

**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5**  
**California State Transportation Agency**  
**August 29, 2024 | 10:30 am – 3:00 pm**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)**  
**900 Wilshire Blvd.**  
**Suite 1700**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90017**

**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		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
	Sharon Cooney, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS)	x	Laurel Paget-Seekins, Public Advocates	x	Kari Watkins, UC Davis

**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTF) – Meeting #5**  
**August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

x	Ian Griffiths, Other Stakeholder with Subject Matter Expertise in Transportation	x	Michael Pimentel, California Transit Association	x	Mark Watts, Transportation California
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	x	Tony Tavares, Caltrans		

**Agenda Topics:**

- 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks** (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTF Chair)
  - Opening remarks expressing gratitude to the Task Force members and providing an overview of today’s agenda.
  
- 2. Remarks from the meeting host, SCAG** (Sarah Jepson, SCAG)
  - Opening remarks about SCAG, the nation’s largest metropolitan planning organization (MPO).
  - Highlighted aspects of SCAG’s plan, Connect SoCal, a 20+ year plan with \$750 billion in transportation investments, and the region’s existing conditions and challenges.
  
- 3. Remarks from LA Metro** (Sharon Gookin, LA Metro and multiple LA Metro colleagues)
  - Opening remarks from LA Metro, highlighting its multiple projects and programs, including its GoPass program for students, its Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program for low-income riders, and its Employer Pass programs for commuters.

#### **4. Public Comments**

- Bart Reed (Transit Coalition) commented on the lack of payment interoperability between transit systems in the Los Angeles area, and recommended that TAP cards should be made interoperable with MetroLink and other payment methods.
- Kevin (Chino Hills) commented on the lack of payment interoperability in the greater Los Angeles region, and noted that the region should implement something akin to the Bay Area's Clipper card.
- Phoebe (UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies) commented on fare capping for students and noted that there have been many efforts to establish free transit passes for students Statewide. She asked that fare capping for students be established.
- Carlos Gonzalez (Community Organizer, SAGE) commented that the State needs to subsidize universal fareless transit and not preclude agencies from going fareless. He also noted that the farebox system needs to be updated.
- Denny Zane (former Executive Director, Move LA) thanked LA Metro for pioneering the universal student transit pass program. He noted that Move LA specialized in ballot measures and has successfully passed over four measures that are generating over \$3 billion per year, and that voter initiatives qualified by signature drives only require a majority vote to pass.
- Jeremy Stutz (former president, Rail LA) expressed concerns about fare interoperability. He commented that a regional agreement through SCAG would be a benefit to riders and make cross-regional travel easier.
- Oscar (SAJE) commented that it is difficult for low-income transit-dependent riders to apply for lower fares. He commented on the need for the State to subsidize transit operations so systems can offer fareless rides.
- Connie Arnold (Disability Rights Advocate) commented that federal transit funding does not seem to be translating into accessibility for all individuals, and asked what transit agencies are doing to make sure that all transportation systems are fully accessible to the disabled.

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

- Maria Sims (Redondo Beach) commented that safety concerns prevent her from using public transportation, and asked the Task Force to consider how safe it is to take public transportation.

### 5. **Roll Call** (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTF Chair)

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

### 6. **Approval of the TTF Meeting Minutes for June 29, 2024** (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTF Chair)

- E. Lipmen: Noted that the topic of first/last mile was not reflected in the June 29, 2024 meeting minutes and also not reflected in today's meeting agenda. He requested that first/last mile be a topic of discussion as it is an essential component to create an integrated system.
- Motion/Second: Ajise/Sedoryk
- Ayes: Ajise, Barnes, Bockelman, Griffiths, Hance, Lindsay, Lipmen, Matute, Miller, Moe-Luna, Murphy, Paget-Seekins, Pimentel, Powers, Sedoryk, Tavares, Tollefson, Turner, Watkins, Watts, Wunderman.
- Noes: None.
- Absent: Cooney, Sforza, Tolkoff, White.

### 7. **Staff Report on findings and policy recommendations for the report to the Legislature** (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTF Chair)

- The TTF Chair went over the proposed process for approving recommendation, the structure of the final report (which will include principles, strategies, and policy recommendations), and the role of the Technical Working Group (TWG).
- Off-cycle meetings will be needed (in addition to the regularly scheduled Task Force meetings) to review the draft recommendations. Exact meeting dates and time will be announced.
- Today the Task Force will go through the approval process for recommendations related to transit prioritization.

#### a) **Staff presentation on process for findings and policy recommendations** (Hunter Owens, SB125 Staff)

**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5**  
**August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

- M. Owens presented a set of draft recommendations and supporting staff report on the topic of transit prioritization. The draft recommendations were drawn from TTTF meetings, TWG meetings, and SME interviews. He presented the draft recommendations in the table below.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Draft Recommendations</b>
<b>A. Standardize, support, and scale transit priority infrastructure.</b>	<b>A.1.</b> Establish statewide procurements for Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and other infrastructure that can be leveraged to lower costs and encourage standardization.
	<b>A.2.</b> Update the CA MUCTD to include TSP for transit routes where applicable. Create TSP Guidelines & standards that can be leveraged in any jurisdiction. Work to encourage collaboration between cities and agencies to enable TSP at scale.
	<b>A.3.</b> On the state right of way, encourage implementation of transit priority and BRT features, such as bus-only lanes or queue jumps. Ensure that the State Highway Network can be used by Transit riders.
	<b>A.4.</b> Authorize transit buses to be equipped with “yield to bus” signs, to establish yield requirement for auto travel.
	<b>A.5.</b> Extend authorization for transit agencies to use readily available camera technology to discourage illegal parking in transit-only lanes and at transit stops where parking is already prohibited under existing law.
<b>B. Expedite delivery of transit-supportive infrastructure.</b>	<b>B.1.</b> Allow for exemption or preemption of local permitting requirements on identified priority transit routes.
	<b>B.2.</b> Extend the SB 922 CEQA exemptions for transit prioritization projects, general purpose lane to bus-only lane conversions, highway shoulders to part-time transit lanes conversions.
	<b>B.3.</b> Establish a by-right permitting mechanism for transit infrastructure – bus shelters, transit priority, TSP, etc. inside each city and on the State right of way

**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5**  
**August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Strategies	Draft Recommendations
	<p><b>B.4.</b> Establish a statewide TIGER team to assist with the implementation of BRT / Bus Only lanes statewide to assist with planning, engineering and implementation in all jurisdictions.</p>
<p><b>C. Coordinate and collaborate to deliver infrastructure across jurisdictions.</b></p>	<p><b>C.1.</b> Develop a framework on roles and responsibilities for TSP and BRT implementation for use statewide.</p>
	<p><b>C.2.</b> Convene a statewide working group for cities and transit agencies to discuss and solve common issues in implementing TSP.</p>
	<p><b>C.3.</b> Assist with funding TSP &amp; other transit amenities on a state-owned facility using SHOPP dollars.</p>
<p><b>D. Establish flexibility with State funding sources.</b></p>	<p><b>D.1.</b> Fund planning and engineering resources at the State level for easier implementation of transit priority infrastructure at the local level.</p>
	<p><b>D.2.</b> Update state funding programs and guidelines to encourage the delivery of transit priority infrastructure.</p>

**b) Public Comments**

- Laura Tolkoﬀ (SPUR) indicated she was pleased to see transit priority rise to the top of the discussion. She would like for the Task Force to articulate a well-designed role for the State in transit prioritization. She felt it was important to diﬀerentiate strategies by impact, responsible party, and timeline, to accomplish actions administratively, and to recognize the time lag between adoption of recommendations and implementation.
- Adina Levina (Seamless Bay Area) emphasized the importance of focusing on impactful actions, particularly in relation to Caltrans and multi-jurisdictional transit corridors in the Bay Area. She also supported setting standards that integrate transit, walking, and biking, and advocates for administrative action wherever possible, considering recent laws and aiming to go beyond them.
- Jeremy Stutz (former president, Rail LA) expressed support for Item B.1., emphasizing the importance of exempting priority transit routes from local permitting to speed up project delivery. He also urged

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

prioritization of high-capacity transit routes, stressing that trains should not be delayed at stoplights, as this undermines efficient public transportation.

- Grace Peng (Beach Cities) expressed support for the transit prioritization policy recommendations. She expressed frustration over CO2 emissions from cars and long bus wait times caused by local opposition to bike and bus lanes. She urged the adoption of policies that prioritize bus lanes to offer faster transit than driving, especially in suburban areas.
- Kevin (Chino Hills) expressed that driving was more feasible than using local transit in the San Bernardino and Riverside areas. He expressed support for the recommendations, and urged state and regional authorities to provide more support for public transit, including bus rapid transit.
- Bart Reed (Transit Coalition) highlighted that if preemption were implemented in Los Angeles, rapid transit routes like the Expo Line and Orange Line could reduce travel times by 10 minutes. He emphasized the need to prioritize transit over cars and called for changes in city policies to ensure smoother and faster transit across multiple council districts.

### c) Task Force Discussion and Actions on Transit Prioritization Draft Recommendations (All)

- **Process Improvements:** Task Force members requested earlier distribution of the draft recommendations and supporting materials to the Task Force as well as the Technical Working Group (TWG). They discussed the process to adopt, reject, or amend recommendations, and requested adding another option to approve in concept for further refinement.
- **General Support for the Draft Recommendations:** Most, but not all, of the Task Force members voiced general support of the draft Transit Signal Priority recommendations in concept.
- **Detailed Recommendations and Implementation:** Some Task Force members expressed the need for more details and context around the draft recommendations. This includes identifying roles and responsibilities, timelines, sources, owners, performance guidelines, and priorities for the draft recommendations.

**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5**  
**August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

- **Need for Further Refinement:** Task Force members provided feedback, commentary, additions, and recommended modifications to the draft recommendations. These comments address topics including liability, bus on shoulder, the role of the State, data collection and evaluate, state and local permitting, funding, procurement, roles and responsibilities, land use, regional coordination and collaboration, incentives for local jurisdictions, and others.
- **Funding:** Several Task Force members expressed the need to create a more robust funding structure for transit to ensure transformation. One member noted that the draft TSP recommendations have the potential to reduce costs for transit operators in the form of reduced cost per vehicle revenue mile.
- **Further Refinement:** It was agreed that the draft Transit Signal Priority recommendations would be adopted for further refinement rather than final approval to allow the recommendations to be further developed.

**Motion to approve draft recommendations A.1. through A.5 with the following modifications (in *bold italics*):**

Strategies	Draft Recommendations
<b>A. Standardize, support, and scale transit priority infrastructure.</b>	<b>A.1.</b> Establish statewide procurements for Transit Signal Priority (TSP), <i>preemption</i> , and other infrastructure that can be leveraged to lower costs and encourage standardization.
	<b>A.2.</b> Update the CA MUCTD to include TSP <i>and preemption</i> for transit routes where applicable. Create TSP Guidelines & standards that can be leveraged in any jurisdiction. Work to encourage collaboration between cities and agencies to enable TSP at scale.
	<b>A.3.</b> On the state right of way, encourage implementation of transit priority and BRT features, such as bus-only lanes or queue jumps. Ensure that the State Highway Network can be used by Transit riders. <i>Add performance standards for transit on the SHN.</i>
	<b>A.4.</b> Authorize transit buses to be equipped with “yield to bus” signs, to establish yield requirement for auto travel.



**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5**  
**August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Strategies	Draft Recommendations
	<p><b>A.5.</b> Extend authorization for transit agencies to use readily available camera technology to discourage illegal parking in transit-only lanes and at transit stops where parking is already prohibited under existing law, <b>as well as other violations.</b></p>

- A motion was made and seconded.
- **Ayes:** Ajise, Barnes, Bockelman, Griffiths, Hance, Lindsay, Lipmen, Matute, Miller, Moe-Luna, Murphy, Paget-Seekins, Pimentel, Powers, Sedoryk, Tavares, Tollefson, Turner, Watkins, Watts.
- **Noes:** None.
- **Abstain:** Wunderman
- **Motion approved.**

**Motion to approve draft recommendations B.1. through B.4 with the following modifications (in *bold italics*):**

Strategies	Draft Recommendations
<p><b>B. Expedite delivery of transit-supportive infrastructure <i>and strategies.</i></b></p>	<p><b>B.1.</b> Allow for exemption or preemption of local <b><i>and State</i></b> permitting requirements on identified priority transit routes.</p>
	<p><b>B.2.</b> Extend the SB 922 CEQA exemptions for transit prioritization projects, general purpose lane to bus-only lane conversions, highway shoulders to part-time transit lanes conversions.</p>
	<p><b>B.3.</b> Establish a by-right permitting mechanism for transit infrastructure – bus shelters, transit priority, TSP, etc. inside each city and on the State right of way.  <b><i>Note: Liability issues for this recommendation will be further researched.</i></b></p>
	<p><b>B.4.</b> Establish a statewide TIGER team to assist with the implementation of BRT / Bus Only lanes statewide to assist with planning, engineering and implementation in all jurisdictions.</p>

**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5**  
**August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

- A motion was made and seconded.
- **Ayes:** Ajise, Barnes, Bockelman, Griffiths, Hance, Lindsay, Lipmen, Matute, Miller, Moe-Luna, Murphy, Paget-Seekins, Pimentel, Powers, Sedoryk, Tavares, Tollefson, Turner, Watkins.
- **Noes:** None.
- **Abstain:** Watts, Wunderman
- **Motion approved.**

**Motion to approve draft recommendations C.1. through C.3 with the following modifications (in *bold italics*):**

Strategies	Draft Recommendations
<b>C. Coordinate and collaborate to deliver infrastructure across jurisdictions.</b>	<b>C.1.</b> Develop a framework on roles and responsibilities for TSP and BRT implementation for use statewide.
	<b>C.2.</b> Convene a statewide working group for cities, <b><i>counties, MPOs,</i></b> and transit agencies to discuss and solve common issues in implementing TSP.
	<b>C.3.</b> Assist with funding TSP & other transit amenities on a state-owned facility using SHOPP dollars. <b><i>Note: The implication of using SHOPP dollars will be further researched.</i></b>

- A motion was made and seconded.
- **Ayes:** Ajise, Barnes, Bockelman, Griffiths, Hance, Lindsay, Lipmen, Matute, Miller, Moe-Luna, Murphy, Paget-Seekins, Pimentel, Powers, Sedoryk, Tavares, Tollefson, Turner, Watkins, Watts.
- **Noes:** None.
- **Abstain:** Wunderman
- **Motion approved.**

**Motion to approve draft recommendations D.1. through D.2 without any modifications with the understanding that revenue sources will be discussed in greater detail in further Task Force meetings:**

**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTF) – Meeting #5**  
**August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Strategies	Draft Recommendations
<b>D. Establish flexibility with State funding sources</b>	<b>D.1.</b> Fund planning and engineering resources at the State level for easier implementation of transit priority infrastructure at the local level.
	<b>D.2.</b> Update state funding programs and guidelines to encourage the delivery of transit priority infrastructure.

- A motion was made and seconded.
- **Ayes:** Ajise, Barnes, Griffiths, Hance, Lindsay, Lipmen, Matute, Miller, Moe-Luna, Murphy, Paget-Seekins, Pimentel, Powers, Sedoryk, Tavares, Tollefson, Turner, Watkins.
- **Noes:** Watt.
- **Abstain:** Bockelman, Wunderman
- **Motion approved.**

**8. Discussion of research plan and analysis**

**a) Research plan for completing non-recommendation portions of the report** (Hunter Owens, SB125 Staff)

- Provided an overview of the research plan for completing non-recommendation portions of the report, including SB125 requirements, objectives, analysis descriptions, and sources.

**b) Public Comments**

- Adina Levin (Seamless Bay Area) noted that it would be important to connect the non-recommendation items to potential recommendations. She highlighted the items relating to cost and needs for capital and operations, and the items relating to serving seniors, persons with disabilities, and meeting ADA requirements.

**c) Task Force Discussion** (All)

*Summary of Discussion Themes on Proposed Research Plan for the SB125 Report*

- **Feedback on Proposed Research Plan:** Several Task Force members commented on the research plan process, asked clarifying

questions, and provided suggestions on additional data sources. Task Force members mentioned existing or in-progress research that the SB125 team could leverage, including work on the zero emission transition, information on funding gaps and the cost of future growth, regional plans, and research conducted in support of SB1121. The group discussed the need to coordinate these parallel efforts and incorporate them into the SB125 research plan.

- **Process Clarification:** Task Force members asked for clarification on how they could provide additional feedback and how the “non-recommendation” portions of the SB125 report were related to the broader discussion. SB125 staff indicated that this section was mandated by law and that the State welcomes feedback on how to address it in the report and how to link it to recommendations.
- **Transit Safety Concerns:** Several Task Force members asked about the opportunity to analyze the impacts of transit safety issues, including studying what individual counties have done in terms of funding to address homeless and mental health issues, to more fully understand transit safety challenges.

## **9. Discussion of workforce opportunities in public transportation industry**

### **a) Staff and Technical Working Group Presentation** (Hunter Owens, SB125 staff)

- CA bus and rail employees approximately 33,000 people and this number is increasing.
- Workforce-related challenges faced by transit agencies include:
  - Recruitment: In 2022, the vacancy rate was 17% for bus operators and 10% for bus mechanics across transit agencies nationally.
  - Retention: Since 2010, transit sector turnover in CA has increased by ~40%, reaching ~9% in 2022.
  - Development: With an aging workforce (38% of employees within CA urban transit systems are age 55+, compared to 24% of CA workers across sectors) there is a need to develop a new generation of workers.
- Working with the Technical Working Group (TWG) and other Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), SB125 staff identified several initiatives that agencies are undertaking to address these challenges, as well as

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTF) – Meeting #5

### August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

ideas on how the State could support agencies across the workforce pipeline.

- The TWG and key transit SMES proposed the following possible actions to address workforce challenges:
  - Recruitment
    - Expand partnerships with trade/community colleges and other programs to increase size of candidate pool, and train potential candidates.
    - Create a centralized job board for transit agencies that are in the same transit region to advertise vacancies, share a talent pool, and better match candidates to positions.
    - Create a statewide campaign to increase interest in careers in public transportation.
    - Re-evaluate age requirements for bus operators.
    - Create an on-the-spot in-person interview and hiring process, and provide on-site examination for operators rather than requiring applicants to go to the DMV.
    - Align federal and state regulations around drug tests, particularly as it relates to marijuana.
    - Benchmark pay to cost of living.
    - Provide housing stipends, or partner with affordable housing providers to secure housing for entry level employees.
  - Retention
    - Invest in amenities for operators at end-of-line (e.g., add restrooms facilities and lighting).
    - Improve safety and experience of operators by increasing the presence of community support and law enforcement officers, installing protective partitions, and easing enforcement of safety measures through cross-jurisdiction legal frameworks
    - Establish on-site childcare centers (or equivalent benefits).
    - Increase access to affordable housing near where transit workers report to work.
    - Provide increased flexibility to workers (e.g., relieving shifts, choosing what shifts they want) to manage

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

- personal commitments, such as childcare or other familial responsibilities.
- Offer a diverse variety of shifts, and scale pay per desirability of shifts.
- Cater and tailor compensation packages to different stages of the employee lifecycle.
- Development
  - Create centralized training programs that can be leveraged across agencies in the same transit area; for example, through trade colleges, and fund placements.
  - Standardize credentials, curriculums, and onboarding materials that can be recognized across agencies.
  - Establish formal mentorship and shadow programs; specifically, programs that provide new employees with visibility into roles a few levels above.
  - Connect transit agencies to academic institutions (e.g., community colleges) to train employees for emerging skill requirements like for EVs.

### **b) Public Comments**

- Jeremy Stutz (Transit Coalition) commented on how the entertainment industry is suffering and how transit can provide flexible employment for creative workers.

### **c) Task Force Discussion (All)**

#### *Summary of Discussion Themes on Workforce Challenges*

- **Certification Challenges:** Several Task Force members noted the difficult, lengthy process of getting transit operators certified, which includes background check, licensing, and drug testing processes. Each transit agency maintains its own certification program, and there is an opportunity for the State to help streamline these certification processes. One member mentioned difficulties in changing testing protocols from urine to saliva tests. Additionally, smaller agencies lack access to vehicle simulation technology for behind-the-wheel training, which larger agencies use to expedite

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

certification. A shared pool of simulators distributed across agencies could help speed up the process and keep candidates engaged.

- **DMV Challenges:** One Task Force member commented on the challenges for transit drivers to obtain commercial driver's licenses from the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) that the State could assist with. These challenges include limited appointment availability, limited testing availability, and rigid program requirements. Allowing agencies more flexibility with regards to certification examiners and the "10-test requirement" would increase efficiencies.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** Successful recruitment and retention programs, such as those employed by Metro, include targeted efforts like Spanish Language recruitment, which have eliminated deficits in operator needs. Another Task Force member noted that successful recruitment and retention begins with addressing transit system safety and cleanliness.
- **Housing Challenges:** The Task Force discussed housing challenges for transit workers. Many operators cannot afford to live where they work, leading them to commute long distances or sleep in their cars. One member proposed the addition of workforce housing near transit facilities to address this problem.
- **Workforce Development and Education:** One Task Force member noted that workforce development is most effective when government partners with unions, and it would be beneficial for the State to explore the federal infrastructure bill as a model. Other members discussed how the State can fund and partner with universities and educational institutions offering certificates for those interested in transit careers. Career pathways are crucial for developing a robust transit workforce, which includes not just operators but mechanics as well.
- **Training Opportunities:** In addition to the need for ongoing training, new technologies will create demand for new skillsets. The Task Force members noted that as the transit industry transitions to zero-emission (ZE) vehicles, there is a need for extensive training for operators, mechanics, and those in supporting roles (e.g., electricians). The State could help support educational and training programs, which will help advance the transit industry, as operators and mechanisms will need to be re-trained on emerging technologies. One Task Force member mentioned that when

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

airplane mechanics were in short supply, agencies partnered with airlines to develop training programs.

- **Infrastructure for New Technologies:** The Task Force discussed the need for new infrastructure to support new technologies. The State could play a role in partnering with utilities to address transit infrastructure challenges and expedite permitting and construction processes.
- **Marketing and Recruitment Campaigns:** One Task Force member suggested that the State could help address workforce challenges by running two Statewide, agency-agnostic marketing campaigns: one to promote careers in transit and another to recruit law enforcement recruitment, including sworn officers and crisis intervention specialists. Independent campaigns could help transit agencies with hiring, improve safety perceptions, and potentially boost ridership.
- **Broader Industry Transformation:** California can lead a national effort in the green revolution by supporting electric bus manufacturers and expanding transit-related manufacturing. The State's size and resources could enable it to set a precedent for sustainable market development and broader industry transformation.
- **Impact of Autonomous Vehicles (AV) on Transit Workforce Development:** Two Task Force members discussed the impact of autonomous vehicles on the transit workforce. One member mentioned that vehicle automation feature could reduce operator burden and fatigue in the short-term, and another mentioned that an autonomous vehicle test facility in Northern California is exploring the creation of an AV workforce training center to address future maintenance and repair needs.

### 10. Discussion of Transportation Development Act reform for transit operations

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

- The TDA was created in the 1970s as a source of stable and continuous funding for public transit and has several qualifying requirements for accessing funding.
- The TDA is divided into two funds: Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA).



## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

- LTF
  - Distribution mechanism: By Population
  - Requirements to quality for funding: Farebox recovery ratio (FRR) (fare revenue to operating cost) threshold, based on degree of urbanization
  
- STA
  - Distribution mechanism: 50% by population; 50% by transit operator revenues
  - Requirements to quality for funding: FRR (fare revenue to operating cost) threshold, based on degree of urbanization; Total operating cost per vehicle revenue hour (VRH) must be less than that of previous year.
- The TWG identified several challenges to reform the TDA:
  - Focus on one metric may cause unintended consequences that impact customer delivery and equity (e.g., FRR emphasis may cause transit agencies to reduce service and innovation).
  - TDA's administrative requirements for funding may place a high burden on transit agencies.
  - Structure of penalties in TDA makes long-term funding less predictable.
- The TWG identified possible actions to reform the TDA:
  - If metrics are used, replace FRR with a ridership or other service effectiveness metric (e.g., UPT/VRH).
  - If metrics are used, customize them to better match system characteristics and performance trajectory (e.g., system scale, relative improvement vs. absolute metrics).
  - Reconsider the need for metric-based funding requirements
  - Re-use reporting materials that are already prepared for FTA audits.
  - Align data reporting requirements to those for the NTD.
  - Provide technical assistance to agencies to meet reporting requirements.
  - Amend penalties or develop other enforcement mechanisms aside from withholding funding.

### **b) Public Comments**

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

- Diana Kotler (Anaheim Transportation Network) commented on how small operators are precluded from participating in the TDA, and requested that TDA requirements and statutory language be streamlined to allow smaller operators to participate.
- Sebastian Andres Hernandez (Pasadena Transit) commented that many small local transit operators do not receive TDA funding, yet are required to bear the costs of transitioning to zero emissions. Not all operators may survive this transition. He requested that the State ensure that all available State transit resources reach all transit operators.
- Phoebe (UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies) commented on her support for replacing the FRR with another metric that is more beneficial for ridership and the number of paying riders per system.
- Colin Fisk (Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities) spoke in favor of eliminating the FRR, and advocate for removing the provision that allows some counties to divert some LTF funds to road work rather than transit, which is a problem in rural counties.
- Adina Levin (Seamless Bay Area) commented on the need to move away from the FRR, to reform the unmet needs process where transit funds can be used for non-transit purposes, and to establish standards for objective funding.
- Marissa (Transit Rider) voiced support for discontinuing the use of FRR as a metric and advocated for a more meaningful metric that considers ridership.

### c) Task Force Discussion (All)

#### *Summary of Discussion Themes on TDA Reform*

- **Consensus on the Need for TDA Reform:** There was consensus among Task Force members that the farebox recovery ratio (RFF) and operating cost per hour requirements for the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA) are outdated and in need of replacement. The group advocated for removing these metrics and exploring alternatives that more accurately reflect transit service effectiveness.
- **Proposed Metrics and Performance Measures:** Task Force members discussed the need for different metrics to replace the FRR to better measure transit service quality and coverage. A possible option

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

includes a per capita index service metric. Any new primary metric(s) should be uniform across the State. Task Force members emphasized the need to be careful when selecting the new metrics and consider the impact on operators of all sizes, not just those in large, urban areas.

- **Concerns Over “Unmet Needs” Clause:** Some Task Force members expressed concern that TDA funds are diverted to non-transit purposes under the "unmet needs," with no centralized tracking. Task Force members desired to better understand how much money is being diverted, including potentially inviting SMEs from small, rural counties to share how the process works. TDA reform should include solutions to ensure that funds designated for transit are used for transit. The unmet needs process should focus on supporting transit agencies, particularly for transitioning to zero-emission technology.
- **Reform of “Claimant Priority Order”:** One Task Force member commented on the need to reform the TDA’s claimant priority order, which establishes an order of operations for funding application that prioritizes rail over transit. This order should be eliminated, and local jurisdictions should be allowed to exercise their discretion in determining what order funds should be applied in.
- **Need for Improved Benchmarking and Auditing:** Some Task Force members supported the adoption of a benchmarking process for evaluating transit systems of similar sizes. This would help assess performance and identify areas for improvement, focusing on feasible operational enhancements. Members emphasized the need for a reformed TDA to include a performance improvement plan for underperforming agencies.
- **Data Reporting and Oversight Improvements:** Task Force members discussed the need for streamlined data reporting and enhanced data analysis was noted. Transit agencies face heavy reporting burdens. There are existing reporting frameworks, including TDA’s triennial performance audit system, that could be leveraged rather than creating new processes. A Statewide data portal could simplify reporting and improve oversight.
- **Flexibility and Local Discretion:** The importance of maintaining flexibility in funding allocation at the regional and local level was stressed. One Task Force member noted that TDA funding offered

## Transit Transformation Task Force (TTTF) – Meeting #5 August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes

flexibility at the RTPA level to set effective regional and local policies.

### 11. Public Comments for items not on the agenda

- Phoebe (UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies) commented that if the State is moving away from FRR, then we should think of innovative funding mechanisms, including employer-based transportation benefits and real estate in transit stations. She also extended an invitation to the UCLA Institute of Transportations Studies online symposium on transportation labor on September 10, 2024.
- Grace Peng (League of Women Voters, LA County) commented that the league unanimously supports congestion pricing and using that to fund transit and non-car alternatives.
- Jeremy Stutz (Transit Coalition) commented that he supports a vision for electrification and interoperability across the region. Also, he noted that transit hubs should serve specific needs of community members.
- Brianna Egan (medical student) commented on the importance of strengthening California's regional transit infrastructure to create meaningful mode shift and make transit the most attractive option to achieve climate and health imperatives.

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

- Please continue to send any useful reports, data, surveys, and other information, which helps inform agendas.
- We will send out an email to collect further feedback from the Task Force and to set up interim meetings to further discuss recommendations.
- Next TTTF meeting will be on October 28, 2024 from 10:30 am – 3:00 pm at the Monterey Conference Center at 1 Portola Plaza, Monterey, CA 93940.

### 13. Adjourn (Mark Tollefson, Undersecretary, CalSTA, TTT Chair)

- Thank you to the Task Force and the public.
- Meeting adjourned.

**Transit Transformation Task Force (TTF) – Meeting #5**  
**August 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

For any further questions please or visit our webpage:  
<https://calsta.ca.gov/subject-areas/sb125-transit-program>