



Transit Watch: Public Transit in Crisis



April 7, 2020

Friends,

Significant ridership and fare revenue declines buffet public transit agencies due to the coronavirus pandemic, as most Californians responsibly shelter in place; these fiscal impacts today threaten the viability and availability of transit services in the near- and long-term.

Keeping public transit services available and sustainable during this time of crisis should continue to be a local, state and federal priority, as public transportation systems still carry many essential service workers to and from their jobs.

The recently signed federal relief package (CARES Act) provides much needed immediate funding for local transit agencies, and will help mitigate the worst impacts of COVID-19 in the near-term. However, while federal assistance addresses the immediate crisis, additional funding may be needed over the long-term to prevent permanent, significant cuts to transit.

A robust network of transit systems will also be critical to helping our economy get back on track when life returns to normal, by getting millions of people to work, school, shopping, medical appointments and other obligations – as was happening before the pandemic hit.

Restoring viable public transit will also be essential if we're going to continue to make progress toward our greenhouse gas reduction and clean air goals, while also creating a more equitable society that provides mobility options for seniors, working-class and lower-income families

We intend *Transit Watch* to provide key stakeholders with up-to-date information about COVID-19 and its impact on public transit services and our communities that rely on transit:

California Transit Association one-stop hub on COVID-19 impacts

Check [this page on our website](#) frequently for the latest information about COVID-19 impacts on public transit.

- The site includes updated figures from our survey of public transit agencies showing ridership and revenue declines by agency, as well as other information.
- We maintain a running, real-time summary list of latest impacts to local agencies, culled from each day's headlines and agency press releases, [located here](#).

California Transit Association responds to federal stimulus package

- The CARES Act provides more than \$25 billion to public transit agencies nationally, with more than \$3.74 billion dedicated to California's transit agencies.
- The California Transit Association issued a statement in response to the federal coronavirus relief bill, known as the CARES Act.
- Our statement acknowledges the federal funding helps in the short-term, but projects more help will likely be needed.
- Read the [full release here](#).

SF Muni Suspends Nearly All Routes

- As the result of COVID-19 impacts, **Muni Metro**, San Francisco's subway, bus and light rail service shut down all service except for 17 "core" routes.
- Muni also anticipates that 40% of their operators will be out due to complications of COVID-19.
- In spite of these challenges, Muni continues transporting more than 100,000 riders daily - getting nurses, cooks, custodians, and other essential workers to their jobs.
- Read more from San Francisco MTA here: [Muni Prepares to Deliver Essential Trips Only](#)

Southern California transit agencies go fare free to help protect public and staff

- Several Southern California transit agencies, including **LA Metro**, **Foothill Transit**, **Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus**, **Omnitrans** and **Antelope Valley Transit Authority**, have temporarily eliminated fares on buses to help keep the public and their drivers safe.
- By moving to rear-entrance boarding only and relaxing requirements to pay fares, riders abide by the CDC's social-distancing recommendations.
- Read more from the San Gabriel Valley Tribune: [Free rides help Southern California bus agencies combat coronavirus](#)

Sacramento Regional Transit ridership down sharply due to shutdown

- California's capital transit agency is experiencing a ridership decline of more than 75% due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- It has reduced services to just 38% of normal daily routes, subject to increase based on demand. la Grants for Rural Areas: \$86,790,829
- Read more from the *Sacramento Bee*: [Sacramento Regional Transit ridership down significantly due to coronavirus shutdown](#)

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