

California Transit
Association



Update on Public Transit in California

March 24, 2021



Emergency Relief

Michael Pimentel

Executive Director

California Transit Association





February 9, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

President Biden, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy and Leader McConnell:

Our coalition of transportation, labor, business, infrastructure, environmental and social justice leaders thank you for your strong support for transit agencies nationwide throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergency funding provided to transit agencies by Congress last year has helped stave off the most severe service reductions and workforce layoffs, which would have devastated the communities that have continued to rely on transit service during today's public health crisis.

We applaud your commitment to provide \$30 billion in new operational funding to transit agencies nationwide. This funding level will address the operating needs faced by the industry into 2023. Moreover, as you finalize the next round of emergency relief, we urge you to continue to ensure that California receives its fair share of total funding so that transit agencies of all sizes throughout our state can benefit from the additional operational support.

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510



This funding is vital to transit agencies operating in rural, urban and suburban settings as they continue to grapple with steep declines in ridership and revenues due to the pandemic-induced economic downturn.

A viable public transit network is necessary to help support essential and frontline workers as well as communities disproportionately hurt by the pandemic, to protect strong and healthy communities, avoid the loss of thousands of good-paying local jobs, and to support a balanced economic recovery.

Surveys have found that the majority of Californians who continue to rely on transit during the pandemic, are using the service to get to work, are overwhelmingly low-income and/people of color, and lack access to a personal vehicle. Reduced transit service disproportionately harms these communities, making it more difficult for them to provide for their families and threatening the health of local economies.

Transit agencies themselves have significant impacts on local economies. The California Transit Association estimates that more than 35,000 Californians are directly employed by transit agencies, but many agencies are considering or have already made cuts to personnel due to the severe budget shortfalls.

Without additional funding for transit operations, service and workforce cuts that were avoided last year will proceed this year. Moreover, transit agencies will delay capital improvement projects and transit vehicle procurements, and defer payments to contractors. These cuts will compromise the condition of transit assets, undermine the role of California's transit agencies in meeting our state's environmental goals, slow the deployment of zero-emission buses, and result in job losses in construction as well as domestic and California-based manufacturing.

The emergency funding we request today would establish funding certainty to better allow transit agencies to navigate the crisis.

Ensuring California's public transit agencies can continue to provide essential service and invest in capital projects is critical to a balanced economic recovery, our quality of life, and to achieving our state's ambitious environmental goals.

Please help us save local public transit.

Sincerely,

Michael Pimentel, Executive Director
California Transit Association

Tim Elder, President
National Federation of the Blind California

Michael Quigley, Executive Director
California Alliance for Jobs

Shane Gusman, Director
California Teamsters Public Affairs Council

Bill Higgins, Executive Director
California Association of Councils of
Government (CALCOG)

Shane Gusman, Legislative Advocate
California Conference Board of the
Amalgamated Transit Union

Kiana Valentine, Executive Director
Transportation California

Rick L. Callender, President
California - Hawaii State Conference NAACP

Louie Costa, Director
California State Legislative Board
SMART-Transportation Division



Updates On California's High-Speed Rail Project / Saving Public Transit Amid Pandemic, Zero Emissions Vehicles In CA Budget / New State License Plates Promoting

CITYLAB

LISTEN TO FULL SHOW

Transportation touches nearly every part of your home is made out of, to help you significantly impacted by the pandemic. As Governor Newsom releases his budget aside to help electric and hydroelectric amid the pandemic, what it'll take to get-of-Fame Basketball Legend Bill Russell.

Today's Guests

- California High-Speed Rail Authority
- California Transit Association
- Politico California Transportation
- Hall-of-Fame Basketball Legend

This Oct. 9, 2019, file photo shows the high speed rail train near Fresno, Calif.

The Emergency Funding Ideas Help Keep Transit Alive

As U.S. agencies push Congress for aid, transit advocates scrape together funds, from online delivery fees to gas tax

By [Laura Bliss](#)
December 11, 2020, 4:00 AM PST



New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority faces a \$1 billion agency to plan for drastic service and job cuts. Photographed by [unreadable]



Laura Bliss is a writer

Agencies are also looking for ways to stretch budgeted for capital investment expenses, a bridge solution to a backlog of disrepair, said executive director of the California Transit Association. Longer-term solutions such as congestion pricing and other measures put to voters, said

But those would need to stretch beyond the present federal government has the speed and scale of what's said. Unlike most cities and states, transit agencies run a deficit.

"While we're dealing with the pandemic, we're taking severe action to keep transit alive. It's about timing and how we need to look to the level of funding we need to provide for what's needed."

As transit operators in major cities face deep cuts to address pandemic budget shortfalls, advocates are advancing ideas for new funding sources, whether or not fresh

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MY TURN

Saving transit in California recovery

BY GUEST COMMENTARY
FEBRUARY 3, 2021

Photo via iStock

IN SUMMARY
California transit agencies need immediate assistance from the federal government to overcome today's challenges from COVID-19.

By [Michael Pimentel](#), Special Advisor
Michael Pimentel is executive director of the California Transit Association. [MichaelP@caltransit.org](#)

California's public transit agencies are facing unprecedented budget deficits due to depressed ridership, reduced sales tax revenues and the high cost of implementing health and safety measures designed to keep transit frontline workers and riders safe.

To remain viable, public transit agencies have been forced to make painful decisions, like [reducing service levels](#), slowing capital projects and furloughing employees. Without further federal and state action, these decisions could become permanent, leaving communities across the state with service that is severely compromised.

Sadly, we know that those hurt most by the pandemic-induced service reductions are low-income people and people of color, the very Californians already suffering disproportionately from the health and economic impacts of the crisis. These Californians, who are essential to our state no matter the time, face longer trip times and less reliable service, making it harder for them to get to work, access medical care and to care for loved ones.

Federal and state governments must take immediate action to support these Californians and lay the foundation for an equitable recovery with transit at its core.

Gov. Gavin Newsom's [January budget](#) acknowledged this and signaled his support for ongoing federal relief for California's transit agencies. His push, which complements our own efforts in Washington, D.C., helped secure relief for transit in President Joe Biden's proposed \$1.9 trillion emergency relief bill. The plan is expected to be debated by Congress soon.

While we wait for Congress to act, the state Legislature must take a series of immediate actions to support transit and those who rely on it. Specifically, we request that the Legislature extend a series of statutory relief measures passed last year that provided transit agencies with short-term relief from the efficiency requirements in various transit funding programs. These requirements, which impose financial penalties on transit agencies for non-compliance, wrongly focus on transit efficiency at a time when transit is operating as a lifeline.



CRRSAA

- Includes **\$14 billion** for transit agencies nationwide
 - **\$2.1 billion** for California's transit agencies
- **Status:** Signed by President Trump on December 27

American Rescue Plan

- Includes **\$30 billion** for transit agencies nationwide
 - **\$3.99 billion** for California's transit agencies
- **Status:** Signed by President Biden on March 11

Breakdown of National Transit Funding



- **\$30.5 billion** allocated as follows:
 - FTA 5307: \$26.086 billion
 - FTA 5310: \$50 million
 - FTA 5311: \$317.2 million
 - FTA 5311(f): \$100 million
 - Discretionary: \$2.207 billion
 - FTA 5309 (CIG plus up): \$1.675 billion

California Transit Agencies' Share



- FTA 5307: \$3,959,863,509
- FTA 5311: \$27,104,027
- FTA 5310 (Pop. 200k >): \$4,282,420
- FTA 5310: (Pop. 50k-200k): \$979,535
- FTA 5310 (Pop. 50k <): \$395,148

TOTAL: \$3,992,624,639

The screenshot shows the MASS TRANSIT website with a navigation bar at the top containing links for COVID-19 NEWS, BUS, RAIL, TECHNOLOGY, SAFETY & SECURITY, ALT. MOBILITY, MANAGEMENT, TRANSIT BIDS, and CAREER CENTER. A banner for 'Stay on track' with a 'SUBSCRIBE TODAY!' button is visible. The main article is titled 'CA: Struggling Bay Area public transit agencies win big in American Rescue Plan' and is dated Mar 11th, 2021. The article text discusses federal funding for public transit agencies in the Bay Area. A sidebar on the right features a 'PROMOTE RFPs, RFQs AND BIDS' advertisement and a 'LATEST IN MANAGEMENT' section with several news items.

MASS TRANSIT SUBSCRIBE MAGAZINE ADVERTISE CONTACT US SUPPLIER'S DIRECTORY LOG IN REGISTER

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CA: Struggling Bay Area public transit agencies win big in American Rescue Plan

Federal funds have kept agencies, including BART and Muni, afloat this year, running decreased service but retaining workers.

By Mallory Moench
Source San Francisco Chronicle (TNS)
Mar 11th, 2021

Mar. 11—The Bay Area expects to receive approximately \$1.7 billion out of \$30.5 billion nationally in the just-passed stimulus bill to help struggling public transportation agencies that have lost riders and revenue. The money will flow into census-designated urban areas, with San Francisco–Oakland getting the largest chunk at \$1.25 billion.

Federal funds have kept agencies, including BART and Muni, afloat this year, running decreased service but retaining workers. New funds would help avoid mass layoffs and drastic service cuts, but long-term financial challenges remain and future budget shortfalls are likely to continue for years, agencies said.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission will divide the new funding between operators over the next few months. The agency is still working on divvying up part of the second stimulus bill passed by Congress last year later in March.

The package also includes money for capital infrastructure projects, with \$52 million for Caltrain electrification, \$87 million for BART's Transbay Corridor Core Capacity Program and \$23 million for the Central Subway. The BART extension from San Jose to Santa Clara didn't make the cut after a Republican protest. Agencies also get the chance to apply for \$2.2 billion in other emergency relief.

Here's a breakdown of the allocation to urbanized areas:

PROMOTE RFPs, RFQs AND BIDS
Reach transit industry suppliers
MASS TRANSIT

LATEST IN MANAGEMENT

Management
NY: Lawmakers sink Cuomo's plan to raid \$160M from New York's mass transit
Mar 16th, 2021

Bus
OH: Stark Area Regional Transit Authority bus system aiming to rebound by this summer
Mar 16th, 2021

Management
CA: Marin transit agencies hope COVID stimulus fuels rebound
Mar 16th, 2021

Management



Transportation and logistics – public transit/airport and commercial airlines

- Public transit workers, including airport workers for commercial airlines (but not private airplanes), will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. They are at high risk for occupational exposure, and maintaining continuity of transportation operations is critical.
- See CDPH's [Provider Bulletin](#) (updated on March 11, 2021) for details, including a [fact sheet](#) on vaccines for people with high-risk medical conditions or disabilities.

COVID vaccine: California public transit workers eligible starting Monday
Workers at BART, Caltrain, VTA and other agencies will soon be able to get shots

[f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [s](#)



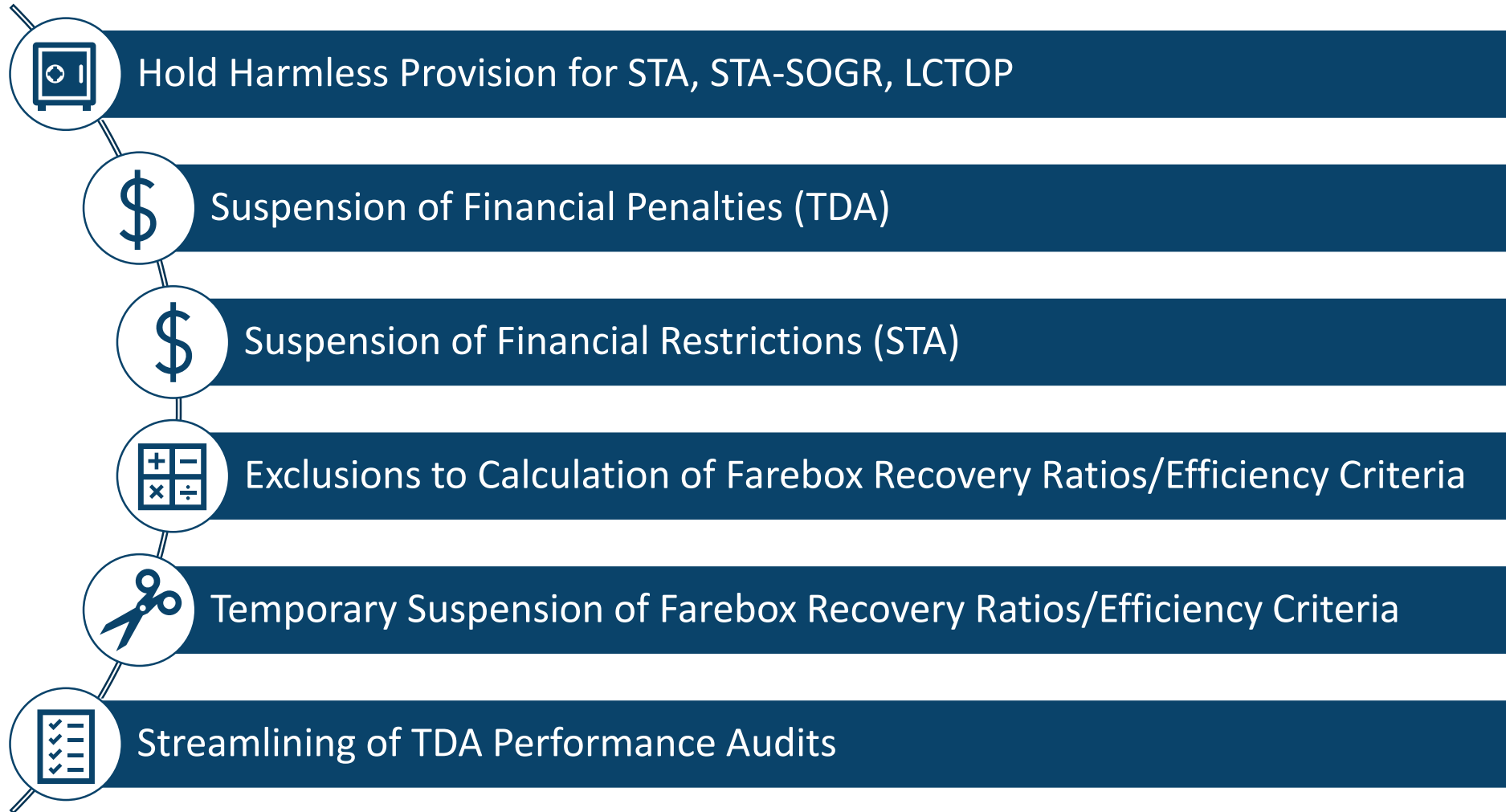
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SAN JOSE, CA--APRIL 13: A VTA bus driver Barry Jones poses for a portrait on April 13, 2020, in San Jose, Calif. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

Statutory Relief for Transit Agencies



Why These Actions Matter



92% of today's riders are using transit to commute to work. Many riders are essential workers. Many have no other transportation options.

- Pre-crisis, transit ridership reflected a 50/50 gender split; today, 56% of riders are female.
- Since the pandemic, Black and Latino riders comprise the majority of transit riders.
- More than 20% work in health care services. Almost 20% work in food preparation.
- Transit is increasingly vital to the equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.





Recovery

Michael Pimentel

Executive Director

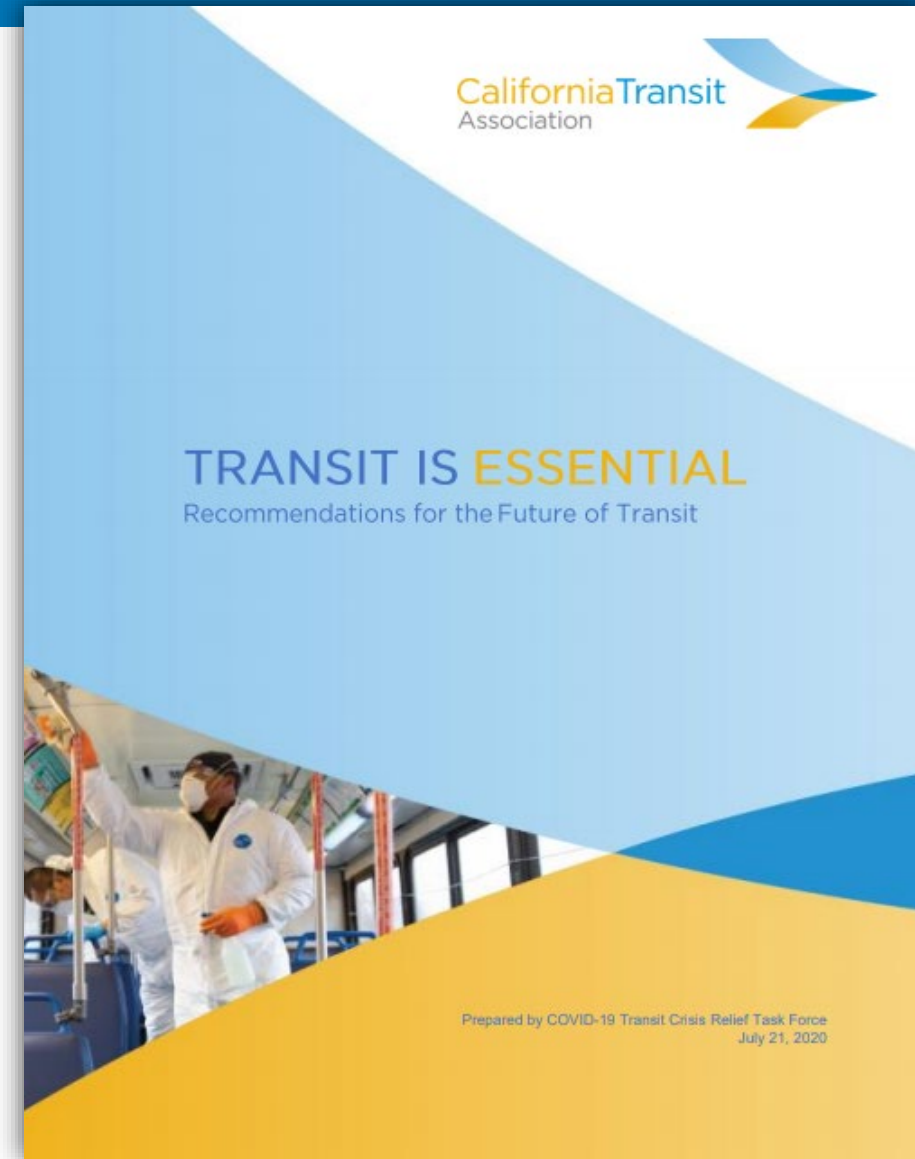
California Transit Association



Future of Transit Report



- Includes **17** recommendations with examples from California
 - **11** operational/technological recommendations
 - **6** policy recommendations
- Provides readers with additional background on the Association's survey process, prioritization, sources





1. Provide emergency funding to transit agencies
2. Institute new local government funding options to support transit and infrastructure near transit
3. Expedite transit project delivery
4. Increase funding for zero-emission buses and charging/refueling infrastructure
5. Authorize operation of transit buses on highway shoulders
6. Continue to move projects through the CIG pipeline

2. Institute New Local Government Funding Options



- Supporting **ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry)** to lower voter-threshold for special taxes
 - Supports passage of local option sales taxes
 - Increases funding available to transit projects

3. Expedite Transit Project Delivery



- Supporting **SB 44 (Allen)** to create expedited judicial and administrative review for transformative transit projects
- Implementing **SB 288 (Wiener)** to exercise short-term statutory exemptions to CEQA

4. Increase Funding for ZEBs, Infrastructure



- Supporting Administration's proposed **\$1.5 billion** investment in ZEVs and ZE Infrastructure
 - **\$465 million** for clean vehicles (\$315 million for heavy duty vehicles)
 - **\$1 billion** for “electric vehicle charging and hydrogen fueling stations”
- Pursuing new ZEV investment in federal infrastructure plan
 - Aligns federal policy with state objectives
 - Creates more dedicated investment in California transit agencies

5. Authorize Bus on Shoulder Operations // Transit Efficiency



- Sponsoring legislation to expand authority to operate transit buses on highway shoulders
 - Builds on CTC recommendation
 - Improves transit travel time and reliability
 - Includes provisions to ensure operational safety
- Sponsoring **AB 917 (Allen)** to discourage illegal parking in transit-only lanes, bus stops
 - Improves transit travel time and reliability
 - Addresses safety concerns raised by disabled Californians

6. Continue to Move Projects through the CIG Pipeline



- Pursuing increased capacity in Capital Investment Grant program through surface transportation reauthorization
- May pursue additional large-scale investments in California transit projects in federal infrastructure plan

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