



March 24, 2025

MEMO TO: VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION FINANCE COMMITTEE

**FROM: MARTIN ERICKSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LUPE ACERO, FINANCE DIRECTOR**

SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026 DRAFT BUDGET

RECOMMENDATION:

- Receive the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Draft Budget and Salary Schedule (See Attachment 1 of this item and Appendix C of the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Draft Budget) and approve forwarding the Draft Budget and Salary Schedule to the full Commission.

DISCUSSION:

The Draft Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget is divided into two main sections: the Main Budget and the Program Task Budgets. The Main Budget contains program overviews and projections and is intended to provide a general understanding of VCTC's budgeted activities and programs for the coming fiscal year. The Program Task Budgets contain task level detail of the projects including objectives and accomplishments. This task driven budget is designed to provide fiscal transparency and clarity of VCTC's programs and services to the region.

The Draft Budget continues projects from the prior year as well as starts new activities. At \$154,648,428, the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Draft Budget is \$24,107,216 or 13.5% lower than Fiscal Year 2024/2025. The decrease is a combination of increases and decreases in multiple budgets as detailed later in this item and within the budget document. The largest reductions occur within the Transit Grant Administration budget (-\$14.2 million), the Regional Transit Technology (-\$6.2 million), the Valley Express budget (-2.38 million) and the VCTC Intercity Services budget (-\$2.48 million) while the largest increases occurred within the Santa Paula Branch Line budget (\$2.1 million) and Metrolink Commuter Rail (\$1.3 million) The draft budget contains six programs starting on page 37:

- Transit and Transportation program at \$51,511,253 (Budget pages 38, 65-76)
- Highway program at \$5,972,900 (Budget pages 39, 77-82)
- Rail program at \$41,956,158 (Budget pages 40, 83-90)
- Commuter Assistance program at \$1,078,300 (Budget pages 41, 91-96)
- Planning and Programming program at \$52,390,417 (Budget pages 42, 97-108)
- General Government program at \$1,739,400 (Budget pages 43, 109-115)

Personnel costs for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 are budgeted at \$5,019,500 or 3.3% of the budget, which is an increase of \$440,000 from the previous fiscal year. The draft budget includes twenty-four employees (the same as last year and two part-time intern positions). The wage cost of \$3,388,900 includes approximately \$157,800 pool for merit increases for employees not at the top of their range and \$91,900 for a proposed three percent COLA while the budget is being developed. Benefits account for \$1,604,500 or 1.2% of the Draft Budget. Further information about personnel can be found within the Personnel Section of the budget (Budget pages 26-37).

Below are some of the major changes in the Draft Fiscal Year 2025/2026 budget as compared to last fiscal year. Additional details of these major changes, as well as smaller changes to all budgets, can be found within the individual budget tasks. The major changes that occurred compared to last fiscal year include:

- The Accessibility Services budget decreased by \$318,400 due to lower consultant and travel costs.
- The Regional Transit Technology budget decreased by \$6.2 million as due to the implementation of software and equipment in the current fiscal year.
- The Transit Grant Administration budget decreased by \$14.2 million as pass-through projects were completed. This line item is expected to increase with the final budget when the new pass-through projects to local agencies are added.
- The Valley Express budget decreased by \$2.4 million largely due to the successful implementation of the of the purchase of new buses in the current fiscal year; and expected decreases in contractor costs.
- The VCTC Intercity Service budget decreased by \$2.5 million largely due to the implementation of five new bus purchases and the refurbishment of an additional five buses in the current fiscal year..
- The Highway Project Management budget decreased approximately \$429,500 for the partial completion of consultant work on the U.S. 101 preliminary engineering and environmental documents. Legal services was reduced based on prior experience with this project.
- The Motorist Aid Services budget decreased by \$222,800 due to deferral of a fourth Incident Responder Grant Program round to a future fiscal year.
- The Metrolink Commuter Rail budget increased by \$1.32 million due the station rehabilitation and operation increases.
- The Santa Paula Branch Line budget increased by \$2.1 million for the construction and consultant costs related to the Sespe bridge due to storm damage and broadband deployment offset by an overall reduction in consultant costs.
- The Rideshare budget increased by \$174,100 due to increased consultant services, staff travel and training costs needed to be prepared to assist and educate the community on alternative modes of transportation.
- The Regional Transit Planning budget decreased by \$1.1 million mostly due to the Short-Range Transit Plan expected to be completed by the end of this fiscal year, thus resulting in a reducing in Consultant Services.
- The Transportation Development Act budget had an increase in revenue receipts but a lower carry-in fund balance which resulted in a net decrease of \$493,100 funds passed-through to local agencies.
- The Community Outreach budget increased by \$15,100 for higher staff costs.

- The Management and Administration budget decreased by \$18,700 due to lower consultant service costs related to executive placements and lower hardware/software costs due to a lesser number of expected computer replacements.

The estimated ending Fiscal Year 2025/2026 fund balance (after contingency set aside) is expected to be \$17.4 million. The Commission's available General Fund balance (after reserves) is estimated at \$1,070,524. The other funds are restricted, and the estimated fund balances after reserve are \$736,000 for the Local Transportation Fund, \$10.5 million for the State Transit Assistance fund, \$1.4 million for the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies fund, \$3.6 for the State of Good Repair Fund, \$25,367 for the Santa Paula Branch Line fund, and a zero balance for the VCTC Intercity Services and the Valley Express funds.

It is important to note a few reasons the STA fund balance is at \$10.5 million. First, the STA fund balance is used for on-going cash flow needs when State and Federal grants are delayed as well as cashflow for the Highway 101 study. Also, these funds although not currently budgeted, could be used for nonrecurring capital costs associated with Metrolink capital and rehabilitation expenditures, possible bus purchases for the VCTC Intercity Service or other transit projects benefiting the County.

The Draft Budget is a "work-in-progress" for VCTC as tasks are fine-tuned. Staff will update the final budget with input received from the Commission and new information as it becomes available from local partners such as Metrolink and funding information from the State and Federal governments.

As required by the VCTC Administrative Code, the proposed Draft Fiscal Year 2025/2026 budget is being submitted to the Finance Committee (Chair Judge, Vice-Chair McQueen-Legohn, and Past-Chair LaVere) for review at the March 24, 2025, Finance Committee meeting. The Draft Budget will be discussed and a recommendation from the Finance Committee will be needed. Staff's recommendation is to Receive the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Draft Budget and Salary Schedule (See Attachment 1 of this item and Appendix C of the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Draft Budget) and approve forwarding the Draft Budget and Salary Schedule to the full Commission.

As required by the Administrative Code, a public hearing will be held at the April Commission meeting. The final budget is scheduled for adoption at the Commission's June meeting, at which time a second public hearing will be held pursuant to the VCTC Administrative Code.

The proposed Draft Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget is a balanced budget and is a separate attachment to the agenda. A copy of the Draft Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget is available on the VCTC website at www.goventura.org.

Attachment 1
Ventura County Transportation Commission
Salary Schedule by Department
Fiscal Year 2025/2026
Effective July 1, 2025

Department/Position	FTE	Annual Range Bottom*	Annual Range Top	Non-Exempt Hourly Rate		Exempt vs. Non-Exempt
				Bottom	Top	
ADMINISTRATION						
Executive Director	1.0	250,190	291,033			E
Program Manager, Government and Community Relations	1.0	109,251	169,338			E
Clerk of the Commission/Executive Assistant	1.0	109,251	169,338			E
Receptionist/Secretary	1.0	53,177	77,373	25.57	37.20	NE
ADMINISTRATION SUBTOTAL:	4.0					
FINANCE						
Finance Director	1.0	153,726	238,276			E
Program Manager, Information Technology	1.0	109,251	169,339			E
Program Manager, Accounting	1.0	109,251	169,339			E
Senior Accountant/Analyst	2.0	82,495	120,030	39.66	57.71	NE
FINANCE SUBTOTAL:	5.0					
PLANNING						
Planning and Sustainability Director	1.0	153,726	238,276			E
Program Manager, Transportation Planning	1.0	109,251	169,339			E
Program Manager, Transportation Data and Services	1.0	109,251	169,339			E
Administrative Assistant	0.1	53,177	77,373	25.57	37.20	NE
Intern (Part-time)	0.5			18.50	21.50	NE
PLANNING SUBTOTAL:	3.6					
PROGRAMMING						
Programming Director	1.0	153,726	238,276			E
Program Manager, Programming	2.0	109,251	169,339			E
Administrative Assistant	0.3	53,177	77,373	25.57	37.20	NE
PROGRAMMING SUBTOTAL:	3.3					
TRANSIT						
Public Transit Director	1.0	153,726	238,276			E
Program Manager, Regional Transit Planning	1.0	109,251	169,339			E
Program Manager, Transit Contracts	1.0	109,251	169,339			E
Transit Planner	2.0	82,495	120,030	39.66	57.71	NE
Transit Information Center and Technology Specialist	1.0	53,177	77,373	25.57	37.20	NE
Administrative Assistant	0.6	53,177	77,373	25.57	37.20	NE
Customer Service Representative	2.0	45,936	66,838	22.08	32.13	NE
Intern (Part-time)	0.5			18.50	21.50	NE
TRANSIT SUBTOTAL:	9.1					
TOTAL BUDGETED POSITIONS:	24.9					

VCTC will automatically adjust any wage that does not meet California's minimum wage or local fair-market wage requirements.
Hourly time is based on a 2080 hour year. If more billable hours in a year, then budget would be adjusted accordingly