



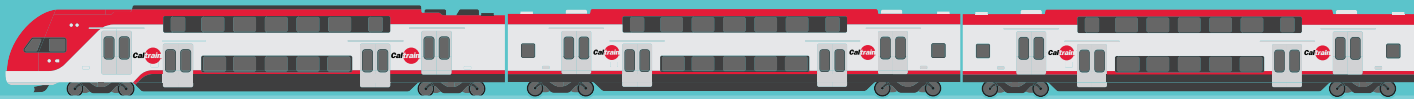
CALTRAIN STATION ACCESS POLICY: Parking and Curbside Management Strategy

February 2026



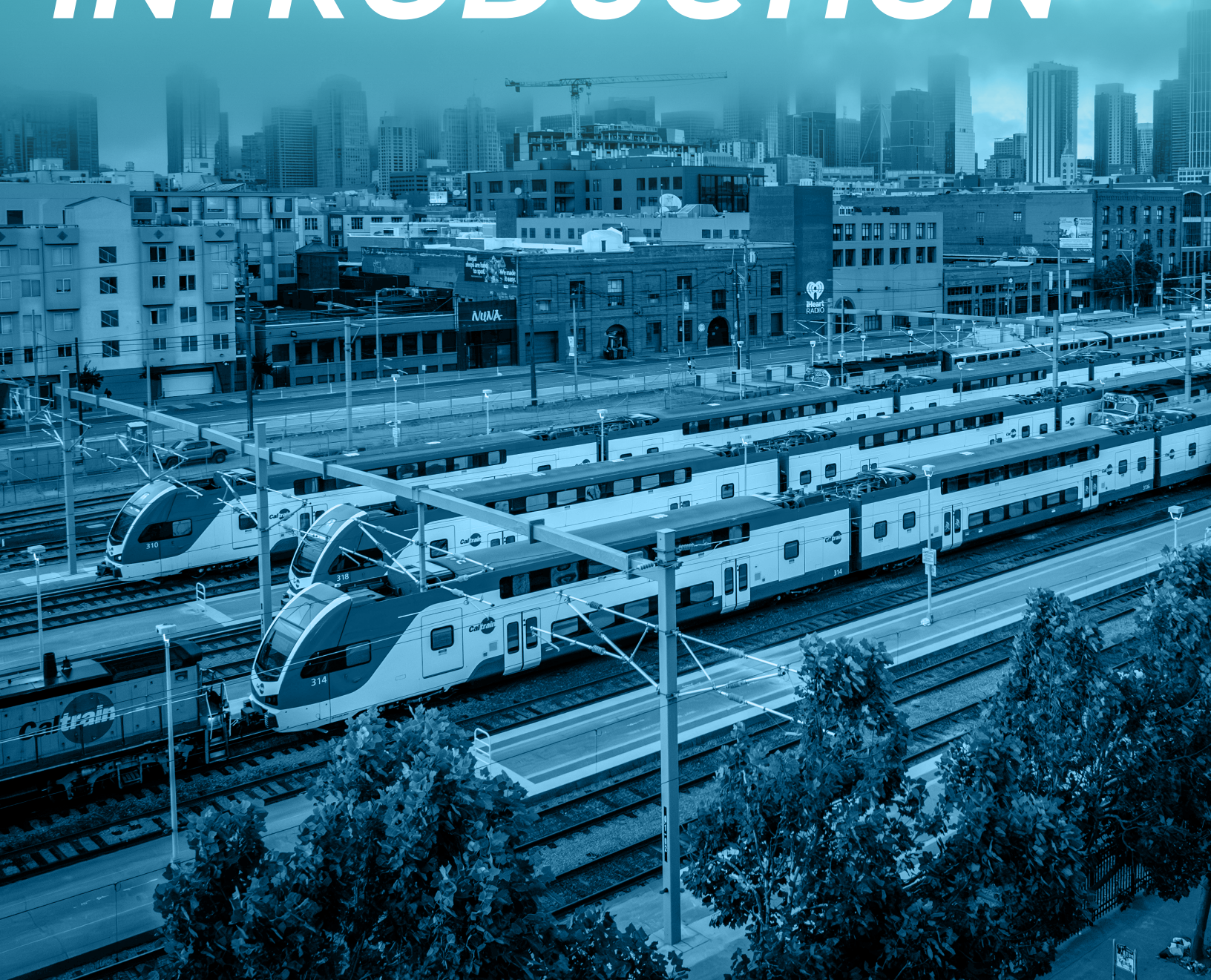
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01

INTRODUCTION



Purpose

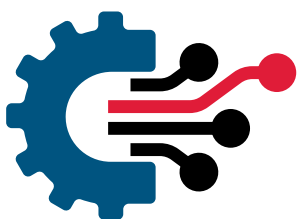
Caltrain's Parking and Curbside Management Strategy guides decisions about parking lots and curbside loading areas at Caltrain stations.

Development of this Strategy was identified as a next step within the adopted Caltrain Station Access Policy.

This Strategy is intended to support Caltrain staff, local and regional jurisdictions, partner transit agencies and operators, property owners, and other decision makers in understanding Caltrain's priorities for its station parking and loading facilities when making station investments.

The Strategy is applicable to all parking facilities and curbside areas at stations controlled by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) – the agency that owns and operates Caltrain. The Strategy also informs Caltrain's recommendations for properties that the JPB does not own but may affect its station access such as adjacent sites or those accessed through leases, easements, licenses, or other agreements.

The Parking and Curbside Management Strategy:



01 Guides key decisions about parking lots and curbside loading areas



02 Identifies actions to support safe and comfortable station access



03 Supports ridership and revenue growth through activation and management of parking and curbside facilities

Definitions

The following terms have been defined for the context of this Strategy Document and were not previously defined in the Station Access Policy.

Curbside Facilities:

Curbside loading areas directly adjacent to a street or parking lot at Caltrain stations that facilitate passenger flow to and from train platforms. Curbside or curb facilities can include space for: passenger loading zones for pick-up and drop-off by private vehicles, taxis, or rideshare services; boarding areas for transit and shuttles; or micromobility parking.

Car Parking Facilities:

All physical elements (such as surface parking lots, parking garages, etc.) at Caltrain stations that contain spaces for vehicle storage. This includes designated spaces for private and shared (park-and-ride, carpool and vanpool) vehicles, accessible parking spaces, electric vehicle charging, motorcycle spaces, and spaces reserved for Caltrain and affiliated staff. This does not include bike parking (bike lockers, racks, etc.).

Bike and Micromobility Parking:

The infrastructure used to store bikes and micromobility devices for short and long-term durations. This includes racks, lockers, bike rooms, shared micromobility docks, and other types of securements.

Parking and Curbside Management:

The practice of designing, constructing, operating, regulating, pricing, enforcing, and maintaining parking and curbside facilities. Management can enhance safe and intuitive circulation of all modes, optimize space allocation and utilization, support revenue generation, and improve customer experience for all riders.

Parking Utilization:

The percentage of parking spaces in a Caltrain lot that are occupied by a parked vehicle at a point in time. A representative point in time, when the parking lots are expected to be at their maximum occupancy, occurs mid-day (10 am – 2 pm) during the mid-week (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday).

For the purposes of classifying station parking utilization, “high occupancy” is regarded by Caltrain as any station with an average utilization greater than 85% , indicating that the demand for parking may sometimes exceed the supply. “Medium occupancy” is regarded as between 50% and 85%. “Low occupancy” is regarded as less than or equal to 50%, meaning that there is much more parking supplied than what the current demand warrants.

Transit Oriented Development (TOD):

Development that focuses on creating mixed-use communities centered around public transportation. Caltrain has a TOD Policy that includes goals and strategic objectives for TOD on Caltrain-owned property.

Caltrain Station Access Policy

The Station Access Policy identified the development of a Parking and Curbside Management Strategy as a next step to guide decisions about parking needs and curbside use at stations.

In 2024, Caltrain adopted the Station Access Policy to establish priorities regarding how people get to and from Caltrain stations. It affirms that station access from any point should be direct and safe, clear, welcoming, and simple, with a focus on accommodating the most vulnerable users and sustainable transportation modes over autos.



The Station Access Policy defines an Access Hierarchy (below) that serves as a systemwide aspirational framework and tool for weighing tradeoffs as part of station area planning and investment decisions. Pedestrians, people travelling by bike or shared micromobility, and transit users are given the highest priority in decision-making, including for proposed access improvements. These modes were prioritized because they are low cost, environmentally sustainable, safe, efficient, and align with Caltrain’s core values. The 2022 Triennial Survey found that 70% of customers reach Caltrain by walking, biking, scootering, or using transit. Only 15% of survey respondents said they drove a car or motorcycle to the station.

The five modes within the Access Hierarchy are defined as follows:



- 1 Walking**
 Includes people traveling on foot, using wheelchairs and other mobility devices, and children in strollers. All Caltrain riders are pedestrians at some point in their journey while they board and depart trains, navigate platforms and stations, and access station services such as ticket vending machines and validators.
- 2 Bikes and Shared Micromobility**
 Includes private electric and human-powered bicycles, scooters, and other personal devices as well as shared devices administered through a third party such as bike and scooter share.
- 3 Transit and Shuttles**
 Includes all connecting services at Caltrain stations such as bus, paratransit, light-rail, heavy-rail, and shuttles administered through a third party.
- 4 Drop-Off and Rideshare**
 Includes taxis, all forms of ride-hailing services, and curbside pick-up/drop-off for private vehicles.
- 5 Auto and Parking**
 Includes private and shared vehicle facilities and storage including for carpool and vanpool vehicles.

The Station Access Policy also sets forth six Access Goals:





The Station Access Toolkit in the appendix of the Station Access Policy included suggested actions relevant to parking and curb management. These actions are further expanded in this Strategy's Action Matrix.

The Station Access Toolkit actions related to parking and curb management include:

- Develop new or enhanced pick-up/drop-off facilities for transit and shuttles.
- Work with transit agency partners to implement rail-to-rail and bus-to-rail opportunities that optimize transit stop placement, frequency, and routing for connecting transfer services.
- Develop new or enhance existing delineated areas for rideshare passenger drop off and pickup.
- Develop parking pricing to right-size parking to local market conditions and demand.
- Implement parking management and enforcement practices such as paid parking, automated enforcement via license plate recognition, etc.
- Identify stations where parking lots are underutilized and can be reduced and redeveloped into Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and/or new access facilities (transit centers, bikeways, bike parking, etc.).
- Coordinate with other agencies, local jurisdictions, and/or adjacent property owners to consider sharing station parking.
- Provide carshare facilities at stations.
- Provide designated carpool/vanpool spaces at stations.

The Station Access Policy identified the development of a Parking and Curbside Management Strategy as a next step to guide decisions about parking needs and curbside use at stations. This Strategy fulfills that directive.

02

EXISTING CONDITIONS



The Parking and Curbside Management Strategy provides a comprehensive framework for addressing current challenges and opportunities Caltrain faces in its management of parking and curbside assets. Since the pandemic, a greater percentage of riders are using alternative modes of transportation (rather than private automobile) to access Caltrain stations. Caltrain's ridership is growing, but parking utilization does not seem to be linked to that growth. Many Caltrain stations are centrally located as towns grew around the historic rail stations. Caltrain parking lots are in walkable downtown areas. This creates opportunities for Caltrain to use parking facilities for more profitable and ridership-generating purposes. Existing practices and conditions, and the resulting challenges and opportunities, are described in this section.

Challenges to parking and curb management include:

1. Limited and constrained station space.

Caltrain owns very little land at many of its stations. The railroad was built in the 1800s without parking lots, so when parking lots were added they were built on available leftover land near stations and are often small or narrow. These conditions limit space for shuttles, pick-up/drop-off, and future development opportunities that could support more riders.

2. Shared use with other agencies.

Many Caltrain stations are used by multiple transit agencies and partners. While coordination is helpful, the added complexity also makes it harder for Caltrain to manage parking and curb areas effectively for its own riders.

3. Dispersed decision-making authority.

There is limited data on parking lot and curb use at Caltrain stations and the management responsibility of parking and curb space is distributed across several departments, complicating the decision-making process.

This strategy is an important step toward smarter use of station space, better rider access, and long-term support for Caltrain's service and growth.

Property Ownership and Use

The Parking and Curbside Management Strategy will help guide how the JPB, uses its limited land assets. JPB owns property at stations between San Francisco and Tamien Station in San Jose, much of which is used for parking.

As a legacy rail system, JPB's station-area properties are generally smaller and more constrained than those of newer systems designed with large park-and-ride facilities. Figure 1 illustrates this contrast, showing BART and JPB's landownership at Millbrae Station.

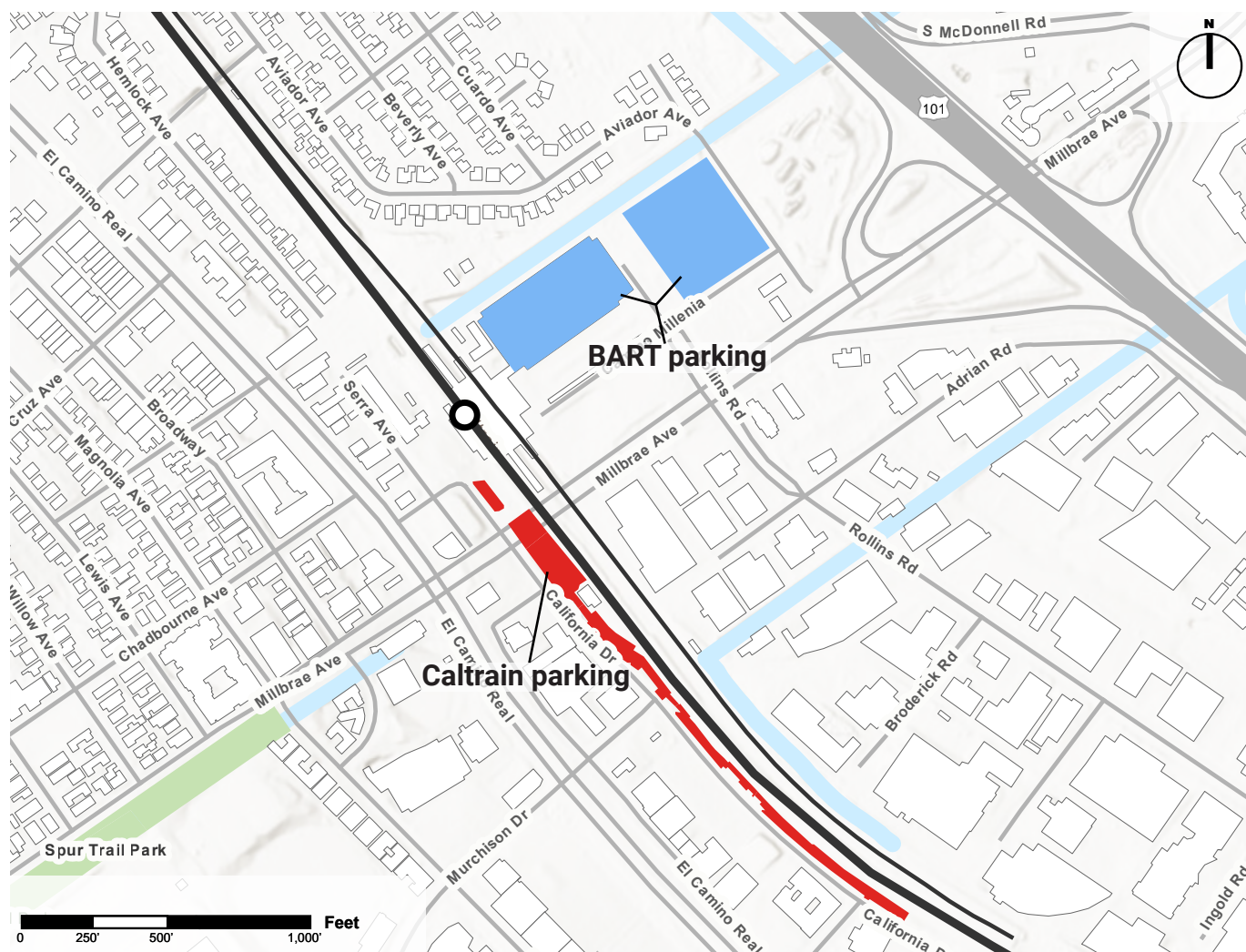
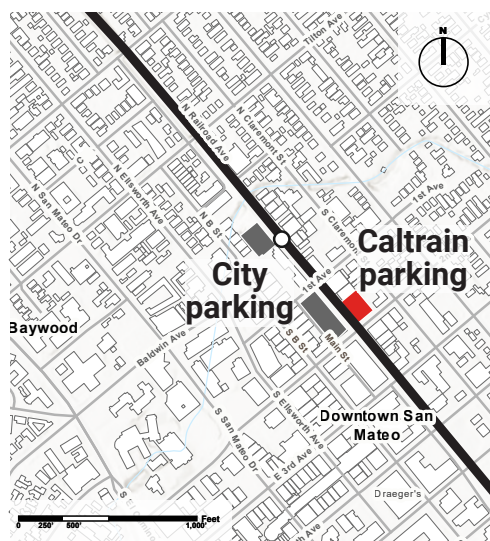


Figure 1: Millbrae Station Caltrain and BART parking lot ownership

Caltrain parking lots were often built on available leftover land near stations, typically on long, narrow strips alongside the tracks. This configuration leads to long walks to the platform from a parked car; constrained space for buses, shuttles, and pick up/drop off; and limited opportunities for other uses such as development. Figure 2 shows this parking lot configuration, as well as other commonly occurring parking lot shapes and sizes. The opportunities are different for each of these parking lot types. San Mateo Station is an example of a station within a city's downtown, with a small lot (42 stalls). There are also two lots adjacent to the San Mateo Station leased to the city, which highlights the need to coordinate with cities. Hayward Park Station is an example of a station with a medium-sized, less narrow parking lot (210 stalls). Hayward Park is one of Caltrain's high-priority TOD sites. Hillsdale Station is an example of a long narrow parking lot (379 stalls), built on the available JPB-owned land along the right-of-way. It is challenging for shuttles to turn around in the narrow Hillsdale lot.

San Mateo Station



Hayward Park Station



Hillsdale Station



Figure 2: Caltrain parking lot typologies

Caltrain's current parking and drop-off areas weren't designed based on a systemwide plan that considered overall needs. Parking lots typically consist of available property owned by JPB or another transit agency next to the station. As a result, parking supply and occupancy vary significantly by station and are not necessarily reflective of the station's ridership. For example, San Jose Diridon Station has almost twice as many parking spaces as Palo Alto Station, but Palo Alto Station's ridership is approximately 64% greater than San Jose Diridon, as of November 2024.

As a result, Caltrain faces trade-offs between use of limited space for rider parking, pick-up and drop-off, shuttles, bike facilities, station activation, and other uses. These trade-offs are especially important to address at stations planned for future transit-oriented development. Land use around stations has a big impact on ridership, and developing parking lots adjacent to stations has the potential to generate more riders.

Four JPB-owned station properties have been currently identified as high priority sites for future transit-oriented development (TOD): San Francisco Railyard, Hayward Park, Redwood City, Mountain View and Diridon. The recently entitled TOD Project at Diridon Station is on a 3.1-acre site currently used for Caltrain parking. The proposed development includes 1.1 million square feet of commercial space and a public plaza. This project will provide a long-term revenue stream which will support Caltrain operations and drive increases in ridership by bringing jobs near the station. In coordination with the City of San Jose's Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP) parking district strategy, Caltrain has entitled the project in accordance with the City's policies and dedicated 758 publicly available, market-rate parking spaces within the development in-lieu of direct replacement parking.

Station access facilities, such as sidewalks, bike paths, and interagency transfers to other transit and shuttle services at Caltrain stations are a key component of parking lot and curbside facilities. However, station access facilities are not always intuitive and universally accessible. These facilities are often constrained by surrounding land and built with outdated designs.

Changes in Ridership and Parking Trends

The way Caltrain riders access stations is changing as ridership recovers from the pandemic, with more riders using alternative modes of transportation.

- The total number of cars parked at Caltrain stations has declined
 - Parking occupancy fell by 39% from 2019 to 2023, increased by 8% from 2023 to 2024, and by 9% from 2024 to 2023.
 - 13 stations were above 80% occupancy in 2019, while only one station, San Mateo station – which has a relatively low number of parking stalls – was above the 80% occupancy in 2023 and 2024. In 2025, 3 stations were above 80% occupancy - South San Francisco, San Mateo, and San Jose Diridon.
- Fewer riders are driving and parking at stations
 - In 2025, only 16% of Caltrain riders drove and parked at stations, down from 24% in 2019 (Caltrain Triennial Customer Survey).
 - According to Caltrain and MTC's 2024 Origin and Destination Survey, just 9% of Caltrain riders accessed their first transit leg by driving and parking, compared to 16% in 2014.
- More riders are using transit or active transportation
 - Transit connections to Caltrain increased from 13% in 2019 to 18% in 2025.
 - Bicycle and scooter use rose slightly from 16% in 2019 to 17% in 2025.

Figure 3 illustrates the shift in how people get to and from Caltrain in 2016, 2019, 2022 and 2025. Figure 4 shows mode of travel to and from Caltrain based on results from a 2024 customer survey conducted by Caltrain and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to understand Caltrain rider travel patterns. Since fewer riders are traveling to and from Caltrain stations by private vehicles, Caltrain has an opportunity to use underutilized parking facilities to generate revenue for operations and increase ridership.

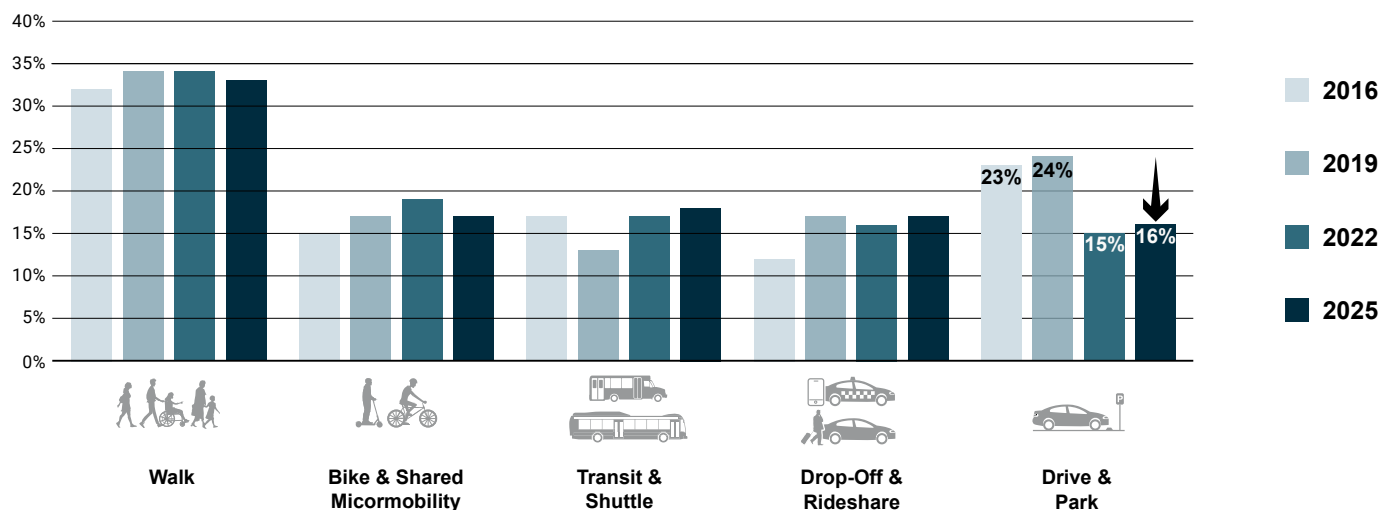


Figure 3: Shift in how people get to and from Caltrain in 2016, 2019, 2022, and 2025 based on Caltrain's Triennial Customer Survey

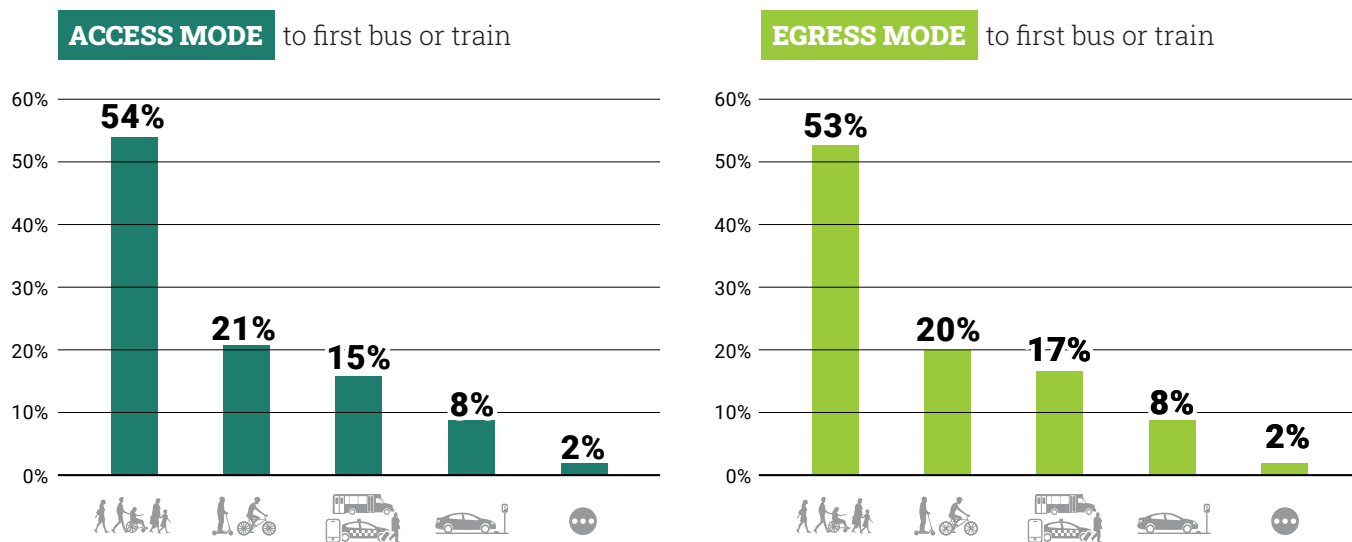
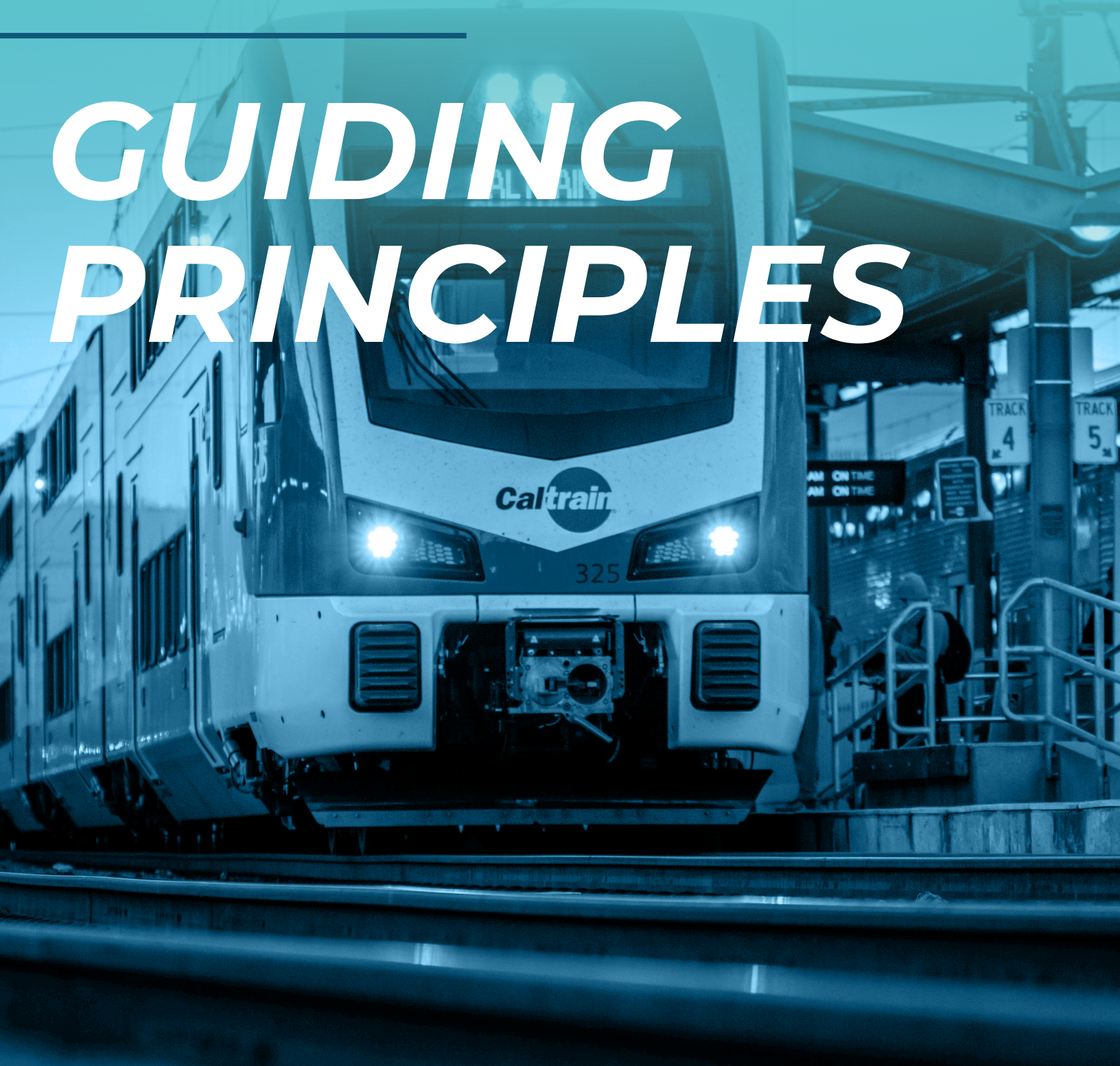


Figure 4: 2024 access and egress modes based on Caltrain and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's 2024 Origin and Destination Customer Survey

03

***GUIDING
PRINCIPLES***



The following principles guide decisions regarding the use of Caltrain-owned parking lots and curb space. They align with Caltrain’s Station Access Policy, Transit Oriented Development Policy, and the Property Access Agreement process, which includes the Property Conveyance Policy and Rail Corridor Use Policy (RCUP), while supporting customer satisfaction, ridership growth, and revenue generation.

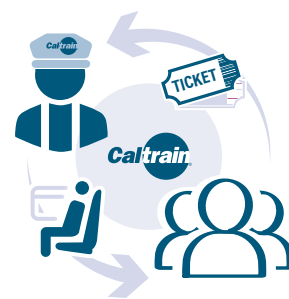
Caltrain staff will evaluate requests for use of Caltrain owned parking lots and curb space on a case-by-case basis, subject to staff capacity, resource availability, and consistency with RCUP and these Guiding Principles. The principles below are not ranked – all items, including sub-bullets, carry equal weight. Approval of requests is discretionary and are made by Caltrain staff, with designated reviewer(s) dependent on the type of decision. Alignment with every guiding principle is not required for approval. Projects involving significant changes to Caltrain parking facilities, such as development, should include community outreach, when appropriate.



01 Enhance and Maintain Safe, Comfortable, Multimodal Access, and Connectivity



02 Promote Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability



03 Activate Stations to Support Operations and Enhance Ridership



Guiding Principle #1

Enhance and Maintain Safe, Comfortable Multimodal Access and Connectivity

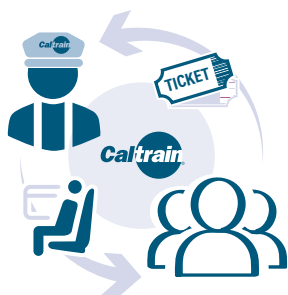
- Focus parking and curbside decisions on growing transit ridership and providing a high-quality customer experience.
- Allocate parking and curb space in alignment with the Access Hierarchy in the Station Access Policy, prioritizing the safe movement of people over private automobiles.
- Design parking and curb facilities to prioritize direct, safe walking and rolling pathways to, from, and through stations and minimize conflicts between travel modes.
- Prioritize paratransit vehicles and accessibility facilities (such as curb ramps, wheelchair lifts, ADA loading zones, etc.).
- Maintain clean, safe, and welcoming station environments that encourage multimodal access and rider comfort.



Guiding Principle #2

Promote Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability

- Prioritize parking for Caltrain riders over non-riders.
- Ensure that all uses of Caltrain parking and curb facilities generate positive revenue or operate at low or no net cost to Caltrain and that the benefits to Caltrain outweigh any associated risks.
- Strengthen efficient management and enforcement practices in parking lots and curb spaces.



Guiding Principle #3

Activate Stations to Support Operations and Enhance Ridership

- Prioritize uses of station property that generate more riders, revenue and social benefit than car parking (e.g., multimodal access, TOD).
- Encourage station activation with a focus on revenue and ridership generating uses (both short- and long-term) as guided by the Property Conveyance Policy, RCUP and TOD Policy.
- Support future Transit Oriented Development opportunities.



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