Ventura County Short Range Transit Plan 2025-2034

Gaps and Opportunities Report

Prepared for:

Ventura County Transportation Commission

April 3, 2025

Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transit service is extensive across Ventura County, despite a constrained funding environment where there is no countywide revenue stream to extend state and federal funds. Every community has at least some fixed-route service, and dial-a-ride programs are widespread.

Riders in Ventura County rate their transit services highly, praising the comfort, driver courtesy, and raising no concerns about safety. The College Ride and Youth Ride Free programs are highlights of a progressive approach to attracting riders among a demographic that would most benefit from transit. Throughout the county, seniors are eligible for dial-a-ride service which helps with mobility in communities that often have newer residential development that is isolated from community centers.

Transit service design and level of investment varies widely by community. Several communities with more dense, walkable environments that would traditionally support effective fixed-route service instead have focused more resources into dial-a-ride programs open to the general public. Microtransit has recently attracted attention in some communities but cities have not yet committed to transitioning fully to only one service, despite there being little incentive to use an hourly and indirect bus route if microtransit is on-demand and direct to the rider's destination.

VCTC Intercity service provides regional connectivity between Ventura County communities and to major employment centers in neighboring Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties, and while all local operations have some connecting routes, schedules and levels of service are not coordinated with the intent to form a regional network.

Across Ventura County is the framework of an excellent transit environment where most residents live a short walk from a convenient local bus route and the benefit of a regional route network that can take them as far away as the next county and back in a day. However, this SRTP shows that compared to 2014, most current transit services are attracting few riders, even setting aside the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be partly explained by reductions and continual tweaking of service among most of the providers throughout 2015-2019. Most providers appear to have been trying to better balance revenue hours with ridership to improve productivity. While this makes sense individually, collectively it appears to have perpetuated substantial decline across most (although not all) services. Although the

total service operated today is not much lower than in 2019, the selective reductions and adjustments over time have likely resulted in a less functional overall network.

Because all services are directed independently by each city or agency, regional ridership is not seen as a focus for local routes; likewise, VCTC Intercity riders probably predominantly do not rely on local routes either. However, successful transit depends on not only regular riders, but also on trips made by many occasional riders that are harder to quantify and capture through surveys and engagement.

This is not to say that the only solution to attract more riders is to offer regional service. In fact, several local routes in several different communities are also not attracting many riders despite serving local origins and destinations. The SRTP identifies several cases in which route design and schedules are clearly not aligned to community need. This report identifies potential to improve local services that will attract more local riders while also forming a more functional regional network, which will also attract more riders on *both* services.

All of these circumstances can be improved through adjustments to routes, schedules, and allocation of resources between demand-response and fixed-route services. There is no evidence that any routes or services should be outright cancelled despite several that carry very few riders. Nor does this report find that significant increases in routes or service hours are necessary to attract more riders in the short term, although a greater investment in transit service would certainly be ideal. Much of the identified opportunity to attract more riders should be achievable through shifting existing resources.

This report discusses the detailed conditions by community area and then concludes that coordinating improvements between the local and regional services would benefit all, without taking anything away from either. And, given how low ridership remains on some services, there should be no argument in favor of maintaining status quo. The following final Short Range Transit Plan report will develop the specific route and service concepts that follow from the ideas presented here.

2. INTRODUCTION

The **Short-Range Transit Plan for 2025-2034** (SRTP) is a comprehensive assessment of public transportation programs offered in Ventura County that identifies the transit needs of residents and employees throughout the region, evaluates how the transit system currently aligns with those needs, and recommends service improvement strategies over the next ten years. This Existing Conditions document covers the first two of these topics.

Eight distinct operations are examined in depth: Camarillo Area Transit, Kanan Shuttle, Moorpark City Transit, Simi Valley Transit, Thousand Oaks Transit, Valley Express, VCTC Intercity, and the East County Transit Alliance (ECTA). Gold Coast Transit District conducted a separate SRTP which is summarized in this document. Ojai Trolley is not fully covered by this SRTP due to limited resources at the city to support the analysis.

The report is structured as follows:

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

The **Countywide Overview** provides context on the demographics, travel patterns, and transit service (including governance and organizational structure) in the County.

The **Community-Specific Chapters** delve into each community in depth following three main topics:

- The **market assessment** describes the community characteristics that contribute to transit ridership opportunity and demand including demographic and economic data, the built environment, and the travel patterns within the community and among its neighbors.
- The **service evaluation** describes the fixed route and demand response services operating within each community. An operational and financial analysis is provided.
- The **gaps and opportunities** section highlights takeaways from the market assessment and service evaluation that will guide the recommendations offered in the SRTP.

Each chapter is focused on a distinct geographic area within Ventura County except VCTC Intercity and ECTA, which are regional services and are discussed as such. The components of each community-specific chapter are described in more depth below.

Existing Conditions Methodology

Each community-specific chapter will include three main components: a market assessment, a service evaluation, and gaps and opportunities for the community's transit service. The following few pages describe the basics of what data this SRTP used to assess potential for transit. If you are familiar with transportation planning concepts, you may skip this section and proceed to Chapter 3.

MARKET ASSESSMENT

A transit market assessment uses demographic and economic data, travel data, and maps to investigate where transit service might best support people's travel needs. Transit can be valuable for many people for many different trip purposes such as commuting to work or school, accessing medical services, or running errands. Particularly in Ventura County, where many people live and work in different locations, local transit should address trip purposes beyond commuting. A well-designed transit service links a wide variety of people and places together efficiently along key corridors with concentrations of diverse land uses (e.g. housing, jobs, commerce, entertainment). The denser these conditions are, the more frequent transit should be.

A market assessment considers two groups more specifically: **people who are less likely to drive** (students and seniors), and **people who could most benefit from affordable transportation** (low-income and zero-car or single-car households). Most transit agencies must determine their preferred balance between providing essential coverage across the entire service area and focusing transit resources in fewer places where they can be the most frequent and benefit a large market segment.

This chapter evaluates the demographics, employment generators, and travel patterns for each community within Ventura County to identify transit gaps and opportunities. The supporting analyses draw on data from a variety of sources, including:

- **2022-2023 Streetlight data** to analyze the origins and destinations for vehicle trips within and between each community. Streetlight data uses connected vehicle data sourced from car models that support location tracking via GPS to provide anonymized origin-destination data. This report used data estimating average weekday travel at the block group level.
- **Replica's** activity-based travel demand model data to supplement Streetlight data in capturing origin-destination travel patterns across the county. Replica combines multiple datasets including Census, location data, travel surveys, and customer activity data to represent activities and travel behavior. This analysis uses Spring 2024 data.

- **2021 U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data** to determine the total jobs per square mile for census blocks within the communities and the breakdown of jobs by sector for each community. This dataset provides publicly available anonymized summaries of the locations of employers and employees based on data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages and Unemployment Insurance. This report primarily used the LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) to review employment data by Census block. This analysis aggregated the job sectors into the following categories:
    - Professional Services
    - Service Industry
    - Industrial/Logistics
    - Agriculture/Mining
- **2021 U.S. Census OnTheMap data** to analyze the number of employed residents working elsewhere, working and living in the same community, or workers in the community who live elsewhere. U.S. Census OntheMap data is compiled from the LEHD LODES dataset described above and provides inflow and outflow diagrams for residents and workers in U.S. cities.
- **Cities' Annual Financial Reports** (CAFR) to identify top employers for each community.
- **2021 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates** to develop the **transit propensity index**, which combines population density, job density, senior and youth populations, and car-light and low-income households to create a score that indicates how likely a census block group is to have transit riders.

In addition, the built environment of each community was characterized to consider factors that influence how many places and different types of places people have access to nearby. Older (pre-WWII) development typically features residential and commercial land uses in walking distance to one another, while development since the 1950s often features distinct land uses separated by larger roads and fewer destinations within a short walk of one another.

SERVICE EVALUATION

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

FIXED ROUTE AND DEMAND RESPONSE TOPICS

Each community-specific chapter describes the operations of the fixed route and demand response service, touching on ridership, service productivity, and operational costs. The geographical coverage of each system is described, including transfer locations to neighboring or regional service.

TERMINOLOGY

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

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

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

ADA Paratransit is required by federal law to be offered within at least ¾ mile of any fixed route stop at comparable times of day for passengers whose disability prevents them from using the fixed route bus for any portion of the desired trip. For the purpose of this report, paratransit is only used to describe the federally-required complement to fixed route, although others may use the word paratransit to broadly refer to all demand-response services.

Many communities also offer **Dial-a-Ride** programs which can have broader eligibility but otherwise are otherwise similar point-to-point services. Dial-a-Ride (DAR) programs must be accessible, but are not necessarily limited only to people with disabilities.

Microtransit is effectively the same type of service as Dial-a-Ride, but riders can request a trip on their smartphone (or by calling the agency), allowing the rider to book a trip closer to their desired travel time. Demand response programs traditionally require riders to request their trips at least a day in advance. The software and hardware that powers microtransit allows for dynamic dispatching and serving trip requests essentially "on demand." It can be incorporated into traditional DAR and even paratransit programs, and represents a recent and evolving innovation.

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

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

Revenue hours and miles are the hours and mileage each day that service is available to the public for passenger pick up and drop off. **Transit productivity** is measured by dividing the average daily number of passenger boardings by the revenue hours operated. Passengers per revenue mile is also often reported, but this statistic is more useful in urban environments. Buses driving that are not in passenger (revenue) service are "deadheading". Buses deadhead between the garage and the first or last stop of the day, or sometimes if the service is operated only in one direction at certain times of day. Generally, deadhead hours and miles should be minimized where feasible.

ON-BOARD SURVEY

Rider surveys were distributed on-board buses across most of the County except Gold Coast Transit and Ojai Trolley buses in spring 2024. Surveys were distributed in English, Spanish, and Mandarin and there was a total of 753 completed surveys. Results of this survey are provided when a sufficient number of responses were received for a given agency.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

Key findings from the market assessment and service evaluation are highlighted in this section. These findings and observations inform the service recommendations in the SRTP.

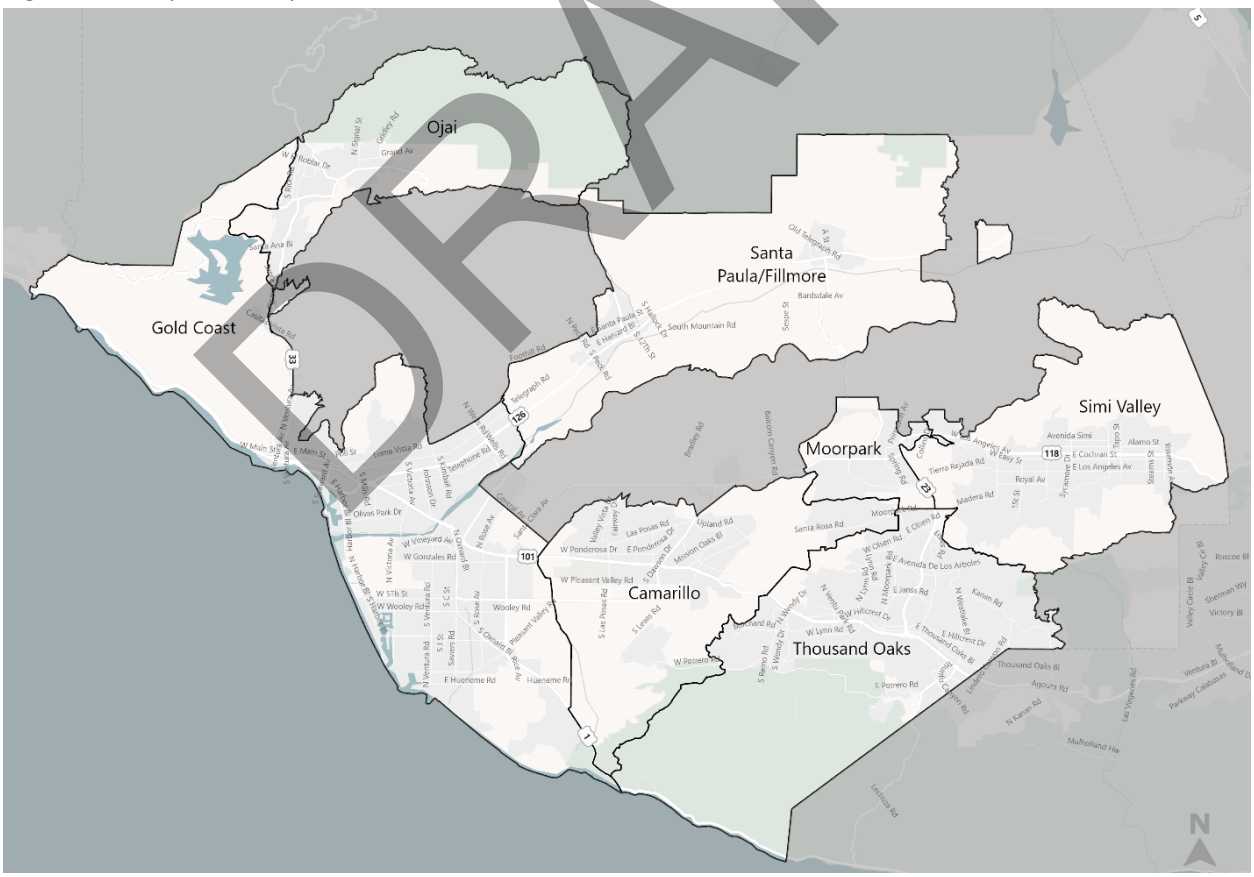
Conventions used in this report

The community-specific chapters of this report are each focused on a sub-area of the overall study area, which was limited to the developed areas of Ventura County. These chapters focus primarily on local circulation within each sub-area and are delineated based on service provider. Table 1 defines the sub-areas and Figure 1 shows their extents.

Table 1: Sub-Area Definitions

Sub-Area	Service Provider	Communities Served
Camarillo	Camarillo Area Transit	Camarillo
Gold Coast	Gold Coast Transit District	Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Saticoy, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Oakview, Ojai
Moorpark	Moorpark City Transit	Moorpark, Ventura Harbor (summer route)
Ojai	Ojai Trolley	Ojai
Simi Valley	Simi Valley Transit	Simi Valley, Chatsworth
Thousand Oaks	Thousand Oaks Transit	Thousand Oaks, Malibu (summer route), Ventura Harbor (summer route)
Santa Paula/Fillmore	Valley Express	Fillmore, Santa Paula, Piru
Countywide	Ventura County Transportation Commission	Camarillo, Carpinteria, Fillmore, Goleta, Moorpark, Newbury Park, Ojai, Oxnard, Santa Barbara, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Ventura

Figure 1: Study Area Map



This report relies on some additional conventions:

All agency data (such as ridership and financial data) were provided by the agencies and represent a snapshot of service as of 2024. Other data sources are noted as applicable.

Walkability is generally used to refer to the ability for people to reach nearby destinations whether on foot or through the use of personal mobility assistance devices like a wheelchair. Walkability is used rather than "accessibility" to help distinguish when the report is discussing required access for people with disabilities, which is an important topic specific to public transit vehicles and services.

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

Gold Coast Transit District initiated its own SRTP in 2023. Their findings and recommendations, when available, are incorporated in this report without additional analysis.

3. SUMMARY OF RELATED PLANS

Analysis of Ventura County Transit Comprehensive Plans

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key Takeaways

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

A common theme in plans developed before the COVID-19 pandemic is the improvement of bus service schedules and service consistency. Since finalization of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit regulations, plans placed a greater focus on emission reduction and prioritizing the transition to lower-emission vehicle fleets. Infrastructure enhancements, particularly for bicycles and pedestrians, are another recurring strategy, coinciding with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which provides substantial funding for a wide range of transportation infrastructure projects, including active transportation infrastructure and Complete Streets initiatives.

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

The development of mobility hubs to improve network integration and connectivity is also frequently mentioned, underscoring the importance of central nodes for efficient transit operations. Alongside these efforts, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies are included in several plans, aiming to optimize the use of transit resources and reduce congestion through measures such as incentivizing off-peak travel. Finally, many plans emphasize the need for robust performance tracking and goal-setting mechanisms, ensuring that strategies are effectively implemented and continuously improved upon.

Table 2: Strategy Matrix

	Transition to a lower-emission vehicle fleet (electric, hybrid)	Implement Complete Streets principles to enhance the safety of vulnerable road users	Optimize transit routes to increase connectivity and efficiency	Consolidate transit services and/or routes	Improved transit service schedule consistency and reliability	Enable the execution of transit-oriented development initiatives	Pilot and Implement a Reduced Fare Program	Enhance infra-structure for bicycles and pedestrians	Develop a mobility hub to improve network integration	Implement TDM strategies	Track goals and implement performance measures
VCTC Intercity Five-Year Service Plan (2015)				■	■				■		
Ventura County Short Range Transit Plan (2015)					■			■	■		
Simi Valley Transit Short Range Transit Plan (2017)					■						■
VCTC Communities Connected (2020)										■	■
VCTC Triennial Performance Audit (2020-2022)											■
VCTC Transit Asset Management Plan (2022)	■										
VCTC Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan (2022)							■				
VCTC Strategic Plan (2023)	■	■	■				■	■			■
Ventura County Transit Integration & Efficiency Study (2023)	■			■							■
Ventura County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2023)	■	■				■		■			
Ventura County CEQA Vehicle Miles Traveled Adaptive Mitigation Program (2023)	■		■			■	■	■		■	
VCTC Intercity Five-Year Service Plan (2015)				■	■				■		
Ventura County Short Range Transit Plan (2015)					■			■	■		

4. COUNTYWIDE OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the demographics, travel market, and existing service in Ventura County.

Ventura County

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

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

Table 3: Ventura County Demographics

Ventura County	2015	2021
Residential population	**840,833**	**845,255**
Senior citizens (ages 65+)	110,084 (13%)	132,487 (16%)
Youth (ages 10-17)	96,502 (11%)	93,540 (11%)
Persons with Disabilities	85,878 (10%)	92,203 (11%)
Land Area	1,866 square miles	1,866 square miles
Residents Per Square Mile	451	453
Persons Below Poverty Level	80,854 (10%)	71,418 (8%)
White Population	662,754 (79%)	592,773 (70%)
Black Population	15,063 (2%)	15,486 (2%)
Asian Population	59,508 (7%)	61,322 (7%)
Hispanic Population	349,799 (42%)	366,211 (43%)
Educational Attainment (ages 25+)		
Less than High School Degree	92,900 (17%)	82,625 (14%)
High School graduate or higher	457,867 (83%)	492,160 (86%)

[1] 2021 5-year ACS estimates; 2021 LEHD LODES.

Ventura County	2015	2021
Bachelor's degree or higher	174,683 (32%)	195,611 (34%)
Language Spoken at Home (ages 5+)		
Speak only English	484,117 (62%)	497,124 (62%)
Speak Spanish	239,140 (30%)	237,361 (30%)
Speak other languages	63,368 (8%)	63,178 (8%)
Households	**268,969**	**274,471**
Persons Per Household	3.1	3.1
Low-income individuals	80,854 (10%)	74,418 (8.6%)
Car-light households[1]	52,991 (20%)	40,292 (15%)
Zero-vehicle Households	12,503 (5%)	11,610 (4%)
Rental Households	96,360 (36%)	100,077 (36%)
Jobs	**304,532**	**298,476**
Mean Travel Time	**25.8 minutes**	**26 minutes**
Means of Transportation to Work		
Drove Alone	77.1%	76.1%
Carpooled	12.6%	9.5%
Public Transportation	1.3%	0.8%
Walked	1.9%	1.6%
Biked	0.7%	0.4%
Worked from Home	6%	10.7%
Median Household Income	**$77,348**	**$94,167**

Note: [1]Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015 & 2021.; "Workplace Area Characteristics," LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2015 & 2021.

The Post-Pandemic Travel Market

The COVID-19 pandemic measurably altered some travel patterns for the long-term (particularly work travel for people who previously had office-based jobs). The most significant change in Ventura County commute patterns between 2015 when the previous SRTP was completed and 2021 was the increase in the number of residents who worked from home, which grew by nearly 5%. As a result, all other commute modes saw a drop in percentage points, with the largest declines occurring in the drove alone and carpooled mode choices. Although more people work from home post-pandemic, car ownership has increased compared to 2015. The share of car-light households in the County—defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle—decreased by 5% between 2015 and 2021.

Nevertheless, travel still fundamentally follows a similar framework as it always has. First, based on an analysis of Streetlight origin-destination data **there is almost always more travel activity within a given city than there are trips to another**. This is because people usually go to school, buy groceries, go out for dinner, get their haircut, and carry out other activities locally. This trend is particularly true in Ventura County where most cities east of Oxnard and Ventura are relatively separate from one another. Secondly, although people often think of commuting as being one of the most important markets for transit to serve, **work trips usually make up no more than a quarter of a given individual's travel**[2]. Transit can successfully serve work trips, but most agencies have seen a substantial decline from office workers who now work from home at least a few days a week.

Across all communities in Ventura County:

- **Over half of the vehicle trips in every community start and end in the community.** The percentage of local trips ranges from 62 to 90 percent across the communities[3].
- **A community's next highest trip destination is typically its neighboring communities**.[4]
- **Overall, most of the areas identified with the highest transit propensity scores are served by at least one transit stop.**[5] However, there are some areas of significant travel within communities that are underserved or not served at all, like the communities along Las Posas Road in Camarillo and Madera Road in southwestern Simi Valley.
- **In every community, over 75 percent of employed residents commute to work outside of their home community**[6] (in other words, fewer than 25% of residents in Ventura County live and work in the same place). Generally, the communities with more jobs available, like Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, and Simi Valley, have a lower percentage of their employed

[2] U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, "Summary of Travel Trends: 2022 National Household Travel Survey," 2024.
[3] Streetlight Data, 2022.
[4] Streetlight Data, 2022.
[5] Fehr & Peers, Transit Propensity Index.
[6] US Census OntheMap, 2021.

residents leaving for employment elsewhere, and vice versa for communities with fewer jobs.

- In most communities, **around half of the areas with the highest job density are served by at least one transit stop**.[7] The top employers in most communities are often located along major arterial roads or regional connector roads like state highways. However, **agriculture, industrial, and manufacturing jobs in communities like Camarillo, Santa Paula, and Moorpark are located further from main roads and are often not served by transit**.

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

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

[7] Fehr & Peers, Job Density.

Transit Service Overview

There are ten distinctly branded transit services operating primarily within the county, nine of which offer fixed route service, while ECTA is a subregional intercity Dial-a-Ride service operated through a memorandum of understanding between the cities of Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks. The fixed route services are detailed in Table 4.

Collectively, there is local bus service coverage within a quarter mile of approximately 60 percent of Ventura County residents. Aside from VCTC Intercity, most of the operators provide local circulation within developed urban and suburban areas. VCTC Intercity routes connect cities within the County, as well as neighboring regions. VCTC Intercity also makes limited stops within each community, supplementing the transit service provided by local circulators. More rural areas of the County generally do not have bus service within walking distance.

Besides the local transit service providers, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) operates regional bus service into Thousand Oaks, and the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation operates Commuter Express services into Thousand Oaks as well. VCTC Intercity services provide connections to communities within Los Angeles County, including Chatsworth, Agoura Hills, Westlake Village, and Woodland Hills, and within Santa Barbara County, including Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, and Goleta. Simi Valley operates a bus route into Chatsworth in Los Angeles, and the Kanan Shuttle operates partly within Agoura Hills in Los Angeles County as well. Metrolink and Amtrak provide intercity and regional rail service, which is described in more detail below.

FIXED-ROUTE BUS SERVICE

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

Table 4: Fixed-Route Bus Services

Service Provider	Unique Routes	Service Area		Communities Served
		Area[1] (square miles)	Service Population[2]	
Camarillo Area Transit	2	20	27,000	Camarillo
Gold Coast Transit District	17	77	329,100	Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Saticoy, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Oakview, Ojai
Kanan Shuttle	1	4	12,200	Oak Park, Agoura Hills
Moorpark City Transit	2	12	28,600	Moorpark
Ojai Trolley	1	4	13,200	Ojai
Simi Valley Transit	3	50	90,000	Simi Valley, Chatsworth
Thousand Oaks Transit	6	167	72,500	Thousand Oaks, Malibu (summer route)
Valley Express	7	121	53,000	Fillmore, Santa Paula, Piru, Moorpark
VCTC Intercity	18	28	135,100	Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Woodland Hills (Los Angeles), Fillmore, Santa Paula, Saticoy, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Somis, Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Goleta, UCSB, CSU Channel Islands

Notes:
[1] Area reflects the service area from each agency's NTD 2023 Agency Profile except for Kanan Shuttle and Valley Express, for which agency profiles were not available. The service areas for these transit services were estimated via GIS analysis.
[2] Estimated residential population plus jobs within a quarter mile of a bus stop, using Remix.

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

Table 5: Fixed-Route Operational Characteristics for FY23

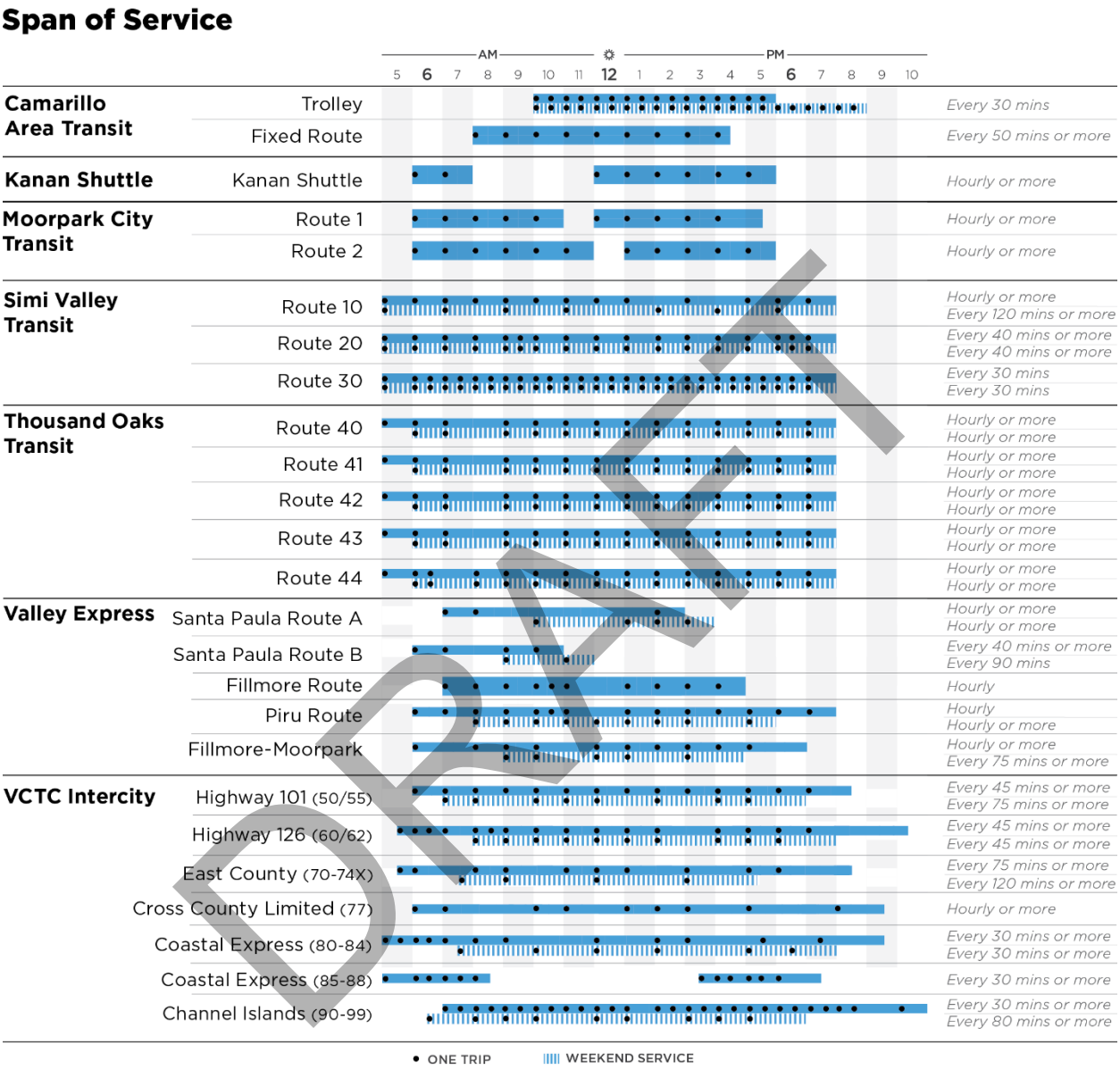
Service Provider	Annual Ridership	Annual Revenue Hours	Average Boardings per Revenue Hour
Camarillo Area Transit	24,550	5,280	4.6
Gold Coast Transit District[1]	2.96 million	186,565	15.9
Kanan Shuttle	35,625	2,604	13.7
Moorpark City Transit	25,758	5,804	4.4
Ojai Trolley	36,691	4,316	8.5
Simi Valley Transit	133,634	26,993	5.0
Thousand Oaks	152,351	21,823	7.0
Valley Express	37,193	6,489	5.7
VCTC Intercity	365,900	59,221	6.2

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

Nearly all bus routes in Ventura County outside of Oxnard and Ventura end before 8:00 p.m. Saturday service is offered only by Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Ojai, and on select Valley Express and VCTC Intercity routes. Sunday service is offered only by Ojai and on select Valley Express and VCTC Intercity routes. The service spans of the different operators are summarized in Figure 2.

In general since the pandemic, operators across the region have struggled with lower ridership but stable or increased operating costs, leading to operating costs per revenue hour that continue to trend upwards.

Figure 2: Span of Service by Transit Agency



ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY

Most respondents to the on-board service survey were satisfied with their overall experience of bus service in Ventura County. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.56 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus drivers and the safety on board the bus. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were bus schedules being readily available and the need to transfer on their trip. Even the areas with the lowest score had an average rating higher than 3, indicating general satisfaction with the bus service overall.

Respondents were also asked to state their preference for future service changes. Most of the respondents indicated that there was nothing preventing them from using the bus more often. Some respondents indicated that they were not able to use the bus more often because it did not travel when or where they need it. A majority of respondents preferred increasing the frequency of service over creating new or extended routes.

DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICE

Most communities offer Dial-a-Ride (DAR) programs within the city boundary. ADA Complementary Paratransit service is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act within ¾ mile of any fixed route, and in most communities these trips are served by the DAR program. All communities have chosen to expand availability of paratransit to seniors regardless of disability, although this is not required by law. Several communities also choose to extend the DAR program to the general public. ECTA represents a special agreement between Moorpark, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks to offer a premium intercity DAR service that backfills, to some degree, the lack of fixed-route bus service between these neighboring cities.

Microtransit is an emerging service type which pairs traditional DAR operation with the on-demand scheduling capability of modern technology to dynamically assign trips to vehicles as rider requests come in. Microtransit typically serves only local trips and often uses smaller mini-van style vehicles. Both GCTD and Moorpark have launched microtransit services, attracting the attention of other communities who are considering their own approach in the future.

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

More information on the Demand Response services in the County is provided in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6: Demand Response Services

Service Provider	Demand Response Offerings	Service Area (sq mi)	Service Population	Communities Served
Agoura Hills	ADA Paratransit/Senior Dial-A-Ride	24.1	45,419	Agoura Hills, Malibu Lake, and for increased fare, Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks, and Oak Park
Camarillo Area Transit	General Dial-A-Ride (no eligibility requirements)	23.2	83,436	Camarillo
East County Transit Alliance	ADA Paratransit /Senior Dial-A-Ride	146.7	324,682	Moorpark, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park, Santa Susana Knolls *Extended service area: Camarillo, Somis, CSUCI, Agoura Hills*
Gold Coast Transit District	ADA Paratransit/Senior Dial-A-Ride, GO ACCESS Zones, Late Night Safe Rides	168.7	352,324	Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Saticoy, El Rio, Nyeland Acres, Oakview, Ojai
Kanan Shuttle	None	-	-	-
Moorpark City Transit	ADA Paratransit /Senior Dial-A-Ride, MCT On Demand	12.5	33,835	Moorpark
Ojai Trolley	None	-	-	-
Simi Valley Transit	ADA Paratransit/Senior Dial-A-Ride	38.8	163,628	Simi Valley, Chatsworth
Thousand Oaks	ADA Paratransit/Senior Dial-A-Ride	75.9	156,059	Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village, Newbury Park, Oak Park, Ventura Park, Lynn Ranch, Rolling Oaks, Hidden Valley and Lake Sherwood
Valley Express	General Dial-A-Ride (no eligibility requirements)	97.4	62,345	Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru and other unincorporated areas of Heritage Valley
VCTC Intercity	None	-	-	-

Note: [1]Residential population and jobs.

Table 7: Demand Response Operational Statistics for FY23

Service Provider	Ridership[1]	Revenue Hours	Boardings per Revenue Hour
Agoura Hills	2,012	Not available	Not available
Camarillo Area Transit	42,811	15,387	2.8
East County Transit Alliance	8,051	5,955	1.4
Gold Coast Transit District	84,895	39,677	2.1
Kanan Shuttle	-	-	-
Moorpark City Transit[2]	16,251	5,805	2.8
Ojai Trolley	-	-	-
Simi Valley Transit	133,634	26,993	4.9
Thousand Oaks	26,686	14,531	1.8
Valley Express	16,097	14,101	1.1
VCTC Intercity	-	-	-

Note: [1]Ridership is defined as the total number of unlinked passenger trips.
[2] Moorpark data shown includes all senior, ADA, and microtransit (MCT On-Demand)

PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

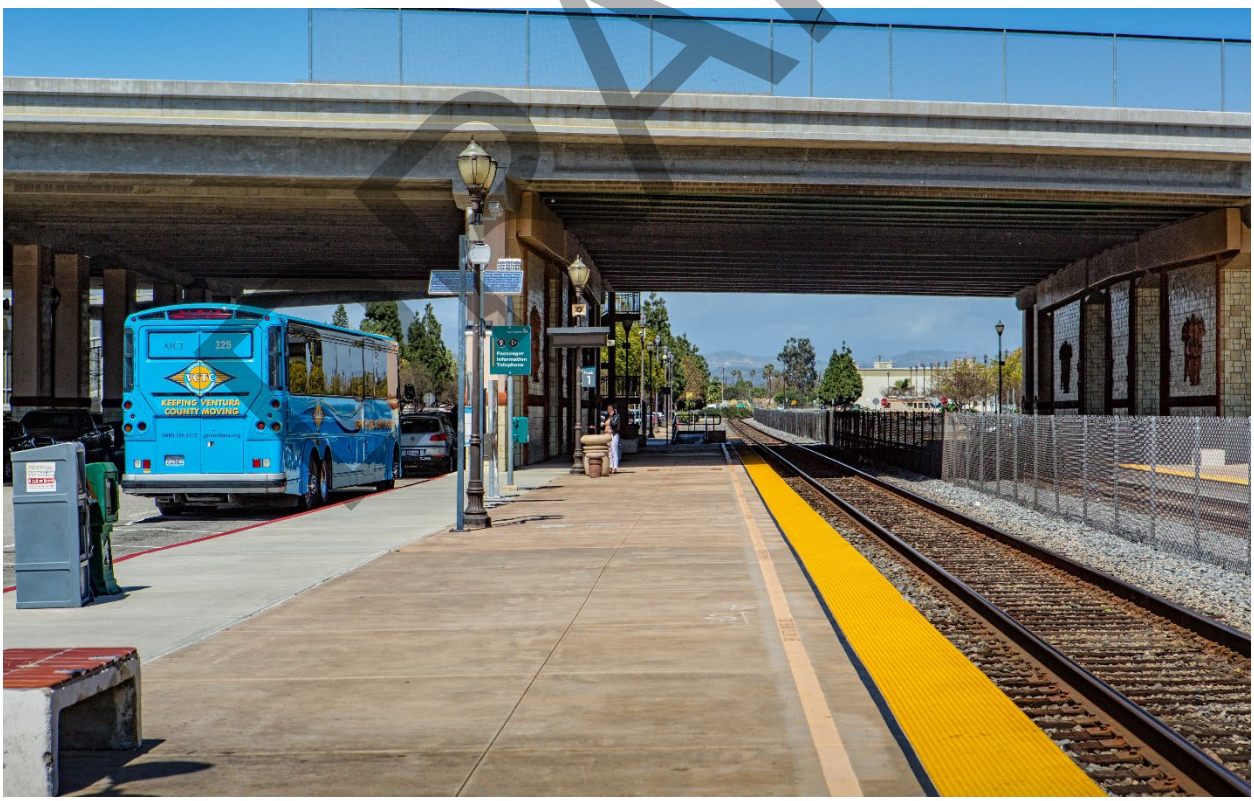
METROLINK

Metrolink operates seven lines of commuter rail service in the Los Angeles region. The Ventura County Line includes stations in East Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Moorpark, and Simi Valley, and seven stations in Los Angeles County (Chatsworth, Northridge, Van Nuys, Burbank-Bob Hope Airport, Downtown Burbank, Glendale, and Los Angeles Union Station). Service operates Monday-Friday between 5:00 a.m. and approximately 8:30 p.m. There are eight weekday southbound trains to Los Angeles and eight weekday northbound trains from Los Angeles; five of these round trips operate only as far as Moorpark, stopping short of Camarillo, Oxnard, and East Ventura, while the other three trains serve all stations. The current service design remains oriented towards traditional commuter rail with most trips operating in the early morning from East Ventura through to Los Angeles Union Station and returning in the evening. The only afternoon service towards Los Angeles begins at Moorpark.

PACIFIC SURFLINER/AMTRAK

The Pacific Surfliner operates intercity rail between San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, and San Diego, which serves the Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Moorpark and Simi Valley stations. Six northbound trains and six southbound trains operate daily. Thanks to Rail 2 Rail, a ticket-sharing agreement with Metrolink, Metrolink Monthly Pass holders can seamlessly transfer to Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains on overlapping routes along the Ventura County and Orange County lines without additional fares and vice versa. A pilot program called Codeshare expands this benefit to any Metrolink ticket holder, allowing them to ride all Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains between L.A. Union Station and Ventura. These partnerships enhance the benefits of ongoing schedule coordination between Metrolink and Amtrak, improving regional rail integration and connectivity across southern California.

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



Existing Fare Structure

Each agency sets base fares and policies individually and any similarities between agencies are presumed to be coincidental. However, there is a level of regional coordination led by VCTC to offer student and college rider fare subsidies across the county. VCTC also established a countywide fare media, VCbuspass, previously known as Smart Card. This initiative allows riders to pay for any transit in Ventura County with a single card or app. Table 8 and Table 9 offer more details on fare policies across the operators.

Table 8: Agency Single-ticket Fares and Discounts

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

Notes:
1 Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.
2 Free for seniors ages 75 and over.
3 10% off for all riders purchasing fare through VCbuspass.
4 Free for Leisure Village residents.
Source: Agency websites.

Station-to-station fares for Metrolink and Amtrak vary but are generally between $5.50 (Simi Valley to Moorpark) and $10.25 (Simi Valley to East Ventura) one-way as of 2024 for a regular full-price ticket.

Table 9: Fixed-Route Pass Availability

Service Provider	Passes[1]				Payment Methods			
	Day	Week	Month	Ticket pack	Cash	Change given	Passes	Smart-phone
Camarillo Area Transit[2]								
Gold Coast Transit District								
Kanan Shuttle	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free
Moorpark City Transit								
Ojai Trolley								
Simi Valley Transit								
Thousand Oaks								
Valley Express								
VCTC Intercity								

Notes:
[1]All agencies offer regular and reduced pricing on passes.
[2]Monthly pass includes unlimited fixed-route and local Dial-A-Ride trips. No fixed route only pass available. CAT only offers stored value for fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride via the VCbuspass.
Source: Agency websites.

TRANSFER POLICIES

Transit agencies in Ventura County coordinate transfer policies to enhance connectivity in the region. Most agencies offer free transfers between routes they operate, typically valid for a single trip or within a two-hour window, with a few exceptions. For instance, VCTC Intercity charges an additional fare of $1.50 for transfers to VCTC Zone 2 routes (Coastal Express and Conejo Connection). Transit agencies in Ventura County also offer free transfers to VCTC Intercity services where applicable. Metrolink and Amtrak tickets are accepted as free transfers when boarding VCTC, Gold Coast, and Simi Valley bus routes.

Governance and Organizational Structure

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

- **City-administered services**, which are either a distinct department of city government or housed under another department (typically public works), with the city council typically acting as the transit board. Camarillo Area Transit, Ojai Trolley, Simi Valley Transit, Moorpark City Transit, and Thousand Oaks Transit make up this group.
- **Independent agencies**, which are typically formed and defined by a state legislative act and have their own governing board representing their service area. This category includes GCTD, VCTC, and the County of Ventura:
    - GCTD is a special transit district formed by AB 664 and has a governing board made up of representatives from the five cities it serves.
    - VCTC is the regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) and coordinates all public transportation service planning in the County and oversees federal and state public transportation funds. VCTC is also the state-designated County Transportation Commission for administering local sales tax allocations for transit operations. VCTC directly operates transit service (as well as administering the Valley Express service), although this is not typically a role of an RTPA or CTC, meaning that the Board (the Commissioners) also serves as the board for VCTC Intercity service.
    - The County of Ventura is a funding partner and stakeholder for transit throughout the County, including the Kanan Shuttle, the Valley Express, Ojai Trolley, and some GCTD services. While the County does not directly operate any transit services, the County Board of Supervisors acts as the governing body overseeing these partnerships.
- Services defined by third parties and **operated by another agency**, which include the Kanan Shuttle and the Valley Express. These are unique cases in which a service was developed in response to a community need and is overseen and/or funded by one agency but fully administered by another party.
    - The County of Ventura provides the funding and oversight of the Kanan Shuttle but contracts with Thousand Oaks Transit for operation. Kanan Shuttle's governing board is effectively the County administration.
    - The Valley Express is a community service that encompasses the cities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and the County (representing Piru), all of which provide funding and play an advisory role through an advisory (HVPAC) and a technical (HVTAC) committee, but the service is otherwise fully administered by VCTC.
    - ECTA exists as an MOU between its participating cities with Thousand Oaks Transit as the administrator and contracting agent.

Table 10 summarizes the agency governance structures.

Table 10: Agency Governance Structures

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

Notes:
[1]Operator contracts are managed by Thousand Oaks Transit.
[2]Contracts vehicle maintenance out to Thousand Oaks Transit.
[3]The City contracts with First Transit to operate the micro-transit service, and with RideCo to provide the scheduling software and app.
[4]Contractor performs maintenance on leased vehicles only. Vehicle maintenance on City-owned vehicles is performed in-house.

5. CAMARILLO

Camarillo Travel Market Assessment

Camarillo is a mid-sized city relative to the study area, with a population of 84,000 and 39,000 jobs, has a larger percentage of senior residents than the average for Ventura County and a smaller percentage of low-income, car-light households, and youth residents than the County average.

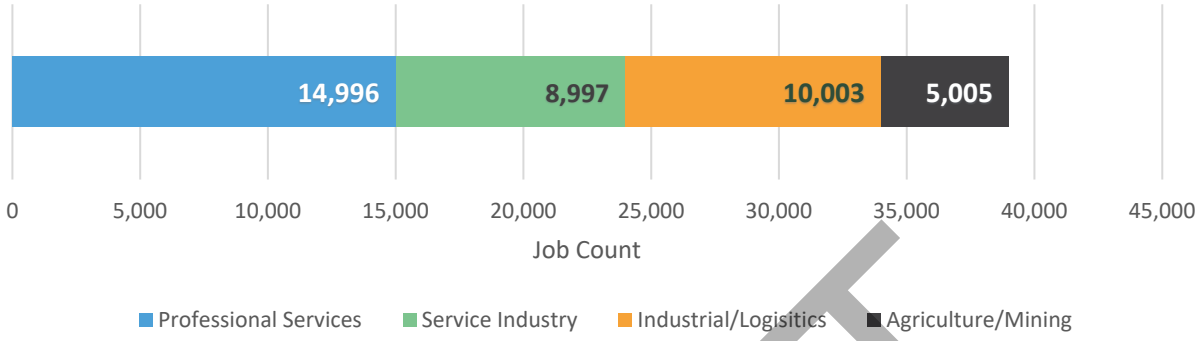
Camarillo is located in southern Ventura County and is bordered by Thousand Oaks to the east, Moorpark to the northeast, and Oxnard to the west. US-101 connects Camarillo with Thousand Oaks and Oxnard, and California State Routes 34 and 118 connect Camarillo with Moorpark and Saticoy (Ventura). The areas immediately to the south and west of the city are mostly agricultural land. The Camarillo Hills border the city to the north, and the significant Conejo Grade to the east separates it from the East County. Eight round trips pass daily through the Camarillo Metrolink station connecting Camarillo by rail to Union Station in Los Angeles. VCTC Intercity bus service connects to most surrounding communities and to CSUCI through Camarillo as well as Coastal Express service to Santa Barbara and Goleta.

Table 11: Camarillo Demographics

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

Note:
[1]Denominator is persons in housing units.
[2]Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021.; "Workplace Area Characteristics," LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Figure 3: Camarillo Jobs by Industry



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

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

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

[PLACEHOLDER – Market Assessment Cutsheet]

Service Evaluation

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

CAMARILLO AREA TRANSIT FARES

The City currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

Table 12: Agency Single-ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type

Service Type	Regular	Discounted[1]	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
Fixed Route	$1.00	$0.50[2]	Free	Free	Free
Dial-A-Ride	$3.00	$2.00	Free	$3.00	$3.00

Notes:
1 Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.
2 Free for Leisure Village residents.
Source: Agency websites.

CAMARILLO AREA TRANSIT: FIXED-ROUTE SERVICES

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

SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

The Fixed Route is a weekday-only bus service that connects Leisure Village, an age-restricted community for persons aged 55 and above, to retail, medical, and community destinations west of State Route 34. This bus service frequency runs approximately once an hour between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday - Friday.

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

The Camarillo Metrolink Station is the City's hub for regional transit connections. VCTC Intercity Highway 101, Cross County Limited, and Channel Islands routes all stop at the Camarillo Metrolink Station. Only the Trolley currently serves the Metrolink Station. Fixed Route riders can transfer to the Trolley at the Ponderosa Center but must ride almost the entirety of the loop to reach the Metrolink Station stop.

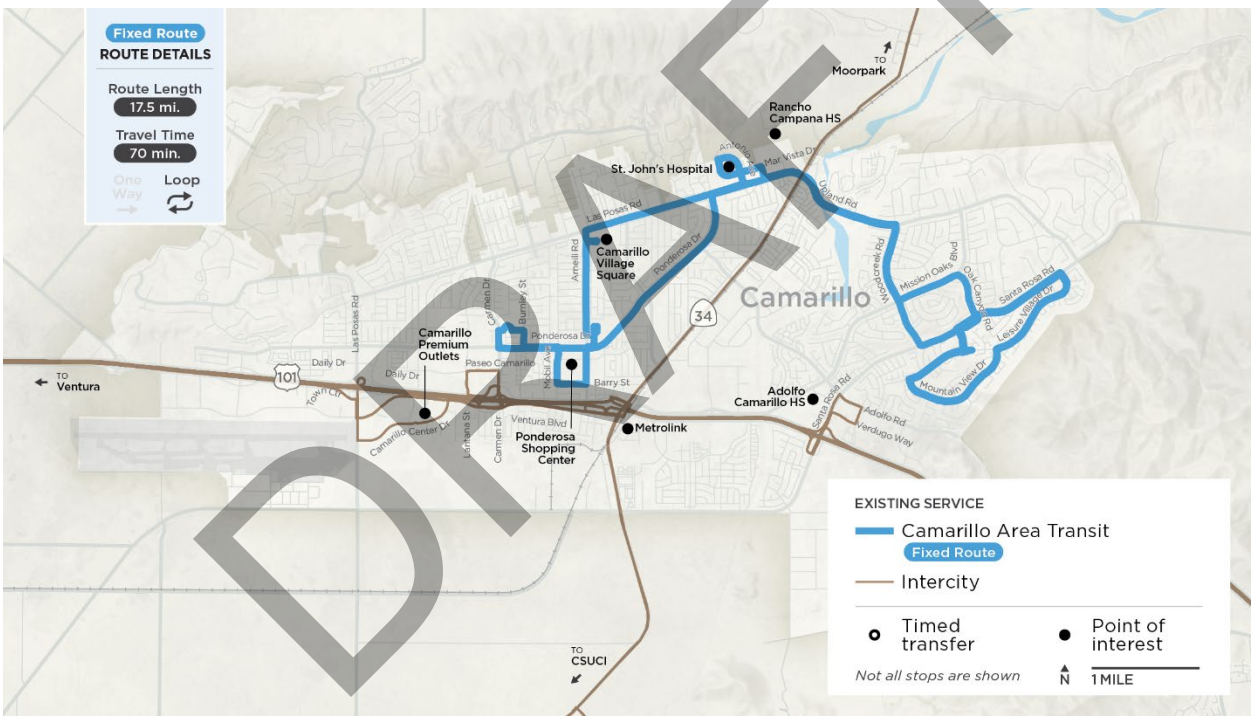
FIXED ROUTE

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

Camarillo Area Transit suspended fare collection during the COVID-19 pandemic but continued operating the Fixed Route.

In FY23, Fixed Route had 24 average daily boardings.

Figure 4: Camarillo Fixed Route



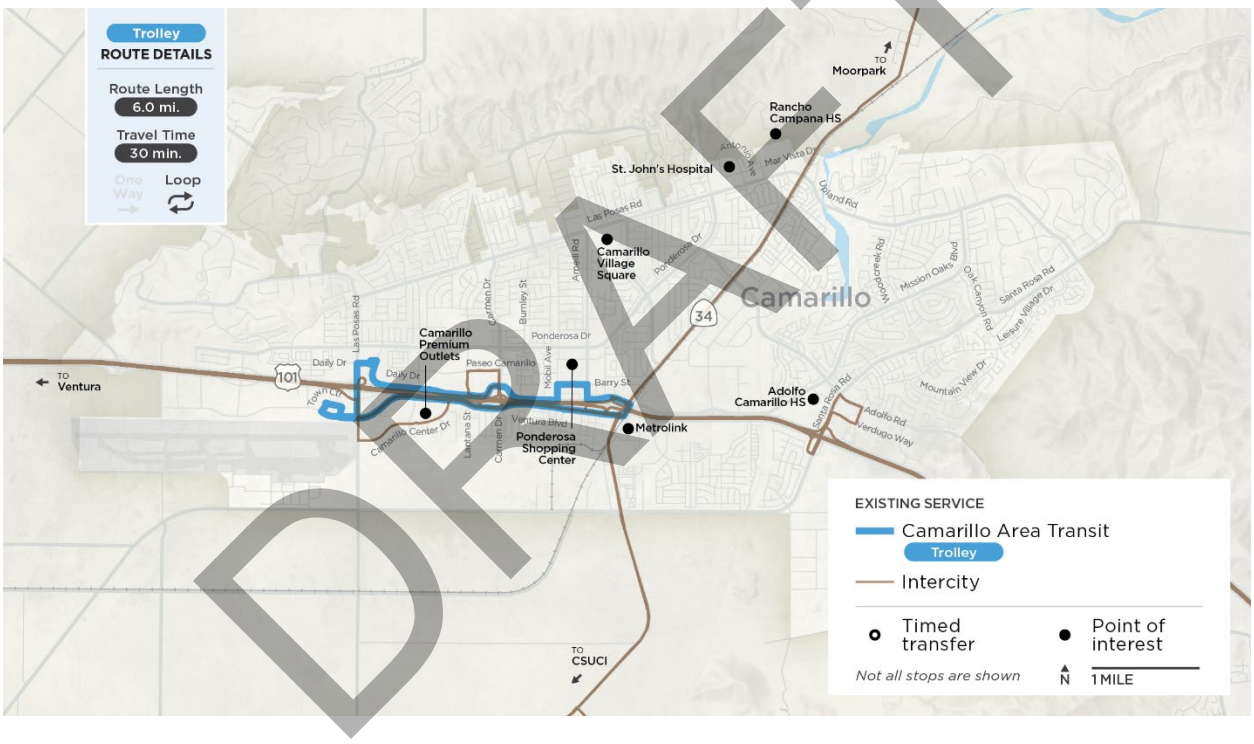
TROLLEY

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

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

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

Figure 5: Camarillo Trolley



RIDERSHIP

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

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

SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

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

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

Table 13: Camarillo Area Transit Fare Revenue by Route, FY23

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

ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY

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

EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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

However, the substantial jump in operating cost reflects Camarillo Area Transit more closely resembling its peers in transit. Prior to FY21, Camarillo Area Transit average costs were far lower than others in Ventura County and were generally low compared to the industry average in California based on NTD data. The current $130 per revenue hour cost is more typical of similar operations in the region for FY23.

[PLACEHOLDER – CAMARILLO Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – CAMARILLO Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

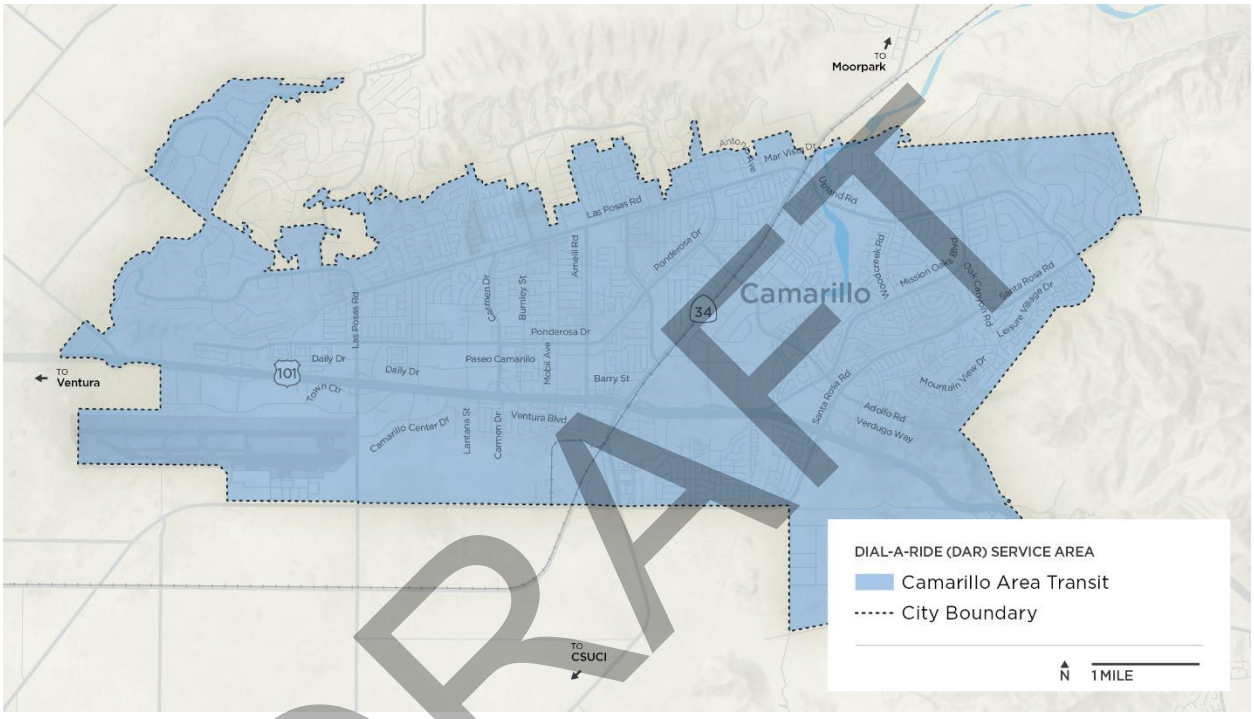
[PLACEHOLDER – CAMARILLO Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

CAMARILLO AREA TRANSIT: DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICES

Camarillo Area Transit operates a combined senior/ADA-paratransit and general public Dial-a-Ride program.

RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Figure 6: Camarillo Dial-a-Ride Service Area



Camarillo Dial-a-Ride provides trips throughout the city to the ADA population and seniors. If there is space available in the schedule, members of the general public are served. The Dial-a-Ride service area extends beyond Camarillo city limits for ADA-certified riders and seniors.

ADA-certified riders and seniors may travel to select destinations within Oxnard, limited by 5th Street, Oxnard Blvd. and Highway 101. Camarillo Dial-a-Ride also serves California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI), about 7 miles from City Hall, providing trips to students.

Program managers indicate that the Dial-a-Ride service serves general trips because the fixed route service is limited and does not cover many areas of the city.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Key performance metrics for Camarillo's Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Camarillo Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics

Camarillo Dial-a-Ride	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Passenger Trips	97,403	75,537	40,380	42,010	42,811
Revenue Hours	28,280	22,454	13,359	14,422	15,387
Revenue Miles	505,638	421,571	287,773	297,202	301,354
Operating Cost	$1,709,016	$1,955,844	$2,160,167	$2,125,224	$2,381,590
Pax per Hour	3.4	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.8
Pax per Mile	0.19	0.18	0.14	0.14	0.14
Cost per Pax	$17.55	$25.89	$53.50	$50.59	$55.63
Cost per Hour	*$60.43*	*$87.11*	*$161.70*	*$147.36*	*$154.78*
Cost per Mile	*$3.38*	*$4.64*	*$7.51*	*$7.15*	*$7.90*

DAR passenger trips are slowly increasing after the pandemic, however overall operating costs are increasing faster than the number of trips is increasing. Notably, the cost per passenger has increased by $38 in the last four years and the cost per hour by 156% from $60.43 in FY 19 to $154.78 in FY 23. Productivity is holding steady at 2.8 passengers per hour, but lower than pre-pandemic efficiency.

OPERATIONS TOPICS

The Camarillo Dial-a-Ride is a component of the City of Camarillo's Public Transportation Department and contractor-operated by RATP-USA, who recently secured a four-year contract with the City.

RESOURCES

RATP managers reported that 19 employees support the Camarillo public transportation program, including 4 FTEs in call taking and dispatch and 1 FTE in trip scheduling/reservation. Supervision is managed by 3 positions: a Dispatch Supervisor, a Scheduling Supervisor, and a Road Operations Supervisor, supported by a Safety Technician.

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

DAR TRIP SCHEDULING AND DISPATCHING

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

The contractor had been using in-house, “home grown” scheduling software that supports a manual scheduling process. With the new operations contract, the program will transition onto VCTC’s Ride-Co scheduling software platform. When the CAT dispatchers cannot accommodate a rider’s request, they offer timeslots either an hour before or after the original request. To check on “where’s my ride” and estimated times of arrival, when riders call, dispatch may call the driver to determine an answer but can generally geo-locate the vehicle and estimate a time.

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

Excessive no-show trips and late cancellations have impacted productivity. Riders making reservations more than a week in advance sometimes do not show up and don’t notify Dispatch.

DAR TRANSFERS

Procedures exist for Camarillo riders with ADA certification to transfer onto Gold Coast GO ACCESS to travel farther into the Gold Coast service area. Vehicles meet at St. John’s Regional Medical Center in Oxnard and are coordinated through Dispatch. Reportedly, CAT vehicles are on time and Gold Coast vehicles frequently late. This is difficult for CAT drivers as it is their policy to stay with the rider until the transfer vehicle arrives.

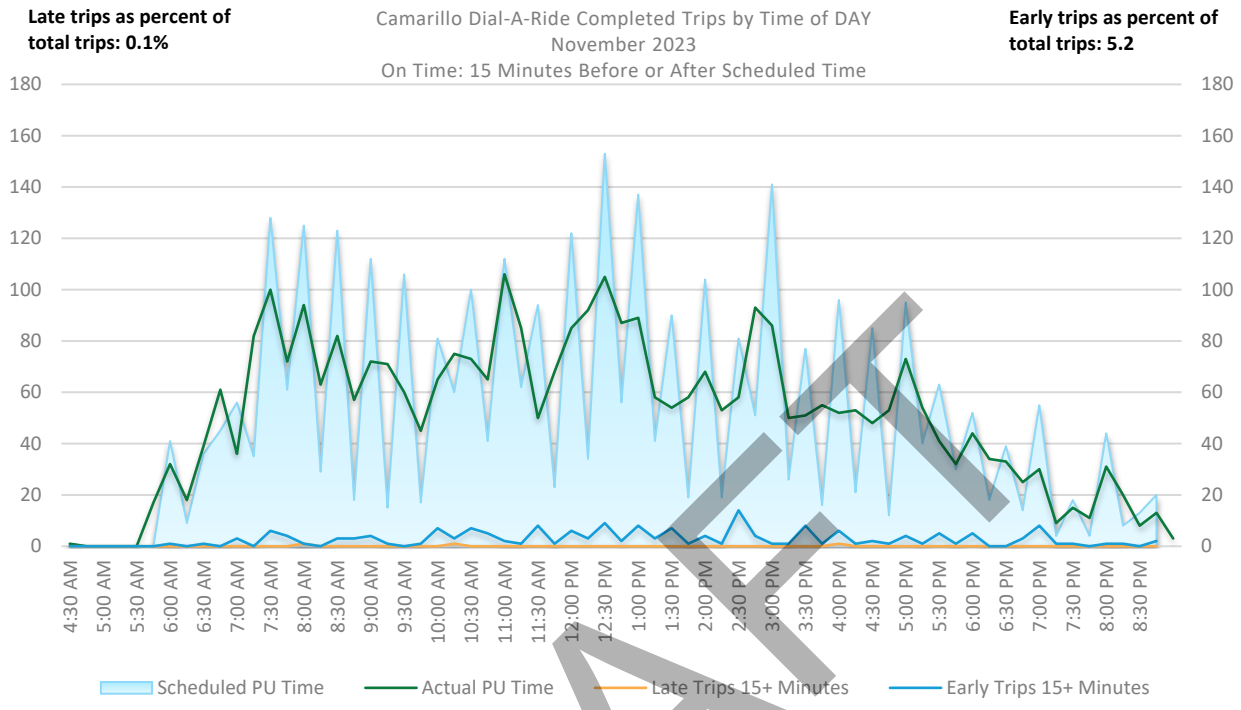
Passengers may book their return trip with Gold Coast GO ACCESS and be brought home directly by Gold Coast. Camarillo Dial-a-Ride has no role in or coordination with ECTA.

DAR ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented below. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. Trips served outside of a 30-minute window, either 15 minutes before the scheduled time as early or 15 after the scheduled time as late, are calculated for determining on-time performance.

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

Figure 7: Camarillo Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance



n = 3,428

Camarillo Area Transit: Gaps and Opportunities

PEOPLE

SENIORS

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

GENERAL POPULATION

Many people have jobs elsewhere, but lots of trips are made within the city. Getting around by car is fairly fast and easy, so good bus service needs to cover more area and be relatively fast/frequent to compete for local trips. The Fixed Route also does not connect effectively to the regional transit services that might support commuters.

STUDENTS

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

PLACES

COVERAGE

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

WALKABILITY

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

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

Service connections between Camarillo Fixed Route and Trolley are limited. Fixed Route does not directly connect to Metrolink or regional bus. Trolley does connect to regional services (Metrolink and Santa Barbara Airbus) but begins operation late in the morning.

SERVICE DESIGN

FIXED ROUTE DIRECTNESS

The Trolley route benefits from being a relatively short and

FIXED ROUTE FREQUENCY

The Trolley frequency is a strength of Camarillo's transit

SPAN

The Trolley service span is generally well aligned to its

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

service. The Fixed Route is as frequent as possible for its service design, but does not attract riders for other reasons described.

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

BALANCE OF SERVICES

As discussed, Camarillo Area Transit has a conflicting service design for its Fixed Route which is unquestionably designed to serve the Leisure Village residents, who also benefit from the DAR service. Although there is a significant price difference, this is apparently not an incentive for most riders to use the Fixed Route.

Meanwhile, much of the city that could walk to a scheduled bus instead rely on the general public DAR. A city of this size and configuration would typically swap these options, reserving the DAR program for the large senior community and aligning the fixed route service to cover more of the general population more cost-effectively.

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

6. GOLD COAST SERVICE AREA

This section provides an assessment of the regional travel market in the Gold Coast Transit District service area (Ventura, Port Hueneme, Oxnard, and surrounding areas), a summary of their recently completed independent SRTP, and an evaluation of their Demand Response service.

Market Assessment

The market assessment covers the regional transportation context for the Gold Coast Transit District service area, referred to here as the Gold Coast service area. The Gold Coast service area includes the cities of Ventura, Oxnard, and Port Hueneme, with some service extending as far north as Ojai. The Gold Coast service area is bordered by Camarillo to the east, Ojai to the north, Santa Paula to the northeast, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The area is generally characterized by older development with grid-based neighborhoods throughout Oxnard and Ventura and distinct downtown centers.

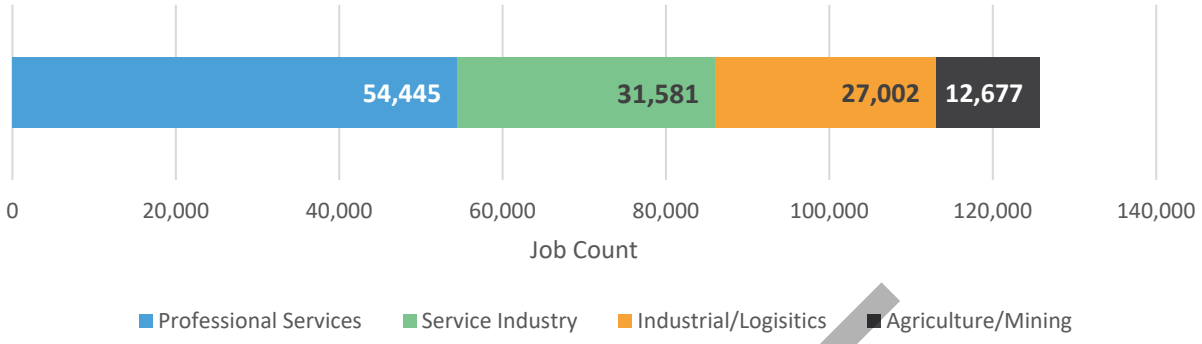
The Gold Coast service area is the most populous region, accounting for nearly half the total Ventura County population. Relative to the rest of Ventura County, the Gold Coast service area has a higher percentage of low-income households and car-light households, a lower median household income, and a lower share of senior citizens.

Table 15: Gold Coast Service Area Demographics

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

Note:
[1]Denominator is persons in housing units.
[2]Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021.; "Workplace Area Characteristics," LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Figure 8: Gold Coast Service Area Jobs by Industry



The top employment industries within the service area are professional services and the service sector, followed by the industrial/logistics and agriculture/mining sectors. Given the size of the Gold Coast service area and its range of jobs and services, a very high proportion of trips begin and end in the community (90 percent). Other common destinations from the Gold Coast service area are Camarillo, which account for five percent of trips, and Santa Paula and Fillmore which account for three percent of trips.

In addition to having the largest residential population, the Gold Coast service area is also the biggest employment center in Ventura County with over 125,000 jobs, accounting for around 42 percent of the jobs in the study area. However, 56 percent of people living in the Gold Coast service area commute to other communities for work.

[PLACEHOLDER – Market Assessment Cutsheet]

Gold Coast Transit Service Evaluation

GOLD COAST TRANSIT FARES

Gold Coast Transit currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

Table 16: Agency Single-ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type

Service Type	Regular	Discounted[1]	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
Fixed Route	$2.00	$0.75[2]	Free	Free	Free
Paratransit	-	$4.00	-	-	-

Notes:
1 Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.
2 Free for seniors ages 75 and over.
Source: Agency websites.

GOLD COAST FIXED ROUTE SRTP SUMMARY

The Gold Coast Transit District (GCTD) Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) for FY2026-2030 provides a structured framework to guide transit services in West Ventura County over the next five years. Initiated in June 2023, the GCTD SRTP aims to meet evolving community needs by focusing on five key goals:

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

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

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

The GCTD SRTP proposes several key recommendations. The proposed fixed route service changes focus on improving frequency and span of service by reallocating resources from eliminated, duplicative routes. The recommendations increase weekday service frequency on six routes, increase weekend service frequency on seven routes, and improve transfer times at key transfer points. The plan notes that these service changes would present opportunities to scale back on-demand service in South Oxnard and overnight but also identifies three new potential zones where microtransit may make sense. Marketing and outreach efforts would complement these service changes through website

improvements, targeted campaigns for diverse demographic groups, and enhanced signage across the transit system.

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

The GCTD SRTP's implementation is phased over five years. Year one focuses on foundational planning, marketing, and infrastructure upgrades. Incremental route adjustments, extended service hours, and microtransit options in underserved areas would be introduced in the subsequent years. Year five involves performance evaluations and adjustments based on observed outcomes. The TOC is not included this five-year implementation plan but will be included in the Long Range Financial Plan. The financial plan projects $208.6 million in operating expenses and $42.9 million in capital investment, with operating expenses increasing by three to five percent each year. The GCTD SRTP anticipates a 20% increase in ridership as a result of the proposed enhanced services and marketing efforts.

DEMAND RESPONSE

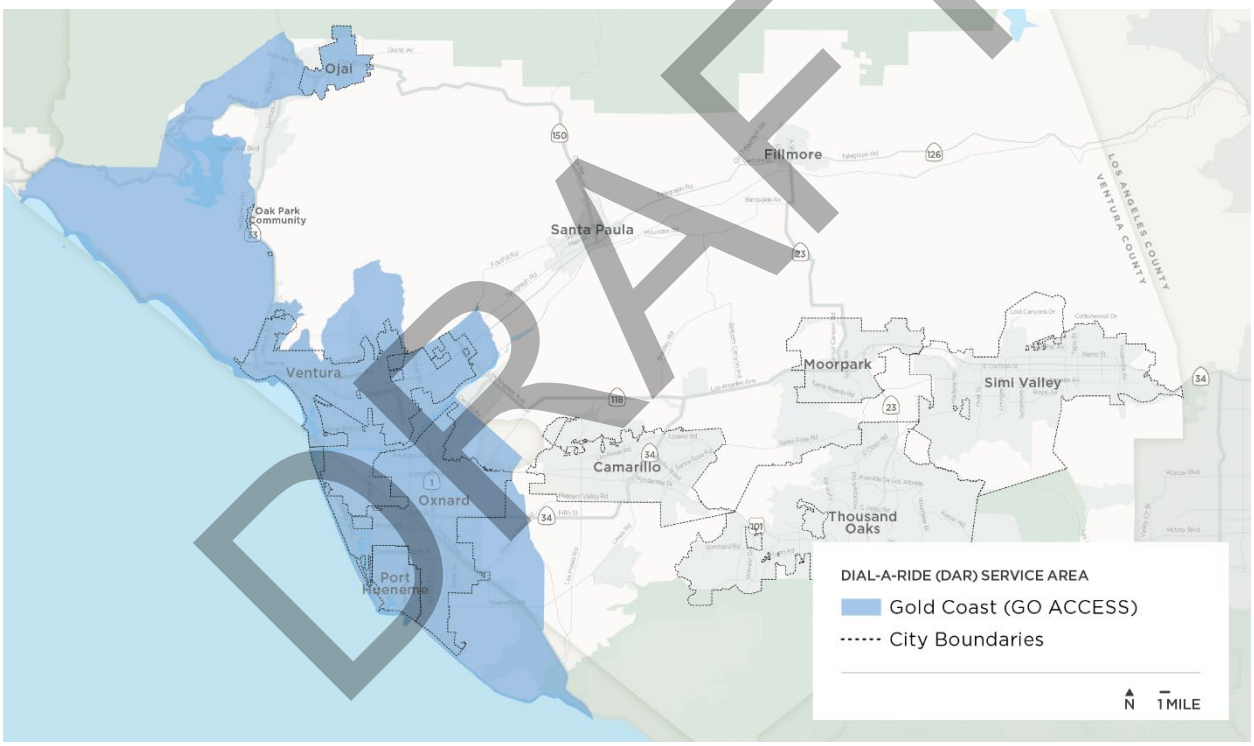
GCTD operates GO ACCESS for ADA-eligible riders and seniors.

RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Gold Coast GO ACCESS is an ADA complementary paratransit program, serving people certified as ADA eligible and seniors aged 65 or over within ¾ mile of the fixed-route service. GO ACCESS does not provide trips to the general public. However, GO ACCESS does accommodate trip requests that are beyond the strict ¾ mile boundary from the fixed-route network.

A map of the paratransit service area is shown in Figure 9 encompassing the communities of Ventura, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ojai and the unincorporated areas of the county.

Figure 9: Gold Coast GO ACCESS Service District



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Gold Coast GO ACCESS are shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Gold Coast GO ACCESS Performance Metrics

Gold Coast GO ACCESS	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Passenger Trips	117,456	95,295	61,907	75,596	84,992
Revenue Hours	50,227	39,935	29,951	41,409	39,737
Revenue Miles	777,069	619,953	511,051	562,865	634,550
Operating Cost	$3,507,119	$2,896,684	$2,294,343	$2,355,210	$3,529,348
Pax per Hour	*2.3*	*2.4*	*2.1*	*1.8*	*2.1*
Pax per Mile	*0.15*	*0.15*	*0.12*	*0.13*	*0.13*
Cost per Pax	*$29.86*	*$30.40*	*$37.06*	*$31.16*	*$41.53*
Cost per Hour	*$69.83*	*$72.53*	*$76.60*	*$56.88*	*$88.82*
Cost per Mile	*$4.51*	*$4.67*	*$4.49*	*$4.18*	*$5.56*

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

Cost per passenger of $42 in FY23 is 39% above its $30 cost per rider in FY19, the lowest of the ADA paratransit systems. Annual total operating costs of $3.5 million have grown minimally, by less than 1%, since FY 19. Overall, GO ACCESS performance measures are quite favorable.

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

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

OPERATIONS TOPICS

MOVING TO A NEW OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Since initiating this Countywide SRTP, GO ACCESS brought its contracted demand response program in-house, including making the contractor's 35 drivers GCTD employees. The program will operate from the GCTD yard at 1901 Auto Center Drive in Oxnard. This policy decision by the GCTD board was described as cost-neutral and will provide the District with increased management control. Dispatching telephone numbers will not change following this transition.

TRIP RESERVATION AND SCHEDULING FUNCTION VIA ECOLANE

GCTD continues to use Ecolane for its trip reservation and trip dispatching function, currently through 6 FTE call taker positions. The call center uses Ecolane software which management finds satisfactory for the following reasons:

- Efficiencies through shared ride dispatching wherever possible
- Ease of use by schedulers and dispatchers
- Same day, dynamic schedule optimization during the day-of-service
- Reservations can be made via the web or via a call to dispatch
- Fare payment accounts to which funds can be deposited by the rider or family members and debited as trips are taken; funds can be re-loaded via the telephone; relieving the rider to carry cash

GO ACCESS managers are not interested (as of this writing) in leaving Ecolane to move to the RideCo contract that VCTC is managing. They might be interested in relation to their micro transit service which is also dispatched via the Ecolane software.

OPERATIONS-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Communications with Riders

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

Top Trip Generators

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

Deadhead Concerns and Fare increase for Intercity Trips

GCTD managers are concerned about the length of some of their trips and the necessity of deadheading back. Trips to and from Ojai are examples of particularly long trips. A fare increase from $6 to $8 went into effect on January 1st 2025 for GO ACCESS Intercity trips, reflecting the costs to the system of these longer trips.

Gold Coast Transit: Gaps and Opportunities

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

PEOPLE

SENIORS

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

GENERAL POPULATION

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

STUDENTS

College students live and work throughout the County and often have widely varied schedules. Continuing to provide regular connecting service through CSUCI, as well as to other schools like Ventura College and Oxnard College, helps support young adults.

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

In terms of **Places**, the area of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, and Ventura is quite large. The key destinations are already directly connected by Intercity service (the County Complex, or the Esplanade, for example) where riders can transfer to Gold Coast Transit for other destinations.

7. OAK PARK (KANAN SHUTTLE)

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

Market Assessment

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

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

Service Evaluation

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

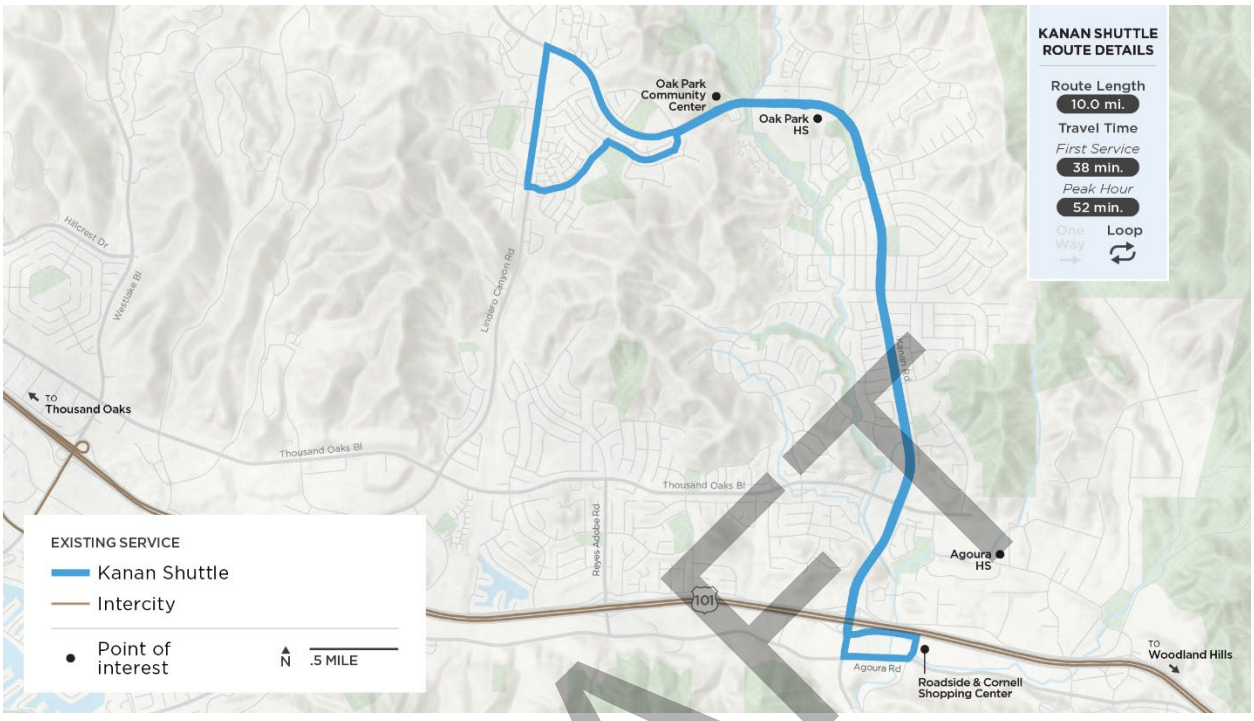
KANAN SHUTTLE FARES

Kanan Shuttle operates fare-free.

FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

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

Figure 10: Kanan Shuttle



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

FIXED ROUTE RIDERSHIP

Kanan Shuttle recorded 32,729 fixed route riders in FY23. Ridership over the past decade peaked at 79,613 in FY18 and reached a low of 7,159 in FY21. Ridership grew between FY15 and FY18 but declined by 14% in FY19, followed by a sharp drop due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The low point most likely coincided with schools being mostly remote. Service was reduced by half during the pandemic, contributing to the decline in ridership. Recovery began in FY22, with ridership rebounding to 52% of FY19 levels by June 2023. In FY23, Kanan Shuttle averaged 128 daily boardings.

FIXED ROUTE SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

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

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

EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Kanan Shuttle's operational expenditures have fluctuated over the past decade, peaking in FY19 before sharply decreasing in FY20 due to service reductions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Total operating costs fluctuations likely reflect adjusting service to changing demand; conversations with the County indicated that in the past with occasional crowding issues at school bell times, additional service might be operated and of course since that time service has been pared back to fit the ridership levels and demand during the pandemic years.

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

The Kanan Shuttle is primarily funded through the California Transportation Development Act (TDA). Historically, the Oak Park Unified School District and the City of Agoura Hills contributed funding annually to help the County's operation meet its TDA-required 20% farebox recovery ratio. However, according to County staff, these funding contributions were discontinued following the pandemic and the related service reductions and were not reimplemented as of FY24.

Kanan Shuttle Gaps and Opportunities

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

[PLACEHOLDER – KANAN Service Evaluation Cutsheet

[PLACEHOLDER – KANAN Service Evaluation Cutsheet

[PLACEHOLDER – KANAN Service Evaluation Cutsheet

8. MOORPARK

Market Assessment

Moorpark is a smaller city relative to the study area, with a residential population of 36,000 and 13,000 jobs. Moorpark has a lower percentage of low-income and car-light households and a lower percentage of seniors than the County average. Moorpark also has a median household income almost $35,000 higher than the median household income for Ventura County.

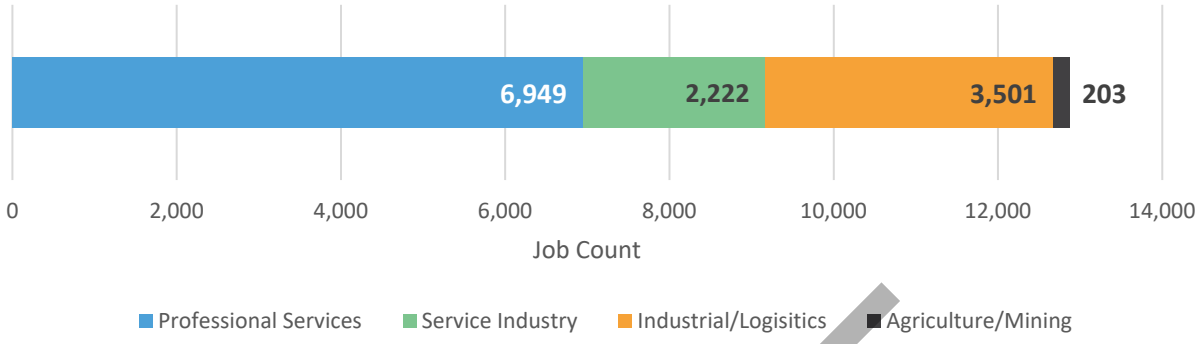
Moorpark is located in northeastern Ventura County and is bordered by Simi Valley to the east, unincorporated Santa Rosa Valley and the City of Thousand Oaks to the south, and Fillmore to the north. The area west of Moorpark is primarily agricultural and open space and includes the unincorporated community of Somis. Moorpark is generally separated from its neighbors by hilly and mountainous terrain on all sides. California State Route 118 connects Moorpark with Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks. State Route 23 is a two-lane highway north through the mountains to Fillmore, while in Moorpark and continuing south it is a multi-lane freeway to Thousand Oaks.

Table 18: Moorpark Demographics

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

Note:
[1]Denominator is persons in housing units.
[2]Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021.; "Workplace Area Characteristics," LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Figure 11: Moorpark Jobs by Industry



Jobs in Moorpark are mostly in professional services, but there are also a significant number of jobs in the industrial/logistics and service sectors. An inflow-outflow analysis of employment in Moorpark indicates there is significant traffic coming both to and from Moorpark for work. Almost 90 percent of Moorpark residents commute elsewhere for work, and 9,000 people who live in other communities commute to Moorpark for work. Moorpark's Metrolink station sees 13 daily round trips on Metrolink/Pacific Surfliner connecting Moorpark to Union Station in Los Angeles. VCTC Intercity bus service offers one-seat rides to Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, and Oxnard/Ventura from Moorpark Station.

Moorpark has a lower rate of intra-city travel than other communities in Ventura County, with just over 60 percent of all trips beginning and ending in Moorpark. The city generally has fewer commercial and community resources (healthcare, entertainment, etc.) compared to other cities in the region. Simi Valley (17% of trips) and Thousand Oaks (12% of trips) are the most common destinations for trips outside the city.

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

[PLACEHOLDER – Market Assessment Cutsheet]

Service Evaluation

The City of Moorpark operates Moorpark City Transit, including two local fixed-route circulators, a senior/ADA-paratransit and general public dial-a-ride service, and a recently launched on-demand microtransit service called MCT On Demand. The fixed routes and MCT On Demand are open to the general public, while senior/ADA dial-a-ride riders must be at least 65 years old or have a disability.

MOORPARK CITY TRANSIT FARES

The City currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

Table 19: Agency Single-ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type

Service Type	Regular	Discounted[1]	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
Fixed Route	$1.00	Free	Free	Free	Free
Dial-A-Ride	-	$2.00	-	-	-
MTC on Demand	$1.00	$0.50	Free	$1.00	Free

Notes:
1 Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.
Source: Agency websites.

FIXED-ROUTE

SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

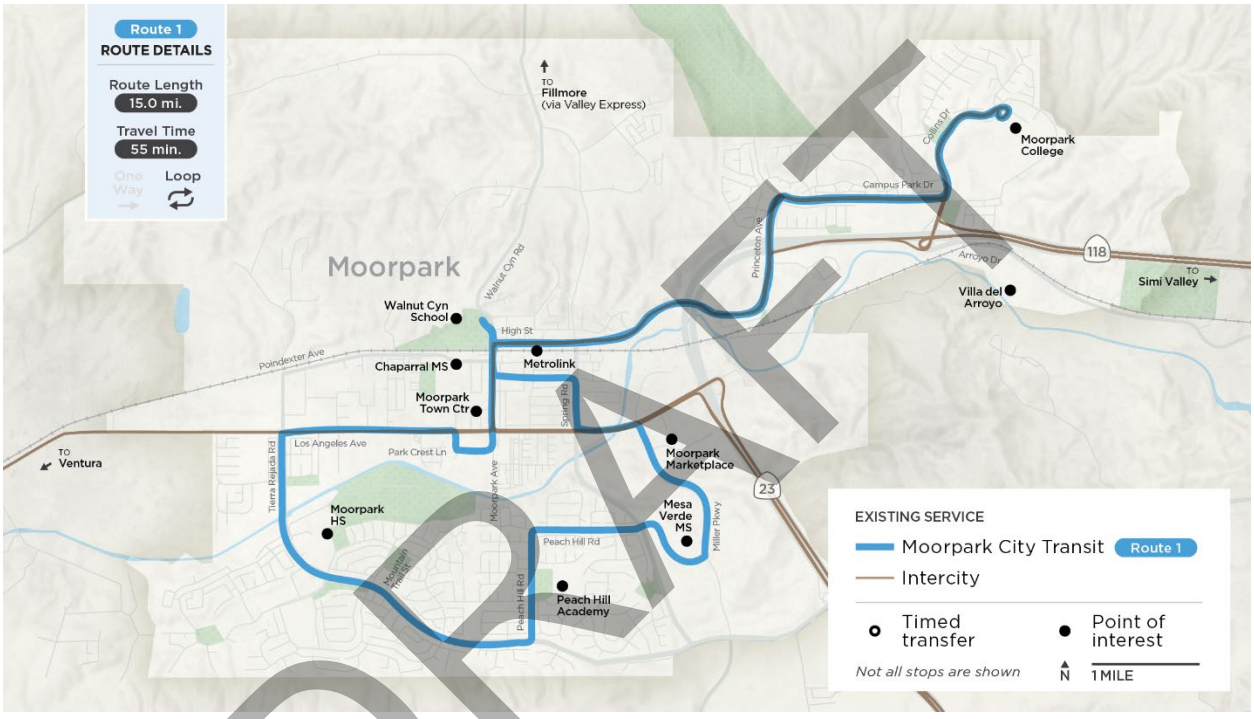
The fixed route service operates Monday through Friday between 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., excluding designated holidays. Route 1 and Route 2 operate along the same route but in opposite directions, connecting residential and commercial areas, schools, and civic centers within Moorpark. Both routes operate with 60-to-75-minute headways.

VCTC Intercity's East County and Cross County Limited routes and Valley Express' Fillmore-Moorpark route connect to other parts of the region and supplement Moorpark City Transit by providing additional transit service throughout the day between Moorpark College and Moorpark Station. The Fillmore-Moorpark route also stops at Moorpark Marketplace, which is not currently served by Moorpark City Transit's fixed route services. Riders can transfer from Moorpark City Transit Routes 1 and 2 to these regional services at Moorpark Station and at Moorpark College.

ROUTE 1

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

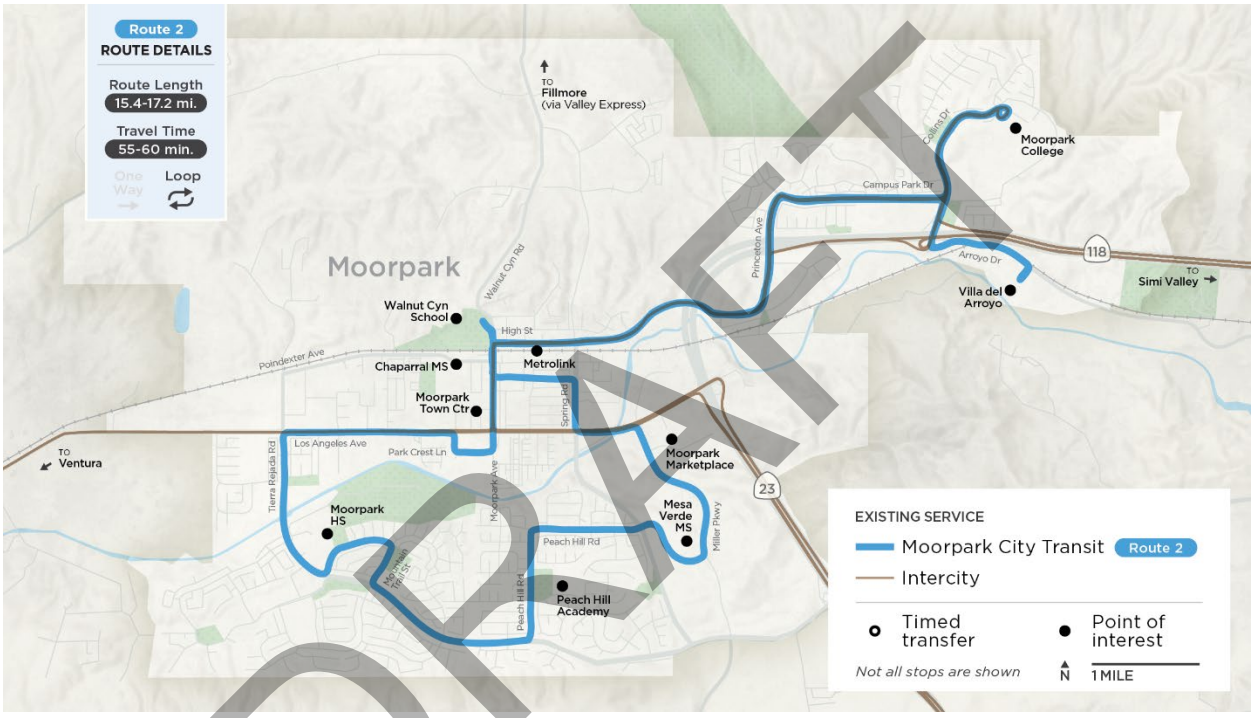
Figure 12: Moorpark Route 1



ROUTE 2

Route 2 operates along the same route as Route 1 and also begins at the Civic Center[8], but travels in the opposite direction from Route 1. The route operates from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays. Route 2 serves most of the same stops as Route 1 but does not stop at Moorpark High School or Moorpark Town Center. Route 2 makes additional stops in residential areas and serves the Villa del Arroyo community on six of its 11 daily trips. In FY23, Route 2 had 39 average daily boardings.

Figure 13: Moorpark Route 2



[8] Route 2 begins at the Civic Center with the exception of the first trip of the day, which begins at Moorpark College.

RIDERSHIP

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

Route 1 accounts for 61% of the total ridership, while Route 2 represents 39%, indicating a higher utilization of Route 1 among transit users. Though the two routes essentially form the same loop in opposite directions, only Route 1 serves Moorpark High School, which may drive these ridership trends as high school and college students account for 60% of Moorpark City Transit's fixed route riders.

SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

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

EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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

[PLACEHOLDER – MOORPARK Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – MOORPARK Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – MOORPARK Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

DEMAND RESPONSE

Moorpark City Transit operates a senior/ADA-paratransit and general public Dial-a-Ride service and MCT On Demand, a recently launched microtransit service.

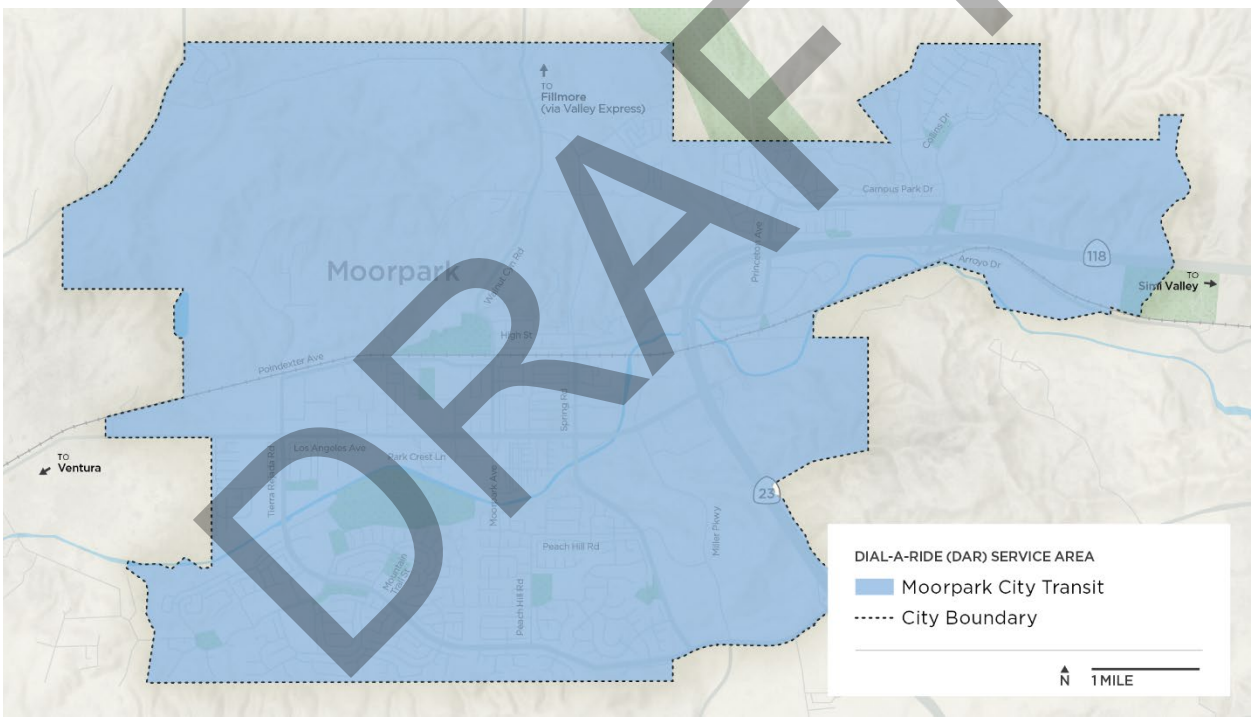
MOORPARK DIAL-A-RIDE

RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

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

It expanded around 2015, with other demand response programs in the County. Its service area for these DAR trips is contiguous with its city boundaries, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Moorpark Dial-a-Ride Service Area



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Moorpark's Dial-a-Ride service are shown in

Table **20**.

Table 20: Moorpark Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics

Moorpark Senior Dial-a-Ride	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Passenger Trips	1,701	1,111	1,280	625	608
Revenue Hours	3,426	3,213	629	289	307
Revenue Miles	68,685	64,408	13,551	4,893	4,619
Operating Cost	$64,299	$57,798	$70,687	$41,182	$40,828
Pax per Hour	*0.50*	*0.35*	*2.0*	*2.2*	*2.0*
Pax per Mile	*0.02*	*0.02*	*0.09*	*0.13*	*0.1*
Cost per Pax	*$37.80*	*$52.02*	*$55.22*	*$65.89*	*$67.15*
Cost per Hour	*$18.77*	*$17.99*	*$112.38*	*$142.50*	*$132.99*
Cost per Mile	*$0.94*	*$0.90*	*$5.22*	*$8.42*	*$8.84*

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

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

Operating costs have been more resistant to the decreases, only decreasing 37% from $64,000 in FY 19 to $41,000 in FY 23. This is largely because Moorpark contributes to the overhead costs of the coordinated system, of which it is a part of Thousand Oaks and ECTA, including its partner Simi Valley.

OPERATIONS TOPICS

Operations-Related Opportunities and Challenges

The central issue managers spoke to is how this system Dial-a-Ride does – or doesn't – integrate with the MCT OnDemand. It is an ADA complementary paratransit program, required to complement Moorpark's fixed route service. The extent to which the MCT OnDemand could act in its place, as an ADA complementary service, was not known at the time of the interview. The key structural difference is that MCT OnDemand does not directly go riders' homes but works from a large network of defined pick-up locations.

Resources – Personnel and Vehicles

The Moorpark Dial-A-Ride is operated by the City of Thousand Oaks, with 7-8 dedicated drivers spread across the Thousand Oaks and Moorpark Dial-a-Ride programs. Thousand Oaks has 4 dedicated call takers and 3 full-time dispatchers that support all of the programs it operates. Moorpark has a fleet of 12 cutaway vehicles that are shared between the dial-a-ride and microtransit programs, carrying 13 passengers each.

Trip Scheduling

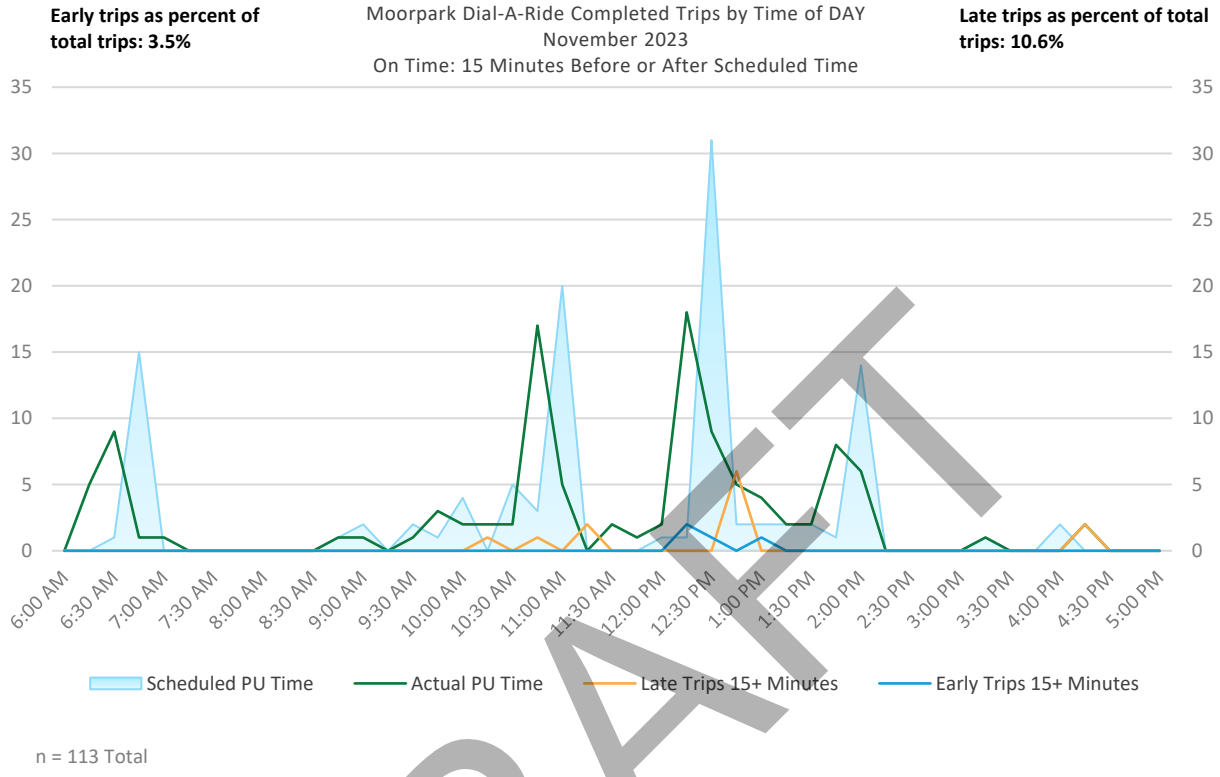
The scheduling of trips is facilitated using Trapeze software where dispatchers review batched manifests early in the morning and again midday to make any needed adjustments. Trapeze can optimize demand response routing for improved efficiency every 15 minutes. Automated calls through the Trapeze Ripple module are sent to riders the day before and 20 minutes prior to the vehicle's arrival to help reduce no-shows and late cancellations. Once the call is received the rider can confirm or cancel the trip over the phone, reducing the burden on call takers fielding late cancellation calls and improving driver and dispatcher efficiency related to no-shows.

On-Time Performance

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented in Figure 15. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. Trips served outside of a 30-minute window, either 15 minutes before the scheduled time or 15 after the scheduled time, are calculated for determining on-time performance.

The distribution of trips throughout the day for Moorpark's dial-a-ride service is sporadic with scheduled trips during the 6 o'clock hour followed by a period of no activity until mid-morning. Demand peaks at 12:30 p.m. when the highest instance of late grips is experienced. Late trips account for almost 11% of all trips while 3.5% of pick-ups arrive early.

Figure 15: Moorpark Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance



n = 113 Total

MCT ON DEMAND

RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

MCT OnDemand is a new microtransit program providing same-day trips within the City of Moorpark since 2021. Moorpark residents are eligible to use the service and can travel between 100 pick-up points within the City of Moorpark.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for MCT are shown in Table 21.

Table 21: MCT On Demand Performance Metrics

MCT On Demand	FY 22	FY 23
Passenger Trips	572	15,643
Revenue Hours	916	5,498
Revenue Miles	3,594	-
Operating Cost	$85,530	$574,001
Pax per Hour	*0.6*	*2.8*
Pax per Mile	*0.16*	-
Cost per Pax	*$149.53*	*$36.69*
Cost per Hour	*$93.39*	*$104.40*
Cost per Mile	*$23.80*	-

MCT On Demand launched in April 2022, providing almost 600 trips over its first three months of service. Ridership grew to almost 16,000 trips in FY23 over a full year of service with a cost per trip of $36.69, the lowest cost per trip of the county's demand response programs. The operating cost of $574,001 is inclusive of First Transit and RideCo operating costs but does not include an allocation for City of Moorpark administrative costs.

OPERATIONS TOPICS

Pick-up locations are within a 5-minute walk to or from most areas of the city. There are currently 100 designated pick-up locations that all meet the criteria of being accessible and safe, located on main roads avoiding cul-de-sacs, and with space to pick up multiple riders at a given location. In 2020, the fixed route service was not very productive, and the city had been interested in exploring ways to cut back fixed-route service, with microtransit seen as a means to serve riders that might be impacted by a reduction in service.

Trip Reservation and Scheduling Function

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

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

Operations-Related Opportunities and Challenges

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

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

Moorpark City Transit Gaps and Opportunities

PEOPLE

SENIORS

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

GENERAL POPULATION

Although the bi-directional loop model provides good coverage across the city, the stop spacing and alignment between the two directions is inconsistent from Los Angeles Avenue south. The travel market for circulation within town for most adults is likely limited, so more efficient service into the center of town and back home would be the most useful.

STUDENTS

Only one of the two routes directly connect the high school to residential areas of the City; although Route 2 passes directly in front of the high school it does not have a stop on that side of the road within 1,500 feet of an entrance. With service only once an hour, alignment to the school bell schedule is critical. Microtransit would be more attractive for app-savvy students but less efficient for the service.

PLACES

COVERAGE

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

WALKABILITY

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

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

MCT routes provide direct connections between routes and to regional services including Metrolink and Intercity bus.

SERVICE DESIGN

FIXED ROUTE DIRECTNESS

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

FIXED ROUTE FREQUENCY

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

SPAN

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

BALANCE OF SERVICES

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

A community the size of Moorpark is likely best suited to only operate one or the other service. However, microtransit could complement the fixed route by increasing the price for trips that begin and end within walking distance of the fixed route, and/or by extending the span of service later in the evening.

9. SIMI VALLEY

Market Assessment

Simi Valley is the second most populous city in the study area and the fourth most populous community in Ventura County overall with just shy of 130,000 residents. Simi Valley is also an important employment center for the County, with nearly 37,000 jobs. Simi Valley demographics are similar to the Ventura County averages in the percentage of the population who are senior citizens or youth as shown in Table 22. Simi Valley has a lower percentage of car-light households and a higher median income than the County average.

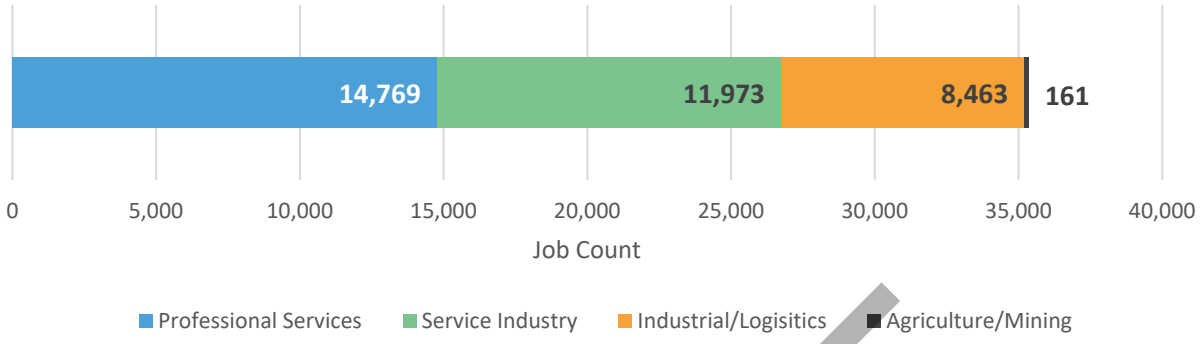
Simi Valley is located in eastern Ventura County and is bordered by Thousand Oaks to the south, Moorpark to the west, and Los Angeles County to the east, with mountains and the Santa Clara River to the north. California State Route 118 connects Simi Valley with Moorpark and the San Fernando Valley. Simi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

Table 22: Simi Valley Population Statistics

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

Note:
[1]Denominator is persons in housing units.
[2]Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021.; "Workplace Area Characteristics," LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Figure 16 Simi Valley Jobs by Industry



Most of the jobs are in professional services and the service sector, but there are also many jobs in the industrial and logistics sectors. The jobs in Simi Valley account for around 21 percent of the jobs in the study area. The inflow-outflow employment numbers indicate significant traffic coming to and from Simi Valley for work. Over 80 percent of Simi Valley residents commute elsewhere for work.

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

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

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

[PLACEHOLDER – Market Assessment Cutsheet]

Service Evaluation

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

SIMI VALLEY TRANSIT FARES

The City currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

Table 23: Agency Single-ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type

Service Type	Regular	Discounted[1]	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
Fixed Route	$1.50	$0.75	Free	Free	Free
Dial-A-Ride	-	$2.00	-	-	--

Notes:
1 Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.
Source: Agency websites.

FIXED-ROUTE

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

SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

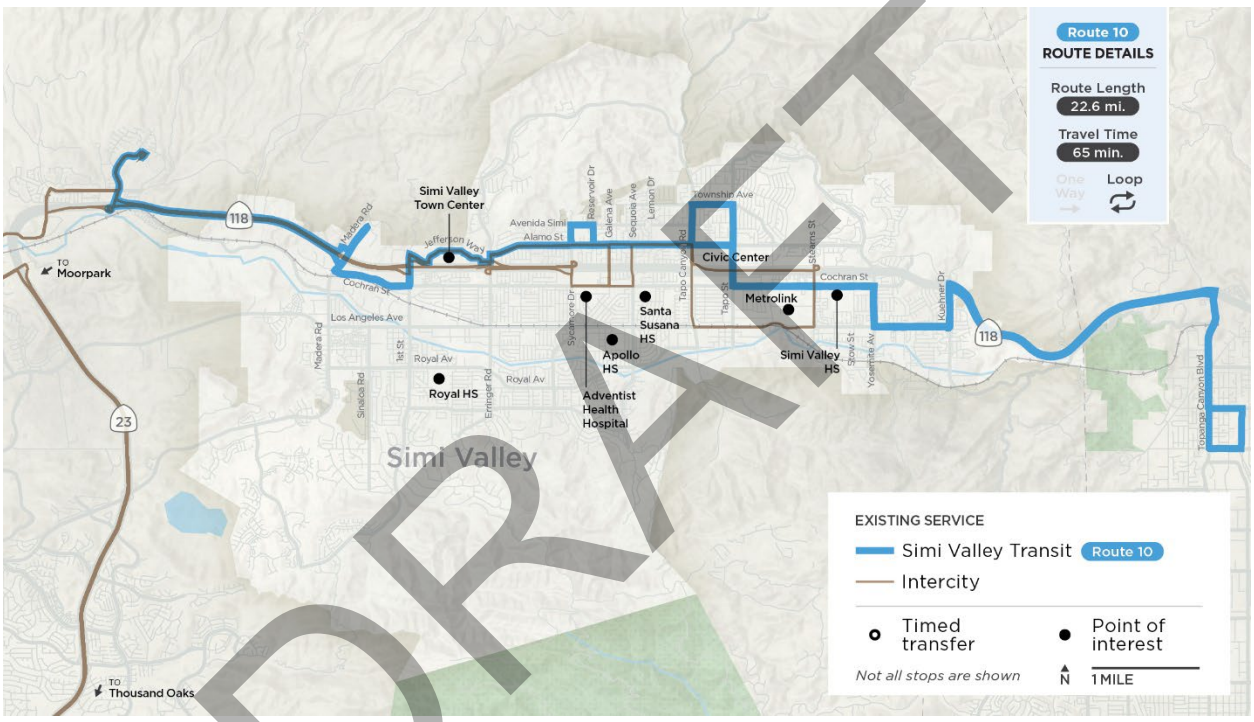
The Simi Valley Transit service span is Monday through Saturday from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., excluding designated holidays. Route 30 runs every 30 minutes on the half hour, while Route 20 and Route 10 have less regular schedules, with Route 20 alternating between 40 minute and 68 minute headways, and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

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

ROUTE 10

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

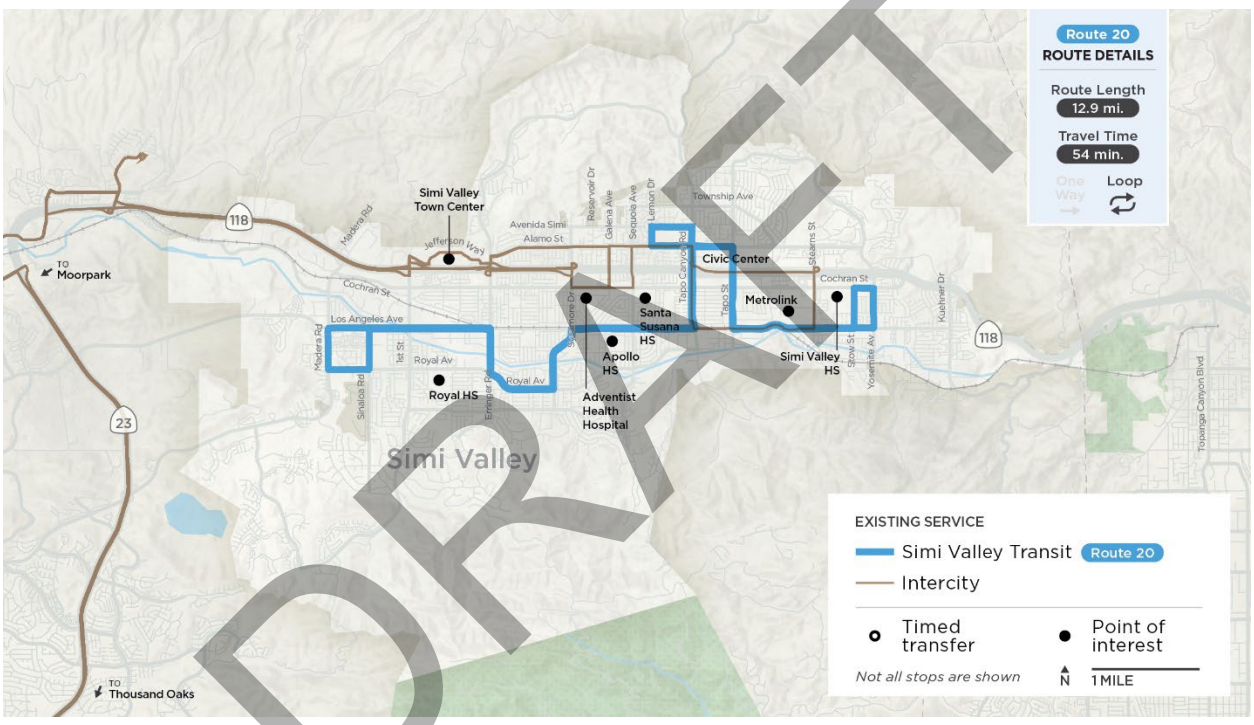
Figure 17: Simi Valley Route 10



ROUTE 20

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

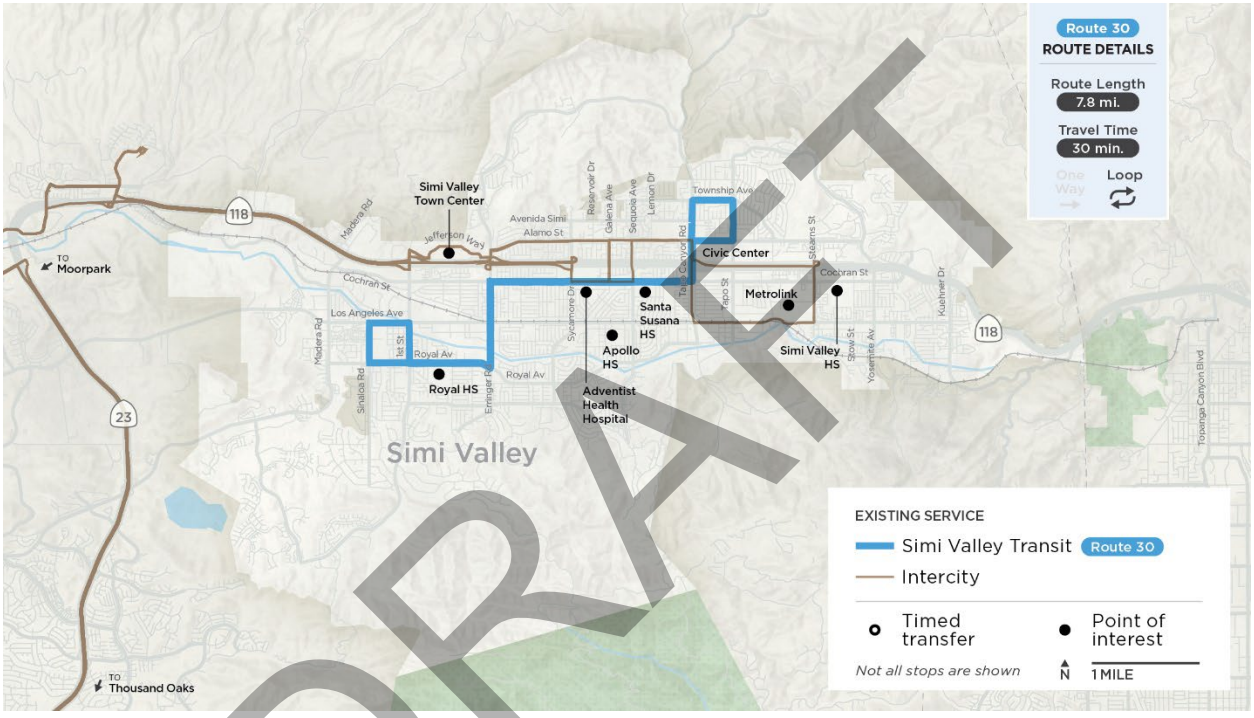
Figure 18: Simi Valley Route 20



ROUTE 30

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

Figure 19: Simi Valley Route 30



RIDERSHIP

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

While it is not possible to make a direct route-to-route comparison of ridership pre- and post-pandemic, nor compare the effectiveness of the restructured route system, we can gain a general understanding of how the old routes' ridership shares were trending downward, and how the ridership share has fluctuated as we emerge from the pandemic.

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

SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

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

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

The systemwide average fare per unlinked passenger trip was $0.75, which represents half of Simi Valey Transit's regular one-way fare. The average fare revenue per trip was higher for Route 10 and lowest for Route 20 in FY23. While Route 20 accounted for 37% of ridership in FY23, it only accounted for 31% of fare revenue. Table 24 summarizes average fare revenue per trip for each route by dividing each route's fare revenue for FY23 by unlinked passenger trips for the same period.

Table 24: Simi Valley Transit Fare Revenue by Route, FY23

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

ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY

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

EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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

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

[PLACEHOLDER – SIMI Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – SIMI Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

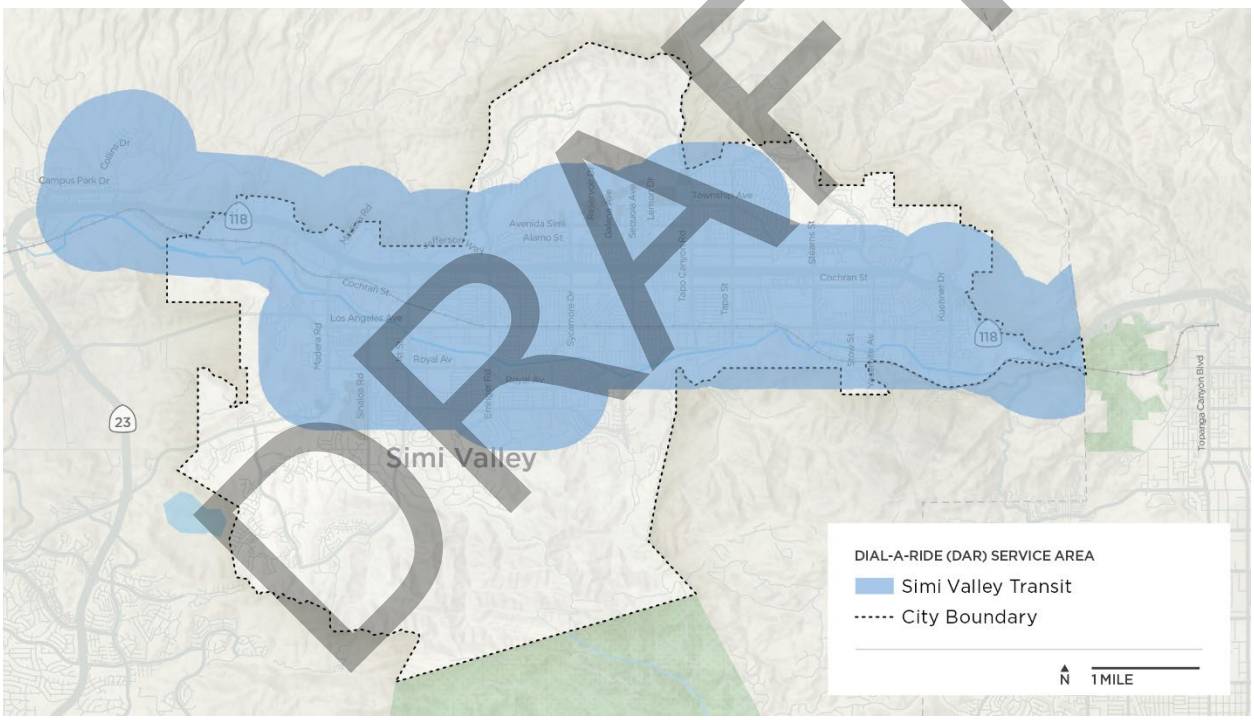
[PLACEHOLDER – SIMI Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

DEMAND RESPONSE

RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Simi Valley directly operates an ADA complementary paratransit program for persons certified as ADA eligible, as well as those over the age of 65. Figure 20 shows the extent of the service area.

Figure 20: Simi Valley Transit Dial-a-Ride Service Area



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Simi Valley Transit's Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Simi Valley Transit Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics

Simi Valley Transit Dial-a-Ride	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Passenger Trips	40,651	27,305	20,370	33,238	45,432
Revenue Hours	17,226	13,205	5,790	7,807	8,932
Revenue Miles	159,508	121,557	71,397	104,842	127,077
Operating Cost	$3,195,938	$2,773,761	$1,887,724	$2,180,872	$2,359,602
Pax per Hour	*2.4*	*2.1*	*3.5*	*4.3*	*5.1*
Pax per Mile	*0.3*	*0.2*	*0.3*	*0.3*	*0.4*
Cost per Pax	*$78.62*	*$101.58*	*$92.67*	*$65.61*	*$51.94*
Cost per Hour	*$185.53*	*$210.05*	*$326.03*	*$279.35*	*$264.17*
Cost per Mile	*$20.04*	*$22.82*	*$26.44*	*$20.80*	*$18.57*

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

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

OPERATIONS TOPICS

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

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

RESOURCES

Simi Valley operates its Dial-a-Ride program with a fleet of city-owned 12 paratransit vehicles, running 8 or 9 vehicles in peak service.

The call-taking staff has four full-time and four part-time employees with one open position between fixed route and Dial-a-Ride operations. Simi Valley Transit employs 11 paratransit drivers, and a single paratransit supervisor oversees operations.

TRIP SCHEDULING, DISPATCHING AND RIDER NOTIFICATIONS

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

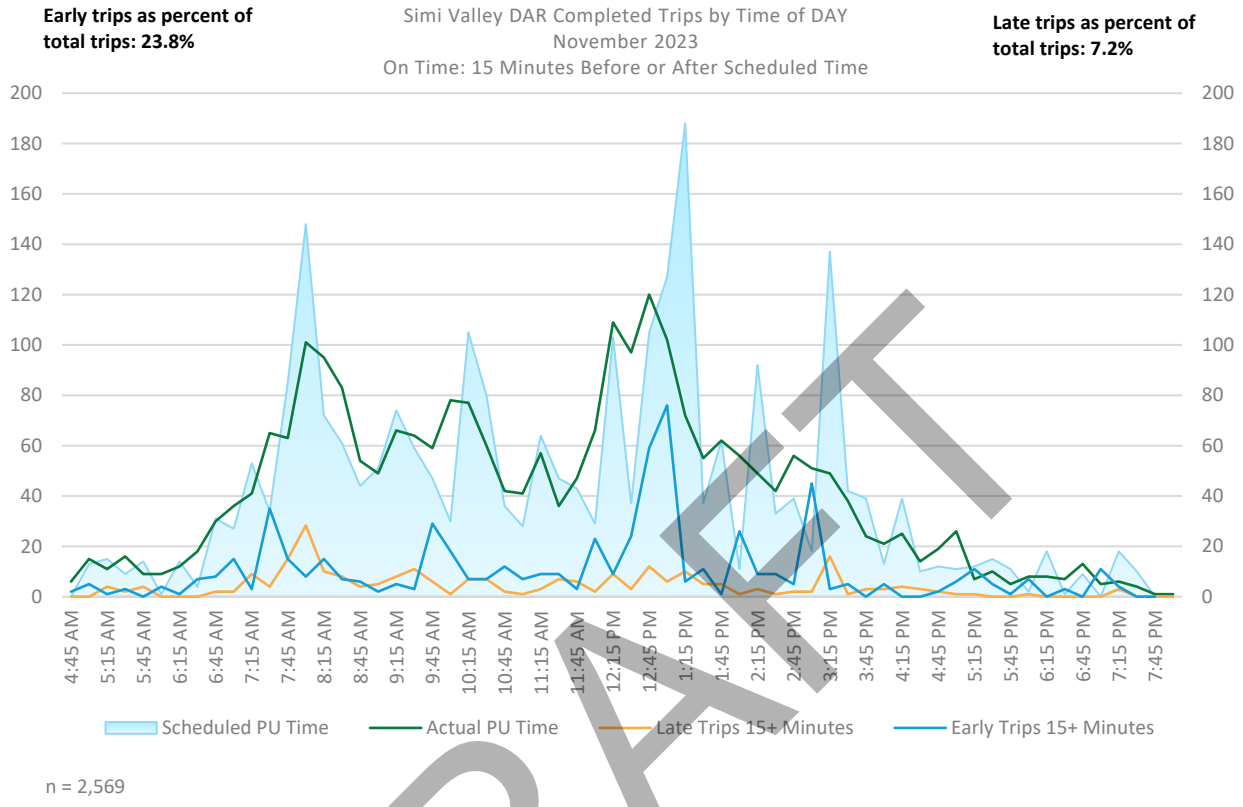
Ecolane sends text message notifications generated by the system with the actual time of pick-up about 5 minutes prior to the driver's arrival.

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is shown in Figure 21. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. Trips served outside of a 30-minute window, either 15 minutes before the scheduled time or 15 after the scheduled time, are calculated for determining on-time performance.

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

Figure 21: Simi Valley Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance



MICROTRANSIT

The City has been interested in exploring microtransit options to reach areas of the City that are currently underserved by existing transit. The Wood Ranch area is an example that might be better served by an on-demand service model. The desired model would deliver curb-to-curb service rather than the designated stop location model operated by the City of Moorpark.

Simi Valley Transit Gaps and Opportunities

PEOPLE

SENIORS

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

GENERAL POPULATION

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

STUDENTS

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

PLACES

COVERAGE

Much of the City is within walking distance of the routes, and the DAR program generally follows the required ¾ mile radius from the route. The southwest Wood Ranch area is underserved as are other neighborhood areas along the southern and northern edges.

WALKABILITY

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

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

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

SERVICE DESIGN

FIXED ROUTE DIRECTNESS

Simi Valley Transit routes are relatively direct, mainly turning

FIXED ROUTE FREQUENCY

Service frequency varies widely; Route 10 is hourly with some

SPAN

The route network span of service is relatively similar to

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

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

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

BALANCE OF SERVICES

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

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

10.THOUSAND OAKS

Market Assessment

The Thousand Oaks area is the second largest community in Ventura County in terms of population and jobs, after the Gold Coast service area, with a combined population of approximately 148,000 inclusive of Lynn Ranch, Lake Sherwood, Casa Conejo, and other unincorporated area. The Thousand Oaks area has a lower percentage of low-income households and car-light households than the County average. Thousand Oaks also has the highest median income of all communities in Ventura County, over $38,000 higher than the median income for the whole county.

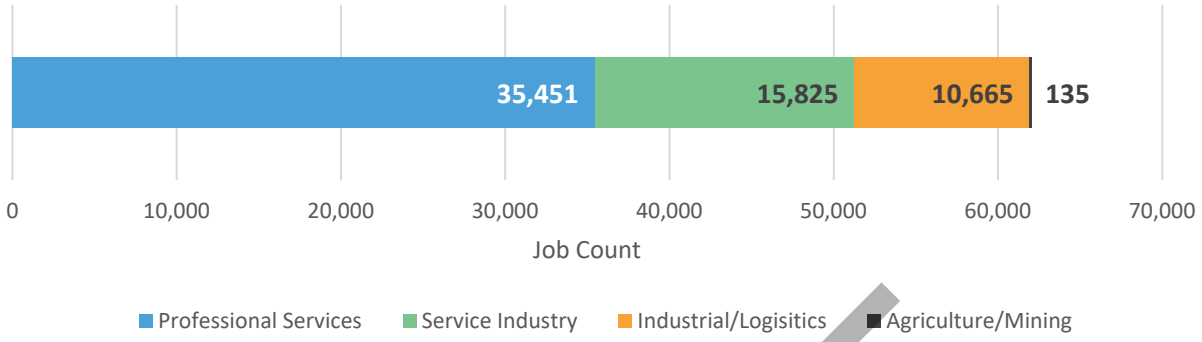
Thousand Oaks is located in southeastern Ventura County and is bordered by Los Angeles County to the south and east, Moorpark to the north, and Camarillo to the west. Thousand Oaks is separated from Camarillo by mountainous open space and the Conejo Grade. However, the City is relatively contiguous to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

Table 26: Thousand Oaks Demographics

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

Note:
[1]Denominator is persons in housing units.
[2]Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021.; "Workplace Area Characteristics," LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Figure 22: Thousand Oaks Jobs by Industry



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

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

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

The primary arterial roads are Lynn Road/Olson Road, Moorpark Road, and Hillcrest Road. Land uses are somewhat more diversified between Hillcrest Drive and US-101, while areas to the north and south feature winding and discontinuous residential neighborhoods with limited street connections to major arterials. The western reach of the City includes a significant light industrial/commercial zone centered on Rancho Conejo Boulevard.

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

[PLACEHOLDER – Market Assessment Cutsheet]

Service Evaluation

The Thousand Oaks service comprises fixed routes, ADA paratransit, and dial-a-ride service.

THOUSAND OAKS TRANSIT FARES

The City currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

Table 27: Agency Single-ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type

Service Type	Regular	Discounted[1]	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
Fixed Route	$2.00	$0.50	Free	Free	Free
Dial-A-Ride	-	$4.00	-	-	-

Notes:
1 Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.
Source: Agency websites.

FIXED ROUTE

Thousand Oaks Transit is a fixed route bus service in the city of Thousand Oaks and surrounding communities in southeastern Ventura County. Thousand Oaks Transit operates five local bus routes and one seasonal bus route to Zuma Beach and Ventura Harbor. The service is administered by the City of Thousand Oaks and operated under contract.

SERVICE AND SCEHDULES

Thousand Oaks Transit's fixed route service operates from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The network of bus routes pulses approximately hourly throughout the day, with some additional early-morning trips that operate weekdays only.

The fixed route network is structured as a combination of loop and linear routes, prioritizing coverage and allowing for easy transfers at key hubs. The service provides access to major residential neighborhoods, business centers, shopping districts, and educational institutions within Thousand Oaks. Key routes also extend into nearby areas, such as Westlake Village and unincorporated sections of Ventura County, expanding accessibility for riders traveling between Thousand Oaks and neighboring communities.

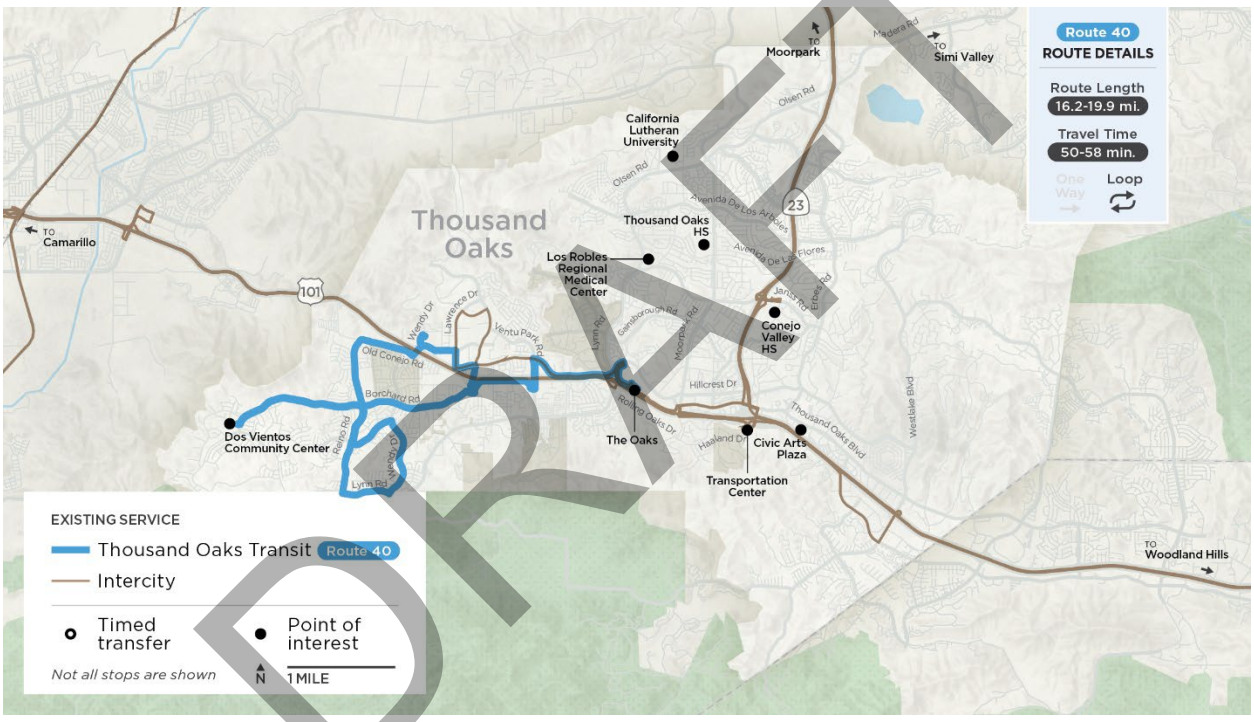
VCTC Intercity's East County and Highway 101 routes provide regional service to the Thousand Oaks community via transit stops at The Oaks and the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center. All of Thousand Oaks Transit's routes serve The Oaks and a subset also serve the Transportation Center. VCTC Intercity provides regional connections from Thousand Oaks to Moorpark, Simi Valley, Ventura, Oxnard, and Woodland Hills. VCTC's East County service provides additional local service within Thousand Oaks, extending beyond The Oaks to make four stops around Conejo Industrial Park.

ROUTE 40 – NEWBURY PARK

Route 40 serves the southern and western neighborhoods of Thousand Oaks and Newbury Park. This route features 30 stops along Borchard Road and Reino Road. Key destinations include retail centers, the Thousand Oaks Community Center, and Newbury Park High School. In FY23, Route 40 had 135 average daily boardings, the highest of all Thousand Oaks routes. Compared with other routes in the network, Route 40 has a slightly wider range of land uses it connects across neighborhoods, commercial areas, and civic or school destinations on its route.

Route 40 connects with other routes and services at The Oaks.

Figure 23: Thousand Oaks Route 40

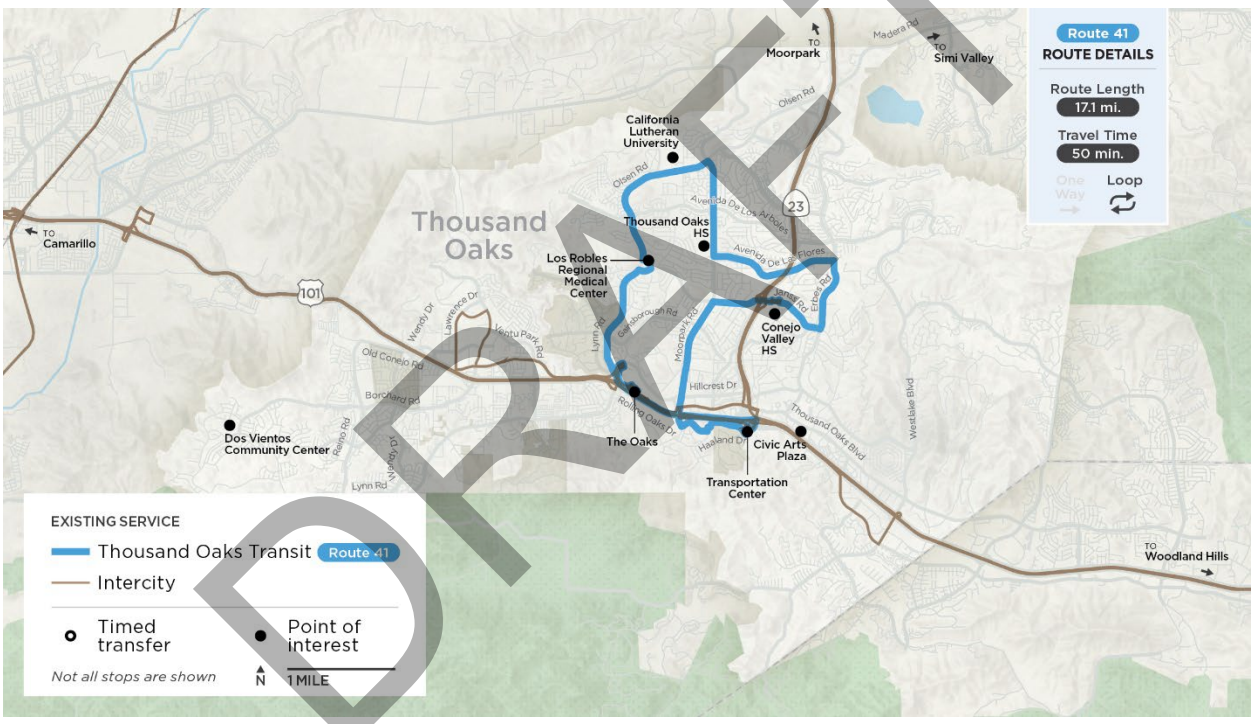


ROUTE 41 – MIDTOWN A

Route 41 provides east-west transit coverage through central Thousand Oaks, serving 17 stops along Lynn Road, Avenida de los Arboles, Moorpark Road, and other key corridors. The route includes stops at Rolling Oaks Drive, Gainsborough Road, and Wilbur Road, among others. Route 41 mostly serves residential areas, as well as destinations including Los Robles Hospital, California Lutheran University (Cal Lutheran), Thousand Oaks High School, the Teen & Senior Centers/Library, and the Transportation Center.

Transfer points at The Oaks and the Transportation Center facilitate connections to other routes and regional transit services.

Figure 24: Thousand Oaks Route 41

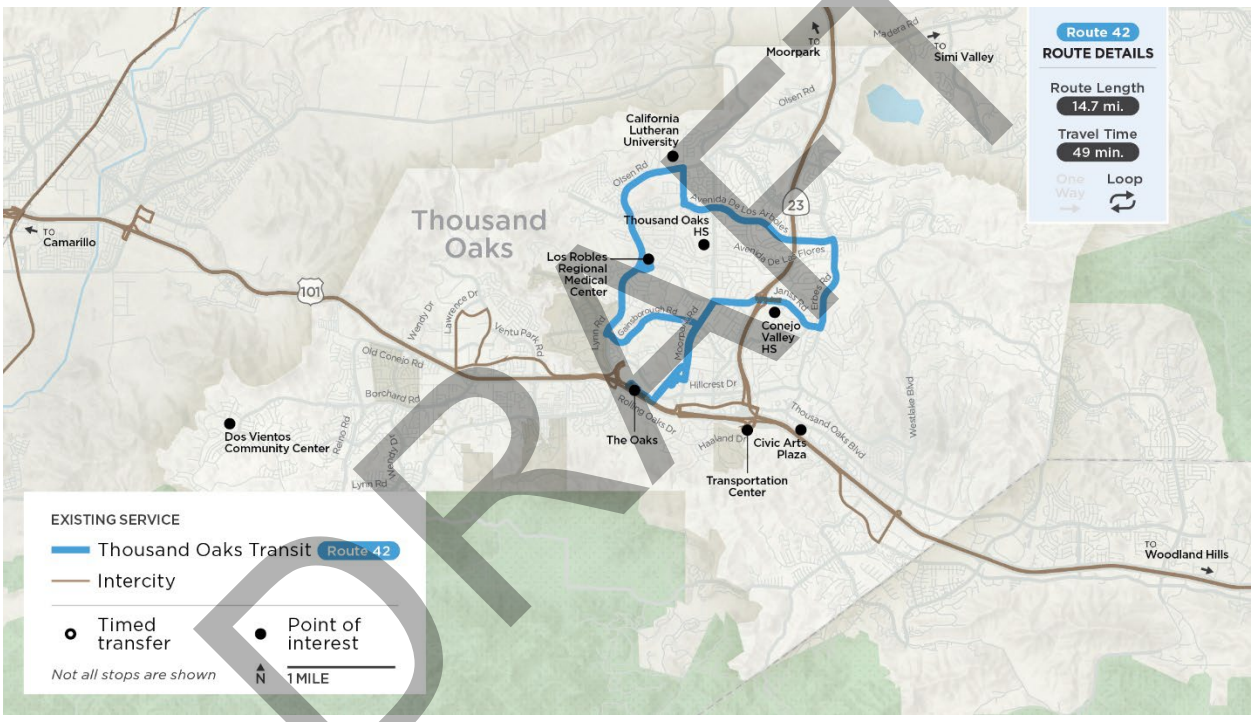


ROUTES 42 – MIDTOWN B

Route 42 offers east-west coverage through central Thousand Oaks, complementing Route 41 with a distinct alignment while serving many of the same major destinations. This route includes 22 stops, traveling along key thoroughfares such as Janss Road, Avenida de Los Arboles, Olsen Road, Erbes Road, and Moorpark Road. Route 42 serves mostly residential areas, as well as destinations including Conejo Valley High School, California Lutheran University (Cal Lutheran), Thousand Oaks High School, and Los Robles Hospital.

Route 42 connects with other routes and services at The Oaks.

Figure 25: Thousand Oaks Route 42

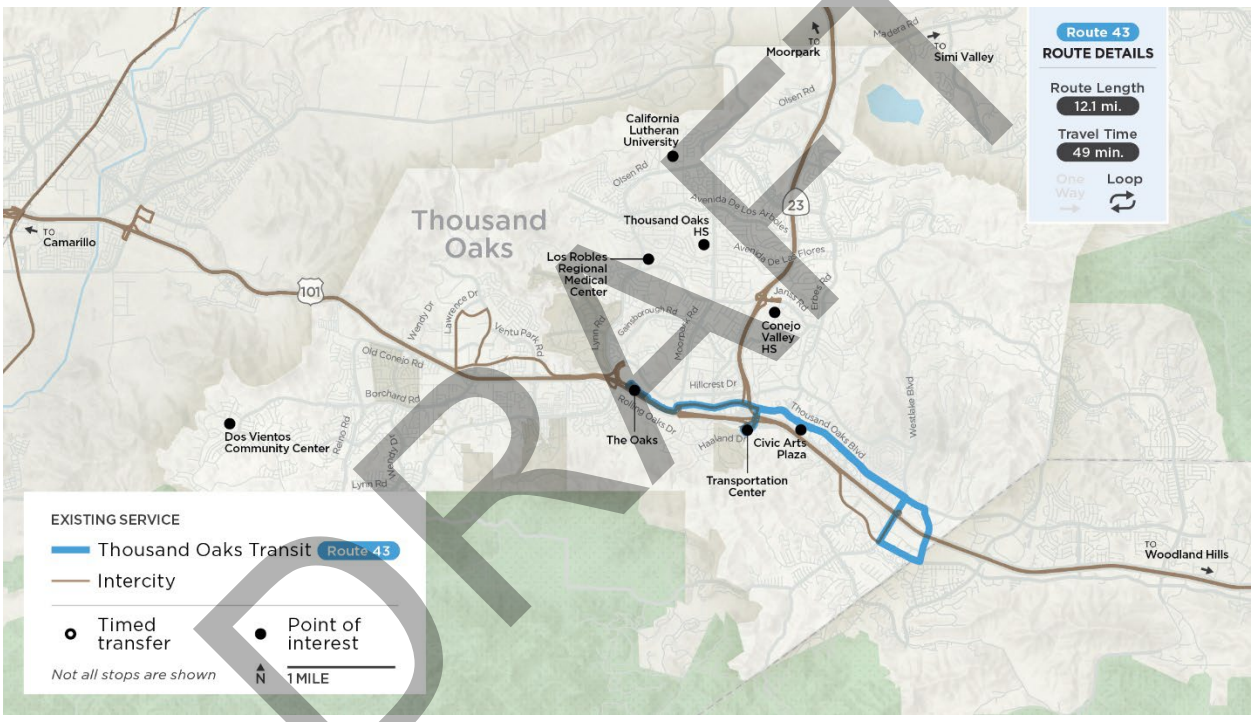


ROUTES 43 – TOB EXPRESS

Route 43 provides service to the southeast corner of the city along Thousand Oaks Boulevard. Destinations include the Civic Arts Plaza, Grant R. Brimhall Library, and key retail centers. Route 43 has relatively fewer homes within a short walk of its stops than most other Thousand Oaks routes, but as a hub-and-spoke network, residents from areas to the north or west can connect to this route to reach the commercial district to the east. This is reflected as Route 43 has the second-highest ridership in the network after Route 40. During FY23 Route 43 saw an average of 123 daily boardings.

The route also features transfer points at The Oaks and the Transportation Center.

Figure 26: Thousand Oaks Route 43

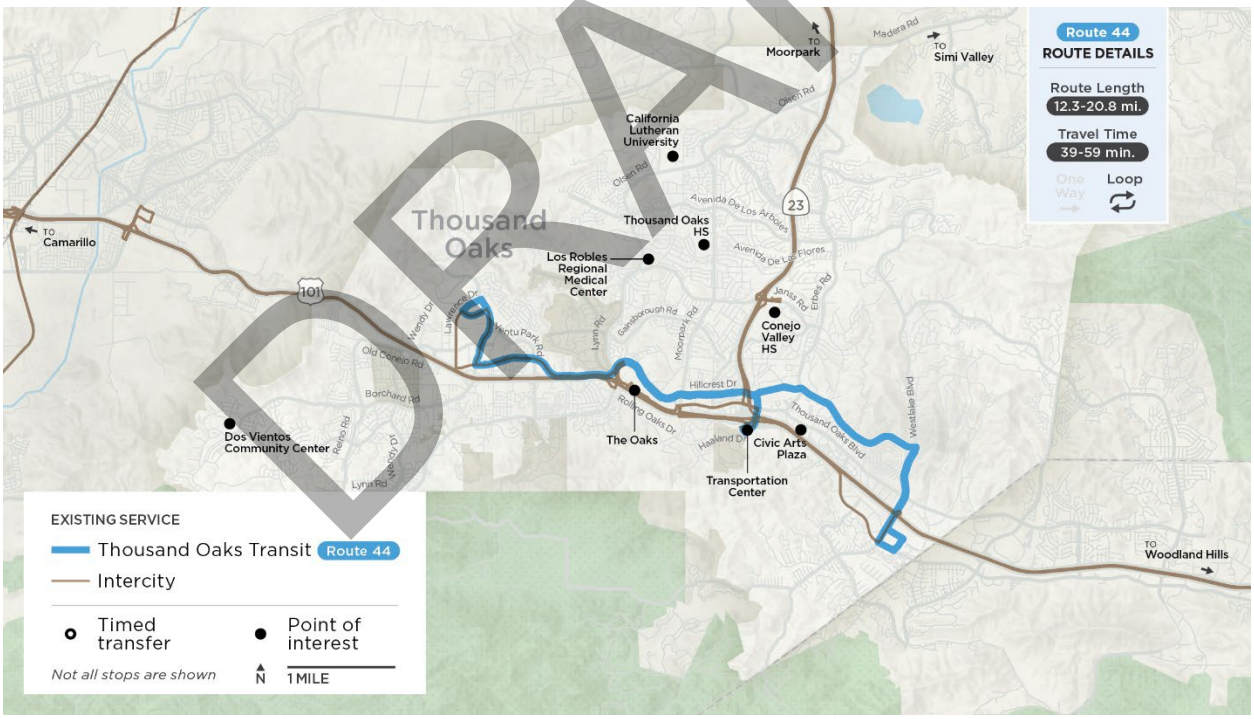


ROUTES 44 – CROSSTOWN

Route 44 offers east-west coverage across Thousand Oaks, connecting the Transportation Center with destinations in Westlake and Newbury Park. This route includes 35 stops on Rancho Conejo Boulevard and Hillcrest Drive, among other roads. Key destinations include Colina Middle School, Amgen, Westlake High School, and the surrounding business parks. Route 44 had an average of 53 daily boardings in FY23, the lowest of all routes.

Compared with most other Thousand Oaks routes, Route 44 operates in a more straight-line fashion along a single major corridor and is the only route not to divert from Hillcrest Drive to serve the main bus stop at The Oaks, meaning riders transferring to other routes must happen at other on-street stops or at the Transit Center. These are potential contributors to the lower ridership, as is the land use within walking distance. For example, on the east end of the route although it is closer to many homes south of Hillcrest Drive, the land use to the north (or to the east of Westlake Boulevard) is generally low density residential or open space. Likewise, a long stretch of Hillcrest drive from The Oaks to Ventu Park Road runs along US-101 rather than homes or businesses.

Figure 27: Thousand Oaks Route 44



RIDERSHIP

Annual ridership for Thousand Oaks Transit was relatively stable from 2014 until about 2018. Some operational adjustments to vehicle service hours and miles correspond to fluctuations in ridership, but a decrease in FY17 preceded a downward trend into 2020, at which point ridership declined as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership dropped sharply to its lowest point of 70,606 in FY21. Service adjustments, including fare-free operations and reduced service hours, were implemented to address the challenges of the pandemic while maintaining essential services.

Ridership began to recover in FY22, with steady growth into FY23 and stabilization in FY24. By FY23, total ridership was approaching its pre-pandemic conditions. All routes have seen positive growth in FY24 compared with the low point in FY21.

Route 40 has the highest ridership on weekdays, accounting for 28% of weekday trips. However, Route 43 sees higher ridership on weekends, with 26% of all weekend trips. Although Routes 41 and 42 have a similar alignment, Route 41 captures a higher share of ridership on both weekdays and weekends. Finally, Route 44 has the lowest share of ridership, accounting for only 10% of weekday trips and 14% of weekend trips.

SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

Compared to transit agencies in the region, Thousand Oaks Transit has been more successful in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Service productivity increased at the system level to an average of 7.0 passenger trips per revenue hour, a 5% improvement compared to FY19. The Service Evaluation graphics on the following pages illustrate that route-level productivity range from 10.2 passengers per hour on Route 40 to fewer than 4 passengers per revenue hour on Route 44. Route 43 is the most productive Saturday route with 6.9 passengers per hour, and all routes on Saturdays range between 40 and 80 riders.

The systemwide average fare revenue per unlinked passenger trip in FY23 was $0.53, which is 71% lower than the base fare of $2.00. This disparity suggests a significant proportion of the ridership are eligible for discounted rates or free trips, such as students. Table 28 summarizes average fare revenue per trip, which divides total fare revenue for FY23 by total unlinked passenger trips for the same period.

Table 28: Thousand Oaks Transit Fare Revenue by Route, FY23

Route	Farebox Revenue	Average Fare Revenue per Trip	Regular One-Way Fare
40	$22,199.83	$0.53	$2.00
41	$18,415.73	$0.60	$2.00
42	$15,566.28	$0.63	$2.00
43	$22,728.95	$0.59	$2.00
44	$10,411.11	$0.63	$2.00

ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY

Thousand Oaks Transit received a total of 88 on-board survey responses. Most respondents to the survey were satisfied with their overall experience of bus service in Thousand Oaks. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.49 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus operators and the safety onboard the bus. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were the need to transfer during a journey and bus schedules being readily available.

EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Between FY14 and FY23, annual operating costs rose by 141%, while annual ridership was about 9% lower. Although the cost increase is steep, Thousand Oaks has fared better than many agencies in terms of attracting riders back to transit following the pandemic to maintain overall productivity and cost efficiency.

Operating costs per trip increased by 11% over the last five years. Similarly, operating costs per revenue hour and per revenue mile rose by 16% and 18%, respectively.

[PLACEHOLDER – TOAKS Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – TOAKS Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

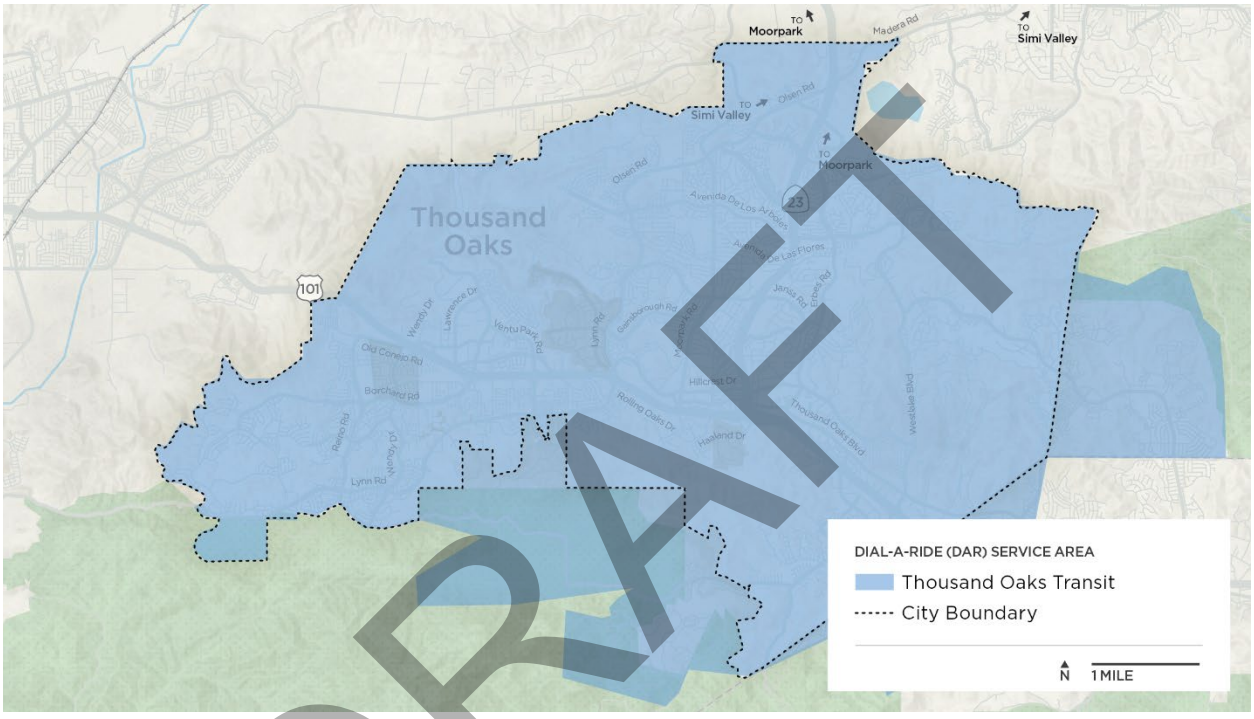
[PLACEHOLDER – TOAKS Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

DEMAND RESPONSE

RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride (TO DAR) is an ADA complementary paratransit program, serving persons certified as ADA and seniors. Figure 28 shows the extent of the service area.

Figure 28: Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride Service Area



Trips that originate within the city but travel outside the city are served by the East County Transit Alliance (ECTA) Intercity dial-a-ride.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Thousand Oaks' Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 29.

Table 29: Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics

Thousand Oaks DAR	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Passenger Trips	62,855	43,548	32,469	30,488	26,686
Revenue Hours	26,868	19,501	17,869	15,158	12,233
Revenue Miles	377,898	293,920	309,543	238,679	218,130
Operating Cost	$2,306,029	$2,031,936	$1,946,223	$2,194,138	$2,220,548
Pax per Hour	*2.34*	*2.23*	*1.82*	*2.01*	*2.2*
Pax per Mile	*0.17*	*0.15*	*0.10*	*0.13*	*0.1*
Cost per Pax	*$36.69*	*$46.66*	*$59.94*	*$71.97*	
Cost per Hour	*$85.83*	*$104.20*	*$108.92*	*$144.75*	*$181.52*
Cost per Mile	*$6.10*	*$6.91*	*$6.29*	*$9.19*	*$10.18*

Passenger trips have continually declined since 2019, while overall operating costs have remained roughly even. Revenue hours have decreased more than 50% since 2019 and revenue miles have decreased by 40%. With constant operating costs and reduced revenue hours, the operating cost per hour has increased by 110% or almost $100 since FY19, and costs per mile have increased by over $4.00 in the last four years.

OPERATIONS TOPICS

Thousand Oaks has a significantly sized demand response program, although at 27,000 annual trips in FY23, it is down 57% from its pre-pandemic level of 62,000 annual trips. The City of Thousand Oaks is the hub of a multi-community system, holding contracts as the operator for the City of Moorpark and ECTA services, as well as Los Angeles County small programs in Agoura Hills, Oak Park, and Westlake Village.

RESOURCES

Staffing generally associated with the TO demand response program, (with some overlap to the other services) includes 4 call-taker positions receiving calls on one dial-a-ride number and one fixed route number.

There are currently 35 drivers, compared to 60 positions pre-COVID-19 for both fixed route and dial-a-ride combined. Notably, the 60% reduction in revenue hours since the Pandemic has reduced the numbers of drivers needed. Current driver positions associated with TO-managed demand response services are:

- 7 to 8 Dial-a-Ride (for Thousand Oaks and Moorpark)
- 2 to 3 ECTA Dial-a-Ride

Each driver is qualified to drive any vehicle, to ensure easy replacement of either driver or vehicle, as necessary during the service day.

TRIP SCHEDULING, DISPATCHING AND RIDER NOTIFICATIONS

Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride uses Trapeze to book/schedule trips, and to provide driver manifests which are downloaded to vehicle tablets

The Trapeze software batch schedules the trips around 11:00 p.m. to create the driver manifests for the following day. The lead dispatcher reviews these around 4:00 a.m. and again midday to address any changes or issues.

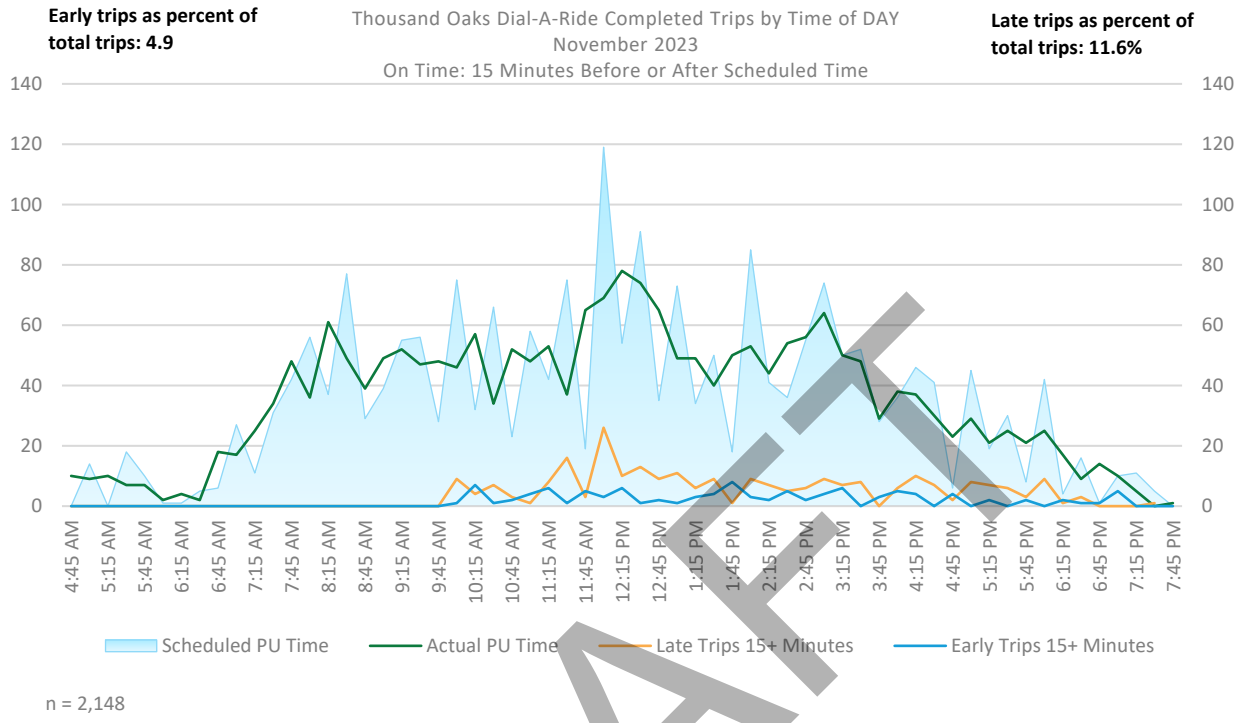
Riders receive automated calls 20 minutes in advance of arrival, through the Ripple system. This is understood to be actual time and not scheduled pick-up time. Generally, the dispatcher is only involved in calling the rider if something has gone wrong.

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented in Figure 21. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. Trips served outside of a 30-minute window, either 15 minutes before the scheduled time or 15 after the scheduled time, are calculated for determining on-time performance.

Trip demand for Thousand Oaks Dial-A-Ride is steady throughout the morning and peaks in the early afternoon with trip bookings nearly doubling at noon. The system is shown to be over capacity in the afternoon and struggles with late trips throughout the afternoon. Early trips are recorded at almost 5% of all trips while late trips account for almost 12% of trips delivered.

Figure 29: Thousand Oaks Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance



n = 2,148

TRANSFERS

Transfers between demand response services are seen to be a necessary option, even if the numbers are small, for those needing to make longer cross-county trips. TO managers do not see one-seat rides (on demand response) as either financially realistic or practical in terms of losing a vehicle from the immediate service area to make the long trip.

Thousand Oaks Transit Gaps and Opportunities

PEOPLE

SENIORS

Routes consistently cover the majority of the community ensuring basic access, but most homes are not a short walk to a bus stop and the fixed-route service may be difficult for people with limited mobility. The City reserves its DAR program specifically for seniors and people with disabilities which ensures capacity for the residents who are most likely to need mobility support.

GENERAL POPULATION

Coverage and frequency of routes is quite good given the population density, and despite the built environment limiting walking access to service. The routes are generally oriented to connect the more residential northern areas to the civic and commercial destinations in the southern/central areas, and to regional transit connections.

STUDENTS

Middle and high schools are served by routes, but the walk access for most homes may be a barrier for many students, and the large geography of the City can be challenging to align service schedules with school start and end times.

PLACES

COVERAGE

Overall service coverage is good – much of the City is near at least one route, and the design is oriented to make the most efficient trips despite large, winding, hilly roads. Most service funnels through the economic center parallel to US-101.

WALKABILITY

Walkability is a major challenge for the community. Bus stops are relatively infrequent along each route, as are safe road crossing opportunities. Most homes are not a short walk to the nearest bus stop. Many businesses are set far back from the main road by large parking lots.

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The City has no direct train connection and relies more on VCTC Intercity service to Moorpark or Camarillo for longer-distance regional connections. Connectivity to Simi Valley is limited and runs via Moorpark. Northeast Thousand Oaks and some portions of Newbury Park are underserved.

SERVICE DESIGN

FIXED ROUTE DIRECTNESS

Thousand Oaks operates a hub-and-spoke system where routes generally converge at The Oaks

FIXED ROUTE FREQUENCY

All routes effectively operate on an hourly pulse from The Oaks, which is ideal for predictability

SPAN

The route network span of service is relatively similar to most Ventura County

and riders from one part of town must transfer to reach another. This is a common service design, but can make service seem indirect. For example, riders from the mostly-residential northern reach of the city almost certainly have to transfer for most trips unless their final destination is at or near The Oaks, because most non-residential land uses are to the east and west along Thousand Oaks Bl.

and guaranteed transfers in a hub-based network. More frequent service is always ideal, but given the built environment and character of the city, hourly frequency has still attracted consistent ridership compared to ten years ago. As student ridership is likely a significant market, predictable schedules timed with school bells is more important than operating service slightly more often.

communities, with services beginning somewhat earlier. Based on the travel market analysis, there may be justification to offer service through 8 p.m. (an additional hour) to capture more of the overall trip activity.

BALANCE OF SERVICES

Thousand Oaks offers substantial coverage for its senior/ADA DAR program, which is sensible given the built environment which presents a significant challenge for people with limited mobility to walk to a bus route.

The eligibility and fares between the fixed route and the DAR program are delineated such that people who can use the bus routes are incentivized to by its lower cost. Thousand Oaks does not offer DAR to the general public nor does it have a general public microtransit service.

11. SANTA CLARA RIVER VALLEY: SANTA PAULA, FILLMORE & PIRU

Market Assessment

The Santa Clara River Valley—comprised of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and the unincorporated community of Piru—is located in north-central Ventura County. Sometimes referred to as the Heritage Valley, the Santa Clara River Valley is the third smallest community in Ventura County in terms of population (about 52,000 including the three communities) and jobs. Santa Paula and Fillmore have a higher percentage of low-income households than the average for Ventura County as well as a higher proportion of youths and car-light households shown in California State Route 126 connects Santa Paula and Fillmore with Ventura and Los Angeles County. State Route 150 connects Santa Paula with Ojai, and State Route 23 connects Fillmore with Moorpark. Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru are each separated by six to seven miles of farmland along Route 126. They each have traditional street grids with relatively mixed land uses and walkable streets that reflect pre-war development patterns. Each of these individual communities has experienced significant large-scale housing developments in recent years, expanding their footprint. The recent residential developments feature internal street grids but are located far from the traditional community centers and are comprised exclusively of residential and school land uses.

Table 30. The median household income for Santa Clara River Valley is the lowest in Ventura County, almost $25,000 lower than the rest of the County.

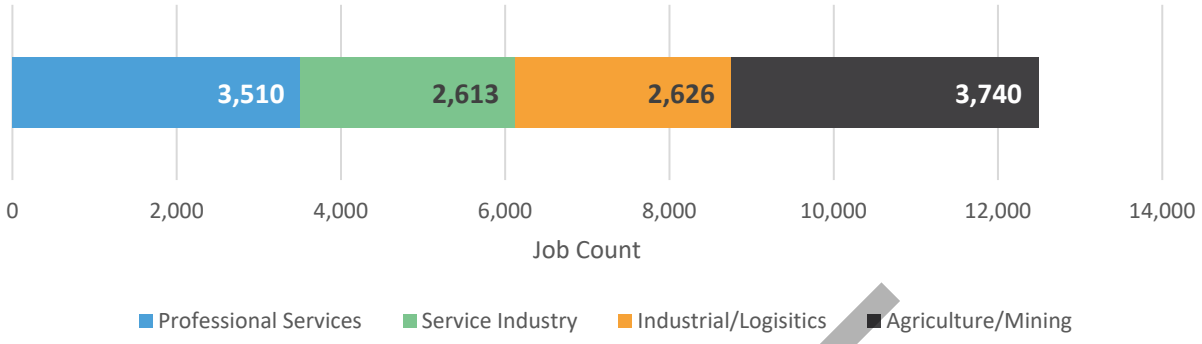
California State Route 126 connects Santa Paula and Fillmore with Ventura and Los Angeles County. State Route 150 connects Santa Paula with Ojai, and State Route 23 connects Fillmore with Moorpark. Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru are each separated by six to seven miles of farmland along Route 126. They each have traditional street grids with relatively mixed land uses and walkable streets that reflect pre-war development patterns. Each of these individual communities has experienced significant large-scale housing developments in recent years, expanding their footprint. The recent residential developments feature internal street grids but are located far from the traditional community centers and are comprised exclusively of residential and school land uses.

Table 30: Santa Clara River Valley/Heritage Valley Demographics

	Santa Clara River Valley/Heritage Valley	Percent Share	
	Count	Santa Clara River Valley/Heritage Valley	Ventura County
Residential population	**51,952**	-	-
Senior citizens (ages 65+)	6,565	13%	16%
Youth (ages 10-17)	7,546	15%	11%
Low-income individuals[1]	6,511	13%	9%
Households	**14,866**	-	-
Car-light households[2]	2,851	19%	15%
Jobs	**12,489**	-	-
	Santa Clara River Valley/Heritage Valley	**Ventura County**	
Median Household Income	**$69,205**	$94,167	

Note:
[1]Denominator is persons in housing units.
[2]Defined as any household with zero vehicles or households with two or more people and one vehicle.
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021.; "Workplace Area Characteristics," LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021.

Figure 30 Santa Clara River Valley/Heritage Valley Jobs by Industry



Over 80 percent of Santa Clara River Valley residents commute elsewhere for work, a higher share than average for the County. Just under 7,000 people commute to the Santa Clara River Valley area from neighboring communities for work. Agriculture and mining account for the largest category of jobs in the community, followed by jobs in professional services, the service sector, and the industrial/logistics sector. Job density in Santa Paula and Fillmore is highest in the areas surrounding California State Routes 126 and in downtown areas like South 10th Street, Main Street, and Ventura Street. Many of Santa Paula and Fillmore's top employers are located along these major routes.

Three-quarters of all vehicle trips in the Santa Clara River Valley area begin and end within the area. The Ventura-Oxnard (Gold Coast service area) region is an important external destination, accounting for 19 percent of vehicle trips originating in the Santa Clara River Valley communities. The high concentration of travel to the Ventura-Oxnard area is likely a direct result of crossing the challenging mountain range to the south, and the high degree of services and commerce to the west. Santa Clarita to the east in Los Angeles County is also an important destination for these communities but no regular transit service operates between them.

[PLACEHOLDER – Market Assessment Cutsheet]

Service Evaluation

The Valley Express service comprises both fixed routes and dial-a-ride service.

VALLEY EXPRESS FARES

Valley Express currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

Table 31: Agency Single-ticket Fares and Discounts by Service Type

Service Provider	Regular	Discounted[1]	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
Fixed Route	$1.25	$0.60	Free	Free	Free
Dial-A-Ride	$2.00	$2.00	$2.00	$2.00	$2.00

Notes:
1 Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.
Source: Agency websites.

FIXED-ROUTE

Valley Express operates a fixed-route bus service within Ventura County that serves the cities of Fillmore and Santa Paula, as well as the unincorporated community of Piru.

In late summer 2024, Valley Express implemented a Fillmore-Moorpark route, fulfilling a long-standing request from the community for direct service over the mountains and connecting to Moorpark College. The service had not been implemented at the time of this analysis, but operates a fairly direct route from the Fillmore Terminal south on State Route 23 to Moorpark, serving a few stops in downtown Moorpark and to Moorpark College, with regular service through 7 p.m. as well as limited trips on weekends.

SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

Valley Express operates four primary routes, plus two seasonal tripper routes during the school year. The service is administered by VCTC and operated under contract.

Valley Express fixed-route service span varies by route, operating approximately from 6:00 a.m. to 7:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. Weekend service in Santa Paula and Piru runs from 8:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. When initially launched, Santa Paula routes operated a more consistent all-day schedule, but by 2017, a decision was made to eliminate any trip carrying fewer than a certain threshold of passengers on average, resulting in an unusually fragmented schedule. The Fillmore, Piru, and new Fillmore-Moorpark routes all operate relatively regular schedules throughout the day.

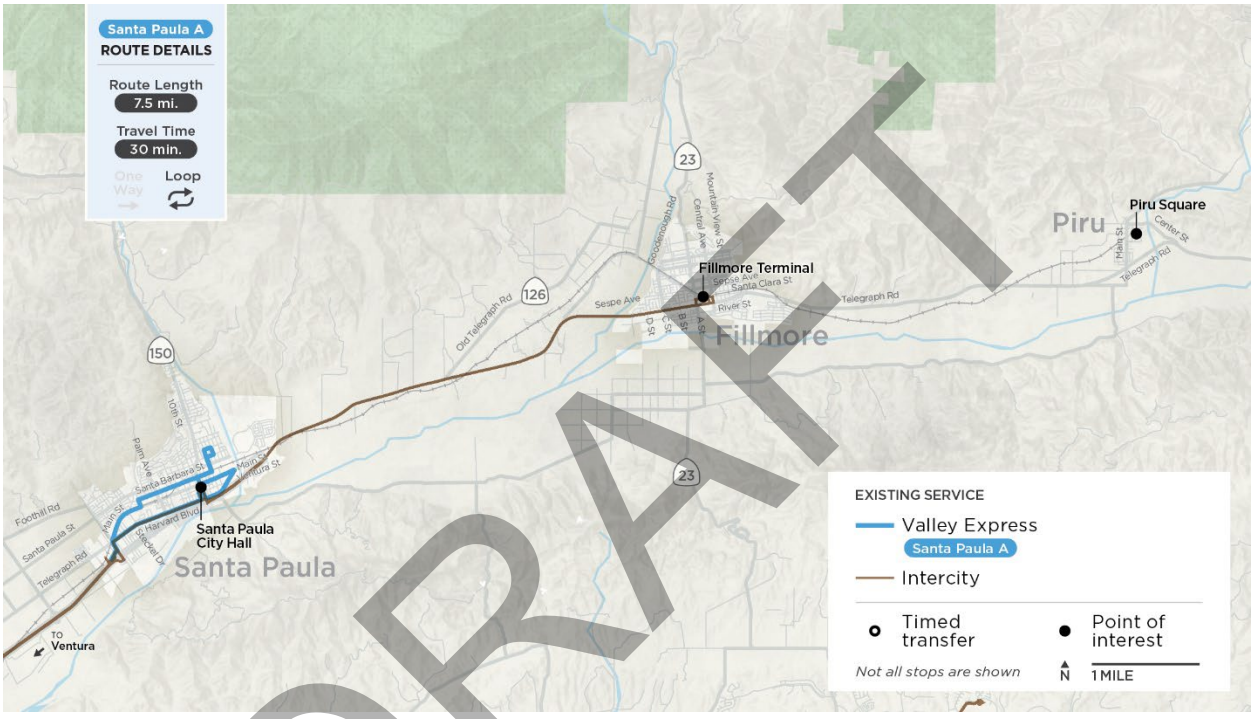
VCTC Intercity's Highway 126 routes provide intercity service within the Heritage Valley as well as regional connections to Saticoy and Ventura. The Highway 126 routes operate seven days a week and make local stops at the former Santa Paula Kmart, Santa Paula DMV, Santa Paula City Hall, and Fillmore

Terminal but does not extend to Piru. Riders can transfer from any of the Valley Express fixed routes to the VCTC Intercity service.

SANTA PAULA ROUTE A

Santa Paula Route A operates along Main Street, Santa Paula Street, and Harvard Boulevard with 27 stops, providing access to Santa Paula Hospital, local schools, and shopping centers. In FY24, Route A had 3 average daily boardings, likely due to the extremely limited operating schedule and long gaps between trips.

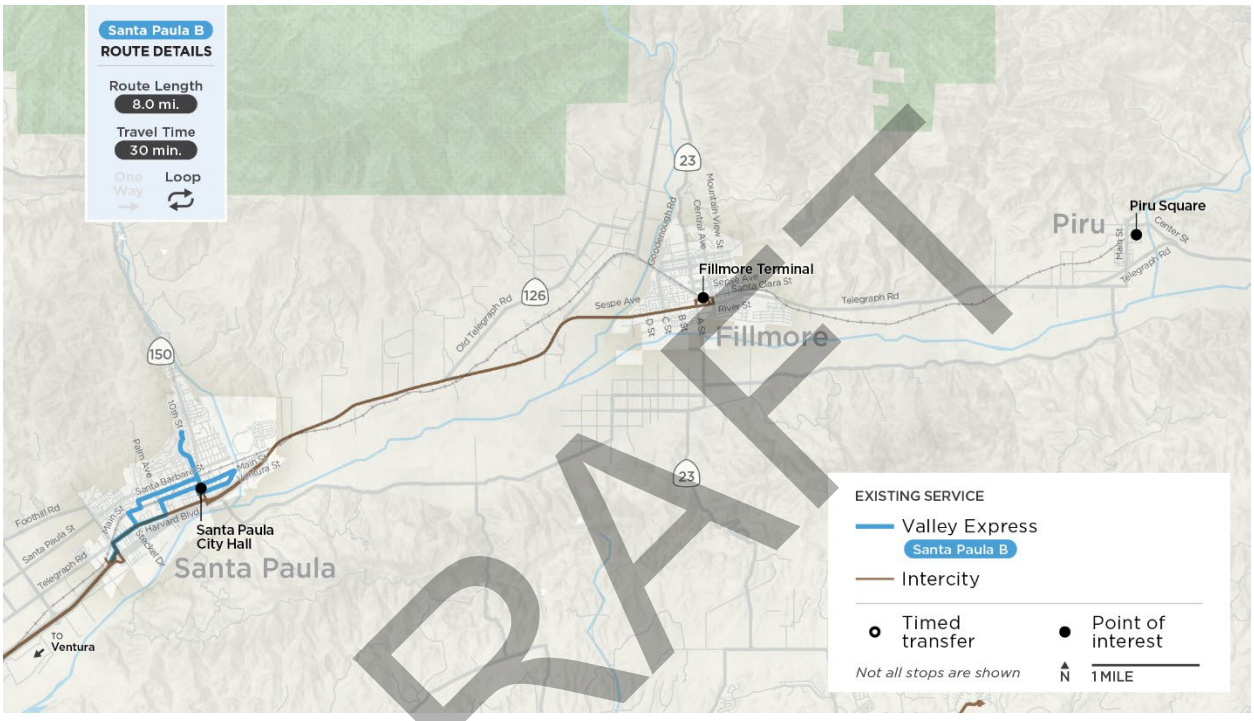
Figure 31: Valley Express Santa Paula Route A



SANTA PAULA ROUTE B

Santa Paula Route B covers 10th Street, Ojai Road, and Santa Barbara Street with about 32 stops, serving Las Piedras Park and shopping plazas. In FY24, Route B had 2 average daily boardings, likely due to the extremely limited operating schedule.

Figure 32: Valley Express Santa Paula Route B



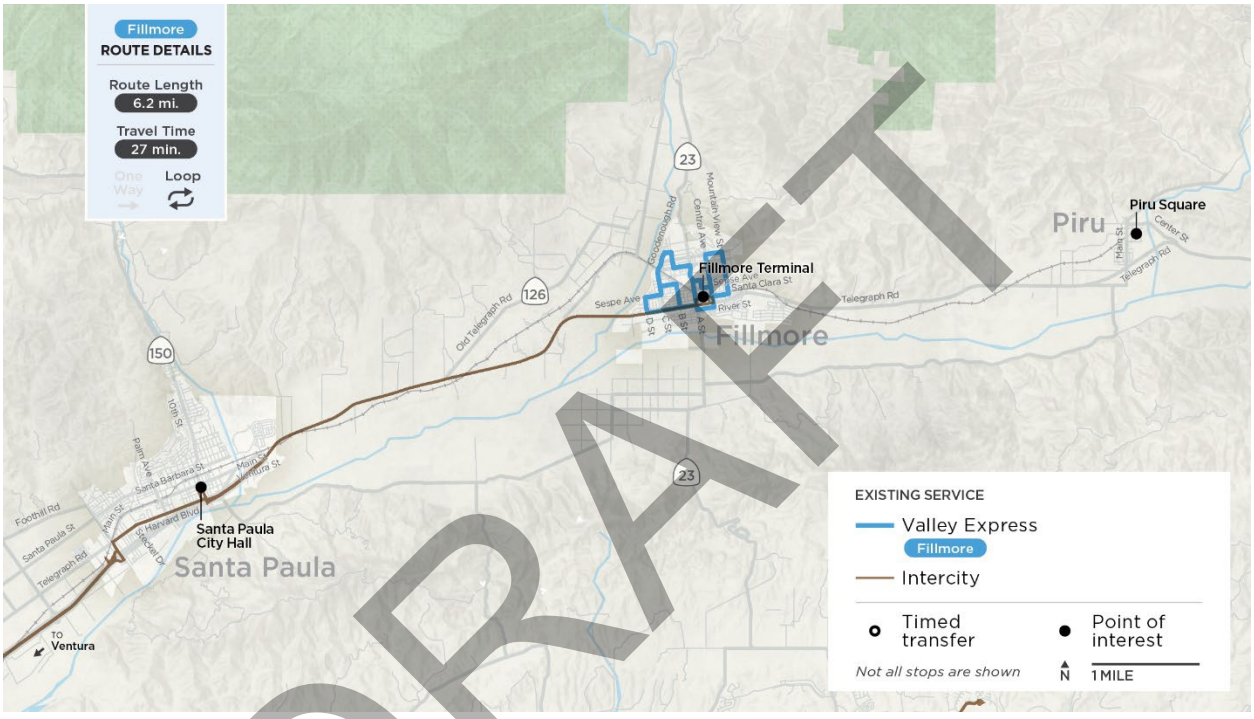
SANTA PAULA TRIPPER

Santa Paula Tripper (not shown) runs once a day during school days starting at 7:00 a.m., along Harvard Boulevard, Santa Paula Street, and 12th Street, with designated stops at or near schools. In FY24, the Santa Paula Tripper had 1 average daily boarding. However, staff report that for the current school year, the schedule was updated to better align with school bells and anticipate that significantly boosting ridership.

FILLMORE ROUTE

Fillmore Route runs along Central Avenue, A Street, Mountain View Street, and Ventura Street with 27 stops, connecting to Fillmore Terminal, Library, City Hall, and shopping centers. In FY24, the Fillmore Route had 5 average daily boardings, which is exceptionally low despite operating relatively consistent service during the daytime. The span is limited with the last trip ending before 5 p.m.

Figure 33: Valley Express Fillmore Route



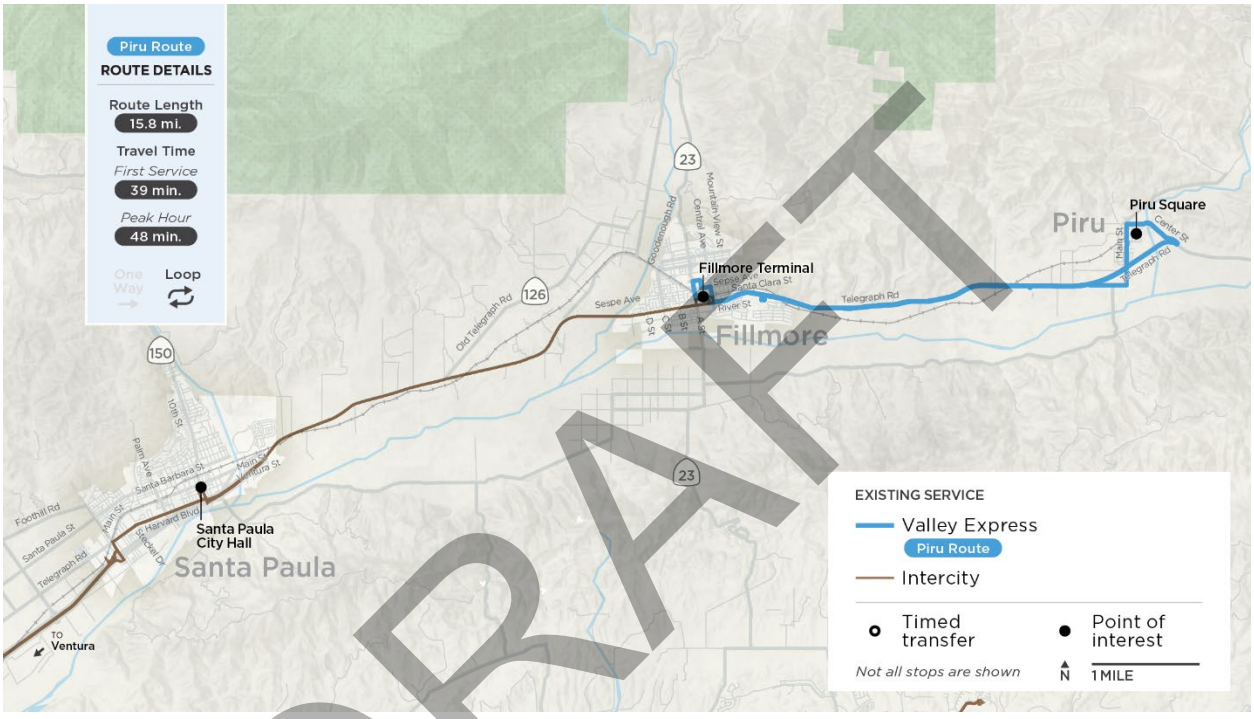
FILLMORE RIO VISTA TRIPPER

The Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper (not shown) is a student route that operates on school days. It runs once in the morning and twice in the afternoon, with an additional third trip in the afternoon on Thursdays. The route has 14 stops along various neighborhoods and at Rio Vista Elementary School. In FY24, the Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper had 20 average daily boardings.

PIRU ROUTE

Piru Route covers Center Street and Piru Square with around 8 stops, linking Piru to Fillmore and serving locations such as Piru Library and Fillmore High School. In FY24, the Piru Route had 80 average daily boardings, the highest of any Valley Express Route, which is assumed to be largely student ridership in the morning and afternoons. The Piru Route operates the most trips of any Valley Express service.

Figure 34: Valley Express Piru Route



RIDERSHIP

Valley Express total annual fixed-route ridership was approximately 37,193 in FY23. Total annual ridership is 25% lower than in 2015, with a high of 96,994 in FY16, and a low of 19,094 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in FY21. Valley Express ridership had been trending down even prior to the pandemic. Beginning on March 20, 2020, all Tripper services were suspended and not restored until August 2021. Fixed-route ridership had recovered to 71% of FY19 levels as of June 2023.

The Piru Route has the highest average daily weekday and weekend ridership, accounting for 77% of total fixed route passenger trips. The Piru Route, along with the Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper, also saw the strongest recovery post-pandemic. The Santa Paula Route B and the Fillmore Route were most affected by the pandemic. These routes lost 90% or more of their ridership between FY19 and FY21 and recovered less than 35% of their pre-pandemic ridership as of June 2023, although it should be acknowledged that even the 2019 ridership for all but the Piru and Rio Vista Tripper routes was very low relative to service hours.

SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

Over the last five years, service productivity in terms of passenger trips per revenue hour and passenger trips per revenue mile decreased at the system level. Passenger trips per revenue hour decreased by 29%. The Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper is the most productive route on weekdays, exhibiting the highest number of trips per revenue hour. This route caters to a dedicated ridership base – students in Fillmore who rely on it for their daily commute to school. The next most productive route during weekdays is the Piru Route. It operates most frequently and for more hours in the day than the other Valley Express fixed routes.

The systemwide average fare revenue per unlinked passenger trip was $1.04, which is relatively close to the Valley Express base fare of $1.25. The average fare revenue per trip was higher for both tripper routes than for the other fixed routes.

Table 32: Valley Express Fare Revenue by Route, FY23

Route	Farebox Revenue	Average Fare Revenue per Trip (Collected)	Regular One-Way Fare (Price)
Santa Paula Route A	$1,004.91	$0.93	$1.25
Santa Paula Route B	$704.09	$0.88	$1.25
Santa Paula Tripper	$393.42	$1.19	$1.25
Fillmore Route	$1,301.62	$0.97	$1.25
Fillmore Rio Vista Tripper	$6,167.61	$1.21	$1.25
Piru Route	$30,167.24	$1.06	$1.25

ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY

Valley Express received a total of 20 on-board survey responses. Most respondents to the survey were satisfied with their overall experience of bus service on Valley Express. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.75 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus operators and the safety onboard the bus. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were the need to transfer during a journey and bus schedules being readily available. The low number of total survey responses reflects the overall daily ridership across the system and supported by those who responded that a barrier to using Valley Express is the lack of service at some times of day.

EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Valley Express invested in expanding its fixed route service in 2015, which increased total cost but also resulted in a parallel increase in overall ridership. However, fixed route service cuts were made within a year and resources were redistributed back to general public Dial-a-Ride services. Ridership trends reflect this disinvestment in fixed route service with a disproportionate drop in ridership compared to the percentage decrease in service hours.

Fixed route operating costs were relatively stable between FY18 and FY21 but began to increase post-pandemic resulting in a 34% increase from FY19 to FY23. Due to declining ridership since FY16, the agency's fixed route operating cost per revenue hour has steadily increased each year. Annual operating cost per trip and per revenue hour more than doubled over the last five years. Although the Piru Route has the highest total operating cost among Valley Express routes, it demonstrates the importance of investing in a higher degree of regular service throughout the day by carrying by far the highest number of passengers and recovering relatively quickly from the pandemic.

[PLACEHOLDER – VALLEY Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – VALLEY Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – VALLEY Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

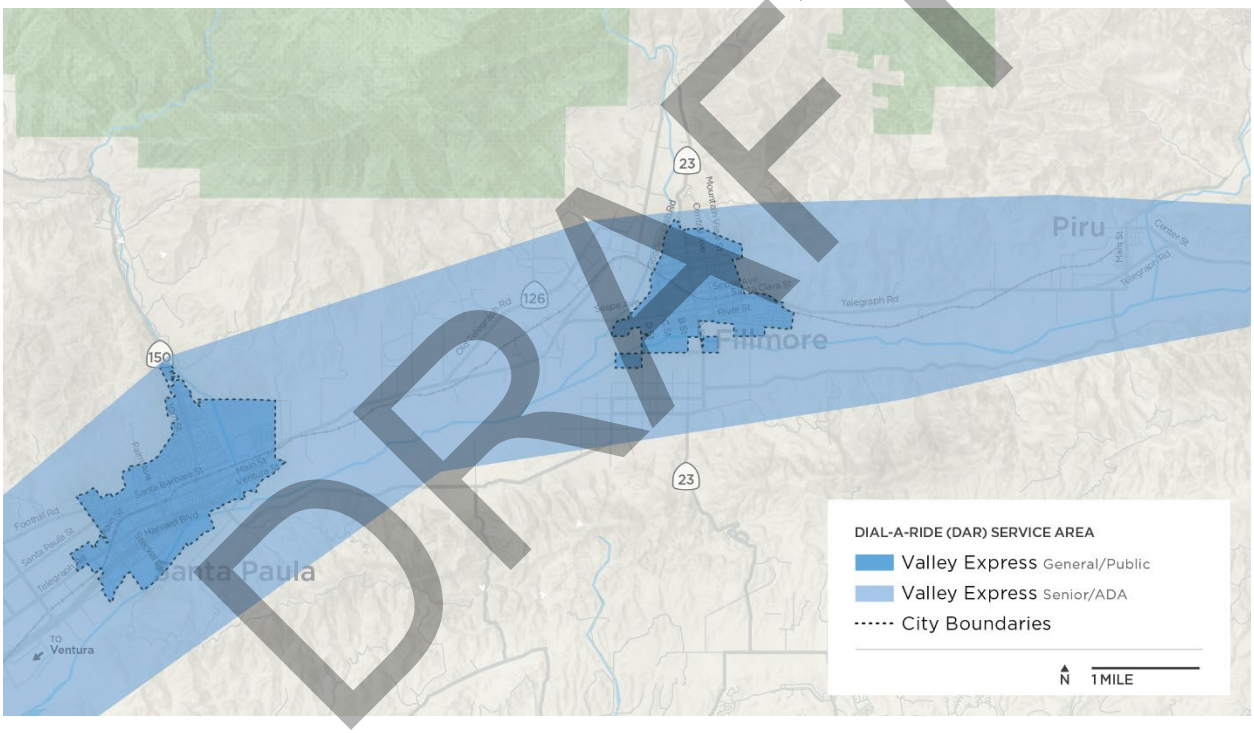
DEMAND RESPONSE

RIDER ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICE AREA

Valley Express operates an ADA complementary paratransit program, serving persons with disabilities and seniors. The service also provides trips to the general public riders if there is availability. There are differences in where riders can travel within the greater Valley Express service area:

- ADA riders and seniors can travel across the Heritage Valley within the orange-highlighted area above. They can also utilize the GO ACCESS transfer point at Wells and Telegraph.
- General public riders can only travel within their home community or otherwise use the fixed-route service.

Figure 35: Valley Express Dial-a-Ride Service Area



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Key performance metrics for Valley Express' Dial-a-Ride service are shown in Table 33.

Table 33: Valley Express Dial-a-Ride Performance Metrics

Valley Express Dial-a-Ride	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Passenger Trips	36,756	27,435	14,744	17,459	16,097
Revenue Hours	15,436	15,397	11,629	12,443	14,101
Revenue Miles	195,882	177,154	113,108	102,114	96,890
Operating Cost	$1,012,595	$1,136,347	$977,629	$1,079,652	$1,282,461
Pax per Hour	*2.4*	*1.8*	*1.3*	*1.4*	*1.1*
Pax per Mile	*0.19*	*0.15*	*0.13*	*0.17*	*0.17*
Cost per Pax	*$27.55*	*$41.42*	*$66.31*	*$61.84*	*$79.67*
Cost per Hour	*$65.60*	*$73.80*	*$84.07*	*$86.77*	*$90.95*
Cost per Mile	*$5.17*	*$6.41*	*$8.64*	*$10.57*	*$13.24*

Ridership on the Valley Express paratransit program is slowly rebuiliding, still down 56% from FY19 ridership (37,000 annual trips). The service provided just over 16,000 trips in FY23, or roughly 300 passenger trips per week. Productivity is significantly down over that same period, from a high of 2.4 rides/hour to the most recently reported 1.1 rides/hr for FY23. Both indicators may reflect the program's difficulty in hiring sufficient bus drivers.

Revenue hours are 9% below their pre-Pandemic level. Despite increasing revenue hours by 1,000 hours between FY22 and FY23, rider comments note that general public trips are frequently denied, with system capacity unable to accommodate some genereal public requests.

Cost per passenger is $80/trip, almost three times its pre-pandemic cost of $28. Cost per revenue hour, now at $91 an hour, reflects the new operations contract commencing during 2023. Increased operating expense overall contributes to the $1.3 million annual operating costs, up 27% from FY19. Despite significant reductions in service outputs of revenue hours, fewer than half the revenue miles were provided that year and less than half the trips delivered.

OPERATIONS TOPICS

Historically, Valley Express service almost exclusively provided demand response services until early 2015. At this time, given year-over-year increases in demand for demand response trips, HVTAC decided to increase fixed route service by 96%, from 800 annual revenue hours to 21,070 hrs. As a result, demand response service decreased 68%, from 32,400 revenue hours to 10,500. Concurrently, the Heritage Valley service area for general public demand response riders was limited to trips which started/ended within ¼ mile of fixed-route service. ADA certified riders were allowed to travel within the communities without restriction.

In October 2015 (approximately nine months after this change), the HVTAC recommended reducing fixed route services by almost 30%, while increasing demand response services about 47%. Demand

response fares were also standardized at this time to $2.00. HVTAC recognized this would increase demand for paratransit services (an issue they dealt with in the past) but thought the increased availability of fixed routes services would offset this. The goals stated by HVTAC for these changes were to "*Increase ridership on the Valley Express System as a whole*" and "Maintain or reduce service costs."

Further changes were made in July 2017 when HVTAC recommended cutting fixed route service drastically and removing the requirement that general public DAR rides start/end outside the 1/4-mile buffer from fixed-route services. The reductions in fixed route service made at that time (roughly two years after the expansion of the fixed route network) were based upon ridership levels, specifically whether the route in question routinely performed above or below the threshold of 7.6 passengers per hour.

RESOURCES

The fleet consists of 15 vehicles (all cut-aways as of this writing), for both fixed route and demand response. Currently, 5 are regularly used in demand response service and the others are rotated between the two services.

Valley Express demand response services operates with 3 FTE plus 2 part-time persons with responsibilities of call-taking/reservations, trip scheduling, and vehicle dispatch. In addition there are 2 supervisors over the entire Valley Express program. Staff report that all public-facing positions are held by persons who are bi-lingual in English and Spanish, in an effort to be responsive to a region that is 65%-75% Spanish speaking.

As of May 2024, 11 FTE positions were filled with funding for 16 FTEs. Some drivers ask only to be assigned to Dial-a-Ride service while some work both fixed route and demand response shifts. The current driver shortage impacts service as it limits the times to which trips requests can be negotiated and the system's ability to provide space-available trips to general public riders.

TRIP SCHEDULING

ADA riders may make advance trip reservations up to 7 days in advance. General public riders can only request a trip on the day of service, and it is only served if there is available capacity. Procedures are in place to establish subscription trip reservations for ADA riders. This is not available to general public riders.

The agency uses TripSpark to computer-assist in trip scheduling and development of driver manifests, which facilitate day-of-service dispatching and does not have geofencing capabilities. Call-takers, in considering the service area differences between ADA and general public riders, work from their local knowledge of community boundaries. Trip requests are batch scheduled by TripSpark the night before, not leaving any advance reservation trips unscheduled. Paper manifests are prepared for each driver on shift. Reportedly, these are not revised during the day of service, except to advise drivers of cancelled trips or to add-in same-day trip reservations.

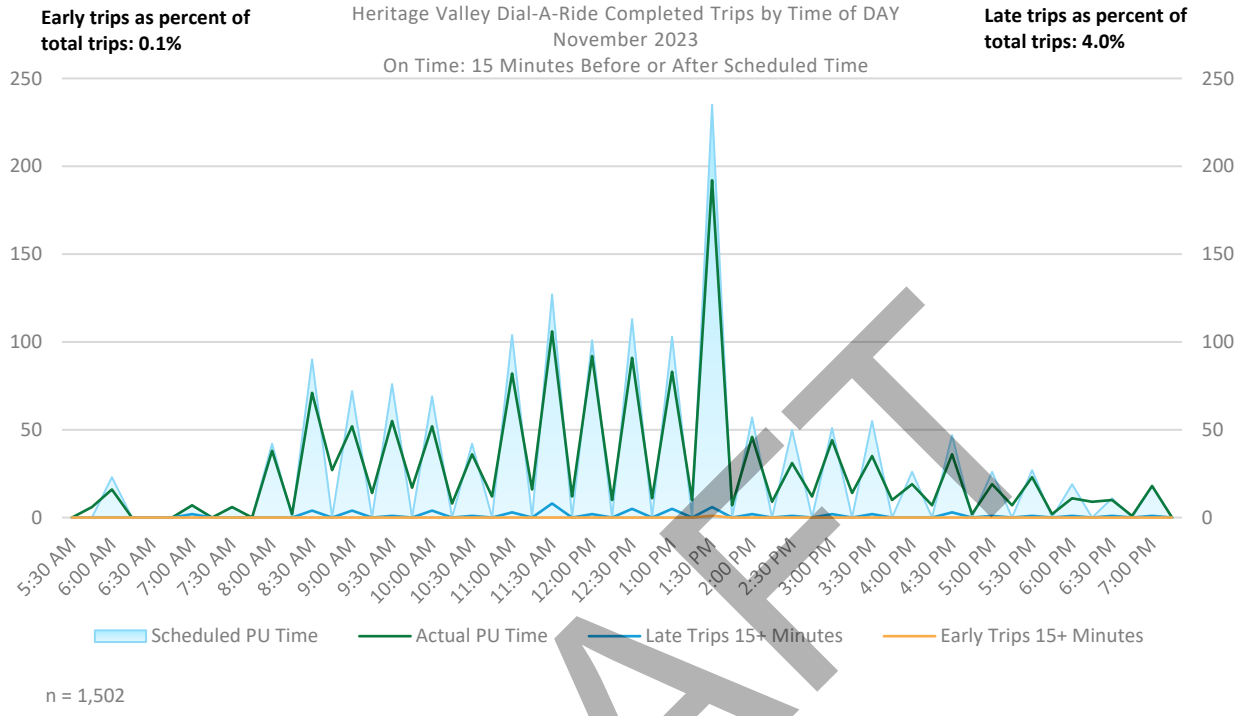
ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented below. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. Trips served outside of a 30-minute window, either 15 minutes before the scheduled time or 15 after the scheduled time, are calculated for determining on-time performance.

The on-time performance analysis for the Heritage Valley's Dial-a-Ride programs shows a service pattern of greater demand in the mornings with peak demand at 1:30 p.m. in the afternoon. Trip demand is reduced in the late afternoon where the last trips are served around 7:00 p.m. Late trips more than 15 minutes beyond the scheduled time represent 4% of all trips served, while only 0.1% of trips were recorded as arriving early, both within the standard for on-time performance.

During the analysis of trip delivery, it was noted that Valley Express is scheduling all pick-ups in 30-minute intervals, every half hour. Improved efficiency can be achieved by reducing booking intervals to no more than 15 minutes, more evenly spreading trip demand over the course of the day.

Figure 36: Valley Express Dial-a-Ride On-Time Performance



n = 1,502

TRANSFER TRIPS

From Valley Express managers' viewpoints, there is a "fair amount of transfer activity between Valley Express Dial-a-Ride and Gold Coast for ADA certified riders at the transfer location at Wells Road and Telegraph in Oxnard." Gold Coast has reported the transfer trip level as averaging 5 – 6 trips per month. Valley Express management reports that most tirps originate in Santa Paula and travel into Oxnard, with fewer trips originating in Oxnard. Valley Express dispatchers coordinate with Gold Coast dispatchers to arrange the pick-up time, when requested by the rider.

Managers report that the transfers would run more smoothly if the timing of pickups was improved. Valley Express vehicles have returned several times in the recent past to the transfer point for the outbound trip when the GO ACCESS vehicle was a no-show.

EXPANDING TRIP NEED IN HERITAGE VALLEY COMMUNITIES

Valley Express demand response covers some growing areas not served by fixed route. New developments are planned or underway in areas that include:

- The Bridges housing development in Fillmore
- The Harvest at Limonaria planned community in Santa Paula
- Planned relocaiton of the Santa Paula Hospital onto Highway 126 expected in three to four years' time.

Common destinations served by this demamd response service and are expected to continue, includes two dialysis facilities in Santa Paula where there are frequent trip requests. The Santa Paula Senior Center and the Fillmore Active Adult Center are recurring trip generators. The Santa Paula Hospital discharge staff and ER staff often call Dial-a-Ride to transport patients to their homes.

Valley Express Gaps and Opportunities

PEOPLE

SENIORS

Access for seniors and people with disabilities is primarily focused on the paratransit/dial-a-ride service. Route coverage in each community is good and oriented towards key destinations like senior centers and grocery stores, but service frequency and patterns are inconsistent and there is little incentive to use fixed-route over DAR.

GENERAL POPULATION

Coverage and frequency are reasonable for the size and population of Fillmore and Piru. Santa Paula has characteristics like higher population and a dense, walkable core which could support higher levels of transit service. There has been a major expansion of housing in the east end of Santa Paula that is currently underserved by transit.

STUDENTS

Middle and high schools are served by routes and service between Piru and Fillmore is particularly strong. Some school tripper service is well-used as long as it is aligned to school bell schedule. However, general routes in Santa Paula were not well scheduled to support school travel in past years. A once-a-day service cannot afford to be misaligned to school bells.

PLACES

COVERAGE

Service coverage in Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru is better than expected for relatively compact, walkable towns. However, the routes have not been updated to support newer housing developments that are separated/further from the historic cores in any of the three communities.

WALKABILITY

Most of these communities are relatively compact and walkable with older grid development and central main street-style downtowns better suited to transit compared to much of Ventura County. Even newer housing developments are relatively walkable within the developments but are largely separated from the historic neighborhoods.

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

The communities are connected to Ventura by VCTC Intercity service and a newly-formed route to Moorpark over the mountains. However, there is no service east to Santa Clarita and no direct connections to regional rail, nor any direct service to Ojai.

SERVICE DESIGN

FIXED ROUTE DIRECTNESS

The Santa Paula routes and the Fillmore route are loops, which are often a reasonable design.

FIXED ROUTE FREQUENCY

Service levels for these communities does not reflect the minimum level expected to

SPAN

The route network span of service is limited and uneven across the services. The Santa

However, these towns are fairly compact and walkable, so by looping and twisting to provide front-door service to as many unique destinations as possible, many people may be able to walk directly to their destination as fast as the bus could get them there. The expansion of development away from the center of Santa Paula, Fillmore, and Piru presents an opportunity to extend more straight-line service through these towns.

support the demographics, travel activity, and development pattern. The Piru route is successful and operates a regular hourly schedule throughout the day. The Santa Paula routes were initially successful in 2016 with regular service frequency, but ridership dwindled to fewer than a handful of riders a day after schedules were severely cut.

Paula routes operate limited trips only until about 3 p.m. and the Fillmore route ends before 5 p.m. Only the Piru and new Fillmore-Moorpark routes operate later. However, the travel market analysis suggests that travel volumes throughout the community actually peak in the 6 o'clock hour and remain relatively high through 8 p.m.

BALANCE OF SERVICES

Local DAR trips are open to the general public in Santa Paula and Fillmore, leaving little incentive for anyone to use the local fixed routes. Conversely, DAR is not available between communities and the VCTC service on 126 and the Piru route are relatively successful compared to other Valley Express routes.

Although DAR is more expensive per trip than the fixed-route service, the difference in price is evidently not enough to incentivize the fixed routes.

12. VCTC INTERCITY

VCTC Intercity Service connects the communities detailed in this report with one another and with Santa Barbara County and Los Angeles County. See Chapter 4 and the Market Assessment sections for each operator for a description of the communities and travel markets served by VCTC Intercity.

Service Evaluation

VCTC operates the VCTC Intercity express routes, which are traditionally long-distance with limited stops and catering to commuters. VCTC also administers the Valley Express services, which are addressed separately.

VCTC INTERCITY FARES

VCTC currently prices its transit offerings as follows:

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

Service Provider	Regular	Discounted[1]	Child	Student/Youth	College Students
Fixed Route[2]	Zone 1: $1.75 Zone 2: $4.00	Zone 1: $0.80 Zone 2: $2.00	Free	Free	Free

Notes:
1 Seniors ages 65 and over, persons with disabilities, and Medicare recipients qualify for discounted fares.
2 10% off for all riders purchasing fare through VCbuspass.
Source: Agency websites.

FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE AND SCHEDULES

VCTC Intercity routes comprise an express/commuter bus service in Ventura County featuring six fixed routes with coverage across the County including Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Saticoy, Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Somis, as well as to California State University at Channel Islands (CSUCI). The Coastal Express service extends northwest of Ventura County to Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Goleta, and the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB). The Highway 101/Conejo Connection service extends east of Ventura County to Woodland Hills in Los Angeles County.

VCTC Intercity commuter/express bus service serves park-and-ride or major transit centers with few local street stops, and operates mostly on the highway between communities. College students and employees at major job centers in the region and in Santa Barbara are the main rider markets and routes are very tightly aligned to the related destinations for these customers with little to no stops oriented directly to residential areas, assuming riders can get to a main stop by being dropped off, driving and parking, or using local connecting transit.

VCTC Intercity routes are grouped into six services:

- Highway 101
- Highway 126
- East County
- Cross County Limited
- Coastal Express
- Channel Islands

Within each of these groups, VCTC operates several distinct route patterns, each of which is described individually below. The services overall form a network of intercity routes within Ventura County and connecting to Santa Barbara or Los Angeles counties.

VCTC Intercity fixed route **service span** varies by route between the hours of 4:00 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Saturday service is offered between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and Sunday service is limited to three routes: Highway 126, Coastal Express, and Channel Islands. VCTC Intercity does not operate on designated holidays. Most routes operate at a wide range of frequencies, meaning service is distributed unevenly throughout the day.

The end-to-end travel time for most VCTC Intercity routes is over an hour. Note that many routes have a one-way travel time that varies substantially, often by at least 30 minutes. It is common that a route takes longer during the peak hour due to traffic congestion (as well as higher passenger-delay in some cases). Long distance routes along heavily congested routes can suffer significant delays. However, an advantage of express routes is that usually the end of the route is served as “drop-off only,” meaning new passengers are not being picked up and therefore the time estimates may actually be longer than normal conditions.

The following section describes and maps each of the route groups, followed by an analysis of the ridership and performance metrics across all of the routes.

HIGHWAY 101/CONEJO SERVICE (50-55)

The Highway 101/Conejo service is made up of routes 50 and 55/55X, which operate along US 101 and collectively serve Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and Woodland Hills. Weekday service extends to Woodland Hills to serve cross-county commuters, while weekend service is limited to stops between the Ventura Transit Center and the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center. The Highway 101/Conejo service previously consisted of four additional routes—Routes 51, 52, 53, and 54—which were eliminated in the fall of 2021 due to driver shortages and to improve overall performance. In FY24, the Highway 101/Conejo service had 232 average daily boardings on weekdays and 133 average daily boardings on Saturdays.

Figure 37: VCTC Intercity Highway 101/Conejo Route 50

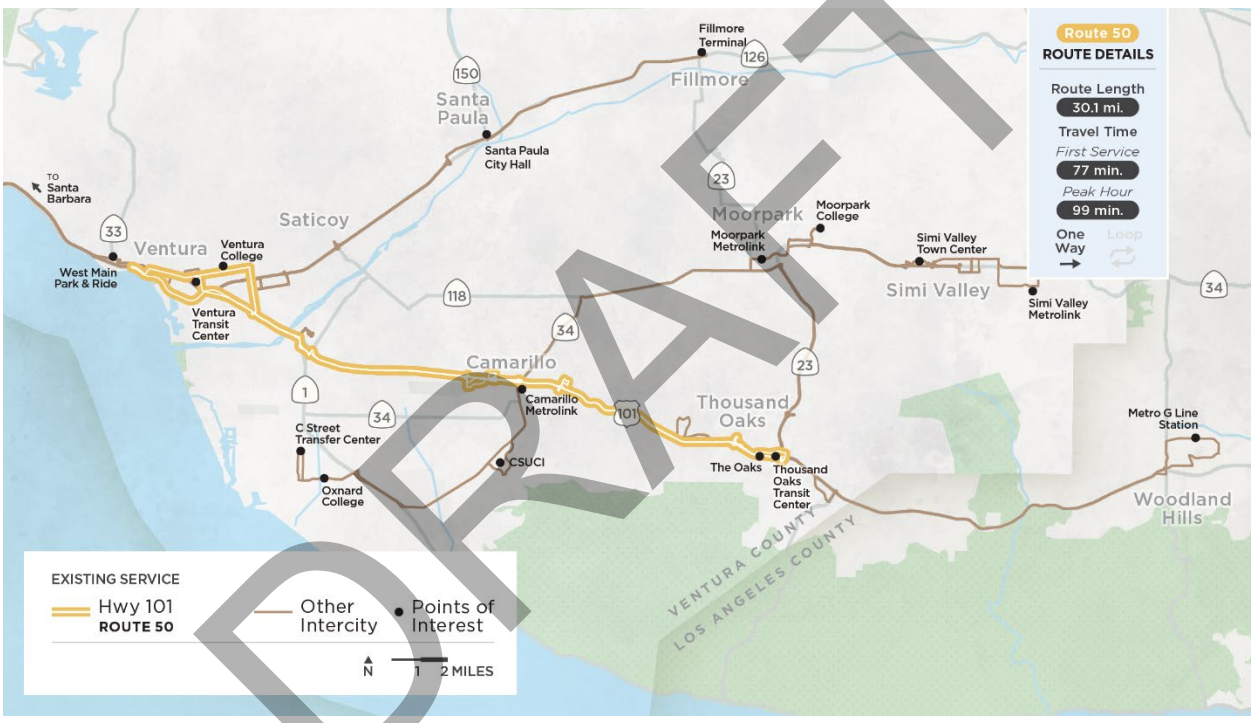
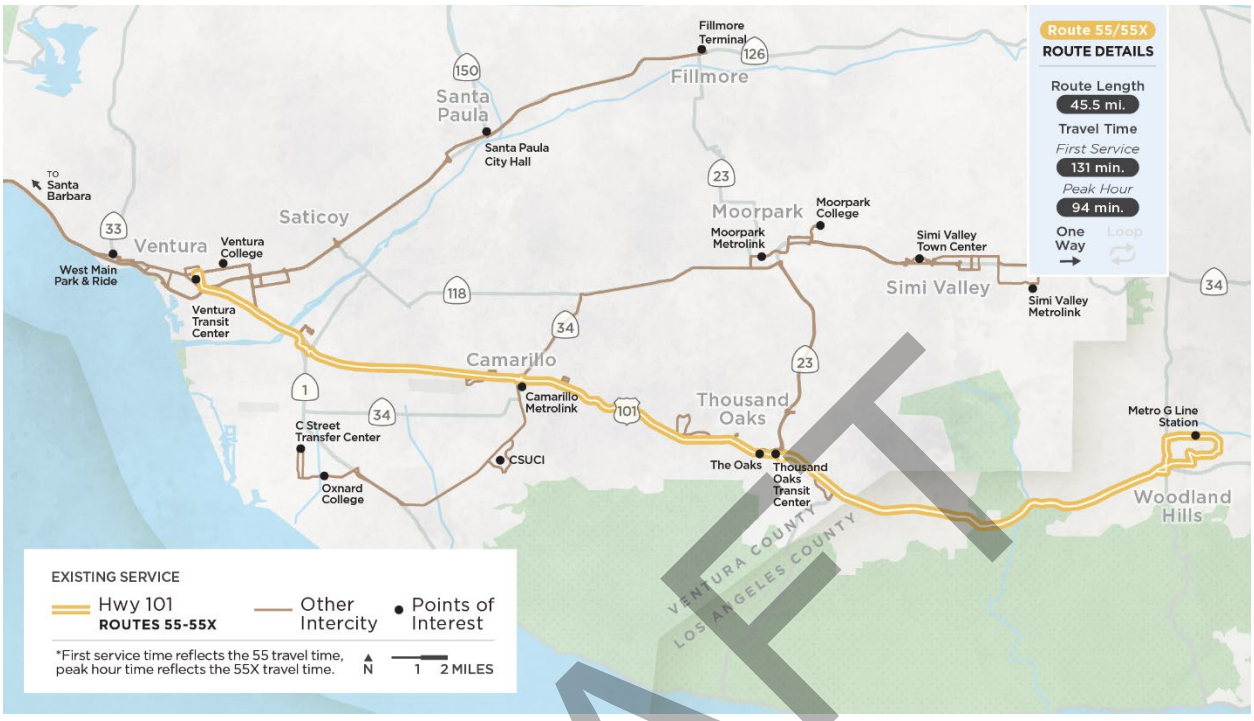


Figure 38: VCTC Intercity Highway 101/Conejo Routes 55/55X



ROUTE 50-55 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Coastal Express and Highway 126 routes at Ventura Transit Center
  - Cross County Limited and CSUCI routes at Camarillo Train Station
  - East County routes at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center
- Gold Coast Transit local routes at Ventura Transit Center and the Esplanade Mall in Oxnard
- Camarillo Area Transit at the Camarillo Train Station
- Thousand Oaks Transit at The Oaks and the Thousand Oaks Transit Center
- LADOT Commuter Express at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center
- LA Metro at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center and in Woodland Hills at the Metro G Line Station

HIGHWAY 126 (60-62)

The Highway 126 service is made up of routes 60 and 62, which operate along SR 126 between Ventura and Fillmore. Route 62 served St. Bonaventure High School and Ventura County Medical Center but otherwise followed the same route as Route 60. Route 62 was removed in January 2025—St. Bonaventure High School and Ventura County Medical Center are now flag stops along Route 60. There is no weekend service to the high school or medical center. The Highway 126 schedule is oriented around connecting residents in Santa Paula and Fillmore to jobs in Ventura. In FY24, the Highway 126 service had 443 average daily boardings on weekdays, 232 average daily boardings on Saturdays, and 315 average daily boardings on Sundays. The Highway 126 service had the highest post-pandemic ridership of all the VCTC Intercity routes.

Figure 39: VCTC Intercity Highway 126 Route 60

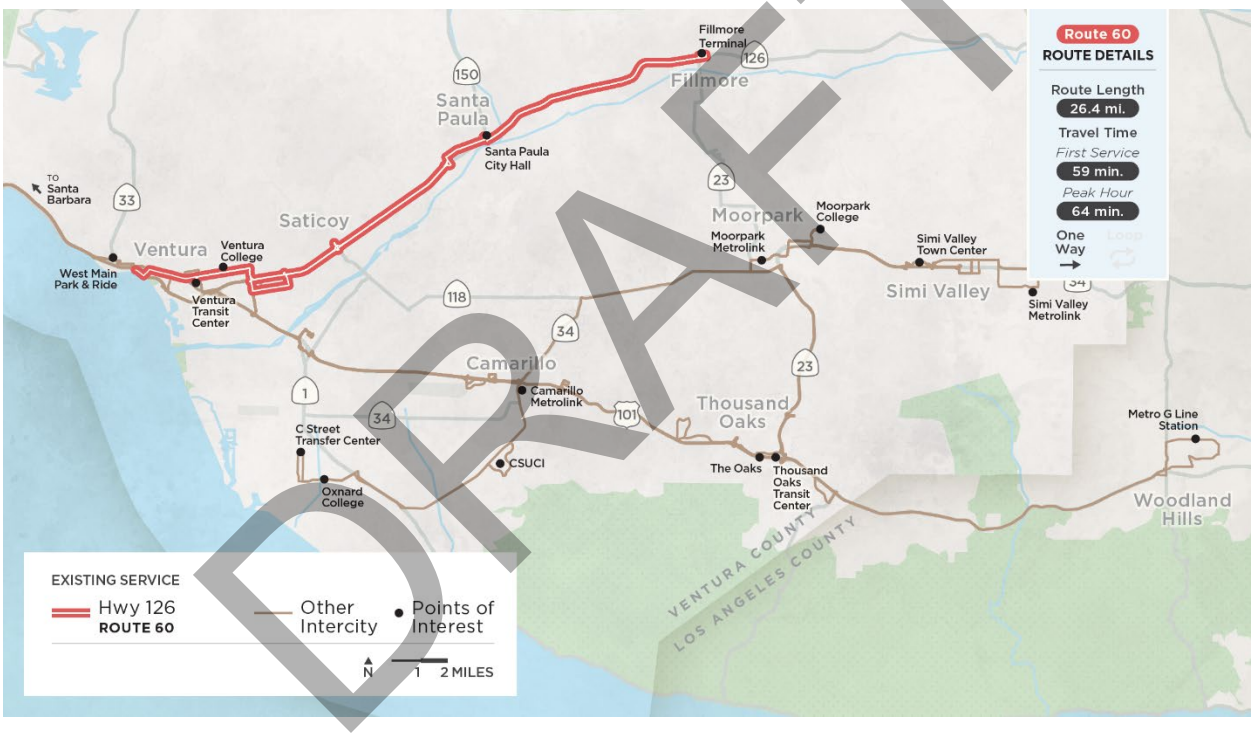
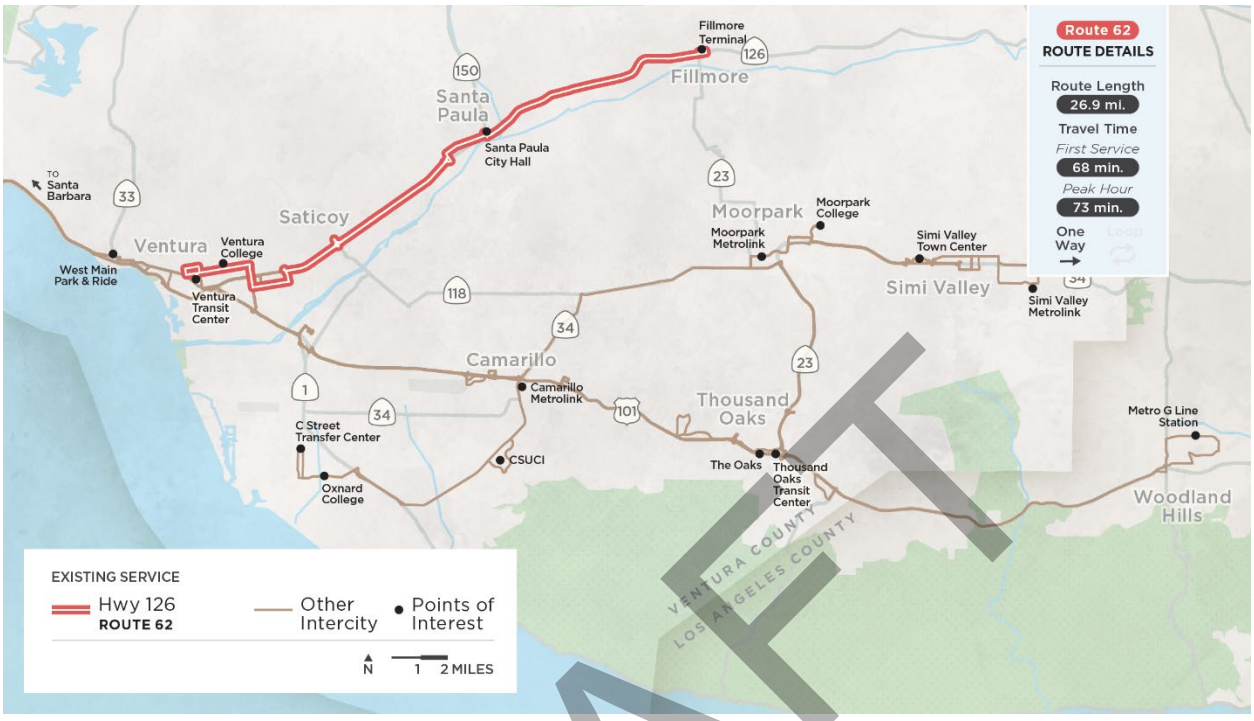


Figure 40: VCTC Intercity Highway 126 Route 62



ROUTE 60-62 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Coastal Express and Highway 101 routes at Ventura Transit Center
- Gold Coast Transit local routes at Ventura Transit Center and the Esplanade Mall in Oxnard
- Valley Express routes in Santa Paula and Fillmore

EAST COUNTY (70-73)

The East County service is made up of routes 70, 72, 73/73X, which operate along portions of US 101, SR 23 and SR 118 between Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley. The stops served by each route variant vary throughout the day and by direction. There is also substantial overlap among each of the variants as illustrated in the route maps below. Route 73 is the only variant extending past Oaks Mall, serving Conejo Valley once a day on weekdays in each direction. Route 72 is the only variant serving the Westlake Plaza and Center, stopping there once a day on weekdays on its northbound route. In FY24, the East County service had 64 average daily boardings on weekdays and 16 average daily boardings on Saturdays.

Figure 41: VCTC Intercity East County Route 70

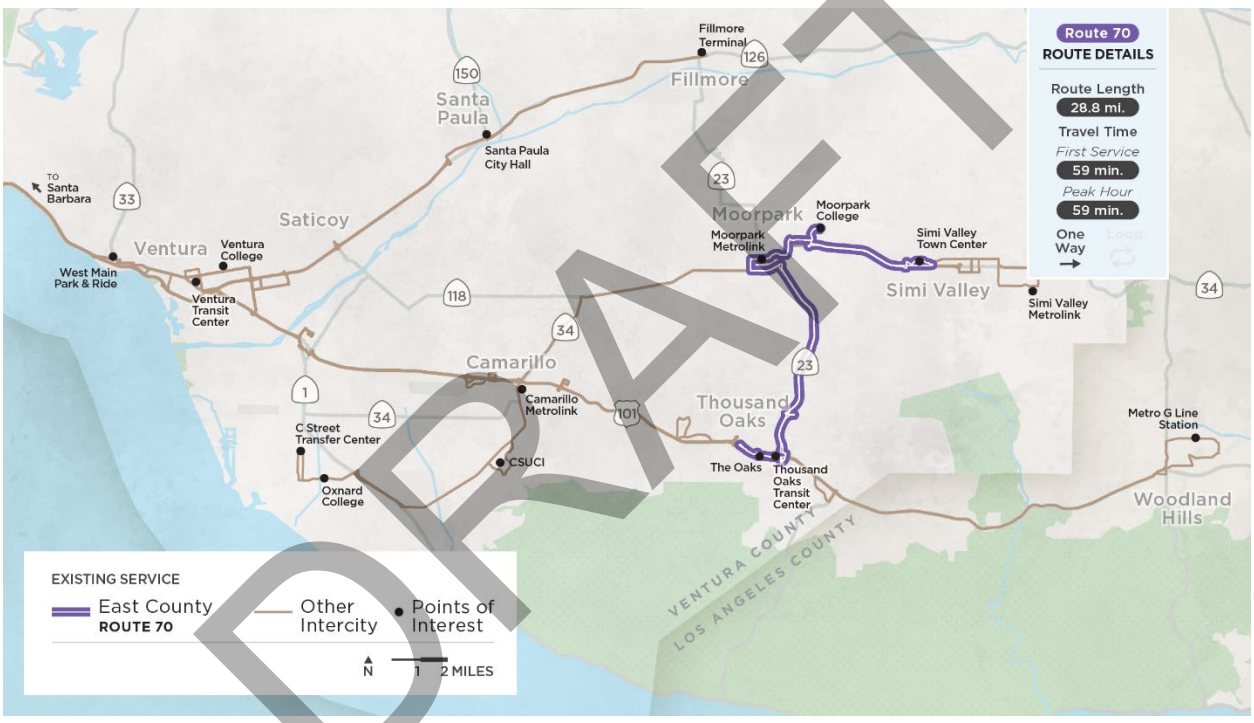


Figure 42: VCTC Intercity East County Route 72

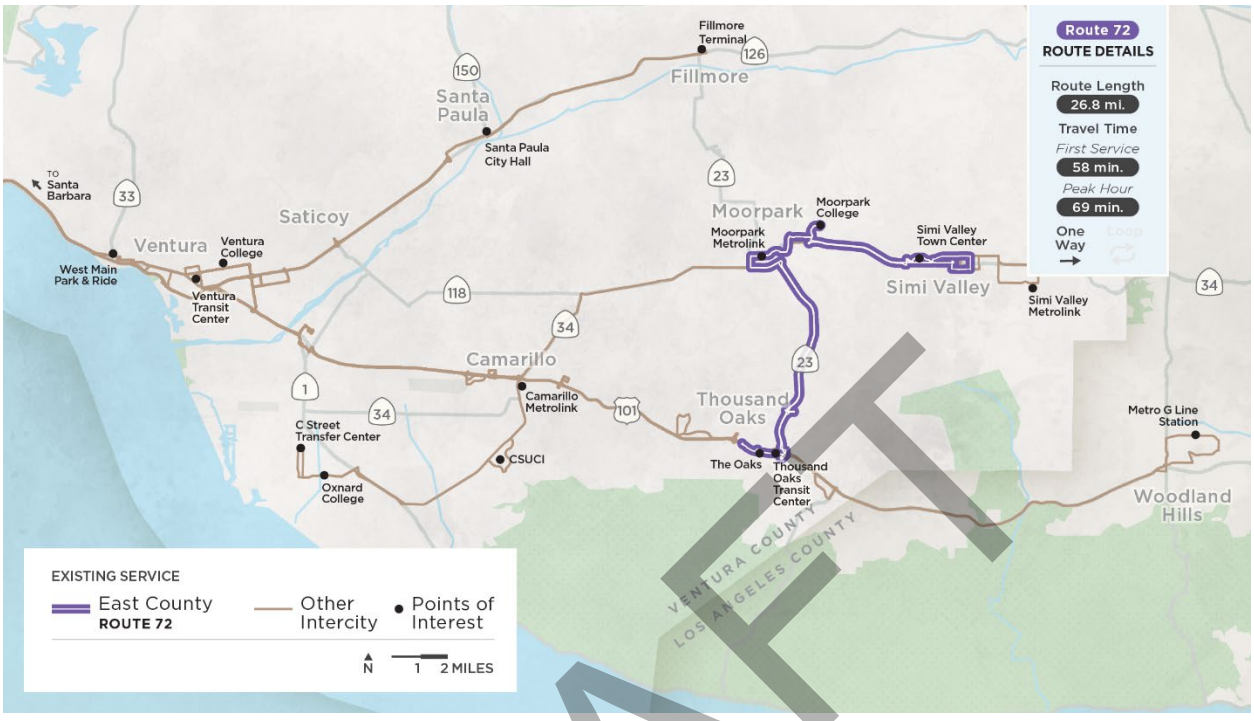


Figure 43: VCTC Intercity East County Route 73

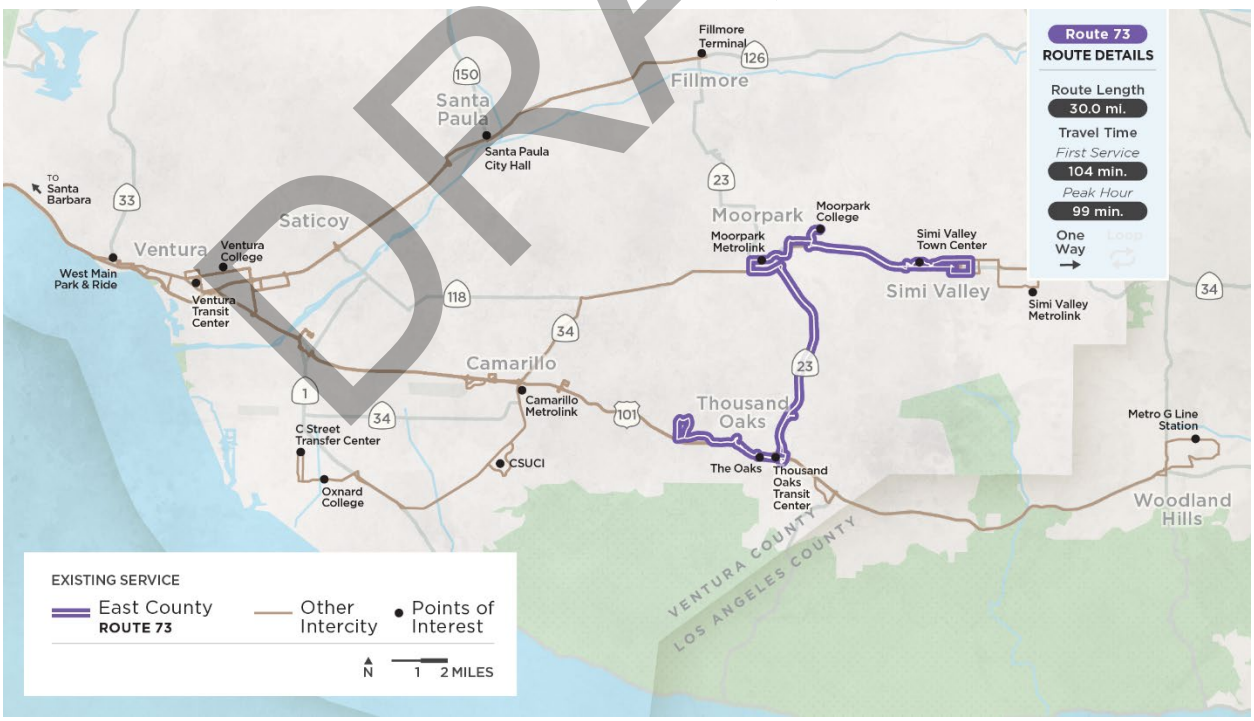
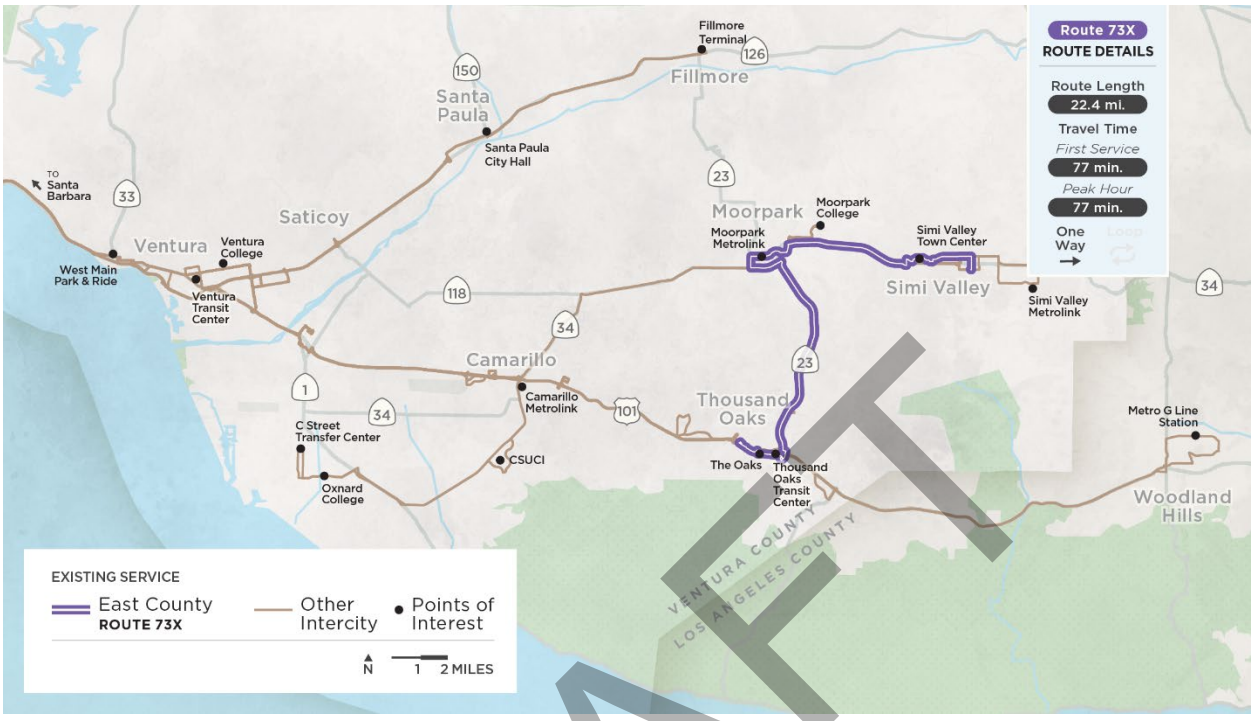


Figure 44: VCTC Intercity East County Route 73X



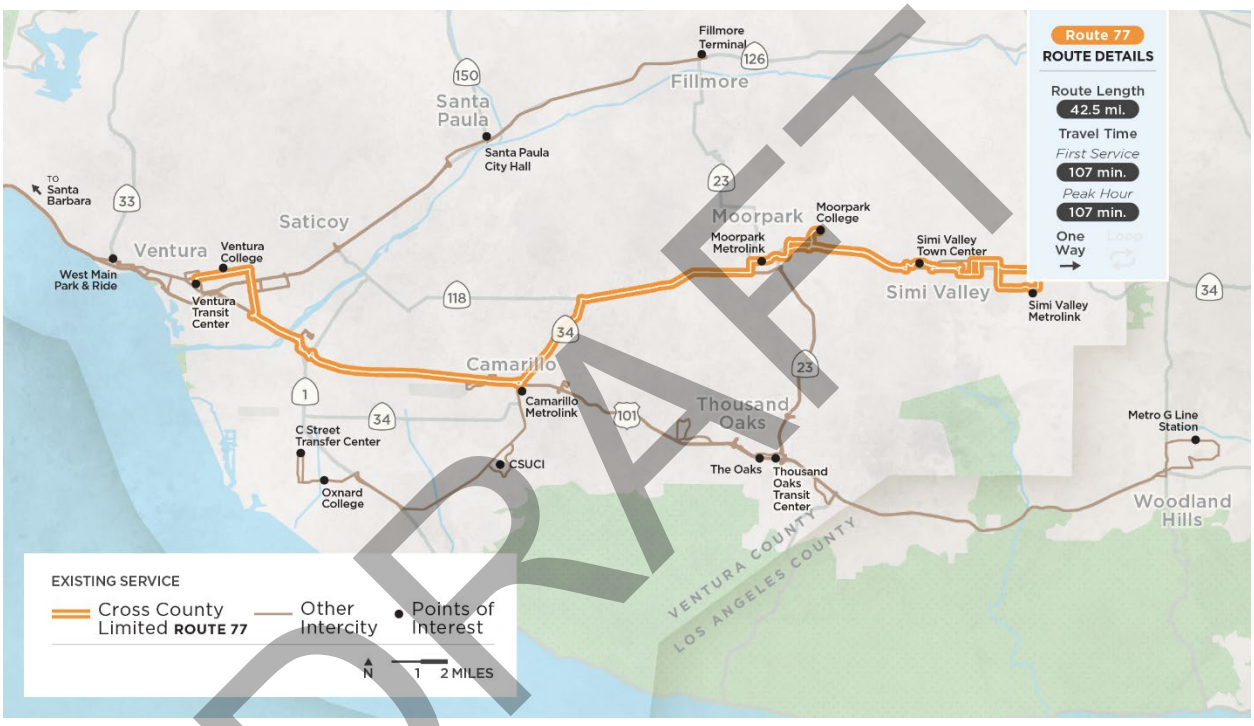
ROUTE 70-73 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Cross County Limited in Simi Valley and Moorpark
  - Highway 101 routes at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center and The Oaks
- Simi Valley Transit routes in Simi Valley
- Moorpark City Transit routes at Moorpark Train Station
- Valley Express Fillmore-Moorpark route at Moorpark Train Station
- Thousand Oaks Transit at The Oaks and the Thousand Oaks Transit Center
- LADOT Commuter Express at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center
- LA Metro at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center

CROSS COUNTY LIMITED (77)

The Cross County Limited route is made up of Route 77, which operates along portions of US 101 and SR 118 between Ventura and Simi Valley. Route 77 serves stops in Ventura, Oxnard, Camarillo, Somis, Moorpark and Simi Valley on weekdays only. Westbound service extends to the Ventura Transit Center, passing the Government Center and Ventura College, for most of the day but does not serve stops beyond Camarillo Metrolink after 6:00 p.m. The eastbound and westbound routes have complementary schedules. In FY24, the Cross County Limited route had 95 average daily boardings on weekdays.

Figure 45: VCTC Intercity Cross County Limited Route 77



ROUTE 77 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Highway 126 routes at Ventura Transit Center
  - Highway 101 and CSUCI routes at Camarillo Train Station
  - East County routes in Simi Valley and Moorpark
- Valley Express Fillmore-Moorpark route at Moorpark College
- Gold Coast Transit local routes at Ventura Transit Center and the Esplanade Mall in Oxnard
- Camarillo Area Transit at the Camarillo Train Station

COASTAL EXPRESS (80-89)

The Coastal Express service is made up of routes 80/80X, 81/81B, and 84/84U, which extend northwest to Santa Barbara, and routes 85/85C, 86, 87, 88, and 89, which extend northwest to Goleta. Routes 84U, 85C, 87, and 88 also serve the University of California-Santa Barbara (UCSB) bus loop. The Coastal Express routes operate along US 101. Most of the route variants have a southeast terminus in Camarillo, except for routes 80/80X and 88, which only extend eastward as far as Ventura. Route 80/80X is the only route that operates throughout the day, with the remaining variants offering early morning and afternoon service only. In FY24, the Coastal Express service had 353 average daily boardings on weekdays, 100 average daily boardings on Saturdays, and 91 average daily boardings on Sundays.

Figure 46: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Routes 80/80X

Figure 47: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Routes 81/81B

Figure 48: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Routes 84/84U

Figure 49: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Routes 85/85C

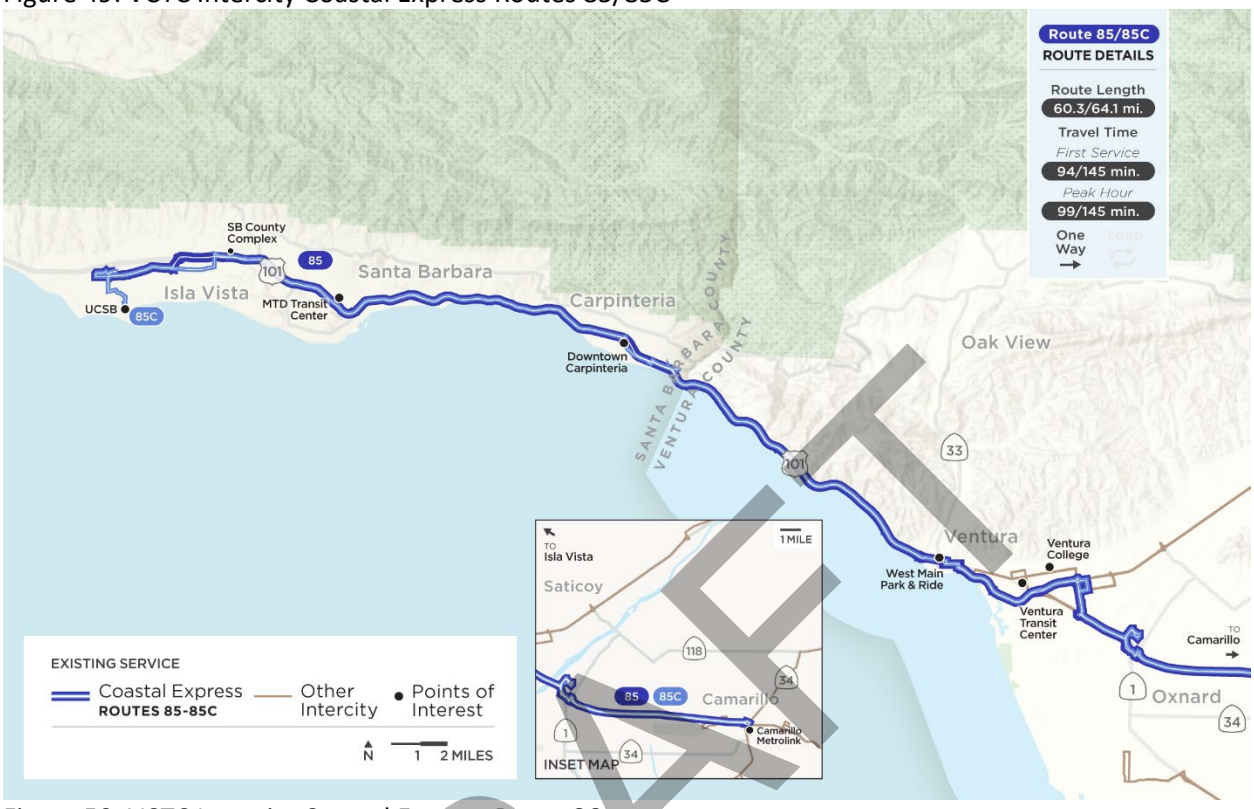


Figure 50: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Route 86

Figure 51: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Route 87

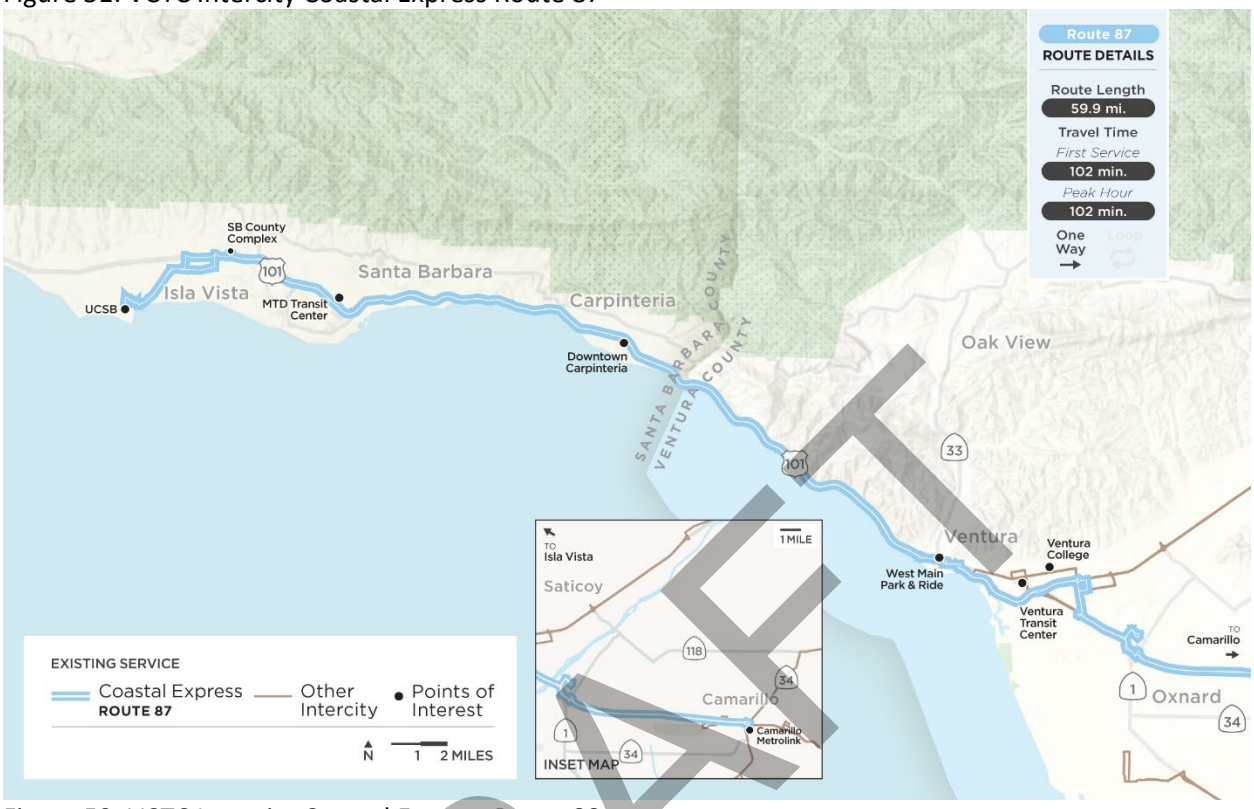


Figure 52: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Route 88

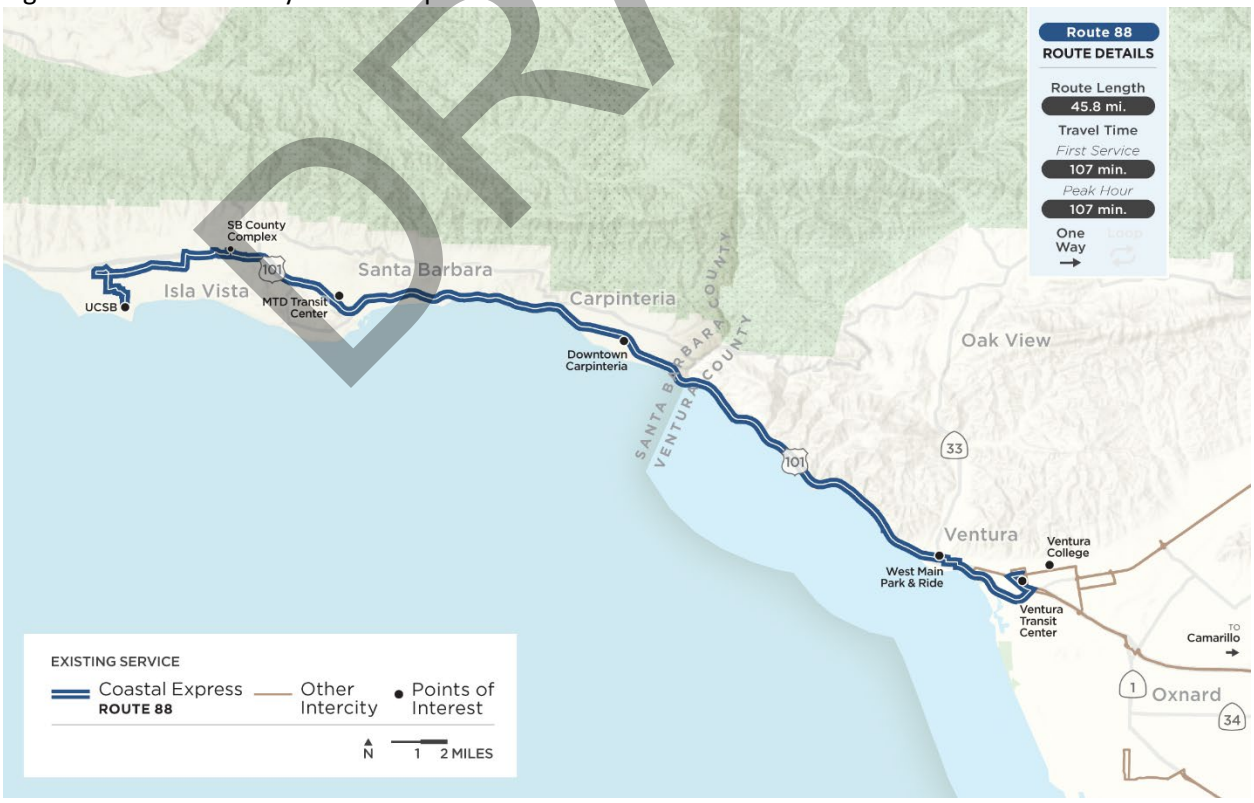
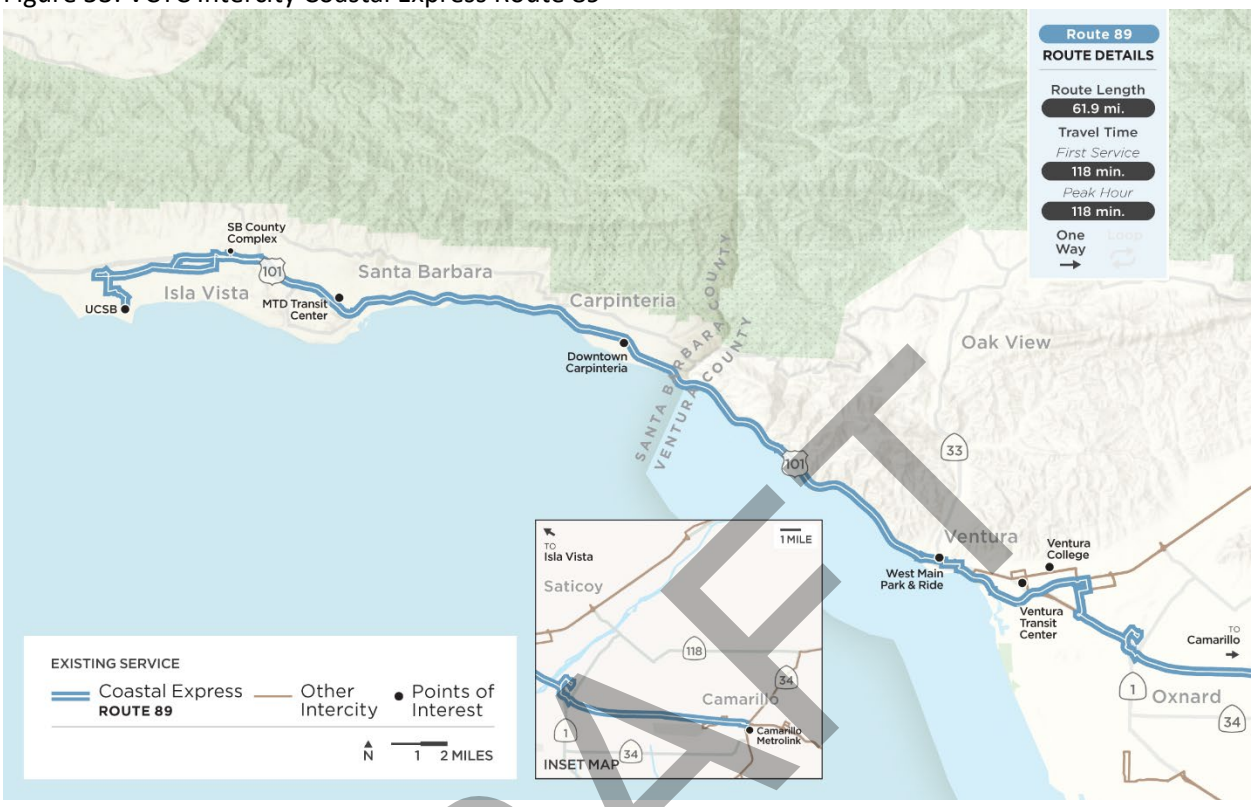


Figure 53: VCTC Intercity Coastal Express Route 89



ROUTE 80-89 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Highway 101 and Highway 126 routes at Ventura Transit Center
  - Cross County Limited and CSUCI routes at Camarillo Train Station
- Gold Coast Transit local routes at Ventura Transit Center and the Esplanade Mall in Oxnard
- Camarillo Area Transit routes at Camarillo Train Station

CHANNEL ISLANDS (90-99)

The Channel Islands service is made up of routes 90, 97, and 99, which run along local arterials in Oxnard and Camarillo. The Channel Islands service operates at the highest and most consistent frequency of all the VCTC Intercity routes. Routes 90 and 97 operate Monday-Thursday, connecting transit centers in Oxnard and Camarillo respectively to the university. Route 99 operates seven days a week when school is not in session and Friday-Sunday during the fall and spring semesters along the combined route of Routes 90 and 97. With a total of five stops, the Channels Islands route also has the fewest stops of all the VCTC Intercity routes. In FY24, the Channel Islands service had 186 average daily boardings on weekdays, 41 average daily boardings on Saturdays, and 37 average daily boardings on Sundays.

Figure 54: VCTC Intercity Channel Islands Route 90

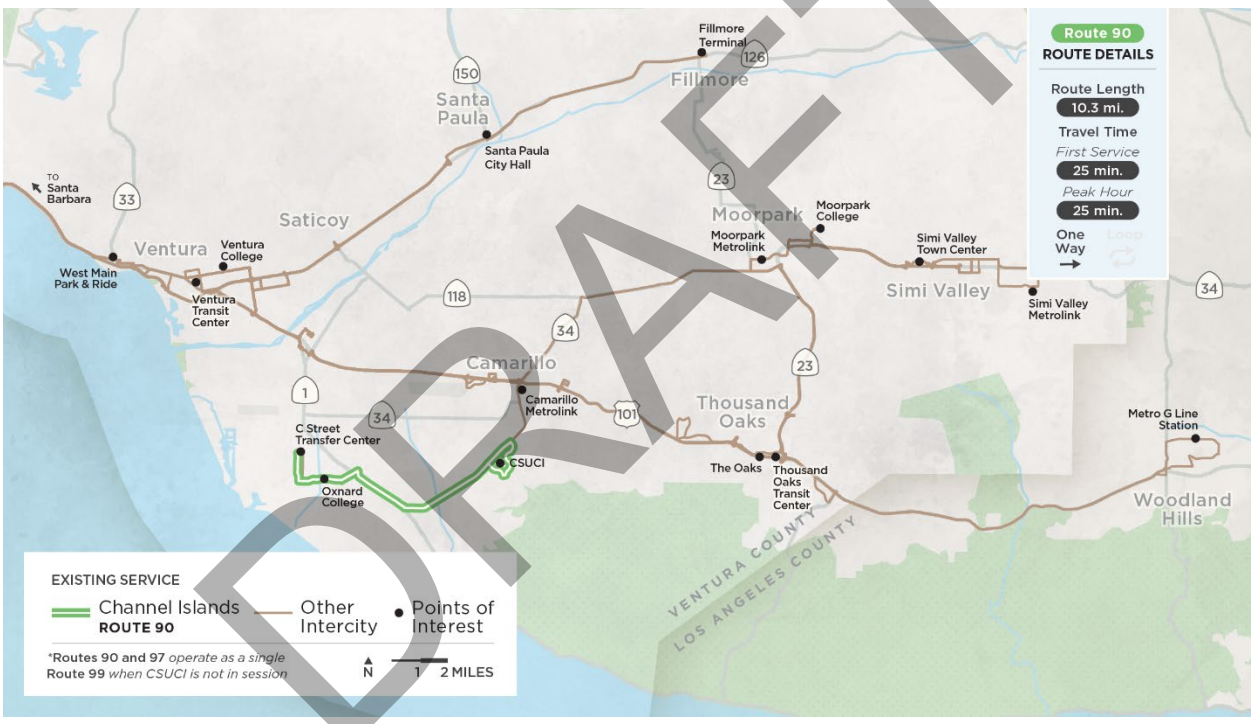
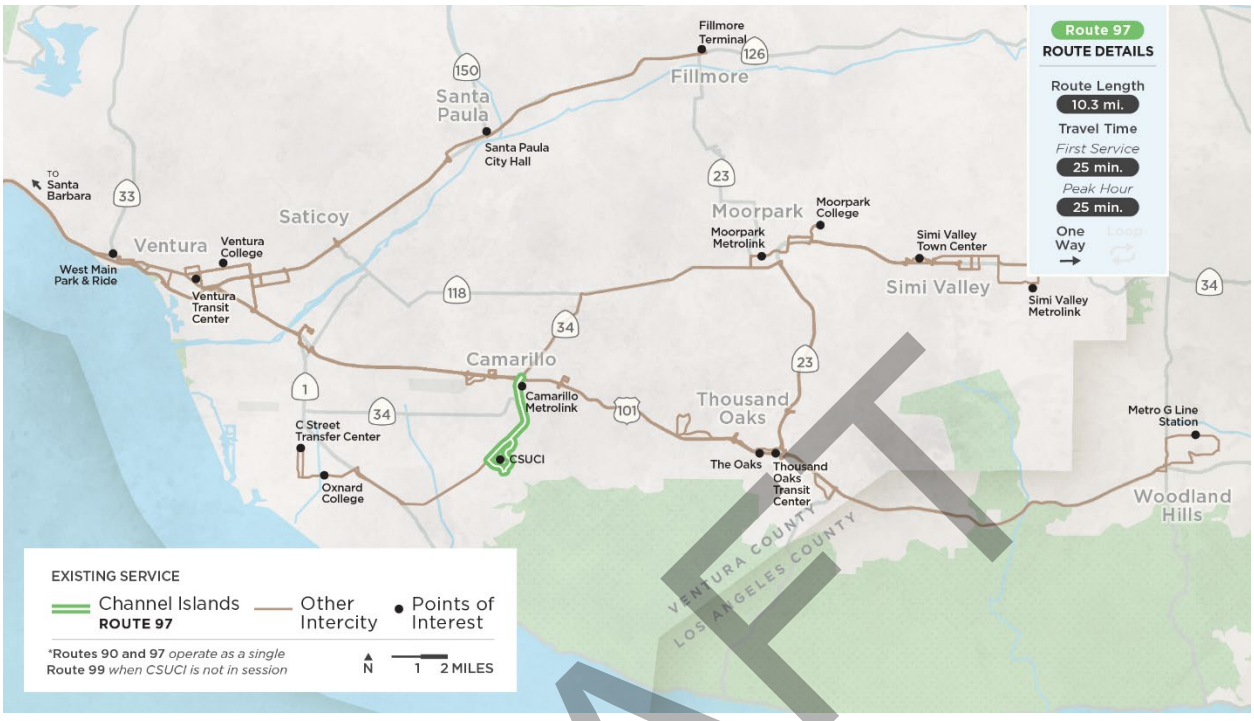


Figure 55: VCTC Intercity Channel Islands Route 97



ROUTE 90-97 CONNECTIONS

- VCTC
  - Coastal Express, Highway 101, and Cross County Limited routes at Camarillo Train Station
- Gold Coast Transit local routes at C Street in Oxnard
- Camarillo Area Transit routes at Camarillo Train Station

FIXED-ROUTE RIDERSHIP

VCTC Intercity total annual fixed-route ridership was approximately 365,990 in FY23. Total annual ridership decreased 56% over the last ten years, with a high of 823,001 in FY14 and a low of 219,378 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in FY21. VCTC Intercity ridership had been trending down prior to the pandemic. Like many transit agencies, VCTC Intercity severely cut service during the COVID-19 pandemic and did not restore service to pre-pandemic levels for a year and a half. Fixed-route ridership as of June 2023 had recovered to 56% of FY19 levels.

The East County (70-73) and Channel Islands (90-99) routes were hit hardest by the pandemic. These routes lost 90% or more of their ridership between FY19 and FY21 and recovered less than half of their pre-pandemic ridership as of June 2023.

The Highway 101 (50-53) routes saw the strongest recovery post-pandemic, serving 82% as many trips in FY23 compared to FY19. Coastal Express and Highway 126 continue to account for the largest share of ridership, with Highway 126 gaining market share over the last five years and surpassing Coastal Express as the highest ridership route.

An analysis of ridership data for the service period July 2023 through January 2024 indicates that Highway 126 and Coastal Express routes have the highest average daily weekday and weekend ridership and together account for 60% of trips. Route 50 is another important service, accounting for 15% of all fixed-route trips.

FIXED-ROUTE SERVICE PRODUCTIVITY

Over the last five years, service productivity in terms of passenger trips per revenue hour and passenger trips per revenue mile decreased at the system level. Passenger trips per revenue hour decreased by 40%. Note that for intercity/express services such as these, trips per revenue mile are generally very low because the vehicles travel for many miles on freeways without serving any bus stops, unlike local transit routes.

Highway 126 represents the most productive route on weekdays and weekends in terms of trips per revenue hour. The next most productive routes are Highway 101/Conejo Connection and CSU Channel Islands.

While many transit services see lower weekend productivity, VCTC Intercity's Coastal Express and Highway 126 service actually have higher productivity on weekends. Service operated on Saturdays and Sundays generally excludes early morning trips but is otherwise evenly distributed throughout the day, so the passengers per revenue hour suggests a better balance, as well as serving travel markets that are possibly more diverse than commuters and students.

VCTC Intercity charges passenger fares based on a two-zone system, which is a base fare of $1.75 for routes that operate only within Ventura County, and a Zone 2 base fare of $4.00 for routes operating beyond Ventura County to either Los Angeles or Santa Barbara. The systemwide average fare per

unlinked passenger trip was $2.05. All VCTC Intercity routes have a relatively high average fare per passenger trip which is typical for commuter bus services that are less utilized by seniors and children compared with local transit service. The CSU Channel Islands service would be expected to see average fare revenue per trip decrease in terms of *cash* as students ride free as part of the pilot College Ride Program; however, agencies may count financial contributions from other sources (in this case, LCTOP[9] funding) or from the schools themselves as the fare revenue.

Table 35: Fare Revenue by Route, FY23

Route	Farebox Revenue	Average Fare Revenue per Trip (Collected)	Regular One-Way Fare (Price)
VCTC Routes (50-77 excl. Hwy 126)	$156,926	$1.62	Zone 1: $1.75 Zone 2: $4.00 (55/55X)
Hwy 126 (60-62)	$167,542	$1.49	$1.75
Coastal Express (80-89)	$355,815	$3.26	$4.00
CSU Channel Islands (90-99)	$70,171	$1.48	$1.75

ON-BOARD SERVICE QUALITY

VCTC Intercity received a total of 385 on-board survey responses, the most of any agency. Most respondents to the survey were satisfied with their overall experience on VCTC Intercity. Respondents rated the overall service quality of bus service as 3.52 out of 4 possible points. Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the bus operators and the safety on at bus stops. The areas with the lowest rating among respondents were bus schedules being readily available and the need to transfer during a journey. However, even the areas with the lowest scores had an average rating over 3, indicating general satisfaction with the VCTC Intercity service overall. As is common with other transit services, frequency and span of service are the main factors riders identified as preventing them from using the bus more often.

[9] The Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) established by SB 862 provides operating assistance to reduce emissions and improve mobility for disadvantaged communities.

EXISTING FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Between FY14 and FY23, annual operating costs increased 65% while annual ridership decreased 56%. Operating costs have also increased despite only a four percent increase in revenue hours since FY14.

Operating cost per revenue hour rose sharply between FY14 and FY18 and has been slowly rising again since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The two routes with the highest average daily ridership—Highway 126 and Coastal Express—also have the highest operating cost per revenue hour. The East County route, which has the lowest average daily ridership, has the highest operating cost per trip and the second highest operating cost per revenue mile after the Cross County Limited.

[PLACEHOLDER – INTERCITY Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – INTERCITY Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

[PLACEHOLDER – INTERCITY Service Evaluation Cutsheet]

VCTC Intercity Gaps and Opportunities

PEOPLE

SENIORS

Generally, seniors are not a target market for long-distance express and commuter services. This is not to say no seniors use such routes, but people who are retired are less likely to use routes that are primarily oriented towards job centers and colleges. However, there is potential for these routes to serve other trip purposes if schedules allow for travel in both directions throughout the day and on weekends.

GENERAL POPULATION

Travel market analysis for the region shows a huge volume of regional trips between neighboring communities in Ventura County. Intercity routes could capture more general/diverse travel market with more regular schedules and adding some local "walkable" stops in denser areas. As discussed below, the great variation

STUDENTS

30-minute frequency on CSUCI route yields relatively high productivity, but all connecting VCTC routes are much less frequent and may not make regular connections, and the only other regular connecting service is the Camarillo Trolley which does not cover most of the city. Moorpark College and Ventura College are relatively well-served by regional transit. There is no direct regional service to Cal Lutheran.

COMMUTERS

Intercity market is more focused on working adults than local transit. Ridership was declining on commuter-focused routes before the pandemic and has been much slower to recover compared with other travel markets. Much of this is attributable to more flexible or fully remote jobs, although other travel indicators suggest that much commute travel has returned, but ridership has not.

Intercity routes have many variations which likely evolved over time to provide direct service to particular job sites. This approach is beneficial when there is a large group of employees who have specific shift times; however, with declining ridership long predating the pandemic, continual tweaking has led to a confusing array of route variants that make the service less useful for everyone else.

With more flexibility in work schedules, and the results of the intercity travel markets analysis from each of the other community areas, there is strong evidence that Intercity service would benefit most from regularity in all-day frequency, connectivity to local routes, and bi-directional service.

PLACES

COVERAGE

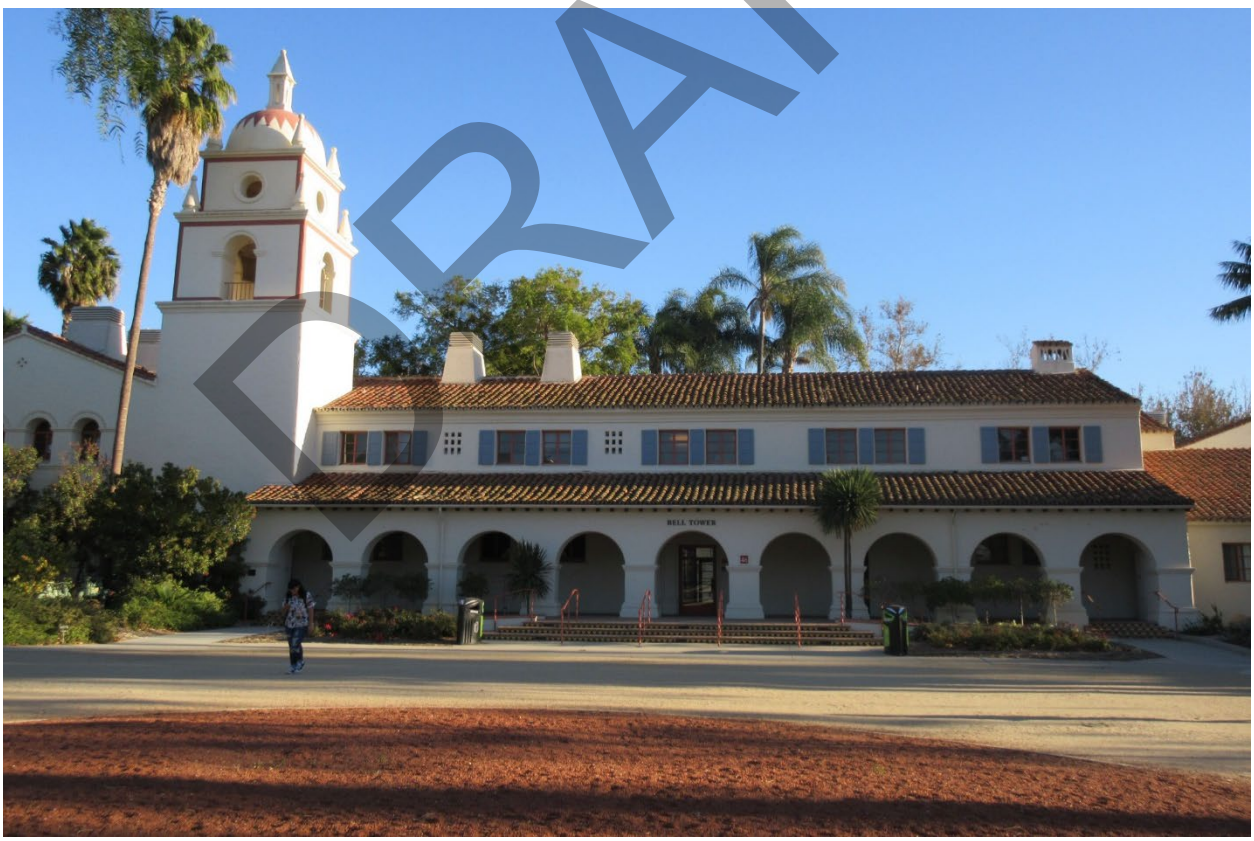
VCTC Intercity has the broadest coverage area of all providers, but any given route must trade off how much of each community it can serve directly to balance very long end-to-end travel time. Most routes have very few, or even only one, stop in each community.

WALKABILITY

The majority of Intercity stops are not walkable to many homes. The commuter-focused routes are generally walkable to major job centers. Even when operating on local arterial streets, local bus stops are very limited. There may be an opportunity to add some infill stops to improve walkable access without significantly slowing service.

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

VCTC Intercity is the primary regional connector within Ventura County as well as to neighboring counties. Intercity can also provide an "infill" role for Surfliner and Metrolink trips through the County. Connecting to local providers with regularity and predictability should be a high priority to reduce the total trip time between any two neighboring cities.



SERVICE DESIGN

FIXED ROUTE DIRECTNESS

Generally express bus services are very direct with few deviations, and Intercity routes follow this model. However, there are also significant stretches of certain routes that operate on local arterial routes past many homes and businesses without any stops. While adding stops can increase total travel time, a balance of limited stops at major intersections could help expand access to service without deviating routes. Avoiding making these stops timepoints will minimize runtime impacts.

FIXED ROUTE FREQUENCY

Frequency on Intercity routes varies greatly. Other local services operate hourly schedules, but only some VCTC routes operate that consistently. Meanwhile, the higher frequency of the CSCUI route would be more desirable. However, the route doesn't directly connect the college to any destinations other than the train station, and almost no connecting transit is as frequent, making at least half of these trips ineffective for most users. A rebalancing of frequency systemwide could significantly improve the ability for people to use Intercity and local services as a true regional transit network.

SPAN

Many Intercity routes make their last runs by 7 p.m. which may be missing some of the regional travel demand that depend on services or classes that end after 8 p.m. Conversely, CSUCI service has operated as late as 10 p.m. but effectively no other transit service is still operating, which likely undermines the usefulness of the later span. As discussed in the other market areas, transit service should generally run through 8 p.m. to capture most daily travel activity; if there is no evening transit service to get someone home (whether from work, class, appointments, or entertainment), they will not take transit earlier in the day either. Late evening runs will always be less productive but are essential for making earlier bus service attractive to a wide variety of users.

BALANCE OF SERVICES

As a predominantly commuter bus service, Intercity does not have a demand-response program.

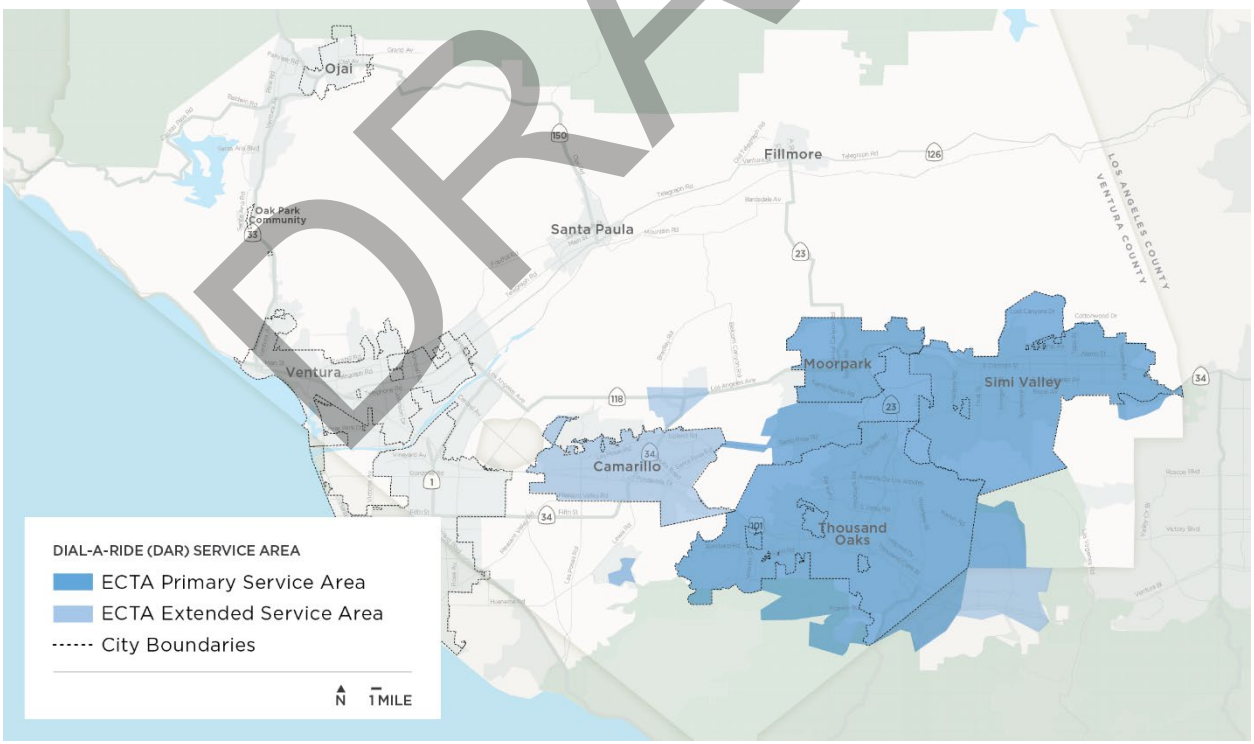
13. EAST COUNTY TRANSIT ALLIANCE (ECTA)

This section provides an assessment of ECTA CONNECT (referred to simply as ECTA herein), the cross-jurisdictional demand response service operating primarily in Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, and Moorpark. See the Market Assessment sections of the chapters on those respective communities for an understanding of the demographics, travel patterns, and landscape of those areas.

Rider Eligibility and Service Area

This service is a collaboration of the cities of Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Moorpark and Camarillo. ECTA serves ADA certified riders and seniors. Under a contract managed by Thousand Oaks, residents of Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Thousand Oaks can travel between the cities, a service area of 110 square miles. ECTA Intercity riders can also transfer onto Gold Coast GO ACCESS at the Camarillo Transfer Point, to travel within Oxnard or Ventura. The ECTA service area is shown in Figure 56.

Figure 56: ECTA Service Area



Perhaps confusingly, although Camarillo is nominally a part of ECTA, the city is considered the Extended Service Area. Riders who live in the primary service area may get travel to and from the extended area (which also includes Agoura Hills in Los Angeles County); residents of Camarillo traveling into the ECTA primary service area are instead served by CAT DAR which does not necessarily match the fare and eligibility structure of ECTA.

Performance Indicators

Key Performance Metrics for ECTA are summarized in Table 36.

Table 36: ECTA Performance Metrics

ECTA CONNECT Dial-a-Ride	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
Passenger Trips	21,300	15,571	3,907	7,031	8,051
Revenue Hours	12,140	8,967	1,774	5,115	5,955
Revenue Miles	271,023	218,069	30,736	117,404	129,514
Operating Cost	$860,744	$1,020,771	$424,271	$683,194	$809,220
Pax per Hour	*1.75*	*1.74*	*2.20*	*1.37*	*1.35*
Pax per Mile	*0.08*	*0.07*	*0.13*	*0.06*	*0.06*
Cost per Pax	*$40.41*	*$65.56*	*$108.59*	*$97.17*	*$100.51*
Cost per Hour	*$70.90*	*$113.84*	*$239.12*	*$133.56*	*$135.89*
Cost per Mile	*$3.18*	*$4.68*	*$13.80*	*$5.82*	*$6.25*

ECTA has experienced a significant drop in ridership since FY 19, losing 62% of passenger trips in FY 23 compared to pre-pandemic levels. Operating costs have fluctuated due to a reduction in service hours, however current operating costs have returned to pre-COVID-19 levels with lower service utilization, causing increases in all cost indicators. Passengers served per hour dropped to 1.35 while the cost per passenger has risen by 150% since FY 19.

Operations Topics

ECTA resulted from general agreement among east county municipalities' transit administrators that consolidation with GCTD was undesirable. The current MOU accomplished intercity dial-a-ride trips that addressed identified unmet needs. The City of Camarillo believed their operations already met a high level of service and that the costs of providing service under the Alliance would likely be higher than what they were paying. For this, Camarillo opted to provide its own intercity services. Camarillo continues to support the Alliance as a non-paying member, with voting rights on policy, procedure, and operations but not as a member of the fiscal agreement.

ECTA currently assesses participating jurisdiction costs by rider's home address.

ECTA sets up transfers into Ventura and Oxnard with Gold Coast at the Camarillo Transfer point and into Los Angeles County with L.A. ACCESS. Camarillo picks up any trip within its city and transfers with Gold Coast at St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard. This arrangement alleviates what might other be multiple transfers for a DAR trip from Thousand Oaks to Oxnard into only one transfer.

RESOURCES

The Thousand Oaks call center which facilitates ECTA trips has 4 call-taker positions spread across the services it operates. There are 3 full-time dispatchers, an operations manager, and customer service manager that field complaints. The ECTA service has 4 dedicated drivers from a pool of 35 drivers with commercial endorsement that can operate any vehicle. The drivers bid on service for assignments to run.

TRIP SCHEDULING, DISPATCHING AND RIDER NOTIFICATIONS

Trip requests are booked into Trapeze after a rider is determined to be eligible for service. Some trip times may be negotiated at the time the trip reservation is placed. Call-takers schedule both legs of a trip when booking. The Trapeze software batches trips at 11:00 p.m. to create the driver manifests that are reviewed before the shift begins for the day. The driver manifests are provided on tablets in the vehicle where drivers only see the next assigned trip. The software may add more trips to the manifest as the day progresses.

TECHNOLOGY

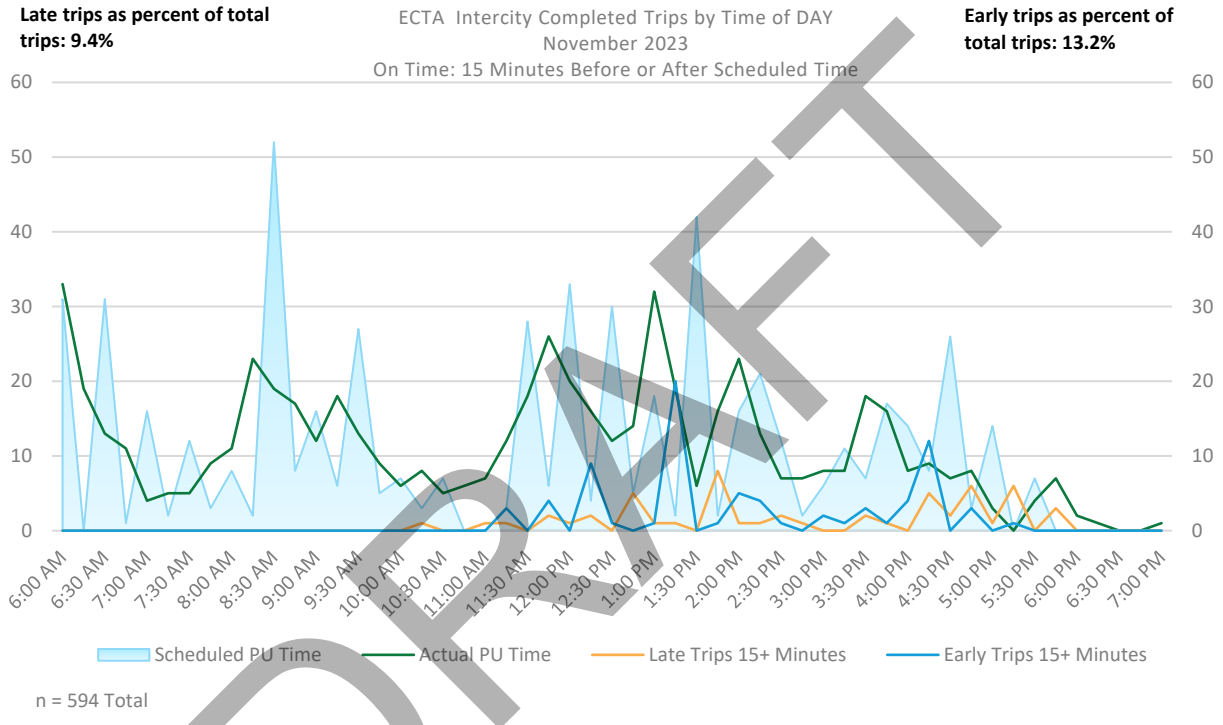
Automated calls are sent to riders 20 minutes before the vehicle's arrival time using the built-in Ripple notification feature. RADAR digital systems are installed on vehicles to ensure safe driving. RideCo scheduling software is expected to replace Trapeze for all Thousand Oaks operated services and is anticipated to increase efficiency in service delivery.

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

An analysis of trips performed by time of day during November 2023 is presented in Figure 57. Scheduled trip times and actual trip pick-up times are plotted over 15-minute intervals throughout the course of the day and summed for all service days in the month. Trips served outside of a 30-minute window, either 15 minutes before the scheduled time or 15 after the scheduled time, are calculated for determining on-time performance.

ECTA service begins at 6:00 a.m. to ensure the longer-distance trips reach their destination in time for appointments and work shifts. Peak demand is experienced at 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. ECTA manages on-time performance well during the morning, but trips begin to run early and late just before noon with a significant number of trips running late just before the midday peak. Vehicles arriving more than 15 minutes before the scheduled time account for 13% of trips while late trips represent just over 9% of trips. ECTA service is available until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Figure 57: ECTA On-Time Performance



ECTA Connect Fares

ECTA Connect fares increased from $6.00 to $8.00 on January 1, 2025, for a one-way trip. The fare remains the same regardless of the distance traveled. Personal Care Attendants with ADA endorsement can ride free of charge when serving as a companion.

ECTA's Interest and Concerns for Integration

ECTA is currently not interested in expanding its service area as growing the system is perceived to be more expensive. ECTA also has concerns about its ability to meet TDA farebox requirements, if services were to be consolidated, there are concerns about absorbing Simi Valley's demand response services given their higher cost pension obligation. However, ECTA is interested in improving coordination with its partners to improve working relationships, improve customer service and enhance the rider experience.

14.OJAI VALLEY

The Ojai Valley is located in northwestern Ventura County and is relatively distant from other communities and separated from them by mountainous open space. Although primarily a residential area, Ojai Valley is known for tourism, attracting visitors with its natural beauty, arts scene, and variety of wellness and luxury resorts.

The City of Ojai operates the Ojai Trolley, which has been running a single route variation since the other was suspended due to a driver shortage relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Service was initially suspended in FY21, then reinstated, then suspended again in FY23. The operational route (Route A) offers hourly service from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., connecting key destinations along Maricopa Highway and Ojai Avenue. This route serves essential locations, including downtown Ojai, and extends to the unincorporated areas of Meiners Oaks and Mira Monte. The temporarily suspended route (Route B) would typically operate with a similar hourly frequency and cover additional areas such as the Ojai Valley Inn. Both routes operate in a loop but cater to distinct parts of the city.

Ojai Trolley fixed route ridership was approximately 36,691 in 2023. Total annual ridership decreased 65% over the last ten years. Like many transit agencies, Ojai Trolley severely cut service during the COVID-19 pandemic and has not restored service to pre-pandemic levels. Ridership had recovered to 51% of FY19 levels as of June 2023.

ADA Paratransit service in Ojai is provided by Gold Coast GO ACCESS.

Due to vacancies at the City of Ojai during the time this work was conducted, limited information could be obtained about existing service, planned changes, City priorities, or resource constraints.

15. CONNECTING THE DOTS: COUNTYWIDE GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Ventura County's public transportation service is a constellation of intercity express routes, local circulators, dial-a-ride and microtransit. Because resources are limited and many communities are relatively low density, most communities offer extensive dial-a-ride programs, and scheduled transit service operates only hourly or even less.

Those that use transit in Ventura County are satisfied with it, but transit mode share remains low, and ridership has mostly failed to recover since the COVID-19 pandemic while operating costs have continued to rise. While much ridership was lost due to the pandemic, several routes were already underperforming before then.

Fundamentally there is no reason transit – even with the limited resources available in Ventura County – cannot be more successful. Relative to the population, density, and travel activity, Ventura County transit operators have plenty of opportunity to attract more riders than they did even in 2019. This report examines a snapshot of how transit performed as of early 2024, and the discussion below links together the individual service evaluations and market assessment to identify the big picture ideas that the final Short Range Transit Plan report will put into actions and provide a financial assessment.

However, many of the ideas presented need not represent an increase in transit spending that cities cannot afford. Instead, they require the willingness of city leaders and staff to think more big-picture and reconsider how, when, and where service is allocated.

Connect span of service to opportunity

Perhaps the greatest benefit for fixed-route transit across the County would be to offer a more consistent frequency and span of service in every community, meaning both operating slightly later overall and providing enough regularity on routes to connect with regional services. There are at least three reasons to do so:

1. Travel data clearly show that in every community, trip activity at 8:00 p.m. is roughly equal to volumes at 8:00 a.m., yet nearly all service across the County winds down by 7:00 p.m.
2. College students are a significant focus of attention for transit providers based on investment in the College Ride program and the design of several routes to directly serve colleges, yet transit service

is inconsistent and rarely runs late enough to serve students with evening classes.

3. While long-distance trips between communities is not the majority of travel, it is still a sizeable portion of the travel market, and the hardest kind of trip to make without a car, yet the local and regional routes do not form an effective network to support these trips.

Getting home is as important as getting there

Because most service ends around 7:00 p.m. or earlier, many people may not use transit at all because they will not be able to get home. Travel volumes vary by community size, but each city has roughly similar levels of travel activity through to 8:00 p.m. Ridership patterns overall (excluding Gold Coast and VCTC) reflect a service design that mostly caters to high school students and older seniors who are most likely to do all their travel before 6:00 p.m. However, transit is most successful when it works for a wide variety of people with different trip purposes. Even many seniors, for example, would like to attend evening community events but find that transit is not available to get home afterwards. Evening ridership will always be lower, but its importance in bolstering daytime productivity should not be underestimated.

Thinking regionally, locally

Local routes should also serve more effectively as the first/last-mile connection for Intercity routes, Metrolink and Amtrak. This is accomplished not only by operating service at least through 8:00 p.m. but also offering consistent, clockface headways countywide that would support predictable, and potentially timed connections to regional service. Although there is no disputing that local travel is the primary focus for the local systems, there is little evidence that strategic adjustments to timing and span to make better regional connections would harm existing riders, and would certainly attract more riders who might want to travel regionally. Even without timed connections, the significant gaps in service on both Intercity and local routes result in few opportunities to travel between communities. With regular, bi-directional, hourly service on Intercity routes plus dependable hourly local connecting routes, it becomes possible for more riders to make more trips on all services. More connections regionally means more riders locally.

Balance frequency with access and connectivity

In further support of routes operating consistent headways and spans: There are several examples of routes that do operate more frequently than hourly, which seems ideal. However, in practice several of these examples don't attract proportionally more ridership compared with less frequent routes in

the same area. In these cases, it might be better to offer a longer route that covers more possible destinations, and make hourly connections to the network, rather than offering high frequency does not attract riders to the route.

Consistency and predictability are invaluable when service is infrequent

Consistent clockface headways offer predictability and simplicity for riders. When service is infrequent, the best thing to do is make the schedule memorable and predictable. If you know the bus always passes your house seven minutes after the hour, it simplifies the planning needed to take the bus.

Routes with cycle times under an hour (but longer than 30 minutes) may be able to squeeze in a few additional trips in a service day compared with running hourly, but this means riders always have to consult a schedule. For most riders, the difference in whether the bus comes every 50 minutes or every 60 minutes is irrelevant. The closer to an hour (or over) a route design is, the more sense it makes to design service to be on clockface intervals.

Second, cities sometimes operate routes on regular intervals but skip an entire hour in the middle of the day to accommodate operator breaks. Bus operators certainly deserve their breaks! However, when service is only hourly at best, skipping an hour to save the expense of a relief driver simply makes the transit service less useful.

Reserve demand-response service for where it fits best

Nationwide, many cities are excited about the prospect of microtransit to expand higher-quality transit service to their residents. However, microtransit is not necessarily better than traditional transit in every case.

In Ventura County, most cities have the road network and population to clearly support fixed-route transit, even if current ridership might suggest that microtransit is a better solution. When microtransit is widely available overlapping the same area as fixed routes, and especially when it is priced the same as or lower than the bus routes, microtransit will draw riders away from a fixed route even if it would otherwise be successful.

Every community has some areas or times of day when microtransit *will* be the best option. This includes neighborhood areas that are far from main roads where bus routes are most successful, or perhaps in the evenings when ridership is low but some transportation service is still desirable. Microtransit thoughtfully designed to extend coverage to harder-to-serve areas and priced to allow riders who truly need an on-demand trip to still get

one will help cities offer a high degree of mobility without breaking the bank. Offering both an extensive microtransit program and fixed-route service is not an investment any city in Ventura County can afford in the long run.

There is plenty of evidence in support of fixed-route success

Planners must be cautious not to mistake low-performing fixed routes as the sole indicator that DAR or microtransit are the best option. While this *may* be true, the SRTP analysis found that every route in the County either was attracting a strong rider base before the pandemic, or long-underperforming routes had clear opportunities for a redesign that should succeed. While this SRTP generally avoids comparing communities within the County (as every community has its own priorities and circumstances), Thousand Oaks demonstrates that fixed-route service can succeed in Ventura County. The City of Thousand Oaks is one of the least-dense communities, with residential and commercial land uses completely segregated along large, high-speed roads. And yet, their route network attracts more riders per revenue hour than Simi Valley, a city with a comparable population but a more traditionally transit-route-friendly distribution of land use along a grid of roads. The same is true compared to Camarillo, Moorpark, Santa Paula, and Fillmore, all of which have more walkable traditional grid-based neighborhoods.

This is not to disparage any community, but rather to emphasize that fixed-route changes in those communities should realize similar or even better outcomes for ridership and cost-efficiency than Thousand Oaks. At an average of 7 passengers per revenue hour, Thousand Oaks Transit is not nearly the most productive fixed-route system, but it performs relatively well despite its built environment. Other cities should expect strong outcomes where they have more dense and walkable areas, and plan and invest in service accordingly.

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

Reducing transit service in response to low ridership often leads to a "feedback loop" where ridership declines even further rather than productivity balancing. When transit service operates only hourly, reducing individual underperforming trips eliminates choice and flexibility, which are important in serving a wide variety of riders. Although it can seem like a prudent cost-saving measure, in several examples, routes operate such a thin schedule that they attract almost no riders on a regular basis at all. This should not be seen as an indicator that a route is simply not useful; the SRTP analysis suggests that most of these examples have a clear travel market but other factors, such as overlapping and underpriced microtransit/DAR could

be contributing. However, when a route operates only sporadically, it is impractical to conclude based on ridership alone whether the route is useful or not.

Invest in communications and marketing

When a business finds that fewer customers are coming in the door, it can rarely afford to simply continue operating indefinitely hoping that its existence alone will attract new customers. Transit providers must invest time in reminding the community that their service is a great option for getting around. This is especially true as several communities are operating transit routes that are barely used, despite generally well-thought service design and moderate frequency.

Small cities with highly successful transit services often take every opportunity to promote themselves to city council, at college and high school events and fairs, adult education programs, community events, and more. Most transit services in Ventura County would benefit from refreshed websites and brochures, investment in web and app-based tools like GTFS, and a stronger social media presence. Regular communication with school district administrators, after school clubs, senior center program directors, and other community leaders can help educate people about transportation resources. A Countywide transit ambassador could easily fulfill this role for multiple agencies and help promote the changes that should result from this SRTP and future programs.

Planners should also not confuse their primary markets – students, seniors, people with low income, etc. – as the *only* people who can benefit from transit. Plenty of people who have money and access to cars would still prefer not to drive for every trip.

Plan for safe walk access to stops

In select areas throughout every community, improvements to safe pedestrian crossings and access to bus stops will greatly benefit and complement improved transit routes and schedules. Specific locations will be identified in the final SRTP, but analysis in each community identified challenges with stop locations differing on opposite sides of the road due to lack of infrastructure for either a bus stop, pedestrian crossing, or both.

Transit in Ventura County has a strong foundation, but it cannot be ignored that current ridership is exceptionally low relative to the amount of service hours offered. Looking back ten years, most transit offerings were relatively similar or more extensive than the level of service in 2024, and ridership overall was substantially higher. All of the evidence supports the fundamental ideas presented above: **by**

investing in a more robust and regular network of services both locally and regionally, all transit operations should see increases in ridership. The current circumstances are not an indicator that transit in Ventura County is inherently limited to only the most transit-dependent residents and workers, but rather that seemingly small decisions made locally over time to conserve resources and reallocate resources away from the route system are perpetuating ridership decline.

There are very real funding limitations and difficult decisions that agencies must make as costs have increased and revenues available to transit are relatively stagnant. However, it must be acknowledged that successful transit requires a level of investment to make it useful most of the time. Anything less only reinforces that transit is only for people who have absolutely no other choice; in which case, Ventura County communities and agencies will collectively spend an increasing amount of money to serve a decreasing number of people who can afford to rely on transit.

This report focuses on the need for improvements to fixed-route service. Given the financial constraints cities face in funding transit, providing a more sustainable cost-efficient service is one of the primary reasons to focus on bolstering the fixed-route service. The final SRTP will address improvements to the demand-response programs countywide in response to the detailed findings by service in this report. The final SRTP will also delve into the financial and capital implications of the concepts to support any proposed shifts or investments in transit.