# Federal Legislative Committee Meeting Agenda

**Conference Call**  
**March 10, 2020**  
**2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Call in number: 1-800-867-2581**  
**Passcode: 2920339#**

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1. Chair Kristin Jacinto, OCTA
2. Vice-Chair Michael Davies, LA Metro
3. Rick Bacigalupo, Cardinal Infrastructure, LLC.
4. Tracy Beidleman, Long Beach Transit
5. Sharon Cooney, San Diego MTS
6. Amanda Cruz, BART
7. Alex Davis, Metrolink
8. Martha D’Andrea, LADOT
9. David Feinberg, Santa Monica’s Big Blue Bus
10. Casey Fromson, SamTrans
11. Georgia Gann Dohrmann, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
12. Connie Garcia-Weinhardt, SacRT
13. Beverly Greene, AC Transit
14. Sharon Greene, InfraStrategies, LLC.
15. Randy Johnson, Access Services
16. Jeanne Krieg, Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority
17. Jim Lawson, Santa Clara VTA
18. Dana Pynn, City of Gardena’s GTrans
19. Rick Ramacier, County Connection
20. David Reyno, Foothill Transit
21. Carl Sedoryk, Monterey-Salinas Transit
22. Victoria Stackwick, SANDAG
23. Amy Van Doren, Marin Transit
24. Jadie Wasilco, SFMTA
Health officials do not recommend avoiding public transit, but they do recommend that residents telecommute where possible and limit outings. (Kevin N. Hume/S.F. Examiner)

BART ridership drops 8 percent amid coronavirus concerns

Transit agencies have stepped up cleaning but maintain regular service

JOE FITZGERALD RODRIGUEZ / Mar. 9, 2020 12:45 p.m. / NEWS / THE CITY

BART ridership dropped significantly last week amidst growing concern over COVID-19, more commonly known as the novel coronavirus.
Last week’s ridership dropped around 8 percent from the week before, a BART spokesperson told the San Francisco Examiner Monday morning.

When asked what may have led to such a stark ridership decline, BART spokesperson James Allison wrote in a statement, “It difficult to attribute it to a single factor but undoubtedly the fact that some major employers are directing workers to telecommute is having an impact.”

BART’s Monday through Friday ridership dropped to 1.86 million passenger trips last week, down from 2.03 million passenger trips the week before.

The agency’s ridership in 2018 averaged 432,000 passenger trips daily. A ridership reduction of 8 percent may amount to roughly 34,500 fewer daily passenger trips, and roughly 172,800 fewer trips through the week, using 2018 ridership numbers as a rough guideline.

San Francisco’s Muni system has not yet crunched the numbers to see if there has been a significant ridership decline during the same period. As of early last week week “ridership was steady,” but San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency spokesperson Erica Kato noted that may have changed later in the week.

Telecommuting is on the rise amid concern over the coronavirus, with 13 confirmed cases in San Francisco as of Monday morning. Coronavirus concerns have also spurred the cancellation of events across San Francisco and the Bay Area, from San Francisco Symphony concerts to the Game Developers Conference at Moscone Center.
Many people use public transit to arrive at such events.

A drop in public transit ridership is not confined to the San Francisco Bay Area. The American Public Transportation Association, which counts member agencies across the country (including BART), warned in an advisory this month that “fear of exposure to infectious disease may significantly curtail ridership and/or increase rider anxiety.”

**Agencies increase cleaning, hygiene efforts**

Both BART and Muni have stepped up cleaning their vehicles to combat the spread of coronavirus.

BART is wiping down its stations with “hospital-grade disinfectant more frequently each day” and wiping down handrails and other surfaces in train cars with germicidal wipes at end-of-line stations. It has also put up multi-lingual posters with public health information regarding flu and coronavirus.
Muni vehicles are cleaned nightly using Germ Swipe and United 282 cleaning products, and “we are reviewing our procedures to look for opportunities to increase this work and test/integrate new solutions,” Kato wrote in a statement.

In a statement, BART officials wrote that “BART, along with all other transit systems, is taking guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, and public health departments. These experts advise us that operational changes are not necessary at this time.”

However Dr. John Swartzberg, clinical professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health, said the additional cleaning “will only help partially.”

“All the washing BART does and Muni does in the world won’t help,” Swartzberg said, “it eliminates only one of the means of transmissions of this virus. You could be in a perfectly sterile BART car, and if I was squished next to you I’d be at substantial risk of catching what you have.”

Swartzberg said avoiding public transit is a “prudent” measure for residents to take right now to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19 and even just the flu.

COVID-19 and the flu “are most easily spread by being in close proximity with people,” he said. “Being on public transit within six feet of proximity with someone who is coughing, you are putting yourself at substantial risk.”

Masks “won’t protect you,” Swartzberg added.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised, in a statement, that COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact with one another, about six feet away, and through “respiratory droplets” produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.”
It may also spread by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your own mouth, nose, or “possible” eyes, but “this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.”

The San Francisco Department of Public Health has not recommended that the public specifically avoid public transit, although it does advise that “to protect the public, transit providers should increase cleaning of vehicles and high touch surface areas. Also, provide hand washing/hand sanitizers [sic] and tissues in stations and on vehicles.”

However, the department also advises vulnerable populations should “limit outings,” and suggests that “if you can telecommute, you should.” The department is also recommending large gatherings be canceled or postponed, and for people to generally avoid any events or gatherings “if you are sick.”

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February 28, 2020

RE: FY 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill

Members of the California Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the California Transit Association, I am writing to you today to thank you for your continued support of California’s transit industry and to provide you with a series of industry recommendations for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill.

The Association is a trade organization based in Sacramento, California that represents more than 250 transit-affiliated entities, including public transit agencies, commuter rail agencies, transit allies & support groups, engineering firms, and transit industry suppliers. Our membership includes some of the nation’s largest transit agencies that operate in dense, urban environments, as well as dozens of medium-sized and small transit agencies that serve suburban and rural areas.

The recommendations that follow were developed in concert with our members and are consistent with the Association’s 2020 Federal Legislative Program.

1) Allocate funding for transit programs above the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act-authorized baseline via formula.

We applaud Congress from its recent actions to fund Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Authorization (FAST) Act-authorized programs at levels that exceed their authorized baselines. Unfortunately, several of these programs, including the Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program (49 U.S.C. 5339(b)) and Low or No Emission (Low-No) Program (49 U.S.C. 5339(c)), allocate funding via a competitive process and have come to disproportionately advantage other states over California.

We believe this reality can – and should – be addressed by directing transit funding above the FAST Act-authorized levels, referred to in previous appropriations bills as Transit Infrastructure Grants, to programs that allocate funding via formula. More specifically, we urge Congress to appropriate any additional funding for transit programs, sourced from the General Fund, to the Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Program (49 U.S.C. 5339(a)).

This change would ensure that California receives its fair share of additional federal funding for transit programs.
2) **Provide preferential scoring in the Low or No Emission Grant program and, if necessary, Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant program to projects pursued by transit agencies that are required, or that have elected, to go 100% zero-emissions.**

In December 2018, the California Air Resources Board adopted the Innovative Clean Transit regulation. The regulation – the first of its kind in the nation – requires California transit agencies to begin to purchase zero-emission buses (ZEBs) as soon as 2023, with the goal of transitioning all transit buses in the state to zero-emission technology by 2040.

The Association supports the goals of the regulation, but the transit agencies that comprise our membership have found that the costs of purchasing ZEBs, building the infrastructure necessary to deploy them, and procuring electricity to operate them, exceed the costs of purchasing and deploying conventionally-fueled vehicles. Easing the transition to cleaner transit buses – a transition that supports the development of heavy-duty electric drivetrains as well as vibrant base for domestic manufacturing – requires additional federal and state support.

**As such, we urge Congress to include language in the FY 2021 THUD appropriations bill that provides preferential project scoring in the Low-No Program and, if necessary, Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program to transit agencies that are required, by state law, regulation or local ordinance, to transition to fully zero-emission fleets or that have completed full fleet transition plans.**

3) **Increase funding levels for the Capital Investment Grant Program to allow for the funding of new projects.**

In recent years, California has benefited from the investment of billions of dollars in federal funding for projects, including, but not limited to:

- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Purple Line Extension;
- San Diego Metropolitan Transit District’s Mid-Coast Corridor Project;
- San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency’s Central Subway;
- Caltrain’s Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project; and,
- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority’s BART Berryessa Extension.

These projects are fundamentally altering how Californians live, work and travel, while also creating construction and manufacturing jobs across the nation. Projects in Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Francisco and San Jose that have not yet received Full Funding Grant Agreements hold the same promise.

With new state and local resources now available, it is vital that the federal government continue to invest in new starts and core capacity projects, so that projects with local buy-in can continue to push the national economy forward.

**As such, we urge Congress to increase funding for the CIG program above the $2.3 billion authorized in the FAST Act to support allocations to new projects in the CIG pipeline and to provide additional funding for the Expedited Project Delivery for Capital Investment Grants Pilot Program. Additionally, we support continued policy direction that the Administration execute the CIG program as intended by Congress, including prohibiting the**
Federal Transit Administration from adopting new local match policies outside of those directed by Congress.

We thank you for your consideration.

If you have any questions about these recommendations, please contact me at michael@caltransit.org or 916-446-4656 x1034.

Sincerely,

Michael Pimentel
Deputy Executive Director

cc: Members, Executive Committee, California Transit Association
    Members, Federal Legislative Committee, California Transit Association