



Memorandum

TO: Operations Committee

DATE: January 5, 2018

FR: Executive Director

W. I. 1224

RE: 511 Program Update

This item is to update the Committee on plans for the next phase of 511's evolution.

Background

At the June 2015 and February 2016 Committee meetings, staff presented 511's plans for next generation (Next Gen) traveler information services, which launched publicly in June 2016. The Next Gen 511 plan's mission was to ensure continued relevance with a smaller budget and to provide flexibility to adapt to the rapid evolution of technology.

Due to the pace of technology and the time required to execute procurements and contract transitions, staff is now again evaluating the future of the 511 program. Usage trends and recent surveys indicate that Bay Area travelers are increasingly turning to private sector websites and apps for trip planning and real-time traffic and transit information. Private sector traveler information alternatives continue to improve; however, 511 still generates more accurate and comprehensive data through its operations center and its efforts in regional transit data consolidation.

Future 511 Program Plans

The next iteration of 511 will focus on its strengths as a data provider, while leveraging the innovation of the private sector's dissemination services. We propose these core principles as the foundation for the future 511 program:

- Collect, verify, and process data from the California Highway Patrol, Caltrans, and transit agencies in order to deliver high quality and accurate traffic and transit information via open data feeds;
- Disseminate emergency transportation information through the 511 phone service, 511.org, and alerting channels; and
- Serve as an information hub and portal connecting travelers to regional services and programs, including the Freeway Service Patrol, Bay Area Express Lanes, Clipper[®], FasTrak[®], Bay Area transit agencies, and electronic Transit Information Displays (eTIDs).

In the 2015 Next Gen plan, staff committed to implementing a Next Gen 511 system that flexibly evolves with changes in technology and customer expectations, at a reduced cost. Given the public's increasing reliance on private sector services for traveler information, future program plans include reduction of real-time and trip planning features on the 511 phone service and 511.org, as described below. These reductions are expected to generate an annual savings of \$1.5 million, which will be reallocated toward OBAG regional traffic operations.

Changes to 511.org

As part of an overall consolidation of the design and operation of MTC websites in order to increase efficiencies, staff plans to launch a new 511.org in summer 2019. Since the Next Gen evaluation in 2015, usage of transit features has been continuing to decline, as travelers access transit information from private sector trip planning websites and apps, or directly from transit agency websites. Based on the decline in usage of transit features, staff intend to eliminate the trip planner, real-time transit departures, and transit schedules. Staff will evaluate whether retaining the traffic map is prudent; based on a recent 511.org survey, most users rely on 511.org for traffic alerts (e.g., incidents, road closures) and traffic speeds, but use private sector websites and apps for driving directions and times.

Changes to the 511 Phone Service

While the 511 phone service remains a unique offering in Bay Area traveler information, phone usage overall, and specifically usage of interactive real-time traffic and transit features, has declined significantly in recent years. Staff will be exploring reduction of 511 phone features by summer 2019, with the possible elimination of the traffic conditions, driving times, and real-time transit features. At the same time, modern voice technologies, like digital assistants (e.g., Amazon Alexa and Google Home), may provide an opportunity to continue to deliver voice-activated, hands-free, audio-based traveler information. 511 launched an interactive Alexa feature for real-time transit departures in March 2017, and will be adding a traffic conditions feature this winter. We will evaluate other opportunities to utilize voice-based technologies as they arise.

Next Steps

We look forward to your discussion and direction on these significant changes proposed for the 511 system. Staff expects to return to this Committee in the future to amend or extend 511 contracts, as appropriate.



Steve Heminger

SH: sc & jb

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511 Program Update: Future of Traveler Information Services

**MTC Operations Committee
January 12, 2018**



Evolution of Traveler Information Services

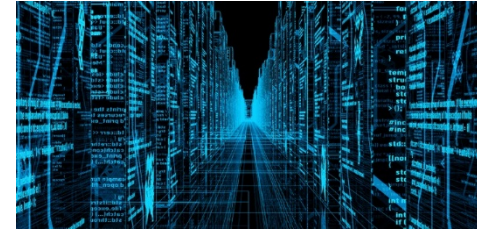
TravInfo®



511



NextGen 511



1993

2002

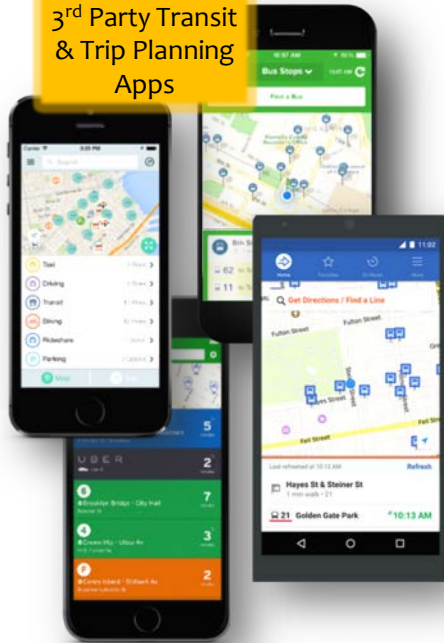
2016

2019→

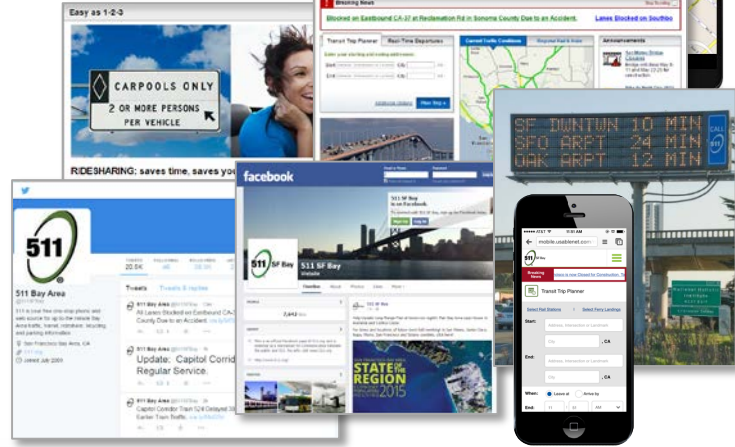
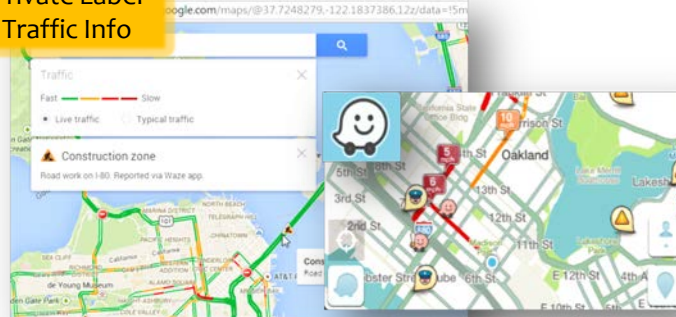
June 2015 Operations Committee Traveler Information Trends

511 SF Bay: 10+
Dissemination
Channels

3rd Party Transit
& Trip Planning
Apps



Private Label
Traffic Info





Citymapper



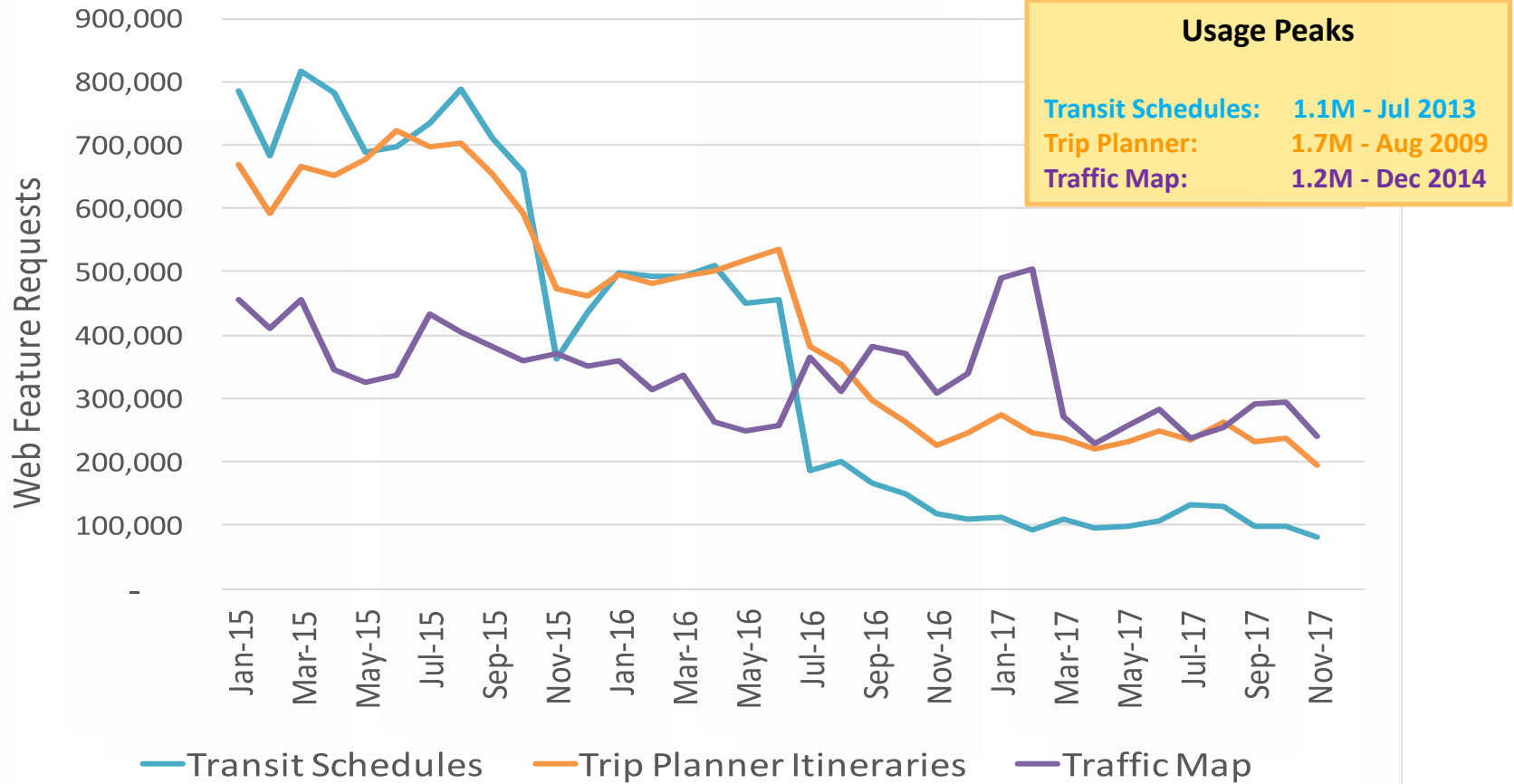
bingTM maps



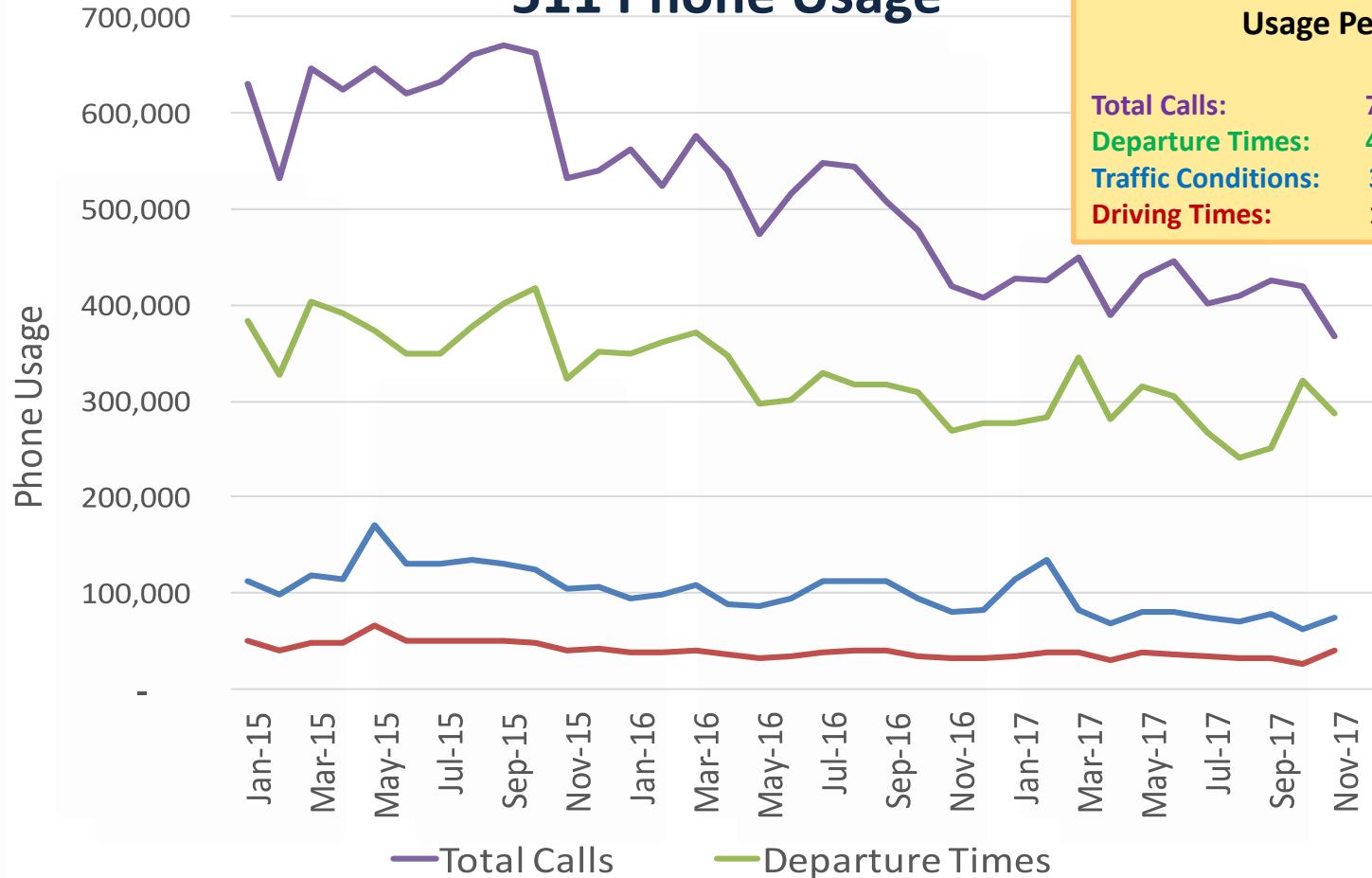
The Transit App



511.org Usage



511 Phone Usage



Proposed Changes to 511

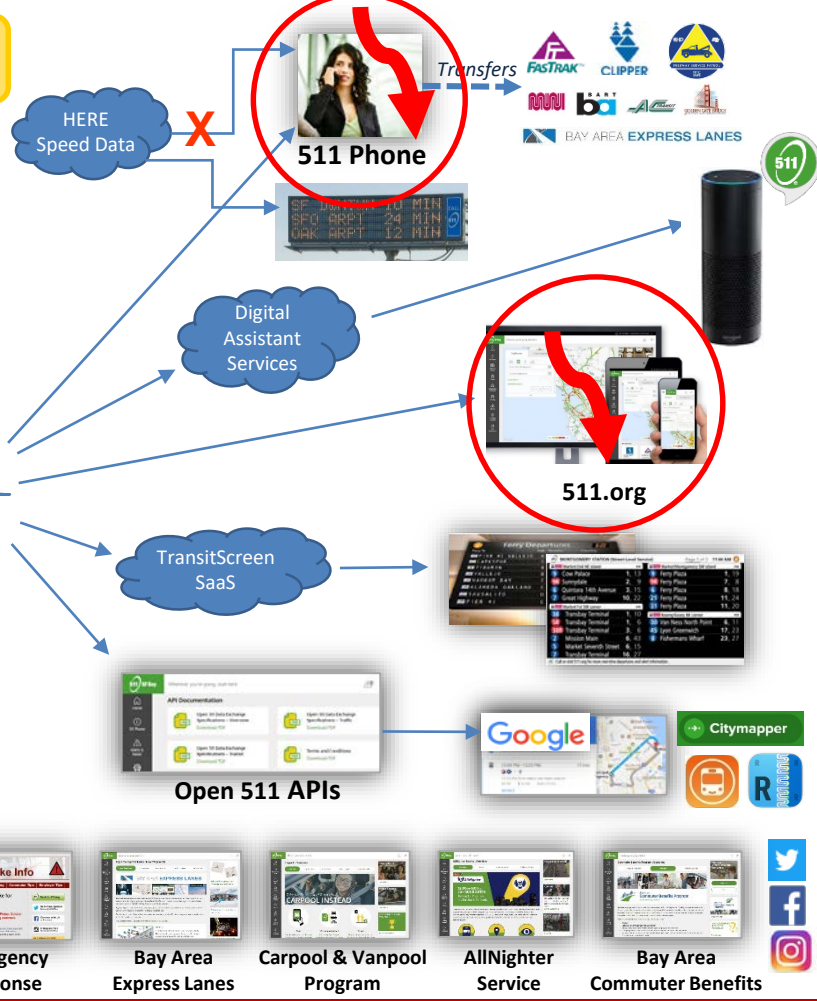
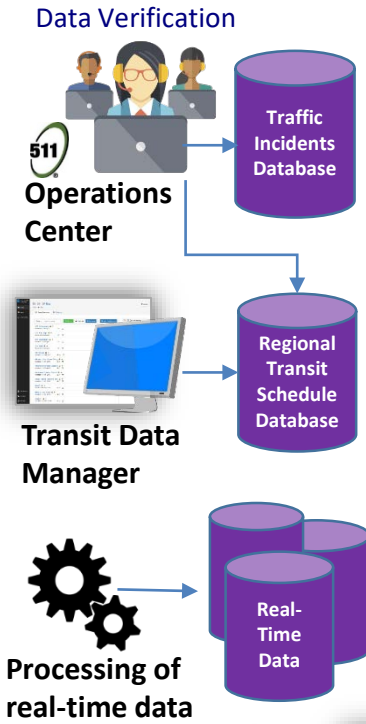
Estimated Savings: \$1.5M annually

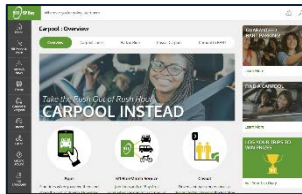
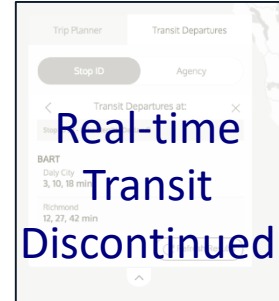
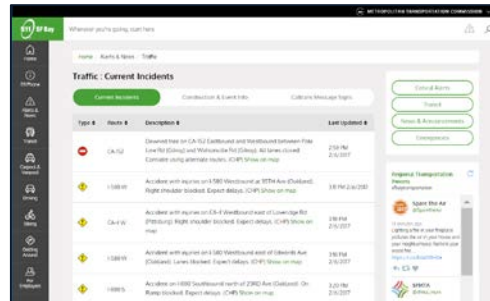
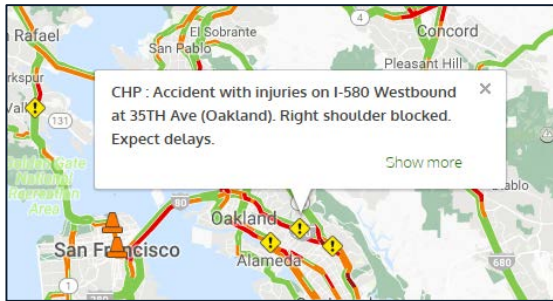
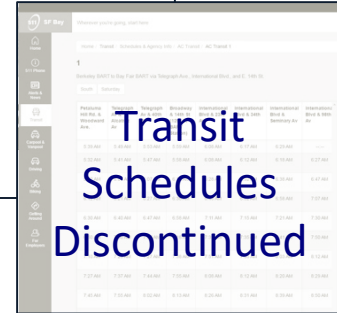
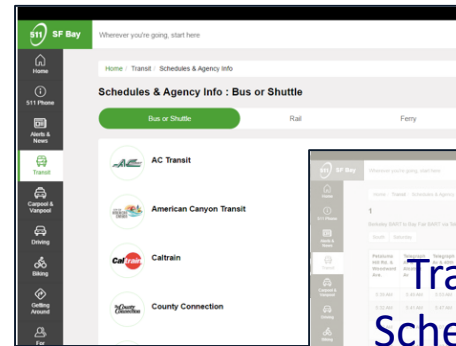
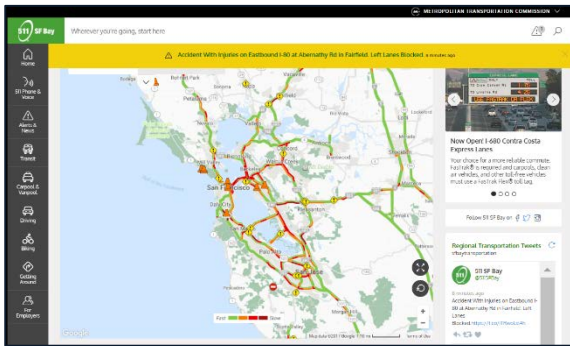
Traffic Incidents, Construction, Road Closures; Transit Service Disruptions

Transit Schedule Data from 31 Agencies

Real-Time Transit (15 agencies), Parking, and Express Lane Data

Regional Emergency and Program Support





Emergency Response

Bay Area Express Lanes

Carpool & Vanpool Program

AllNighter Service

Bay Area Commuter Benefits

Transfers to Agencies
and Programs



BAY AREA EXPRESS LANES



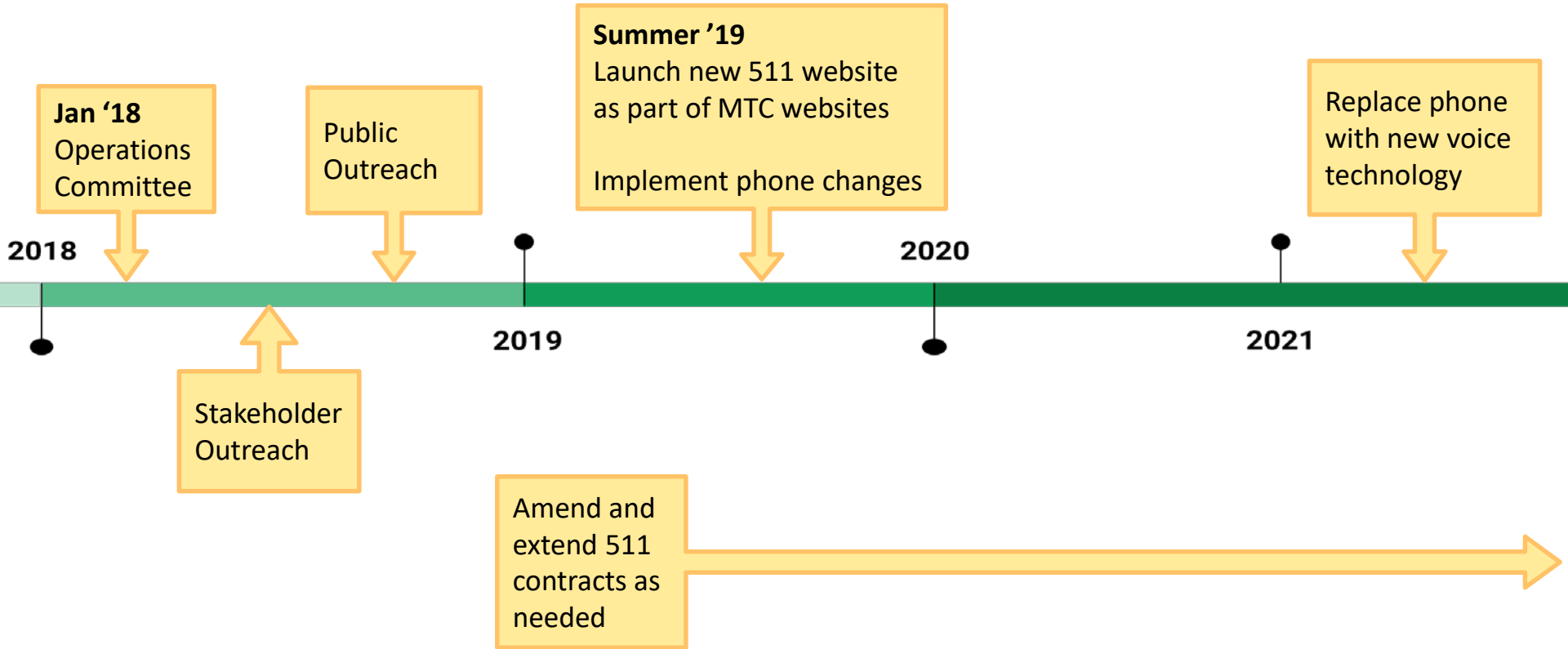
511 Phone

Traffic Conditions - Discontinued

Driving Times - Discontinued

Transit Departures

Timeline for Future 511 Program



Questions?