



**VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION
SERVICE AUTHORITY FOR FREEWAY EMERGENCIES
CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION SERVICE AGENCY
CONGESTION MANAGEMENT AGENCY**
www.goventura.org

AGENDA*

**Actions may be taken on any item listed on the agenda*

IN-PERSON

**THE CITY OF CAMARILLO LIBRARY
4101 LAS POSAS ROAD
CAMARILLO, CA 93010
FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2025
9:00 A.M.**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Government Code Section 54954.2, if special assistance is needed to participate in a Commission meeting, please contact the Clerk of the Commission at (805) 642-1591 ext. 101 or via email at ribarra@goventura.org. Notification of at least 48 hours prior to meeting time will assist staff in assuring those reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility to the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS – *Each individual speaker is limited to speaking to three (3) continuous minutes. The Commission may, either at the direction of the Chair or by majority vote of the Commission, waive this three-minute time limitation. Depending on the number of items on the agenda and the number of speakers, the Chair may, at his/her discretion, reduce the time of each speaker to two (2) continuous minutes. In addition, the maximum time for public comment for any individual item or topic is thirty (30) minutes. Also, the Commission may terminate public comments if such comments become repetitious. Speakers may not yield their time to others without the consent of the Chair. Any written documents to be distributed or presented to the Commission shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Commission. This policy applies to Public Comments and comments on Agenda Items. Under the Brown Act, the Board should not take action on or discuss matters raised during the Public Comment portion of the agenda which are not listed on the agenda. Board members may refer such matters to staff for factual information or to be placed on the subsequent agenda for consideration.*

5. CALTRANS REPORT - *This item provides the opportunity for Caltrans representative to give updates and status reports on current projects.*

6. COMMISSIONER REPORTS - *This item provides the opportunity for the commissioners to report on meetings/conferences attended and any other items related to Commission activities.*

7. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT-** *This item provides the opportunity for the Executive Director to report on meetings/conferences attended and any other items related to Commission activities.*
8. **ADDITIONS/REVISIONS** – *The Commission may add an item to the agenda after making a finding that there is a need to take immediate action on the item and that the item came to the attention of the Commission subsequent to the posting of the agenda. An action adding an item to the agenda requires two-thirds vote of the Commission. If there are less than two-thirds of the Commission members present, adding an item to the agenda requires a unanimous vote. Added items will be placed for discussion at the end of the agenda.*
9. **CONSENT CALENDAR** - *All matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one vote. There will be no discussion of these items unless members of the Commission request specific items to be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate action.*
- 9A. [APPROVE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7, 2025, MEETING PG.5](#)
Recommended Action:
 - Approve the summary minutes of February 7, 2025.**Responsible Staff: Roxanna Ibarra, Clerk of the Board**
- 9B. [SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT CONSULTANT SERVICES AGREEMENT AWARD PG.11](#)
Recommended Action:
 - Authorize the Executive Director to finalize and execute a Contract with WSP USA, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$1,676,461.00 for Consultant Services to Update the Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan and Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement.
 - Approve an Amendment to the Santa Paula Branch Line Program Budget to increase revenues by \$57,422 in the SCAG REAP CTC PP category.**Responsible Staff: Amanda Fagan, Director of Planning and Sustainability**
- 9C. [SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE MONTHLY UPDATE FOR FEBRUARY 2025 PG.15](#)
Recommended Action:
 - Receive and file a report on Santa Paula Branch Line updates for the month of February 2025.**Responsible Staff: Amanda Fagan, Planning and Sustainability Director**
- 9D. [LEGISLATIVE UPDATE PG.19](#)
Recommended Action:
 - Receive and file.**Responsible Staff: Darrin Peschka, Program Manager, Government and Community Relations**
- 9E. [BUS AND RAIL RIDERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES REPORT PG.37](#)
Recommended Action:
 - Receive and file.**Responsible Staff: Dolores Lopez, Transit Planner**
- 9F. [CONTRACT AMENDMENT WITH CPS HR CONSULTING SERVICES PG.43](#)
Recommended Action:
 - Approve Contract Amendment #5 with CPS HR Consulting increasing the contract amount by
 - Year 2024/2025 VCTC budget increasing the General Fund Operations Professional and Human Resources expense line item by \$22,000.**Responsible Staff: Martin Erickson, Executive Director**

DISCUSSION CALENDAR:

10. [MOTORIST AID PROGRAMS UPDATE AND EMERGENCY ROADSIDE CALLBOX DISCUSSION PG.47](#)

Recommended Action:

- *Receive and file a report on the Motorist Aid Programs, including Freeway Service Patrol (FSP), Emergency Roadside Call boxes and Incident Responder Grants.*
- *Receive a report and provide direction to staff on the Emergency Roadside Callbox system.*

Responsible Staff: Andrew Kent, Program Manager, Data & Services

11. GENERAL COUNSEL REPORTS-

12. AGENCY REPORTS:

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Primary: Chair Mike Judge

Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink-SCRRRA)

Primary: Commissioner Tony Trembley

Alternate: Commissioner Bob Engler

Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) aka Amtrak Pacific Surfliner

Primary: Commissioner Jim White

Alternate: Commissioner Chris Enegren

Coastal Rail Coordinating Council-CRCC

Primary: Commissioner Jim White

Alternate: Commissioner Jeff Gorell

California Association of Councils of Governments

Primary: Commissioner Jenny Crosswhite

California Vanpool Authority (CalVans)

Primary: Commissioner Jim White

Alternate: Commissioner Carrie Broggie

13. ADJOURN to 9:00 a.m. Friday, APRIL 4, 2025, at the City of Camarillo Council Chambers 601 Carmen Drive, Camarillo, Ca 93010.



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Item 9A

March 7, 2025

MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7, 2025, REGULAR VCTC COMMISSION MEETING AT 9:00 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair LaVere called the regular meeting of the Ventura County Transportation Commission to order at 9:00 a.m. at the City of Camarillo Library, 4101 Las Posas Road, Camarillo, CA 93010.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Commissioner LaVere.

ROLL CALL/MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mike Judge, City of Simi Valley
Martha McQueen-Legohn, City of Port Hueneme
Dani Anderson, Citizen Rep., County of Ventura
Carrie Broggie, City of Fillmore
Jenny Crosswhite, City of Santa Paula
Bob Engler, City of Thousand Oaks
Chris Enegren, City of Moorpark
Jeff Gorell, County of Ventura
Doug Halter, City of Ventura
Matt LaVere, County of Ventura
Luis McArthur, City of Oxnard
Janice Parvin, County of Ventura
Tony Trembley, City of Camarillo
Jim White, Citizen Rep., County of Ventura

ABSENT:

Rachel Lang, City of Ojai
Kelly Long, County of Ventura
Vianey Lopez, County of Ventura
Gloria Roberts, District 7 Caltrans Director

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

A motion was made by commissioner LaVere to nominate commissioner McQueen-Legohn as Vice-Chair of the Ventura County Transportation Commission. Commissioner Gorell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS – There was no public comment.

6. CALTRANS REPORT – Marlon Regisford, Deputy District Director of Planning and Local Assistance gave the Caltrans report for the month of February.

7. COMMISSIONER REPORTS – There were none.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT-

Executive Director Martin Erickson reported on the following items:

- Thanked outgoing Chair LaVere for his dedicated time during his leadership as Chair this past year and welcomed incoming Chair Judge for 2025.
- Welcomed four new Commissioners: Mayor Luis McArthur (City of Oxnard); Deputy Mayor Doug Halter (City of Ventura); Mayor Pro Tem Rachel Lang (City of Ojai); and Dani Anderson, (Citizen Representative, cities)
- Took a moment to focus on partnerships, noting that VCTC's success is built on strong and enduring partnerships.
- Reported that Amanda Fagan, Director of Planning and Sustainability, was selected as one of **Progressive Railroading's Women of Influence in Rail** for her work on sustainability involving the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL). Amanda and other honorees will be honored in a virtual celebration on March 20.
- Reported that on Friday, February 21st, the City of Oxnard will break ground on the **Rice Avenue Grade Separation**. This project is our largest transportation improvement in many years, with a total cost of \$133 million. The major funding source is the Senate Bill 1 Trade Corridor Enhancement Program, which is providing \$107 million obtained through VCTC's request to the California Transportation Commission, with significant support provided by Assembly Member Jacqui Irwin. Also, we do not want to overlook a key earlier contribution to the project from a federal design grant obtained with support from Congresswoman Julia Brownley. VCTC, the City of Oxnard, County of Ventura, and Caltrans have been working for several years on the design and right-of-way acquisition for this project, which is building a grade separation at the Rice Avenue/Fifth Street/State Route 34 intersection in Oxnard. The new bridge will elevate Rice Avenue over Fifth Street and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks to eliminate the at-grade crossing. The project will also include construction of a connector ramp, two new traffic signals, Class II bike lanes, sidewalk, striping and signage. The project is expected to take four years to build. Security Paving is the prime contractor.
- Thanked the City of Camarillo for hosting VCTC at the City of Camarillo library during the City of Camarillo Chambers remodel and announced the March 7, 2025, meeting will be held one last time at the City of Camarillo library.

9. **ADDITIONS/REVISIONS** – There were none.

10. CONSENT CALENDAR

Commissioner Parvin moved to approve consent calendar items 10A through 10J. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair McQueen-Legohn and passed unanimously. Commissioner Halter abstained from the January meeting minutes.

10A. APPROVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2025, MEETING

Recommendation:

- Approve the summary minutes of January 10, 2025.

10B. MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT

Recommendation:

- Receive and file the monthly budget report for December 2024.

10C. TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT (TDA) LOCAL TRANSPORTATION FUND (LTF) DRAFT APPORTIONMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026

Recommendation:

- Approve the Local Transportation Fund Draft Apportionment for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, apportioning \$51.78 million as shown in Attachment A.

10D. SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE MONTHLY UPDATES FOR JANUARY 2025

Recommendation:

- Receive and file a report on Santa Paula Branch Line updates for the month of January 2025.

10E. SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE PROGRAM BUDGET AMENDMENT-DISASTER RECOVERY CONSULTANT SERVICES CONTRACT

Recommendation:

- Approve transfer of \$192,000 out of State Transit Assistance (STA) fund and into the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) fund.

10F. AUTHORIZATION TO AMEND VCTC INTERCITY BUDGET

Recommendation:

- Approve budget amendment for the FY 24-25 VCTC Intercity budget to increase revenues in the amount of \$10,000 in Local Contribution funds and increase the Contract Services line item by the same amount.

10G. AUTHORIZE PURCHASE OF CAMERA SYSTEM FOR INTERCITY BUSES

Recommendation:

- Authorize the Executive Director to approve the purchase of an internal camera system for five Intercity buses from Luminator Technology Group in the amount of \$55,449.

10H. ADDITION OF HOLIDAYS FOR VCTC

Recommendation:

- Approve the addition of two federal and state recognized holidays: Juneteenth and Veterans Day to take effect in calendar year 2025.
- Incorporate Juneteenth and Veterans Day into the VCTC annual budget and update the VCTC Personnel Policies and Procedures manual to reflect their inclusion.

10I. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Recommendation:

- Receive and file.

10J. AMENDMENT NO.1 TO AGREEMENT WITH ITERIS, INC. TO COMPLETE VENTURA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN AMENDMENT

Recommendation:

- Approve Amendment No. 1 to Contract No. 2425 CTP-1 with Iteris, Inc. to extend the term of services five (5) additional months to June 30, 2025 and increase the Not to Exceed compensation amount by \$10,000 to \$59,980 for consultant services to complete an amendment for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

DISCUSSION CALENDAR:

11. FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026 TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT ACT (TDA) UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS (UTN) PUBLIC HEARING

Recommendation:

- Hold a public hearing and receive testimony of Unmet Transit Needs.

Dolores Lopez, Transit Planner gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing to the commission. Chair Judge opened the Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing at 9:19 a.m. There were no public comments during the Unmet Transit Needs Public Hearing. Chair Judge closed the public hearing at 9:28 a.m.

12. COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS TO EXTERNAL ENTITIES

Recommendation:

- Make Appointments as Follows:
 1. Appoint a primary member to the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) aka Amtrak Pacific Surfliner
 2. Appoint a primary member to the Coast Rail Coordinating Council-(CRCC)
 3. Single appointment to the California Association of Councils of Governments (CalCOG)
 4. Appoint an alternate member to the California Vanpool Authority (CalVans)

The commission approved by acclamation appointing Commissioner Jim White as the primary member to the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) aka Amtrak Pacific Surfliner and Commissioner Chris Enegren as alternate member. The commission approved by acclamation appointing Commissioner Jim White as primary member of the Coast Rail Coordinating Council-(CRCC). The commission approved by acclamation appointing Commissioner Jenny Crosswhite as the primary member for California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG). The commission approved by acclamation appointing Commissioner Carrie Broggie as alternate member to the California Vanpool Authority (CalVans).

Commissioner Trembley moved to approve Item 12 Commissioner Appointments to External Entities. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair McQueen-Legohn and passed unanimously.

13. UPDATE ON US 101 HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (HOV) EXPRESS BUS WIDENING PROJECT APPROVAL/ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT (PAED) PHASE

Recommendation:

- Receive and file presentation.

Peter De Haan introduced Melissa Brady, Vice-President and WSP USA Inc. Project Manager for the consulting team. Ms. Brady gave a PowerPoint presentation on item 13. Update on US 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Express Bus Widening Project Approval/Environmental Document (PAED) Phase to the commission.

14. GENERAL COUNSEL REPORTS- There were none.

15. AGENCY REPORTS:

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Primary: Chair Mike Judge

Chair Judge reported SCAG had its regional meeting. At the regional SCAG meeting there was intensive discussion on recovery efforts from the most recent Los Angeles fires. He stated Simi Valley landfill will be used to place a lot of the debris from the fires but none of the waste will be toxic or hazardous, it is supposed to be treated before it gets to the landfill as it will only be landfill once it gets to Simi Valley. He also stated they had a presentation from a program called CRASH which will launch in March. Once the program is launched, Chair Judge would like to invite them to give a presentation at a future VCTC meeting.

Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink-SCRRRA)

Primary: Commissioner Tony Trembley

Alternate: Commissioner Bob Engler

Commissioner Trembley stated Metrolink's board at their last meeting unanimously approved authorizing the CEO to sign the agreement between VCTC and SBCAG to combine startup costs for Metrolink to develop and implement initial plans for the proposed Santa Barbara/Ventura County inner commuter train.

Commissioner Trembley stated that due to the Los Angeles fire Metrolink was unable to hold its workshop last month but will hold it in March.

Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) aka Amtrak Pacific Surfliner

Primary: Commissioner Jim White

Alternate: Commissioner Chris Enegren

Commissioner White stated the next meeting will be held February 18 in Orange County. Commissioner White and Executive Director Martin Erickson will be presenting at the meeting.

Coast Rail Coordinating Council-CRCC

Primary: Commissioner Jim White

Alternate: Commissioner Jeff Gorell

None.

California Association of Councils of Governments

Primary: Commissioner Jenny Crosswhite

None.

California Vanpool Authority (CalVans)

Primary: Commissioner Jim White
Alternate: Commissioner Carrie Broggie

Commissioner White reported the next meeting will be held in Sacramento March 25th during which they will be meeting with lobbyists.

16. ADJOURN

Chair Judge stated the City of Simi Valley recently lost their Mayor Fred Thomas. Chair Judge requested a moment of silence in honor of Mayor Thomas. The meeting was adjourned to 9:00 a.m. Friday, March 7, 2025, at the City of Camarillo library, 4101 Las Posas Rd., Camarillo, CA



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Item 9B

March 7, 2025

MEMO TO: VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: AMANDA FAGAN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

SUBJECT: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE TRAIL MASTER PLAN UPDATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT CONSULTANT SERVICES AGREEMENT AWARD

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Authorize the Executive Director to finalize and execute a Contract with WSP USA, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$1,676,461.00 for Consultant Services to Update the Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan and Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement.*
- *Approve an Amendment to the Santa Paula Branch Line Program Budget to increase revenues by \$57,422 in the SCAG REAP CTC PP category.*

BACKGROUND:

VCTC acquired the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) in 1995 for use as a multimodal corridor, which included a bicycle and hiking trail among its stated purposes. In 1996, VCTC adopted the *SPBL Master Plan*. Then in 2000, VCTC adopted the *SPBL Recreational Trail Master Plan* and certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The *Trail Master Plan* provides design guidelines, preliminary engineering, a preferred alignment for the trail, and mitigations to avoid and address any impacts to agriculture and other resources. To date, three segments of the trail have been completed in the Cities of Santa Paula and Fillmore and within the Piru community. Final design and engineering for the four-mile segment from Montalvo to Saticoy is currently underway, led by the City of Ventura, with construction to be completed in 2026.

In April 2022, the Commission adopted a goal (Goal 13) to “Reinvigorate the process to complete the Santa Paula Branch Line bike trail,” and in April 2023, the Commission adopted the VCTC Strategic Plan FY 22/23 – FY 27/28, which includes Objective A8, “Update the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) trail master plan, validate trail alignment, connections, and amenities, and update existing conditions to facilitate trail completion, with stakeholder engagement.”

In May 2023, the Commission authorized submittal of five grant applications to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) County Transportation Commissions (CTC) Partnership Program (PP), commonly referred to as REAP 2.0. The applications included an update to the SPBL Trail Master Plan. In July 2023, SCAG approved a grant award to VCTC for \$3,777,000, which included \$1,677,000 in grant funding for an update to the SPBL Trail Master Plan and Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). In December 2023, the Commission approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SCAG to administer the grant and

authorized the Executive Director to release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Consultant Services to update the Santa Paula Branch Line Trail Master Plan and EIR/EIS.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) sought support from qualified consultants to update the SPBL Trail Master Plan and EIR/EIS for the portion of the trail from Saticoy to Piru. The RFP outlines instructions and requirements to submit a proposal. The RFP presents background and context to guide proposal and plan development, including the history of planning for the SPBL trail, important considerations for trail planning and design (such as agricultural resource protection), and defines a scope of work that includes existing conditions assessment, stakeholder engagement, conceptual planning and refinement, technical studies and environmental review components. The scope of work includes professional planning and engineering services required for planning and environmental review of a multi-use path (trail) project along an active railroad corridor in the public sector, and includes the following tasks:

1. Project Management
2. Existing Conditions
3. Outreach and Engagement
4. Conceptual Planning
5. Plan Production and Approval
6. Project Definition
7. Technical Studies
8. Draft EIR/EIS
9. Public Participation
10. Final EIR/EIS
11. Regulatory Process

The RFP also included selection criteria, which include understanding of the project, proposed team qualifications, project experience, client references, project and schedule management approach, and cost proposal/fee schedule.

VCTC initially released the RFP on December 1, 2023, with proposals due February 2, 2024. On January 26, 2024, VCTC received a stop-work order from SCAG due to State budget uncertainty and canceled the RFP. VCTC then sought Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding for the project in June 2024. In September 2024, the Commission approved an updated MOU with SCAG that allocated \$77,000 of restored REAP 2.0 funding to be combined with the awarded \$1,600,000 of STBG funding, for total funding of \$1,677,000. Subsequent cost savings from one of VCTC's four SCAG REAP 2.0 projects made an additional \$57,422 available for the SPBL Trail Master Plan Update. In total, \$1,734,422 in grant funding has been awarded to VCTC for the SPBL Trail Master Plan Update and EIR/EIS project. Neither funding source requires a local match contribution.

On November 20, 2024, VCTC re-released the RFP with proposals initially due on January 10, 2025. VCTC extended the deadline for an additional seven (7) days to January 17, 2025 due to a series of wind-driven fires in the Los Angeles and Ventura County areas that broke out on January 8. VCTC notified by email a list of 31 firms of the availability of the RFP and posted the solicitation to the VCTC Contracts website. VCTC also notified the firms by email and posted online the extension of the due date. The RFP solicitation periods extended for 57 calendar days (initial release) and 58 days (second release), for 115 total days.

DISCUSSION:

By the January 17, 2025 deadline, VCTC received one (1) proposal from WSP USA, Inc. with six (6) subconsultants, including three (3) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms. Three VCTC staff from two departments reviewed and scored the proposal independently. Each reviewer scored the proposal, awarding an average score of 94.7 points out of a possible 100 points. The proposed fee (\$1,676,461) is in alignment with the VCTC project cost estimate and is within the grant awards received by VCTC to complete the project.

Upon receiving only one proposal, VCTC contacted all 31 firms from the bid list that did not submit a proposal for feedback. Competing workload, staff availability, and multi-disciplinary project complexity were

chief among the reasons cited for not submitting a proposal. Given the length of the solicitation period and direct outreach to planning firms, VCTC believes that sufficient outreach was conducted and proceeding with an award to the one proposing firm is reasonable and in line with adopted VCTC Procurement Policies and Procedures. A completed Sole Source Justification Form is attached to this staff report.

WSP USA, Inc. demonstrates through its proposal a strong understanding of the project and its unique challenges and opportunities, as evidenced by Appendix A. The proposal assembles a highly qualified team of planning, engineering, landscape design, public relations, and railroad professionals with national, regional, and local experience with complex multimodal trail projects, including 20 rails-with-trails projects. The WSP proposal acknowledges challenges inherent in the project and highlights stakeholder engagement and relationships to overcome these challenges and advance the project towards implementation. The team incorporates six subconsultants, three of which are based in Ventura County and have significant experience and familiarity with the local and regional land use context. Proposed subconsultants and their respective roles include:

- AimTD LLC (DBE) – Traffic data collection
- LIN Consulting, Inc. (DBE) – Conceptual planning, conceptual design, and traffic services
- Mixtus Inc. dba Mustang Marketing – Outreach, staffing meetings, translation services, and supplemental services
- Pacific Coast Land Design, Inc. – Landscape design and stakeholder engagement services
- Rincon Consultants, Inc. – Environmental analysis and stakeholder outreach services
- Zephyr UAS, Inc. dba Zephyr Rail (DBE) – Aerial mapping and railroad coordination services

As noted above, subsequent cost savings from one of VCTC's four SCAG REAP 2.0 projects made an additional \$57,422 available for the SPBL Trail Master Plan Update. These additional grant funds must be added to the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 SPBL Program Budget Revenues. Sufficient budget authority is available under the Expenditures – Consultant Services category for the cost of the contract award.

Staff respectfully recommends approval of the Recommended Action to authorize the Executive Director to finalize and execute an agreement with WSP USA, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$1,676,461 to update the SPBL Trail Master Plan and EIR/EIS. Staff also recommends approval of an amendment to the Santa Paula Branch Line Program Budget to increase revenues by \$57,422 in the SCAG REAP CTC PP category.



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March 7, 2025

MEMO TO: VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: AMANDA FAGAN, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY
SUBJECT: SANTA PAULA BRANCH LINE MONTHLY UPDATES FOR FEBRUARY 2025

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Receive and file a report on Santa Paula Branch Line updates for the month of February 2025.*

BACKGROUND:

In December 2021, VCTC executed a Railroad Lease and Operations Agreement (Agreement) with Sierra Northern Railway (SNR) for a 35-year term. Under the Agreement, SNR is responsible to operate and maintain the full SPBL right-of-way as of January 1, 2022. The Agreement defines roles and responsibilities and grants Sierra Northern the exclusive rights to operate the SPBL for Railroad Purposes, including tourist and freight services, film and television production, and storage and transload services.

The adopted Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022/2023 – 2027/2028 includes three objectives related to the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL):

- A8. Update the Santa Paula Branch Line (SPBL) trail master plan, validate trail alignment, connections, and amenities, and update existing conditions to facilitate trail completion, with stakeholder engagement.
- B21. Partner with Sierra Northern Railway, corridor cities and the County to operate, maintain, and improve the Santa Paula Branch Line railroad and right-of-way corridor as a countywide community asset, ensuring outreach to stakeholders in the process.
- B22. Continue to address encroachment into the Santa Paula Branch Line right-of-way through leasing activities to ensure safety of operations and protection of the asset and infrastructure.

At the request of the Commission, VCTC staff initiated regular updates on SPBL-related activities. Verbal presentations on SPBL operations were provided at the June 2, October 6, November 3, and December 1, 2023, and January 5, February 2, March 1, April 5, and May 10, June 6, and September 2024 meetings, with written staff reports provided to the Commission in July and September 2023, October, November and December 2024, and January and February 2025. At the September 6, 2024 meeting, the Commission directed Staff to provide a written report on the Consent agenda for future meetings. As such, the following report includes updates for the month of February 2025.

DISCUSSION:

February 2025 updates and activities include:

- *Leasing, Licensing, and Rights-of-Entry*
 - Two lease reassignments (Loose Caboose/Barnyard, Lindgren/Underwood) remain pending completion. VCTC continues to follow up with new licensees periodically (County of Ventura/Broadband, Fillmore RV storage facility) to ensure license terms are met.
 - In alignment with the new Commission-approved right-of-entry (ROE) permitting process, staff continues to coordinate with Sierra Northern Railway on review of ROE applications.

- Application instructions, template and mapping resources are available at <https://www.goventura.org/spbl>.
- In January, staff coordinated with Counsel to address requested revisions by Southern California Edison (SCE) to the Commission-approved ROE template for installation of a temporary power pole to serve the Fillmore RV Park and provided feedback to SCE to facilitate ROE approval by Sierra Northern Railway. On February 20, VCTC concurred with the SCE ROE application for issuance by SNR.
 - *SPBL Trail Planning*
 - Staff continued to support the City of Ventura's efforts to plan, design, and conduct community engagement for the 4-mile section of the SPBL Trail from East Ventura/Montalvo Metrolink Station to Saticoy Depot. More information on the City's *Rails with Trails* project is available at: <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/2584/Santa-Paula-Branch-Line>.
 - Staff continued to support the City of Santa Paula's efforts to plan, design, and conduct community engagement for an additional approximately 1.5-mile section of the SPBL Trail within the City of Santa Paula. Additional information is available at: <https://spcity.org/797/Santa-Paula-Trail-Connectivity-Project>.
 - On November 20, staff re-released the SPBL Trail Master Plan Request for Proposals after incorporating Federal provisions required by the Surface Transportation Block Grant funding source. Proposals were initially due by January 10, 2025 no later than 4:00PM Pacific Standard Time. However, due to the fast moving fires in the Los Angeles area beginning on January 8, VCTC extended the proposal due date for an additional week to January 17, notified prospective bidders and posted notice to the VCTC Contracts website at <https://www.goventura.org/work-with-vctc/contracts/>. VCTC received one proposal by the proposal deadline and reached out to the prospective bidders list to identify any barriers to proposal submittal and determined a path forward for consultant selection. Approval of a contract award is included as a separate Agenda Item for Commission consideration.
 - Staff also coordinated with the Caltrans Priority Legislative Budget Program (PLBP) staff to finalize and execute a Funds Transfer Agreement to allocate the \$5,000,000 of PLBP funds to VCTC in accordance with Resolution No. 2024-15 approved by the Commission in November 2024.
 - *Storm Damage and Response*
 - Staff continued to coordinate with FEMA and CalOES regarding the Sespe Creek Overflow Railroad Bridge project. VCTC met a January 15, 2025 deadline issued by FEMA on December 30, 2024 to provide all remaining documentation required to move the emergency protective measures (Category B) and permanent repairs (Category C) projects to the next phase of FEMA review and obligation. Staff continues to provide financial, environmental, and other project information and documentation to FEMA upon request to meet FEMA deadlines.
 - With completion in October of emergency repairs to stabilize the Sespe Creek Overflow west embankment, the RailPros design team and VCTC staff shifted focus to validating bridge repair designs and cost estimates and securing permits to complete the permanent repair, projected for Summer 2025. The team continues to work toward submittal of the permit application from the Water Board and other regulatory agencies in the February/March timeframe.
 - Staff prepared a draft Invitation for Bids (IFB) and template contract for construction services to complete the permanent repairs to the Sespe Creek Overflow railroad bridge. Staff anticipates returning to the Commission for approval to release the IFB package at the April 4 Commission meeting.
 - *Coordination with Sierra Northern Railway*
 - VCTC staff and Sierra Northern Railway re-established a monthly virtual meeting and communicated on an as-needed basis. Staff coordinated with SNR's Ventura Division General Manager on issuance of ROEs, Site Visits, Inspections, and other rail activities as needed.
 - Payment of annual Sierra Northern invoices remains pending resolution of several insurance policy documentation items from Sierra Northern Railway. SNR selected a new insurance broker in late 2024 to better meet its contractual obligations to VCTC. A review

of insurance documentation is anticipated from the broker. VCTC will continue to follow up with SNR to resolve any remaining issues.

- SNR monitored the SPBL right-of-way during February storms and reports no major impacts of the storms.
- With a move of SNR's operational headquarters to Fillmore in February, SNR reports that the new location is working out well for SNR's needs. SNR will restart track and ties work now that the move is completed.
- SNR responded to a citizen complaint regarding a recreational vehicle (RV) parked within the railroad right-of-way (ROW) in the Santa Paula area, posting the required 72-hour notice. The RV was removed by its owner from the ROW within the notice timeline. SNR also inspected the track in the area; no track issues were identified within in the area.
- SNR continues to work on bridge design and contracting to replace the existing Ferris Drive bridge, located just east of Santa Paula Creek. The replacement bridge will be raised to address a low-clearance issue below the existing bridge. SNR anticipates a late May timeframe to complete the project, which will be a complete rebuild of bridge with a new steel structure with an open-deck design to raise the bridge using an industry standard design that will gain 6-8 inches of height from below the bridge.
- In response to a concern raised by the City of Santa Paula regarding graffiti on the Santa Paula Creek bridge, SNR is evaluating options to safely repaint the exterior of the bridge to remove graffiti, which will likely require use of specialized equipment to safely access the exterior of the bridge.



Item 9D

March 7, 2025

MEMO TO: VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: DARRIN PESCHKA, PROGRAM MANAGER, GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and file.

DISCUSSION:

Federal Issues

Since December, the federal government has been operating under the American Relief Act, a continuing resolution that generally funds the government at existing levels through March 14, 2025. The legislation was intended to give Congress time to reach an agreement on topline funding and develop full-year Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations bills. At the time this report was prepared, Congress has engaged in discussions on the federal budget, but members had not yet come to an agreement. Without an approved budget in place, the federal government will shut down March 15. Congress does have the option of passing a continuing resolution that would extend the current spending levels through a predetermined date while members work on a new budget bill.

Over the past several weeks, President Trump has signed more than 100 executive orders, with about 30 of those affecting transportation activities, according to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). At this time, it does not appear that the executive orders have paused or otherwise disrupted the distribution of federal formula funds for highways and transit, according to APTA. Some competitive grant programs have been paused, including the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program and Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Program, according to an executive order signed in January. Those programs are under review, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is expected to issue further guidance in the spring.

Newly confirmed Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy in February issued an order titled "Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in Department of Transportation Policies Program and Activities." The order lays out revised Department of Transportation (DOT) policies, including that in grantmaking, lending, policymaking and rulemaking, benefits must outweigh costs, the focus will be

on families and communities, and that federal funds shall not be used for projects or goals that are purely local in nature. The DOT is expected to issue guidance soon on how those policies will be applied to federally funded transportation projects.

On Feb. 20, Secretary Duffy and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced that FRA is initiating a review of California's High-Speed Rail Authority to determine if roughly \$4 billion in federal funding should remain committed to the state's high-speed rail project. In addition, Rep. Kevin Kiley of California's 3rd District has introduced legislation that would end all federal funding for the high-speed rail project.

State Issues

At the state Legislature, the deadline to introduce new bills was Feb. 21, and by that date more than 2,300 bills had been introduced. Bills must in print for 30 days before being heard by committees, so hearings on many bills are expected to begin in March. A number of transportation-related bills have been introduced, including proposals intended to improve safety for transit workers, expedite active transportation and transit projects, and increase highway safety. VCTC will analyze these bills over the coming months and may take a position on those that do or do not align with VCTC's adopted Fiscal Year 2025-26 State Legislative Program. The Commission will be kept informed if VCTC takes a position.

Attachment A is the monthly report of Delaney Hunter, the Commission's state lobbyist. Attachment B is a matrix of legislation that VCTC is tracking.

VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STATE LEGISLATIVE MATRIX BILL SUMMARY February 7, 2025			
BILL/AUTHOR	SUBJECT	POSITION	STATUS
AB 21 DeMaio	Taxpayer Protection Act of 2025	Monitor	In Assembly. Pending referral to committee.
AB 23 DeMaio	The Cost of Living Reduction Act of 2025	Monitor	In Assembly. Pending referral to committee.
AB 266 Davies	Freeway Service Patrol Act: sponsorship agreement	Monitor	In Assembly. Referred to Transportation Committee.
AB 267 Macedo	Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: high-speed rail: water infrastructure and wildfire prevention	Monitor	In Assembly. Referred to Transportation and Natural Resources committees.
AB 289 Haney	State Highway Work Zone Speed Safety Program	Monitor	In Assembly. Referred to Transportation and Privacy and Consumer Protection committees.
SB 71 Wiener	California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: transit projects	Monitor	In Senate. Referred to Environmental Quality and Transportation committees.
SB 90 Seyarto	Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024: grants: Improvements to Public Evacuation Routes: mobile rigid water storage.	Monitor	In Senate. Referred to Governmental Organization, and Natural Resources and Water committees.
SB 445	Sustainable Transportation Project Permits and Cooperative Agreements	Monitor	In Senate. Referred to Rules Committee for assignment,



**VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MONTHLY STATE ADVOCACY REPORT
FEBRUARY 2025**

Legislative Update

While the 2025-26 legislative session reconvened in early January, legislators have spent most of their time getting acquainted in their new offices, hiring their staff, waiting for committee assignments, and preparing their legislative agendas for the year. The deadline to introduce bills for the 2025 legislative session was February 21st, so the weeks prior consisted mostly of the initial groundwork and planning for these new bills. When the dust settled after that flurry of bill introductions, 2,495 new pieces of legislation or constitutional amendments were introduced by the deadline. There also have been several productive conversations through the policy committee's informational hearing process that will also help shape the newly introduced legislation and more are being scheduled for the spring.

After being introduced, bills must be in print for 30 days before being taken up in committee, so the policy committee process will commence in March and all of the new bills will begin to be scheduled for their first hearings. Finally, these bills will have to be out of the first house policy committee before Friday, May 16th, when the Appropriations Committee will take center stage. Seaside Advocacy will continue to keep VCTC updated on the host of bills and budget-related issues moving through the legislative process.

Governor's Proposed Budget

The Senate and Assembly budget subcommittees have been meeting on a regular basis to review the Governor's proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. This is where legislators can hear directly from each state department on their proposed budget for the year and begin to dive into more detailed fiscal discussions. It is still early in the process and there will be months more of hearings. The Legislature's priorities are beginning to take shape, and this will set up the two houses and the Governor for their final negotiations on budget items before the June 15th deadline.

On February 20th, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) noted that in light of 2024-25 tax collections to date, "there is upside potential relative to the revenues assumed in the Governor's Budget." A graphic

in LAO's update suggested the possibility of revenues being \$4.4 billion above the Governor's Budget projections for 2024-25 and \$2.4 billion above for 2025-26, with possible personal income tax gains offsetting weakness in corporation and sales taxes, relative to the administration's most recent forecasts. These higher revenues will improve the near-term "bottom line" of the state budget by a much smaller net amount, if any. This is for several reasons. In most years, 40 percent or more of increased revenues must go to school spending, and other funds must go to reserves. For the 2025-26 budget, in particular, higher revenues may allow lower planned withdrawals from the state's rainy day fund, especially in light of future projected deficits and threats of major federal cuts. In addition, pursuant to SB 175 of 2024, certain temporary tax increases in the 2024 budget plan may not apply for taxable years in which the Director of Finance determines that General Fund money over the multiyear forecast is sufficient without those increases, and there is language in the annual budget act not applying those provisions. The LAO says "the surge appears linked to the strength of the stock market," which "has boosted the earnings of high-income Californians and, in turn, income tax collections." The office again questions whether the recent stock market really is sustainable, but notes that "similar observations could have been made in 1998, but the stock market and the state continued to experience a boom for two more years." "Stubbornly elevated inflation further complicates this picture," LAO analysts write, adding this "also poses a risk for the continued strength of the stock market."

Upcoming Bill Deadlines and Newly Introduced Legislation

February 21 – Last day for bills to be introduced

April 10-21 – Spring Recess

AB 21 (DeMaio R) Taxpayer Protection Act of 2025

Introduced: 12/2/2024

Status: 12/3/2024-From printer. May be heard in committee January 2.

Summary: Would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact a constitutional amendment to limit the ability of state and local governments to raise taxes, restore a 2/3 vote requirement on local special tax increases, impose voter approval requirements on specific categories of new taxes, and regulate the titles on state and local ballot measures relating to tax increases.

AB 23 (DeMaio R) The Cost of Living Reduction Act of 2025

Introduced: 12/2/2024

Status: 12/3/2024-From printer. May be heard in committee January 2.

Summary: Current law establishes the Milton Marks "Little Hoover" Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy (Little Hoover Commission) to promote economy, efficiency, and improved service in the transaction of the public business in the various departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the executive branch of state government. This bill, the Cost of Living Reduction Act of 2025, would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to reduce the cost of living in California by undertaking specified activities, including, among other things, by suspending all state taxes and fees on gasoline and electric and gas utilities and by requiring the Little Hoover Commission to provide a report on methods to reduce the cost of living in other areas, as provided.

AB 259 (Rubio, Blanca D) Open meetings: local agencies: teleconferences.

Introduced: 1/16/2025

Status: 2/10/2025-Referred to Com. on L. GOV.

Summary: The Ralph M. Brown Act authorizes the legislative body of a local agency to use teleconferencing, as specified, and requires a legislative body of a local agency that elects to use teleconferencing to comply with specified requirements, including that the local agency post agendas at all teleconference locations, identify each teleconference location in the notice and agenda of the meeting or proceeding, and have each teleconference location be accessible to the public. Current law, until January 1, 2026, authorizes the legislative body of a local agency to use alternative teleconferencing if, during the teleconference meeting, at least a quorum of the members of the legislative body participates in person from a singular physical location clearly identified on the agenda that is open to the public and situated within the boundaries of the territory over which the local agency exercises jurisdiction, and the legislative body complies with prescribed requirements. Current law requires a member to satisfy specified requirements to participate in a meeting remotely pursuant to these alternative teleconferencing provisions, including that specified circumstances apply. Current law establishes limits on the number of meetings a member may participate in solely by teleconference from a remote location pursuant to these alternative teleconferencing provisions, including prohibiting such participation for more than 2 meetings per year if the legislative body regularly meets once per month or less. This bill would remove the January 1, 2026, date from those provisions, thereby extending the alternative teleconferencing procedures indefinitely.

AB 266 (Davies R) Freeway Service Patrol Act: sponsorship agreement.

Introduced: 1/17/2025

Status: 2/10/2025-Referred to Com. on TRANS.

Summary: The Freeway Service Patrol Act requires each tow truck participating in a freeway service patrol to bear a specified logo that identifies the Department of the California Highway Patrol and the Department of Transportation, and, at the option of the entity, the participating regional or local entity. This bill would authorize a participating regional or local entity to generate additional revenue for its freeway service patrol by entering into exclusive sponsorship agreements that allow for the display of a sponsor's name and logo on participating tow trucks, as specified, that are in addition to the above-described required logo.

AB 267 (Macedo R) Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: high-speed rail: water infrastructure and wildfire prevention.

Introduced: 1/17/2025

Status: 2/18/2025-Referred to Coms. on TRANS. and NAT. RES.

Summary: Would suspend the appropriation to the High-Speed Rail Authority for the 2026–27 and 2027–28 fiscal years and would instead require those amounts from moneys collected by the State Air Resources Board to be transferred to the General Fund. The bill would specify that the transferred amounts shall be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to augment funding for water infrastructure and wildfire prevention.

AB 273 (Sanchez R) Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: high-speed rail: infrastructure improvements.

Introduced: 1/21/2025

Status: 2/18/2025-Referred to Coms. on TRANS. and NAT. RES.

Summary: The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 authorizes the State Air Resources Board to include in its regulation of greenhouse gas emissions the use of market-based compliance mechanisms. Current law requires all moneys, except for fines and penalties, collected by the state board from the auction or sale of allowances as part of a market-based compliance mechanism to be deposited in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. Current law continuously appropriates 25% of the annual proceeds of the fund to the High-Speed Rail Authority for certain purposes. This bill would eliminate the continuous appropriation of 25% of the annual proceeds of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to the High-Speed Rail Authority on June 30, 2026. The bill, beginning with the 2026–27 fiscal year, would instead require 25% of the annual proceeds of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to be transferred to the General Fund and for those moneys, upon appropriation, to be used to augment funding provided to local governments to improve infrastructure.

AB 289 (Haney D) State highway work zone speed safety program

Introduced: 1/22/2025

Status: 2/10/2025-Referred to Coms. on TRANS. and P. & C.P.

Summary: Current law authorizes, until January 1, 2032, the City of Malibu to establish a speed safety system pilot program for speed enforcement on the Pacific Coast Highway if the system meets specified requirements. Current law requires the city to administer a public information campaign at least 30 days before implementation of the program, including information relating to when the systems would begin detecting violations. Current law requires the city to issue warning notices rather than notices of violations for violations detected within the first 60 calendar days of the program. Current law also requires the city to develop guidelines for, among other things, the processing and storage of confidential information. Current law requires photographic or administrative records made by a system to be confidential, except as specified, and would only authorize public agencies to use and allow access to these records for specified purposes. This bill would authorize, until January 1, 2032, the Department of Transportation to establish a similar program for speed enforcement that utilizes up to 125 speed safety systems on state highway construction or maintenance areas, as specified. The bill would require the department to adopt written guidelines for the use of speed safety systems before entering into an agreement regarding a speed safety system, purchasing or leasing equipment for a program, or implementing a program, and would require the department, in developing the guidelines, to consult with the Department of the California Highway Patrol and other relevant stakeholder organizations.

AB 338 (Solache D) Workforce development: the Counties of Los Angeles and Ventura: 2025 wildfires.

Introduced: 1/28/2025

Status: 2/18/2025-Referred to Com. on L. & E.

Summary: Would appropriate the sum of \$50,000,000 from the General Fund to the California Workforce Development Board to allocate to the South Bay Workforce Investment Board and the Economic Development Collaborative to train, upskill, and retrain underemployed and unemployed low-to moderate-income individuals to support the rebuilding and recovery of areas in the Counties of Los Angeles and Ventura impacted by the 2025 wildfires. The bill would require those local workforce development boards to demonstrate quality standards and practices, as specified, and to focus on employment in jobs in certain professions and industries, including construction, firefighting, and health care, and other areas essential to emergency response, disaster relief recovery and mitigation, and rebuilding. The bill would require individuals participating in programs funded by the bill to have access to expedited licensing and certification.

AB 339 (Ortega D) Local public employee organizations: notice requirements.

Introduced: 1/28/2025

Status: 2/18/2025-Referred to Com. on P. E. & R.

Summary: Would appropriate the sum of \$50,000,000 from the General Fund to the California Workforce The Meyers-Milias-Brown Act contains various provisions that govern collective bargaining of local represented employees and delegates jurisdiction to the Public Employment Relations Board to resolve disputes and enforce the statutory duties and rights of local public agency employers and employees. Current law requires the governing body of a public agency to meet and confer in good faith regarding wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment with representatives of recognized employee organizations. Current law requires the governing body of a public agency, and boards and commissions designated by law or by the governing body, to give reasonable written notice, except in cases of emergency, as specified, to each recognized employee organization affected of any ordinance, rule, resolution, or regulation directly relating to matters within the scope of representation proposed to be adopted by the governing body or the designated boards and commissions. This bill would require the governing body of a public agency, and boards and commissions designated by law or by the governing body of a public agency, to give the recognized employee organization no less than 120 days' written notice before issuing a request for proposals, request for quotes, or renewing or extending an existing contract to perform services that are within the scope of work of the job classifications represented by the recognized employee organization. The bill would require the notice to include specified information, including the anticipated duration of the contract.

AB 370 (Carrillo D) California Public Records Act: cyberattacks.

Introduced: 2/3/2025

Status: 2/18/2025-Referred to Com. on JUD.

Summary: The California Public Records Act requires state and local agencies to make their records available for public inspection, except as specified. Current law requires each agency, within 10 days of a request for a copy of records, to determine whether the request seeks copies of disclosable public records in possession of the agency and to promptly notify the person of the determination and the reasons therefor. Current law authorizes that time limit to be extended by no more than 14 days under unusual circumstances, and defines "unusual circumstances" to include, among other things, the need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine records during a state of emergency when the state of emergency currently affects the agency's ability to timely respond to requests due to staffing shortages or closure of facilities, as provided. This bill would revise the definition of unusual circumstances as it applies to a state of emergency to require the state of emergency, in addition to currently affecting the agency's ability to timely respond to requests as described above, to also require the state of emergency to directly affect the agency's ability to timely respond to requests as described above. By restricting the time period in which a local agency may respond to requests, thus increasing the duties of local officials, this bill would create a state-mandated local program.

AB 390 (Wilson D) Vehicles: highway safety.

Introduced: 2/3/2025

Status: 2/18/2025-Referred to Com. on TRANS.

Summary: Current law requires a driver approaching, among others, a stationary marked Caltrans vehicle that is displaying flashing lights to approach with due caution and either change lanes to a lane not immediately adjacent to the vehicle, or, if unable to safely do so, slow to a reasonable and prudent

speed, as specified. Current law makes a violation of that provision an infraction, punishable by a fine of not more than \$50. This bill would expand that requirement to apply to all marked highway maintenance vehicles, as defined, and would also make that requirement applicable to any other stationary vehicle displaying flashing turn signal lamps or another warning device, including, but not limited to, cones, flares, or retroreflective devices.

AB 394 (Wilson D) Crimes: public transportation providers.

Introduced: 2/3/2025

Status: 2/18/2025-Referred to Com. on PUB. S.

Summary: Current law defines a battery as any willful and unlawful use of force or violence upon the person of another. Current law provides that when a battery is committed against the person of an operator, driver, or passenger on a bus, taxicab, streetcar, cable car, trackless trolley, or other motor vehicle, as specified, and the person who commits the offense knows or reasonably should know that the victim is engaged in the performance of their duties, the penalty is imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year, a fine not exceeding \$10,000, or both the fine and imprisonment. Current law also provides that if the victim is injured, the offense would be punished by a fine not exceeding \$10,000, by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one year or in the state prison for 16 months, 2, or 3 years, or by both that fine and imprisonment. This bill would expand this crime to apply to an employee or contractor of a public transportation provider. The bill would authorize the court, following a conviction, to impose a prohibition order barring reentry to public transit property, as specified.

AB 612 (Rogers D) Transportation: Highway Design Manual: emergency response times.

Introduced: 2/13/2025

Status: 2/14/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 16.

Summary: Would require the Department of Transportation, on or before January 1, 2026, to update the Highway Design Manual to direct local governments to consult with local fire departments when making road improvements to ensure the improvements do not negatively impact emergency response times.

AB 657 (Alvarez D) Department of Transportation: state highways.

Introduced: 2/14/2025

Status: 2/15/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 17.

Summary: Current law establishes the Department of Transportation and the California Transportation Commission and provides that the department has full possession and control of all state highways and all property and rights in property acquired for state highway purposes and authorizes and directs the department to lay out and construct all state highways between the termini designated by law and on the locations as determined by the commission. This bill would make nonsubstantive changes to these provisions.

AB 778 (Chen R) Local Agency Public Construction Act: internet website posting.

Introduced: 2/18/2025

Status: 2/19/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 21.

Summary: The Local Agency Public Construction Act sets forth the requirements for the payment of construction projects by local agencies. The State Contract Act imposes specified requirements on state agencies regarding payment of construction contracts, including requiring, within 10 days of making a construction contract payment, a state agency that maintains an internet website to post on its internet website the project for which the payment was made, the name of the construction

contractor or company paid, the date the payment was made or the date the state agency transmitted instructions to the Controller or other payer to make the payment, the payment application number or other identifying information, and the amount of the payment. Current law exempts from these provisions, among other things, construction contracts valued below \$25,000. This bill would require a local agency that maintains an internet website to post on its internet website the information described above. The bill would exempt from these provisions construction contracts valued below \$25,000.

AB 854 (Petrie-Norris D) Environmental quality: greenhouse gas emissions: permit streamlining.

Introduced: 2/19/2025

Status: 2/20/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 22.

Summary: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency to prepare a mitigated negative declaration for a project that may have a significant effect on the environment if revisions in the project would avoid or mitigate that effect and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, would have a significant effect on the environment. The Jobs and Economic Improvement Through Environmental Leadership Act of 2021 authorizes the Governor, until January 1, 2032, to certify projects that meet specified requirements for streamlining benefits related to CEQA. This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to adopt permit streamlining guidance for projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

AB 861 (Solache D) Community colleges: students: public transportation: Los Angeles Community College District.

Introduced: 2/19/2025

Status: 2/20/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 22.

Summary: Current law establishes the California Community Colleges, under the administration of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. Current law creates the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority ("LA Metro") with specified powers and duties relative to transportation planning, programming, and operations in the County of Los Angeles. This bill would establish the LA Metro Los Angeles Community College GoPass and Student Ambassador Program to promote the use of public transportation by students enrolled at a campus of the Los Angeles Community College District by (1) providing all students with a free transit pass to access the public transportation services provided by LA Metro, and (2) establishing a student ambassador program within LA Metro where students assist with security, rider assistance, and facility upkeep on LA Metro rail and bus lines serving campuses of the Los Angeles Community College District. The bill would require the Los Angeles Community College District to submit an annual report to the Department of Finance and the budget committees of the Assembly and Senate that includes specified information about the transit pass program and the student ambassador program. By imposing additional duties on the Los Angeles Community College District and LA Metro, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

AB 891 (Zbur D) Community colleges: students: public transportation: Los Angeles Community College District.

Introduced: 2/19/2025

Status: 2/20/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 22.

Summary: Would establish the Quick-Build Project Pilot Program within the Department of Transportation's maintenance program to expedite development and implementation of low-cost projects on the state highway system, as specified. The bill would require the department, on or before

December 31, 2027, to develop and publish guidance for the deployment of district quick-build projects. The bill would require the department, on or before December 31, 2028, to identify and commit to funding a minimum of 6 quick-build projects statewide.

AB 902 (Schultz D) Transportation planning and programming: barriers to wildlife movement.

Introduced: 2/19/2025

Status: 2/20/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 22.

Summary: Current law requires certain transportation planning agencies to prepare and adopt regional transportation plans directed at achieving a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system. Current law requires that each regional transportation plan include a sustainable communities strategy prepared by each metropolitan planning organization in order to, among other things, achieve certain regional targets established by the State Air Resources Board for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks in the region for 2020 and 2035, respectively. This bill would require the regional transportation plan or sustainable communities strategy, upon the adoption or next revision on or after January 1, 2028, to, among other things, identify and analyze connectivity areas, permeability, and natural landscape areas that are partially or fully within the region of the metropolitan planning organization or transportation planning agency, and consider the impacts of development and the barriers caused by transportation infrastructure and development to wildlife and habitat connectivity. The bill would also require metropolitan planning organizations and regional transportation agencies, in implementing those requirements, to, among other things, incorporate appropriate standards, policies, and feasible implementation programs, consult with certain entities, and consider relevant best available science as appropriate.

AB 939 (Schultz D) The Safe, Sustainable, Traffic-Reducing Transportation Bond Act of 2026.

Introduced: 2/19/2025

Status: 2/20/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 22.

Summary: Would enact the Safe, Sustainable, Traffic-Reducing Transportation Bond Act of 2026 which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$20,000,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance transit and passenger rail improvements, local streets and roads and active transportation projects, zero-emission vehicle investments, transportation freight infrastructure improvements, and grade separations and other critical safety improvements. The bill would provide for the submission of the bond act to the voters at the November 3, 2026, statewide general election.

AB 954 (Bennett D) State transportation improvement program: bicycle highway pilot program

Introduced: 2/20/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

Summary: Would require the Department of Transportation to prepare a proposal for the development, including the selection, of sites for a pilot program establishing branded networks of bicycle highways that are numbered and signed within 2 of California's major metropolitan areas. The bill would require the department, on or before January 1, 2030, to include the proposal in the draft ITIP and would require the department to perform all other actions necessary for the pilot program to be programmed in the STIP, as specified. The bill would require the department, on or before July 1, 2031, to report to the relevant policy committees of the Legislature on the status of the pilot program and recommendations for the development of additional networks of bicycle highways.

AB 1014 (Rogers D) Traffic safety: speed limits.

Introduced: 2/20/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

Summary: Current law establishes various default speed limits for vehicles upon highways, as specified. Current law requires the Department of Transportation, by regulation, to require speed limits to be rounded up or down to the nearest 5 miles per hour of the 85th percentile of free-flowing traffic. Current law authorizes a local authority to additionally lower the speed limit in specified circumstances, or retain the currently adopted speed limit in certain circumstances. This bill would authorize the department to additionally lower or retain the speed limit.

AB 1132 (Rogers D) Department of Transportation: climate change vulnerability assessment: community resilience assessment.

Introduced: 2/20/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-From printer. May be heard in committee March 23.

Summary: Existing law establishes the Department of Transportation to, among other things, plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain the state highway system, as provided. Pursuant to that authority, the department developed 12 district-based Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment reports designed to provide the department with a comprehensive database to help in evaluating, mitigating, and adapting to the effects of increasing extreme weather events on the state transportation system. This bill would require the department, on or before January 1, 2027, to identify key community resilience indicators for measuring the impacts of climate-induced transportation disruptions. The bill would also require the department, on or before January 1, 2028, to include in the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment reports an evaluation of the broader social and economic impacts on communities connected to the evaluated infrastructure risks, as specified.

AB 1207 (Irwin D) Climate change: market-based compliance mechanism.

Introduced: 2/21/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-Introduced. To print.

Summary: The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 designates the State Air Resources Board as the state agency charged with monitoring and regulating sources of emissions of greenhouse gases and requires the state board to ensure that statewide greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to at least 40% below the 1990 level by 2030. The act, until January 1, 2031, authorizes the state board to adopt a regulation establishing a system of market-based declining aggregate emissions limits for sources or categories of sources that emit greenhouse gases (market-based compliance mechanism) that meets certain requirements. Pursuant to this authority, the state board adopted the California Greenhouse Gas Cap-and-Trade Program. This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to reauthorize the California Greenhouse Gas Cap-and-Trade Program.

AB 1257 (Lackey R) Department of Transportation: state highways.

Introduced: 2/21/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-Introduced. To print.

Summary: Current law establishes the Department of Transportation and the California Transportation Commission, and vests with the department the obligation to improve and maintain state highways, including all traversable highways that have been adopted or designated as state highways by the commission. This bill would make a nonsubstantive change to this provision.

AB 1275 (Elhawary D) Regional housing needs: regional transportation plan.

Introduced: 2/21/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-Introduced. To print.

Summary: Current law requires the Department of Housing and Community Development, in consultation with each council of governments, to determine each region's existing and projected housing need, and requires each council of governments, or the department for cities and counties without a council of governments, to adopt a final regional housing need plan that allocates a share of the regional housing need to each city and county, as provided. Current law requires certain transportation planning agencies to prepare and adopt a regional transportation plan directed at achieving a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system. Current law requires that each regional transportation plan include a sustainable communities strategy developed to achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for the automobile and light truck sector for 2020 and 2035 established by the State Air Resources Board. This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to harmonize the regional housing needs allocation process with the regional transportation plan and sustainable community strategy processes to ensure the needs of both existing populations and projected populations are met, and to ensure local governments have plans for sufficient housing in climate-friendly locations near transit, jobs, and services.

AB 1421 (Wilson D) Vehicles: Road Usage Charge Technical Advisory Committee.

Introduced: 2/21/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-Introduced. To print.

Summary: Current law requires the Chair of the California Transportation Commission to create a Road Usage Charge Technical Advisory Committee in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation to guide the development and evaluation of a pilot program assessing the potential for mileage-based revenue collection as an alternative to the gas tax system. Current law additionally requires the Transportation Agency, in consultation with the commission, to implement the pilot program, as specified. Current law repeals these provisions on January 1, 2027. This bill would extend the operation of the above-described provisions until January 1, 2035.

AB 1430 (Bennett D) Department of Transportation: state highways.

Introduced: 2/21/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-Introduced. To print.

Summary: Existing law establishes the Department of Transportation and the California Transportation Commission and provides that the department has full possession and control of all state highways and all property and rights in property acquired for state highway purposes and authorizes and directs the department to lay out and construct all state highways between the termini designated by law and on the locations as determined by the commission. This bill would make nonsubstantive changes to these provisions.

AB 1491 (Ta R) Transportation: road safety.

Introduced: 2/21/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-Introduced. To print.

Summary: Existing law requires the Department of Transportation to improve and maintain the state's highways, and establishes various programs to fund the development, construction, and repair of local roads, bridges, and other critical transportation infrastructure in the state. This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to improve safety on the roads in the state.

SB 71 (Wiener D) California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: transit projects.

Introduced: 1/14/2025

Status: 1/29/2025-Referred to Coms. on E.Q. and TRANS.

Summary: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency, as defined, to prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify the completion of an environmental impact report on a project that it proposes to carry out or approve that may have a significant effect on the environment or to adopt a negative declaration if it finds that the project will not have that effect. CEQA also requires a lead agency to prepare a mitigated negative declaration for a project that may have a significant effect on the environment if revisions in the project would avoid or mitigate that effect and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, would have a significant effect on the environment. CEQA, until January 1, 2030, exempts from its requirements active transportation plans, pedestrian plans, or bicycle transportation plans for the restriping of streets and highways, bicycle parking and storage, signal timing to improve street and highway intersection operations, and the related signage for bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles. This bill would extend the operation of the above-mentioned exemption indefinitely. The bill would also exempt a transit comprehensive operational analysis, as defined, a transit route readjustment, or other transit agency route addition, elimination, or modification, from the requirements of CEQA.

SB 73 (Cervantes D) California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions.

Introduced: 1/14/2025

Status: 1/29/2025-Referred to Coms. on E.Q. and TRANS.

Summary: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency, as defined, to prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify the completion of an environmental impact report (EIR) on a project that it proposes to carry out or approve that may have a significant effect on the environment or to adopt a negative declaration if it finds that the project will not have that effect. CEQA also requires a lead agency to prepare a mitigated negative declaration for a project that may have a significant effect on the environment if revisions in the project would avoid or mitigate that effect and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, would have a significant effect on the environment. CEQA exempts from its requirements certain residential, employment center, and mixed-use development projects meeting specified criteria, including that the project is located in a transit priority area and that the project is undertaken and is consistent with a specific plan for which an environmental impact report has been certified. This bill would additionally exempt those projects located in a very low vehicle travel area, as defined. The bill would require that the project is undertaken and is consistent with either a specific plan prepared pursuant to specific provisions of law or a community plan, as defined, for which an EIR has been certified within the preceding 15 years in order to be exempt.

SB 74 (Seyarto R) Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation: Infrastructure Gap-Fund Program.

Introduced: 1/15/2025

Status: 1/29/2025-Referred to Com. on L. GOV.

Summary: Current law authorizes a local agency to finance infrastructure projects through various means, including by establishing an enhanced infrastructure financing district to finance public capital facilities or other specified projects of communitywide significance that provide significant benefits to the district or the surrounding community. This bill would require the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to establish the Infrastructure Gap-Fund Program to provide grants to local agencies to develop and construct infrastructure projects, as defined. The bill would authorize the office to provide funding for up to 20% of a project's total cost, subject to specified

requirements, including, among other things, that the local agency provides funding that has been raised through local taxes for at least 10% of the infrastructure project's total cost. The bill would require the office to develop guidelines to implement the program that establish the criteria by which grant applications will be evaluated and funded. The bill would make these provisions operative on January 1, 2030.

SB 78 (Seyarto R) Department of Transportation: study: state highway system: road safety projects.

Introduced: 1/15/2025

Status: 1/29/2025-Referred to Com. on TRANS.

Summary: Would require the Department of Transportation to conduct a study to identify certain locations in the state highway system with regard to vehicle collisions, projects that could improve road safety at each of those locations, and common factors, if any, contributing to the delay in the delivery of those projects. The bill would require the department to post the study on its internet website on or before January 1, 2027.

SB 79 (Seyarto R) Planning and zoning: housing development: transit-oriented development.

Introduced: 1/15/2025

Status: 1/29/2025-Referred to Com. on RLS.

Summary: Would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would make housing more affordable for California families, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance public transit systems by, among other things, requiring the upzoning of land near rail stations and rapid bus lines to encourage transit-oriented development.

SB 90 (Seyarto R) Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024: grants: improvements to public evacuation routes: mobile rigid water storage.

Introduced: 1/22/2025

Status: 1/29/2025-Referred to Coms. on G.O. and N.R. & W.

Summary: The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 makes \$135,000,000 available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the Office of Emergency Services for a wildfire mitigation grant program to provide, among other things, loans, direct assistance, and matching funds for projects that prevent wildfires, increase resilience, maintain existing wildfire risk reduction projects, reduce the risk of wildfires to communities, or increase home or community hardening. The act provides that eligible projects include, but are not limited to, grants to local agencies, state agencies, joint powers authorities, tribes, resource conservation districts, fire safe councils, and nonprofit organizations for structure hardening of critical community infrastructure, wildfire smoke mitigation, evacuation centers, including community clean air centers, structure hardening projects that reduce the risk of wildfire for entire neighborhoods and communities, water delivery system improvements for fire suppression purposes for communities in very high or high fire hazard areas, wildfire buffers, and incentives to remove structures that significantly increase hazard risk. This bill would include in the list of eligible projects grants to the above-mentioned entities for improvements to public evacuation routes in very high and high fire hazard severity zones, mobile rigid dip tanks, as defined, to support firefighting efforts, prepositioned mobile rigid water storage, as defined, and improvements to the response and effectiveness of fire engines and helicopters.

SB 220 (Allen D) Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Introduced: 1/23/2025

Status: 2/5/2025-Referred to Com. on RLS.

Summary: The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is governed by a 14-member board of directors which is the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, 2 public members and one Los Angeles city council member appointed by the mayor, 4 members appointed from the other cities in the county, the 5 members of the board of supervisors, and a nonvoting member appointed by the Governor. If the number of members of the board of supervisors is increased, existing law requires the authority, within 60 days of the increase, to submit a plan to the Legislature for revising the composition of the authority. This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to update and modernize the membership of the board of directors of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

SB 222 (Wiener D) Climate disasters: civil actions.

Introduced: 1/27/2025

Status: 2/5/2025-Referred to Coms. on JUD. and INS.

Summary: Current law gives a person the right of protection from bodily harm and the right to possess and use property. If a person suffers bodily harm or a loss of their property because of the unlawful act or omission of another, current law authorizes them to recover compensation from the person at fault, which is known as damages. This bill would authorize a person to bring a civil action, if specified criteria are met, including damages of \$10,000 or more, against a party responsible for a climate disaster or extreme weather or other events attributable to climate change due to the responsible party's misleading and deceptive practices or the provision of misinformation or disinformation about the connection between its fossil fuel products and climate change and extreme weather or other events attributable to climate change. The bill would make responsible parties jointly, severally, and strictly liable to a plaintiff for the climate disaster or extreme weather or other events attributable to climate change. The bill would set forth venue requirements and prohibited defenses for that action, and would require the court to award a prevailing plaintiff the full extent of noneconomic, compensatory, and punitive damages allowable, as specified. The bill would provide that the connection of a climate disaster, extreme weather or other events attributable to climate change, or harms resulting from long-term changes to the climate system to alleged injuries are an injury in fact for all residents of the state harmed by the event and would give those persons standing to bring a civil action pursuant to the above-described provisions.

SB 239 (Arreguin D) Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body.

Introduced: 1/30/2025

Status: 2/14/2025-Referred to Coms. on L. GOV. and JUD.

Summary: The Ralph M. Brown Act requires, with specified exceptions, that all meetings of a legislative body, as defined, of a local agency be open and public and that all persons be permitted to attend and participate. The act generally requires for teleconferencing that the legislative body of a local agency that elects to use teleconferencing post agendas at all teleconference locations, identify each teleconference location in the notice and agenda of the meeting or proceeding, and have each teleconference location be accessible to the public. Current law also requires that, during the teleconference, at least a quorum of the members of the legislative body participate from locations within the boundaries of the territory over which the local agency exercises jurisdiction, except as specified. Current law, until January 1, 2026, authorizes specified neighborhood city councils to use alternate teleconferencing provisions related to notice, agenda, and public participation, as prescribed,

if, among other requirements, the city council has adopted an authorizing resolution and 2/3 of the neighborhood city council votes to use alternate teleconference provisions, as specified. This bill would authorize a subsidiary body, as defined, to use alternative teleconferencing provisions and would impose requirements for notice, agenda, and public participation, as prescribed. The bill would require the subsidiary body to post the agenda at the primary physical meeting location. The bill would require the members of the subsidiary body to visibly appear on camera during the open portion of a meeting that is publicly accessible via the internet or other online platform, as specified.

SB 359 (Niello R) Diesel Fuel Tax Law: exempt bus operation.

Introduced: 2/13/2025

Status: 2/14/2025-From printer. May be acted upon on or after March 16.

Summary: The Diesel Fuel Tax Law imposes taxes at a specified rate with respect to the distribution or delivery of each gallon of diesel fuel, and establishes various exemptions from those taxes, including an exemption for an exempt bus operation that consists of, among other things, a transit district, transit authority, or city owning and operating a local transit system, as provided. This bill would additionally apply this exemption to a county that owns and operates a local transit system, as provided.

SB 445 (Wiener D) Sustainable Transportation Project Permits and Cooperative Agreements.

Introduced: 2/18/2025

Status: 2/19/2025-From printer. May be acted upon on or after March 21.

Summary: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency, as defined, to prepare, or cause to be prepared, and certify the completion of an environmental impact report on a project that it proposes to carry out or approve that may have a significant effect on the environment or to adopt a negative declaration if it finds that the project will not have that effect. CEQA also requires a lead agency to prepare a mitigated negative declaration for a project that may have a significant effect on the environment if revisions in the project would avoid or mitigate that effect and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, would have a significant effect on the environment. CEQA, until January 1, 2030, exempts from its requirements certain transportation-related projects if specified requirements are met. CEQA includes within these exempt transportation-related projects a public project for the institution or increase of bus rapid transit, bus, or light rail service, which will be exclusively used by low-emission or zero-emission vehicles, on existing public rights-of-way or existing highway rights-of-way. This bill would require a lead agency to provide a written notice with specified information to a third-party entity, defined by the bill to mean a local agency, electrical corporation, or private telecommunications provider, regarding its need to use, relocate, alter, change, or otherwise improve facilities, publicly owned and managed utilities, public spaces, or other publicly or privately owned facilities under the third-party entity's jurisdiction or ownership for the implementation of a sustainable transportation project. This bill would define "sustainable transportation project" to mean a project where the lead agency is a state agency, operator, or local agency that proposes the construction or modification of facilities meeting at least one of several specified criteria, including that it is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the above-described provisions.

SB 486 (Cabaldon D) Regional housing: public postsecondary education: changes in enrollment levels: California Environmental Quality Act.

Introduced: 2/19/2025

Status: 2/20/2025-From printer. May be acted upon on or after March 22.

Summary: Current law requires certain transportation planning agencies to prepare and adopt regional transportation plans directed at achieving a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system.

Current law requires each regional transportation plan to include a sustainable communities strategy prepared by each metropolitan planning organization in order to, among other things, identify areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region, including all economic segments of the population, over the course of the planning period of the regional transportation plan taking into account net migration into the region, population growth, household formation, and employment growth. This bill would require the sustainable communities strategy, in identifying areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region, to also take into account changes in enrollment levels at institutions of public higher education, as defined, excluding changes in enrollment levels of nonresident students.

SB 506 (Committee on Transportation) Transportation: omnibus bill.

Introduced: 2/19/2025

Status: 2/20/2025-From printer. May be acted upon on or after March 22.

Summary: Existing law requires the Department of the California Highway Patrol to adopt reasonable rules and regulations which, in the judgment of the department, are designed to promote the safe operation of specified vehicles, including among other vehicles, school buses and commercial motor vehicles. This bill would make technical, nonsubstantive changes to these provisions.

SB 544 (Laird D) Railroad crossings: permit applications: review.

Introduced: 2/20/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-From printer. May be acted upon on or after March 23.

Summary: The bill would require an application for a railroad crossing to include, at a minimum, certain information concerning the proposed railroad crossing. The bill would authorize the commission to partially or completely exempt railroad crossing applications that meet certain requirements from review under otherwise applicable adjudication procedures and would authorize the commission to establish an expedited review and approval process for those applications.

SB 840 (Limon D) Greenhouse gases: market-based compliance mechanism.

Introduced: 2/21/2025

Status: 2/21/2025-Introduced. To Com. on RLS. for assignment. To print.

Summary: Existing law authorizes the State Air Resources Board to establish a system of market-based declining annual aggregate emissions limits for sources or categories of sources that emit greenhouse gases that is applicable from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2030, inclusive, and that meets certain requirements (market-based compliance mechanism). This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to reform, and extend the operation of, the market-based compliance mechanism.



Item 9E

March 7, 2025

MEMO TO: VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
FROM: DOLORES LOPEZ, TRANSIT PLANNER
AUBREY SMITH, PROGRAM MANAGER - REGIONAL TRANSIT PLANNING
SUBJECT: BUS AND RAIL RIDERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive and File

BACKGROUND:

As a data driven and transparent organization, VCTC staff provides quarterly reports that include ridership data, performance measures, and goals for VCTC Intercity Transit as well as Metrolink and Pacific Surfliner. This report looks at the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.

DISCUSSION:

Fixed Route

VCTC's Intercity quarterly ridership saw a modest rise of 3.3% compared to the same period last year, marking the 15th consecutive quarter of consistent growth in ridership. The quarter's ridership stands at 62% of pre-pandemic levels, representing the highest ridership since before the pandemic when comparing this quarter. Historically, October has been VCTC Intercity's highest ridership month which is indicative of this quarter as well. Conejo Connection, East County, Coastal Express, and Highway 101 all experienced positive growth compared to the same quarter last year, with Conejo Connection achieving a 30% increase and Coastal Express rising by approximately 12%.

Regarding rider composition, mobility devices have seen a significant increase of about 47% and bicycles have seen an approximately 10% increase compared to FY24 during the same quarter. Train transfers show an impressive increase of about 107% when comparing the same period in FY23.

Passenger revenue had a significant increase of 20% over the same period last year. However, this period also saw an 8% rise in the cost per passenger, primarily driven by a 12% increase in operating

costs. Despite an 8% increase in the Farebox Recovery Ratio excluding route guarantees, the ratio including guarantees decreased by 4% as route guarantees only increased by 1%.

Customer service goals were not met as complaints received for the period exceeded 5/50,000 riders for the quarter. Intercity received seventeen (17) valid complaints this quarter or 8/50,000, which falls short of its performance goal. Most complaints are related to scheduling and on-time performance (OTP), which staff has worked to address in the August service change and will be making additional changes to improve OTP in the January service change.

The On Time Performance (OTP) for the current quarter shows general improvement in the quarter, with most routes maintaining or enhancing their performance. Highway 101 (50-53) peaked at 79% in October and slightly declined to 74% by December, showing sustained improvement from the peak of 71% in September. Conejo Connection (55) increased sharply to 65% in November but dropped to 51% in December, but still slightly improved from the previous quarter. Highway 126 (60-62) and East County (70-74) both showed strong improvements, with the East County maintaining an average 75% OTP after its August schedule complete redesign. Cross County Ltd (77) and Coastal Express (80-89) exhibited some fluctuations but generally performed well, with Coastal Express recovering to 89% after a dip. Channel Islands (90-99) held steady until a drop in December to 68%. The observed increase in OTP across all routes could be attributed to updated schedules which took effect in August 24. Schedules were adjusted further in January to address OTP. Our performance goal is 90% for OTP. It is important to note that our APC system currently counts early arrivals at the end of the line as 'early,' which negatively impacts the OTP metrics. We are actively working on the system to identify and remove the early arrivals at end of line from the OTP calculations.

Rail

The Metrolink Ventura County rail line ridership increased by 27% in FY24 when compared to the previous year in the same quarter. Over this quarter, weekend ridership reached its highest levels, with each month showing consistent growth with the exception of December, which is usual due to the holiday period. This quarter, weekend ridership on the VC Line has continued its upward trend, now accounting for an average of 11% of total ridership. Overall Metrolink ridership on the Ventura Line is at 57% of pre-pandemic ridership with gradual improvement.

Ridership on the LOSSAN Pacific Surfliner service, which operates between San Diego and San Luis Obispo, experienced an 7% increase compared to the same quarter before the pandemic. This increase reflects ridership growth at the five Ventura County stations. It's worth noting that recreational trips have seen a significant increase throughout this quarter.

VCTC INTERCITY

Quarterly Ridership Report | FY 2025 Q2

October - December 2024 **104,803**

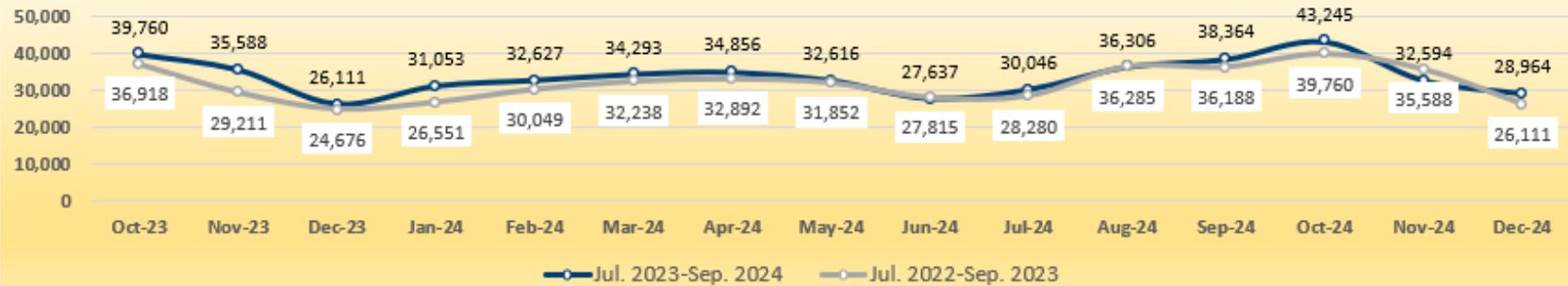
Boardings



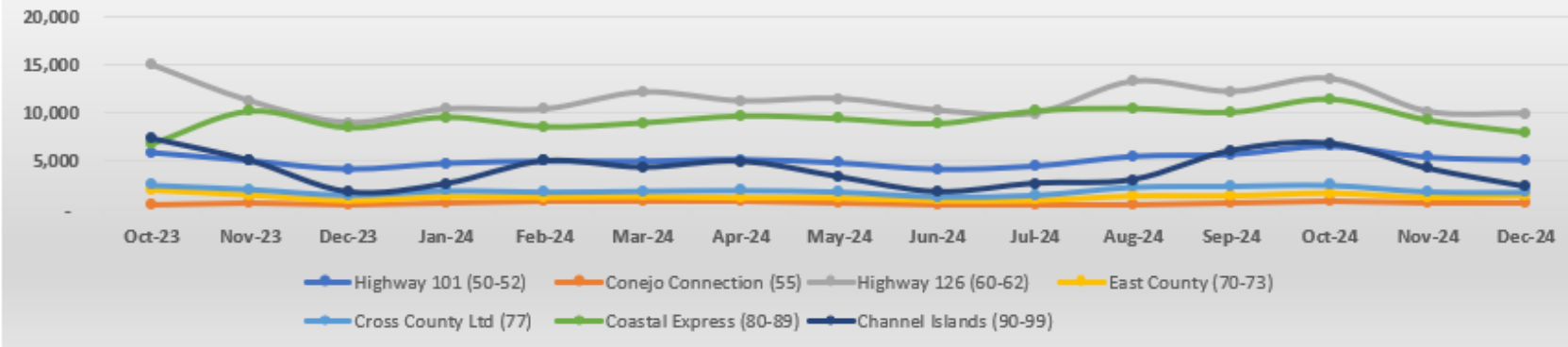
October - December 2023 **101,459**

3.3%

15 Month Ridership Trends Systemwide



15 Month Ridership Trends by Route



	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Highway 101 (50-52)	5,866	5,001	4,097	4,727	4,957	4,951	5,139	4,770	4,084	4,416	5,464	5,668	6548	5364	5071
Conejo Connection (55)	438	745	489	604	775	794	805	720	493	504	511	706	872	670	621
Highway 126 (60-62)	14,901	11,170	8,956	10,357	10,338	12,100	11,174	11,443	10,222	9,925	13,208	12,144	13498	10102	9895
East County (70-73)	1,958	1,483	951	1,329	1,275	1,329	1,216	1,214	953	970	1,382	1,393	1662	1244	1410
Cross County Ltd (77)	2,493	2,050	1,433	1,903	1,762	1,862	1,936	1,778	1,266	1,414	2,296	2,386	2496	1796	1724
Coastal Express (80-89)	6,803	10,133	8,444	9,527	8,542	8,944	9,642	9,377	8,859	10,165	10,419	10,010	11352	9223	7948
Channel Islands (90-99)	7,301	5,006	1,741	2,606	4,979	4,313	4,945	3,314	1,760	2,652	3,026	6,057	6817	4195	2295

Conejo Connection not in service in between October 22 - July 23

VCTC INTERCITY

October - December 2024

0.31

6.57

\$ 25.38

\$242,307



Fare Revenue

Quarterly Ridership Report | FY2025 Q2

Passengers/
Mile

Passengers
/Hour

Cost/Passenger

Fare Revenue

October - December 2023

0.31

6.60

\$ 23.49

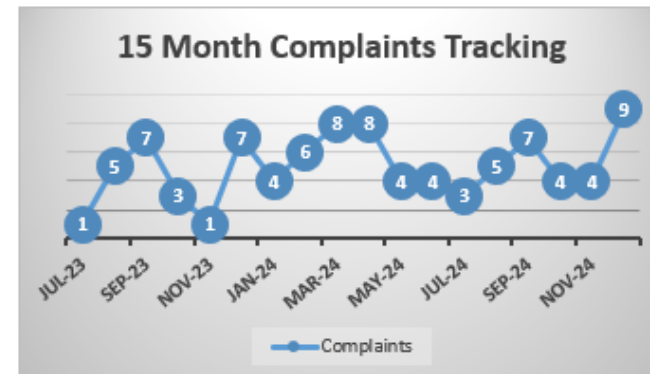
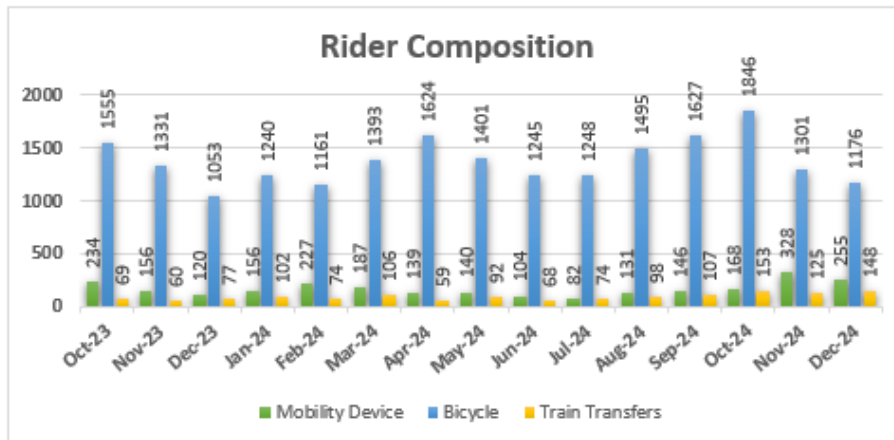
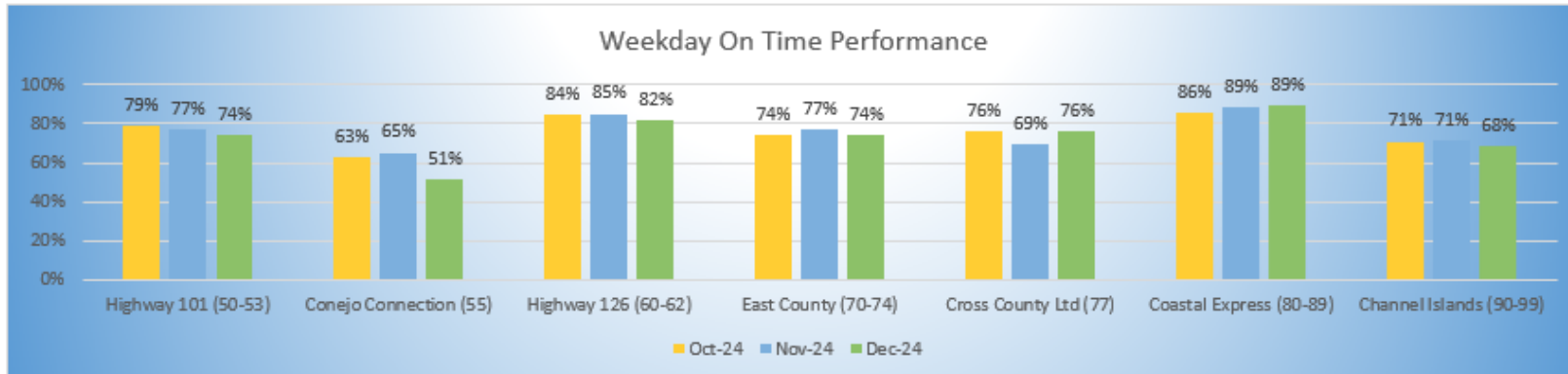
\$201,101

20%

COST AND REVENUE PER PASSENGER

	FY 2024	FY 2025	% Change
Operating Cost	\$ 2,206,621	\$ 2,471,658	12%
Passenger Revenue	\$ 201,101	\$ 242,307	20%
Passenger Revenue including budgeted route guar	\$ 572,368	\$ 615,616	8%
Passengers	101,459	104,803	3%
Cost per Passenger	\$ 23.49	\$ 25.38	8%
Farebox Recovery Ratio not including route guarant	9%	10%	8%
Farebox Recovery Ratio including route guarantees	26%	25%	-4%

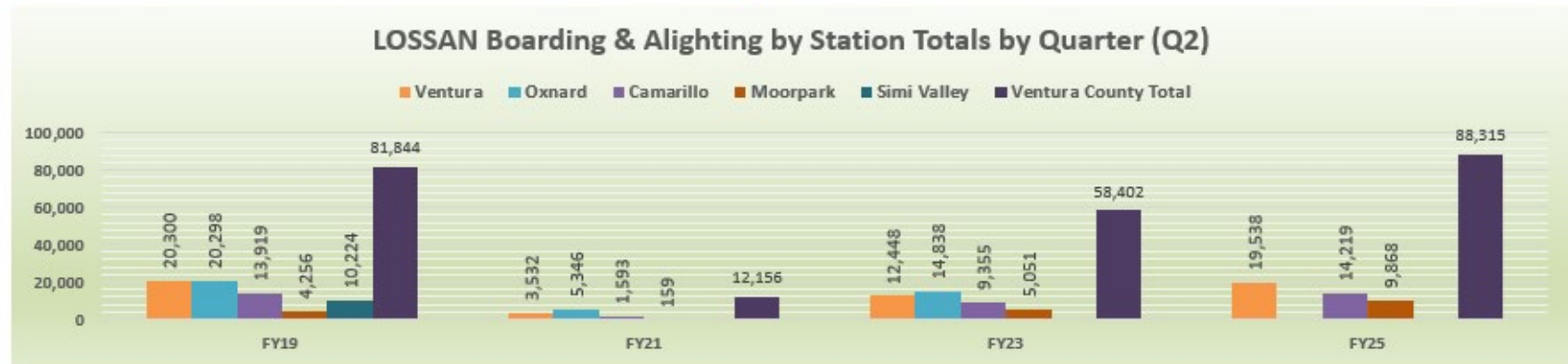
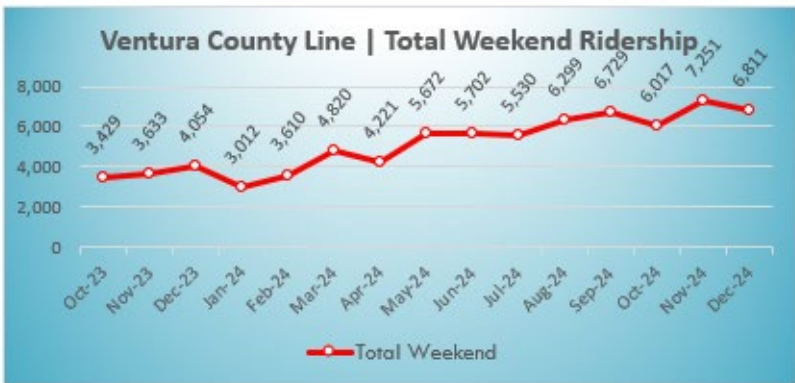
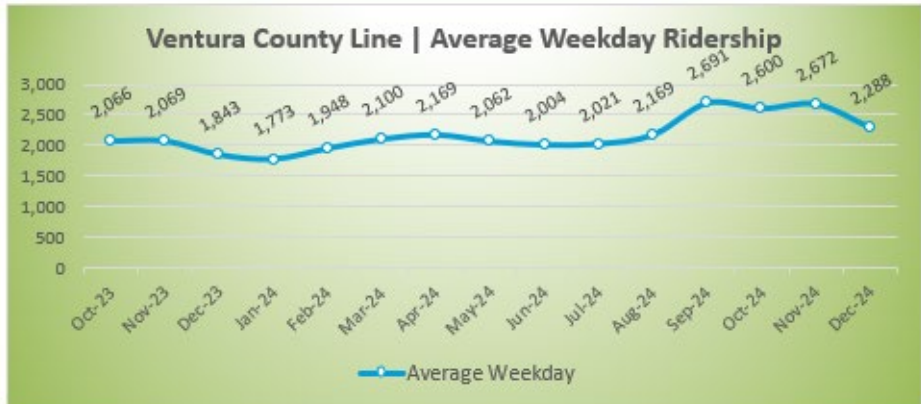
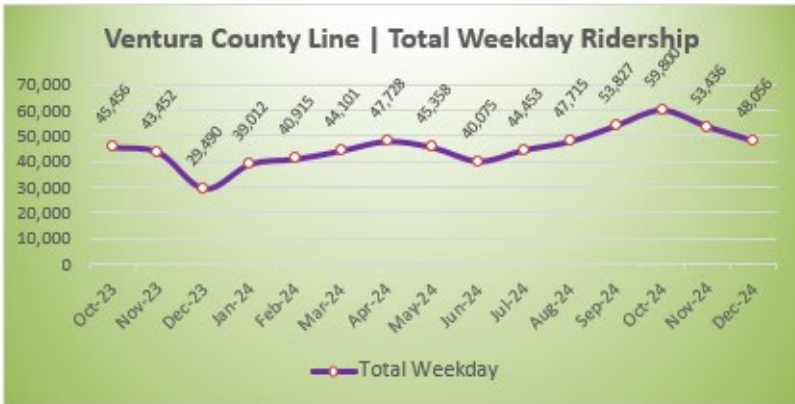
HIGHLIGHTS
20% Increase in passenger revenue despite a slight decrease in the farebox recovery ratio when including route guarantees.



Customer Service Goals:
No more than 5/50,000 rider complaints per quarter.

METROLINK & LOSSAN Corridor | Ventura County Line

Ridership





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March 7, 2024

MEMO TO: VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: MARTIN ERICKSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: CONTRACT AMENDMENT WITH CPS HR CONSULTING

RECOMMENDATION:

- Approve Contract Amendment #5 with CPS HR Consulting increasing the contract amount by \$22,000 and authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract amendment.
- Amend the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 VCTC budget increasing the General Fund Operations Professional and Human Resources expense line item by \$22,000.

BACKGROUND:

In October 2022, the Commission approved a contract with CPS HR Consulting (CPS) to provide human resource services to VCTC after following its RFP process. The contract with CPS allowed for up to \$80,000 a year to provide benefit administration, labor relation advice, policy and procedure development and implementation, recruitment functions, etc. The initial term is for Fiscal Years 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 with an option for two additional one-year extensions. The initial RFP for human resource consulting included the possibility of additional one-time assistance, such as assistance with recruiting, but was not included as part of the normal day-to-day human resource services contract issued in 2022.

DISCUSSION:

One of the areas where CPS will assist VCTC is in employee recruitment. Peter DeHaan, Director of Programming, is retiring from VCTC on May 31, 2025. At the time of his retirement, Peter will have been with VCTC for twenty-seven years and provided valuable and dedicated service in that time. The Director of Programming is a critical position at VCTC in that it oversees the programming of various state and federal funds that VCTC administers. To achieve a seamless process in the recruitment and hiring of a new Director of Programming, staff is requesting the Commission's approval to add \$22,000 to the CPS agreement for additional services to include comprehensive Executive Level recruitment assistance. This will include the development of a brochure, recruitment activities, screening candidates, setting up panels and assisting with the selection of a final candidate.

Taking the appropriate time and allocating necessary resources to recruit and identify VCTC's next Director of Programming will better position the agency for the future funding challenges and opportunities that will present themselves.

Therefore, the staff's recommendations are to approve contract amendment #5 and a budget amendment increasing the VCTC General Fund operations Professional and Human Resources line item by \$22,000

for this contract amendment. Revenue is not adjusted for this budget amendment as it will be netted with the carry forward year-end reconciliation of the indirect cost allocation plan.

**AMENDMENT NO. 5
TO
AGREEMENT BETWEEN
VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
AND
CPS HR CONSULTING**

This Amendment No. 5 (“Fifth Amendment”) is made as of this ____ day of ____, 2025 (“Effective Date”) by and between the VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (“VCTC”), and CPS HR Consulting (“Contractor”), (sometimes referred together as the “Parties” and singularly as a “Party”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, VCTC and Contractor entered into an agreement on October 7, 2022, pursuant to which Contractor agreed to provide various human resources and support services related to operation of VCTC and that agreement has been subsequently amended four times to provide additional services and compensation (“Agreement”); and

WHEREAS the Parties desire to further amend the Agreement to provide for additional compensation under the Agreement for Contractor’s additional services to assist with the development of a brochure and other recruitment activities.

NOW THEREFORE, VCTC and Contractor agree as follows:

1. Section 2 Compensation is hereby amended to include the following language in the first sentence of paragraph 1 of the Section with additions in underline and deletions in ~~strikethrough~~:

“VCTC hereby agrees to pay Consultant a sum not to exceed \$80,000 per year, as well as an additional sum in an amount not to exceed \$68,840 for completion of a salary and compensation study, and an additional sum in an amount not to exceed \$54,000 ~~\$32,000~~ for assistance with recruitment notwithstanding any contrary indications that may be contained in Consultant's proposal, for services to be performed and reimbursable costs incurred under this Agreement.”

Except to the extent amended herein, all other provisions of the Agreement remain in full force and effect.

This Fifth Amendment may be executed in counterparts and/or by facsimile or other electronic means, and when each Party has signed and delivered at least one such counterpart, each

counterpart shall be deemed an original, and, when taken together with other signed counterpart, shall constitute one original, which shall be binding upon and effective as to all Parties.
IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties have executed this Fifth Amendment on the ____ day of _____ 2025

VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

by: _____
Martin Erickson, Executive Director

Approved as to form

by: _____
Steve Mattas, General Counsel

CPS HR CONSULTING

by: _____
Its:



March 7, 2025

MEMO TO: SERVICE AUTHORITY FOR FREEWAY EMERGENCIES
FROM: ANDREW KENT, PROGRAM MANAGER – TRANSPORTATION DATA & SERVICES
SUBJECT: MOTORIST AID PROGRAMS UPDATE AND EMERGENCY ROADSIDE CALL BOX DISCUSSION

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Receive and file a report on the Motorist Aid Programs, including Freeway Service Patrol (FSP), Emergency Roadside Call boxes and Incident Responder Grants.*
- *Receive a report and provide direction to staff on the Emergency Roadside Call box system.*

BACKGROUND:

The Ventura County Transportation Commission, acting in its capacity as the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE), manages the Motorist Aid Services Program, which is financed by a \$1 annual vehicle registration fee on all vehicles registered in Ventura County. Motorist Aid includes the Freeway Service Patrol, the Incident Responder Grant Program and a system of emergency roadside call boxes.

Since 2021, Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) provides roving tow trucks on portions of the highway system during peak traffic periods for rapid clearing of disabled vehicles and motorist assistance. FSP is implemented through a partnership between the Ventura County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE), the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and Caltrans. The goals of the program are to provide congestion relief, reduce the incidence of secondary collisions, mitigate delay related vehicle emissions and assist motorists stranded in dangerous situations on busy highways.

The Commission established the Incident Responder Grant Program (IRGP) in 2019 to provide financial assistance to agencies that respond to incidents on the Ventura County SAFE network of freeways, highways and unincorporated county roads. These agencies use a wide variety of tools to assist motorists, from life saving devices to photographic equipment for incident analysis. These tools heighten the efficiency of incident responders, allowing them to save lives and reduce congestion.

The Ventura County Call Box Program is a system of approximately 428 active emergency roadside call boxes that provide motorists with a direct link to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to request roadway assistance. With the proliferation of cell phones and the decline of call box usage, many SAFE agencies are reevaluating the benefit-cost of their call box systems and contemplating system removal or call box reductions.

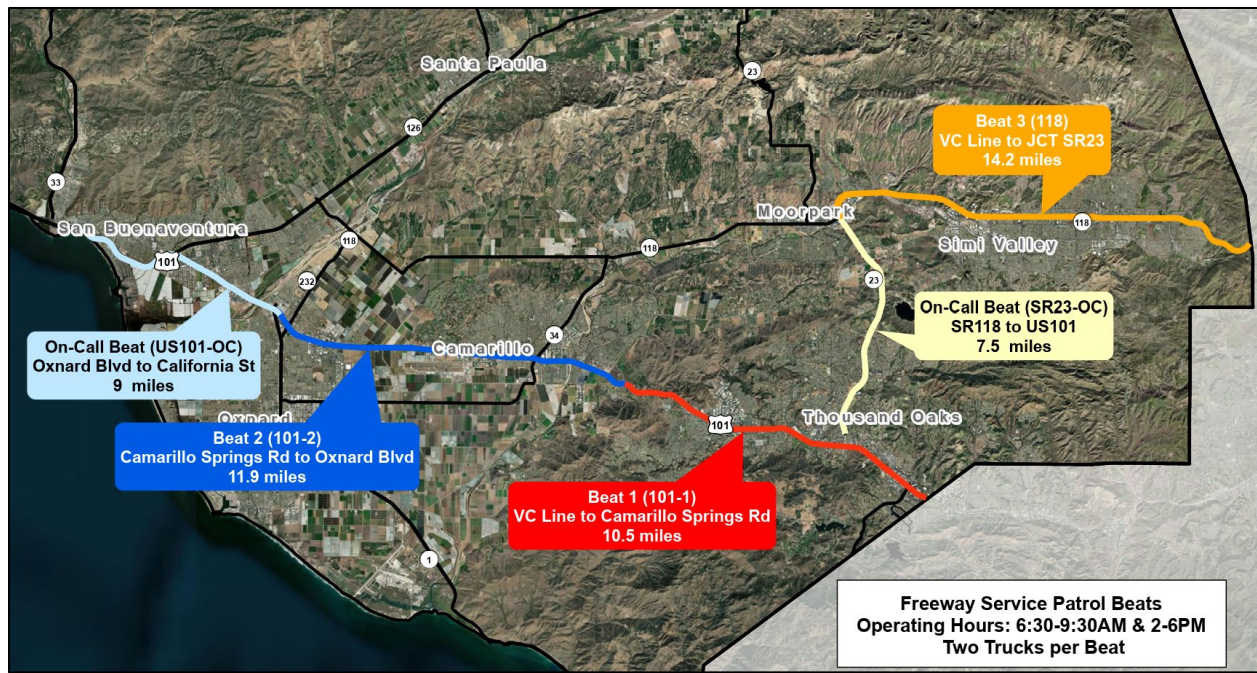
This report will provide the Board with a 2024 year-end review of the state of the Motorist Aid programs. Additionally, Staff is seeking policy direction on the future of the call box program and Motorist Aid priorities into the future.

FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL DISCUSSION:

In September 2020, the Ventura County SAFE Board awarded contracts for FSP Beats 101-1, 101-2 and 118 to Platinum Tow & Transport and service began in March of 2021. This report presents statistics on the fourth year of FSP operations in Ventura County.

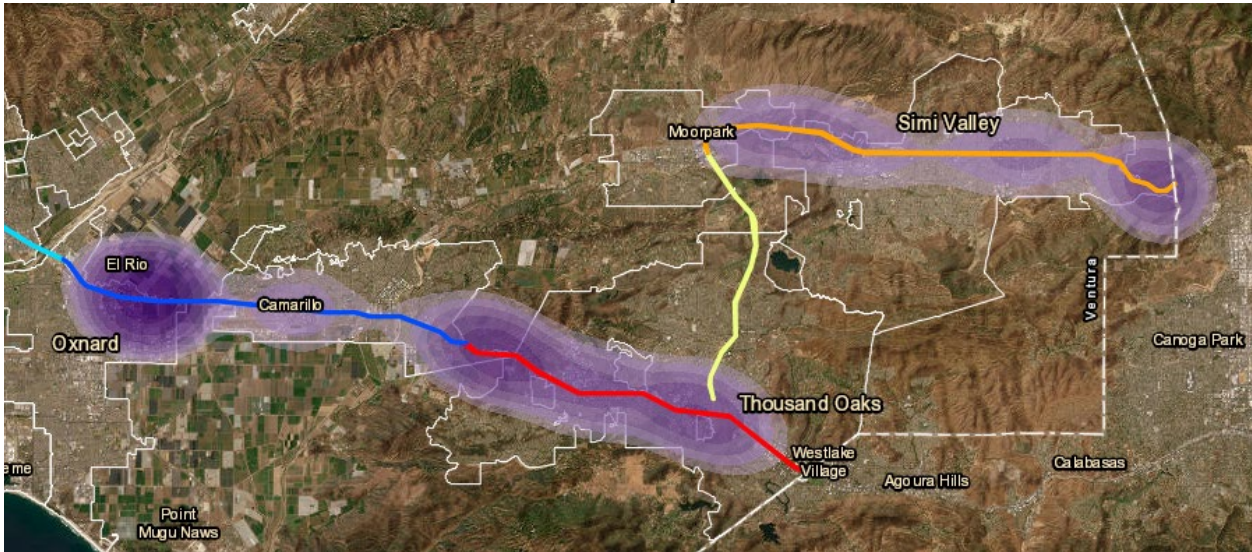
Effective July 1, 2024, Beat 101-2 was extended 2.7 miles, covering the U.S. 101 from Camarillo Springs to Oxnard Blvd. On-Call service was extended to U.S. 101 from Oxnard Blvd to California Street and on S.R. 23 from S.R. 118 to U.S. 101. On-Call FSP beats provide service upon request through CHP dispatch. Service hours were modified to better align with hourly travel volumes. The AM shift was pushed back by one-half hour (6:30 – 9:30 AM), and the PM shift was scheduled to begin an hour earlier (2:00 – 6:00 PM).

FSP Beats Effective July 1, 2024

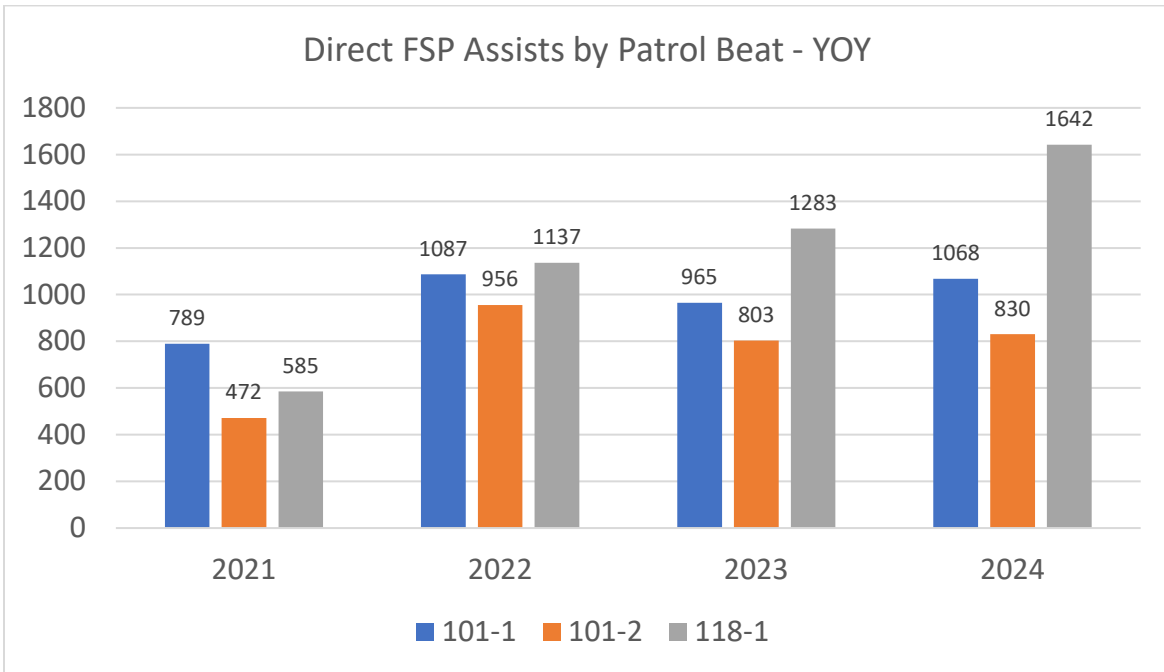


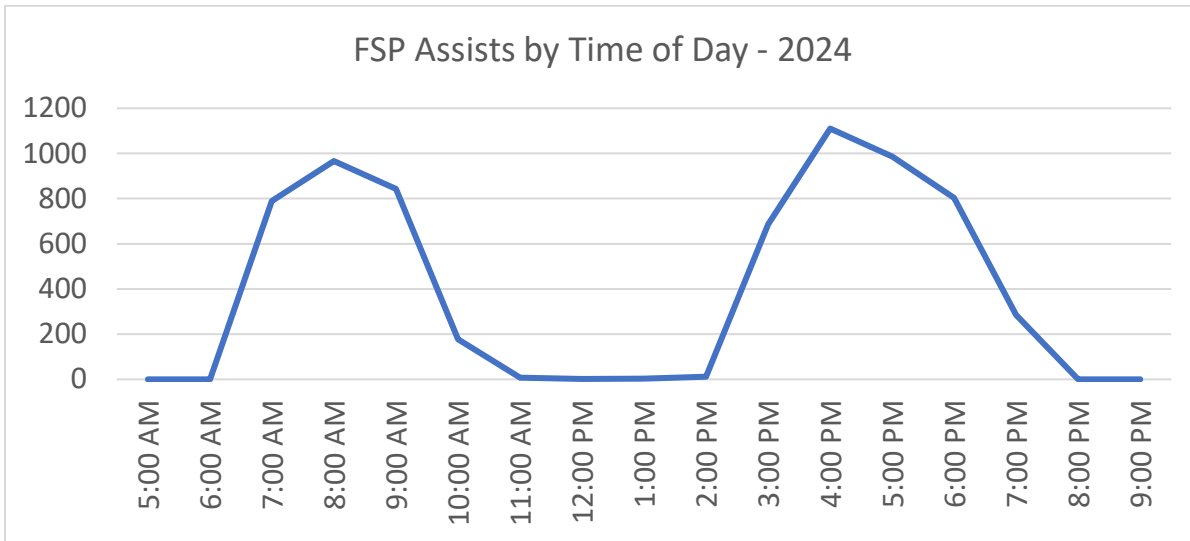
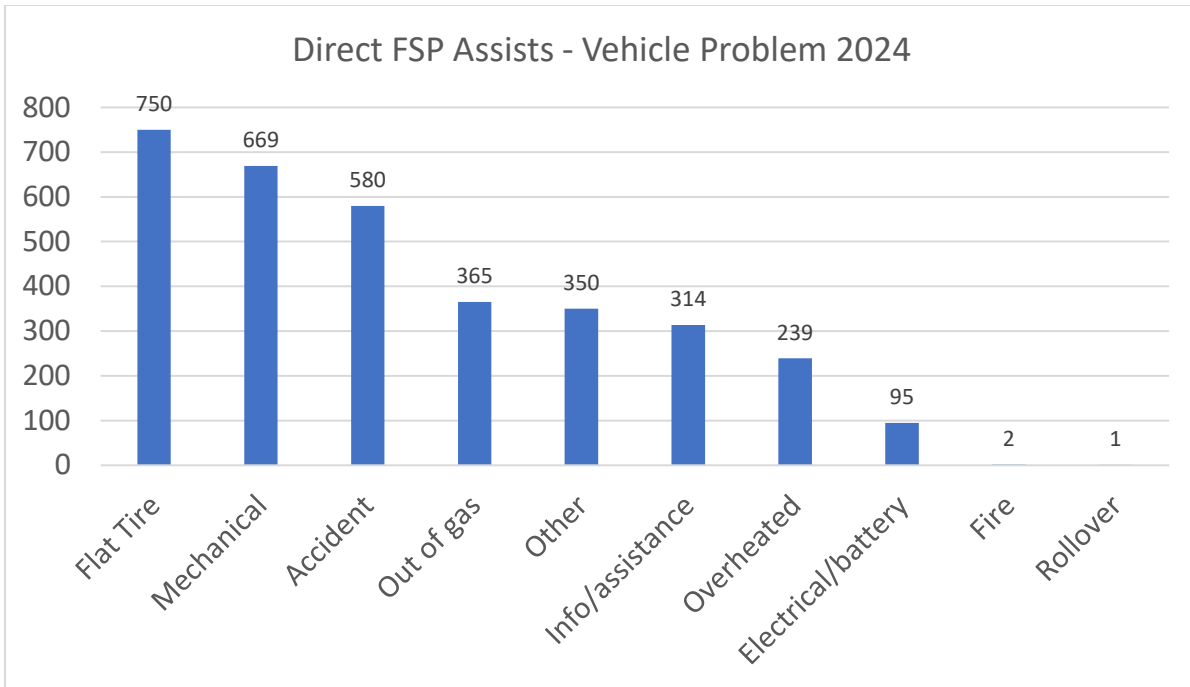
In 2024, the Ventura County Freeway Service Patrol responded to 6,520 motorists stopped in the lanes, shoulders, medians, and ramps of the U.S. 101 and SR 118. This equates to 3.6 FSP responses on the highway for every hour of service. Of those motorists approached by an FSP Driver, 3,365 were provided with direct assistance to restart their vehicle or towed to a safe location off the highway. Of the motorists who did not receive service, 2,730 were found using a mobile phone, resting/sleeping, or engaged in other activities and encouraged by FSP drivers to clear the highway shoulder. In addition to motorist assistance, FSP drivers cleared dangerous debris from highway lanes on 249 occasions and responded to 580 accident/collision events. According to the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Statewide Freeway Service Patrol Annual Report, the three patrol Beats in Ventura County performed at a 3 to 1 benefit (delay, fuel, and emissions savings) to cost (FSP hourly rate) ratio.

FSP Assist Hotspots 2024

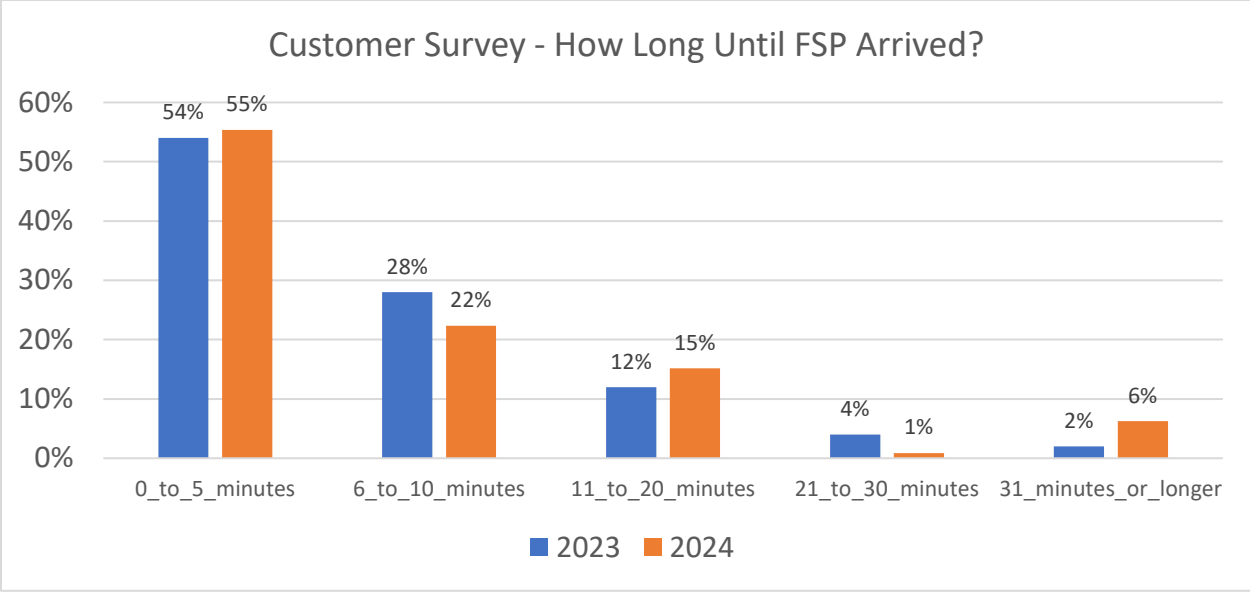


The most common service provided by FSP in 2024 was fixing flat tires, accounting for 25% of direct assists. The busiest time of day for FSP was the afternoon split shift between 3:00pm and 4:00pm, accounting for 20% of assists. Of the motorists assisted, FSP drivers were able to quickly restart vehicles in 79% of cases and approximately 18% were towed to a safe location.





FSP drivers provide assisted motorists with a unique survey ID and brochure with a survey link. During FSP's fourth year of operations, 105 motorists responded to the program's Customer Assist Survey. Public feedback from the survey has rated the service as "Excellent" in 100% of cases. About 13% of motorists surveyed reported that they were aware of Ventura County FSP prior to receiving assistance from the program. Due to the program's model of continuous patrolling, FSP trucks were able to reach stranded motorists in under 5 minutes in 55% of reported cases and under 10 minutes in 77% of reported cases. The auto insurance industry cites a 21-minute average response time for AAA roadside assistance. According to the Transportation Disruption and Disaster Statistics (TDADS), 16% of congestion on Ventura County highways is non-recurrent incident related, making rapid response to disabled vehicles, collisions, and debris a significant mitigation of highway delay.



The tow contractor services contract awarded to Platinum Tow & Transport will enter the second option year as of March 2025, and VC SAFE will need to begin re-procurement of tow services soon after. SAFE agencies with recent FSP procurements have reported significant cost increases to contractor rates due to premium increases in the auto insurance market. At this time, staff is confident Ventura County SAFE will be able to maintain existing levels of FSP service into the future, however, service expansion and/or extra work may require a reevaluation of Motorist Aid budget priorities in the future.

INCIDENT RESPONDER GRANT PROGRAM DISCUSSION:

Incident Responder Grant Program awards over the three prior rounds total approximately \$2.7 million in grant assistance provided to incident responder agencies for equipment deployed across the County to improve traffic control, reduce emergency response times, enhance traffic enforcement and aid collision investigations.

In May 2024, the SAFE board approved the IRGP Round 3 funding allocation and awarded funds were distributed July 1, 2024. Round 3 funds included emergency vehicle traffic signal preemption systems, traffic enforcement equipment and collision investigation equipment. IRGP funds are required to be spent down by awarded agencies within two years and annual grant reporting requirements are due June 30th each year.

Santa Paula Police Department has been granted an extension by the Executive Director allowing the agency to combine remaining Round 2 and Round 3 funds to complete the planned purchase of an incident response vehicle proposed in Round 2. Due to complications with the State’s accounting regulations, the California Highway Patrol was unfortunately required to return funds to VCTC awarded in Round 2.

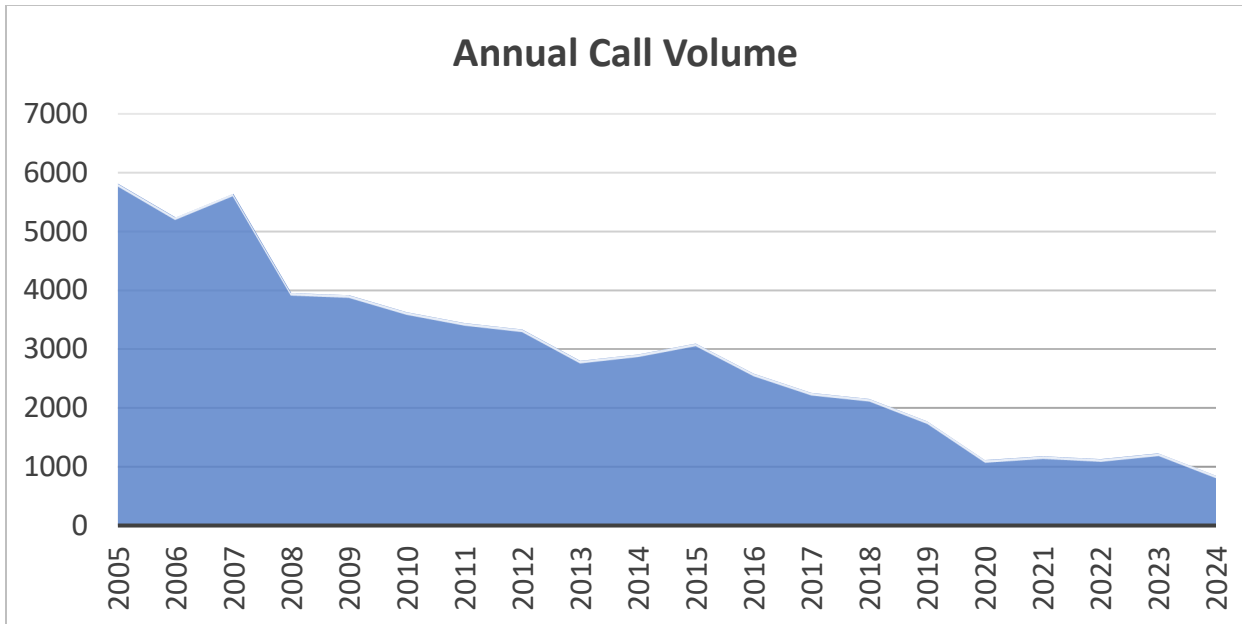
VCTC issues calls for IRGP proposal rounds as allowed by the SAFE Fund Balance, typically biennially. SAFE Staff are tentatively planning to return to the Board for the release of Round 4 incident responder grants in the 2026 calendar year.

Incident Responder Grant Program Rounds 1-3 Awards

Entity	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	TOTAL	Status	Total
Camarillo PD	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	Active	\$ 855,852
CHP	\$ -	\$ 259,000	\$ -	\$ 259,000	Extension	\$ 119,000
Fillmore FD	\$ 45,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 45,000	Closed Out	\$ 1,527,519
Oxnard FD	\$ -	\$ 317,000	\$ 117,000	\$ 434,000	Returned	\$ 259,000
Oxnard PD	\$ 50,000	\$ 148,000	\$ 122,852	\$ 320,852		
Port Hueneme PD	\$ -	\$ 18,000	\$ 31,000	\$ 49,000		
Santa Paula PD	\$ -	\$ 119,000	\$ 85,000	\$ 204,000		
Ventura County Fire District	\$ 55,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,000		
Ventura County Sheriffs Office	\$ 318,000	\$ 139,000	\$ -	\$ 457,000		
Ventura PD	\$ 437,519	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 437,519		
TOTAL	\$905,519	\$1,000,000	\$855,852	\$2,761,371		

CALL BOX DISCUSSION:

The Ventura County SAFE maintains a system of approximately 427 emergency roadside call boxes on the County’s freeway and highway network. Long-run annual call box volumes have followed a downward trend with the proliferation of cell phones and improved coverage areas throughout the County. The call box statistics reflect a significant decline since the early 2000’s, and 142 call boxes were permanently removed in 2017. The total number of calls for assistance in 2004 was 6,945. In Fiscal Year 2022/2023, the total number of calls for roadway assistance was 1,224, averaging more than 100 calls per month. However, in Fiscal Year 2023/2024, the total number of calls for roadway assistance was 878, an average of 73 calls per month, a substantial reduction year-over-year in volume of motorist calls for aid (approximately 29% fewer calls).



Annual Calls per Call Box by Highway – 5 Year Average

HIGHWAY	Calls / call box / year	Percent of Call boxes
HWY 001	4.77	10%
HWY 150	3.47	5%
HWY 101	2.76	30%
HWY 034	2.40	1%
HWY 118	2.29	15%
HWY 033	2.08	6%
HWY 023	1.63	10%
HWY 126	1.45	24%

In June 2020, VCTC approved a three-year contract with a two-year option with CASE Emergency Systems to maintain the call box system. The contract included both preventive and corrective maintenance. In February 2023, VC SAFE staff was informed that CASE, VCTC’s long time provider of call box maintenance services and the patent owner for the proprietary call box technology deployed statewide, was acquired by Knightscope, Inc. In June 2023, VCTC opted to exercise an option to extend the contract for call box maintenance services with Knightscope through June 30, 2025.

Under the contract VCTC signed with CASE Systems, the contractor is compensated a monthly flat fee of \$40.81 per active call box for preventive and corrective maintenance of call boxes, temporary removals and reinstallations, repair of knockdowns and vandalism. Under the contract, every call box is supposed to receive two (2) annual preventative maintenance visits. Preventative maintenance reduces the likelihood of service failure and helps maintain components in need of service which cannot be monitored remotely, such as graffiti removal or cleaning of the solar panel.

In February 2024, VCTC was notified that the dedicated call box maintenance position for Ventura County had been eliminated. Knightscope proceeded to implement a competitive subcontractor model in which two subcontracting companies would compete for maintenance tickets when corrective maintenance was required. Knightscope’s new model left Ventura County without a dedicated maintenance technician and did not contemplate preventive maintenance obligations. To date, VC SAFE’s monthly call box reports, produced by VCTC’s call box analytics consultant (TeleTranTek, or T-Cubed) show that Knightscope has not completed preventive maintenance since 2023.

Staff met with Knightscope management to discuss the lack of preventive maintenance work being completed. Staff was told by Knightscope management that they believed their new ‘smart’ technology would reduce the need for maintenance through better monitoring. Through the discussion, Knightscope management communicated their intention to cut out call box preventive maintenance altogether. Knightscope management also relayed to staff that the company was losing money on call box contracts and that if maintenance fees were not increased or services reduced the company would likely shutter the call box division.

Several Motorist Aid agencies have reported similar frustrations with Knightscope: no preventative maintenance, termination of technician positions, contract issues, lack of communication, etc. A few SAFE agencies are attempting to identify alternative maintenance providers and call box technology. Given the technical and contractual issues involved, other agencies have begun the process of sunsetting their systems or continuing to phase out through “right-sizing”.

In December 2024, San Bernadino County elected to terminate their call box maintenance contract with Knightscope for cause citing deficiencies in contract performance and sunset their program. Santa Barabara County has largely removed their system, however, continues to maintain call boxes in key areas with poor cell phone coverage. Caltrans’ SAFE liaison has expressed a strong preference to the regional SAFEs to phase out the call box programs across the state, citing the long-run reduction of call box usage. In addition, there is concern that risks associated with maintaining the callbox system may outweigh the benefits of a potentially less reliable system as preventive maintenance is not completed.

Knightscope has approached other SAFE agencies with request letters for cost increase discussions; Capitol Valley Regional SAFE received a proposed cost increase which would amount to nearly 400%. The aging of the call box hardware technology is another concern expressed by the SAFE agencies. If the SAFE’s accepted proposed maintenance cost increases, it remains uncertain if Knightscope will be able to source the parts to keep the aging CASE hardware running in the long run. To date, Knightscope has not presented the SAFEs with plans to improve the call box technology or deploy hardware alternatives

VC SAFE Staff requested that VCTC’s management support contractor (T-Cubed) identify and analyze alternatives to the patented call box technology owned by Knightscope. Their findings were provided to Staff in a memo and are summarized below:

No highway call boxes, other than the current Knightscope K1, meet all the requirements of the CHP/Caltrans Call Box and Motorist Aid Guidelines, in particular those requirements related to dual voice capability, an available telephone handset and inclusion of a TTY device for ADA compatibility.

No new technologies for accessing roadside assistance were found in the literature. The primary sources for roadside assistance other than call boxes are Freeway Service Patrols and manufacturers’ in-vehicle non-emergency and emergency communications. Although not currently available for large-scale implementation, Intelligent Transportation System roadside-to-vehicle communication technology may provide new ways to access roadside assistance.

If VC SAFE were to elect to maintain existing service levels, then procurement for a new call box maintenance contractor would need to begin in early calendar year 2025. It is unlikely that such procurement would result in a competitive marketplace, given Knightscope ownership of the patents for the technology internal to the call box operations. If VC SAFE were to begin the process to sunset the call box program, the approximately \$375,000 spent annually to operate and maintain the call boxes could be redirected to expanded Freeway Service Patrol service, additional California Highway Patrol coverage of key areas (such as the Pacific Coast Highway SR-1), or other eligible uses of SAFE funds.

Staff are seeking guidance from the Board on management of the call box program into the future. Statewide, SAFE agencies are pursuing one the following alternatives:

1. Maintain Existing Service Levels
2. Phase Out Through Incremental Reductions or “Right-Sizing”
3. Prepare System Removal Plan for Caltrans to Sunset the Call Box Program

Should VC SAFE prefer to maintain existing service levels, Ventura County SAFE will likely be required to accept a significant cost increase and/or reduced maintenance service. Through “Right-Sizing”, SAFE’s can remove up to 25% of existing call boxes without review from Caltrans. The cost savings from Right-Sizing the system are uncertain since a reduction in call boxes may be offset by a higher contract rate per

call box. To sunset the call box program, the Statewide Motorist Aid guidelines require Staff to submit a removal plan to Caltrans.

Staff will return with an item at an upcoming Commission meeting reflecting the SAFE Board's preferences for final approval.



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