
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1599 (Ahrens) - Public transit: California Transit Stop Registry: transit datasets

Version: June 4, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: TRANS. 13 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Mark McKenzie

Bill Summary: AB 1599 would require the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to create a California Transit Stop Registry (Registry) by June 1, 2027 that includes a statewide dataset of information regarding transit stops, as specified. The bill would also require transit operators, by January 1, 2028, to use a unique identifier for each transit stop when publishing any dataset and to ensure that the name and location of each transit stop conforms with the information identified in the Registry.

Fiscal Impact:

- Caltrans indicates that it is currently resourced through the 2026-27 budget year as part of the California Integrated Travel Project (CallTP), and can absorb the workload related to establishing initial datasets for the Registry through June 30, 2027. Caltrans estimates ongoing costs in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, beginning in 2027-28, to confirm and validate the use of conforming data, and to maintain and update the Registry on an ongoing basis. (State Highway Account)
- Unknown, potentially significant local costs in the aggregate for transit districts to report specified information on each transit stop to Caltrans, ensure the names and locations of each transit stop conforms to the name specified in the Registry, and to use a transit stop's unique identifier listed in the Registry when publishing datasets. The bill states that the state must reimburse these costs if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this bill contains costs mandated by the state. Staff notes, however, that costs incurred by transit districts are not likely to be state-reimbursable. See Staff Comments. (local funds)

Background: Existing law requires regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs), as a condition of receiving specified transit funding from the California Transportation Agency (CalSTA), to submit regionally-compiled transit operator data to CalSTA, including specified information in a General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) format, that is consistent with adopted guidelines and is compiled in coordination with transit operators providing service within the RTPA's jurisdiction. An RTPA must also post a summary of monthly ridership data from all transit districts on its website, consistent with the data submitted to the National Transit Database, as a condition of receiving specified transit funding. Existing law requires CalSTA to provide technical assistance to transit operators to transition to GTFS Real Time, in support of specified transit goals.

GTFS is an open data standard used to distribute information about transit routes, fares, and other relevant factors to transit riders. It provides a uniform standard that transit

agencies across the world can use to publicly report information about their routes and operations, which can then be made available for services provided by independent third parties, such as Google or Apple Maps. GTFS has become the global standard for describing transit schedules and operations for use by trip-planning applications, and is used by thousands of transit agencies across the world. GTFS is broken into various components, each describing different types of data, including GTFS Standard and GTFS Real Time. GTFS Standard includes basic information about schedules, fares, and routes. GTFS Real Time allows for the live tracking of transit vehicle locations, and can provide live schedule estimates. Currently, all California transit agencies make data available using GTFS Standard, and nearly half of agencies are capable of distributing GTFS Real Time data.

Due to its utility, both the federal government and California require transit agencies to use GTFS to varying degrees. On the federal level, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) required the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) to collect GTFS Standard data from transit agencies as a condition of receiving funds. In 2024, FTA adopted regulations requiring all transit agencies to standardize GTFS. Caltrans has also instituted similar requirements on the state level. As part of the California Integrated Travel Project (CallTP), Caltrans has worked to create a statewide transit database of both GTFS Standard and GTFS Real Time data. As part of CallTP, Caltrans has adopted California Transit Guidelines that serve as a reference document for producing high-quality GTFS data. Caltrans also actively works with transit agencies, providing technical assistance to help bring them into compliance with these guidelines, including providing access to and training for software to generate GTFS-compliant data, and direct assistance in generating this data.

Proposed Law: AB 1599 would require Caltrans to create the Registry, by June 1, 2027, as a centralized statewide dataset of standardized information regarding transit stops that includes all of the following for each transit stop in the state:

- The transit stop's name.
- The transit stop's location.
- The amenities available at the transit stop.
- A unique identifier for the transit stop, as established by Caltrans.

The bill would also require transit operators to do both of the following by January 1, 2028:

- Ensure that the name and location of each of its transit stops conforms with the corresponding name and location identified in the Caltrans Registry.
- Use the unique identifier for the transit stop that conforms with the Registry when publishing any dataset with stop information, including:
 - GTFS datasets.
 - Transit stop amenity datasets.
 - Stop-level ridership datasets.
 - Any other format used to incorporate transit service information to a generally available trip-planning mobile application
 - During publication of agency open datasets.

Staff Comments: This bill would implement a recommendation from the Transit Transformation Task Force, established by SB 125 (Budget and Fiscal Review

Committee), Chap. 54/2023. Specifically, the task force's final report, released in late 2025, recommended "opt-in common data collection, analysis, and publication standards across agencies to improve interoperability." By requiring standardized data reporting of information on each transit stop in the state, using unique transit stop identifiers, this bill would eliminate some of the problems encountered by transit users, facilitate stronger coordination among transit agencies, and simplify trip planning.

This bill imposes a state-mandated local program by imposing new duties on transit districts, including reporting specified information on each transit stop to Caltrans, ensuring the names and locations of each transit stop conforms to the information specified in the Registry, and requiring the use of a transit stop's unique identifier listed in the Registry when publishing datasets. The bill states that the state must reimburse these costs if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this bill contains costs mandated by the state. Staff notes, however, that transit districts have general authority to adjust transit fares to offset any administrative costs, so it appears unlikely that the Commission on State Mandates would approve any claims for reimbursement that may be submitted by transit agencies. Furthermore, as enterprise special districts, it appears that transit districts are not eligible claimants under current law. While it seems unlikely that any local costs related to this bill would be state-reimbursable, the Commission would ultimately make that determination, to the extent a claim is filed.

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