Caltrain Wayfinding

Citizens Advisory Committee
May 15, 2024
Agenda Item 8

Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project

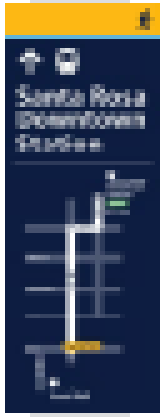
What is Wayfinding?

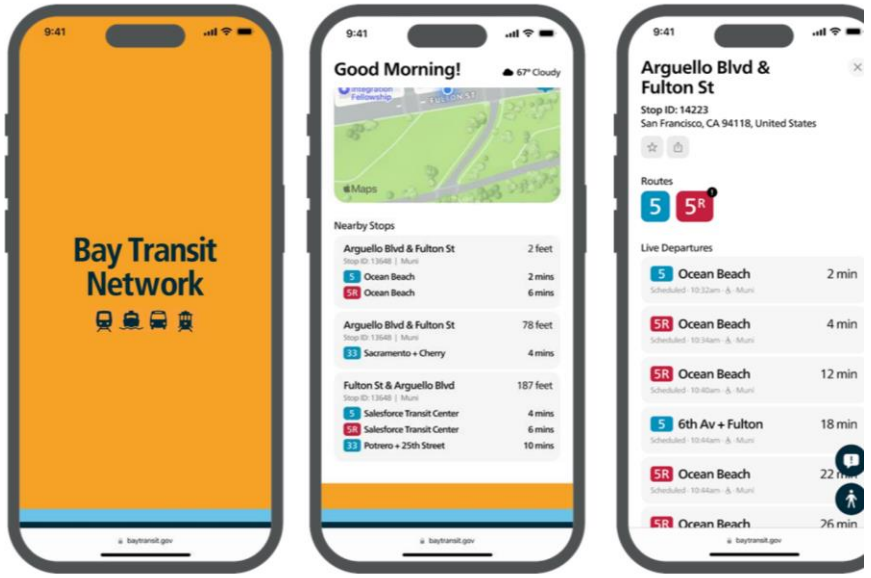
‘Wayfinding’ describes the way people orient themselves in physical locations and move from place to place.

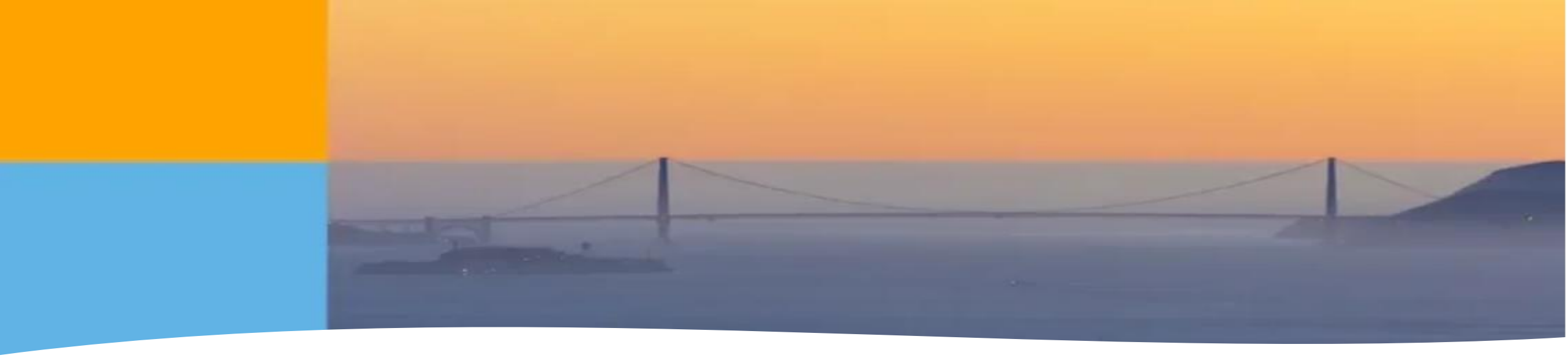
Transit wayfinding tools include maps, diagrams, signs, screens and other devices that help riders plan their journey and get around.

Wayfinding tools are often items in the physical environment, like landmarks and signs that display information along streets, transit entrances and other pathways to major destinations. Wayfinding can include digital and technology-based items as well.

Good wayfinding makes travel less stressful, even when you are going somewhere new.







Regional Mapping & Wayfinding Project

MTC and Bay Area transit agencies are working together to develop a common identify, signage, and colors inspired by the region. This project is the ‘Regional Mapping & Wayfinding Project’ (RMWP). This ties back to MTC's "Transit Transformation Action Plan" and the desire for integrated mapping, signage, and real-time schedule information.

More than 90% of Bay Area residents polled by MTC in 2021 identified uniform and easy-to-use transit maps and signage as an important priority for improving the region’s transit network.

The design concepts incorporate feedback agencies and from Bay Area residents – including riders & non riders, people with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities – who participated in MTC-sponsored surveys, workshops, and focus groups.

RMWP Goals

1. Provide easy-to-understand, dependable, and familiar transit information for travelers, regardless of where they are in the Bay Area.

2. Make it easy for transit agencies to update signs and implement new standards, including common parts and processes.

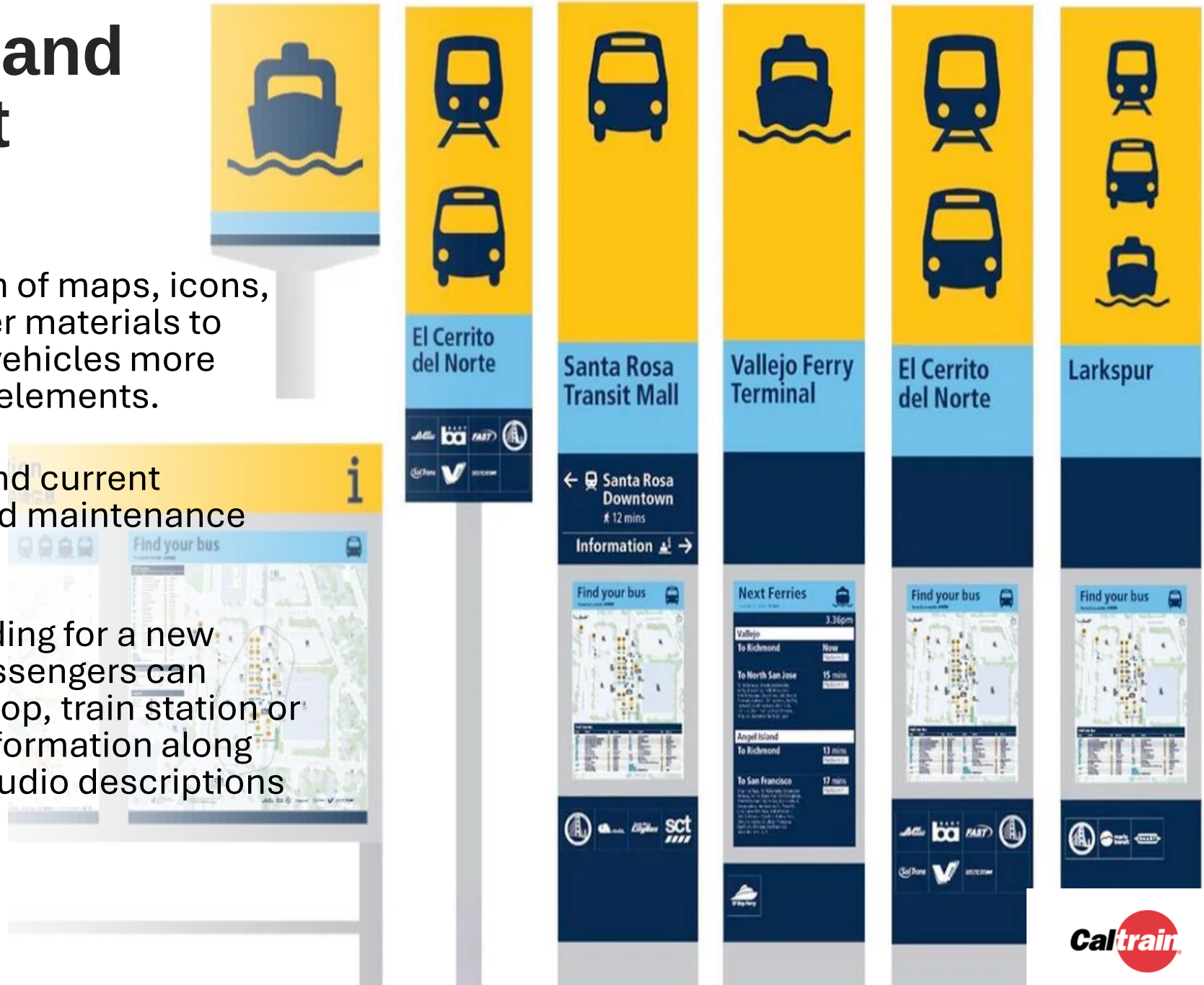
3. Support the social, environmental, economic and equity goals of Plan Bay Area 2050 – the long-range regional plan – by increasing transit visibility and ridership.

Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Project

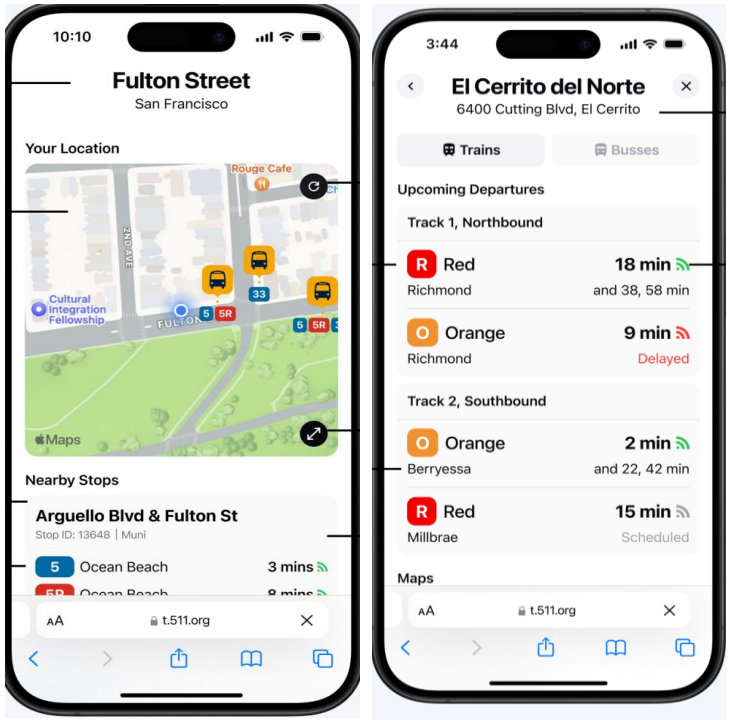
- Aim is to design a universal system of maps, icons, transit stop & station signs, and other materials to make riders' experiences on transit vehicles more consistent. Include tactile & Braille elements.

- Partner with agencies to understand current wayfinding engineering, material, and maintenance standards.

- Explore extending regional wayfinding for a new mobile-friendly website to which passengers can connect via QR codes at each bus stop, train station or ferry terminal, providing real-time information along with accessibility features such as audio descriptions and language translation.



Prototype Digital Design

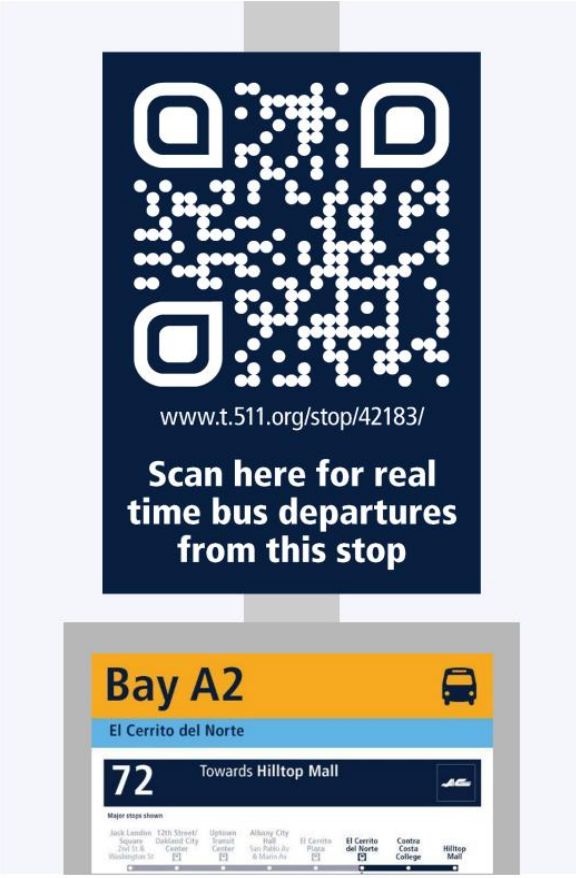


Mapping

Space on every map with a QR code and more detailed information.

Sign

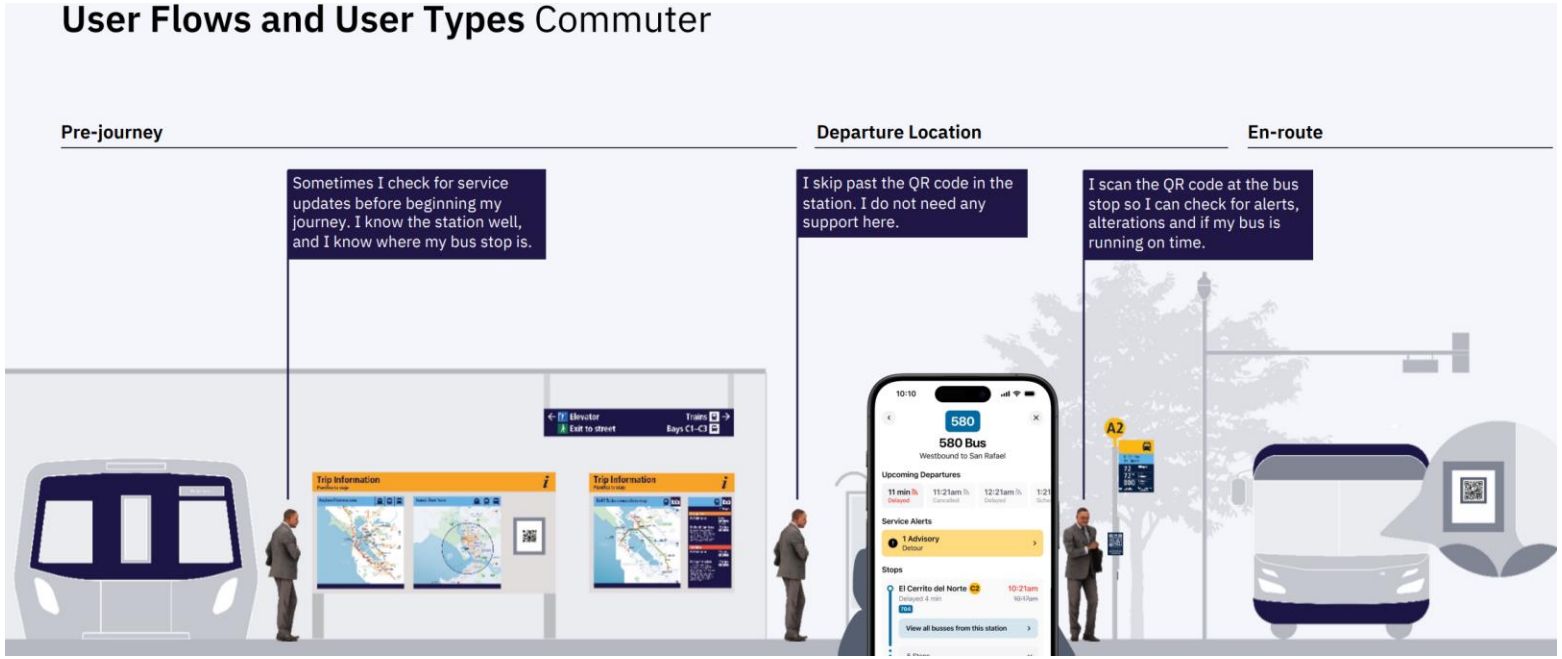
A 5x5in overhead standalone sign.



Advertising/Posters

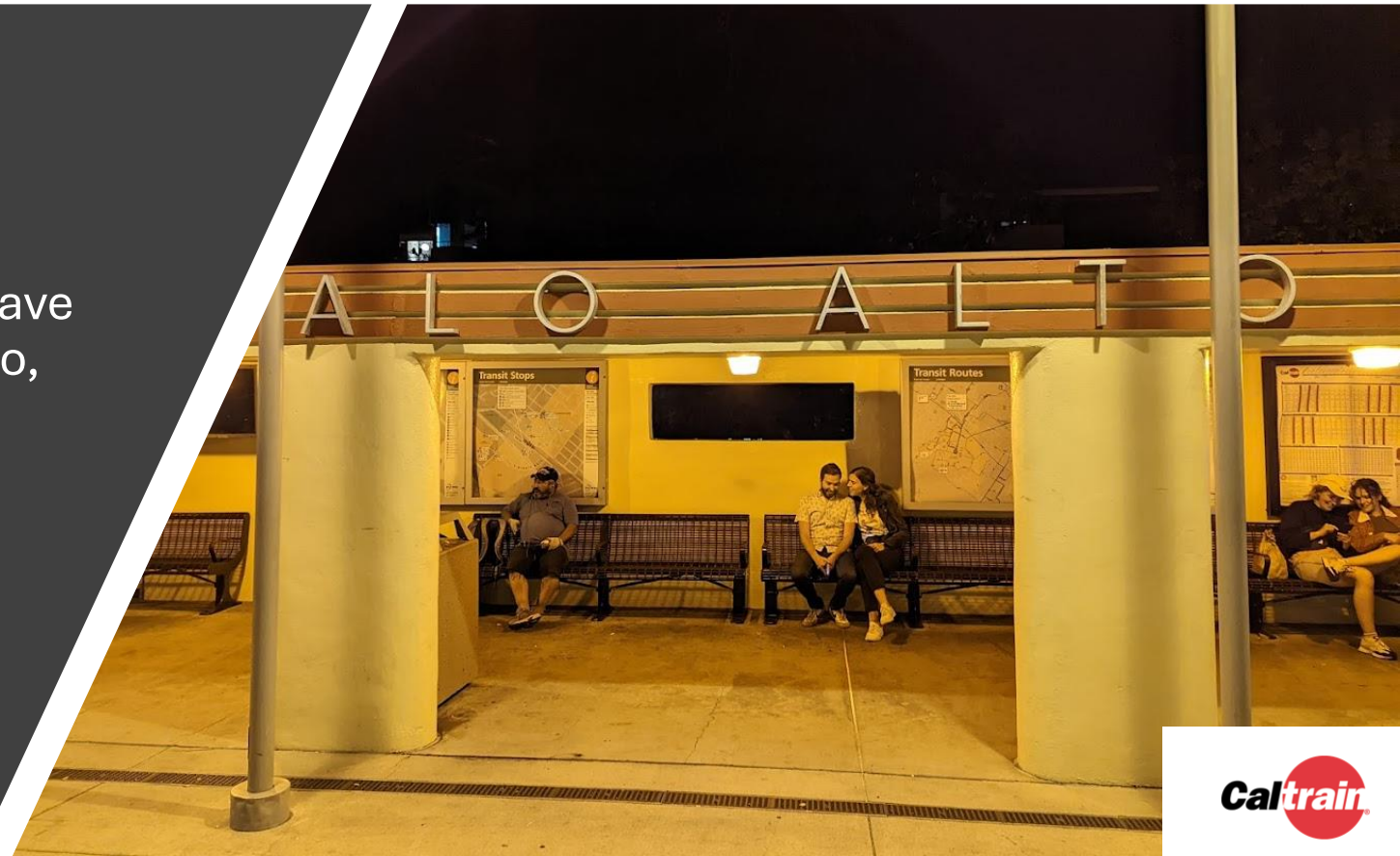
Posters where appropriate with large branding and information.

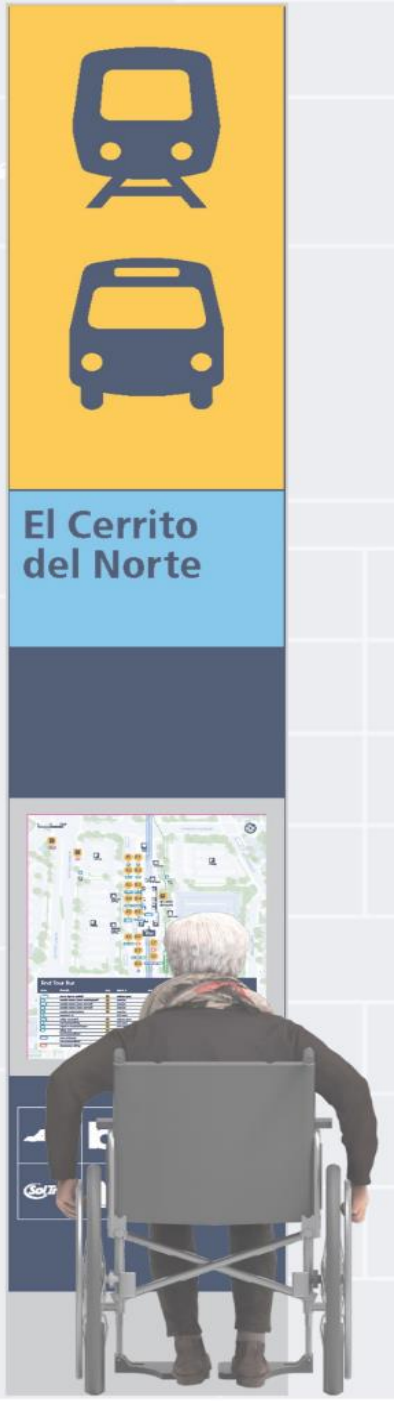
Prototype Design for Transit User Types



Caltrain & MTC Hub Signage

Caltrain Stations has 5 stations that currently have existing MTC Hub Signage: SF, Millbrae, Palo Alto, Mountain View and San Jose Diridon.





What's Next?

- New RMWP web portal on the MTC website where you may read more about the project.

- RMWP is creating a new Accessibility Working group. This group will provide a space for transit customers with disabilities to share their lived experiences with the MTC project team.

- Prototype testing: Installed later this year at the El Cerrito del Norte BART station, the Santa Rosa Transit Mall, and the nearby Santa Rosa SMART station. The public will be able to provide feedback onsite.

- Maps: Design prototypes for a consistent set of transit maps will be presented to the Regional Network Management Council later this year.

- Pilot Projects: Expected to be rolled out in 2025 and 2026, the pilots are intended to test the operational feasibility of widescale production, installation and maintenance of the new wayfinding system.

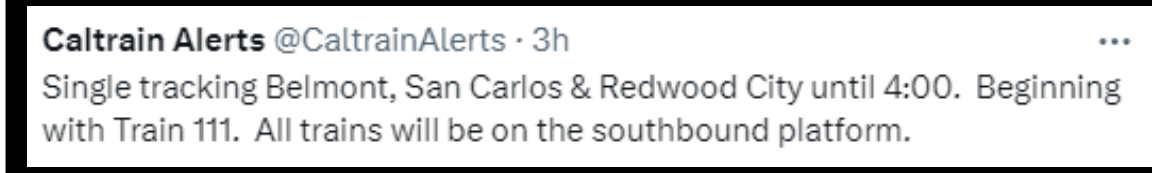
- In 2027 and beyond: after testing is complete, it is anticipated that the Bay area will start to be ready to install new, easier-to-understand materials at transit stations and stops throughout the region.

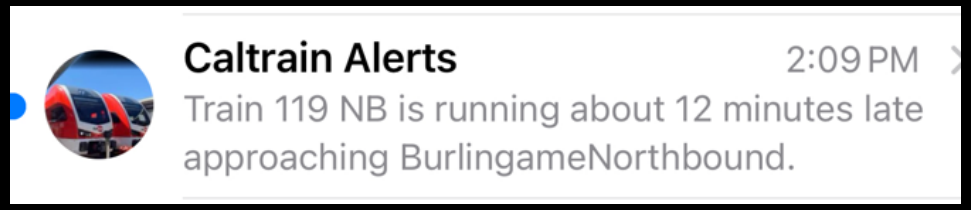
Caltrain

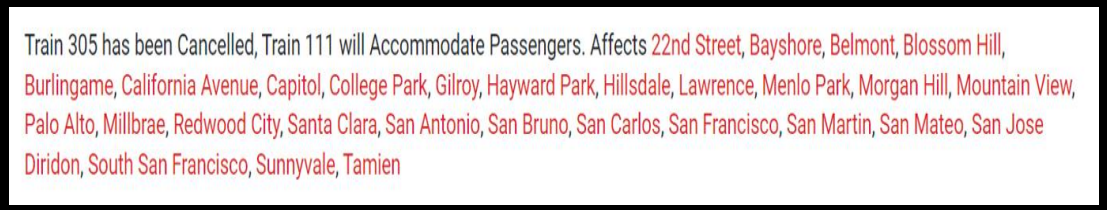
Caltrain Alerts & Wayfinding

Service Alerts convey when the normal Caltrain service changes for customers.

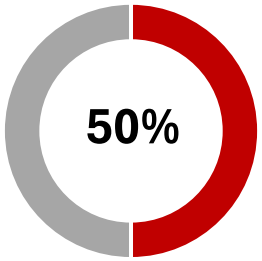
They are a critical piece of the rider's experience, and a service alert may impact wayfinding when there is a platform change, delay, or cancellation.



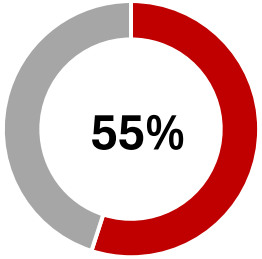




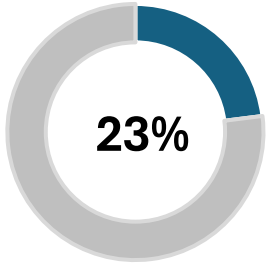
Surveys: Customer Satisfaction



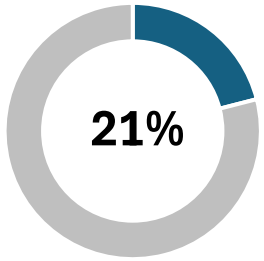
Service Delay Information



Having trip Info on 3rd party apps



Communicates effectively about long term service changes



Communicates effectively about service delays & disruptions

Customer Voice Matters: Alerts

SWIFT

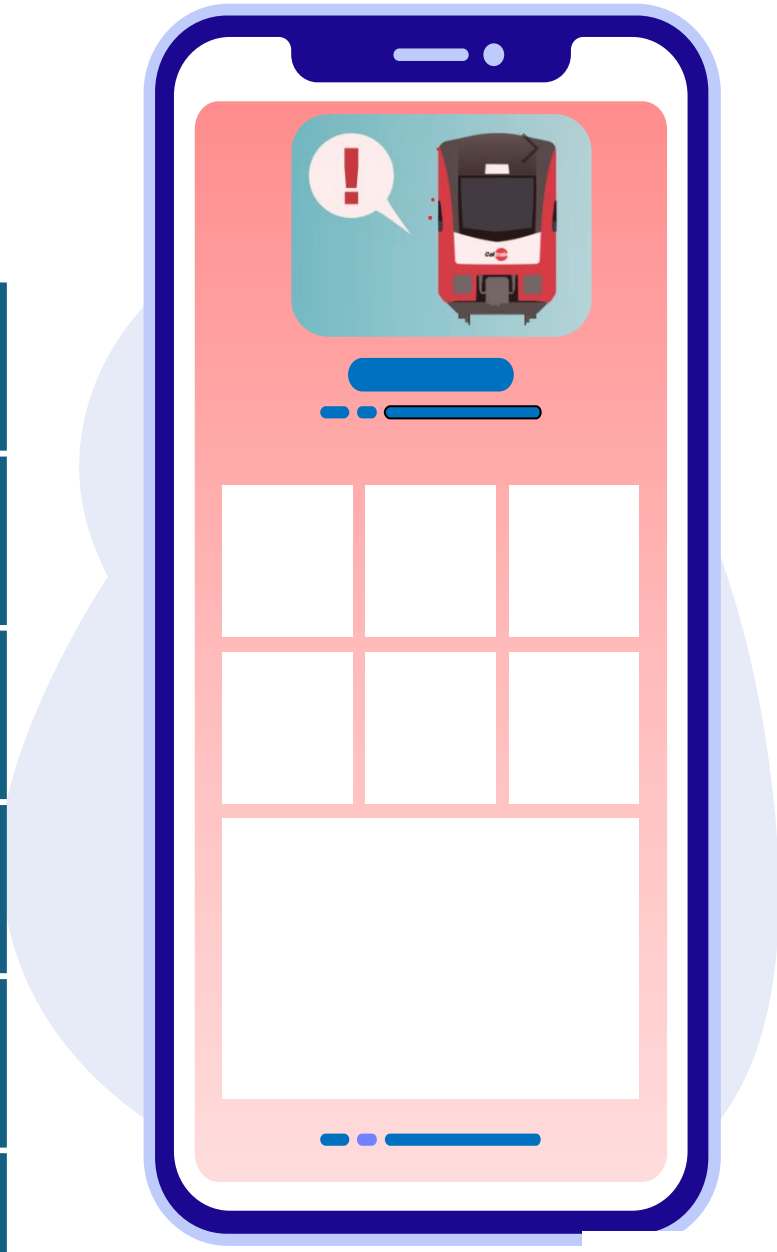
ACCURATE

ACCESSIBLE

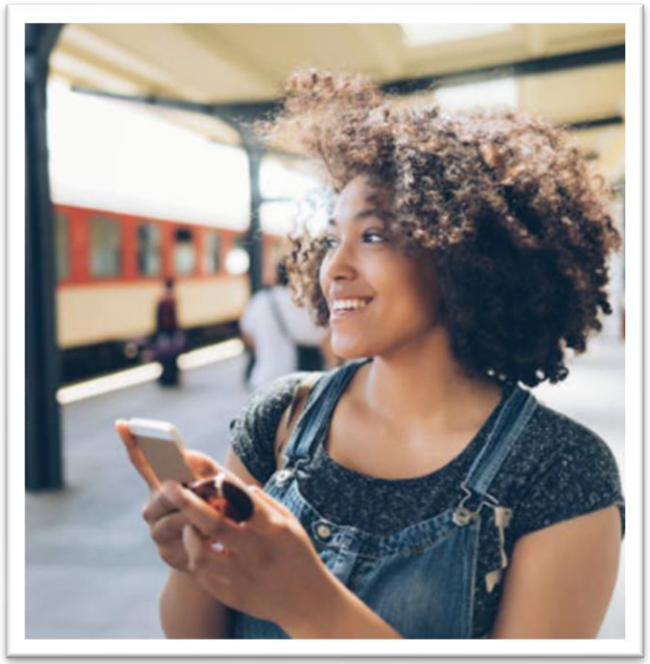
Alert Opportunities

Current alerts have opportunities to improve the experience for Caltrain customers.

Provide	Proactive text and email alert subscription option, customizable to rider trains, stations, and elevators
Provide	Options to alleviate barrier with X (Twitter) where a rider would have to have an account to view current alerts
Ensure	Third-party trip planning apps have **all** alert information
Offer	Additional methods for service alerts for South County Stations, as Caltrain does not have platform VMS for those locations
Provide	Five languages for text and email service alert subscriptions
Provide	A consistent and uniform method of displaying alerts



Where are Caltrain Service Alerts Displayed or Shared?



Website: Caltrain.com/alerts
Viewable via mobile

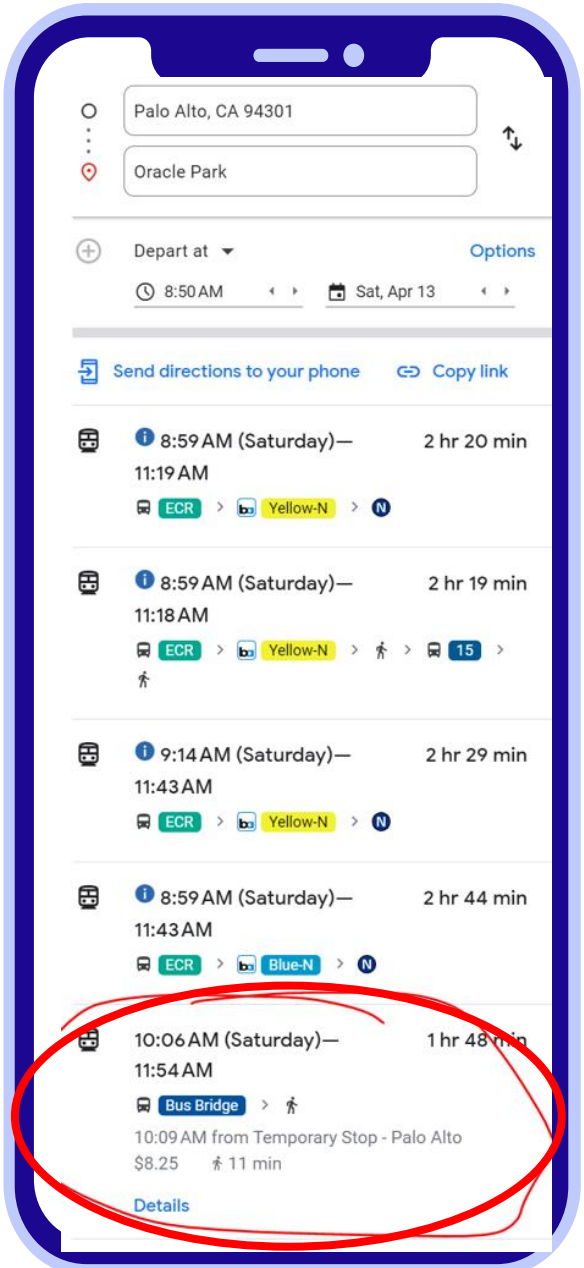
Coming Soon: Text & Email Subscription Alerts
Your trains, Your Stations, Your Times

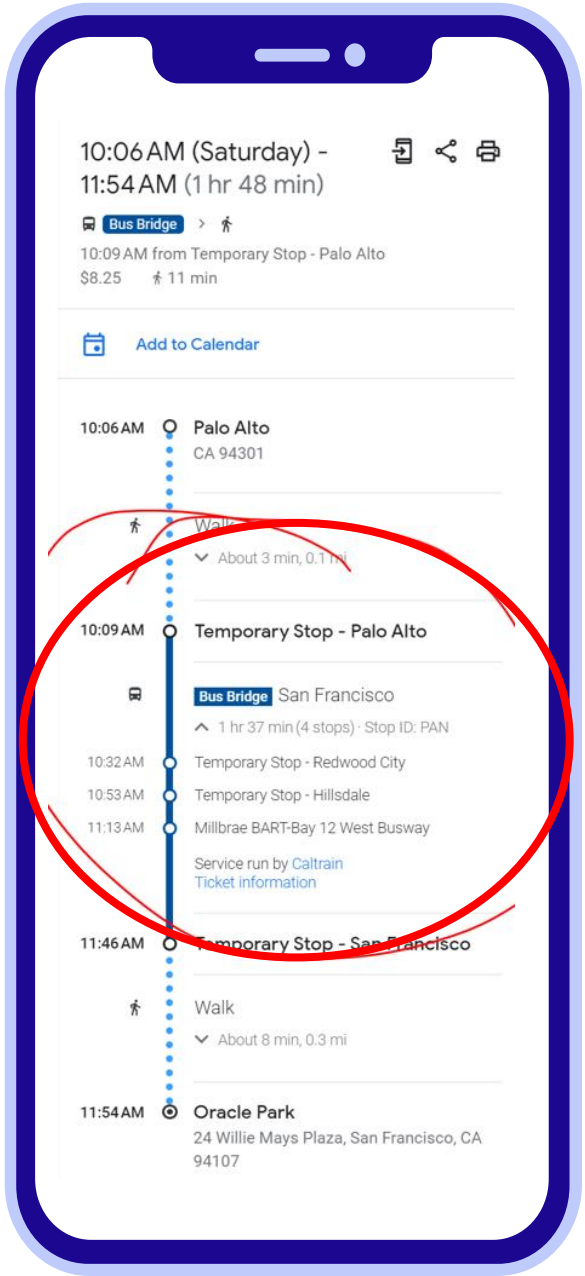
Caltrain Website: Station Pages
View specific station + station alerts

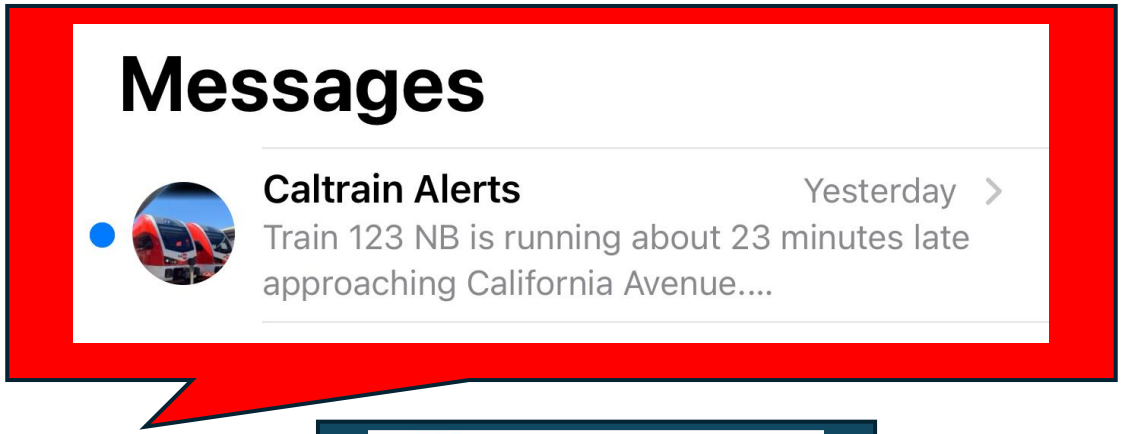
Social Media
On ‘X’ at @Caltrainalerts & soon other platforms

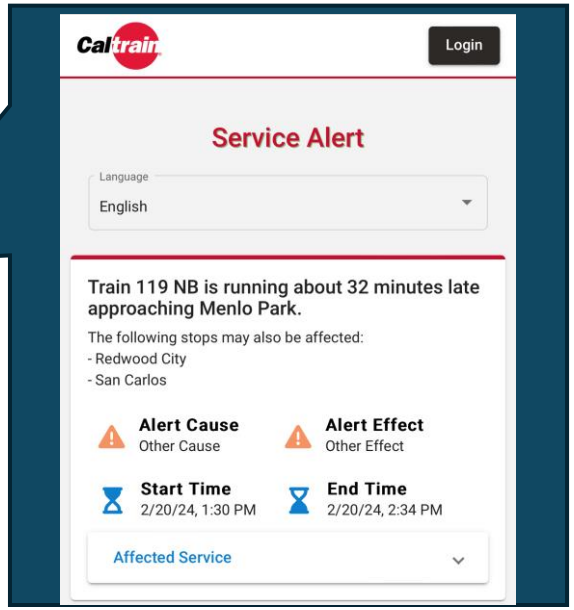
MTC 511 and third-party trip planning apps
Google & Apple Maps | Moovit | Transit | City Mapper

Alert Improvements

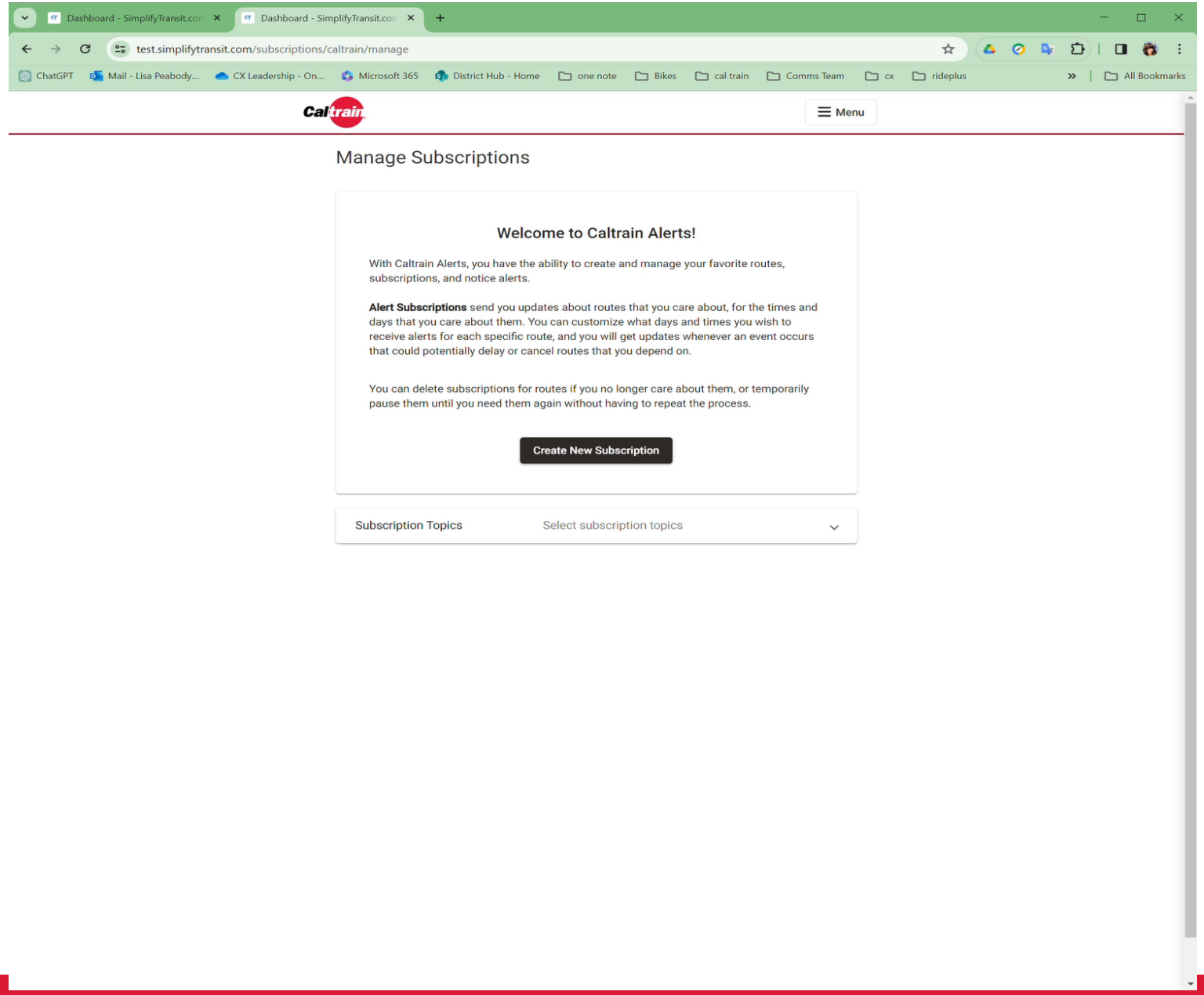








Customers: Creating a Subscription for Alerts



Here is how simple it is to create a subscription as a customer.

I can receive text for the trains and stations I use for my commute. I only commute three days a week during the week to my office.

Setting up this subscription only took 45 seconds!

As a customer, I will now receive text alerts anytime my train numbers are impacted on the days and times I selected. If there is a station-specific alert for the days & times I selected - I will also receive a text. I can change, pause, or stop my subscription at any time.

I can create additional subscriptions too. Example: Follow my partners' trains, as I drop them off at the station every day.

Launch date: TBD

Timeline

- Late June: tentative soft launch of new alerts system for bug testing and iteration

June 2024

July 2024

- Bug fixes and improvements
- Start awareness campaign for customers
- Tentative: full launch of alerts system
- Ambassador outreach

Summer-Fall 2024

- Social media campaigns for awareness
- Continued ambassador outreach
- Measuring subscription rate and QR scan rate
- Launch updated Caltrain.com/alerts web page

Thank You

RMWP Resources

- MTC's RMWP website: https://mtc.ca.gov/operations/transit-regional-network-management/regional-mapping-wayfinding
- MTC's Transit Transformation Action Plan: https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/public-transit/transit-transformation-action-plan
- Plan Bay Area 2020: https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/long-range-planning/plan-bay-area-2050
- Caltrain Engineering Standards: https://www.caltrain.com/engineering-standards