

# Primer for Public Agency Staff Implementing Bay Area Transit Priority Policy for Roadways

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 2025

## Background

MTC is proposing to adopt the **Bay Area Transit Priority Policy for Roadways (Policy)**, in alignment with the transit-related vision and goals of the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint (2025) and the Transit Transformation Action Plan (2021). It would establish requirements for roadway projects on public right-of-way receiving MTC discretionary funding over \$250,000 or requesting MTC endorsement, once adopted.

The Policy would align with MTC Resolution 4493 (2022), which updated the Bay Area's regional Complete Streets (CS) Policy, first adopted in 2006. The goal of MTC's CS Policy is to ensure people biking, walking, rolling, and *taking transit* (emphasis added) are safely accommodated within the transportation network.

The Policy would also align with various State policies and programs, including Senate Bill 960 (2024) and the Caltrans Director's Transit Policy (in-progress).

## Policy Purpose & Goals

The purpose of the Transit Priority Policy for Roadways is to enhance the transit rider experience by supporting the implementation of transit priority infrastructure and policies that improve transit travel times and reliability, and promote active interagency engagement necessary to be successful. The goals of the Policy are to:

- Establish a common definition of transit priority;
- Reinforce and strengthen interjurisdictional coordination;
- Guide agencies to consider transit priority when making roadway improvements; and
- Inform prioritization of funding for transit priority projects.

## Definition of Transit Priority

Transit Priority refers to transit-supportive infrastructure, design, and policies that decrease transit vehicle travel times and enable them to move more reliably by avoiding traffic congestion and minimizing delays. Transit-supportive infrastructure and design treatments include, but are not limited to, transit lanes, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, transit signal priority, queue-jump lanes, and transit stop design elements such as bus bulbs or boarding islands. Transit-supportive policies include, but are not limited to, strategic traffic/parking regulations, optimized transit stop placement and spacing, and boarding/fare payment practices such as off-board fare payment and all-door boarding.

## Aligning with Transit Transformation Action Plan & Plan Bay Area 2050+

The Policy is in alignment with Action 12 of the Transit Transformation Action Plan (2021), which calls for funding, developing, and adopting a Transit Priority Policy and Corridor Assessment for improving bus speed and reliability on high-transit corridors and arterials. It also aligns with Transportation Element Strategy T11 of the Plan Bay Area 2050+ Final Blueprint adopted in Summer 2025, which aims to improve the vitality and viability of existing transit services throughout the Bay Area by providing increased frequency, improved reliability, and greater capacity to reduce wait time, decrease travel time, and encourage ridership growth.

## Building on Complete Streets (CS) Policy & Checklist with Phased Implementation

The Policy would be implemented via the existing [MTC Complete Streets \(CS\) Checklist](https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/complete-streets) (<https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/complete-streets>) process – adopted in 2022 as part of the updated MTC Complete Streets Policy – to ensure early and effective interagency coordination for projects along transit routes, while minimizing the bureaucracy of a new standalone policy implementation process. The CS Checklist is required for projects requesting an MTC endorsement or more than \$250,000 in MTC

discretionary funding, regardless of project sponsor agency type (i.e., roadway owners/operators like cities, towns, and counties; county transportation agencies; or transit agencies). It also applies to Caltrans-led projects on Caltrans right-of-way seeking MTC discretionary funds.

The existing CS Checklist already requires Transit Agency review, but only requires documentation of Transit Agency acknowledgement of the project. Expanding the transit agency review requirements into the CS Checklist process would ensure stronger coordination between project sponsors, roadway owners/operators, and transit agencies for all roadway projects, regardless of whether they are transit-related. Project sponsors should coordinate with transit agencies at the earliest feasible stage of a project, ideally during project initiation/project development, to discuss project scope, objectives, potential impacts on transit, and considerations for transit priority treatments.

The Policy would be implemented in phases, to give affected agencies the opportunity to gradually adapt to new Policy criteria when seeking more than \$250,000 in regional discretionary funds or MTC endorsement:

- **Upon adoption of Policy (anticipated late 2025 or early 2026):** all project sponsors with projects along roadways with transit service would be required to *review the project impacts with affected transit agencies to consider impacts to transit service*, via the CS Checklist process.
- **After adoption of the regional Transit Priority Network (anticipated late 2026 or early 2027):** all project sponsors with projects along the regional Transit Priority Network (TPN) would need to consider incorporating reasonable transit-supportive design elements into projects. The TPN will be developed through a separate data-driven process, the Transit Priority Roadway Assessment, in 2026.

## Project Sponsor / Transit Agency Review Scenarios

All project sponsors seeking more than \$250,000 of regional discretionary funds from MTC or MTC endorsement must complete CS Checklist. Per the following table, some project sponsors would also be subject to the proposed transit review process that requires coordination between project sponsors and transit agencies:

| Project sponsored by...  | Transit Review?                         |
|--|---|
| Transit agencies   | Yes, if other transit agencies affected |
| Transit department or transit team within local or county agency | Yes, if other transit agencies affected |
| Other departments or teams within local or county agency         | Yes                                     |
| Caltrans or MTC  | Yes                                     |

Attachment B-1 provides detail on the transit review process, for project sponsors subject to transit review.

## Existing CS Checklist Requirements

The existing CS Checklist was adopted in October 2022, and is detailed at <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/complete-streets>. The existing requirements are summarized below:

1. If there is an adopted Complete Streets Plan (such as bicycle, pedestrian, active transportation, Vision Zero, or other systemic safety plan), Community Based Transportation Plan, or transit plan, the project must be in accordance with that plan(s).
2. If the project is on MTC's Active Transportation Network, it must follow National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) All Ages & Abilities principles and Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

3. The project must be reviewed by a local (city or county) Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) or equivalent committee.
4. Project sponsors are responsible for assembling all pertinent information, including all elements required for the CS Checklist as well as additional project documentation for review by relevant stakeholders (i.e., Caltrans for a project on the State Transportation Network).
5. Project sponsors provide documentation to confirm transit agency acknowledgement (*emphasis added*) of the project.

## Optional Local Transit Priority Policy or Resolution

A right-of-way owner or roadway operator (i.e., city, town, or county) or a county transportation agency (henceforth “local jurisdictions”) should consider adopting a resolution in support of Transit Priority to reinforce local support for improving transit travel times and reliability and to promote coordination with transit agencies. Local jurisdictions may demonstrate their local commitment to Transit Priority through one of the following actions:

- Adopting a resolution in support of the Bay Area Transit Priority Policy for Roadways;
- Adopting a standalone local transit priority policy; or
- Modifying an existing related local plan or policy to include language on transit priority.

Staff are considering how funding incentives could be provided to encourage local jurisdictions to adopt local transit priority resolutions or policies, such as awarding bonus points to MTC transit priority discretionary funding applications from jurisdictions that have adopted a resolution or policy. Any funding incentives would be implemented through MTC funding programs, not through the Policy, and may vary between programs.

## ATTACHMENT B-1: Process for Transit Agency Review of Projects

This attachment provides detail on the transit agency review process, including guiding questions, for project sponsors subject to transit agency review.

### 0) PROJECT SPONSOR: CONFIRM IF TRANSIT REVIEW IS REQUIRED

Per the following table, in addition to the CS Checklist process, some project sponsors would also be subject to the proposed transit review process that requires coordination between project sponsors and transit agencies:

| Project sponsored by...  | Transit Review?                         |
|--|---|
| Transit agencies   | Yes, if other transit agencies affected |
| Transit department or transit team within local or county agency | Yes, if other transit agencies affected |
| Other departments or teams within local or county agency         | Yes                                     |
| Caltrans or MTC  | Yes                                     |

### 1) PROJECT SPONSOR: CONFIRM TRANSIT SERVICE IN PROJECT AREA

Check published transit maps to determine if the project is along an existing scheduled, fixed-route, publicly-accessible transit service.

“Scheduled fixed-route” service means vehicles operate along established routes with designated stops at predetermined times or on a predetermined headway. It encompasses bus, light rail, and streetcar services provided by the following agencies:

- **AC Transit** (*Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District*)
- **County Connection** (*Central Contra Costa Transit Authority*)
- **Dumbarton Express** (*Dumbarton Bridge Regional Operations Consortium*)
- **FAST** (*City of Fairfield Transit*)

- **Golden Gate Transit** (*Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District*)
  - **Marin Transit** (*Marin County Transit District*)
  - **Muni** (*San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency*)
  - **Petaluma Transit** (*City of Petaluma*)
  - **SamTrans** (*San Mateo County Transit District*)
  - **Santa Rosa CityBus** (*City of Santa Rosa*)
  - **SolTrans** (*Solano County Transit*)
  - **Sonoma County Transit** (*Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works*)
  - **Tri-Delta Transit** (*Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority*)
  - **Union City Transit** (*City of Union City*)
  - **Vacaville City Coach** (*City of Vacaville*)
  - **Vine Transit** (*Napa Valley Transportation Authority*)
  - **VTA** (*Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority*)
  - **WestCAT** (*Western Contra Costa Transit Authority*)
  - **Wheels** (*Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority*)
- a) *Contact transit agencies serving the area to confirm if your project would affect any non-revenue scheduled<sup>1</sup> routes, recurring detour<sup>2</sup> routes, and planned budgeted<sup>3</sup> routes.*

Note that non-recurring special event services, demand-responsive services, and paratransit services are excluded from this Policy.

If you need assistance determining a contact at the transit agency, contact [transitpriority@bayareametro.gov](mailto:transitpriority@bayareametro.gov).

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<sup>1</sup> “Non-revenue scheduled” routes include deadhead movements and pull-in routes where buses operate when they are not carrying passengers.

<sup>2</sup> “Recurring detour” routes include locations with regular special events and conditions that require transit service to detour to an alternate street.

<sup>3</sup> “Planned budgeted” routes include transit service that is included budgeted service changes or an approved Comprehensive Operations Analysis (short-term service plan). It does not include long-range plans, unless they are budgeted.

*b) Share project information and coordinate with affected Transit Agencies.*

- Provide general description of project (i.e., goals, scope, schedule, funding, designs).
- Projects in planning, conceptual design, or environmental stage: Scope of work should include a task that would identify opportunities to reduce transit delay and/or improve transit reliability.
- Projects in detailed design stage ( $\geq 30\%$  design): Identify potential project impacts to transit delay, reliability, and stop accessibility and discuss opportunities to mitigate project elements that may adversely impact transit operations.
- Projects in construction stage: Identify potential permanent and temporary construction impacts to transit operations and stops and discuss opportunities to mitigate project impacts.

**2) TRANSIT AGENCIES: REVIEW PROJECT AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK**

**Complete project review within 20 business days of receipt of project information from Project Sponsor, with review documented by a senior-level staff or an authorized delegate at the Transit Agency.** If it is a complex project (i.e., requiring an expert review) or Transit Agency has extenuating circumstances (i.e., staff shortage), Transit Agency may request a 10-business day extension for review.

***For all projects:*** *review project for impacts to transit, and provide comments to project sponsor.*



**All Projects along Transit Routes - Questions to Guide Transit Review by Phase**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Planning/<br/>Conceptual Design/<br/>Environmental</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does project impact the basic operational needs of transit?</li><li>• Are there opportunities to improve transit service or accessibility of transit stops?</li></ul>  |
| <b>Detailed Design<br/>(≥30% design)/<br/>Engineering</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do project elements impact transit travel times or delay?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If so, what are the anticipated impacts? Can mitigation measures reduce the impacts?</li></ul></li><li>• Are there opportunities to improve transit service or accessibility of transit stops?</li><li>• Does project meet transit agency's stop guidelines, including accessibility?</li></ul>   |
| <b>Construction/<br/>Implementation</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is overall construction phasing/schedule?</li><li>• Will construction require transit stops to be temporarily relocated, or affect paratransit access? How will access to transit and paratransit be maintained?</li><li>• Will temporary traffic control plans modify transit movements or lane configurations?</li><li>• Will construction impact transit travel time and/or delay? What is anticipated impact, and are there opportunities to mitigate construction impacts?</li></ul> |

*If project is on the TPN: also review for potential transit priority elements to be considered in project and provide comments to project sponsor.*

**Projects on TPN - Additional Questions to Guide Transit Review by Project Phase**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Planning/<br/>Conceptual Design/<br/>Environmental</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does project identify opportunities to improve transit travel times or delay, or minimize project impacts to transit?</li><li>• Does project have transit speed and reliability related goals?</li></ul>               |
| <b>Detailed Design<br/>(≥30% design)/<br/>Engineering</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does project include transit-supportive design elements?</li><li>• Are there transit-supportive design elements to consider adding?</li><li>• Does project consider O&amp;M for transit-supportive elements?</li></ul> |

**3) PROJECT SPONSOR: REVIEW & REACT TO TRANSIT AGENCY FEEDBACK**

**Project sponsor reviews the feedback from the Transit Agency and incorporates any feedback into project proposal, or claims an exception documenting reasons it cannot do so.** A collaborative meeting with affected agencies may be convened to discuss transit agency feedback and how design can be modified to address suggestions or concerns.

**If TPN has not yet been adopted, or project is not on TPN:** project sponsors should aim to update project scope and/or design based on Transit Agency comments, as appropriate. This may include mitigation of any identified impacts to transit, where feasible. Enter project information on Complete Streets Checklist portal, including description of changes made in response to transit agency comments.

**If project is on TPN (after TPN is adopted):** project sponsor should work with Transit Agencies to develop consensus around reasonable transit-supportive design elements to incorporate into the project to improve transit travel time and reliability. The NACTO *Transit Street Design Guide* or other national, state, and local transit best practice guidance can be referenced during discussions with Transit Agencies. Potential improvements could include, but are not limited to, bus stop placement adjustments, stop access improvements, transit boarding islands or bulbs, ADA access improvements, transit signal priority, transit lanes, transit queue jumps, adding red curbs to improve access to stops, and other curb regulations.

*3a) If feedback can be incorporated:*

Enter updated project scope and/or design information on Complete Streets Checklist portal, based on project review by and discussions with Transit Agencies.

**If project is on TPN,** document the transit-supportive design elements considered, and detail the design elements proposed to be included in the project or reasons why they could not be included.

*3b) If project is unable to meet the above requirements for transit agency project review, Project Sponsor documents discussions with transit agency and may claim an exception*

1. **Lack of response.** Transit agency did not review project within 20 business days and did not ask for a 10-business day extension;
2. **Infeasibility.** Requested transit-impact mitigations are infeasible along the roadway due to conflicts with fire code, designation as evacuation route or similar public safety code requirements, and/or environmental concerns defined as abutting conservation land or severe topological constraints, and alternative transit-supportive design elements cannot be identified;

3. **Disproportionate Cost (for projects on TPN).** The cost to add transit-supportive design elements to the non-transit project is excessively disproportionate to the base project cost. Generally, “disproportionate” is defined as greater than 20 percent<sup>4</sup> If the cost of preferred accommodation is considered excessively disproportionate, project sponsors shall consider alternatives that represent a feasible share of the total project cost but still provide transit supportive design to improve transit travel time and reliability;
4. **Separate Transit Project (for projects on TPN).** Transit-supportive design elements to be addressed through a separate process or project

To claim an exception from transit agency review, project sponsors must provide documentation in the Complete Streets Checklist detailing how the project meets one or more of the exception conditions above. Exceptions must be documented and signed by senior-level or an authorized delegate at the project sponsor.

#### **4) STAKEHOLDER MEETING IF NEEDED**

Agencies are encouraged to work collaboratively to develop a project that considers the needs of transit while meeting the project goals. If consensus cannot be reached by the project sponsor and transit agency regarding transit-impact mitigations or transit-supportive design elements, MTC may convene a stakeholder meeting with the affected agencies to aid in discussions, but MTC would not take a lead role or be mediator. If a resolution cannot be reached, project sponsors should document efforts made to resolve the dispute and include documentation in the Complete Streets Checklist submission, and describe project design dispute in grant application.

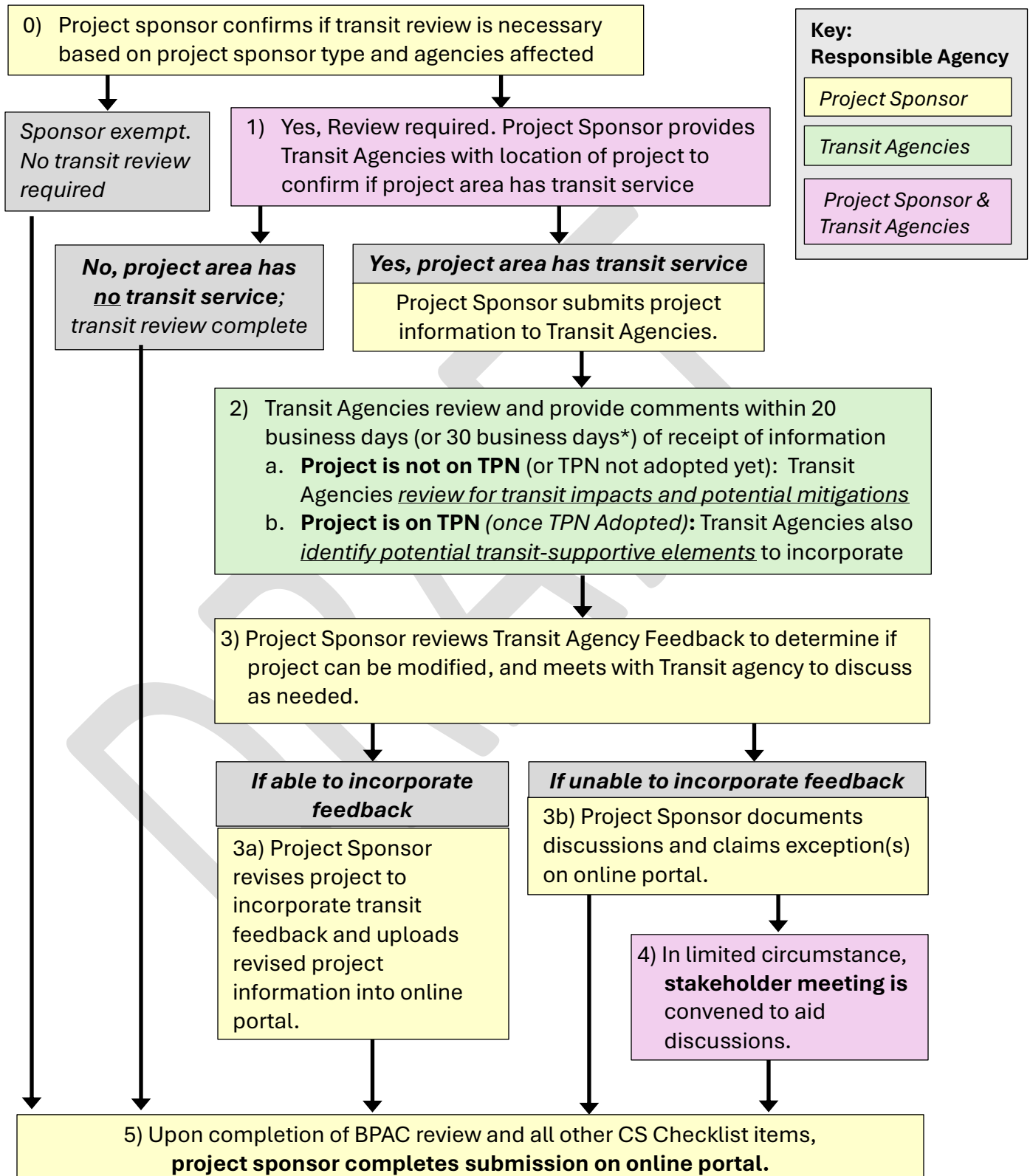
#### **5) UPLOAD DOCUMENTATION ONTO CS CHECKLIST PORTAL**

Upon completion of BPAC review and all other CS Checklist items, **project sponsor completes submission on online portal.**

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<sup>4</sup> Per FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations: “A cost may be considered excessively disproportionate when the cost of providing the accommodation would be more than 20% of the cost of the larger transportation project.”

### High-Level Process Chart of Transit Agency Project Review



\*Transit Agencies may request an additional 10 business days for review of a complex project or extenuating circumstances.