

Caltrain Ridership Growth Task Force

Action Plan Update

WPLP Agenda Item 10

January 26, 2023



Background

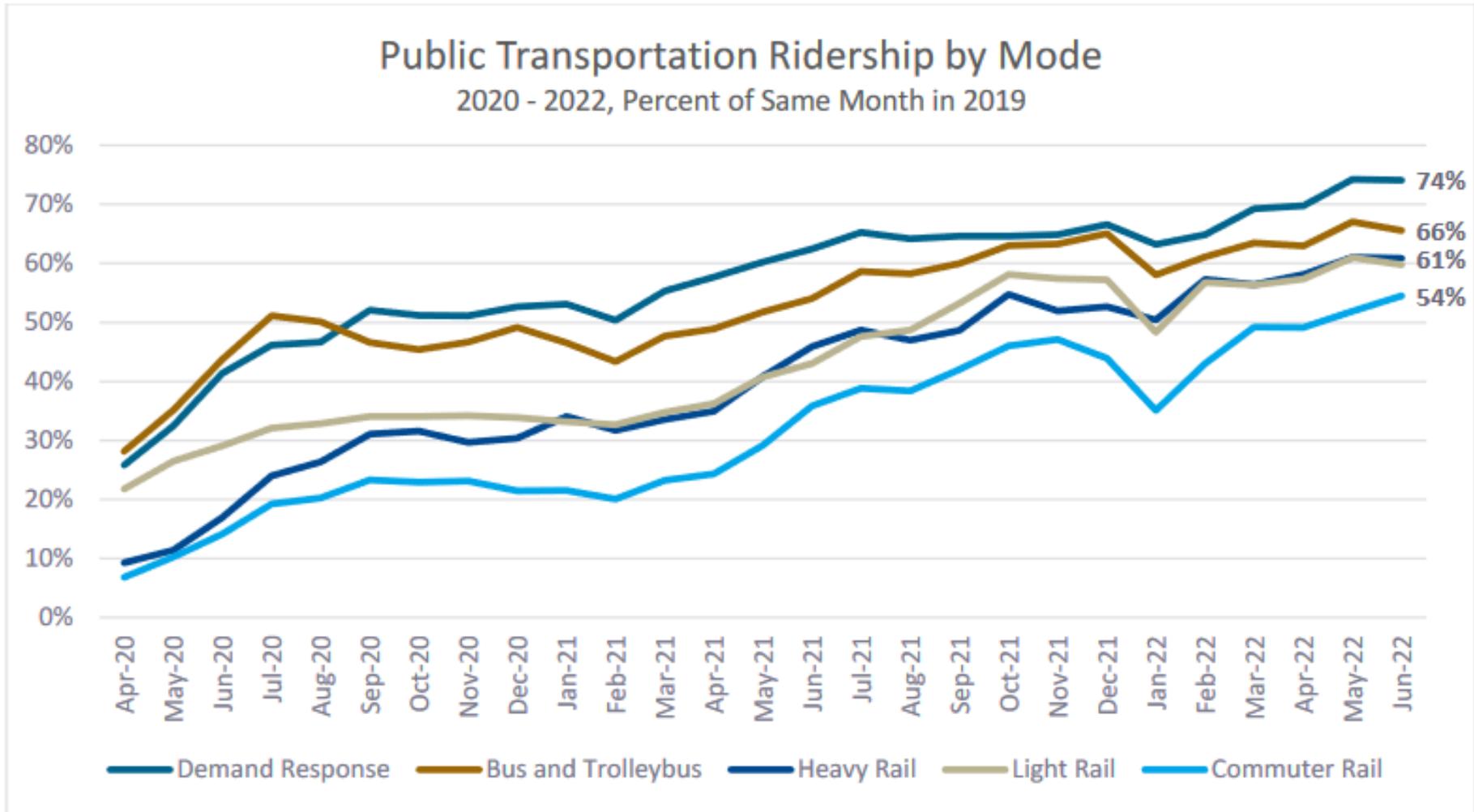
- ❖ Launched **Ridership Recovery Task Force** in 2022 to focus on near-term ridership growth opportunities via targeted marketing efforts, innovative offerings, and robust community partnerships.
- ❖ **Caltrain ridership on a positive trajectory**, but overall recovery continues to lag behind peer agencies and other modes of transit.

People are going back to the office — except in the Bay Area

Mary Ann Azevedo @bayareawriter / 7:25 AM PDT • September 9, 2022

 Comment

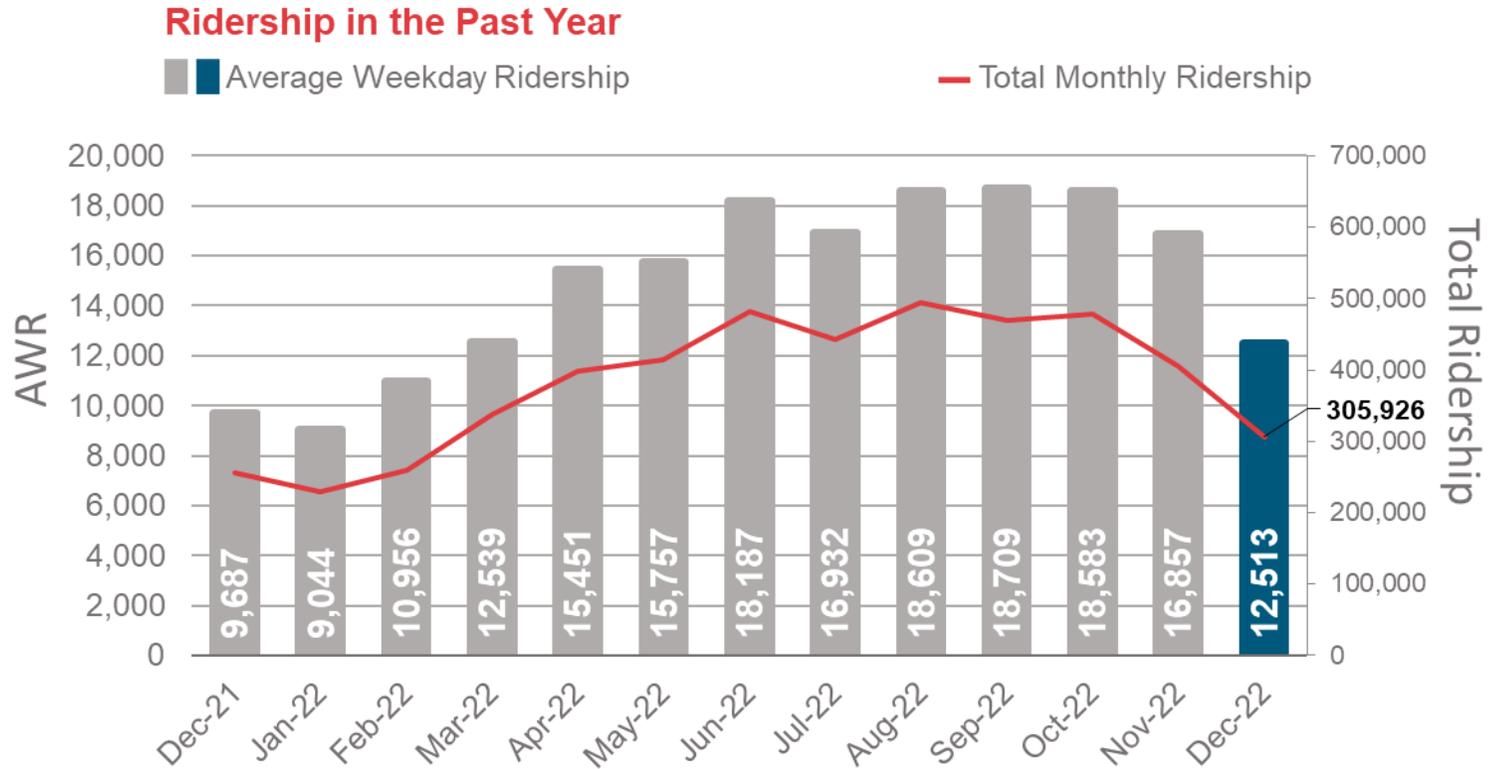




Source: APTA Public Transportation Ridership Update, September 2022

Current Caltrain Conditions

- ❖ Total monthly ridership up 20% YOY (December 2022 vs. December 2021)
- ❖ Fiscal YTD ridership up 54% compared to same period in prior year
- ❖ Fiscal YTD performance (ridership as a percent of pre-COVID baseline):
 - AWR: 25%
 - Total: 27%



Since April 2020, ridership estimates have been developed using daily conductor counts at 14 key stations and Clipper cards used at all stations due to significant impacts to ticket sales and usage patterns from the COVID-19 pandemic.



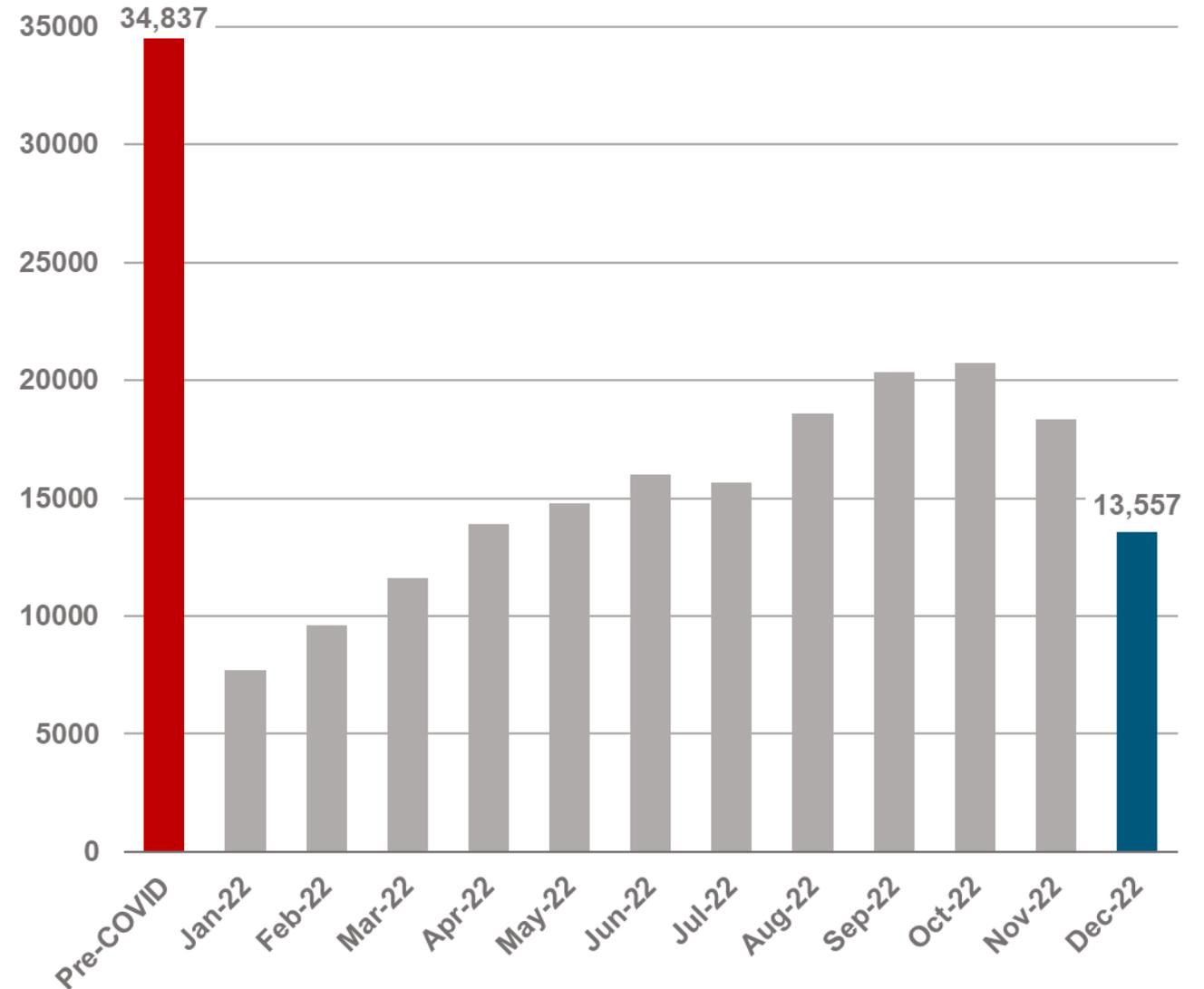
Current Caltrain Conditions

Caltrain and BART have worked toward providing seamless connections at the Millbrae Transit Center.

Many weekday connections are now between 8 and 15 minutes, improving the passenger experience.

Transfers reached 60% of pre-COVID levels in the summer despite AWR levels plateauing at 30% of the 2019 baseline during that time period.

Monthly BART Transfers at Millbrae in the Past Year



Purpose Statement

The **Caltrain Ridership Growth Task Force** aims to increase ridership by developing strategies that will retain existing riders, reclaim previous riders, and recruit new riders.

The execution of these strategies will advance coordination with agency partners and will demonstrate to executive leadership that staff are actively pursuing ridership and revenue growth opportunities.

Approach

- Cross-functional team: Finance, Communications, Marketing, Operations, Planning, Strategy & Policy
- Supported by Fehr & Peers (project management, data analysis, and technical support)
- Focusing on levers that Caltrain has direct control over (fares, promotions, service, marketing campaigns, etc.)

Timeline

Peer Analysis

- Ongoing – targeting January completion
- Identify peer agency efforts and lessons learned

Data Analysis

- Q1 2023
- Analyze key drivers of ridership
- Determine effects of prior Caltrain actions

Implementation

- Q3-Q4 2023
- Set up new incentives and campaigns
- Communicate changes

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**Monitor
and
Adjust**

Market Research

- Q1 2023
- Launch customer surveys, focus groups
- Gather actionable data to inform plan

Action Plan

- Q2-Q3 2023
- Synthesize data
- Prioritize 3-4 most impactful strategies
- Achieve buy-in

Peer Review

Caltrain staff are interviewing 5 peer agencies, selected based on considerations of ridership levels, system size, ridership growth efforts, and geography.

1. SEPTA (Greater Philadelphia area)
2. Sound Transit (Seattle metropolitan area)
3. Metra (Chicago metropolitan area)
4. Metrolink (Southern California)
5. Virginia Railway Express (Northern Virginia)

Market Research

- ❖ Surveying to be conducted quarterly between January and December 2023
- ❖ Target audience: Peninsula Corridor residents including frequent, infrequent, and lapsed riders, as well as those who have never ridden Caltrain
- ❖ Survey will seek to identify barriers to riding Caltrain, “new normal” work and commute status, awareness of Caltrain service and promotions, etc.
- ❖ Surveys will be supplemented by focus groups

Action Plan & Implementation

Caltrain’s action plan will be developed over the next several months. Most transit agencies have implemented a combination of the following strategies:

New Payment Schemes	Better Service	Marketing & Promotions	Partnerships
<i>Free fares, off-peak discounts, flexible passes, fare capping</i>	<i>Providing more frequent and faster service, easing first- and last-mile issues, rider-focused apps</i>	<i>Targeted marketing campaigns to encourage people to choose different modes for their commutes</i>	<i>Large employer engagement, interagency collaborations</i>
Metrolink - 5- & 10-Day Flex Pass (good for 30 and 60 days)	SEPTA – more midday and weekend service	SEPTA – Free parking at SEPTA-owned lots	SEPTA - Key Advantage Program (large employer engagement)
MBTA - 5-Day FlexPass; Monthly Pass option for reduced fare riders	LIRR, NJ Transit – Upgraded apps to provide real-time crowding data	LIRR – “Getaways” program (offers discounts to access local events)	Caltrain – Go Pass Donation Program
MNR & LIRR – New 20-trip ticket (20% off peak one-way fares)	Caltrain – 104 trains per weekday, spread evenly throughout the day	NJ Transit – “Transit to Trails” and rewards programs	RTD – Partnered with businesses to carry riders to downtown events
SEPTA – Three Day Convenience Pass (24 trips in 72 hours)	MARTA Reach – Pilot rideshare program connecting riders to rail	Caltrain – All Aboard Bay Area Transit campaign	

Additional Focus Areas

- ❖ Ensuring consistency with the Caltrain Framework for Equity, Connectivity, Recovery & Growth
- ❖ Improving methodology for estimating ridership
- ❖ Minimizing the impact of service disruptions in 2023
- ❖ Evaluating the economics behind fare changes, promotions, and service changes
- ❖ Conducting a fare analysis
- ❖ Engaging key partners in potential campaigns
- ❖ Identifying the most effective marketing strategies

Next Steps

- ❖ Provide progress update to TOPS Committee in Spring 2023
- ❖ Provide update to Board in Summer 2023 on recommended strategies
- ❖ Ongoing updates on success of programs, to the extent ridership gains can be attributed to specific initiatives
- ❖ Questions?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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