CTA's 2026 Annual Fall Conference & Expo

Delivering transit for California

10/28/2026

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For many Californians, a small or rural system is the only transit there is.



State transit policy succeeds only if it works here.

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THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Under Governor Newsom's Leadership

2021
CAPTI adopted

2022
CalSTA Core 4 Priorities adopted

December 2025
Transit Transformation Task Force Report

Feb 2026
Caltrans Director's Transit Policy (DP-40)

June 2026
Executive Orde N-7-26 signed

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CALSTA'S CORE FOUR PRIORITIES

- SAFETY
- EQUITY
- CLIMATE ACTION
- ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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CAPTI: investing in connections

- Steers discretionary state transportation dollars toward transit, rail, active transportation, and zero-emission infrastructure
- Adopted in 2021; CAPTI 2.0 released February 2025
- CAPTI 2.0 progress report due by the end of 2026



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Defining the Challenge

$11.5B

invested in transit through TIRCP

$5.1 B

Directed for Operations (or capital) via SB125

TTTF Final Report

Delivered late 2025

Operations Challenge

Significant structural deficits facing transit agencies

The Task Force diagnosis

- Transit systems face compounding revenue, ridership, and project delivery challenges
- A core theme: leverage state capacity to streamline design and delivery of public transportation

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Caltrans Director's Transit Policy

Effective February 6, 2026 · Caltrans' first holistic transit policy, required by SB 960

Planning

Transit as a core consideration in Caltrans decisions

Projects

Bus lanes, queue jumps, and signal priority on state highways

Data

Highway data to find where transit priority helps most

New structure: a Deputy Director for Transit and Rail Programs, a restored Division of Mass Transportation, and the California Transit Advisory Committee (CALTAC). Implementation plan expected fall 2026.

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Executive Order N-7-26
Transit EO

Real-time dashboards

Applications, awards, funds remaining, contract and invoice processing times for every program.

Grantee Support

A grants CRM so agencies get streamlined, coordinated communication from a single source.

Guidelines updates

TIRCP, SCCP, ATP, and LPP updated to support transit priority and first/last-mile projects.

Transit belongs on the state highway system

Design guidance, standard plans, specs, and permitting procedures for transit infrastructure

Delivery muscle for local agencies

BRT and bus-only lane assistance on the state highway system, plus a new Statewide ATP Delivery Support Team.

Federal NEPA assignment

Caltrans begins the process of obtaining a NEPA assignment from USDOT to expedite transit projects

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Where state transit dollars come from

TIRCP (competitive)

Capital for rail, bus, ferry, feeder bus, and microtransit. Over $11.5B to 153 projects since 2015.

SB 125 formula TIRCP

Formula dollars to regions, flexible enough to support operations.

ZETCP (SB 125)

Zero-emission buses and infrastructure. $230M honored for 2026-27.

LCTOP

Formula funds for new or expanded service and fleet.

Cal-ITP: modern fares for small systems

Contactless

Riders tap a bank card or phone to pay

Benefits

Discounts applied automatically for eligible riders

Marketplace

Buy from pre-approved vendors, no procurement of your own

In practice: Monterey-Salinas Transit ran California's first contactless pilot in 2021. Nevada County Connects went contactless through the Mobility Marketplace.

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Three asks

1. **Engage on implementation**
   CALTAC, the transit priority list, and design guidance for state highways

2. **Continued coordination with Cal-ITP**
   Put your data and fare payments on statewide standards

3. **Tell your outcomes story**
   Lifeline trips, ridership, and dollars leveraged carry policy across administrations

Thank you!

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