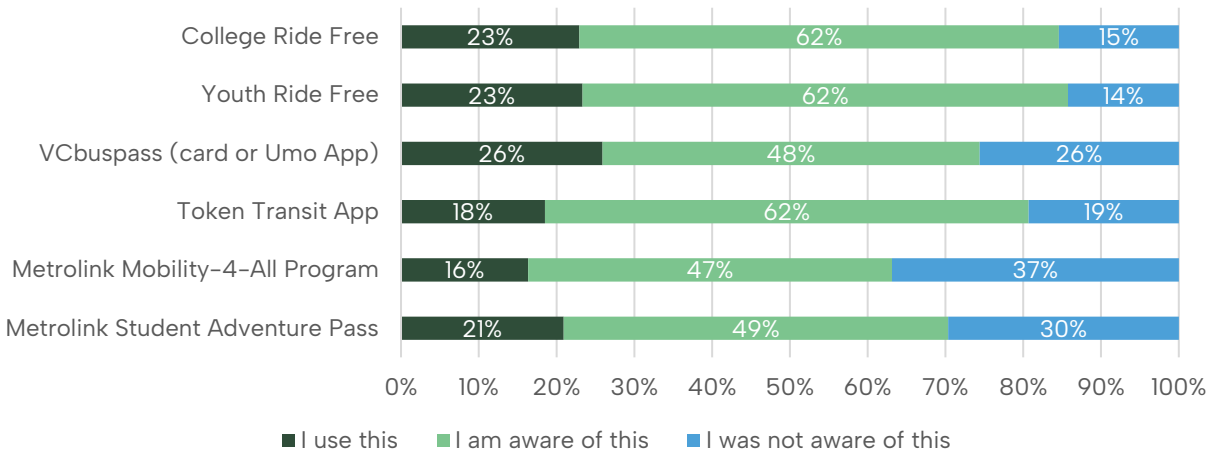


Rider (On-Board) Household Income by Age

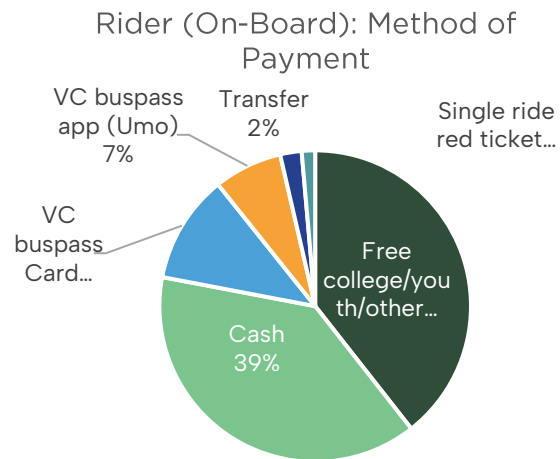


When considering how survey respondent incomes relate to pass availability and awareness of fare programs, we can review both the on-board surveys and the online general public survey. The general public online survey asked all respondents about their familiarity with transit passes and fare programs. Awareness of passes was generally high among those who used transit at least occasionally. Awareness of the Youth Ride Free and College Ride free programs was especially high, but somewhat lower regarding Metrolink discount pass programs. The VCbuspass was the most utilized (26% of current riders) and also had lower general awareness (26%) than the College Ride, Youth Ride, and the Token Transit app. The chart on the following page shows the online survey results for each pass program included in the question.

Online Survey: How familiar are you with transit passes and fare programs in the County?



On board the buses, riders were asked how they paid the fare for that trip. Forty percent ride for free due to their status as college students, their youth, or other reasons (Leisure Village residents ride for free in Camarillo, but represent a low proportion of all riders), while 39% pay cash. The VCbuspass accounts for 18% of all boardings.



Indications from both surveys indicate that transit riders in Ventura County are disproportionately low-income, but how people facing extreme financial hardship manage their transportation needs is not clear. The online survey responses did not indicate that cost of transportation was a major barrier for most riders, although it was noted by a few individuals who depend on dial-a-ride programs, which are more expensive per trip. It was also not highly ranked as a barrier preventing non-riders from using transit. However, it is hard to say with certainty that these surveys fully capture the perspective of people who are truly facing the choice to pay for a transit trip at the expense of something else, which is something to consider given the proportion of respondents who reported extremely low household income across the age spectrum.

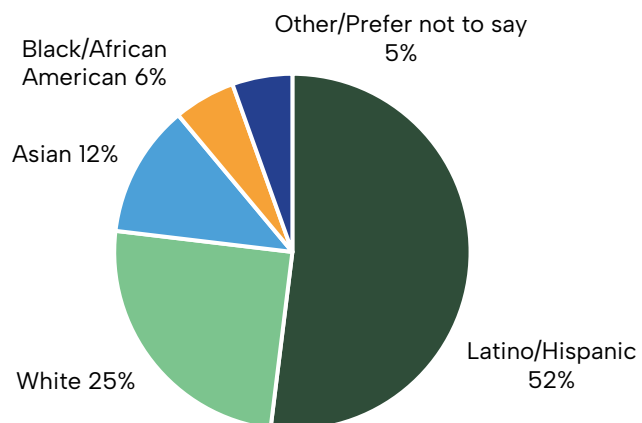
## PERSONAL SAFETY ACCESSING AND RIDING TRANSIT

Both community organizations and agency stakeholders raised concern for actual or perceived safety on transit throughout the outreach process. The general public online survey and on-board rider surveys addressed these in several ways. As discussed above, only 5% of general public non-riders cited safety as one of their top three reasons for not using transit.

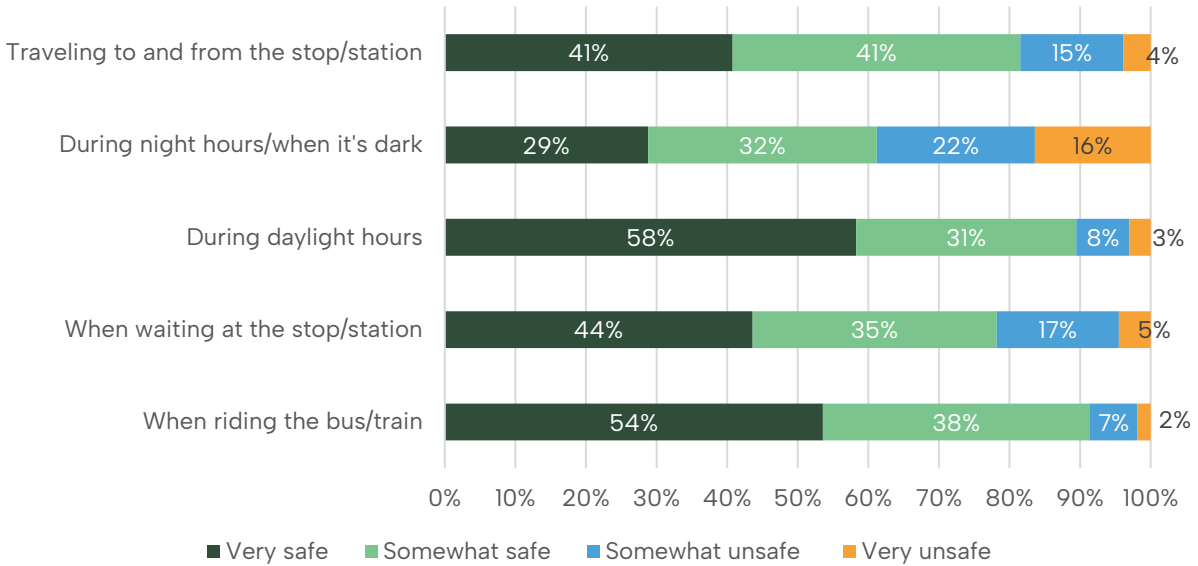
Personal safety is a complex topic and particularly affects some demographics differently than others, particularly women, people who identify as non-binary, and minorities. In the general public online survey, overall response rates were 57% female, with as many as 6% of all respondents also self-identifying as transgender. The on-board survey also received about 6% responses from self-identified non-binary persons, although the proportion of male respondents in the on-board survey was about 51%.

The race and ethnicity of on-board survey respondents was significantly different than that of the online survey. Latinx/Hispanic respondents were by far the largest group, with Asian and Black/African American also slightly more well-represented than the county average population.

Rider (On-Board): Race/Ethnicity



## Online Survey: How safe do you feel using public transit



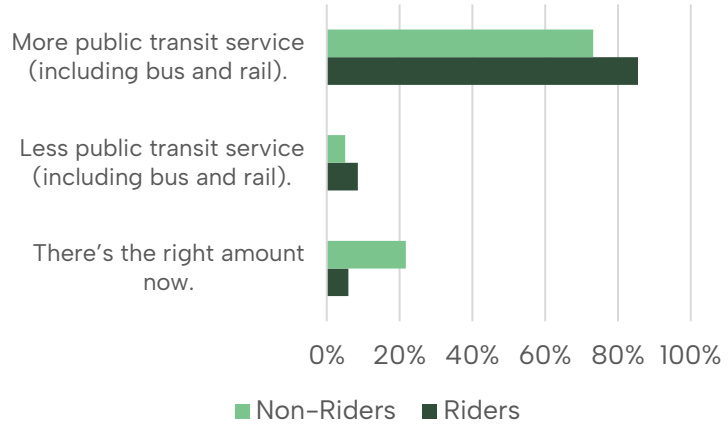
Overall, riders report the highest perception of safety when actually on-board transit, and when waiting for the bus during the day. Unsurprisingly, the perception of safety declines substantially in darkness, and this result is supported by many open-ended comments respondents made about needing improved lighting at bus stops and safer walk access to transit across the county. While only 9% of respondents felt somewhat or very unsafe while riding, such concerns are crucial to address for those riders, and to counter the general narrative that transit is unsafe.

#### FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS AND TRADEOFFS

Both the online and on-board survey asked all respondents, regardless of their transit use, to consider several questions that would help the SRTP weigh out what improvements are *most* needed given there are limited resources available. In the general public online survey, respondents were asked questions about the level of service and improvements in their own city (implying local travel) and then the same question for Ventura County overall (implying regional travel). The following several charts show data from the online survey

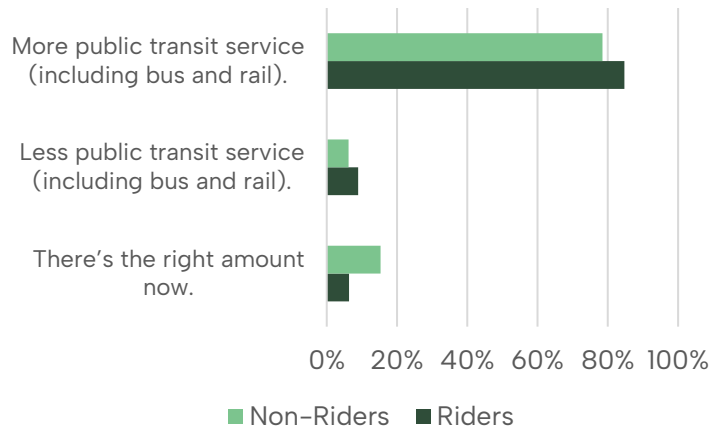
When asked about their **home community**, the majority of online survey respondents agreed on the need for more public transit, although as many as 20% of non-riders believe there is the right amount today.

Do you believe your home community needs:



When asked about **the County overall**, respondents had similar beliefs about needing more public transit. Notably, slightly fewer non-riders believe there is the right amount today.

Do you believe Ventura County overall needs:



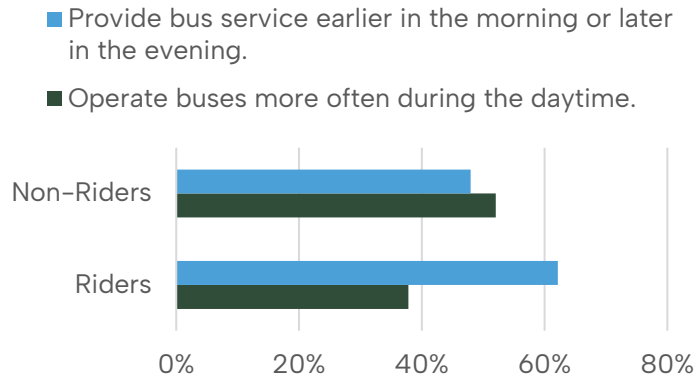
The following series of questions posed a single trade-off to respondents about transit in their home city. These “forced preference” questions help transit planners address the real trade-offs that result from limited transit funding.

First, riders express a clear preference for more peak-period bus service, while non-riders were slightly more likely to favor more frequent service throughout the day.

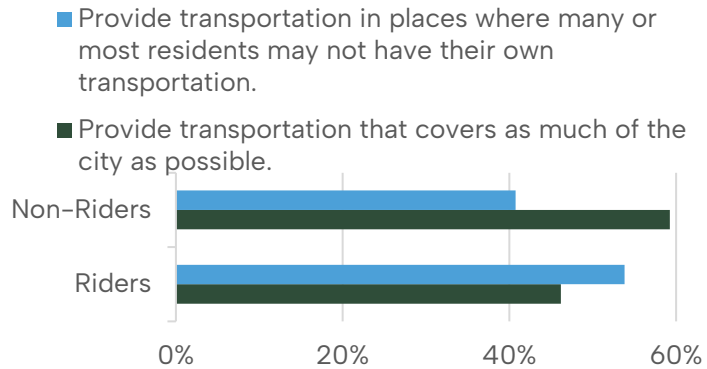
When asked whether cities should focus service in areas where people may not have a car versus greater coverage across the city, respondents seemed relatively split.

The open-response comments suggest this question was not useful, because Ventura County is perceived to be so car-dependent that very few people truly have no other option.

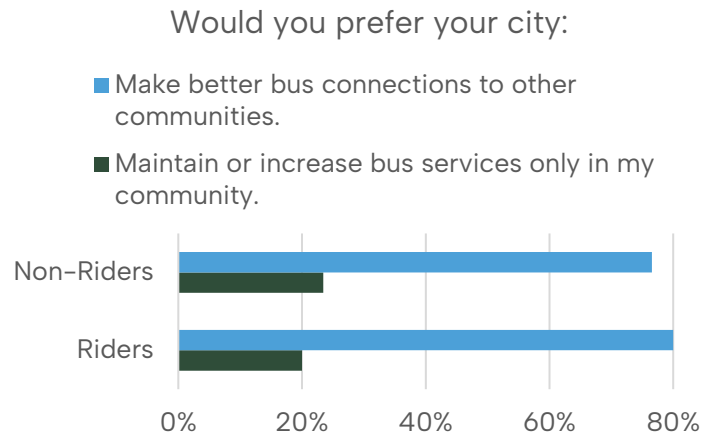
Would you prefer your city:



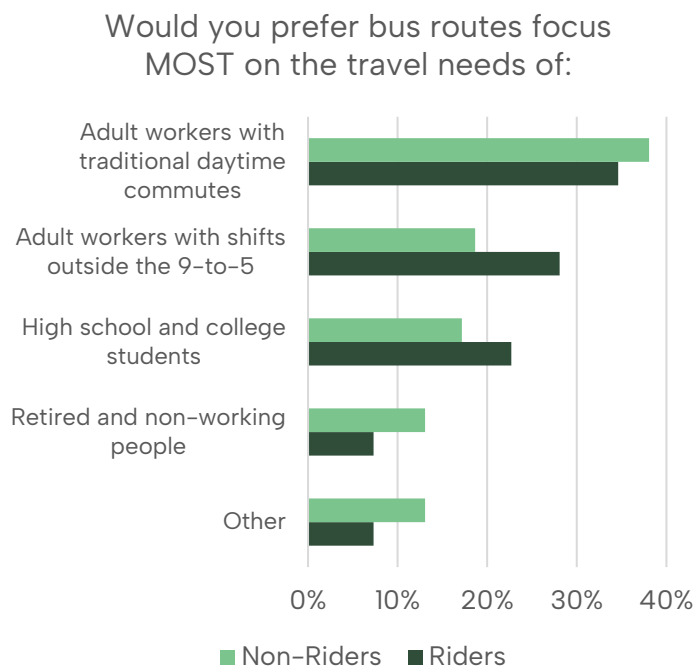
Would you prefer your city:



In contrast, the following question was very clear that all respondents believe that better bus connections between communities is a greater priority than improved local bus service. This is further substantiated by the many open-response comments focused on the difficulty in traveling across the county on transit.



Another theme throughout the project scope and the initial stakeholder engagement is the assumption that travel patterns have shifted substantially following the pandemic and greater ability to work remotely. This question asked respondents to pick one group that was the most important for transit to serve, and although the most common answer still fell along the traditional commute pattern, there were still 20–30% of respondents who believe either better coverage for other work shifts or the needs of high school and college students were the most important. Current riders were notably more likely to focus on workers who have a shift outside the traditional 9-to-5.



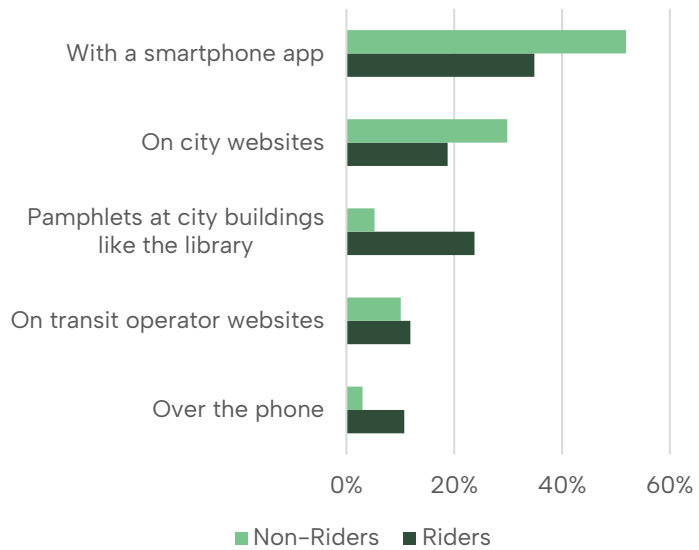
Non-riders were significantly more likely to desire digital information about transit than current riders, who rely on more traditional means, including printed material or the ability to call a customer service representative.

Note that a non-rider has to choose (or be inspired) to seek information out regardless of where and how it can be found, whereas riders already know what they are looking for. The Partnerships Plan will address this subject and the importance of motivating non-riders to take interest rather than relying primarily on the existence of the service to attract new customers.

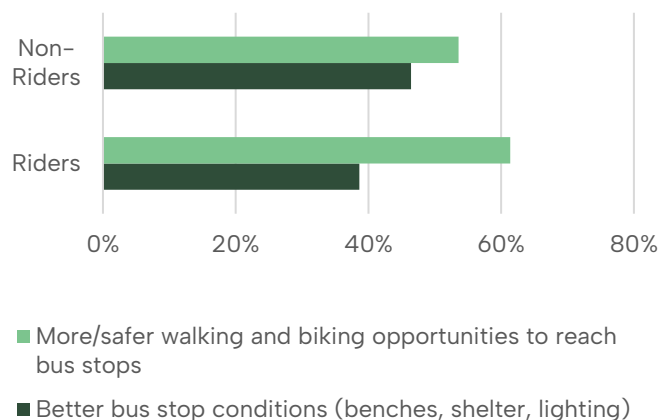
Finally, many areas have bus service but the walking conditions to reach the bus stop are poor, while other areas have a good sidewalk network but little investment in bus stop infrastructure.

Both riders and non-riders are more likely to desire better walking and biking conditions to reach transit, but the conditions of bus stops are still highly important.

Where would information about using the bus be MOST useful for you:



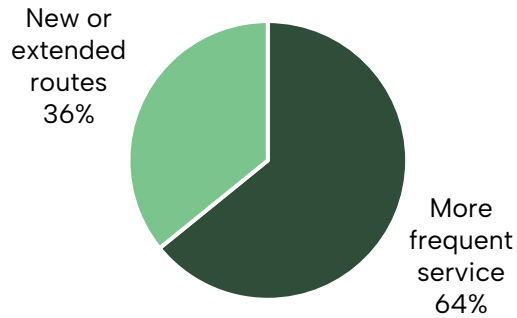
Which do you believe your city needs MOST:



The on-board survey also asked riders to choose among various service improvements.

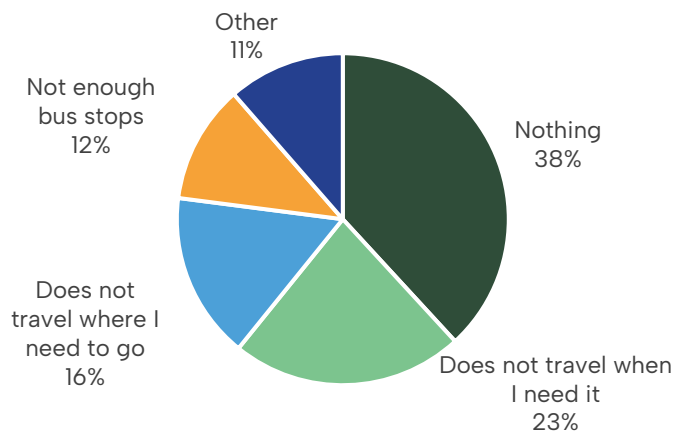
Respondents expressed a strong preference for greater frequency on existing routes (64%) over new or extended routes to new places (36%). Riders’ opinions were mixed on service later in the evening (51%) versus more frequent service during the day (49%).

On-Board (Riders): Would you rather have:



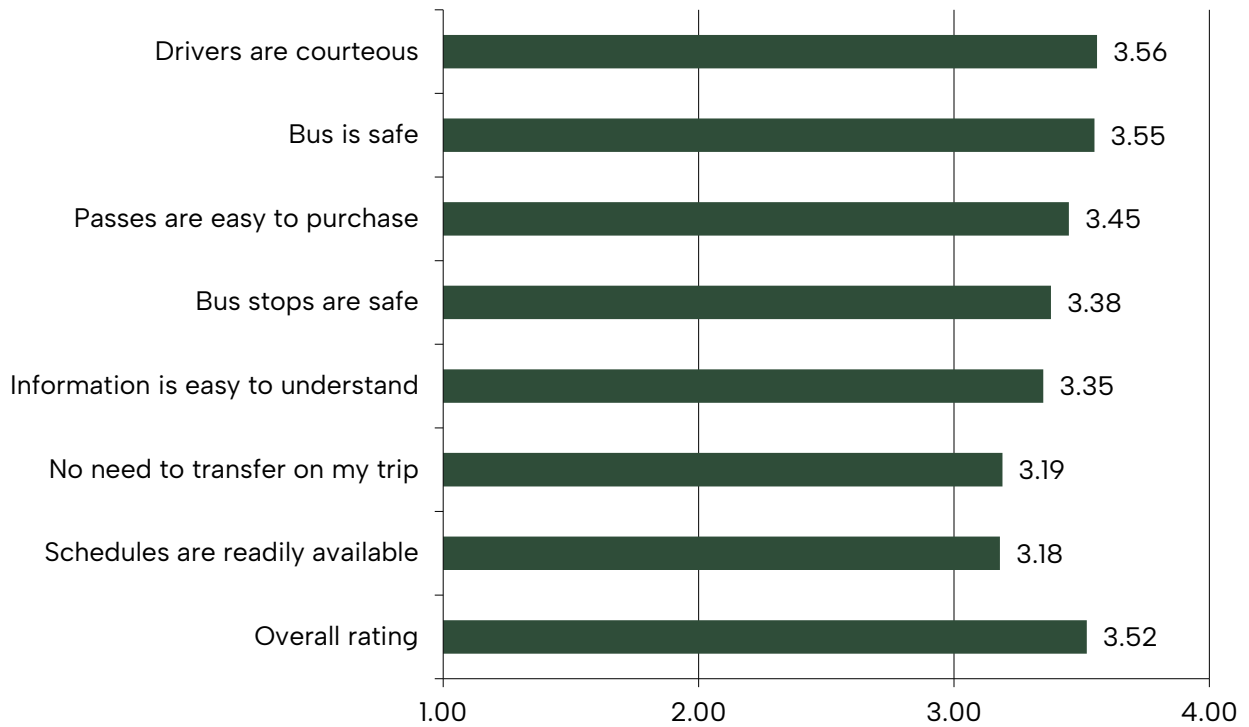
When asked what, if any, factors prevent them from using transit more often, 23% of current riders say that routes do not travel when they need it, and 16% report that routes do not travel where they need to go. However, over one third said nothing prevents them from using it more often, which is likely because most riders are already using the bus most days of the week.

On-Board (Riders): What, if anything, prevents you from increasing your use of the bus?



**FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT SERVICE QUALITY**

The on-board survey asked riders to rate various elements of service on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being “poor” and 4 being “excellent,” as well as to provide an overall rating of bus service. The overall score is 3.52, indicating a high level of passenger satisfaction with bus service. The highest rated items are operator courtesy (3.56) and safety on the bus (3.55). The lowest rated elements are availability of schedules (3.18) and no need to transfer on my trip (3.19).



In designing service improvements, transit planners need to know not only the customer ratings on individual service attributes, but also the importance of each attribute in terms of overall satisfaction. We measure the importance of each service attribute by examining the relationship of each attribute to overall satisfaction. The relationship is measured using correlation analysis to estimate the importance of each service attribute; a higher correlation indicates that a given service attribute is more important in determining overall satisfaction. An index score of 100 is assigned to the average correlation coefficient. Service attributes with a score above 100 are more correlated with overall satisfaction (as measured by the overall rating), while service attributes with a score below 100 are less correlated.

This table shows the Pearson correlation coefficient and the importance score for each service attribute. **Operator courtesy and safety on the bus are most important**, while no need to transfer and ease of purchasing passes are relatively less important.

Service Attribute	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Importance Index
Drivers are courteous	0.850	112.38
Bus is safe	0.831	109.81
Bus stops are safe	0.771	101.88
Schedules are readily available	0.768	101.52
Information is easy to understand	0.744	98.33
Passes are easy to purchase	0.684	90.37
No need to transfer on my trip	0.648	85.71

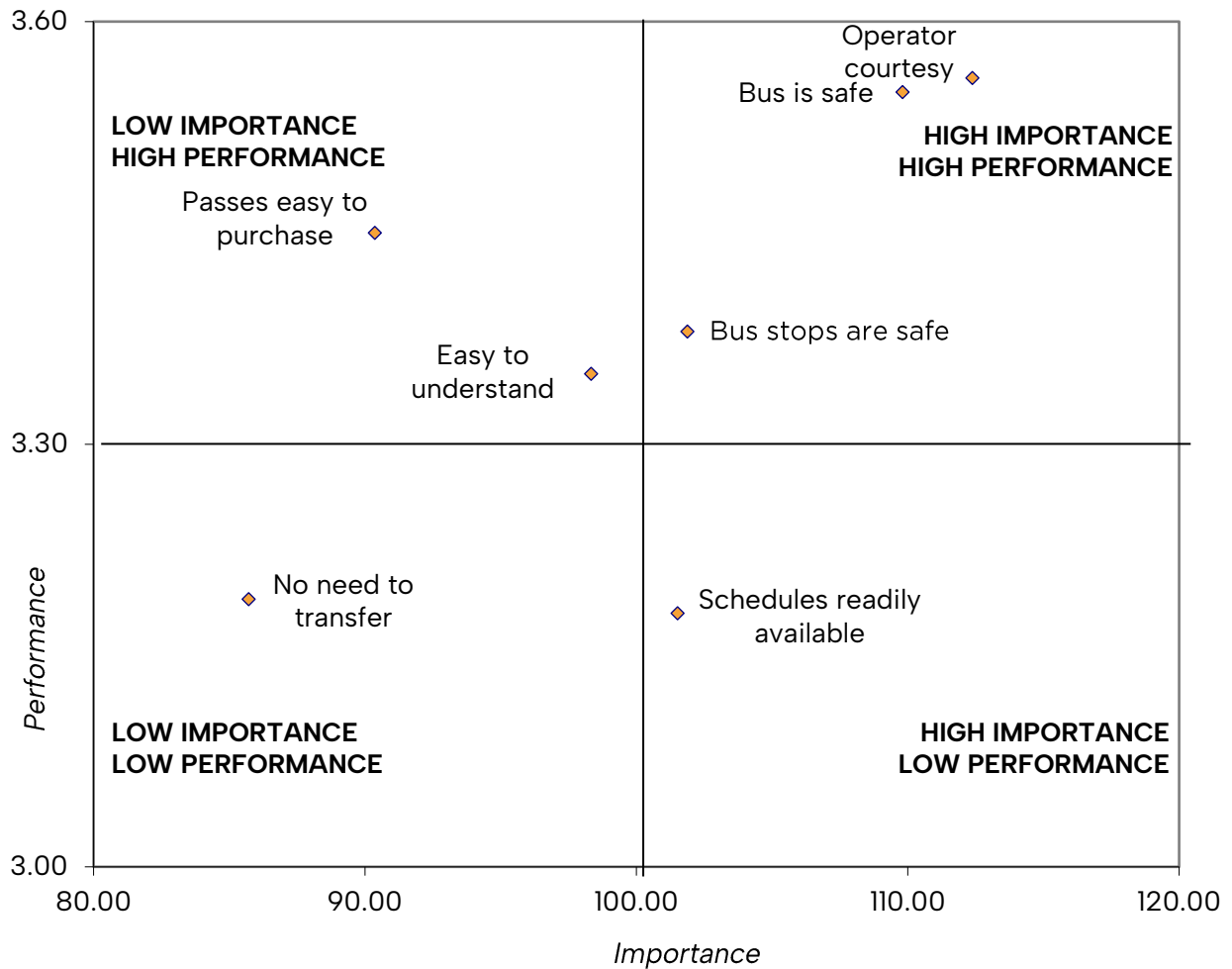
A scatter diagram can visualize the relationship of performance and importance of these attributes, divided into quadrants. This diagram is shown on the following page.

Items in the upper right-hand quadrant represent important attributes with high performance ratings. These are things that bus agencies do well that are important to riders. Agencies should take whatever actions are required to ensure continued high-performance ratings on these attributes. “Operator courtesy,” “safe buses,” and “safe bus stops” are service elements that fall within this quadrant.

Items in the upper left-hand quadrant receive high marks in terms of performance but are relatively unimportant to riders. Often, attributes in this quadrant receive lower importance ratings from passengers precisely because the agency does a good job in these areas. Riders, like everyone else, tend to take areas in which their needs are met for granted. This suggests that agencies need to continue to monitor service delivery in these areas to ensure high performance, but that these elements of service are not top priorities for improvements. The attributes within this quadrant are “passes easy to purchase” and “information is easy to understand.”

Items in the lower left-hand quadrant are relatively unimportant to riders and relatively low scoring in terms of performance. While performance levels are relatively low for these attributes, these are not strong candidates for improvement due to their low levels of importance to riders. The only element in this quadrant is “no need to transfer.”

Items in the lower right-hand quadrant are key priorities for bus agencies. Riders consider these attributes important, but current performance ratings are less than desired. Only one element is in this quadrant, “schedules are readily available.”



**DEMAND-RESPONSE RIDER SURVEYS**

Customers of the demand-response programs (typically dial-a-ride in Ventura County communities), which include paratransit-eligible riders, have different needs and context for using transit from fixed-route riders. A survey was mailed to 3,717 of registered dial-a-ride customers in Ventura County (although not necessarily all those registered are active riders) and over 645 rider responses were returned. At least 660 mailers were undeliverable. The completed surveys represent a 21% response rate.

This section summarizes some findings from these surveys, although additional focused analysis will be incorporated into the Countywide Demand-Response Integration Plan. This section will generally refer to “DAR riders” inclusive of anyone who uses demand-response service.

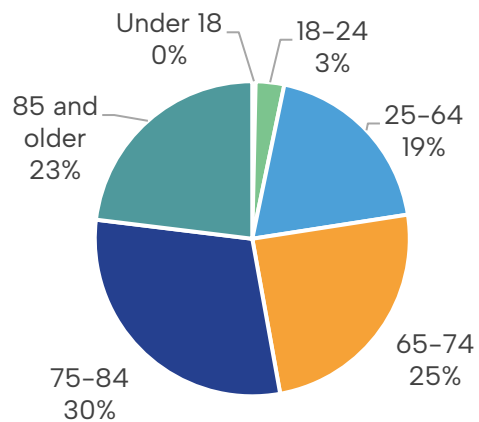
Responses were received for every demand-response program operating in 2024:

For your most recent trip, which service did you use?	
Camarillo Area Transit Dial-a-Ride	99
CONNECT intercity Dial-a-Ride	16
Gold Coast GO NOW	6
Gold Coast Transit GO ACCESS	163
Moorpark City Transit (MCT) On Demand	13
Moorpark Senior Dial-a-Ride	5
Simi Valley Transit ADA/Dial-a-Ride	112
Thousand Oaks Transit Dial-a-Ride	183
Valley Express Dial-a-Ride	17

Many respondents also use multiple services; for example, residents in eastern Ventura County are likely to have used both a municipal DAR and ECTA CONNECT, and others may have used Camarillo Area Transit and GO ACCESS.

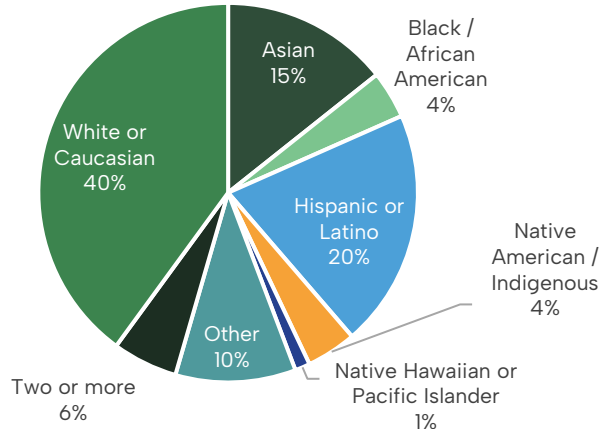
DAR Survey Respondent Age

DAR customers are predominantly aged 65 and older. In fact, 77% are over age 65 and so this survey allowed for more granular age data which demonstrates that DAR customers range well into their 80s and older.



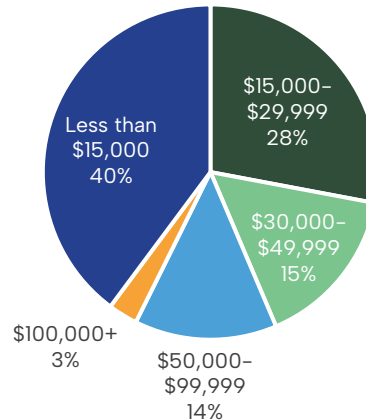
The DAR survey respondents' ethnicity and race distribution is roughly similar to the overall county and to that of the general public online survey results. As with other survey efforts, the DAR survey was available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

DAR Survey Ethnicity/Race



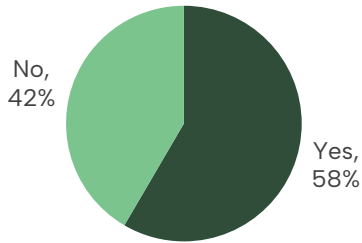
Like other transit riders, DAR customers represent a disproportionate percentage of low-income households. Households earning less than \$30,000 a year in the county are approximately 10%, but almost 70% of riders surveyed fall in this category. Less than 20% of respondents reported a household income over \$50,000. This is also likely reflective of the very high proportion of senior-aged riders who are retired.

DAR Survey Household Income

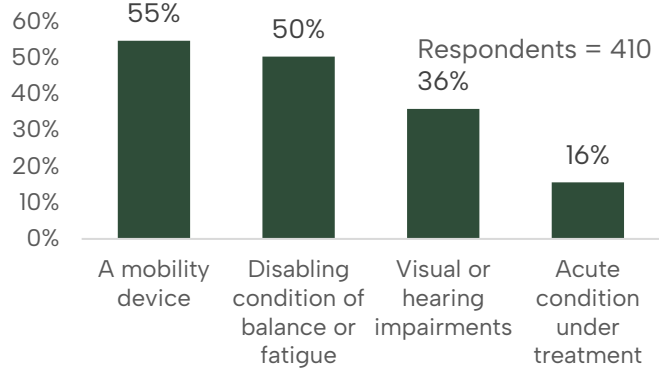


More than 50% of respondents stated that they have a disability. Of those who reported a disability, 55% of those respondents have some type of device they carry with them. This affects the design of the transit fleet to provide sufficient capacity for wheelchair securements, as well as the scheduling appropriate load and dwell times to properly account for mobility issues.

Do you have a disability that impacts mobility?



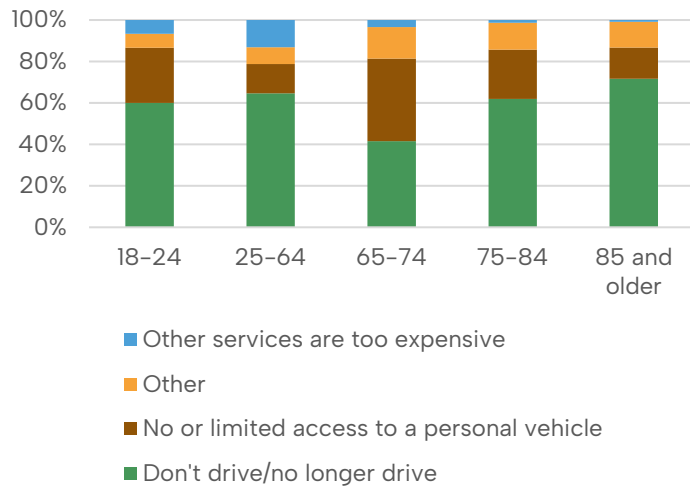
Do you have mobility impacts?



Riders who are under 65 are significantly more likely to have a disability that affects their mobility, primarily because most DAR services are not available to people under 65 unless they have a disability.<sup>24</sup> However, riders over 65 surprisingly were not significantly more likely to report having a disability that affects their mobility; the proportion was about the same in each age group from 65 and up.

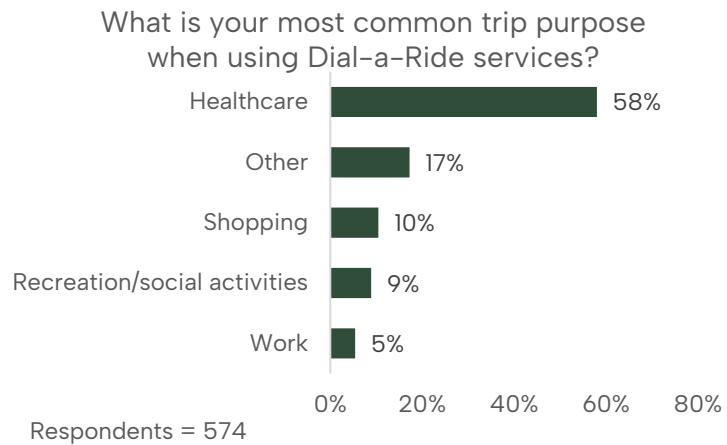
However, ability or comfort with driving is a significant factor. Riders were asked the reason for using the DAR service and the majority across all ages stated they don't or no longer drive, and access to a personal vehicle is also a critical factor.

Reason For Using Service



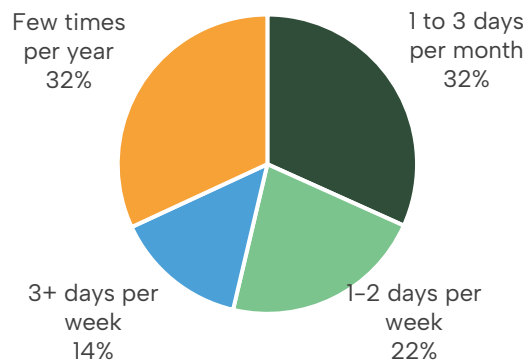
<sup>24</sup> Camarillo Area Transit offers its Dial-A-Ride program to anyone regardless of age or disability. Valley Express also offers some general public dial-a-ride within its service area. All DAR programs in the County are also open to seniors aged 65 and up, although this is not necessarily required for operating a dial-a-ride program.

By far the most common trip purpose is for healthcare, which emphasizes the critical nature of these services, and how collaboration among agencies, especially for those that transfer, is important. Although healthcare is the predominant trip purpose, riders also depend on DAR for the same variety of reasons others use fixed-route services.



Compared with fixed-route riders, there is a much lower proportion who are riding most days of the week—only 14%—and a high percentage who reported only riding a few days a month. What this may not capture, according to staff, is that a significant portion of the overall trips are made by a relatively small number of very active riders, who sometimes make multiple trips per day.

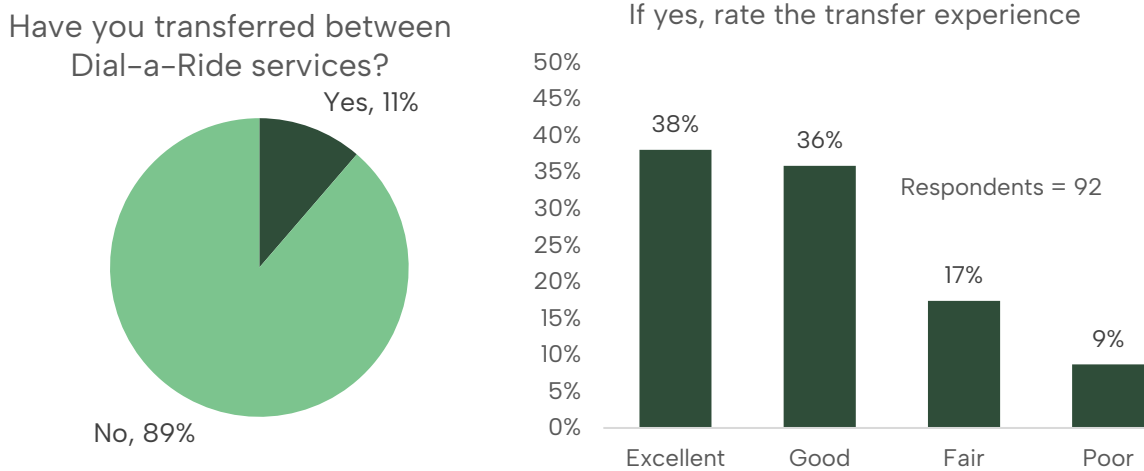
How often do you use the DAR on which you most recently traveled?



Considering most DAR customers report very low household incomes, price of the service may significantly influence travel behavior.

Stakeholders during the initial Phase I engagement raised concern that transferring between providers is a greater burden for DAR riders, especially those with limited mobility and people who use wheelchairs or other devices. The survey asked customers if they transfer between dial-a-ride systems. The majority of those who responded do not transfer between systems; however, those who did were mostly happy with their experience. This supports a point raised by staff that very few current riders are making DAR trips that require a transfer.

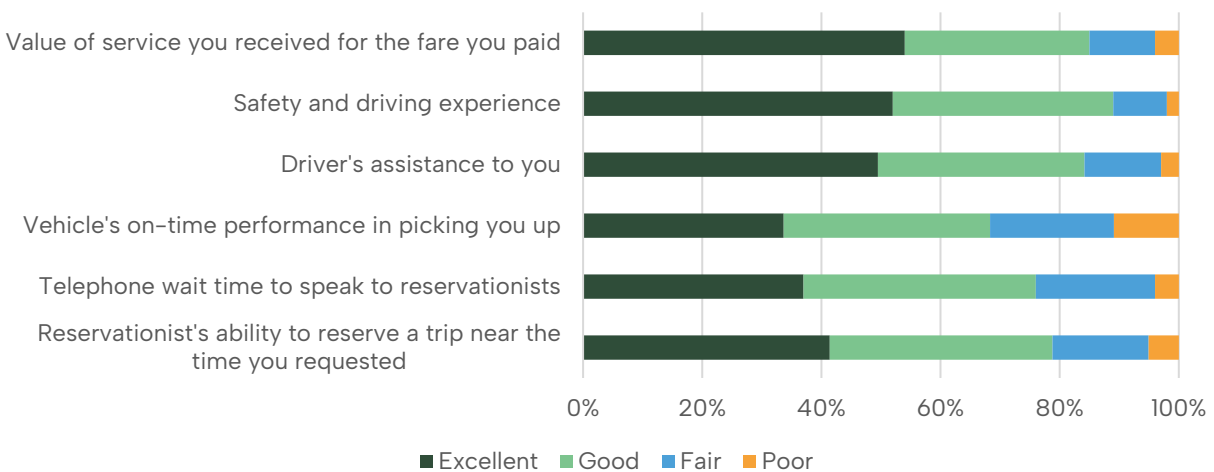
Although only about a quarter of respondents, approximately 24 individuals, rated the transfer experience as fair or poor, the demand-response integration tasks will consider the specific circumstances and opportunities that integration could offer.



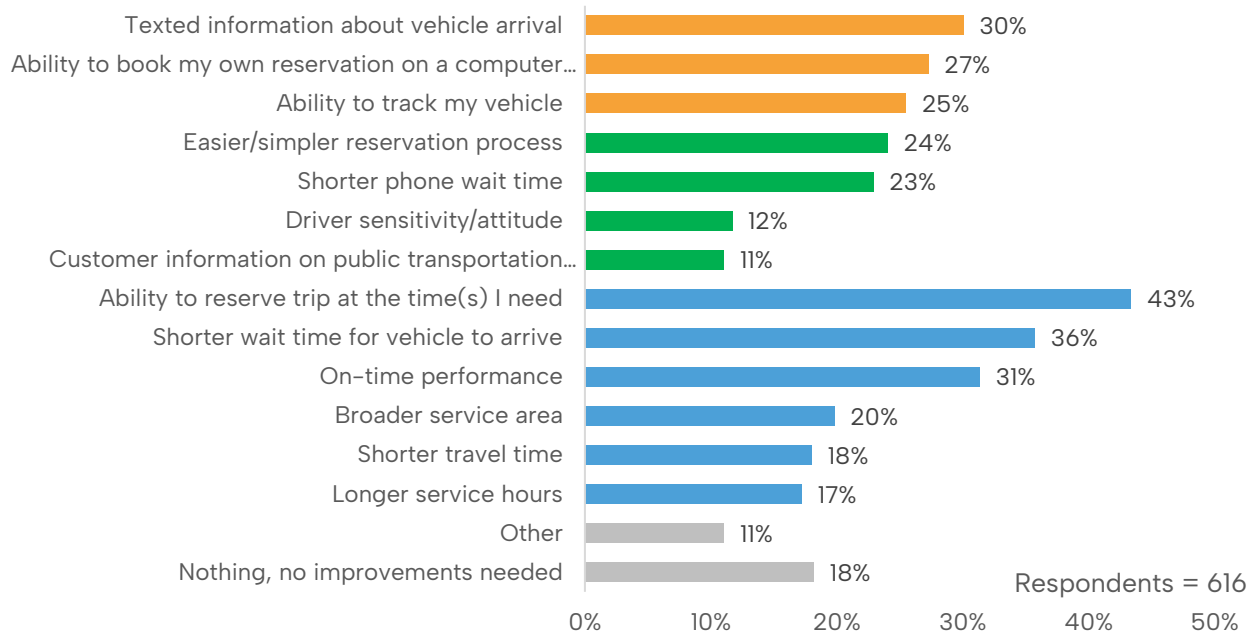
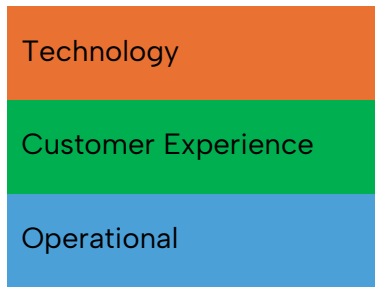
**DAR SERVICE QUALITY AND OPPORTUNITIES**

DAR riders rated most characteristics of the service highly, although on-time performance was notably lower in satisfaction than all other aspects.

DAR Survey: Quality of Service



Riders were asked what improvements to dial-a-ride services would help them the most. Questions were divided into categories represented by different colors below:



The most prominent responses were related to operations, especially the timing of trips, wait time to be picked up, and on-time performance. Given most riders are primarily using DAR to access healthcare, there is likely significant stress around reaching appointments on time. Respondents were interested in technology, including vehicle arrival notifications, booking reservations online, and the ability to track their vehicle remotely. While these appealed to only 30% of respondents, these results are likely to increase in importance to riders in the future as today’s technology will be familiar to future DAR customers.

Overall, relatively few current riders felt that driver sensitivity or attitude needed attention, which further emphasizes that riders highly value and appreciate the high-quality support they receive from the service.

There is more to learn from the DAR surveys that would have implications for the proposed integration of demand-response services in Ventura County. The Demand-Response Integration Plan will delve further into that topic.

### PHASE 3: ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The first phase of engagement established what transit issues confront staff, stakeholders, and special interest groups. The second phase gathered more details on the issues identified by exploring these subjects with riders and the general public through several surveying efforts. Both phases influenced the design of the existing conditions analysis, and identification of transit needs and opportunities. The project team ultimately brought all of these elements together to develop the Plan’s initial transit concepts.

Phase 3 consisted of multiple in-person and virtual workshops, with the goal of presenting the fixed-route service concepts to the general public. Stakeholder participants and any other contacts from prior phases were invited to participate. In-person workshops were held in Camarillo and Santa Paula, while a virtual public workshop was hosted on Zoom.

Ahead of these public meetings, the consultant team connected with each stakeholder community several times, to collaboratively consider and refine the draft recommendations. Staff input was crucial in focusing several ideas into a more select set of trade-offs to present to the public.

Unfortunately, as with Phase 1, the community meetings (both in-person and virtual) were sparsely attended, despite soliciting participation from a larger stakeholder and community contact list (representing over 140 organizations, businesses and other representatives) developed over the prior year. The few community members who did attend the meetings were inquisitive about the analysis and supportive of the concepts. The team received no feedback that would have significantly shifted or altered the recommendations.

Following this outcome, the consultant team and VCTC staff also reengaged with city staff and County supervisors to solicit further input and direction, primarily regarding the Valley Express service. Specific guidance was needed for Valley Express to support the recommended rebalancing of fixed-route and demand-response services, which would represent a major change in service design affecting several communities. The outcome of these conversations was, again, positive and supportive of the proposed concepts.

#### *FURTHER NEED FOR ENGAGEMENT*

Following adoption of the SRTP by the Commission, the individual cities, depending on the level and nature of the proposed changes, may need to conduct additional engagement and public hearings to officially adopt and implement service changes.

Following implementation of agency-specific service changes, city or agency staff should continue to engage with riders and non-riders to supplement monitoring performance metrics with qualitative and personal feedback. This helps adjust service as needed and keeps the conversation about transit in the community fresh.

## ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

The community engagement for the SRTP spanned over a year of ongoing outreach with staff, committees, councils, and stakeholder organizations across the region. These efforts were supported by a strong response to surveys directed towards all transit riders and the non-riding public. Specific and detailed input about routes and service design has helped develop new service concepts which are addressed in the Planning Report. Beyond route and service-level details, these top-level findings are essential in directing future improvements for the whole county:

1. **Investment in better promotion, marketing and materials is crucial.** Stakeholder input and survey data underscore that awareness or understanding of transit is poor. Survey responses show that people believe there is no service to where they want to go or perceive that transit is “not for them.” However, there are many reasons people of all income levels and backgrounds may want to use transit at least some of the time, even if they have a car. In fact, even among current riders, almost 60% have access to a car at least sometimes.
2. Linking promotion of transit to opportunities through stakeholder groups will grow ridership and improve perceptions of transit. Stakeholder groups passionately emphasized the need to better inform the public about how transit can be used, and to address conceptions (and misconceptions) about safety onboard. This sentiment was reinforced through responses and comments from the general public from those in favor of transit but unsure how to use it, or untrusting that it would be safe. This uncertainty about safety comes in contrast with the fact that most existing riders report feeling safe using transit in Ventura County.
3. **Greater emphasis on regular local service, with predictable connections to other providers** will go a long way towards making the network more useful, recognizing that increasing actual frequency or transit speed is not likely with the current resources. People perceive the transit network to be sparse with poor connectivity between routes, and therefore have the perception of very long travel times to destinations beyond someone’s home community. Survey responses from the general public and riders indicated the greatest interest in this service improvement.
4. **Extending span of service has the potential to both support existing riders and attract new ones.** Surveys suggested that extending evening service was more important than improving midday frequency. Current riders sought better service to support ‘non-traditional’ work hours. Additionally, riders tend to have lower incomes, which are less likely to have daytime office-type hours. Extending service later in the evening will ensure people have a return trip home from jobs that extend past 5:00 p.m. Although the highest number of responses supported improvements to service for traditional work shifts, most services are already oriented towards these patterns and expanding evening service would still benefit traditional 9-to-5 commuters. Many respondents commented that it was hard to participate in

community and cultural activities that happen in the evenings because there is no transportation.

5. **Improved walk access to transit should be a top priority for infrastructure projects.** Both riders and non-riders slightly preferred this option over better bus stop infrastructure. While improved stop amenities are important, the ability for people to safely walk (or roll) a short distance to transit will do more to bring more riders to transit, and stop amenities can follow.
6. **Fare policies and programs should support current riders,** who tend to represent significantly lower-income households than the county average. This subject will be explored in greater detail in the fare policy component of the Planning Report.
7. **Dial-a-Ride programs must take steps to address efficiency, reliability, and predictability.** Although these programs are rated highly overall, the majority of riders use DAR service to reach healthcare appointments, and timeliness and predictability are essential. It can be difficult to get appointments with specialists, so any uncertainty about trip availability and on-time performance will generate disproportionate levels of stress on riders. This was the area of greatest need among current DAR riders.
8. **Better availability of fixed-route transit** should help DAR programs free up capacity. Most riders surveyed were well into their senior years, but many did not report a disability that limits their mobility. This suggests opportunity to provide better route service for non-disabled individuals who currently depend on DAR. This strategy can also reduce the fare burden, as DAR riders are even more likely to have very low household income than fixed-route riders.

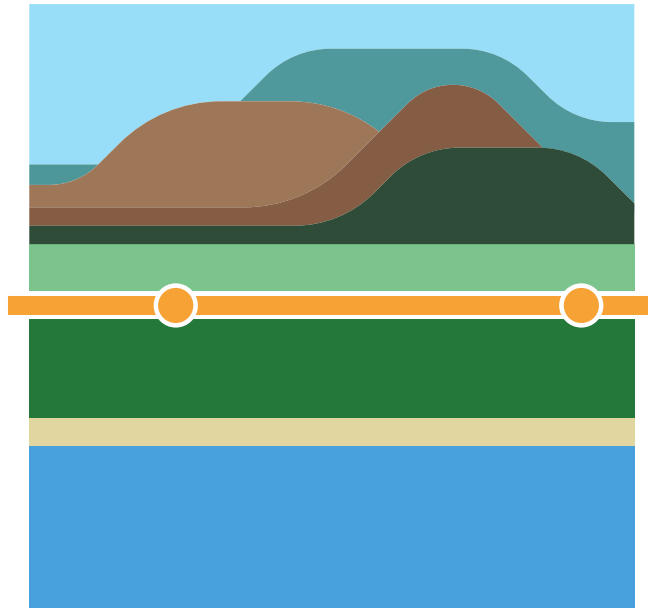
## THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION

The overall theme throughout the engagement activities and input received was the importance of better marketing of transit service, more robust information, and better connections with organizations that could spread the word. There is no downside to making transit easier to understand and reminding people that it's available for them to use. Failure to address this only perpetuates the problem of low transit ridership.

This point was greatly underscored by the outcomes of the public engagement activities themselves. Despite significant effort on all parts, attendance at the virtual and in-person public sessions was exceptionally low. Consider the following:

1. **Public transit use is low** – because relatively few individual residents use transit locally in Ventura County, it is hard to drum up excitement about engagement. There is simply not a community culture around transit, nor enough people riding regularly to bring up transit in casual conversation the way people do in larger cities. If more people rode the bus, non-riders would be more likely to encounter someone—or several people—who were also riders.
2. **Understanding of transit options is low** – Beyond simply not viewing transit as directly relevant, many people may be legitimately unaware that their community has a transit program. Awareness of Metrolink was notably higher than local bus services. Regardless of general awareness, many people don't understand how it could be useful to them, how to get started using the service, or assume the local transit service they see is only for seniors or people with disabilities. When people are not hearing regularly about transit service and being reminded of offerings in a way that they can relate to, they can't imagine needing to engage with it.
3. **Central gathering places are few** – Many communities in Ventura County were not developed with centralized downtown-style districts where a project team could effectively conduct intercept surveys and canvassing efforts. "Meeting people where they are" is an effective engagement strategy when communities have a central place with a high likelihood of encountering a broad cross-section of community members at any given time. Given the low density and spread found in much of Ventura County, "meeting people where they are" would be time-consuming and achieve little benefit. The alternative is to host either virtual meetings or in-person workshops that likely require people to drive to them.





# VENTURA

## COUNTYWIDE SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

2025-2034

MARCH 2026 FINAL REPORT

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