

Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #3
California State Transportation Agency
April 15, 2024 | 10:30 am – 3:00 pm
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Caltrans District 11
4050 Taylor St
Garcia Room
San Diego, CA 92110

Background: [SB125](#) established the Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) 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 TTTF, including representatives from state government, local agencies, academic institutions, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders. CalSTA, in consultation with the TTTF, will prepare a report of findings and policy recommendations based on the TTTF's efforts and submit it to the Legislature by October 31, 2025.

TTTF 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	x	Kari Watkins, UC Davis
x	Ian Griffiths, Seamless Bay Area	x	Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association		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
	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	x	Tony Tavares, Caltrans		

Agenda Topics:

- 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks** (Toks Omishakin, Secretary, CalSTA)
 - Opening remarks from Secretary Omishakin expressing gratitude to the Task Force Members and emphasizing the need for transformative and tangible actions in transit.

- 2. Roll Call** (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTF Chair)
 - Call to order, roll call, establishment of quorum, and housekeeping items

- 3. Approval of the TTF Meeting Minutes for December 19, 2023 and February 29, 2024** (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTF Chair)
 - Motion/Second: Cooney / Ajise
 - Ayes: Ajise, Barnes, Bockelman, Cooney, Griffiths, Hance, Lipmen, Matute, Miller, Moe-Luna, Murphy, Paget-Seekins, Pimentel, Powers, Sedoryk, Tavares, Tolkoﬀ, Tollefson, Turner, Watkins, Wunderman
 - Noes: None
 - Absent: Lindsay, Sforza, Watts, White

- 4. Discussion of transit availability, by geography and trip purpose**
 - a) Staff & Technical Working Group Presentation** (Michael Eshleman, AC Transit)
 - In order for people to consider taking public transit, it needs to be available.

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- Many California residents don't have access to transit. Example: In San Diego, residents can access less than 10% of jobs by transit in under 45 minutes.
- The Technical Working Group (TWG) was asked to define availability for the Task Force's consideration.
- The TWG's proposed definition of availability consisted of three main components:
 1. Access to destinations:
 - Example definition: Percent of destinations in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) that are accessible by transit, for average residents and members of disadvantaged communities, in the same amount of time as by car
 2. Distance to a transit stop:
 - Example definition: Percent of residents who live within a certain time (e.g., 10-minute walk, 20-minute walk) or distance of a transit stop (e.g., ½ mile, 1 mile)
 - Includes considerations of how residents may reach transit
 3. Span of service:
 - Example definition: The number of hours in a day and the number of days a week that transit service is provided
 - Span of service may vary on weekdays versus weekends

b) Public Comments

- Adina Levin from Seamless Bay Area commented on the need to consider more detailed categories than the current categories of urban, suburban, and exurban. Ms. Levin also stressed the importance of considering nuanced types of transit users, including seniors and low-income workers.

c) Task Force Discussion (All)

Summary of Discussion on Availability

Defining Transit Availability and Geographical Variations

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- **Density and Demographics:** Transit availability should account for regional characteristics like population density and demographic factors. For example, Napa Valley has concentrated populations with significant transit use among older residents.
- **Geographic Nuances:** Distinctions between urban, suburban, and exurban areas need further refinement, with attention to local specificities rather than broad categorizations. The needs of densely populated urban areas differ significantly from those of rural areas, requiring tailored approaches rather than a one-size-fits-all strategy.
- **Regional Planning Considerations:** The distinct characteristics of various California regions (e.g., the difference between Los Angeles and the Bay Area) necessitate flexible, region-specific strategies.

Components of Availability

- **Frequency and Reliability:** These were highlighted as critical components of availability. The frequency of service directly impacts perceived and actual availability, influencing user choices between transit and other modes like cars or rideshares.
- **Safety and Accessibility:** Physical safety and accessibility, including for seniors and people with disabilities, are crucial components of availability as well. The ability to access transit without safety concerns or mobility barriers affects usage rates.
- **Affordability:** Affordability was also mentioned as an important component of availability.
- **Technology and Information:** The use of technology to provide real-time transit information can enhance user experience and perceptions of availability.

Performance Thresholds and Metrics

- **Equity:** It is essential to address disparities in transit access and focus on disadvantaged, minority, and vulnerable communities. Metrics like the number of households with limited car access and transit affordability were discussed.
- **Destination-Based Metrics:** Focus should be on ensuring transit access to key regional and local destinations like airports, hospitals, and job centers. The idea of measuring the distance to transit stops and the total travel time compared to driving were discussed.

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- **Demand vs. Supply Metrics:** A shift from emphasis on supply-side metrics (e.g., number of stops) to those reflecting actual usage and demand for transit was suggested to better gauge availability.

Economic and Policy Considerations

- **Funding:** Concerns were raised about the financial feasibility of setting ambitious transit goals, especially in less dense areas. The economic implications of setting high thresholds for transit availability were noted as a potential barrier.
- **Private Sector Partnerships:** Leveraging partnerships with technology companies to enhance transit usability and integration with other services was recommended.

Challenges and Strategic Concerns

- **Competing with Other Modes:** Transit must be competitive with cars and emerging modes like rideshares in terms of convenience and reliability.
- **Policy Implications:** There was a call for realistic goal setting that considers local conditions and avoids overly ambitious targets that may not be achievable or sustainable.

5. Discussion of customer goals, metrics and changes required to enable transformational increase in ridership

a) Staff & Technical Working Group Presentation (Mike Costa, Placer County Transportation Planning Agency)

- Shared the perspective of the Technical Working Group (TWG), who agreed there is no “one-size-fits-all approach.”
- For this exercise, the TWG perspective was customer-centric and unconstrained by cost.
- The TWG developed a set of options around customer goals and metrics for the Task Force to consider.
- Customer perspective outcomes: reliability, speed, safety, experience, and affordability.
 - Reliability: Includes consistency and dependability of transit service, measured through on-time performance and transfer experience. Trust is an important aspect.

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- Reliability threshold ranges proposed by TWG: Across all geographies, customers expect similar reliability of transit (e.g., 80-95% of trips arrive on-time within 5 minutes)
- Reliability may vary more by mode than by geography, with higher reliability (e.g., 90-95%) expected of trains, and slightly lower reliability (e.g., 80-85%) expected of buses
- Speed: Includes frequency, total travel time (comparable to cars), and number of transfers.
 - Speed threshold ranges proposed by TWG: Across all geographies, customers expect similar frequency for peak times of <15 minutes.
 - However, for off-peak times, range of expectations is wider: Urban geographies expect highest frequency (<15 min); Suburban (<30 min); Exurban (<60 minutes) (customers may expect lower frequency for longer trip lengths).
 - Urban geographies expect speeds to be more competitive with the car (e.g., 1-1.25x speed of car) than Suburban and Exurban (e.g., <1.5x speed of car).
 - Across all geographies, customers expect fewer than 1 transfer for short trips.
- Safety: Emphasis on the perception of safety and security throughout the entirety of the trip.
 - Safety threshold ranges proposed by TWG: Safety thresholds may be considered in relation to other forms of transportation (e.g., driving, walking, rideshare).
 - Across geographies, transit should be at least as safe as the street (e.g., walking); in Urban and Exurban geographies, customers may expect transit to outperform street safety.
- Experience: Includes comfort, ease of payment, and ease of wayfinding.
 - Experience threshold ranges proposed by TWG: Across all geographies, customers associate ease of use with their understanding of transit (e.g., standardized information, knowledge of benefit programs)

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- Urban geographies have higher expectations around comfort (e.g., 100% of stops expected with shelters/benches) than Suburban and Exurban (e.g., 50 – 80% of stops expected with shelters/benches)
- In areas without infrastructure, lighting and other elements of experience may be more important to customers
- Affordability: Includes transit's cost competitiveness with driving, factoring in tolls, parking, time and other expenses.
 - Affordability threshold ranges proposed by TWG: Urban and suburban customers are likely more price-sensitive, as driving may incur more costs (e.g., higher parking, toll prices).
 - Expectations may vary across trip lengths – transit could be more competitive for shorter trips by saving on potential “cost of convenience” for parking (e.g., higher % of total travel time is spent on looking for parking), while customers may be willing to sacrifice certain aspects of affordability on longer trips for comfort of experience.
- The TWG developed threshold ranges and example performance targets for all five outcomes and considered variations in the threshold ranges by geography (urban, suburban, exurban).

b) Public Comments

- None

c) Task Force Discussion (All)

Summary of Discussion Themes on Prioritization of Customer Goals (Reliability, Speed, Safety, Experience, and Affordability)

- **Overall Summary of Prioritization of Customer Goals:** Safety was seen as “table stakes” (e.g., a minimum requirement) for providing transit service. In other words, if customers do not feel safe on transit, then other metrics do not matter. Once security concerns have been met, the core metrics that are most critical to driving ridership are service metrics (e.g., reliability and speed [including frequency]). Although experience and affordability were seen as

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important elements, getting core service metrics right is most critical to achieving a transformative increase in ridership.

- **Frequency and Dedicated Right-of-Way:** The importance of frequency was highlighted, with a suggestion that services should aim for no more than a 10-minute wait to increase usability and reduce the reliance on exact scheduling. Additionally, having dedicated right-of-way lanes for transit can help improve transit reliability.
- **Safety and Cleanliness:** Many Task Force Members agreed that safety was the priority. Even if a system is available, individuals will not use it if they do not feel safe. Safety is seen as a complex issue linked to ridership levels; higher ridership can lead to a perceived increase in safety. Cleanliness also plays a crucial role in how safe passengers feel.
- **Transfers and System Integration:** Efficient transfers are crucial, especially avoiding unnecessary ones due to agency boundaries. There is a need for seamless integration across different transit systems to enhance users' transfer experience.
- **Customer Experience:** Experience includes how transit respects and serves the user. The discussion included the importance of transit systems being easy to use and well-integrated. Task Force Members discussed the importance of real-time data, simple payment methods, and overall service consistency as ways to improve customer experience. There was a suggestion that this is an area for the State to play a large role.
- **Equity and Affordability:** The discussion emphasized the need to make transit accessible and affordable to all users, particularly those who rely heavily on transit in their daily lives. Discussions around fare policies and subsidies were mentioned as ways to address equity.
- **Flexibility and Travel Patterns:** Task Force Members discussed the post-pandemic changed patterns of work and travel. For instance, the traditional distinction between “peak” and “off-peak” travel times are becoming blurred as people embrace more flexible schedules. Transit systems need to be flexible and responsive to these changes.
- **Workforce Considerations:** The importance of having a reliable workforce to ensure the operational efficiency and safety of transit services was noted.

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- **Comments on the Task Force Process:** Some Task Force Members called for more policy-oriented discussions to address funding constraints and prioritize goals that can deliver tangible benefits under real-world constraints. Others felt that it was important to have aspirational, unconstrained discussions.

d) Staff & Technical Working Group Presentation (Michael Eshleman, AC Transit)

- Given the goals and metrics defined in the previous section, what needs to change for California to meet them?
- Many enablers will be necessary to meet the goals and metrics for transformational ridership.
- Enablers can be direct or indirect and include both accelerants that need to be applied or impediments that need to be removed.
 - Direct: Evaluation metrics, service, workforce, road prioritization, transit legislation, transit infrastructure, and funding/capital programs.
 - Indirect: Land-use, road pricing, State alignment, governance and policies, demographic shifts, grants/procurements, cultural norm shifts, and standardization.

e) Public Comments

- Adina Levin from Seamless Bay Area commented on span of service and noted that focusing on a wide variety of riders and trips can be a strength, whereas focusing on a narrower range of riders and trips can be a vulnerability.

f) Task Force Discussion (All)

Summary of Discussion Themes on Enablers

- **Grant Administration and Funding:** Some suggested adding grant administration improvements to grants and procurement to streamline processes at the State, regional, and local levels. They also discussed the need for sustainable, predictable, and stable funding as a direct enabler for operations planning and continuity.
- **Safety and Security Challenges Workforce:** Many noted ongoing safety and security challenges within transit systems affecting both workforce and riders. Workforce safety is a key issue, and it has

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been difficult to pass legislation to address safety issues on transit systems.

- **Local Approval/Permitting:** Local approval and permitting processes are barriers to transit projects and could be streamlined and improved.
- **Transit Prioritization:** Enhance transit prioritization on local streets and State highway systems, including initiatives like buses on shoulders.
- **Workforce Development and Training:** The need for improved training programs and certification processes to expedite workforce readiness and address safety concerns.
- **Cultural Change and Engagement:** Task Force Members discussed the importance of changing cultures both within State agencies and transit agencies. They also discussed engaging younger generations through initiatives like student transit passes to build long-term transit ridership.
- **Governance and Roles and Responsibilities:** At the State level, bureaucratic delays and a risk-averse culture delays transit initiatives. Additionally, roles and responsibilities for State, local, and regional partners should be clarifying for network planning processes to ensure alignment.
- **Community and Regional Collaboration:** Multiple participants noted the importance of aligning State, regional, and local bodies (e.g., MPOs, CMAs, RTPAs) to support transit development and overcome bureaucratic hurdles.
- **Institutional Capacity:** Building institutional capacity at various levels was identified as crucial for delivering seamless transit services and fulfilling roles and responsibilities effectively.

6. Public Comments for items not on the agenda

- None

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

- Future topics discussed during today's meeting will be further explored in the next Technical Working Group and the next TTTF meeting (scheduled for June 17, 10:30 am – 3:00 pm, San Francisco Bay Area Metro Center)
- We would appreciate your feedback on:

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- a. Levels and types of service required to meet ridership outcomes
- b. Coordination between agencies (e.g., service, fares, scheduling)
- c. Additional feedback you have on today's discussion questions

8. Closing Remarks (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTT Chair)

- Meeting adjourned

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