

CALIFORNIA CAN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT TRANSIT



TALKING POINTS

June 29, 2020

This document provides key talking points and facts to support the California Transit Association's request for transit funding relief under the statewide "California Without Transit" campaign. The campaign's frame seeks to help local spokespersons evoke, in the minds of key audiences, an image of California if public transit services were to disappear.

Transit in California is experiencing an existential crisis. State or federal funding assistance is critical to prevent a *California without transit*.

- Public transit faces an existential threat due to the severe and adverse impacts of COVID-19, in the immediate and long-term.
 - Transit ridership has plummeted by as much as 90% at many agencies.
 - Sales tax revenues that are key to funding transit are expected to decline by more than 27% statewide.
 - Combined, transit agencies statewide face a funding shortfall that exceeds the funding provided in the federal CARES Act by more than \$3.1 billion over the coming year.
 - Funding from the federal CARES Act provides short-term relief but still falls short by (**\$ amount**) for our agency alone.
 - Transit agencies across the state were forced to suspend or dramatically curtail services, eliminating transportation options for essential workers and disadvantaged communities that need it most.
 - These cuts could become permanent without state or federal action.

Our agency is an integral part of the communities we serve. Without state or federal action, public transit in our communities may not recover.

- (**Agency**) provides essential transportation options in our community, especially for essential workers, to get to work, medical, school and other necessary appointments.
- Like many transit agencies throughout the state, (**Agency**) has been forced to suspend or dramatically reduce services -- limiting mobility options for essential and frontline workers and disadvantaged communities. Many of those affected have no other transportation options.
 - Cite your agency's revenue losses
 - Cite your agency's decline in ridership
 - Detail all the cuts and other operational changes you've had to make (i.e. service reductions, route changes, fare-free, rear boarding, etc.)
 - Cite your local shift in ridership demographics, if compelling
- Without state or federal action, these cuts could become permanent, and the lasting impacts on our community will be devastating.
 - Public transit service is indispensable to the functioning of California communities, as it transports essential workers to jobs, while acting as a major engine of economic stability and equity.

California's local public transit agencies require \$3.1 billion in new funding assistance this year to prevent devastating permanent cuts.

- The State Legislature and Congress must act to save local public transit.
- This emergency funding would address critical outstanding funding needs at transit agencies statewide and allow public transportation to play a more active role in the state's recovery.
- While the federal CARES Act has helped in the short-term, it will likely not stabilize transit or cover our anticipated losses in FY 2020-2021.
- We understand there are serious and competing needs for limited state and federal resources. However, without additional relief funding, it could take years for public transit to recover from today's crisis, resulting in the elimination of important mobility options for millions of Californians, job loss, and the unnecessary delay of California's economic recovery.

In a *California without transit*, many underserved communities would suffer disproportionately from a lack of mobility options, causing economic and social distress.

- The COVID-19 crisis created a dramatic shift in ridership.
- **Cite differences in local ridership demographics**
- An April 2020 survey conducted by Transit App found:
 - Pre-crisis, transit ridership reflected a 50/50 gender split; today, 56% of riders are female.
 - Since the pandemic, Black and Latino riders comprise the majority of transit riders.
 - Today, more than 35% of transit riders make under \$15,000 per year.
 - 92% of today's transit riders are using it to commute to work. Many riders are essential workers.
 - More than 20% work in health care services.
 - Almost 20% work in food preparation.
- Transit is necessary to survival for many riders. Many of these riders have few other transportation options.

The ripple effects of a *California without transit* would be far-reaching and devastating to California communities.

- If the mobility options offered by public transit were to disappear, California risks seeing spikes in:
 - **Unemployment** rates in underserved communities due to lack of reliable transportation to work, further deepening the economic disparities between our most vulnerable communities and wealthier areas.
 - **Worsened health outcomes**, as access to medical appointments and fresh food is reduced, and other health conditions – associated with air pollution caused by increased automobile traffic – are exacerbated.
 - **Increased traffic congestion**, as transit riders opt to use personal vehicles rather than returning to transit. A recent study by Vanderbilt University predicted that commute times in San Francisco alone could increase by as much as 80 minutes per driver per day