CALIFORNIA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION · OCTOBER 29, 2026

Breaking the Stalemate

Labor, Management, and the Future of Transit Scheduling



SCHEDULING EXPERTISE × OPERATOR FEEDBACK × OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE

Finding solutions conventional negotiations may never uncover

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PANEL DISCUSSION

Four Questions for Discussion

Ideas, evidence and real-world experience to break the stalemate and find better scheduling solutions.

01



Carte Blanche

What if we stopped letting yesterday's rules define tomorrow's work?

02



Operator Feedback

Are we asking operators what they actually want?

03



Measure What Matters

Using quality-of-life KPIs to evaluate better work.

04

OPTIONAL



From Ideas to Action

What would it take to pilot and implement better scheduling?

PRACTICAL IDEAS | DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES | REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

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Why change was needed

- **More departures than hires**
- 50% split-shift and Three-part split shift assignments
- Up to 10 years before regular weekends off
- Urgent pressure on attraction and retention, **we did not have enough bus drivers to cover the full service**

What I will present today happen then.



Presentation

Michel

KEY INSIGHTS
& APPROACH

Panel Discussion

PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES
& OPPORTUNITIES

Norm	Rich	Hitham
MODERATOR	LABOR PERSPECTIVE ATU	MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT

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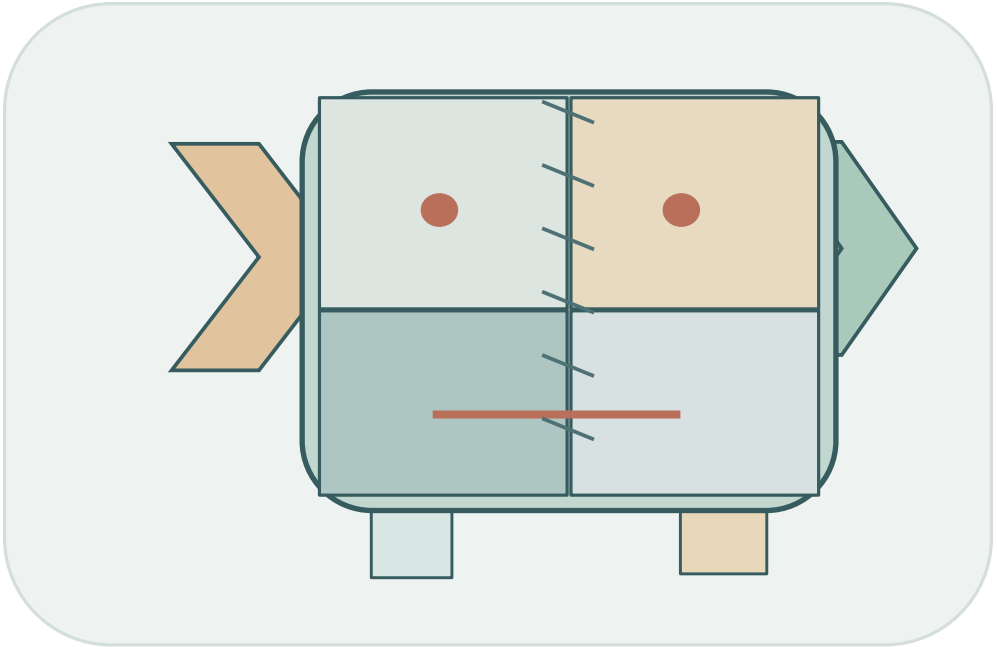
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Well-intended rules can produce unintended results.

INDIVIDUALLY REASONABLE PIECES



THE UNPLANNED WHOLE



Not a "bad" rule.
An unintended combination.

Suspend assumptions in the simulation — not protections in real life.

1

CURRENT AGREEMENT

Existing negotiated rules

→

2

CLEAN-SLATE SIMULATION

Test alternative designs

→

3

COMPARE OUTCOMES

Cost • work quality • service

→

4

JOINT DISCUSSION

Negotiate only by agreement

THE CBA AND ALL EXISTING PROTECTIONS REMAIN IN FORCE

Same rules, same approaches — why expect different results?

CHALLENGE
Inherited assumptions

→

TEST
Scheduling alternatives

→

QUANTIFY
Costs + work quality

→

DECIDE
What still matters

To learn what still matters, we must ask the people doing the work.

NEXT → OPERATOR PRIORITIES / SURVEYS

Explore freely. Protect what matters. Negotiate with evidence.

LABOR

Earned rights

Meaningful protections

Better quality of work

MANAGEMENT

Reliable service

Sustainable budget

Workforce stability

AGREED CHOICES, TESTED AGAINST REAL OUTCOMES

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We know the work rules. Do we know the operator priorities?

ASSUME

“We think operators want...”

ASK

“Operators tell us what they value.”

A common fact base for labor and management

Different lives. Different definitions of better work.

DAYS OFF
Calendar

PREDICTABLE STARTS
Clock

CONSISTENT SHIFT
Routine

FINISH TIME
Time

INCOME
Earnings

FOUR-DAY WEEK
Workweek

PREFERENCES VARY WITHIN EVERY SENIORITY GROUP

Ask about trade-offs, not vague satisfaction.

FOUR LONGER DAYS	OR	FIVE SHORTER DAYS
SAME START TIME	OR	FLEXIBLE START / BETTER DAYS OFF
EARLIER FINISH	OR	CONSISTENT START

ILLUSTRATIVE SURVEY QUESTIONS — NO PREFERENCE IMPLIED

Reveal differences. Do not vote away seniority.

ILLUSTRATIVE ANALYSIS STRUCTURE · NOT SURVEY RESULTS

0–5 YEARS	Days off	Work times	Workweek
6–10 YEARS	Days off	Work times	Workweek
….. YEARS	Days off	Work times	Workweek
25+ YEARS	Days off	Work times	Workweek

TWO DISTINCT IDEAS

Listen to all groups

Preserve negotiated seniority selection

Listen first. Then design and measure.

1. JOINT **SURVEY**
2. UNDERSTAND **PREFERENCES**
3. AGREE **OBJECTIVES**
4. DEFINE **KPIs**
5. EVALUATE **SCENARIOS**

INFORMATION FOR NEGOTIATION — NOT A POPULARITY VOTE

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We measure cost. Why not measure quality of work?

QoL

OPERATOR EXPERIENCE

$

SERVICE + FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Both belong in the same evaluation.

One set of scenarios. Both sides see the trade-offs.

OPERATOR QUALITY OF LIFE

- Straight vs. split duties
- Spread-time distribution
- Duty start / finish distributions
- Workweek consistency
- Days-off patterns

MANAGEMENT / SERVICE

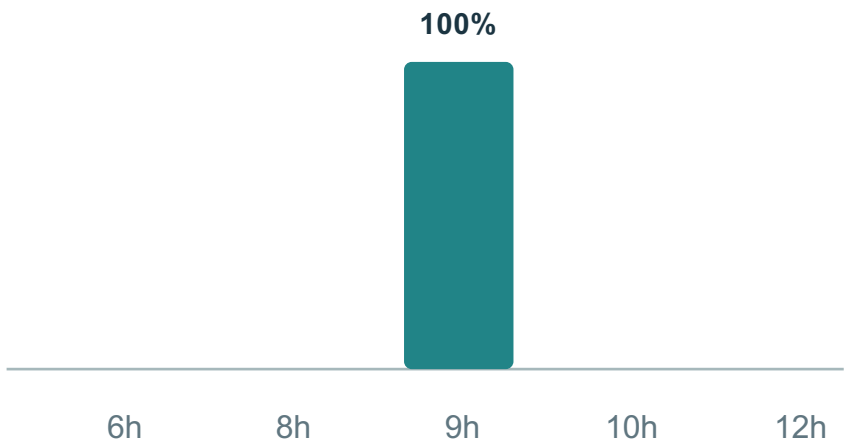
- Pay-to-platform ratio
- Paid hours / total cost
- Vehicle & crew requirements
- Overtime exposure
- Staffing robustness

EXAMPLE MEASURES · PRECISE DEFINITIONS AND THRESHOLDS TO BE AGREED

Same average. Very different working lives.

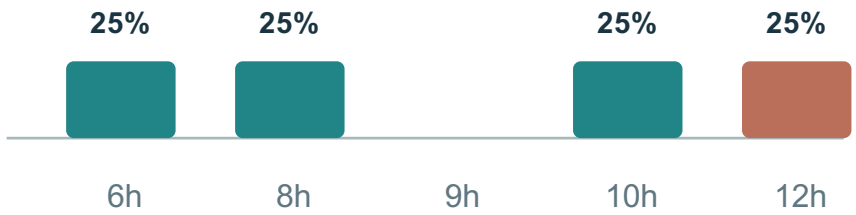
ILLUSTRATIVE · PERCENTAGE OF DUTIES BY SPREAD TIME

SCENARIO A



AVERAGE = 9 HOURS

SCENARIO B



AVERAGE = 9 HOURS

Long-spread tail

Make gains, sacrifices and cost visible.

SHARED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK	BASELINE	OPTION B	OPTION C
Distribution of unattractive duties	*To measure*	*To measure*	*To measure*
Pay-to-platform ratio	*To measure*	*To measure*	*To measure*
Overall operating cost	*To measure*	*To measure*	*To measure*
Workweek quality / consistency	*To measure*	*To measure*	*To measure*
Staffing and service implications	*To measure*	*To measure*	*To measure*

TEMPLATE — NO PROJECT RESULTS SHOWN · METRICS AND THRESHOLDS DEFINED JOINTLY

Numbers structure the conversation; people make the decisions.

QUANTITATIVE

KPI dashboard

Agreed definitions, thresholds and distributions

QUALITATIVE

Joint scheduling review

Actual duty-level experience and operational context

BETTER-INFORMED LABOR–MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

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OPTIONAL

Training new operators is expensive. Losing them is worse.

1

RECRUIT + TRAIN

Agency investment

→

2

EARLY-CAREER WORK

Quality of assignments

→

3

RETAIN

Stable, experienced workforce

Avoidable turnover forces the cycle to start again.

OPTIONAL

Does rostering mean giving up what seniority has earned?

CAFETERIA BIDDING

Seniority may allow first choice across individual work assignments.

ROSTERED POSITIONS

Pre-built, recurring combinations of duties across a workweek or cycle.

The concern is real. It must be addressed in the agreement.

OPTIONAL

Protect the best work explicitly — then bid by seniority.

PROPOSED NEW CBA SAFEGUARDS — TO BE NEGOTIATED

DEFINED PREMIUM / “ALL-STAR” SUBSET

- Early straight duties
- Finish around lunch
- Weekends off
- Same shift all week

PROTECT QUANTITY + ATTRIBUTES

THEN BID BY SENIORITY

These guarantees must be added — do not assume they already exist.

OPTIONAL

We don’t have to go all in. We can test. We can create subgroups with different bidding models.

EXISTING SYSTEM

Cafeteria bidding continues

LIMITED PILOT

Cycling roster for a subset

TIME-BOUNDED · NEGOTIATED PROTECTIONS · JOINT MEASUREMENT · OPTION TO REVERT

OPTIONAL

Protect seniority. Improve the work new operators can live with.

PROTECT

Earned seniority benefits

IMPROVE

Early-career work quality

VERIFY

Actual retention and cost

A joint pilot makes a difficult idea testable.

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