

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1599
Author: Ahrens (D), et al.
Amended: 8/20/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 13-0, 6/23/26
AYES: Cortese, Strickland, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Dahle, Gonzalez, Grayson, Menjivar, Richardson, Seyarto, Valladares, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/13/26
AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0, 5/21/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Public transit: California Transit Stop Registry: transit datasets

SOURCE: AARP
Streets for All

DIGEST: This bill requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to create the California Transit Stop Registry and requires transit operators to use a unique identifier that conforms with the registry when publishing any dataset with stop information.

Senate Floor Amendments of 8/20/26 1) require Caltrans to take input from transit operators when creating the transit stop registry, including considering transit operator input on the design, sources, data collection methods, and guidelines for the registry; 2) require Caltrans to utilize publicly available data when possible when creating the transit stop registry; 3) require Caltrans to update the transit stop registry at least once a year; 4) state that Caltrans cannot be held liable for information included or excluded from the registry; 5) remove references to “amenities” and instead require the registry to include if seating and shelter are available at a transit stop; and 6) require Caltrans to limit adverse financial and human resource impacts on transit operators in creating the registry.

ANALYSIS:

Existing federal law:

- 1) Requires the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to maintain, and transit operators who receive federal funds to contribute to, a National Transit Database (NTD) that contains operating and geographic coverage area information, among other things. (Title 49 United States Code (USC) Section 5335)

Existing state law:

- 1) Establishes the Transportation Development Act (TDA) to provide funding for transit and non-transit related purposes that comply with regional transportation plans. (Public Utilities Code (PUC) Division 10, Part 11, Chapter 4)
- 2) Authorizes Caltrans to adopt rules and regulations consistent with TDA. (PUC 99241)
- 3) Defines a transit operator as a city, county, public district, or certain other entity that operates a public transportation system, as defined. (PUC Section 99210)
- 4) Requires transportation planning agencies to report General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data to the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) as a condition of funding. (Government Code (GOV) Section 13987(f))
- 5) Requires CalSTA to provide transit operators with technical assistance to implement GTFS Real Time data collection and reporting. (GOV Section 13987(i))

This bill:

- 1) Requires Caltrans to create the California Transit Stop Registry by June 1, 2027. The registry must contain, at a minimum, the following information for each transit stop in the state:
 - a) The transit stop's name;
 - b) The transit stop's location;
 - c) If seating is available at the transit stop;
 - d) If shelter is available at the transit stop; and,
 - e) A unique identifier for the transit stop.
- 2) Requires Caltrans, when creating the California Transit Stop Registry, to
 - a) Maximize the use of publicly available data;
 - b) Update the registry at least once a year;

- c) Consider input from transit operators on registry design, data sources, data collection methods, and guidelines; and,
 - d) Limit adverse financial and human resources impacts on transit operators.
- 3) Requires transit operators, by January 1, 2028, to 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, to use that unique identifier when publishing any data set, including GTFS datasets, and to include any information regarding if seating and shelter are available at a transit stop.

Comments

Purpose of the bill. 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.”

General Transit Feed Specification. 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. This standard then allows third parties, such as Google or Apple Maps to access this data and make it available for users of their services. Indeed, today GTFS is 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. The two most prominently used today are 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 able to distribute 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. In 2024, FTA then passed regulations requiring transit agencies to standardize GTFS data and imposed this requirement on all agencies. Thus, all California agencies are already under this requirement.

In California, Caltrans has instituted similar requirements on the state level. Namely, as part of the California Integrated Travel Project (CalITP), Caltrans has worked to create a statewide transit database of both GTFS Standard and GTFS Real Time data. In so doing, Caltrans has created their own 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. This assistance includes offering access to and training for software to generate GTFS-compliant data, and direct assistance in generating this data.

Transit stop locations. While GTFS makes information about transit routes and schedules easily available to the public, it is ultimately still reliant on information reported out by the transit agencies themselves. As a result, complications can arise when different agencies operate in the same location.

One common issue has to do with the location of transit stops. For example, in a busy urban area, multiple transit agencies may utilize the same stop. However, each agency may refer to the stop by a different name. Furthermore, even if each transit agency functionally utilizes the same stop location, their GTFS data may report that stop as being in slightly different places. Therefore, a mapping application may tell a transit rider to walk across the street to get their next bus, when in fact they are already in the correct location, creating confusion and delay.

This bill seeks to address this issue by requiring Caltrans to establish a California Transit Stop Registry. As part of the registry, each transit stop in the state would be assigned a unique identifier. Once this identifier is assigned, the bill would further require transit agencies to include that information in the data they report out using GTFS. Transit agencies would not, however, be required to adopt the new identifier for internal purposes, only in published data sets. Thus, this would allow transit agencies to continue to call the stop by their unique names while also ensuring that mapping applications understand it is the same location for routing purposes. Furthermore, since all transit agencies in California already report out GTFS Standard data, the only additional requirement imposed on the agencies would be the inclusion of the unique identifier in their data sets.

According to Streets for All, writing as a sponsor of this bill, “AB 1599...creat[es] a single statewide registry and assign[s] a unique identifier to each transit stop. By standardizing stop information across agencies, the bill 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.”

Transit stop amenities. In addition to the unique stop identifier, this bill also requires the registry to contain information about if seating and shelter are available at any particular transit stop. By including such information, it would also be available to any third-party application that wishes to make use of that data. Thus, it would then be possible for users to see if a transit stop had seating or shelter available while planning their trips. Some proponents have argued that this would support increased accessibility and safety around transit stops by allowing users to access and plan around this information. However, GTFS does not currently support information about stop amenities, and it is thus unclear how much such data would be utilized by third-parties without wider adoption.

Protections for transit operators. This bill also includes protections for transit operators to ensure that implementing the California Transit Stop Registry does not create undue fiscal or staffing burdens on operators. Namely, this bill specifies that Caltrans must work in consultation with transit operators when designing the California Transit Stop Registry and must proactively work to mitigate any such negative effects. This is to be achieved by, among other things, requiring the use of data that is already publicly available.

Transit Transformation Task Force. SB 125 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 54, Statutes of 2023), among other things, created the Transit Transformation Task Force. The goal of the task force was to look at ridership growth strategies, operation innovations, and reforms of the TDA. The taskforce was convened by CalSTA in December of 2023, including representatives from transit agencies, including urban, rural, bus, rail, and ferry providers; regional transportation planning agencies; transit and environmental justice advocates; labor; academia; and the Legislature. The taskforce’s final report, including recommendations, was delivered to the Legislature in late 2025.

One recommendation of the task force was to “Recommend opt-in common data collection, analysis, and publication standards across agencies to improve interoperability (e.g., General Transit Feed Specification, Operational Data Standard, TIDES) to local and regional agencies.” AB 1599 would take a significant additional step towards implementing this recommendation by allowing transit agencies that share stops to more easily coordinate amongst themselves.

This would be the first recommendation of the task force to be addressed legislatively.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- Caltrans indicates that it is currently resourced through the 2026-27 budget year as part of CalITP, 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.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/19/26)

AARP (co-source)
 Streets for All (co-source)
 Active San Gabriel Valley
 Bike East Bay
 Circulate Planning & Policy
 Climate Resolve
 Move LA
 People for Housing Orange County
 Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
 San Diego County Bicycle Coalition
 Seamless Bay Area
 South Pas Active Streets

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/19/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0, 5/21/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Chen, Garcia, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Samuel Myers / TRANS. / (916) 651-4121
8/25/26 21:20:30

**** END ****