

Transit Transformation Task Force (TTF) – Meeting #4
California State Transportation Agency
June 17, 2024 | 10:30 am – 3:00 pm
MEETING MINUTES

Bay Area Metro Center
375 Beale Street
Board Room – First Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

Background: [SB125](#) established the Transit Transformation Task Force (TTF) to develop policy recommendations to grow transit ridership, improve the transit experience, and address long-term operational needs. The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) appointed 25 members to the TTF, including representatives from state government, local agencies, academic institutions, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders. CalSTA, in consultation with the TTF, will prepare a report of findings and policy recommendations based on the TTF's efforts and submit it to the Legislature by October 31, 2025.

TTF Members

(X indicates member was present in the room)

x	Kome Ajise, Southern California Association of Governments	x	Kate Miller, Napa Valley Transportation Authority/Vine Transit	x	Laura Tolkoff, SPUR
x	Rashidi Barnes, Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority	x	Lorelle Moe-Luna, Riverside County Transportation Commission	x	Mark Tollefson, CalSTA
x	Alix Bockelman, Metropolitan Transportation Commission	x	Seamus Murphy, San Francisco Bay Water Emergency Transportation Authority	x	Michael Turner, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
x	Sharon Cooney, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS)	x	Laurel Paget-Seekins, Public Advocates		Kari Watkins, UC Davis
x	Ian Griffiths, Seamless Bay Area	x	Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association	x	Mark Watts, Transportation California

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x	Amy Hance, City of Clovis	x	Robert Powers, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)		Melissa White, Senate Transportation Committee
x	James Lindsay, Amalgamated Transit Union	x	Carl Sedoryk, Monterey-Salinas Transit District	x	Jim Wunderman, Bay Area Council
x	Eli Lipmen, Move LA		David Sforza, Assembly Transportation Committee		
x	Juan Matute, UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies		Tony Tavares, Caltrans		

Agenda Topics:

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTTF Chair)

- Opening remarks expressing gratitude to the Task Force members and providing an overview of today's agenda.

2. Roll Call (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTTF Chair)

- Call to order, roll call, establishment of quorum, and housekeeping items.

3. Approval of the TTTF Meeting Minutes for April 15, 2024 (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTTF Chair)

- Ayes: Ajise, Barnes, Bockelman, Cooney, Griffiths, Hance, Lipmen, Matute, Miller, Moe-Luna, Murphy, Paget-Seekins, Pimentel, Powers, Sedoryk, Tolkoff, Tollefson, Turner, Wunderman.
- Noes: None.
- Abstain: Cooney, Watts.
- Absent: Sforza, Tavares, Watkins, White.

4. Public Comments

- Aleta Dupree (Team Folds) commented on the morning's ride-along event, expressed appreciation for the event, and noted that getting people interested in transit involves discovering things outside of themselves.

5. Discussion of service improvements related to increasing frequency and reliability through transit prioritization

a) Staff & Technical Working Group Presentation (Julie Kirschbaum, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency)

- Presentation on the Van Ness Improvement Project, a major project designed to reduce travel times in conjunction with San Francisco's citywide plan for transit priority and to address the problem of declining bus speeds and reduced ridership.
- As congestion increases in areas where transit does not have traffic priority measures, transit service becomes slower and more expensive to provide.
- The Van Ness BRT project introduced dedicated center-running bus lanes, implemented dedicated station platforms, employed all-door boarding and transit signal priority (TSP), and eliminated most left turns for cars.
- Project outcomes have led to improvements in ridership, speed, reliability, and availability.
- The project took over 20 years from inception to completion due to its complexity and required extensive planning, environmental review, and coordination between agencies.
- Potential challenges to scale similar BRT improvement projects across California include high costs, long timelines, complex approval processes, and challenging community buy-in.
- Lessons learned from the project include using the SB 122 CEQA process, taking an incremental and iterative "quick build" approach, and combining transit upgrades with other street improvements such as utility projects.
- The TWG developed a set of actions for the Task Force to consider:
 - Considering making state funding more flexible to secure long-term support for capital projects.
 - Reevaluate permitting regulations, with some entity having the power to say "yes."
 - Created standardized BRT guides to lower costs and streamline implementation.
 - Evaluate opportunity for Caltrans to build BRT-specific elements on its assets, and potentially act as a project manager/builder for non-Caltrans roads.

b) Public Comments

- Warren Cushman (Community Resources for Independent Living, Hayward) commented on the significant challenges islands pose for the blind and visually impaired. Mr. Cushman noted that the proliferation of islands further complicates travel for this population. Mr. Cushman noted that it's essential to consider improvements in both fixed-route and paratransit systems, as changes in fixed-route services impact the reliability of paratransit.
- Anthony (East Bay AC Transit rider) appreciated the Van Ness Improvement Project presentation and encouraged the Task Force to address challenges with multi-jurisdictional transit priority projects. He highlighted AC Transit's slowdown due to increased traffic and upcoming service cuts, and suggested reforms or simplified project approvals within city jurisdictions or through Caltrans involvement to improve transit efficiency.
- Aleta Dupree (Team Folds) praised the presentation and highlighted the lengthy process of implementing Van Ness BRT. She emphasized the benefits of BRT in reducing traffic congestion. Ms. Dupree voiced support for transit priority measures and expressed hope for more initiatives to address heavy traffic and improve safety.

c) Task Force Discussion (All)

Summary of Discussion on Transit Prioritization

- **Legislative Support and Policy Implementation:** Several Task Force members advocated for the extension of SB 922 CEQA exemptions and the implementation of SB 960 to streamline transit prioritization projects. There is a need for clear state-level mandates and policies to facilitate TSP and transit-only lane enforcement. State support is helpful to overcome local city-level opposition to transit priority projects as well as bureaucratic hurdles.
- **Funding and Resource Allocation:** Several Task Force members stressed the necessity of flexible, ongoing funding to support transit infrastructure and increased service frequency. Smaller cities face financial constraints, and there is a need for state-level incentives and streamlined approval processes. Several Task Force members proposed state support to integrate transit prioritization into broader

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infrastructure projects, leveraging available funding opportunities. Others noted that it was important to examine the feasibility to designate a single “capital builder” to execute BRT buildouts in a region/state.

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination:** Collaboration among transit agencies, local governments, and state entities is critical to ensure cohesive implementation of transit projects. Several Task Force members mentioned the challenges in working with cities on transit prioritization and suggested the creation of groups and/or forums engage with cities to address transit prioritization challenges collectively. Quick-build approaches were discussed as ways to maintain stakeholder engagement and expedite project timelines.
- **Operational Efficiency and Technological Integration:** Several Task Force members mentioned the benefit of using camera technology to enforce transit-only lanes and reduce illegal parking, and equipping buses with necessary tools to manage congestion and ensure operational efficiency. One Task Force member suggested establishing Centers of Excellence for BRT implementation to provide technical support and standardized practices. Others discussed the possibility of creating a centralized State-level implementation “tiger team” to support end-to-end deployment of BRT projects.
- **Strategic Planning and Incremental Implementation:** Many emphasized the importance of focusing on incremental approaches, starting with strong transit corridors and scaling up based on success. One Task Force member advocated for strategic use of state routes and local streets with existing transit infrastructure to enhance accessibility and efficiency, while others pointed out that pilot projects can be used to test and refine transit prioritization measures before broader implementation.
- **Transit and Urban Development Considerations:** One possible way to speed up transit priority improvements is by integrating transit infrastructure with urban development goals, particularly in high-priority corridors. Some Task Force members suggested leveraging legislative efforts on housing to promote efficient urban development and transportation solutions. Others suggested potentially designating key transit corridors as having “as-of-right” permission for BRT, with the potential to overlap with housing

mandates

6. Discussion of fare coordination between agencies

a) Staff & Technical Working Group Presentation (Bill Bacon, Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Felix Fung, Ontario Ministry of Transportation)

- Shared a case study advanced by the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Ontario's One Fare program.
- Longer journeys often require riders to take a fare penalty for needing to cross the jurisdictional or service area boundaries.
- There are 1.8 million trips everyday between Toronto and neighboring municipalities and more than 20 public transit providers across the region, each with their own fare structures and schedules.
- Mr. Fung presented Ontario's efforts to eliminate double fares ("co-fares") between Toronto and surrounding municipalities, introducing the One Fare Program to facilitate seamless transfers and reduce costs for riders.
- Since its launch, the program has achieved significant success with over 5 million transfers in two months and is expected to generate over 8 million new rides annually, enhancing transit efficiency and affordability.
- The Ontario government subsidized lost revenue for municipalities due to fare integration, incentivizing local transit agencies to participate despite concerns over autonomy and funding challenges.
- Potential challenges to implementing fare integration in California include limited coordination at the local level, legacy technologies (e.g., different fare payment suppliers), and the lost fare revenues.
- The TWG developed a set of actions for the Task Force to consider:
 - Establish "responsible entity" to ensure fare and revenue coordination (short-term) and standardization (long-term).
 - Promote short-term fare standardization at a regional level before statewide scaling.
 - Ensure acceptance of open-loop payments (e.g., credit, debit, mobile wallet) even while legacy systems are in place.
 - Condition funding on long-term participation in standardized, open payment infrastructure and simplification.

b) Public Comments

- Steve Green Brandt emphasized the benefits of the German "Verkehrsverbund" concept, which integrates fares, planning, and schedules across transit systems. Mr. Brandt urged Bay Area agencies to collaborate and overcome challenges to achieve a similar integrated system. He also recommended a relevant podcast that discusses transitioning from fragmented transit systems to integrated networks, suggesting it could provide valuable insights.
- Mike (Senior Citizen rider, Contra Costa County) highlighted the importance of allowing local agencies to maintain autonomy in setting fares, noting specific local initiatives such as grant-funded free lines and senior discounts, which are crucial for attracting riders. While supporting integration efforts, he stressed the significance of preserving local fare-setting authority to meet community needs effectively.
- Aleta Dupree (Team Folds) commented on advancing fare integration policies, highlighting challenges like unpredictable travel patterns and the need for unified fare systems akin to New York City's capped weekly fares. Ms. Dupree advocated for integrating group travel options via mobile apps and plastic cards to enhance convenience and reduce reliance on cash or paper tickets, aiming to foster cooperation rather than competition between different transit services.
- Adina Levin (Seamless Bay Area) commented on the lessons from Ontario, especially the use of financial incentives. Ms. Levin highlighted fare integration as a cost-effective strategy for boosting ridership and advocated for incremental progress in the Bay Area. She emphasized the importance of open payment systems and standardized eligibility for senior and disability discounts to enhance accessibility across transit services.
- Ryan Meckel (Santa Cruz) emphasized the importance of fare integration due to his frequent travel between Santa Cruz and the Bay Area, involving multiple transit agencies with different payment methods. He highlighted the need for fare accumulation, similar to New York City's weekly fare cap, to ensure commuters do not pay more than necessary. Mr. Meckel advocated for collaboration

between agencies to implement a fare cap system across different operators, making transit more affordable and user-friendly.

- Christine Fitzgerald (Community Advocates) commented that fare integration is very important to those that travel via public transit (e.g., BART, Caltrain, and paratransit). All these services are vital to those of us with disabilities, and fare integration will make it easier to get from point A to point B. It would add functionality and ease of service for us to go from one place to another quickly and easily.

c) Task Force Discussion (All)

Summary of Discussion Themes on Fare Coordination and Integration

- **Open-Loop Payments and Technology:** Some Task Force members advocated for the adoption of open-loop payment systems, which can coexist with closed-loop systems, offering fare capping and simplifying fare payments across multiple transit agencies. Others highlighted the need for new funding and technical support to introduce open-loop systems, including new transponders and back-end software.
- **Fare Simplification and Incentives:** Task Force members discussed the importance of making fare structures simpler to improve transit ridership and the rider experience. Some suggested that long-term participation in standardized fare infrastructure should be a condition for funding. Others supported an incentives-based approach to encourage agencies to adopt coordinated fare policies, including potential new funding and project scoring criteria that favor fare integration.
- **Fare Integration Compared to Other Measures:** Some Task Force members noted that fare integration can significantly increase ridership and is a cost-effective investment compared to other transit improvements. Other members noted that other transit improvement measures, like transit prioritization, were more important investments than fare integration.
- **Administration Challenges and Regional/ Statewide Coordination:** Task Force members noted the complexities involved in setting fares, and the need for upfront discussions and administrative support to implement new policies. Several Task Force members recommended establishing a responsible entity at both regional

and state levels to spearhead fare standardization and coordination efforts.

- **Economic Considerations:** The Task Force discussed the economic impact of fare integration, including the cost of administration and potential loss of fare revenue from free transfers. Suggested state subsidies could help offset initial costs.
- **Equity in Fare Programs and Fare Policy:** The Task Force noted the importance of maintaining reduced fare programs for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income riders within integrated fare systems. One member mentioned the need to consider federal regulations, such as Title VI, which affect fare policy implementation, particularly for smaller agencies.
- **Youth and Future Transit Riders:** The Task Force discussed ways to attract youth as future transit riders. Proposed initiatives included a statewide transit pass ID for youth, potentially funded through DMV fees.

7. Discussion of service improvements related to coordinated scheduling

a) Staff and Technical Working Group Presentation (Chad Edison, Chief Deputy Secretary, CalSTA)

- Shared a case study advanced by the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Switzerland's fare coordination.
- In the 1980s, Switzerland faced decreasing transit ridership as personal cars gained popularity. It implemented coordinated scheduling and an integrated fare structure on a national and regional scale.
- The strategy involved creating a national and regional integrated timetable, ensuring synchronization between various modes of transport (e.g., rail, bus, light rail, trams) at key connection points.
- Planned capital investments focused on frequency increases and reliable connections, with a coordinated process among multiple agencies and jurisdictions.
- Significant ridership increases were observed, such as Zurich's 129% increase within four years of the S-Bahn opening. Improvements included reduced intervals between services, higher average speeds, and a 96% increase in rail service in Zurich from 1990 to 2012.

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- Implementing a similar approach in California faces challenges including the lack of an existing model for interagency coordination, lack of data standardization, and the need to prioritize infrastructure investments.
- The TWG developed a set of actions for the Task Force to consider:
 - Organized process is necessary among MPOs, State of California, County Transportation Commissions, Operators, and other stakeholders to oversee joint timetable implementation, facilitate agency collaboration, and provide guidance/standards on balancing local and regional operations.
 - Agencies need common data collection, analysis, and publication standards.

b) Public Comments

- Wendy Kallins (Sustainable Marin) commented the topic of schedule coordination is an important one for the Bay Area. She noted and highlighted that confusion, inconvenience, and long wait times between transfers (especially between different agencies) are major reasons people avoid using public transit in the Bay Area. She emphasized the need to prioritize this issue to improve transit usage.
- Adina Levin (Seamless Bay Area) commented on Switzerland's gradual progress from uncoordinated to well-coordinated transit systems and suggested California draw lessons from this evolution. She emphasized the importance of coordinated services to maximize investment value and achieve climate goals. She also highlighted the heightened challenges faced by the disability community regarding service coordination in transit systems.

c) Task Force Discussion (All)

Summary of Discussion Themes on Coordinated Scheduling

- **Frequency as Key:** Many Task Force members noted that frequency of service is critical for schedule coordination between various transit modes and operators. Multiple speakers emphasized that increasing service frequency is essential for effective schedule coordination across different transit systems. Challenges arise when

integrating less frequent heavy rail or long-haul services with more frequent local bus routes, since operators have to prioritize and choose which schedule(s) to coordinate.

- **Low-Hanging Fruit:** Other Task Force members noted that while increasing frequency will help with coordinated scheduling, which can be very expensive, there are “low-hanging fruit” improvements that can be made now by identifying the most egregious connection point challenges and fixing them. For instance, GTFS data could be analyzed to create a hierarchy of routes, and then schedule coordination could be initiated for the most high-impact routes and transfer points (e.g., high ridership, high transfer penalty). Historical GTFS data could also be used to recommend “buffer” times to riders, thus helping them plan their trips.
- **Complexity of Schedule Coordination:** Coordinating schedules among numerous transit operators and modes (e.g., heavy rail, commuter rail, ferries, buses) poses significant challenges due to varying frequencies, operational constraints, and geographical differences within regions. Aspects such as shared infrastructure with Amtrak and other operators, labor union agreements, and school schedules all affect transit schedule coordination.
- **Equity Considerations:** Several Task Force members emphasized the need to prioritize equity when discussing schedule coordination. This should not involve simply increasing frequency, but assessing demographics, socio-economic factors, and ridership needs to ensure fair and accessible transit options and determine the optimal connection points.
- **Financial and Technical Support:** Many Task Force members pointed out the need for funding and ongoing technical support to enhance frequencies and support schedule integration. Costs include maintaining and upgrading scheduling software, aligning service adjustments, and maintaining durable capital investments.

8. Discussion of safety and cleanliness on and around transit

a) Staff and Technical Working Group Presentation (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTTF Chair)

- Presented categories and actions for consideration by the Task Force based on previous Task Force meetings, listening sessions with key transit leaders and experts, and the TWG.

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- The TWG developed a set of actions for the Task Force to consider.
 - Workforce safety.
 - Install protective doors for bus operators.
 - Work to create unified legal frameworks in routes that cross jurisdictions.
 - Riders' safety.
 - ✓ Create safety ambassador program.
 - ✓ Use public address (PA) systems at operator stations.
 - ✓ Facilitate collaboration between legal system and transit agencies to improve enforcement.
 - Coordination with Health and Human Services to prioritize services for populations with health needs that are riding the transit system.
 - Shelters, wayfinding, security, and communication systems.
 - ✓ Construct emergency call boxes.
 - ✓ Improve existing security camera quality and increase quantity across stations/stops.
 - ✓ Standardize information presented on signage at transit stops, shelters, and stations.

b) Public Comments

- Aleta Dupree (Team Folds) commented on the importance addressing safety and cleanliness in transit systems, highlighting concerns about attacks on transit employees and the presence of biohazards and noxious substances.

c) Task Force Discussion (All)

Summary of Discussion Themes on Safety and Cleanliness

- **Safety and Security:** Task Force members emphasized the critical importance of ensuring safety and security for both transit workers (including operators and maintenance/other types of workers) and transit riders. There was consensus on the need for better safety measures, including prohibition orders for offenders, protective barriers for transit workers, and increased penalties for violations of prohibitions orders. One Task Force member suggested promoting

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station foot traffic by encouraging more goods and services (e.g., restaurants) to be offered in stations.

- **Policing:** Several Task Force members noted that having sworn police officers on transit systems was helpful, but it was difficult to fill these positions. Using progressive policing options such as crisis intervention specialists and/or ambassadors on transit systems is an alternative way to deter crime and reassure the public. Another Task Force member raised concerns about over-policing and the criminalization of fare evasion, advocating for more balanced and fair approaches.
- **Policy and Legislative Recommendations:** The need for innovative policy changes was discussed, including activating transit stations to allow for goods and services, which could generate revenue and improve safety through increased activity. The importance of integrating state-level surveys and recommendations, particularly those focusing on vulnerable populations like women and LGBTQIA communities, was stressed.
- **Addressing Homelessness:** A significant portion of the discussion revolved around the impact of homelessness on public transit systems. Participants called for better coordination and funding to support transit agencies in managing homelessness, including outreach and access to mental health and housing services. The financial burden on transit agencies to handle these social issues was highlighted, with suggestions for the state to provide additional resources or reimbursement for these expenses, and for agencies to be able to access the funds provide to municipalities for addressing homelessness.
- **Infrastructure and Accessibility:** The importance of infrastructure improvements for transit safety was discussed, particularly in relation to state highways, urban arterials, and sidewalks. Ensuring safe access to bus stops and transit stations, improving sidewalk quality, and addressing ADA accessibility were seen as critical needs. Suggestions included better traffic control measures and infrastructure solutions to protect transit riders and improve overall safety.
- **Funding and Resource Allocation:** The need for increased funding and resources for transit agencies was a recurring theme. This included funding for safety measures, mental health services, and homelessness outreach, as well as support for progressive policing

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initiatives. The participants also emphasized the importance of state-level support in coordinating efforts and providing the necessary statutory tools to address these challenges effectively.

- **Cross-Agency Coordination:** The Task Force discussed the need to enhance collaboration between transit agencies, law enforcement, judicial systems, healthcare providers, social services, and state agencies to ensure effective enforcement of prohibition orders, support for vulnerable populations, and streamlined communication and resource sharing. The Task Force mentioned that currently, there is minimal coordination between these entities, which makes it difficult to keep track of problem riders as they move through various systems.

9. Public Comments for items not on the agenda

- Aleta Dupree (Team Folds) expressed appreciation for the chance to discuss California transit and emphasized the importance of building an integrated, complementary public transit system.
- Phoebe Chu (UCLA) asked if the SB125 report will include information about taxation for transportation network companies as a funding mechanism for transit in California.

10. Preview of next steps and topics for future meetings (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTTF Chair)

- Appreciated the robust discussion. First and last mile connections and networks will be covered in future TTTF meetings. Future meetings will also cover the implications of service enablers on labor costs, infrastructure costs, and maintenance costs.
- We will send out an email to collect further feedback from the Task Force.
- Next TTTF meeting will be on August 29, 2024 from 10:30 am – 3:00 pm. The location is Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) at 900 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1700, Los Angeles, CA 90017
- Please continue to send any useful reports, data, surveys, and other information, which helps inform agendas.

Summary of Discussion Themes on Process and Next Steps (All)

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- Several Task Force members raised questions about the integration of feedback from previous meetings and the process to develop recommendations.
- CalSTA noted that Task Force members will have the opportunity to review and discuss draft recommendations (based on the feedback provided to date) in upcoming meetings. CalSTA will begin summarizing major themes and recommendations from discussions, creating documentation that will be shared with Task Force members.
- CalSTA also noted that while the meeting dates have been scheduled, the topics are flexible and can be modified.
- Additional topics for future meetings were suggested, including a call to discuss housing and urban planning in relation to transit.
- Several Task Force members noted that today's discussion was robust and productive.

11. Adjourn (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTT Chair)

- Thank you to the Task Force, the public, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for hosting.
- Meeting adjourned.

For any further questions please [contact SB125transit@calsta.ca.gov](mailto:contactSB125transit@calsta.ca.gov) or visit our webpage: <https://calsta.ca.gov/subject-areas/sb125-transit-program>