

# VENTURA COUNTYWIDE SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLAN

2025-2034

DEMAND  
RESPONSE  
SERVICE  
INTEGRATION

TRANSCOM

November 13, 2024

FEHR PEERS

# Demand Response Integration in Ventura County

- Context
- Where are we headed and why?
- Where are we headed?

Structures, best practices, governance, transition

- Discussion
- Next steps?

# Our Goal - A Path Toward Integration

- VCTC Strategic Plan Goals, Spring 2023
  - Goal A: Transportation Planning and Programming, Strategy, A10
    - Complete the short-range transit plan to better plan and coordinate transit services and programs
  - Goal B: Transportation Services, B12
    - Support improved transit and transportation services for those with disabilities
- Outcome of Transit Integration and Efficiency (TIES), 2024
  - VCTC Board direction to analyze what it requires to achieve demand response integration

# TIES Countywide Integration and Efficiency

- How an integrated approach can offer better outcomes:
  - Service marketing, promotion, information and rider education
  - Improved reliability
  - Data management and reporting
  - Administrative oversight
  - More seamless, less confusing travel for passengers
  - Program resilience while addressing latent demand
- Best outcomes when staff are dedicated only to transit program

# Context



# Short Range Transit Plan - Assessment Activities

- Public dialogue in community meetings & via stakeholder interviews
- Surveying
  - General public - countywide e-survey
  - Fixed-route riders - on-board survey
  - Dial-a-ride users - e-survey & paper survey
  - Interactive project website
  - Unmet needs testimony review, multiple years
- Field work and operations management interviews
- Operations data analyses and markets assessment

# Where Are We Headed? And Why?



# Where We're Headed: What Does Integration Mean for Ventura County's Demand Response Services?

## **Working with VCTC Board TIES' direction –**

1. Centralized administration, call center, trip scheduling
2. Uniform policy and procedure
3. Local operations and community responsiveness
4. Branding
5. Technology coordination



# Where We're Headed: What Does Integration Mean for Ventura County's Demand Response Services?

## 1. **Centralized administration, call center and trip scheduling**

- Common scheduling and dispatching platform
- One-call single phone number
- Joint procurement – vehicles, technology, fueling infrastructure
- Driver training

## 2. **Uniform policy and procedure**

- Service hours and days
- Fares
- No-shows and cancellations

# Where We're Headed: What Does Integration Mean for Ventura County's Demand Response Services?

## **3. Local operations and community responsiveness**

- Local dispatcher, vehicle logistics, customer service, maintenance

## **4. One brand**

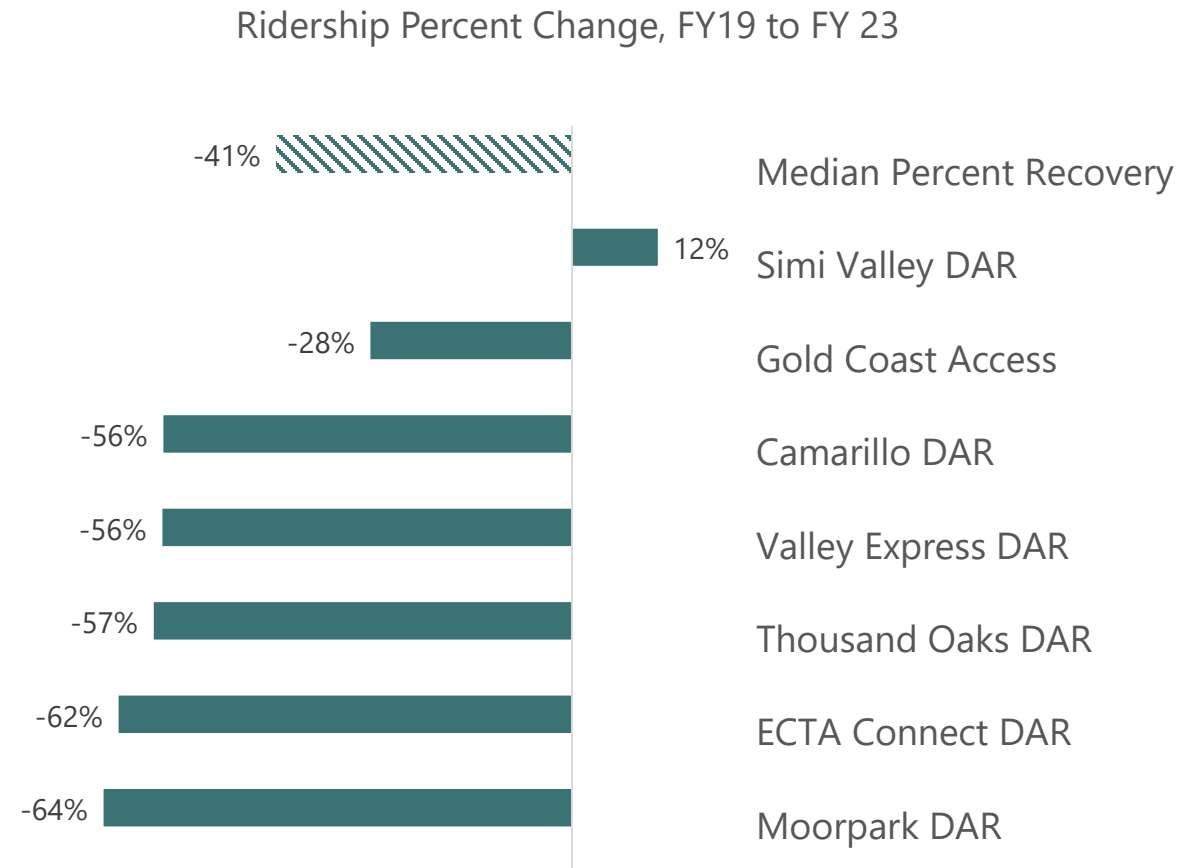
- One "brand"
- Countywide transit information (web & print) to promote & educate

## **5. Technology coordination**

- Common scheduling (ETAs and data management)
- Fare media

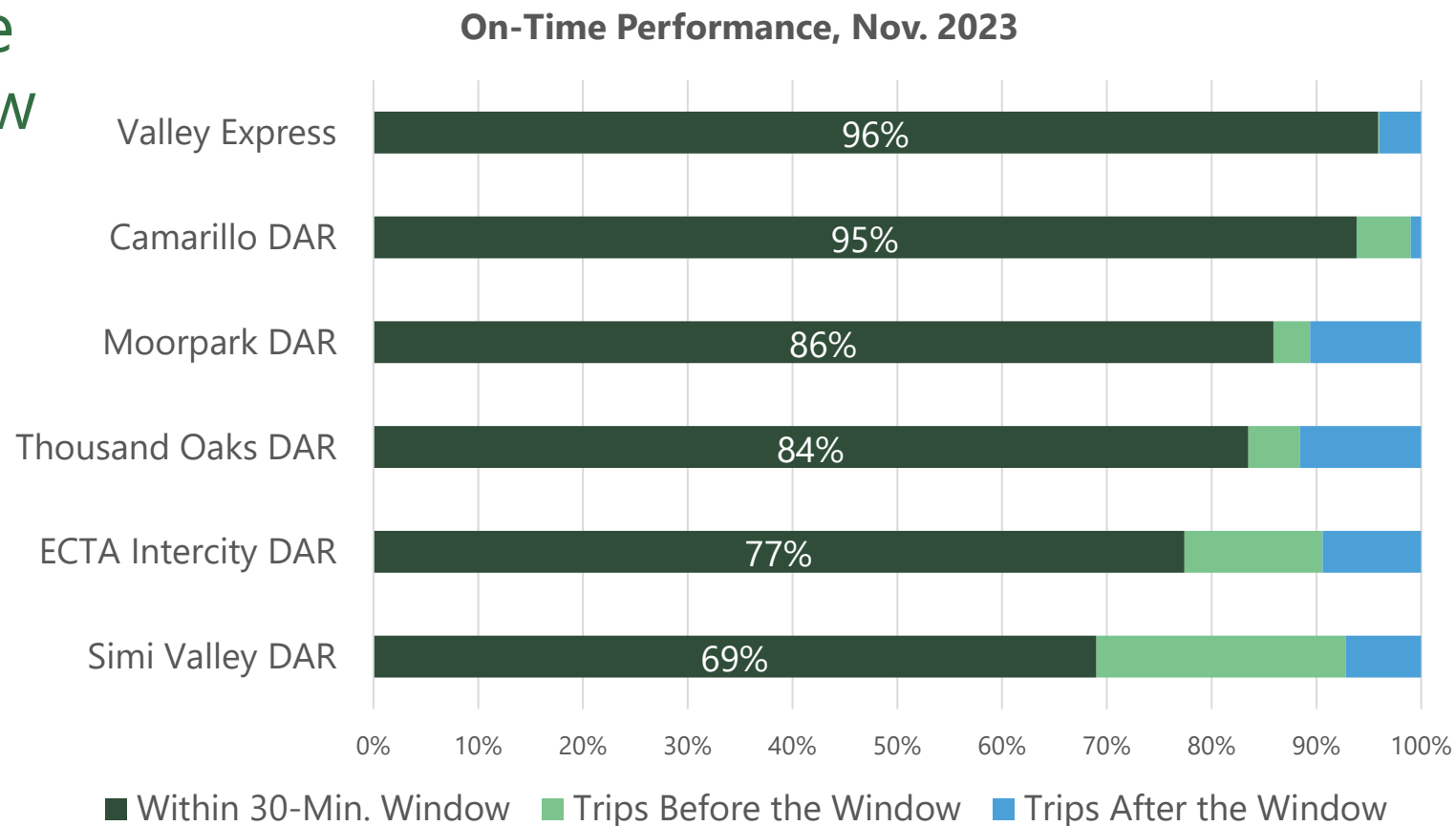
# Why? IMPROVE MOBILITY & REBUILD RIDERSHIP

- Ridership has not recovered for most DAR services
  - 6 systems below 2019 ridership
  - Median ridership at 41% below 2019 ridership



# Why? IMPROVE ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

- Early and late, outside the 30-minute window
- High no-show, late cancel percentages, slowing service and wasting resources



# Why? IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY

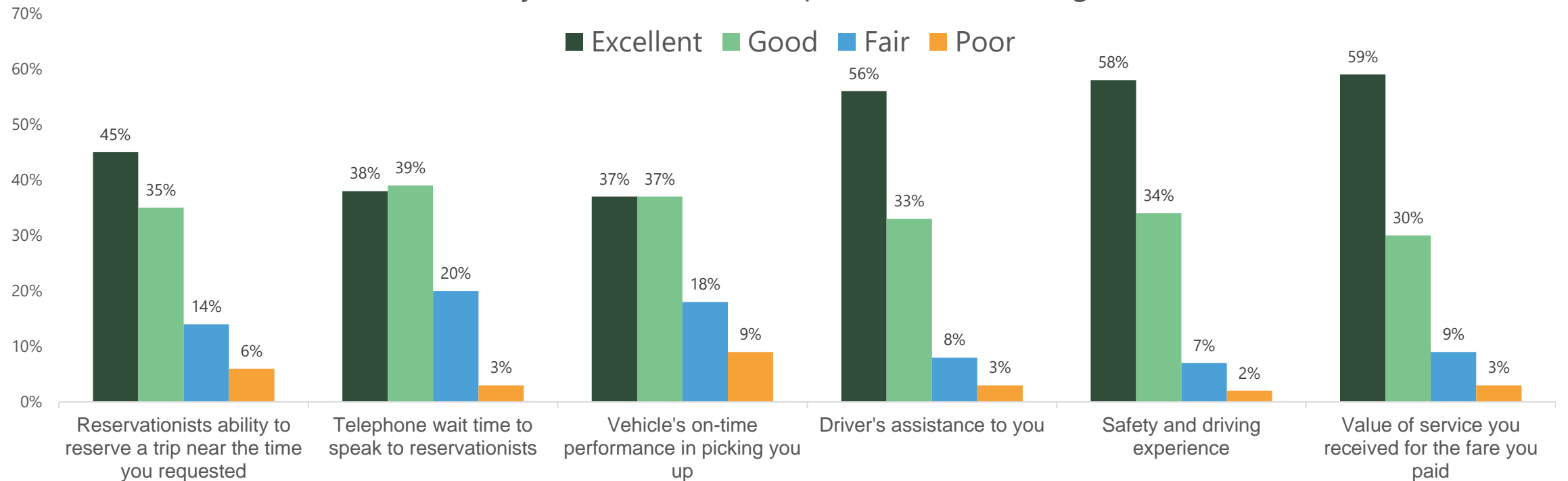
- Productivity has not improved to pre-pandemic levels for most systems

Productivity by System	FY 19	FY 23	% Change
Valley Express	2.4	1.1	-54%
Camarillo DAR	2.9	2.1	-28%
ECTA Connect DAR	1.8	1.4	-22%
Thousand Oaks DAR	2.3	2.0	-13%
Gold Coast GoAccess	2.3	2.1	-9%
Moorpark DAR	0.5	1.0	100%
Simi Valley DAR	2.4	5.1	113%
MCT On Demand	n/a	2.9	n/a

# Why? IMPROVE SERVICE

## Rider Survey – Customer ratings of service elements

For your most recent trip, rate the following:





# Why? IMPROVE SERVICE

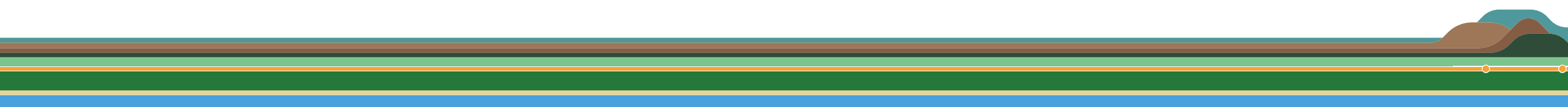
## Rider Survey – Comment Themes

### What improvements would most help you?

- Improve Driver Courtesy
- Enhance Booking Flexibility
- Increase Vehicle Availability
- Improved Punctuality and Scheduling
- Enhance Communication and Notifications

### Additional comments

- Improve Service Reliability
- Increase Driver Availability
- Enhance Accessibility for Disabled Persons
- Improved Communication
- Expand Service Hours and Areas



# WHY? ADMIN CHALLENGES - Getting Data

- Challenge of getting data from different agencies in different formats
- Speaks to a need to improve systems and administration
- If done right, integration can help accomplish this, while achieving other benefits



# Where We're Headed

Key Principles

Integrated DAR Brokerage

Relevant Best Practices

Governance & Transition Topics

# Where We're Headed – Guiding Principles

- Improve the rider experience and mobility
- Balance ADA civil rights compliance while providing beyond-the-ADA & premium services
- Improve performance and cost-effectiveness.

# Where We're Headed – Integrated DAR Brokerage

1. Administratively-oriented
2. Customer-facing





# Elements of a Brokerage Transition Plan

- Governance and funding
- Defining equitable cost allocation methodology
- Migrating to common scheduling & dispatching software platform
- Physical location
- ADA compliance review
- Establish common policies
- Strengthen reporting structures

# Where We're Headed - Relevant Best Practices

## Regionalism

- **LA ACCESS services** – regional service with 6 zones & operating hubs; distance-based fares; formalized transfer points
- **Riverside Transit Agency** intercity DAR service under one operator, with 2 operating hubs
- **Common Branding**
  - **Vamos** (CA central valley) – operators with co-branding & common functions
  - **Valley Metro** (Phoenix) - one system with operating hubs
  - **OATS** (Missouri) – common brand with local service logo

## Microtransit

- **Valley Metro Microtransit** (Phoenix)
- **Los Angeles Metro Micro** – zone based
- **SacRT Smart Ride** (Sacramento)

## Technology Tools and Promotion

- **Western Placer County, centralized dispatching** (north of Sacramento) - single call center receiving trip requests for individual community services, with common platform for trip scheduling [Roseville DAR, PCT DAR, Auburn Transit, Health Express]
- **San Bernardino County countywide promotion** – customer-facing rider education to teach Google Transit / trip planning

# Transition Timeline

Governance  
& Software

Facilities  
& Location

Brand

Implementation

Fall 2025

Early 2026

Summer 2026

Early 2027

Determine governing structure

Migrating to common platform

What, where and who?

Creative design and application

Launch integrated operations

# Next Steps

Complete draft  
service plan  
concepts

Now

Community  
Engagement

December

Revise service  
concepts

Early 2025

Final report

Summer 2025

Coordinate  
with partners  
on integration  
concepts

Financial Plan

Develop  
Implementation/  
Transition Plan

# Discussion