



# CALTRAIN STATION ACCESS POLICY

2024 UPDATE  
Adopted DATE



## Purpose

**Caltrain is a customer-focused rail system. Our mission is to offer safe, reliable, accessible, and sustainable transportation service that enhances quality of life for all.**

The Caltrain Station Access Policy supports Caltrain's vision of being a vital link in the regional and statewide rail network by improving connectivity to communities and other transit systems, contributing to the region's economic vitality, and partnering with local communities to ensure that diverse constituencies receive a world-class travel experience.

The Station Access Policy focuses on enhancing access for existing customers and expanding access to new customers to support ridership growth and the railroad's fiscal health, as well as supporting access improvements necessary as part of Caltrain's electrification and modernization program.

This Station Access Policy provides a tool for both Caltrain staff and external partners to use in making access-related decisions and prioritizing investments that align with Caltrain's overall mission, vision, and core values.

## Defining Access

Caltrain serves a diverse range of individuals and community types that have varying access needs. Individuals use a number of modes of transport to complete their journey to and from Caltrain stations: they are pedestrians, ride a bicycle, use shared micromobility, drive, are dropped off, take a bus or train operated by another agency, or in many cases combine various modes of transport.

Motivations for travel vary and are constantly evolving in response to commute patterns, jobs and housing trends, and desires for connectivity to major attractions and activity centers throughout the region. It is critical to meet a wide range of access needs and support all individual's access journey regardless of the motivation for travel.

Caltrain's Station Access Policy emphasizes:

- Safe, universally accessible, well-maintained, and seamless connections to Caltrain stations.
- Integration with the local station area and community context.
- Excellent customer experience for all individuals.



# Intended Users of the Station Access Policy

## Caltrain Riders and Community Members:

To collaborate with Caltrain to identify local and systemwide needs and define access priorities, including within equity-priority communities such as historically underserved low-income, minority, Limited-English proficient, riders with disabilities, and transit-dependent groups.



## Caltrain Board and Staff:

For project identification, prioritization, and engagement with project stakeholders based on the Access Toolkit and User Manual.



## Policy Makers and Regulatory Agencies:

To align local and regional plans and policies around Caltrain stations and properties with the Policy goals and objectives, detailed in the Goals and Objectives section.



## Local and Regional Transportation Agencies:

To partner with Caltrain in the identification, funding, and delivery of access projects, including coordination and implementation of projects.



## Local Jurisdictions:

To partner and coordinate with Caltrain in the identification, funding, and delivery of access projects when and where these projects fall outside of Caltrain's jurisdiction.



## Developers, Contractors, and Third-Party Vendors:

To partner and support Caltrain in the funding, planning, design, construction, ongoing maintenance and performance evaluation of access improvements.



## Goals & Objectives



### Access Goal #1 Safe Routes To, From, and Through Stations

- **Operations:** Promote rider and maintenance investments to ensure safe and reliable train operations at Caltrain stations.
- **Connectivity:** Work with local jurisdictions to ensure safe and direct connections to, from, and through Caltrain stations and facilities.
- **Universal Design:** Incorporate Universal Design\* principles to ensure safe access for all riders and respond to varying user needs.
- **Crime Prevention:** Embed Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in design guidelines and criteria to ensure safe and secure access.



### Access Goal #2 World-Class Customer Access Experience for All Users

- **Design Guidelines and Criteria:** Develop multimodal station design guidelines and criteria reflecting industry best practices that align with the Caltrain Access Hierarchy.
- **Project Delivery:** Ensure access needs and improvements are reflected in planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities.
- **Technology:** Leverage technology both at stations and online to help riders easily navigate the Caltrain system.
- **Wayfinding:** Provide a unified wayfinding system that provides clear and intuitive directions to diverse customers, reinforces Caltrain's Access Hierarchy, and aligns with regional initiatives.

\*Universal design facilitates station access, system equity, and ease of movement for all users, especially people using wheelchairs or mobility devices, the elderly, people with children and strollers, and people carrying groceries or packages (National Association of City Transportation Officials).



### Access Goal #3

## Ridership Growth through Strategic Access Investments

- **Transit-Oriented Development:** Promote transit-oriented development at Caltrain-owned stations and in the surrounding station areas, providing direct access to Caltrain for residents and workers.
- **Multimodal Programs:** Promote first/last mile access options through collaborations to expand bike lockers, bikeshare, private shuttles, and other micromobility options.
- **Transfer Guidelines:** Establish and implement facility design guidelines and criteria for direct and convenient travel paths when transferring between modes.
- **Seamless Transit:** Partner with connecting transit operators to minimize transfer times and provide seamless connections.
- **Maximize Value:** Explore creative use of facilities to support both operations and maintenance and customer access needs.



### Access Goal #4

## Equitable Access Aligned with Diverse Community Needs

- **Community Engagement:** Build relationships with communities, including equity-priority communities, to understand needs and define access priorities.
- **Access Prioritization:** Prioritize investments that improve access for equity-priority communities.
- **Expanded Choices:** Collaborate with jurisdictions and partner agencies to deliver first/last mile connections to Caltrain that are tailored to meet the needs of local riders.
- **Adaptable Solutions:** Ensure multimodal design guidelines and criteria are flexible and adaptable to different communities and local contexts.
- **Partnerships:** Engage in strategic partnerships to improve regional access to housing and jobs at Caltrain stations and in surrounding station areas.



## Access Goal #5

### Healthy and Sustainable Modes of Access

- **Land & Capital Management:** Leverage land and capital assets to encourage transit-oriented development around stations and minimize vehicle-miles traveled.
- **Climate Resilience:** Ensure station facilities can withstand and operate in current conditions and are resilient for future weather and climate conditions.
- **Mode Shift:** Prioritize multimodal investments to encourage mode shift from automobiles and parking to more sustainable options.
- **Parking Management:** Consider parking management strategies such as parking pricing to leverage parking assets and encourage mode shift that reduces single occupancy vehicle trips.



## Access Goal #6

### Strategic Partnerships to Advance Station Access

- **Collaboration:** Partner with local jurisdictions in station area planning efforts to incorporate multimodal, connected street networks aligned with transit-supportive land uses.
- **Coordination:** Define roles and responsibilities for Caltrain and its stakeholders to identify, plan, construct, and maintain access related projects.
- **Review Processes:** Establish protocol for involvement with local jurisdictions and private entities on development plans, leveraging the project planning and entitlement process to deliver access investments.
- **Partnerships:** Cultivate partnerships to explore cost-sharing, data-sharing, and grant funding opportunities with other agencies and jurisdictions.
- **Facility and Resource Use:** Align permitted uses and resources at Caltrain stations with access needs, balancing between multimodal access, maintenance, and community needs.

## Access Hierarchy

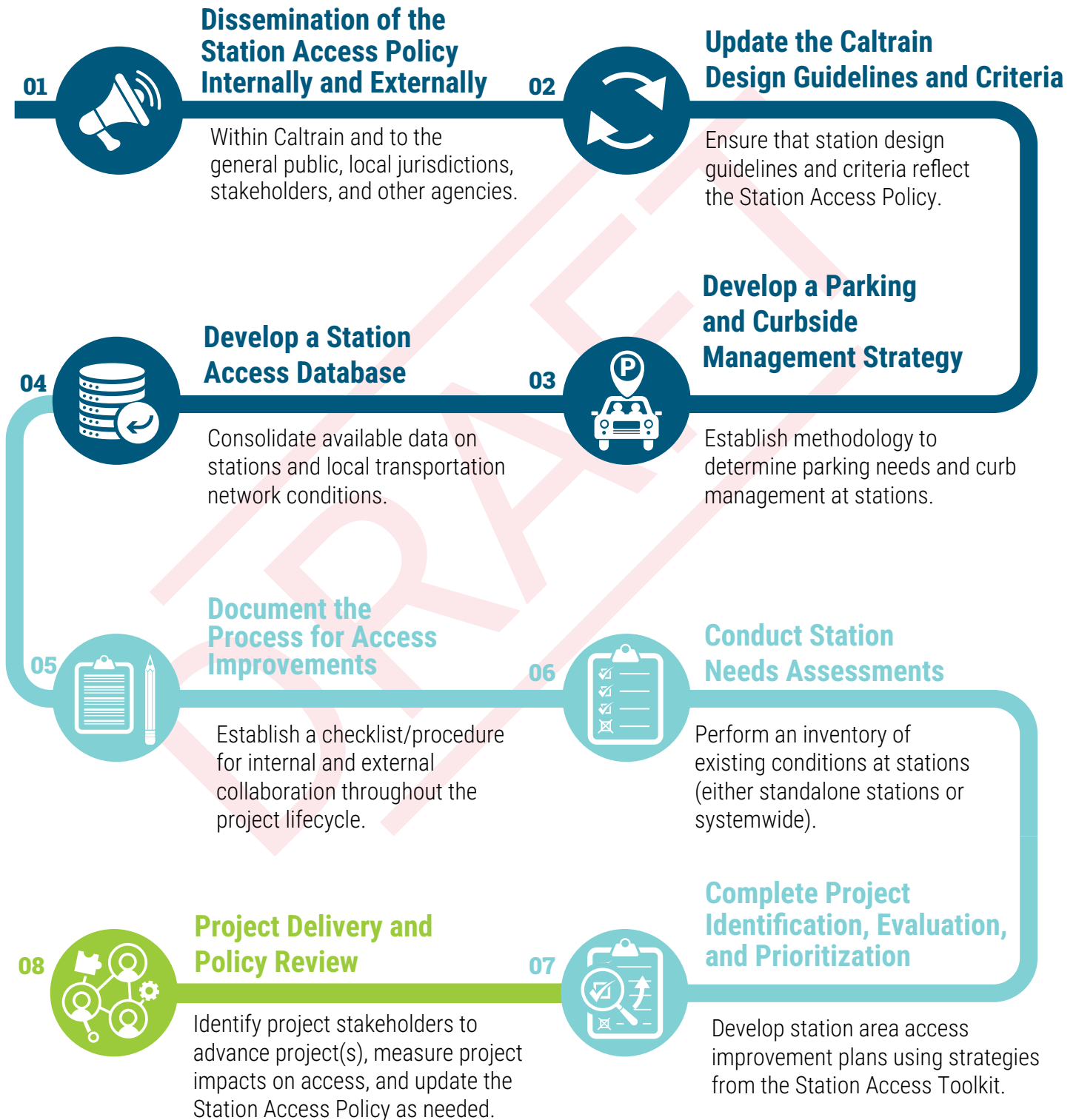
Caltrain stations are accessed through a combination of several modes including, walking, biking, shared micromobility, transit, drop off/rideshare, or private vehicle and parking. Caltrain supports universal design across all modes to ensure that Caltrain's stations are accessible to everyone.

The Access Hierarchy is the systemwide aspirational framework to guide station area planning and investment decisions. The Access Hierarchy is intended to be used as a tool for decision making and weighing the tradeoffs of access investments to ensure sustainable modes are the highest priority. The Access Hierarchy emphasizes walking, biking/shared micromobility, and transit facilities as the highest priority when considering proposed access improvements.



## Next Steps

The next steps to support the application of the Station Access Policy are organized in short-term (within 2 years), mid-term (2-5 years), and long-term (5+ years) time periods.



 Short-Term  
Within 2 Years

 Mid-Term  
2-5 Years

 Long-Term  
5+ Years



# Appendix

## Station Access Toolkit

The Station Access Toolkit provides examples of actions to inform decision making that users of the Station Access Policy may select from when identifying possible access improvements. The Access Toolkit actions are organized into five categories:

1. Customer Experience
2. Active Transportation
3. Transit and Shuttles
4. Private Vehicles and Parking
5. Partnerships

### Category #1

#### Customer Experience

##### Toolkit Actions

Improve customer comfort through enhancements such as landscaping, lighting, weather protection, seating, local information, and other placemaking strategies at stations.

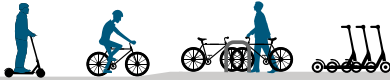
Improve ease of navigation to, from, and within stations, for example through intuitive design, clear sightlines, signage, translations of signage for Limited-English proficient communities, and other accessible wayfinding strategies.

Implement security improvements such as the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques, lighting, visibility enhancements, cameras, and other means to increase security presence.

Improve access to real-time arrival information at stations and through digital communications.

## Category #2

### Active Transportation



#### Toolkit Actions

Develop new or enhance existing pedestrian circulation areas (e.g. sidewalks, concourses, and plazas) within stations.

Ensure stations meet accessibility standards and work with stakeholders to apply universal design principles such as elevators, ramps, stairs, level boarding, and auditory and visual cues.

Coordinate with local jurisdictions to deliver local station area access improvements that meet universal design principles such as curb ramps, tactile and audio crossing cues, improved sidewalks, slower traffic speeds, shorter crossing distances, and increased crossing time.

Develop new or enhance existing bike and micromobility parking amenities, such as secure bike parking, bike share stations, scooter drop zones, and electric bike charging infrastructure.

Partner with local jurisdictions to encourage plans for low-stress active transportation facilities to Caltrain stations, such as traffic calming measures, crossing improvements, protected bike lanes, and curb extensions.

Work with local jurisdictions and project sponsors to ensure that grade separation projects adjacent to stations reflect multi-modal access needs.

## Category #3

### Transit and Shuttles



#### Toolkit Actions

Develop new or enhanced pick-up/drop-off facilities for transit and shuttles.

Work with transit agency partners to implement rail-to-rail and bus-to-rail opportunities that optimize transit stop placement, frequency, and routing for connecting transfer services.

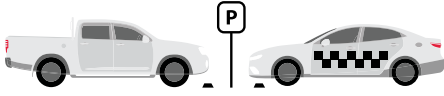
Coordinate schedules, station facility needs, and access to information with public and private transit operators to optimize transfers, including paratransit access, bus stops, waiting areas with shading and seating, and signage with real-time information.

Increase coordination with guaranteed ride home programs and other local micro-transit services to increase passenger awareness and usage.

Coordinate with local jurisdictions to deliver transit-priority improvements that improve transfer connectivity and travel times such as queue jumps and transit-only lanes.

## Category #4

### Private Vehicles and Parking



#### Toolkit Actions

Develop new or enhance delineated areas for rideshare passenger drop off and pickup.

Develop parking pricing to right-size parking to local market conditions and demand.

Implement parking management and enforcement practices such as paid parking, automated enforcement via license plate recognition, etc.

Identify stations where parking lots are underutilized and can be reduced and redeveloped into TOD and/or new access facilities (transit centers, bikeways, or bike parking, etc.).

Coordinate with other agencies, local jurisdictions, and/or adjacent property owners to consider sharing station parking.

Provide carshare facilities at stations.

Provide designated carpool/vanpool spaces at stations.

## Category #5

### Partnerships

#### Toolkit Actions

Explore fare incentive programs such as the GoPass and other partnerships that increase access to sustainable and affordable travel choices for equity-priority populations.

Strengthen relationships and membership in local Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) to promote Caltrain ridership and first/last mile access choices.

Coordinate with local institutions (e.g., colleges and healthcare campuses) to collect data and develop shuttle programs or other access projects that cater to these destinations.

Identify opportunities to support local parking cash out programs and other sustainable travel incentives.

Identify opportunities for public-private partnerships and other cost sharing agreements to deliver station area access improvements.

Formalize agreements, operating standards, and facility usage with third-party vendors that provide first/last mile access.

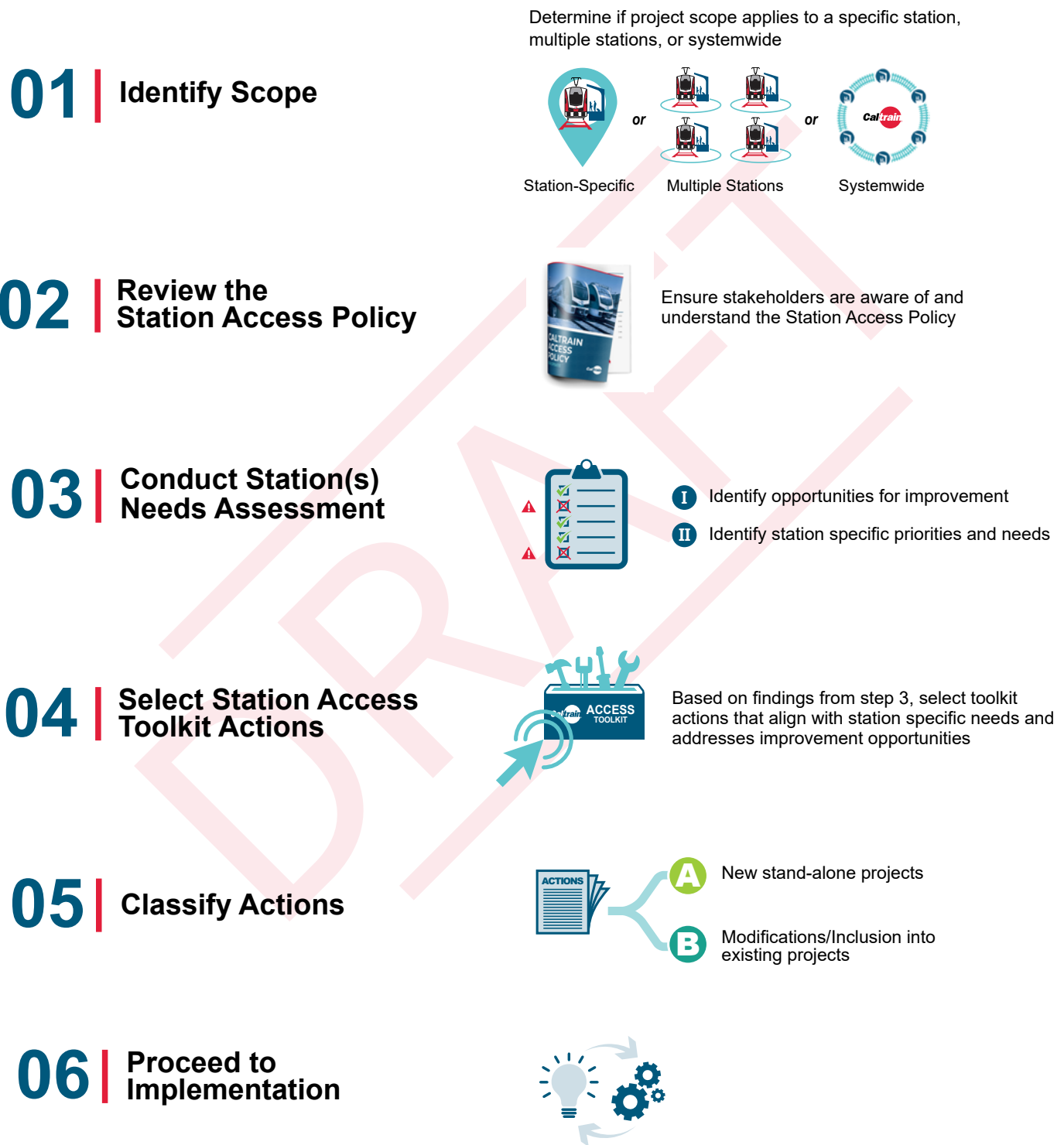
Partner with local jurisdictions to identify opportunities for placemaking and other station enhancements that promote community identity.

Collaborate with local communities, cycling advocacy groups and environmental groups to increase awareness of sustainable and affordable travel choices.

Formalize partnerships with advocacy groups, community-based organizations, and other non-governmental agencies to solicit community buy in and identify access priorities.

# Applying the Station Access Policy

The six steps below outline how to use Caltrain's Station Access Policy to achieve the Goals and Objectives during the development of access-related projects.



## List of Access Related Caltrain Policies and Programs

The following are adopted and ongoing Caltrain initiatives also relevant to access.

- Bicycle Parking Management Plan (2017)
- 2040 Service Vision (2019) and Business Plan (2020)
- Equity, Connectivity, and Growth Framework (2020)
- Rail Corridor Use Policy (2020)
- Transit-Oriented Development Policy (2020)
- Design Criteria (2024)
- ADA Transition Plan (Ongoing)
- Capital Improvement Plan Development Project (Ongoing)
- Corridor Crossings Strategy (Ongoing)
- Corridor Crossings Delivery Guide (Ongoing)
- At-Grade Crossings Safety Strategy (Ongoing)
- Level Boarding Roadmap (Ongoing)

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