

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1599 (Ahrens) – As Introduced January 16, 2026

Policy Committee: Transportation Vote: 16 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill (1) directs the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to create the California Transit Stop Registry—a centralized, statewide dataset of standardized information regarding transit stops—and (2) requires each transit district to use standardized transit stop identifiers that conform with information in the registry.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Directs Caltrans, by December 1, 2026, to create the California Transit Stop Registry—a centralized, statewide dataset of standardized information regarding transit stops that includes at least all of the following for each transit stop in the state: (a) the transit stop's name and location, (b) amenities available at the stop and (c) a unique identifier for the transit stop, as established by Caltrans.
- 2) Requires each transit district, by June 1, 2027, (a) ensure that the name and location of each of its transit stops conforms with the corresponding name and location identified in the California Transit Stop Registry, and (b) use the unique identifier that conforms with the California Transit Stop Registry when publishing any dataset with stop information used to incorporate transit service information to a generally available trip-planning mobile application, or during publication of agency open datasets, including through the use of General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) datasets.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) This bill seems to create significant new work for Caltrans, both one time, to establish the registry, and ongoing, to maintain and update the registry with new data. Initial costs are likely to be in the low to mid hundreds of thousands of dollars to establish the registry, while ongoing annual costs are likely in the low hundreds of thousands to cover the salary and related costs of in-house Caltrans staff. All costs would come from the State Highway Account (SHA). For its part, Caltrans estimates ongoing annual costs of approximately \$420,000 for three positions to maintain the database, which Caltrans describes as including validation of transit agencies data (SHA).

According to Caltrans, the bill will not require up-front costs because the bill calls for creation of a registry, not a database, so Caltrans would simply need to pull data from what local agencies post, which requires minimal information technology resources.

- 2) Costs of an unknown, but collectively significant amount, to transit agencies to ensure that the names and locations of transit stops conforms with the corresponding name and location identified in the California Transit Stop Registry and to use the unique identifier that conforms with the California Transit Stop Registry when publishing any dataset with stop information, as required by the bill. The state would need to reimburse the local costs, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates, and the most-likely funding source would be the General Fund (GF).

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of GF structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** The author contends the ways different transit agencies name their stops make it difficult for riders to plan trips on public transit using popular transit apps. This is especially true, the author argues, when more than one transit agency shares a transit stop, but each transit agency refers to the stop by a unique name. According to the author:

Today, every transit agency names and labels its stops differently even when they're sharing the exact same physical bus stop. That means riders can see conflicting information on Apple Maps or other transit apps, making transfers confusing and unreliable. For working families, seniors, and people with disabilities who depend on transit, that confusion can mean missed connections, longer commutes, or deciding not to take transit at all. We can do better by making our system clearer, more consistent, and easier to use.

- 2) **Background.** California works to facilitate public transit use. Of note, the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP)—a statewide initiative supported by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and Caltrans through a grant from the California Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program—supports local transit agencies to make travel easy and accessible to all. Cal-ITP undertakes various efforts organized around three goals: (a) standardized contactless fare collection, (b) standardized customer-facing, real-time information and (c) automated transit discounts.

Key to Cal-ITP's efforts is use of GTFS, an open-source electronic format, as described by Cal-ITP:

used to distribute relevant information about transit systems to riders. It allows public transit agencies to publish their transit data in a format that can be consumed by a wide variety of software applications... This means that agencies can make information available using any of the many tools which already support GTFS (including simple text editing using a text editor or a spreadsheet). Open standards lead to the creation of data that can be easily shared. A feed is simply the collection of text files that describe a service, hosted online at a permalink that's publicly available. The same feed can be used by Google, Apple, Transit App, Open Trip Planner, and even apps created by riders. Anyone who wants to provide accurate and up-to-date transit information can use a GTFS feed to do so.

Caltrans reports it would rely on GTFS to create the California Transit Stop Registry, as required by this bill.

Streets for All, a supporter of the bill, asserts a statewide transit stop registry “will support better trip planning tools, stronger coordination between transit agencies, and a more seamless rider experience,” which will “improve data quality, simplify transit planning and coordination, level the playing field between transit routing softwares, and make transfers between transit services clearer for riders.”

There is no opposition registered to this bill.

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