

**Caltrain  
2025 Draft Legislative Program**

**AGENDA ITEM 10**

**Purpose**

Legislative and regulatory actions have the potential to significantly benefit Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board / Caltrain (Agency) programs and services. They also have the potential to present serious challenges that threaten the Agency's ability to meet the county's most critical transportation demands.

The 2025 Legislative Program establishes the principles that will guide the Agency's legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts through the 2025 calendar year, including the second half of the 2024-25 State legislative session and 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. The program is intended to be broad enough to cover the wide variety of issues that are likely to be considered during that time and flexible enough to allow the Agency to respond swiftly and effectively to unanticipated developments.

**Objectives**

The 2025 Legislative Program is organized to guide the Agency's actions and positions in support of three primary objectives:

- Maintain and enhance funding opportunities to support the Agency's programs and services;
- Seek a regulatory environment that streamlines project delivery and maximizes the Agency's ability to meet transportation service demands; and
- Reinforce and expand programs that build and incentivize public transportation ridership, improve quality transportation choices, and better incorporate Caltrain service with other agencies in the Bay Area.

**Issues**

The Legislative Program is structured to apply these core objectives to a series of regional, state, and federal issues falling in these categories:

- Funding
- Project and Program Implementation
- Legislative and Regulatory Actions

Within these categories are a detailed list of specific legislative initiatives and corresponding set of policy strategies.

Should other issues surface that require the Board's attention, actions will be guided by the three policy objectives listed above. If needed, potential action on issues that are unrelated to these policy goals will be brought to the Board for consideration.

**Advocacy Process**

Staff will indicate during monthly legislative updates recommended positions for pending bills. Once the Board has an opportunity to review the recommended position, staff will communicate the position to the relevant entity (such as the bill author, agency, or coalition). In rare circumstances, should a position on a bill be needed in advance of a Board meeting, staff will confer with the Board Chair. If legislation falls

outside of the scope of the Board's adopted Legislative Program, Board approval will be required prior to the Agency taking a position.

### **Public Engagement Strategies**

Staff, led by the Communications Division and its legislative consultants, will employ a variety of public engagement strategies to support the 2025 Legislative Program, including:

- Direct Engagement

Engage policymakers directly and sponsor legislation, submit correspondence and provide public testimony that communicates and advances the Agency's legislative priorities and positions.

- Coalition-based Engagement

Engage local and regional stakeholders to build awareness about specific issues and participate in local, regional, statewide and national coalitions organized to advance positions that are consistent with the 2025 Legislative Program.

- Media Engagement

Build public awareness and communicate the Agency's legislative priorities by issuing press releases, organizing media events, and through the use of social media.

The adopted legislative program will guide the Agency's legislative advocacy efforts until approval of the next program.

- Interagency Engagement

Partner with other transportation agencies at various levels to promote coordinated policy positions and influence broader regulatory and legislative agendas.

- Regulatory Engagement

Establish and maintain strong, long-term connections with key regulatory agencies and their teams.

### **Issue 1 – Funding**

***The following strategies and actions will guide the Agency's efforts to protect existing transportation commitments from federal, state, regional, and local sources; secure additional federal, state, regional, and local funding for the Agency's benefit; and provide enhanced options allowing the Agency to seek additional funding support.***

#### **General**

A. Work with the Caltrain Federal and Legislative Delegation, federal and state agencies, regional agencies, transit systems and transit associations to identify and advance opportunities for funding that would support the Agency's transportation priorities and operations.

- B. Protect against the elimination or diversion of any State, Federal, or regional funds that support the agency's transportation needs.
- C. Advocate for funding and policies to support crossing safety improvement projects, including grade separation projects.
- D. Support legislation and regional action that ensures transit agency emissions-reducing transportation projects, programs, and services are eligible for funding.
- E. Support funding for workforce development, retention, recruitment, and housing to attract and retain quality personnel.
- F. Work to ensure state and federal funds are made available to transportation agencies to achieve state and federal greenhouse gas reduction, air quality, and climate goals.
- G. Advocate for state, federal and regional tax revenue related to transportation, including aviation, to be made available to public transit agencies.
- H. Advocate for flexible funding mechanisms that can adapt to changing transit demands.
- I. Ensure all remaining funds committed to Caltrain's Electrification Project and subsequent rail vehicle option trainsets, including the Battery-Equipped Electric Multiple Unit Pilot Project, are maintained and received.
- J. Support state and federal funding requests by partner agencies regarding key projects to improve the Caltrain corridor and regional connectivity.

### **Federal**

- K. Direct advocacy for additional resources to secure federal funding for transit operations and capital, including through discretionary and competitive federal programs.
- L. Advocate to maintain the highest funding levels for federal infrastructure and rail investments, and advocate for federal funding through IIJA, IRA, and other federal programs for the agency's priorities.
- M. Support funding for positive train control (PTC) operations and regulatory streamlining.

### **State and Regional**

- N. Direct advocacy to secure dedicated state funding for transit operations and capital, and work to ensure committed funds materialize in the FY 2025-26 State Budget for these purposes.

- O. Support the full funding of all state programs that support the agency's operations and capital programs.
- P. Advocate for new regional and local funding tools to support public transportation operations, infrastructure and services and work to ensure the agency is prioritized and appropriately funded as part of any potential regional funding measure.
  - a. If a legislative authorization pathway for a funding measure is pursued, such a vehicle should include:
    - i. Appropriate levels of funding for Caltrain operations;
    - ii. Flexibility;
    - iii. Simplicity; and
    - iv. Focus on voters.
- Q. Participate in the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) SB 125 implementation and Transit Transformation Task Force efforts and support the work of the California Transit Association in this regard.
- R. Support efforts to provide funding for the deployment of zero emission transit vehicles and infrastructure, including working with the CalSTA, California Air Resources Board (CARB), and California Energy Commission (CEC) on funding program requirements.
- S. Work to secure additional cap-and-trade revenues to support the Agency's operations and capital needs and protect existing cap-and-trade appropriations for transit operations and capital projects.
- T. Support efforts to amend the State Constitution to reduce the voter threshold required for the State or a city, county, special district or regional transportation agency to impose a special tax for transportation projects or programs and monitor local efforts to use the initiative process to place measures on the ballot with lower voter thresholds.
- U. Enable the option for the agency to seek sustainable local funding for the agency's transit operations, including the ability to place a transit funding measure on the ballot within the agency's service territory.

## **Issue 2 – Project and Program Implementation**

***The following strategies and actions will guide the Agency's efforts to improve mobility in the region and support policies that benefit transit systems and transit riders.***

### **General**

- A. Collaborate with regional partners to unite business, community, and transportation stakeholders in advocating for equitable transportation and mobility solutions across the Bay Area.
- B. Support efforts that allow for public private partnerships that benefit the implementation of transit capital projects, operations, or related mobility improvement options.
- C. Advocate for the development of new and innovative first and last-mile travel options, ensuring commuters have access between major transit centers and their final destinations.
- D. Advocate for expanded Transportation Demand Management (TDM) tools and funding, encouraging broader adoption of TDM strategies.
- E. Work to address regulatory challenges that limit Caltrain's ability to optimize capacity and service benefits.
- F. Support the implementation of the projects and policies in the Caltrain Business Plan.
- G. Support funding and regulations that are consistent with Caltrain's equity and growth policy.
- H. Continue working to ensure that federal and state regulations and programs support the operation and future enhancements of Caltrain's electrified service.

### **State and Regional**

- I. Support state funding incentives, streamlining processes, and policies that promote transit-oriented development, while not placing new conditions on committed funding.
- J. Ensure state and regional agencies incorporate relevant elements of the Caltrain Business Plan and subsequent plan updates in their long-term planning efforts.
- K. Consistent with existing agreements between Caltrain and the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), support projects and efforts and funding opportunities to enhance connectivity and support future Blended System service on the Caltrain corridor.

### **Issue 3 – Legislative and Regulatory Actions**

***The following strategies and actions will guide the Agency's engagement with Congress, the Federal Government, the State Legislature, and the Governor's Administration on legislation and regulations to the benefit of the Agency.***

### **General**

- A. Advocate for removing barriers and increasing flexibility in transportation operations, planning, and project delivery.
- B. Ensure new transit requirements foster better connections between systems without creating unintended consequences for key transit riders and stakeholders.
- C. Engage the State of California, federal and state delegation, sister agencies and transportation associations to ensure the certification of federal transit grants owed to the Agency is not delayed now or in the future due to PEPPRA implementation.
- D. Ensure all planning, development, or policy proposals are consistent with the Agency's policies and planning priorities.

***State and Regional***

- E. Participate in the implementation of CARB's zero-emission rail regulation and ensure Caltrain continues to benefit from the state's Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) program.
- F. Work with partners on regional coordination to enhance the transit experience in the Bay Area, including on elements of the MTC's Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force's Bay Area Transit Transformation Action Plan.
- G. Closely monitor efforts to modernize the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) without compromising environmental goals, and support proposals that advantage transportation projects, including bicycle, pedestrian, rail and transit-oriented development projects.
- H. Advocate for policies that provide funding to support the Agency's transportation services associated with the implementation of SB 375 and Plan Bay Area.
- I. Work with the California State Legislature and Caltrain's energy distribution and supply partners to develop a solution, which may include legislation, that ensures Caltrain receives fair credit for the energy generated through regenerative braking of electric trains.