



CALTRAIN STATION ACCESS POLICY

2024 UPDATE
Adopted September 2024



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 walk, use a mobility device, ride a bicycle, use shared micromobility (e.g. bike share and scooter share), 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:

To guide 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:** Prioritize 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 all stations Caltrain serves 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 vehicle parking management strategies such as vehicle 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, mobility devices, 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 support the application of the Station Access Policy.

- 1**  **Disseminate the Station Access Policy Internally and Externally**
 Within Caltrain and to the general public, local jurisdictions, stakeholders, and other agencies.
- 2**  **Identify Metrics and Measure**
 Establish metrics to measure the success of the Station Access Policy.
- 3**  **Update the Caltrain Design Guidelines and Criteria**
 Ensure that station design guidelines and criteria reflect the Station Access Policy.
- 4**  **Develop a Parking and Curbside Management Strategy**
 Establish methodology to determine parking needs and curb management at stations.
- 5**  **Develop a Station Access Database**
 Consolidate available data on stations and local transportation network conditions.
- 6**  **Document the Process for Access Improvements**
 Establish a procedure for internal and external collaboration throughout the project life cycle.
- 7**  **Conduct Station Needs Assessments**
 Perform an inventory of existing conditions at stations (standalone stations or systemwide).
- 8**  **Complete Project Identification, Evaluation, and Prioritization**
 Develop station area access improvement plans using strategies from the Station Access Toolkit.
- 9**  **Deliver Projects and Review the Policy**
 Advance projects, measure impacts, and update the Station Access Policy as needed.

 Short-Term

 Mid-Term

 Long-Term

