

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1599 (Ahrens)

As Amended August 21, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

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

Senate Amendments

- 1) Requires Caltrans to get input from transit operators when establishing the registry.
- 2) Requires Caltrans to update the registry at least once per year, unless Caltrans determines the inclusion of additional data is necessary more frequently.
- 3) Removes the requirement for transit agencies to report amenities available at the transit stop and instead requires them to provide if seating is available at the transit stop and if the transit stop is sheltered.

COMMENTS

Caltrans' division of Rail and Mass Transportation in 2020 established the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP) to improve the experience and cost-effectiveness of public transit for riders and operators through three actions: (1) installing an open loop contactless payment system that uses tap to pay enabled mobile devices, bank cards, or prepaid cards, to enable seamless travel across transit providers in order to make payment more convenient, (2) automating pricing flexibility, and (3) developing a platform for transit operators to share static and eventually real-time route information by establishing the California Minimum General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) guidelines.

GTFS was created in 2006 through a public-private partnership between the transit agency in Portland, Oregon and Google and is the global standard for describing transit schedules and operations for use by trip-planning applications. Thousands of agencies worldwide use GTFS and it produces the most transit agency data.

According to Caltrans, "The purpose of the California Transit Data Guidelines is to communicate the specific criteria by which Caltrans determines whether GTFS schedule and real time data produced by transit providers and vendors meets the qualitative needs of riders (and therefore trip-planning applications that deliver this data to riders), transit providers, and regulators. The guidelines provide producers with a reference document for the characteristics of high-quality GTFS feeds. All transit providers and GTFS-producing vendors within the State of California are expected to work toward meeting the Guidelines in full."

The most common ways for transit riders to see the data are through a consumer-facing application such as Google or Apple Maps, a transit provider's signage, or through commercial displays. Caltrans guidelines for transit agencies recommend they provide the public accurate, complete, and up-to-date transit information.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) required the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) to collect GTFS data from transit agencies. In 2024 FTA passed regulations requiring transit agencies to standardize GTFS data and imposed this requirement on all agencies. As a result, most California transit agencies have standardized their trip data and annually submit the data to the federal government.

This bill would go a step further than the federal requirements for standardizing trip data and would require transit agencies to standardize transit stop data, including using a unique identifier for each transit stop as established by Caltrans. A standardized stop ID enables a mapping app to read a location for trip planning and would standardize a currently fragmented system that can make it harder for a transit user to determine what route they need to take to get to their destination.

For example, in the City of Banning there is a transit stop where four different agencies stop at the same location. Every agency calls the stop by a different name. Under this bill, Caltrans could assign that location an ID number, allowing the transit agencies to continue to call the stop by their unique names while also ensuring mapping applications understand it is the same location for routing purposes.

Standardizing stop data may also make other potential travel improvements easier to implement. Transit agencies have increasingly been shifting away from monthly transit passes and instead have been implementing fare capping. Fare capping limits the amount an individual rider would pay in a single month to never exceed a maximum amount. For example, a rider who cannot afford a monthly pass and instead pays for each individual ride would never have to pay in a single month more than the cost of the monthly pass. Fare capping has been shown to modestly increase transit ridership. According to a University of Tennessee Report, *the App or the Cap? Which fare innovation affects bus ridership?* monthly fare capping was found to increase annual bus ridership from 3.6% to 4.1%.

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."

Arguments in Support

Streets for All, *a sponsor of this bill*, argues "Currently, transit stop information is often fragmented across agencies. When multiple transit operators serve the same stop, it may appear as separate entries in different datasets with inconsistent names or locations. This can create confusion for riders, trip planning apps, and planners who rely on accurate transit data.

AB 1599 addresses this issue by creating a single statewide registry and assigning 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 software, and make transfers between transit services clearer for riders.

Improving the quality and accessibility of transit data helps make transit systems easier to use and more reliable. A statewide transit stop registry will support better trip planning tools, stronger coordination between transit agencies, and a more seamless rider experience."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to Senate Appropriations Committee:

- 1) Caltrans indicates that it is currently resourced through the 2026-27 budget year as part of the California Integrated Travel Project (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)
- 2) 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)

VOTES:

ASM TRANSPORTATION: 16-0-0

YES: Wilson, Davies, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Carrillo, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Lackey, Macedo, Papan, Ransom, Rogers, Sharp-Collins, Ward

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 74-0-6

YES: 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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Chen, Garcia, Lackey, Ramos, Celeste Rodriguez

UPDATED

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