Supervisor **Doug Verboon**, Chair, Kings County
Supervisor **Diane Burgis**, Vice-Chair, Contra Costa County
Supervisor **Patrick Hume**, Vice-Chair, Sacramento County
Supervisor **Vito Chiesa**, Stanislaus County
Mayor **Christina Fugazi,** City of Stockton
Supervisor **Leticia Gonzalez**, Madera County
Supervisor **David Haubert**, Alameda County
Supervisor, **Josh Pedrozo,** Merced County
Supervisor **Amy Shuklian**, Tulare County
Mayor **Freddy Valdez,** City of Firebaugh

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San Joaquin
Joint Powers Authority

Alternate **Nancy Howze,** City of Hanford
Alternate **Aaron Meadows**, City of Oakley
Alternate **Bobbie Singh-Allen**, Sacramento County
Alternate **Rachel Hernandez,** City of Riverbank
Alternate **Leo Zuber,** City of Ripon
Alternate **Jose Rodriguez**, City of Madera
Alternate **Melissa Hernandez,** Alameda County
Alternate **Matt Serratto,** City of Merced
Alternate **Eddie Valero**, Tulare County
Alternate **Rey León**, City of Huron

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING

Friday, November 20, 2026 – 10:00 am

Robert J. Cabral Station
949 E. Channel Street
Stockton, CA 95202

Teleconference Locations

County Administrative Office
Board of Supervisors
2800 W. Burrel Avenue
Visalia, CA 93291

Heritage House
4501 Pleasanton Drive
Pleasanton, CA

Merced County Administration
Building, Basement Level,
Conference Center, Atwater Room
2222 M St.
Merced, CA 95340

3361 Walnut Boulevard, Suite 140
Brentwood, CA 94513

700 H Street, Suite
2450, Sacramento, CA
95814

1010 10th Street
6th floor
Modesto, CA

501 W Weber Avenue
Building 1, 5th Floor
Stockton, CA 95202

Members of the public may attend the meeting at the above addresses, or may observe the meeting by using the link or dial-in information below:

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82522454870
Or Telephone: +1 669 444 9171 US

Persons wishing to address the Authority on any item of interest to the public regarding SJJPA and the Gold Runner Rail Service shall state their names and address and make their presentation. The Authority cannot take action on matters not on the agenda unless the action is authorized by Section 54954.2 of the Government Code. Materials related to an item on the Agenda submitted to the Board of Commissioners after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Commission Office at 949 E. Channel Street, Stockton, CA, 95202 during normal business hours. These documents are also available on the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission website at

https://www.sjrrc.com/events/ subject to staff's ability to post the documents prior to the meeting. If a member of the public wishes to make a public comment:

1. **Submit written comments to SJJPA staff via email at clerk@sjrrc.com, in which staff will read the comment aloud during the public comment period.**
2. **Complete a Request to Speak form (available at the entrance to the meeting room) and give it to the SJJPA Board Clerk before the Item is considered by the Board.**
3. **Join from the Zoom meeting link and notify staff by alerting them via the "Raise hand" or "Chat" function; call +1 669 444 9171, dial *9 to raise your hand when you wish to speak, and dial *6 to unmute when you are requested to speak. Please note that if participating using Zoom, all members of the public will be placed on mute until such times allow for public comments to be made.**

Public comments should be limited to three (3) minutes per comment.

This Agenda shall be made available upon request in alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12132) and the Ralph M. Brown Act (California Government Code § 54954.2). Persons requesting a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in the meeting should contact San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission staff, at 209-944-6220, during regular business hours, at least twenty-four hours prior to the time of the meeting.
All proceedings before the Authority are conducted in English. Anyone wishing to address the Authority Board is advised to have an interpreter or to contact SJRRC during regular business hours at least 48 hours prior to the time of the meeting so that SJRRC can provide an interpreter. Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Governing Board regarding any item on this agenda will be made available upon request in both English and Spanish for public inspection at the Office of the Chief Executive Officer located at 949 East Channel Street, Stockton, California, 95202 during normal business hours or by calling (209) 944-6220. The Agenda and meeting materials are also available on the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Website: http://www.sjjpa.com/Home.

***Disclosures:** Directors shall disclose any agenda item in which they have a conflict of interest under State law and acknowledge whether they will recuse from hearing that item. Among other State laws, the Levine Act (Gov. C. §84308) may require recusal on agenda items involving a contract or entitlement before the Commission where a campaign donor is a participant, and the campaign contribution totals more than $500 within the 12-month period before the decision on the item. The disclosure must include the name of the party, participant, or agent, and any other person making the contribution; the name of the recipient, the amount of the contribution, and the date of the contribution. Information regarding the Levine Act can be found at fppc.ca.gov.*

1. **Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**
   Chair Verboon

2. **Roll Call**

3. **Public Comment**
   Persons wishing to address the Authority on any item of interest to the public regarding SJJPA and the Gold Runner Rail Service shall state their names and address and make their presentation. The Authority cannot take action on matters not on the agenda unless the action is authorized by Section 54954.2 of the Government Code. Materials related to an item on the Agenda submitted to the Board of Directors after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection in the Commission Office at 949 E. Channel Street, Stockton, CA, 95202 during normal business hours. These documents are also available on the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority website at https://sjjpa.com/events/ subject to staff's ability to post the documents prior to the meeting.
   Public comments should be limited to three (3) minutes per comment.

4. Consent Calendar

4.1	Approve Minutes of September 18, 2026 Board Special Meeting	**ACTION**
4.2	Adopt a Resolution Rescinding Resolution No. 26/27-13 and Amending the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority's Conflict of Interest Code	**ACTION**
4.3	Adopt a Resolution Adopting the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission's Organizational Conflict of Interest Policy	**ACTION**
4.4	Adopt a Resolution Ratifying Action Taken by the Chief Executive Officer Triggering the Continuation Clause Period of the 2026 Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service Operating Agreement with Amtrak for the Period October 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Continue Negotiations with Amtrak to Enter into a FFY 2027 Operating Agreement	**ACTION**
4.5	Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 02 to the Agreement with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) for the Design and Construction of the Oakley Station Platform Project for $429,824 for a total Amount Not-to-Exceed $1,159,169 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project	**ACTION**
4.6	Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 01 with BNSF Railway for Construction for the Oakley Station Platform Project for $2,831,093 for a total Amount Not-to-Exceed $9,796,868 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project including Approving Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority	**ACTION**
4.7	Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with BNSF Railway for Procurement, Construction and/or Construction Management Services related to the removal of the Antioch-Pittsburg Station Platform in an Amount Not-to Exceed $450,000 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Projects including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority, Subject to Approval as to Form by General Counsel	**ACTION**
4.8	Operating Expense Report	**INFORMATION**
4.9	Washington Update	**INFORMATION**

5. Caltrans Fleet Plan Update — **INFORMATION / PRESENTATION**
Presented by: Kyle Gradinger (Chief, Caltrans Division of Rail)

6. Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 01 to the 2025/2026 San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Annual Business Plan for State-Provided Equipment in the amount of $15,383,366, increasing the FFY26 budget to $46,060,137, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Execute Any and All Documents Associated with the Master Fund Transfer Agreement Supplements for Operations, Administration, and Marketing Budgets for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 — **ACTION**
Presented by: Chris Orlando (Chief Executive Officer) and Brian Schmidt (Director of Equipment Services)

7. Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Compass Group USA, Inc. dba Canteen, for the Food and Beverage Program, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project Including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority — **ACTION**
Presented by: Marques Cook (Deputy Director of Passenger Experience and Marketing)

8. Adopt a Resolution Accepting the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report — **ACTION**
Presented by: Dan Leavitt (Manager of Regional Initiatives)

9. Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with BNSF Railway for Construction and Maintenance for the Madera Station Relocation Project for an Amount Not-to-Exceed $8,300,000 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project — **ACTION**
Presented by: David Lipari (Deputy Executive Director)

10. Quarter 1 Gold Runner Service and Performance Update — **INFORMATION**
Presented by: Tamika Smith (Director of Rail Services) and Mariah Bryant (Marketing Manager)

11. Marketing Partnerships and Allensworth Update — **INFORMATION**
Presented by: Marques Cook (Deputy Director of Passenger Experience and Marketing)

12. Board Member Comments

13. Chief Executive Officer's Report
Chris Orlando

14. CLOSED SESSION
Threatened or Anticipated Litigation: Government Code §54956.9(d)(2); One Case; Conference with Legal Counsel Regarding Significant Exposure to Litigation Concerning the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)

15. Return to Open Session
Janice D. Magdich (General Counsel)

16. Adjournment
The next regular meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2027 – 10:00 am

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 4.1

Subject: **Minutes of San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority September 18, 2026 Board Special Meeting**
Agenda Action: **ACTION**
Prepared By: Ariana Talosig (Clerk of the Board I)

The special meeting of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) was held at 10:00 am on September 18, 2026, in the Robert J. Cabral Board Room, 949 E Channel St., Stockton, CA. Board Members attended this meeting in person and via videoconference.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Verboon called the meeting to order at 10:02 am and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Directors Present: Chiesa (remote), Fugazi, Alternate Valero (remote), Vice-Chair Hume (remote), Vice-Chair Burgis (remote), Chair Verboon (remote)

Directors Absent: Gonzalez (joined remotely – 10:11 am), Haubert (joined remotely – 10:04 am), Pedrozo (joined remotely – 10:06 am), Valdez

3. Public Comment

Michael Barnbaum, a member of the public, shared details regarding missed connections at various stations.

4. Consent Calendar

4.1	Approve Minutes of July 16, 2026 Board Special Meeting	**ACTION**
4.2	Approve 2027 San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Board Meeting Calendar	**ACTION**
4.3	Quarterly Report Out on Agreements and Purchases over $100,000 Executed in the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2025/2026	**INFORMATION**
4.4	San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee Report Out	**INFORMATION**
4.5	Quarterly Capital Expense Report	**INFORMATION**
4.6	Operating Expense Report	**INFORMATION**
4.7	Washington Update	**INFORMATION**

Director Haubert joined the meeting remotely at 10:04 am.

Director Pedrozo joined the meeting remotely at 10:06 am.

Director Gonzalez joined the meeting remotely at 10:11 am.

M/S/C (Alternate Valero/Fugazi) to approve Item 4.1 of the Consent Calendar.

Passed and Adopted by the Authority Board on September 18, 2026, by the following vote to wit:

AYES:	9	Chiesa, Fugazi, Gonzalez, Haubert, Pedrozo, Alternate Valero, Vice-Chair Hume, Vice-Chair Burgis, Chair Verboon
NOES:	0	
ABSTAIN:	0	
ABSENT:	1	Valdez

Regarding item 4.2, Mr. Barnbaum shared suggestions for dates and possible meeting locations throughout the Gold Runner corridor.

Chris Orlando, Chief Executive Officer, stated staff would look into possible locations for future Authority board meetings.

M/S/C (Fugazi/Vice-Chair Burgis) to approve Items 4.2-4.7 of the Consent Calendar.

Passed and Adopted by the Authority Board on September 18, 2026, by the following vote to wit:

AYES:	9	Chiesa, Fugazi, Gonzalez, Haubert, Pedrozo, Alternate Valero, Vice-Chair Hume, Vice-Chair Burgis, Chair Verboon
NOES:	0	
ABSTAIN:	0	
ABSENT:	1	Valdez

5. Madera Station Relocation Project Update — INFORMATION

Christine Inouye, Director of Capital Programs, gave a presentation on this item.

Director Gonzalez shared her enthusiasm for the project and thanked staff for their efforts.

Chair Verboon asked for clarification on bus service from Merced to San Jose/Madera.

David Lipari, Deputy Executive Director, shared details regarding service connectivity and explained that a Network Integration Study is currently being conducted.

There were no public comments.

This was an information item only.

6. Quarter 4 and Year-End Gold Runner Service and Performance Update **INFORMATION**

Marques Cook, Deputy Director of Passenger Experience and Marketing, and Nathan Alastra, Operations Superintendent, gave a presentation on this item.

Chair Verboon, Director Chiesa, and Director Haubert complimented staff on the Thruway Bus Service performance.

Chair Verboon and Vice-Chair Hume asked for clarification on the Gold Runner on-time performance results.

Nathan Alastra, Operations Superintendent, shared factors that contributed to the low on-time performance.

Director Hume asked for clarification on host railroad maintenance projects and equipment failures in the summer months.

Mr. Alastra and Mr. Orlando both mentioned that Director Hume's questions would be covered by the next agenda item.

Faramarz Nabavi, a member of the public, spoke about his experience regarding delays and cancellations on the Gold Runner service for the past month.

Mr. Barnbaum shared information about scheduling issues since the introduction of the 7th round-trip and commented on the long-distance connectivity concerns in Martinez and Sacramento.

This was an information item only.

7. Equipment Maintenance Transition Update **INFORMATION**

Mr. Orlando and Brian Schmidt, Director of Equipment Services, gave a presentation on this item.

Director Fugazi asked for clarification on the chart included in the PowerPoint presentation outlining that equipment was purchased in the 1990's and overhauled only 18 years ago.

Mr. Schmidt verbally corrected the dates on the table.

Director Hume commented on the tremendous task it is to forecast maintenance on equipment.

Mr. Orlando spoke about some of the strains of the vehicles and mentioned that a fleet plan presentation will be given at a future meeting.

There were no public comments on this item.

This was an information item only.

8. Board Member Comments

Chair Verboon shared his experience at the recent Valley Voice trip to Washington DC.

9. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Mr. Orlando shared information on the Route 5 ribbon-cutting event and the upcoming Rail Safety Month events occurring within the ACE and Gold Runner corridors.

10. Adjournment

Chair Verboon adjourned the meeting at 11:19 am.

The next San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority meeting is scheduled for:
November 20, 2026 – 10:00 am.

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 4.2

Subject: **Adopt a Resolution Rescinding Resolution No. 26/27-13 and Amending the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority's Conflict of Interest Code**
Agenda Action: **ACTION**
Prepared By: Janice D. Magdich (General Counsel)

Background:
The Political Reform Act (Government Code Section 81000, et. seq., the "Act") and the Fair Political Practices Commission ("FPPC") implementing regulations (2 Cal. Code of Regulations sections 18722–18740, and 18750–18756, the "Regulations") document the legal parameters and procedures by which every state and local government agency is required to adopt and promulgate a Conflict of Interest Code ("Code"). The FPPC adopted the standard Code terms in Regulations Section 18730.

Biennially, local agencies must review their Code and determine if it must be amended to conform to state amendments to the Act or the Regulations, or if there are local changes that require updating. If a Code amendment is necessary, Sections 83702-3, and 83706.5 require the local agency to submit the proposed Code amendment(s) to the Code reviewing body for consideration within 90 days.

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) staff and General Counsel reviewed the Authority's Code and determined Code amendments are necessary to reflect current job titles and duties in the Authority and to align with the Act, Regulations, and any amendments adopted by the FPPC. The Disclosure Categories, as described in Appendix B (attached to the Resolution accompanying this staff report), have been determined for each Designated Position in Appendix A (also attached to the Resolution accompanying this staff report) based on job duties and level of participation in making governmental decisions.

The attached appendices designating officials, employees, consultants, and establishing disclosure categories, shall constitute the Code of the Authority. Designated officials, employees, and consultants shall file their statements with the Clerk of the Authority and such statements shall be open for public inspection and reproduction pursuant to Government Code section 81008. Statements for all designated officials and employees will be retained by the Clerk of the Authority.

Fiscal Impact:
There is no fiscal impact associated with the adoption of the Amended Conflict of Interest Code.

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Rescinding Resolution No. 26/27-13 and Amending the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority's Conflict of Interest Code.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION RESCINDING RESOLUTION 24/25-41 AND AMENDING THE SAN JOAQUIN REGIONAL RAIL COMMISSION'S CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE

WHEREAS, the Political Reform Act (Government Code Section 81000, et. seq., the "Act") and the Fair Political Practices Commission ("FPPC") implementing regulations (2 Cal. Code of Regulations sections 18722 – 18740, and 18750 – 18756, the "Regulations") document the legal parameters and procedures by which every state and local government agency is required to adopt and promulgate a Conflict of Interest Code ("Code"); and

WHEREAS, the FPPC adopted the standard Code terms in Regulations Section 18730; and

WHEREAS, biennially, local agencies must review their Code and determine if it must be amended to conform to state amendments to the Act or the Regulations, or if there are local changes that require updating; and

WHEREAS, if a Code amendment is necessary, Sections 83702-3 and 83706.5 require the local agency to submit the proposed Code amendments to the Code reviewing body for consideration within 90 days; and

WHEREAS, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission, as managing agency of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority), staff and General Counsel reviewed the Authority's Code and determined Code amendments are necessary to reflect current job titles and duties in the Authority and to align with the Act, Regulations, and any amendments adopted by the FPPC; and

WHEREAS, the Disclosure Categories, as described in Appendix B, have been determined for each Designated Position in Appendix A based on job duties and level of participation in making governmental decisions; and

WHEREAS, the Directors of the Authority intend that this resolution and the attached appendices designating officials, employees, consultants, and establishing disclosure categories shall constitute the Code of the Authority; and

WHEREAS, designated officials, employees, and consultants shall file their statements with the Clerk of the Authority and such statements shall be open for public inspection and reproduction pursuant to Government Code section 81008. Statements for all designated officials and employees will be retained by the Clerk of the Authority.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Resolution No. 26/27-13 is hereby repealed and replaced in its entirety.

2. The terms of the Regulations Section 18730 and any amendments duly adopted by the FPPC, along with the attached Appendices A and B in which officials, employees, and consultants are designated and disclosure categories are set forth, are hereby incorporated herein by this reference, and this version shall constitute the Conflict of Interest Code of the Rail Commission, as managing agency of the Authority.

3. Persons holding designated positions identified herein shall file statements of economic interest pursuant to the provisions of this Code.

4. All designated officials, employees, and consultants shall file their statements of economic interests with the Clerk of the Authority to whom the Directors hereby delegate the authority to carry out the duties of filing officer.

5. Failure to file the required statement in a timely fashion may result in the imposition of administrative, criminal, and civil sanctions as provided in Government Code sections 81000 - 91014.6.

The effective date of this Resolution shall be November 20, 2026.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

APPENDIX A

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE APPENDIX OF DESIGNATED FILERS

DESIGNATED POSITIONS. Individuals performing work in the classifications listed below are "designated filers" in that they exercise independent judgment or are deemed to make decisions, or to participate in making decisions, which may have a material effect on their personal financial interest. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority's Conflict of Interest Code (Title 2 California Code of Regulations Section 18730) requires "designated filers", including San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC) staff, as SJRRC is the contracted managing agency of SJJPA, to disclose certain economic interests in accordance with the disclosure category shown, and as defined in Appendix B.

APPOINTED POSITIONS	POSITION	DISCLOSURE CATEGORY
	Director*	1
	Chief Executive Officer *	1
	General Counsel*	1
DIVISION	**POSITION**	**DISCLOSURE CATEGORY**
Administration		
	Contracts Specialist (2)	2
	Director of Administration	1
	Human Resources Manager	2
	Manager of Administration	1
	Procurement & Contracts Manager	2
	Procurement Specialist (3)	2
Capital Programs		
	Capital Program Engineer (PE)	1
	Capital Program Manager	1
	Capital Programs Analyst	2
	Capital Program Liaison	1
	Chief Program & Construction Manager	1
	Director of Capital Programs	1
Equipment Services		
	Chief Mechanical Officer	2
	Director of Equipment Services	1
	Equipment Manager	2

	Equipment Services Manager	2
Executive		
	Deputy Executive Director	1
Finance		
	Fiscal Compliance & Capital Budget Officer	1
	Manager of Fiscal Services	1
	Senior Accountant	2
Information Technology		
	IT Business Solutions Manager	2
Passenger Experience and Marketing		
	Deputy Director of Passenger Experience and Communications	2
	Marketing Manager	2
	Onboard Experience Manager	2
	Public Relations Manager	2
Planning, Grants, & Programming		
	Deputy Director of Planning, Grants and Programming	2
	Manager of Planning	2
	Manager or Regional Initiatives	2
Rail Services		
	Connecting Services Manager	2
	Director of Rail Services, DBELO	1
	Facilities Superintendent	2
	Operations Superintendent	2
CONSULTANTS		**DISCLOSURE CATEGORY - 1**
FIRM	**POSITION**	**LAST, FIRST**
PGH Wong Engineering, Inc.	Assistant Construction Coordinator	Ahmed, Ashfaq
PGH Wong Engineering, Inc.	Assistant Construction Coordinator	Taylor, Scott

PGH Wong Engineering, Inc.	Construction Coordinator	Chen, John
Pressley & Associates, Inc.	Controller	Pressley, Steve
Ghirardelli & Associates	Project Controls and Schedule Manager	Hynes, Robert
Ghirardelli & Associates	Senior Project Manager	Gee, Darren
Ghirardelli & Associates	Senior Project Manager	Kaulfers, David
Ghirardelli & Associates	Senior Project Manager	Lloyd, Taylor
Ghirardelli & Associates	Senior Project Manager	Piano, Alvin
Ghirardelli & Associates	Senior Project Manager	Ryan, Jay

***** Exempt from Political Reform Act of 1974, but required to file a statement of economic interest pursuant to Government Code section 87200.

CONSULTANTS:

1. Consultant means an individual who, pursuant to a contract with a state or local governmental agency:

    A. Makes governmental decisions whether to: 1. approve a rate, rule or regulation; 2. adopt or enforce a law; 3. issue, deny, suspend, or revoke any permit, license, application, certificate, approval, order or similar authorization or entitlement; 4. authorize the agency to enter into, modify, or renew a contract provided it is the type of contract which requires agency approval; 5. grant agency approval to a contract which requires agency approval and in which the agency is a party or to the specifications for such a contract; 6. grant agency approval to a plan, design, report, study or similar item; 7. adopt, or grant agency approval of policies, standards, or guidelines for the agency, or for any subdivision thereof; or

    B. Serves in a staff capacity with the agency and in that capacity performs the same or substantially the same duties for the agency that would otherwise be performed by an individual holding a position specified in the agencies Conflict of Interest Code.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or designee, may determine in writing that a particular consultant, although a “designated position” is hired to perform a range of duties that are limited in scope and thus is not required to fully comply with the disclosure requirements described in this section. Such written determination shall include a description of the consultant’s duties and based upon the description, a statement of the extent of the disclosure requirements. The CEO or the designee’s determination is a public record and shall be retained for public inspection in the same manner and location as this Conflict of Interest Code.

STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTEREST (FORM 700):

Individuals holding designated positions shall file their Assuming Office statements within 30-days of assuming office, and thereafter, no later than April 1 of each year for the previous full calendar year. Statements shall be filed with the Clerk of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority located at 929 East Channel Street, Stockton, CA 95202, which will make the statements available for public review and reproduction (Gov. C. §81008). Upon leaving a designated filer position, Leaving Office statements must be filed within 30-days of separation.

An individual holding one of the above-listed positions may contact the Fair Political Practices Commission for assistance or written advice regarding their filing obligations if they believe that their position has been categorized incorrectly. The Fair Political Practices Commission makes the final determination whether a position is covered by Government Code section 87200.

APPENDIX B

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE APPENDIX OF DISCLOSURE CATEGORIES

Individuals holding designated positions must report their interests according to their assigned disclosure category(ies).

DISCLOSURE CATEGORIES:

1. **Category 1:**

   Individuals in this category shall disclose all investments and business positions in business entities, sources of income, including loans, gifts, and travel payments, from all sources wherever located; and interests in real property located within the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority or within two (2) miles of any land owned or used by the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission or the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority.

2. **Category 2:**

   Individuals in this category shall disclose all investments and business positions in business entities, and sources of income from entities, including loans, gifts, and travel payments, which: a.) are from sources engaged in the performance of work or services of the type utilized by the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission or the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority; or b.) which manufacture or sell supplies, services, materials, equipment or machinery of the type used by the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission or the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority.

3. **Category 3:**

   Individuals in this category shall disclose all investments and business positions in business entities, and sources of income from entities, including loans, gifts, and travel payments, which: a.) are from sources engaged in the performance of work or services of the type utilized by the designated employee's department or division; or b.) which manufacture or sell supplies, services, materials, equipment or machinery of the type used by the designated position's division or department.

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 4.3

Subject: **Adopt a Resolution Adopting the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission's Organizational Conflict of Interest Policy**
Agenda Action: **ACTION**
Prepared By: Janice D. Magdich (General Counsel)

Background:
The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Rail Commission) has served as the managing agency of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) since 2015, and as part of the scope of services outlined in the Managing Agency Agreement, the Rail Commission provides all necessary administrative support to the Authority, including negotiating and recommending the award of all necessary agreements for the Authority.

The Rail Commission Board adopted its Organizational Conflict of Interest Policy (Policy) on August 21, 2026. The Policy was prepared in coordination with General Counsel for purposes of conducting procurement and contracting activities, and in order to proactively identify potential organizational conflicts of interest during procurement planning, solicitation development, evaluation, and award.

The Policy is distinct from and is in addition to the Authority's Conflict of Interest Code (Code) under the California Political Reform Act (Gov. Code sec. 81000 et seq.) and is not intended to replace or supersede the Code.

Fiscal Impact:
There is no fiscal impact associated with the adoption of the Rail Commission's Organizational Conflict of Interest Policy.

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Adopting the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission's Organizational Conflict of Interest Policy.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE SAN JOAQUIN REGIONAL RAIL COMMISSION'S ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Rail Commission) has served as the managing agency of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) since 2015, and as part of the scope of services outlined in the Managing Agency Agreement, the Rail Commission provides all necessary administrative support to the Authority, including negotiating and recommending the award of all necessary agreements for the Authority; and

WHEREAS, the Rail Commission Board adopted its Organizational Conflict of Interest Policy (Policy) on August 21, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Policy was prepared in coordination with General Counsel for purposes of conducting procurement and contracting activities, and in order to proactively identify potential organizational conflicts of interest during procurement planning, solicitation development, evaluation, and award; and

WHEREAS, the Policy is distinct from and is in addition to the Authority's Conflict of Interest Code (Code) under the California Political Reform Act (Gov. Code sec. 81000 et seq.) and is not intended to replace or supersede the Code.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Adopts the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission's Organizational Conflict of Interest Policy.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 4.4

Subject:	**Adopt a Resolution Ratifying Action Taken by the Chief Executive Officer Triggering the Continuation Clause Period of the 2026 Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service Operating Agreement with Amtrak for the Period October 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Continue Negotiations with Amtrak to Enter into a FFY 2027 Operating Agreement**
Agenda Action:	**ACTION**
Prepared By:	Angela Miller (Fiscal Compliance and Capital Budget Officer)

Background:
Since 2016, Operating Agreements have typically been negotiated annually with Amtrak following the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) which runs October – September. Negotiations with Amtrak for the FFY 2026 Agreement started in June 2025 and continued through April 2026. The long negotiations were due to the transfer of mechanical responsibility for the Legacy Equipment used for the Gold Runner and Capitol Corridor services from Amtrak to the Authority. The transfer required amendments to multiple agreements which had to then be memorialized and updated in the Operating Agreement. In November 2025, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) Board approved the FFY 2026 (ending September 2026) San Joaquin Intercity Passenger Rail Service Operating Agreement (Operating Agreement) with Amtrak.

In September 2026, the Authority and Amtrak signed a joint letter agreeing to the continuation period of the FFY 2026 (October 2025 – September 2026) Operating Agreement to be effective through March 2027. Negotiations are underway with Amtrak to clarify agreement provisions and incorporate the FFY 2027 cost methodology policy for State Supported Routes under Section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (i.e., PRIIA Section 209). The Operating Agreement will address changes to the food and beverage program, fare revenue and ridership projections, and other service initiatives.

The Operating Agreement is based upon forecasted funding levels approved by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) in the Annual Business Plan. The FFY 2027 Rate Schedule and Cost Estimate outlining the service's monthly costs is based on requested funding. The annual cost estimate for the Gold Runner service ($48,888,149) is consistent with the FFY 2027 State/Authority Funding allocation and will not exceed the funding level identified in the Business Plan Approval Letter.

Fiscal Impact:
State funding for the Gold Runner Operating Agreement was approved in the FY 26/27 Annual Business Plan submitted to California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA).

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Ratifying Action Taken by the Chief Executive Officer Triggering the Continuation Clause Period of the 2026 Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service Operating Agreement with Amtrak for the Period October 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Continue Negotiations with Amtrak to Enter into a FFY 2027 Operating Agreement.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 --

RESOLUTION RATIFYING ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TRIGGERING THE CONTINUATION CLAUSE PERIOD OF THE 2026 GOLD RUNNER INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE OPERATING AGREEMENT WITH AMTRAK FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1, 2026 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2027, AND AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE, TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS WITH AMTRAK TO ENTER INTO A FFY 2027 OPERATING AGREEMENT

WHEREAS, since 2016, Operating Agreements have typically been negotiated annually with Amtrak following the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) which runs October – September; and

WHEREAS, negotiations with Amtrak for the FFY 2026 Agreement started in June 2025 and continued through April 2026; and

WHEREAS, the long negotiations were due to the transfer of mechanical responsibility for the Legacy Equipment used for the Gold Runner and Capitol Corridor services from Amtrak to the Authority; and

WHEREAS, the transfer required amendments to multiple agreements which had to then be memorialized and updated in the Operating Agreement; and

WHEREAS, in November 2025, the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) Board approved the FFY 2026 (ending September 2026) San Joaquin Intercity Passenger Rail Service Operating Agreement (Operating Agreement) with Amtrak; and

WHEREAS, in September 2026, the Authority and Amtrak signed a joint letter agreeing to the continuation period of the FFY 2026 (October 2025 – September 2026) Operating Agreement to be effective through March 2027; and

WHEREAS, negotiations are underway with Amtrak to clarify agreement provisions and incorporate the FFY 2027 cost methodology policy for State Supported Routes under Section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (i.e., PRIIA Section 209); and

WHEREAS, the Operating Agreement will address changes to the food and beverage program, fare revenue and ridership projections, and other service initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the Operating Agreement is based upon forecasted funding levels approved by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) in the Annual Business Plan; and

WHEREAS, the annual cost estimate for the Gold Runner service ($48,888,149) is consistent with the FFY 2027 State/Authority Funding allocation and will not exceed the funding level identified in the Business Plan Approval Letter.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Ratifies Action Taken by the Chief Executive Officer Triggering the Continuation Clause Period of the 2026 Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service Operating Agreement with Amtrak for the Period October 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027, and Authorizes the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Continue Negotiations with Amtrak to Enter into a FFY 2027 Operating Agreement.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 4.5

Subject: **Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 02 to the Agreement with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) for the Design and Construction of the Oakley Station Platform Project for $429,824 for a total Amount Not-to-Exceed $1,159,169 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project**

Agenda Action: **ACTION**

Prepared By: Tamika Smith (Director of Rail Services) and Autumn Gowan (Procurement and Contracts Manager)

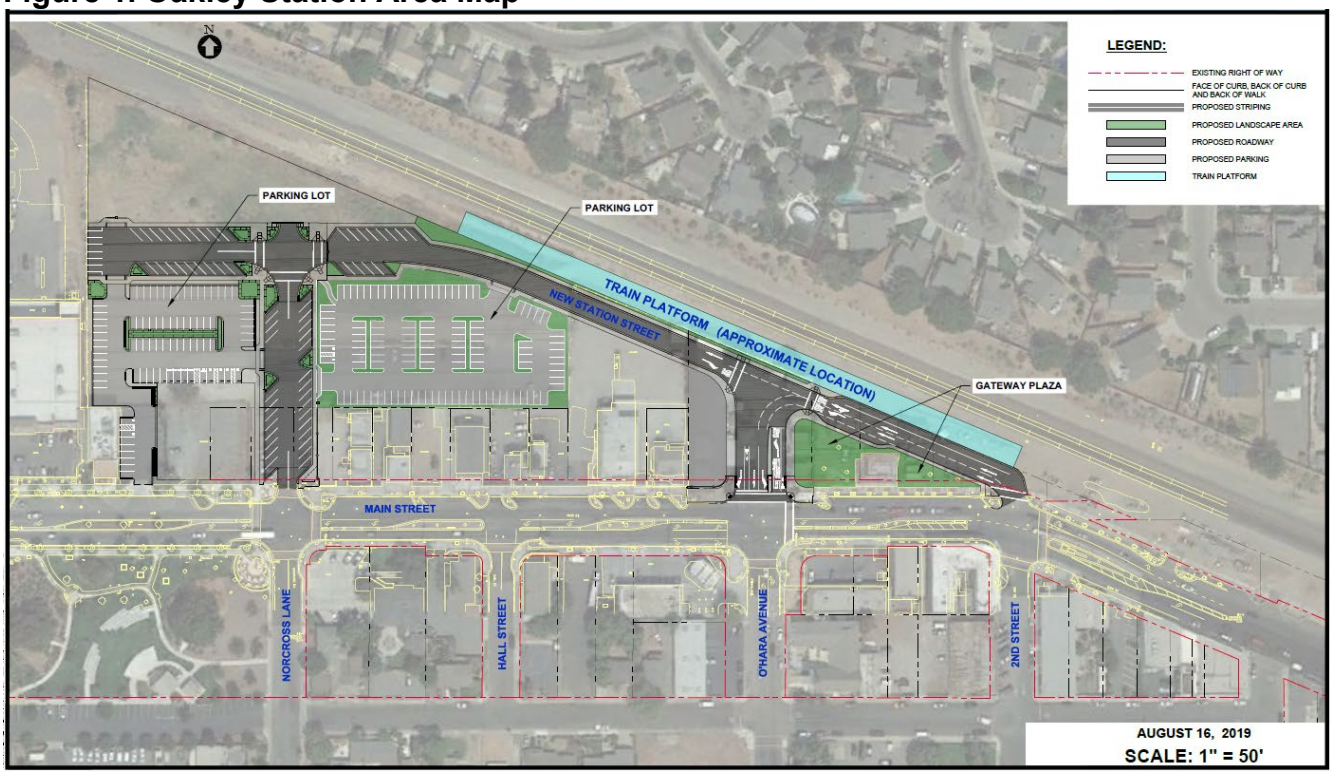
Background:

In May 2018, the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) awarded San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Rail Commission) and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) $500.5 million in funding for the joint "Valley Rail" program. As part of Valley Rail, the Rail Commission has programmed and allocated a total of $7.8 million in TIRCP funding for design and construction of the project. Since allocating the funds, the City of Oakley began a separate project for the station's parking, transit access, and other station amenities in coordination with the Authority.

As part of the coordination effort, the Authority staff participated in meetings with the City of Oakley, BNSF Railway (BNSF), and Amtrak in the development of the Oakley Station Platform Project (Platform Project). As a result of the meetings, it was determined it would be in the best interest of all parties if Amtrak completed the design and constructed the Platform Project in coordination with the Authority, the City of Oakley, and BNSF.

Staff is recommending approving this Amendment 02 with Amtrak to provide funds for design and construction support of the Platform Project during the construction phase. As needed, BNSF will coordinate with Amtrak for necessary design modifications. The Platform Project would construct an approximately 700-foot-long platform along the west side of BNSF's mainline that runs through the City of Oakley between 2nd Street and Norcross Lane.

Figure 1. Oakley Station Area Map



As construction progresses on the Platform Project, staff will provide updates to the Authority and project stakeholders. Staff anticipates that Oakley Station will open for Gold Runner service in February 2028. The Authority, Amtrak, and Caltrans will be working with the host railroad, BNSF, on any additional requirements for the opening of this new station for Gold Runner service, including developing new potential operational service plans to keep overall run-time for the Gold Runner as short as possible notwithstanding the addition of the new station.

Staff is recommending approval of Amendment 02 for Amtrak and its designer (Michael Baker International) to provide construction phase services (CPS) support during construction of the Platform Project. Support would include reviewing and approving submittals from the contractor during construction to ensure compliance with the project documents and responding to contractor requests for information (RFIs).

Procurement Approach:
Amendment 02 was handled in accordance with the Rail Commission's Procurement Manual, adopted by the Authority in 2015 and amended in October 2026.

Procurement and Contracts staff have confirmed that the price of the Amendment 02 is fair and reasonable. The additional services are reasonable, necessary, and in line with the scope of services for the Platform Project.

Amendment 02 will increase the current contract amount of $729,345 by $429,824 for a new not-to-exceed amount of $1,159,169.

Amendment 02 will be effective upon execution by both parties and shall continue until project completion (including substantial completion, closeout, etc.).

Fiscal Impact:

Project	Oakley Station
Capital Project Budget Line Item	Oakley Station
Phase for this Agreement	Right of Way (ROW)
Funding Sources for this Phase	Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)
Budget for this Phase	$7,598,000
Encumbrances for this Phase	$3,311,780
Budget Remaining for This Phase	$4,286,219
Agreement Amount	$429,824
Budget Remaining For this Phase if Approved	$3,856,395

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 02 to the Agreement with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) for the Design and Construction of the Oakley Station Platform Project for $429,824 for a total Amount Not-to-Exceed $1,159,169 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENT 02 TO THE AGREEMENT WITH THE NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION (AMTRAK) FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE OAKLEY STATION PLATFORM PROJECT FOR $429,824 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED $1,159,169 AND AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, AWARD, AND EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECT

WHEREAS, in May 2018, the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) awarded San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Rail Commission) and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) $500.5 million in funding for the joint “Valley Rail” program; and

WHEREAS, as part of Valley Rail, the Rail Commission has programmed and allocated a total of $7.8 million in TIRCP funding for design and construction of the project; and

WHEREAS, since allocating the funds, the city of Oakley began a separate project for the station’s parking, transit access, and other station amenities in coordination with the Authority; and

WHEREAS, as part of the coordination effort the Authority staff participated in meetings with the City of Oakley, BNSF Railway (BNSF), and Amtrak in the development of the Oakley Station Platform Project; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the meetings, it was determined it would be in the best interest of all parties if Amtrak completed the design and constructed the project in coordination with the Authority, the City of Oakley, and BNSF; and

WHEREAS, staff is recommending entering into a funding agreement with Amtrak to provide funds for design and construction of the Platform Project; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak will coordinate with BNSF for modifications to necessary service and lease agreements that currently exist between the two organizations; and

WHEREAS, the project would construct an approximately 700-foot-long platform along the west side of BNSF’s mainline that runs through the City of Oakley between 2nd Street and Norcross Lane; and

WHEREAS, staff anticipates that Oakley Station will open for Gold Runner service in February 2028; and

WHEREAS, the Authority, Amtrak, and Caltrans will be working with the host railroad BNSF on any additional requirements for the opening of this new station for the Gold Runner, including developing new potential operational service plans to keep overall run-time for the Gold Runner as short as possible with the addition of a new station; and

WHEREAS, staff is recommending approval of funds for Amtrak and its designer (Michael Baker International) to provide construction phase services (CPS) support during construction. Support would include reviewing and approving submittals from the contractor during construction to ensure compliance with the project documents and responding to contractor request for information (RFIs); and

WHEREAS, Procurement and Contracts staff have confirmed that the price of the amendment is fair and reasonable. The additional services are reasonable, necessary, and in line with the scope of services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Approves Amendment 02 to the Agreement with the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) for the Design and Construction of the Oakley Station Platform Project for $429,824 for a total Amount Not-to-Exceed $1,159,169 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

Subject: **Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 01 with BNSF Railway for Construction for the Oakley Station Platform Project for $2,831,093 for a total Amount Not-to-Exceed $9,796,868 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project including Approving Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority**

Agenda Action: **ACTION**

Prepared By: Tamika Smith (Director of Rail Services) and Autumn Gowan (Procurement and Contracts Manager)

Background:
In May 2018, the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) awarded San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Rail Commission) and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) $500.5 million in funding for the joint "Valley Rail" program. As part of Valley Rail, the Rail Commission has programmed and allocated a total of $7.8 million in TIRCP funding for design and construction of the project. Since allocating the funds, Authority staff has participated in meetings with the City of Oakley, BNSF Railway (BNSF), and Amtrak in the development of the Oakley Station Platform Project (Platform Project).

As part of the Platform Project, BNSF will manage construction of the 700-foot-long platform along the west side of BNSF's mainline through the City of Oakley between 2nd Street and Norcross Lane. The Platform Project will include lighting, shelters, benches, ADA improvements, and Passenger Information Display (PID) and signage for passengers boarding and disembarking at Oakley Station.

BNSF is slated to receive the notice to proceed in November 2026 with an anticipated construction completion date of February 2028. Staff is recommending approval of Amendment 01 for BNSF to award the construction contract to the responsive low bidder from the BNSF solicitation for bids and to provide adequate funding for BNSF retained staff to manage construction activities and the construction contract.

Procurement Approach:
Amendment 01 was handled in accordance with the Rail Commission's Procurement Manual, adopted by the Authority in 2015 and amended in October 2026.

Procurement and Contracts staff have confirmed that the price of Amendment 01 is fair and reasonable. The additional services are reasonable, necessary, and in line with the scope of services for the Platform Project.

Amendment 01 will increase the current contract amount of $6,965,775 by $2,831,093 for a new not-to-exceed amount of $9,796,868.

Amendment 01 will be effective upon execution by both parties and will expire upon completion of the Platform Project.

Section 7.3 of the Rail Commission's Procurement Manual (4th Amended) sets forth the criteria allowing for non-competitive procurements with host railroads.

Pursuant to Sections 7.3.1. "Other approved non-competitive procurements include the following types of procurement of goods and/or services and are exempt from competitive procurement requirements under SJRRC policy:" and 7.3.1.1 Host Railroad Infrastructure and Services: Host railroads (UPRR, BNSF, Caltrain, etc.) maintain exclusive real property rights, regulatory obligations, and operational control over its tracks and right of way. Host railroads are recognized as the sole source capable of executing or approving work within their operating corridors. This exemption applies exclusively to agreements with the host railroad for work performed by their own workforce or contractor, for, for flagging services, preliminary engineering services, right of entry (ROW) permits, easements, construction management services, and construction."

This Project was presented to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for approval with a request to allocate funds to the right-of-way phase in March 2025. Since the contract bid came in higher than expected, additional funds are needed and the Authority is requesting CTC's approval on the supplemental allocation for $3.481M at the January 2027 CTC meeting. Funds will be available upon CTC's approval.

Fiscal Impact:

Project	Oakley Station Platform
Capital Project Budget Line Item	Oakley Station Platform
Phase for this Agreement	Right of Way (ROW)
Funding Sources for this Phase	Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program
Budget for this Phase	$7,598,000
Encumbrances for this Phase	$480,688
Budget Remaining for This Phase	$7,117,312
Agreement Amount	$2,831,093
Budget Remaining For this Phase if Approved	$4,286,219

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 01 with BNSF Railway for Construction for the Oakley Station Platform Project for $2,831,093 for a total Amount Not-to-Exceed $9,796,868 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project including Approving Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENT 01 WITH BNSF RAILWAY FOR CONSTRUCTION FOR THE OAKLEY STATION PLATFORM PROJECT FOR $2,831,093 FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED $9,796,868 AND AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, AWARD, AND EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECT INCLUDING APPROVING ANY AND ALL AMENDMENTS THERETO WITHIN THEIR SPENDING AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, In May 2018, the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) awarded San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Rail Commission) and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) $500.5 million in funding for the joint “Valley Rail” program; and

WHEREAS, as part of Valley Rail, the Rail Commission has programmed and allocated a total of $7.8 million in TIRCP funding for design and construction of the project; and

WHEREAS, since allocating the funds, Authority staff has participated in meetings with the City of Oakley, BNSF Railway (BNSF) and Amtrak in the development of the Oakley Station Platform Project (Platform Project); and

WHEREAS, as part of this the Platform Project, BNSF will manage construction of the 700-foot-long platform along the west side of BNSF’s mainline through the City of Oakley between 2nd Street and Norcross Lane; and

WHEREAS, the Platform Project will include lighting, shelters, benches, ADA improvements and Passenger Information Display (PID) and signage for passengers boarding and disembarking at Oakley Station; and

WHEREAS, BNSF is slated to receive the notice to proceed in November 2026 with an anticipated construction completion date of February 2028; and

WHEREAS, staff is recommending approval of the Amendment 01 for BNSF to award the construction contract to the responsive low bidder from the BNSF solicitation for bids and to provide adequate funding for BNSF retained staff to manage construction activities and the construction contract; and

WHEREAS, Procurement and Contracts staff have confirmed that the price of the Amendment 01 is fair and reasonable and the additional services are reasonable, necessary, and in line with the scope of services; and

WHEREAS, Amendment 01 will increase the current contract amount of $6,965,775 by $2,831,093 for a new Not-to-Exceed Amount of $9,796,868.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Approves Amendment 01 with BNSF Railway for Construction for the Oakley Station Platform Project for $2,831,093 for a total Amount Not-to-Exceed $9,796,868 and Authorizes the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project including Approving Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 4.7

Subject: **Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with BNSF Railway for Procurement, Construction and/or Construction Management Services related to the removal of the Antioch-Pittsburg Station Platform in an Amount Not-to Exceed $450,000 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Projects including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority, Subject to Approval as to Form by General Counsel**

Agenda Action: **ACTION**

Prepared By: Tamika Smith (Director of Rail Services)

Background:

In March 2023, the Authority approved the decommissioning of the Antioch Pittsburg (ACA) Station following the opening of the new Oakley Station. As part of the station transition, the Authority has been coordinating with BNSF Railway (BNSF) regarding the requirements associated with permanently discontinuing passenger service at the ACA Station.

BNSF has advised that removal of the existing passenger platform is required to address safety concerns associated with maintaining an inactive passenger platform adjacent to an active railroad corridor. Additionally, BNSF has indicated that leaving the platform in place could create the appearance that the station remains operational, potentially leading individuals to mistakenly believe passenger service is still available at the location.

BNSF will be responsible for overseeing the platform removal activities, including necessary railroad coordination, construction activities, and restoration of the affected area, as applicable.

The estimated cost to complete the platform removal is $450,000.

At this time staff is recommending that the board adopt a resolution approving an agreement with BNSF for Procurement, Construction and/or Construction Management related to the removal of the Antioch-Pittsburg Station Platform, Subject to Approval as to Form by General Counsel. Staff anticipates using Minor Capital Program funding.

Non-Competitive Procurement

Section 7.3 of the Rail Commission's Procurement Manual (4th Amended), which the Authority adopted in 2015, sets forth the criteria allowing for non-competitive procurements between host railroads.

Pursuant to Sections 7.3.1. "Other approved non-competitive procurements include the following types of procurement of goods and/or services and are exempt from competitive procurement requirements under SJRRC policy" and 7.3.1.1 "Host railroads (UPRR, BNSF, Caltrain, etc.)

maintain exclusive real property rights, regulatory obligations, and operational control over its tracks and right of way. Host railroads are recognized as the sole source capable of executing or approving work within their operating corridors. This exemption applies exclusively to agreements with the host railroad for work performed by their own workforce or contractor, for, for flagging services, preliminary engineering services, right of entry (ROW) permits, easements, construction management services, and construction."

The Procurement and Contracts Department, the Contract/Project Manager, and the Director of Rail Services have confirmed that the procurement qualifies as a non-competitive procurement, budgeted funds are available, and Legal Counsel has been consulted.

Rail Commission staff, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 7.1.2. of the Procurement Manual have determined that this agreement qualifies as non-competitive procurement.

Fiscal Impact:
The project will not exceed the amount of $450,000 using Minor Capital Funding and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority.

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with BNSF Railway for Procurement, Construction and/or Construction Management Services related to the removal of the Antioch-Pittsburg Station Platform in an Amount Not-to Exceed $450,000 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Projects including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority, Subject to Approval as to Form by General Counsel.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH BNSF RAILWAY FOR PROCUREMENT, CONSTRUCTION AND/OR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES RELATED TO THE REMOVAL OF THE ANTIOCH-PITTSBURG STATION PLATFORM IN AN AMOUNT NOT-TO EXCEED $450,000 AND AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE TO NEGOTIATE, AWARD, AND EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECTS INCLUDING ANY AND ALL AMENDMENTS THERETO WITHIN THEIR SPENDING AUTHORITY, SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AS TO FORM BY GENERAL COUNSEL

WHEREAS, in March 2023, the Authority approved the decommissioning of the Antioch Pittsburg (ACA) Station following the opening of the new Oakley Station; and

WHEREAS, as part of the station transition, the Authority has been coordinating with BNSF Railway (BNSF) regarding the requirements associated with permanently discontinuing passenger service at the ACA Station; and

WHEREAS, BNSF has advised that removal of the existing passenger platform is required to address safety concerns associated with maintaining an inactive passenger platform adjacent to an active railroad corridor; and

WHEREAS, BNSF has indicated that leaving the platform in place could create the appearance that the station remains operational, potentially leading individuals to mistakenly believe passenger service is still available at the location; and

WHEREAS, BNSF will be responsible for overseeing the platform removal activities, including necessary railroad coordination, construction activities, and restoration of the affected area, as applicable; and

WHEREAS, the estimated cost to complete the platform removal is $450,000; and

WHEREAS, Rail Commission staff, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 7.1.2. of the Procurement Manual have determined that this agreement qualifies as non-competitive procurement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Approves an Agreement with BNSF Railway for Procurement, Construction and/or Construction Management Services related to the removal of the Antioch-Pittsburg Station Platform in an Amount Not-to Exceed $450,000 and Authorizes the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Projects including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority, Subject to Approval as to Form by General Counsel.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority
Operating Expense Report
September 2026
25% of Budget Year Elapsed

OPERATING EXPENSES	SJJPA FY 25/26 ALLOCATION	EXPENSE THRU SEP 2026	YTD PERCENT EXPENDED
Administrative Expenses			
Salaries/Benefits/Contract Help	3,489,422	1,077,759	31%
Office Expense	14,276	1,648	12%
Subscriptions/Periodicals/Memberships	39,449	1,020	3%
Office Equipment Lease	31,410	2,182	7%
Computer Systems	20,000	-	0%
Communications	5,000	182	4%
Motor Pool	19,250	4,579	24%
Transportation/Travel	103,665	23,856	23%
Training	24,000	2,397	10%
Audits Regulatory Reporting	47,580	2,200	5%
Professional Services Legislative	480,508	53,207	11%
Professional Services Legal	167,280	37,797	23%
Professional Services General	557,942	145,662	26%
Professional Services Grants	125,052	-	0%
Professional Services Planning	150,000	-	0%
Publications/Legal Notices	12,500	554	4%
Professional Services Operations	128,000	-	0%
Communications, Operations	15,190	7,832	52%
Maintenance of Headquarters Structures/Grounds	834,310	206,005	25%
Insurance	337,148	47,758	14%
Insurance Management Fees	17,000	1,750	10%
Security Services/Safety Program	121,066	31,118	25%
Administrative Expenses Subtotal	6,740,047	1,647,505	24%
Marketing Expense			
Marketing & Outreach	1,750,000	416,638	24%
Marketing Expenses Subtotal	1,750,000	416,638	24%
Contract Expense			
San Joaquin Intercity Rail Operations (All Contracts)	109,956,315	18,292,955	17%
Contract Expense Subtotal	109,956,315	18,292,955	17%
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	**118,446,362**	**20,357,099**	**17%**

Prepared by: Nick Perez (Manager of Fiscal Services)

TG | &A

SAN JOAQUIN REGIONAL RAIL COMMISSION

PREPARED BY TAI GINSBERG & ASSOCIATES, LLC



MONTHLY REPORT

LATEST LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY UPDATES

OCT 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OCTOBER PRIORITIES

With Congress in recess throughout October ahead of the midterm elections, federal transportation activity centered on regulatory actions, agency initiatives, and funding announcements. Notable developments included:

- **FRA:** The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced $2.3 billion in Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant funding for freight and passenger rail projects in 45 states and the District of Columbia.

- **FHWA:** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced more than $1.6 billion in Emergency Relief Program funding for repairs to infrastructure damaged by natural disasters and other catastrophic events in 34 states and $426 million in Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects (INFRA) awards across 12 states and $200 million to expand truck parking in 12 states.

- **FTA:** The FTA released a proposal to revise evaluation criteria for a major transit capital grant program, which could give preference to communities with higher birth and marriage rates. Public comments are accepted through mid-November.

- **FAA:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) reached an agreement on a 2.8% pay increase for air traffic controllers. The FAA also proposed five changes to its Part 450 commercial space launch and reentry licensing framework, determined that a Boeing flight management software issue need not be fixed before certification of the 737-10, reinstated its Flight Deck Training program, and issued a first-of-its-kind Special Airworthiness Market Survey Certificate to BETA Technologies for its ALIA eVTOL aircraft.

LOOKING FORWARD

Congress is scheduled to return following the November 3 midterm elections, with Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) appropriations and surface transportation reauthorization expected to remain key priorities. With the current Continuing Resolution (CR) in effect through December 11, lawmakers will face renewed pressure to address federal funding and other 'must-pass' legislation over the coming weeks.

The Senate is scheduled a cloture vote November 9 on a motion to proceed on bipartisan permitting reform legislation. Introduced September 30 by leaders of the Senate Environment and Public Works and Energy and Natural Resources Committees, the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act (S. 5653) seeks to streamline federal permitting processes.

ON THE HILL

PERMITTING REFORM

On September 30, bipartisan leaders of the Senate Environment and Public Works and Energy and Natural Resources Committees introduced the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act (S. 5653), a sweeping permitting reform proposal aimed at accelerating federal environmental reviews, establishing clearer permitting deadlines, and providing greater regulatory certainty for major infrastructure and energy projects.

The legislation has drawn support from infrastructure, construction, and energy industry groups, stating that the reforms could reduce project delays and costs. Environmental advocates have raised concerns that proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other environmental laws could weaken wildlife protections, restrict public and Tribal participation in NEPA, and limit judicial review.

The Senate is scheduled to vote November 9 on cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2347- the legislative vehicle for the permitting reform package. The proposal remains subject to potential amendments as the bill proceeds to full Senate consideration.



ON THE HILL

MODERN SKIES ACT

On September 28, Senator Eric Schmitt (R-MO) introduced the Modern Skies Act (S. 5572), to provide an additional $30 billion to update and modernize the nation's air traffic control systems and airport infrastructure. It includes:

- $10 billion to complete digital architecture: Upgrades air traffic controller safety separation tools, builds a more resilient telecommunications system that powers air traffic control, and unlocks airspace capacity with new air traffic flow management technology and AI technology.
- $10 billion for airport infrastructure: Replacement and modernization of aging air traffic control towers, airport facilities, and other critical infrastructure.
- $10 billion for airport improvements: Establishes a new grant program for transitional airports, which lack access to capital but service between 5 million and 25 million passengers annually.
- Additional FAA flexibility: Authority to reallocate certain existing and proposed funding to support the deployment of modern air traffic control technologies and equipment

This legislation has been referred to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee.

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE (T&I) COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

With House T&I Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) retiring, Representatives David Rouzer (R-NC) and Rick Larsen (D-WA) have emerged as the leading candidates to chair the committee next Congress, depending on which party controls the House. Rouzer, currently chairman of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee, is the leading Republican contender, and appears to face no significant Republican challengers at this point. Larsen, the committee's current ranking Democrat, likewise appears to have broad support among his colleagues. Neither leadership position is formally settled.

ON THE HILL

DCA AIR SAFETY ACT

Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) is eyeing a potential lame-duck aviation safety package or the annual defense authorization bill as a vehicle for the DCA Air Safety Act (S. 5387), which he introduced with Senator Mark Warner (D-VA). In response to the January 2025 midair collision that killed 67 people near Reagan National Airport, the legislation would cap hourly arrivals at 28, reduce flight clustering, and eliminate 30 flight slots over five years. Senator Kaine said he and Warner will push to include the provisions in legislation before the end of the year.

FAA ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOL

A group of House Democrats, led by Representative April McClain Delaney (D-MD), is urging the FAA to pause its rollout of the AI-enabled Strategic Management of Airspace, Routes, and Trajectories (SMART) tool pending answers to safety and oversight questions. The technology is currently deployed at Reagan National, Dulles, and BWI airports, and is intended to support air traffic management and flight scheduling.



USDOT UPDATES

RAIL

BIRTH AND MARRIAGE RATES IN TRANSIT FUNDING

Birth and marriage rates could become factors in determining which communities receive federal transit funding under a proposed FTA policy change. On October 1, the FTA proposed revised evaluation criteria for its Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program, which funds major transit projects, including rail expansions and bus rapid transit. The proposal would increase the federal funding share for projects serving communities with higher birth and marriage rates.

View the proposal here

Public comments are due November 16

NEW REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CROSS-BORDER RAIL

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) proposed new advance reporting requirements for freight and passenger trains crossing U.S. borders. Under the proposal, rail carriers would be required to provide train arrival or departure notices at least 24 hours before reaching the border and submit passenger and crew information before departing the final station or stop approaching the border, expanding CBP's ability to screen cross-border rail traffic.

View the proposal here

Public comments are due December 14

USDOT UPDATES

RAIL

FREIGHT LOGISTICS OPTIMIZATION WORKS ANNUAL MEETING

On October 21, USDOT brought together more than 100 freight and supply chain stakeholders for its 2026 Freight Logistics Optimization Works (FLOW) Annual Meeting. The gathering focused on modernizing America's supply lines to anticipate and prevent delays, bottlenecks, and disruptions–ultimately lowering consumer costs and accelerating the movement of goods.



NEW REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CROSS-BORDER RAIL

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View the winners here

USDOT UPDATES

HIGHWAY

NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT MULTIMODAL FREIGHT & HIGHWAY PROJECTS (INFRA) AWARDS

On October 1, USDOT Secretary Duffy announced $426 million in Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects (INFRA) grants for critical infrastructure projects across 12 states. The awards will support projects aimed at relieving freight bottlenecks, expanding highway capacity and improving safety, including projects in Florida, California, Georgia, Kansas and Louisiana.

On October 14, USDOT announced an additional $200 million in INFRA funding to address a longstanding shortage of safe truck parking along major freight corridors to help reduce driver fatigue and improve highway safety.

View the winners here

EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDING

On October 19, FHWA announced more than $1.6 billion in Emergency Relief Program funding to repair roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure damaged by recent natural disasters and catastrophic events. The funding will support recovery efforts in 34 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

USDOT UPDATES

AVIATION

AVIATION EXPORTS TO CHINA

The Trump administration has slowed export licensing for certain U.S.-made aviation supplies destined for China, including supplies for Chinese aircraft manufacturer COMAC, according to Reuters. The restrictions are part of ongoing trade negotiations aimed at securing greater U.S. access to Chinese rare earth minerals, which are critical to the aerospace and automotive industries.

COMMERCIAL SPACE LAUNCH LICENSING

On October 6, the FAA proposed five regulatory changes to streamline commercial space launch and reentry licensing under its Part 450 framework. Developed with USDOT's new Space Policy Administration, Coordination, and Execution (SPACE) Task Force, the proposals would allow electronic applications, provide greater flexibility in demonstrating compliance with safety standards, and eliminate duplicative reviews.

Public comments are due November 4

View the proposal here

BOEING 737 MAX CERTIFICATION

On October 20, the FAA certified Boeing's 737-10 aircraft after determining that a previously identified flight management software issue would not prevent certification. The issue, which can affect automated flight guidance during aborted landings, remains under review, with Boeing and GE Aerospace developing a software fix.

USDOT UPDATES

AVIATION

FLIGHT DECK TRAINING PROGRAM

On October 14, the FAA announced the reinstatement of its Flight Deck Training program, which allows air traffic controllers to observe flight operations firsthand aboard commercial, general aviation, and military aircraft. Suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, the program aims to strengthen controllers' understanding of cockpit operations and pilot decision-making.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER PAY INCREASE

The FAA and National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) reached a deal on October 16 to provide air traffic controllers with a 2.8% pay increase, retroactive to January 2026. In the Homeland Security and Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026, Congress directed the FAA to tie a pay increase to measurable improvements in operational efficiency, including reforms addressing timekeeping, staffing, and controller reassignments.

ELECTRIC VERTICAL TAKEOFF AND LANDING (EVTOL) OPERATIONS

On October 21, the FAA issued its first Special Airworthiness Market Survey Certificate for an electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, authorizing BETA Technologies to conduct demonstration flights with prospective operators and other participants aboard its ALIA A250 aircraft. The authorization expands opportunities for operational testing but does not permit commercial passenger service.

MARITIME

PORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PIDP) AWARDS

On October 27, Secretary Duffy announced $498 million in Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) funding to 35 projects across 19 states. The funding will modernize America's ports and help secure America's maritime dominance.

View the winners here

UNION PACIFIC AND NORFOLK SOUTHERN MERGER

OVERVIEW

Union Pacific reports that shippers representing more than 30% of its freight volume have expressed support for its proposed acquisition of Norfolk Southern. However, the merger continues to face opposition from major shipper associations, including the National Industrial Transportation League and organizations representing chemical and agricultural producers, citing concerns about higher shipping rates, reduced competition, and potential service disruptions.

Labor opposition has also increased, as the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) became the seventh rail union to oppose the merger. According to labor organizations opposing the proposal, these unions collectively represent more than 70% of unionized workers at the two railroads.

The proposed merger remains under review by the Surface Transportation Board (STB), with public comments, protests, and requests for conditions due November 18.





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San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 5

Subject: **Caltrans Fleet Plan Update**
Agenda Action: **INFORMATION / PRESENTATION**
Prepared By: Tamika Smith (Director of Rail Services)

Background:
Staff will provide an update regarding the Caltrans Fleet Plan at the November 20, 2026 Board meeting.

Fiscal Impact:
There is no fiscal impact at this time.

Recommendation:
This is an information item only. There is no action required.

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 6

Subject: **Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 01 to the 2025/2026 San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Annual Business Plan for State-Provided Equipment in the amount of $15,383,366, increasing the FFY26 budget to $46,060,137, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Execute Any and All Documents Associated with the Master Fund Transfer Agreement Supplements for Operations, Administration, and Marketing Budgets for Fiscal Year 2026/2027**

Agenda Action: **ACTION**

Prepared By: Angela Miller (Fiscal Compliance and Capital Budget Officer)

Background:

The transition of maintenance responsibilities for the State-Provided Northern California intercity passenger rail fleet (Legacy Equipment) was a multiyear effort that began in 2023 and was completed in July of 2025. The transition represented a change in the Maintainer role from Amtrak to TransitAmerica Service, Inc (TASI), as well as a new framework that addresses equipment availability, day to day readiness, better benchmarks for evaluating equipment condition, clearly defined maintenance requirements, and transparent costing for the owners of the assets (Caltrans) and the services (Capitol Corridor and Gold Runner) that manage day to day operations.

At the September 18, 2026, Special Authority Meeting, staff shared an update regarding the status of the maintenance of equipment (MoE) program transition. The update highlighted that in its first year, the MoE program faced challenges from a rapidly growing and increasingly complex fleet, aging Legacy Equipment with significant deferred maintenance needs, and limited vehicle availability due to high service demands and harsh operating conditions. Despite these constraints, the program has made measurable progress by directing more funding toward vehicle maintenance and parts rather than overhead, increasing bi-level car availability, implementing a more efficient in-house major incident damage repair process, and returning long-term out-of-service vehicles to operation, all of which have improved fleet reliability and supported expanded passenger service.

To support the MoE program, the Authority originally requested $35,900,000 for Legacy Equipment maintenance in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY25/26) Annual Business Plan. However, unforeseen delays in the transition of mechanical maintenance responsibilities from Amtrak required the redirection of $4,065,936 to Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) to satisfy outstanding FY24/25 Amtrak costs, reducing the equipment maintenance budget allocation from the State to $31,834,064.

While actual mechanical program expenditures exceeded the approved budget, the reduction in available funding further amplified the budgetary shortfall. The cumulative mechanical program funding awarded for Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (FFY24)24 through FFY26 totaled $62,229,189, compared with $77,612,555 in expenditures for the Venture and Legacy Equipment fleets, resulting in a supplemental program requirement of $15,383,366.

FFY24 Contract Budget:	$5,300,000
FFY25 Contract Budget:	$25,095,125
FFY26 Contract Budget:	$31,834,064
Total Funding Awarded	**$62,229,189**
Ventures Lifetime to Date	($47,797,992)
Legacy Lifetime to Date	($29,814,563)
State Provided Equipment Lifetime to Date	($77,612,555)
Supplemental Program Requirement	**($15,383,366)**

From the beginning, the MoE transition was understood to require a period of increased financial and operational investment, given the state of the Legacy Equipment and the new Venture cars increasing the total equipment pool by 49 units. The cost of maintaining equipment in daily revenue service is different from the cost of restoring equipment affected by accumulated wear, deferred investment, and long standing out of service costs, as well as, initial inventory builds. The Venture cars had not yet been deployed in other state supported routes and limited costing information was available for a baseline.

The adopted annual business plan mechanical budget reflected these known requirements based on historical actual costs for “like kind” ACE bilevel equipment. While the costs that were planned and budgeted for had foundation and historically accurate inputs the condition of the equipment was assessed as routine, and not corrective or substantially increased to address long standing state of good repair rehabilitation. Major component deficiencies/replacement, safety/ADA campaigns and long-term lifecycle needs were not included in the budget.

While the near-term financial requirements are significant the proposed FFY26 budget of $46,060,137 represents a reduction of $5,293,057 or 10.3% of the combined Authority/CCJPA FFY25 actuals under TASI and Amtrak during the final phase of the transition. The investment is critical in facilitating the long-term objective to move from a largely reactive maintenance environment toward a more transparent, planned, and measurable program of equipment to serve the growth of the services. The investment also better informs the scope and prioritization of mid-life overhauls competitive procurements in the coming years alongside a state-wide analysis of how procure new equipment that is homogonous with existing fleet and dispose of units that cannot be otherwise used in a meaningful way.

The supplemental funding requirement reflects the financial impact of transitioning a complex equipment pool with substantially higher preexisting maintenance and asset recovery needs than considered in the initial period for the Capitols and Gold Runner services. The Authority’s responsibility now extends beyond maintaining equipment for daily revenue service and is centered around condition recovery, long term sustainability, and direct partnership with Caltrans for a program that is continually progressing in terms of fleet condition, rehabilitation, replacement and a sufficiently funded financially transparent maintenance program.

Fiscal Impact:
Adoption of the Amendment would increase the FY2026 Annual Business Plan allocation to $130,243,957, subject to funding by the State.

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Approving Amendment 01 to the 2025/2026 San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Annual Business Plan for State-Provided Equipment in the amount of $15,383,366, increasing the FFY budget to $46,060,137, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Execute Any and All Documents Associated with the Master Fund Transfer Agreement Supplements for Operations, Administration, and Marketing Budgets for Fiscal Year 2026/2027.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENT 01 TO THE 2025/2026 SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN FOR STATE-PROVIDED EQUIPMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF $15,383,366, INCREASING THE FFY26 BUDGET TO $46,060,137, AND AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE MASTER FUND TRANSFER AGREEMENT SUPPLEMENTS FOR OPERATIONS, ADMINISTRATION, AND MARKETING BUDGETS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027

WHEREAS, the transition of maintenance responsibilities for the State-Provided Northern California intercity passenger rail fleet (Legacy Equipment) was a multiyear effort that began in 2023 and was fully completed in July of 2025; and

WHEREAS, the change represented a change in the Maintainer role with TransitAmerica Service, Inc (TASI), as well as a new framework addressing equipment availability, day to day readiness, better benchmarks for evaluating equipment condition, clearly defined maintenance requirements, and transparent costing for the owners of the assets (Caltrans) and the services (Capitol Corridor and Gold Runner) that manage day to day operations; and

WHEREAS, at the September 18, 2026, Special Authority Meeting, staff shared an update regarding the status of the maintenance of equipment (MoE) program transition; and

WHEREAS, the update highlighted that in its first year, the MoE program faced challenges from a rapidly growing and increasingly complex fleet, aging Legacy Equipment with significant deferred maintenance needs, and limited vehicle availability due to high service demands and harsh operating conditions; and

WHEREAS, to support the MoE program, the Authority originally requested $35,900,000 for Legacy Equipment maintenance in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 (FY25/26) Annual Business Plan; and

WHEREAS, unforeseen delays in the transition of mechanical maintenance responsibilities from Amtrak required the redirection of $4,065,936 to Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) to satisfy outstanding FY24/25 Amtrak costs, reducing the equipment maintenance budget allocation to $31,834,064; and

WHEREAS, while actual mechanical program expenditures exceeded the approved budget, the reduction in available funding further amplified the budgetary shortfall; and

WHEREAS, the cumulative mechanical program funding awarded for FY23/24 through FY25/26 totaled $62,229,189, compared with $77,612,555 in expenditures for the Venture and Legacy Equipment fleets, resulting in a supplemental program requirement of $15,383,366; and

WHEREAS, while the costs that were planned and budgeted for had foundation and historically accurate inputs the condition of the Legacy Equipment was assessed as routine, and not corrective or substantially increased to address long standing state of good repair rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, major component deficiencies/replacement, safety/ADA campaigns, and long-term lifecycle needs were not included in the budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Approves Amendment 01 to the 2025/2026 San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Annual Business Plan for State-Provided Equipment in the amount of $15,383,366, increasing the FFY26 budget to $46,060,137, and Authorizes the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Execute Any and All Documents Associated with the Master Fund Transfer Agreement Supplements for Operations, Administration, and Marketing Budgets for Fiscal Year 2026/2027.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 7

Subject:	**Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Compass Group USA, Inc. dba Canteen, for the Food and Beverage Program, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project Including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority**
Agenda Action:	**ACTION**
Prepared By:	Marissa Cabusas (Onboard Experience Manager) and Autumn Gowan (Procurement and Contracts Manager)

Background:
In 2024, the State requested that San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (the Authority) identify measures to reduce overall operating costs, and the food and beverage program was one of the areas that required immediate attention. The Authority significantly reduced the previous program costs and worked directly with a third-party vendor to benefit the service by being able to track key performance indicator (KPI)'s, provide flexibility in offerings to keep within a defined budget, and accumulate the lessons learned needed to plan and execute an Industry Day for the program.

The Authority introduced a third-party food and beverage provisioning pilot with Compass Group USA, Inc. (Canteen) for approval by the Authority board on November 22, 2024. The Authority Board provided approval on November 22, 2024 and the Authority entered into agreement 25-J-71-00 on January 21, 2025. After the Notice to Proceed (NTP) was communicated, Canteen and the Authority started addressing the rising onboard food service costs with Amtrak and establish a consistent complimentary snack and beverage program. The pilot shifted inventory procurement and commissary functions to Canteen while retaining Amtrak's services for onboard staffing. Canteen's responsibilities include product procurement, scheduled deliveries and train loading in Bakersfield, inventory management, reporting, and coordination with agency staff and Amtrak.

In May of 2025, the Authority officially launched the pilot program with Canteen for its food and beverage program to create a baseline of costs for the entire program, which has historically been managed by Amtrak and inclusive of Onboard Staff, commissary, regional and national charges, inventory. The pilot program has removed the commissary charge, lowered the regional and national charges, and replaced the inventory charges. Since the launch of the pilot, there have been some additions to the scope of Canteen, which have expanded their responsibilities from not only provisioning, but also for loading trains, thus causing an increase in their labor and management fees.

The goal was to run the pilot for one (1) year to develop a business case for the market that could lead to an industry day, which could lead to competitive bidding. Since the pilot did not officially start until May of 2025, it had not been long enough to move to the next phase of the pilot. For the pilot program to continue, a new agreement was required since the 25-J-71-00 agreement did not come with option years. The Authority brought the new agreement with Canteen to extend the Food and Beverage Program Pilot for the Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026 to the Authority board on November 21, 2025. The

Authority board provided approval on November 21, 2025 and the Authority entered into agreement 26-J-55-00 on January 1, 2026.

Since January 1, 2026, the Authority has continued working with Canteen and Amtrak to improve the Gold Runner Food and Beverage Program, strengthen inventory controls, and develop service options within the program's budget. During this period, the Authority's work expanded beyond evaluating complimentary snack stations to preparing for cart service and future onboard sales. These changes required coordination on equipment, product storage, inventory procedures, onboard staffing, and training. To support this transition, the Authority worked with Canteen and Amtrak to develop cold beverage storage procedures and inventory tracking to better monitor product availability and usage. Staff also coordinated the selection and modification of service carts, developed operating procedures, and conducted onboard staff training in September 2026. The complimentary cart service pilot began on October 1, 2026, allowing staff to observe service delivery, obtain passenger and onboard staff feedback, and identify operational adjustments. As of November 9, 2026, complimentary cart service has been implemented across the full fleet.

Justification:
Approval is requested under Section 7.1.1.5 of the SJRRC Procurement Manual to continue Canteen's food and beverage provisioning services from January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2027.

Canteen has supported the provisioning pilot since its launch in May 2025 and has established the procurement, delivery, train-loading, and inventory processes supporting the complimentary onboard program. When the pilot was first launched, it was with the intention of providing enough time for the Authority to work through regulatory and operation challenges associated with introducing vending into the service. The timeline for that process has continued to extend causing a need to continue offering complimentary service in addition to exploring alternative service models, including cold beverage storage, inventory tracking, and complimentary cart service, while developing future vending and revenue cart service options.

Implementation of onboard vending progressed more slowly than originally anticipated, requiring staff to pivot to an interim complimentary cart service pilot, which began October 1, 2026. This left approximately three (3) months before the agreement expires to evaluate the pilot, define updated provisioning requirements, and arrange a transition to a replacement provider. Work continues on vending equipment coordination and installation planning, along with the procedures and approvals needed to transition to revenue cart service. Canteen's continued provisioning, delivery, train loading, and inventory support remain necessary as these service changes are implemented and evaluated.

Other food and beverage suppliers may be available; however, replacing Canteen during this transition would require a separate procurement process to identify, evaluate, and secure an alternative provider, followed by establishment of delivery, loading, and inventory procedures in coordination with Amtrak. These activities would require additional staff time and could increase procurement and transition costs. Delays in securing and onboarding a replacement could interrupt the availability of complimentary snacks and beverages, negatively affecting the passenger experience, while also not be in a position that the Authority could find another vendor that can fulfill all of the requirements that the program has evolved to fulfill.

Actions Taken:
Staff reviewed the current Canteen agreement, which was extended beginning January 1, 2026 and expires December 31, 2026, to assess provisioning needs and the feasibility of transitioning services to another provider.

Staff assessed the operational requirements for a transition, including reliable provisioning in Bakersfield, platform access during designated delivery windows, direct coordination with Amtrak Onboard Services (OBS) and the Authority staff, inventory tracking, cold beverage storage, and costs within the agency's budget. Given the timing of the pilot and evolving service requirements, staff determined that there was insufficient time to complete a comparative vendor review and select, onboard, and verify the readiness of a replacement provider before the agreement expires without risking service disruption. Staff did not complete a comparative vendor review and has not determined that other providers are incapable of meeting these requirements.

The proposed one-year term provides time to complete the complimentary cart service pilot, transition to revenue-generating cart service, introduce onboard vending, and train OBS staff on established procedures. Maintaining Canteen's existing delivery and inventory processes during these changes supports consistent product availability and replenishment while staff implements and evaluates each service stage. Staff recommends the two-year agreement to maintain provisioning continuity, support staff training, and minimize disruptions to the passenger experience as the onboard food and beverage program evolves. This operating experience would allow the agency to develop a more clearly defined scope for a future competitive procurement that would address a blended service model that would include vending management, cart service, as well as a complementary program to the future comfort class program.

Non-Competitive Procurement:
Section 7.1 of SJRRC's Procurement Manual, adopted by Authority 2015, and amended in October 2026, sets forth the criteria allowing for sole source purchases. Pursuant to Sections 7.1.1.2 "The sole source must be the only known source of supply with the capability of meeting the bona fide specification requirements." And 7.1.1.5 "[Where] [t]here are other sources of supply but because of financial, schedule, performance, and other factors a single source of supply is immune from effective competition. Such an immunity is created when the award to a different contractor would create a waste of SJRRC funds resulting from a substantial increase in support costs, a substantial schedule delay not owing to poor planning by SJRRC, an unacceptable technical risk towards completion of a project (or continuation of a warranty), or substantial increases in lifecycle costs."

At this time, it is in the Authority's best interest to approve a sole source agreement with Canteen for these services based on the following:

Other food and beverage suppliers may be available; however, replacing Canteen during this transition would require additional staff time and could increase procurement and transition costs. Delays in securing and onboarding a replacement would impact passenger's experience and the food and beverage program.

The Procurement and Contracts Department and a Director have confirmed that the procurement qualifies as a sole source purchase, budgeted funds are available, and Legal Counsel has been consulted.

Authority staff, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 7.1.2.2.1 of the Procurement Manual and verified by General Counsel, have determined that this agreement qualifies as non-competitive procurements.

Fiscal Impact:
Expenses and Revenues for this agreement are identified in the FY 2026-2027 Operating Budget.

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Compass Group USA, Inc. dba Canteen, for the Food and Beverage Program, and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project Including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH COMPASS GROUP USA, INC. DBA CANTEEN, FOR THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROGRAM, AND AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, AWARD, AND EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECT INCLUDING ANY AND ALL AMENDMENTS THERETO WITHIN THEIR SPENDING AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, in 2024, the State requested that San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (the Authority) identify measures to reduce overall operating costs, and the food and beverage program was one of the areas that required immediate attention; and

WHEREAS, the Authority introduced a third-party food and beverage provisioning pilot with Compass Group USA, Inc. (Canteen) for approval by the Authority board on November 22, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Authority board provided approval on November 22, 2024 and the Authority entered into agreement 25-J-71-00 on January 21, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Canteen's responsibilities include product procurement, scheduled deliveries and train loading in Bakersfield, inventory management, reporting, and coordination with agency staff and Amtrak; and

WHEREAS, for the pilot program to continue, a new agreement was required since the 25-J-71-00 agreement did not come with option years; and

WHEREAS, the Authority brought the new agreement with Canteen to extend the Food and Beverage Program Pilot for the Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026 to the Authority board on November 21, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Authority board provided approval on November 21, 2025 and the Authority entered into agreement 26-J-55-00 on January 1, 2026; and

WHEREAS, since January 1, 2026, the Authority has continued working with Canteen and Amtrak to improve the Gold Runner Food and Beverage Program, strengthen inventory controls, and develop service options within the program’s budget; and

WHEREAS, it is in the Authority's best interest to approve a sole source agreement with Canteen for these services based on the following:

- Other food and beverage suppliers may be available; however, replacing Canteen during this transition would require additional staff time and could increase procurement and transition costs;
- Delays in securing and onboarding a replacement would impact passenger’s experience and the food and beverage program;

WHEREAS, the Procurement and Contracts Department and a Director have confirmed that the procurement qualifies as a sole source purchase, budgeted funds are available, and Legal Counsel has been consulted; and

WHEREAS, Authority staff, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 7.1.2.2.1 of the Procurement Manual and verified by General Counsel, have determined that this agreement qualifies as non-competitive procurements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Approves an Agreement with Compass Group USA, Inc. dba Canteen, for the Food and Beverage Program, and Authorizes the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project Including Any and All Amendments thereto within Their Spending Authority.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 8

Subject:	**Adopt a Resolution Accepting the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report**
Agenda Action:	**ACTION**
Prepared By:	Dan Leavitt (Manager of Regional Initiatives)

Background:

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) is responsible for managing, improving, and planning for the future of the Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service (operated by Amtrak), which runs between Bakersfield in the south and Oakland and Sacramento in the north. A large network of Thruway Bus routes connects Gold Runner passengers to destinations throughout California and into Nevada. This Thruway Bus network is integral to the success of the Gold Runner service, with a significant portion of the Gold Runner service's ridership supported by Thruway Bus connections to Los Angeles and other major population centers as an extension of the rail network.

The Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study undertaken by the Authority was intended to be tactical in nature and focused on delivering specific, feasible, and short-term recommendations for improving the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes/network. The culmination of this effort is the "Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report" that was added to the Authority's Gold Runner Thruway Bus webpage (https://sjjpa.com/gold-runner-thruway-bus-study/) on September 23, 2026. The webpage also includes details about the Thruway Bus Study, and how to provide input to the study and the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report (Draft Report).

The Draft Report concludes that the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network is performing exceptionally well and is a valuable part of California's intercity transportation system. Right-sizing decisions made during and following the pandemic have resulted in a cost-recovery ratio of 119% for the overall network while retaining most of the network's ridership. This is a strong outcome given industry-wide operating cost increases experienced since the pandemic. This success provides the foundation for the recommendations in this study, which aims to build on an already effective system through targeted, tactical interventions. The greatest need for improvement lies with Route 15A (Merced – Yosemite) and Route 7 (Martinez – Arcata), where cost effectiveness remains below desired levels, while the broader network presents opportunities to further strengthen performance through targeted service adjustments, improved connections, enhanced data and reliability, and partnerships with local and regional transit and private intercity bus providers.

Overall, the network should be viewed very positively, with this study providing a practical framework to build on existing successes, address key areas for improvement, and capitalize on opportunities to further enhance an already successful program. By continuing to make strategic, data-informed decisions, and pursuing partnerships that can expand connectivity and leverage additional funding, the Authority can build on the progress already achieved and ensure that the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network remains a reliable, convenient, and cost-effective extension of the rail system for communities throughout California.

Summaries of agency and public input received on the Draft Report by October 21, 2026, via the Thruway Bus Study webpage, and e-mails to Authority staff are included as three attachments to this staff report (letters/e-mails, webpage comments, and survey responses). Authority staff have also had discussions with a number of partner agencies including Caltrans, Amtrak, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy County Working Group (with members from all San Joaquin Valley Regional Transportation Planning Agencies), Butte County Association of Governments, Humboldt Transit Authority, Mendocino County Transit, Merced Association of Governments, and Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities.

A large number of the comments received on the Draft Report (letters from the City of Eureka and Coalition for Responsible Transportation, a number of survey responses, and nearly all of the webpage comments) are in support of the Route 7 service (between Arcata and Martinez) and opposed to any further reductions of the Route 7 service. Other comments received included desires for more Thruway Bus frequency, better on-time performance, shorter travel times, more stops, more routes, more advertising for the network/routes, additional service on holidays and weekends, utilizing the Sales Force Transit Center in San Francisco, reduced fares, better safety, improved amenities (including better bike racks on buses), improved information regarding the service/routes, prioritized boarding, return regular service to the Central Coast, better connectivity to other modes of transit, improved safety, more bus-only ticketing, business class on buses, availability for food at stops, and express bus services, and a number of other requests/comments.

Based on agency and public input, staff is recommending a number of edits to the version of the Draft Report that was released on September 23, 2026. These include significant edits to the text and timing of the Route 7 recommendations. The edits are shown in track-changes (shown as red/underlined text) on the Draft Report dated November 13, 2026, that is included as an attachment to this staff report. This revised version of the Draft Report was also uploaded to the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Thruway Bus Webpage on November 16, 2026. Staff requests the Authority adopt this revised version of the Draft Report. If this revised Draft Report is adopted by the Authority, staff will produce a clean version of the report (that does not highlight the edits based on agency/public input) and upload it to the Authority webpage as the “Final Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report” dated November 20, 2026.

Fiscal Impact:
There is no fiscal impact.

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Accepting the November 13, 2026 Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE GOLD RUNNER THRUWAY BUS STUDY REPORT

WHEREAS, The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) is responsible for managing, improving, and planning for the future of the Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service (operated by Amtrak), which runs between Bakersfield in the south and Oakland and Sacramento in the north; and

WHEREAS, the Thruway Bus network is integral to the success of the Gold Runner service, with a significant portion of the Gold Runner service's ridership supported by Thruway Bus connections to Los Angeles and other major population centers as an extension of the rail network; and

WHEREAS, the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study undertaken by the Authority was intended to be tactical in nature and focused on delivering specific, feasible, and short-term recommendations for improving the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes/network; and

WHEREAS, the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report (Draft Report) released on September 23, 2026, concludes that the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network is performing exceptionally well and is a valuable part of California's intercity transportation system; and

WHEREAS, summaries of agency and public input received on the Draft Report by October 21, 2026, via the Thruway Bus Study webpage, and e-mails to Authority staff are included as three attachments to this resolution (letters/e-mails, webpage comments, and survey responses); and

WHEREAS, based on agency and public input, staff is recommending a number of edits to the version of the Draft Report that was released on September 23, 2026. The edits are shown in track-changes (shown as red/underlined text) on the Draft Report dated November 13, 2026, that is included as an attachment to this resolution; and

WHEREAS, pending approval, staff will produce a clean version of the November 13, 2026 revised report (that does not highlight the edits based on agency/public input) and upload it to the Authority webpage as the "Final Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report" dated November 20, 2026; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Accepts the November 13, 2026 revised Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report attached to this resolution and incorporated herein.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair







Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report

November 13, 2026

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

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Executive Summary

Conclusion

The Gold Runner Thruway Bus network is performing exceptionally well and is a valuable part of California's intercity transportation system. Right-sizing decisions made during and following the pandemic have resulted in a cost-recovery ratio of 119% for the overall network while retaining most of the network's ridership. This is a strong outcome given industry-wide operating cost increases experienced since the pandemic. This success provides the foundation for the recommendations in this study, which aims to build on an already effective system through targeted, tactical interventions. The greatest need for improvement lies with Route 15A (Merced – Yosemite) and Route 7 (Martinez – Arcata), where cost effectiveness remains below desired levels, while the broader network presents opportunities to further strengthen performance through targeted service adjustments, improved connections, enhanced data and reliability, and partnerships with local and regional transit and private intercity bus providers. Overall, the network should be viewed very positively, with this study providing a practical framework to build on existing successes, address key areas for improvement, and capitalize on opportunities to further enhance an already successful program. By continuing to make strategic, data-informed decisions and pursuing partnerships that can expand connectivity and leverage additional funding, SJJPA can build on the progress already achieved and ensure that the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network remains a reliable, convenient, and cost-effective extension of the rail system for communities throughout California.

Background

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) is responsible for managing, improving, and planning for the future of the Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service (operated by Amtrak), which runs between Bakersfield in the south and Oakland and Sacramento in the north.

SJJPA is also responsible for management and service decisions for a large network of Thruway Bus routes connecting Gold Runner passengers to destinations throughout California and into Nevada. The Gold Runner Thruway Bus Network is the largest Thruway bus network in the Amtrak system, based on the scale of daily bus miles operated and passenger volume. This Thruway Bus Network functions as an extension of the Gold Runner rail network and is an integral component of the success of the Gold Runner service, with over 55% of Gold Runner rail passengers utilizing Gold Runner Thruway Bus connections to Los Angeles and other major population centers. Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes also provide connecting service to California's two other intercity passenger rail

services (Capitol Corridor, and Pacific Surfliner) and connect with numerous local/regional passenger rail and transit services throughout the state. Amtrak manages daily operations of most routes through private contracted operators, with funding flowing from Caltrans through SJJPA. The bus network is integrated with the rail service through coordinated connections, guaranteed seating, and integrated ticketing. In Fiscal Year 2025 (July '24-June '25), the Gold Runner Thruway Bus system carried approximately 627,000 passengers.

The network has evolved significantly in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic sharply reduced ridership, prompting SJJPA to modify several routes to preserve the network's overall viability by reducing operational costs on underperforming routes while maintaining services in strong ridership corridors and markets. These measures included elimination and shortening of certain routes, along with service reductions on others. Ridership rebounds in recent years are now pointing to opportunities to increase service levels on certain routes and look to expand the network strategically to meet the level of demand while ensuring continued cost effectiveness.

Additionally, SJJPA worked with Senator Allen and Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada (RailPAC) to pass Senate Bill 742 (SB 742) in 2019, which aimed to remove portions of the California Government Code that required state-supported Amtrak Thruway bus passengers to have a rail trip as part of their ticket. Enabling Thruway Bus ticketing for bus-only trips creates additional opportunities to increase the reach and utility of the network to passengers across the state while also potentially boosting cost-effectiveness and access to harder to reach rural parts of the state. Bus-only ticketing is implemented on a route-by-route basis and has now been implemented on all but three routes in the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network.

Looking to the future, SJJPA is pursuing strategic partnerships with regional agencies, private intercity bus operators, and stakeholders to enhance performance, expand connectivity, and pursue additional local, regional, and state funding sources. These efforts additionally include positioning the Gold Runner to integrate with the California High-Speed Rail Authority's Merced–Bakersfield Early Operating Segment, anticipated to begin service by 2033.

Goals

Given the size and importance of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network, there is a need for SJJPA to investigate the existing routes, performance, and governance of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network to ensure that the service provided achieves the following goals:

1. A preferred and convenient option for intercity travelers that connects to Gold Runner rail services and increases Gold Runner ridership while driving mode shift away from the highway network.
2. A cost-effective service that is responsive to structural shifts in demand, highly constrained Public Transportation Account (PTA) funding, and increasing costs of providing service (including maximized utilization of available funding from partner agencies for Thruway service benefits).
3. Effective business models/governance structure to oversee and administer the Thruway Bus service.
4. Providing safe, reliable, and competitive connectivity to key travel markets throughout California – particularly for transit-dependent residents (focusing on near-term improvements/changes)

In order to advance these goals, SJJPA initiated the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study in May 2026 as a tactical effort focused on short-term, feasible recommendations for studying and improving the network in both the near-term and long-term. This study proposes network-wide and route-specific recommendations, with a focus on actionable items and next steps for further study during the current and next fiscal years.

Cost Effectiveness of the Existing Network

Cost effectiveness is a key metric used to evaluate the performance of the network as well as of each route. This metric can be determined based on each route's ability to achieve the *break-even point*, defined under California Government Code Section 14035.2a(3) as: the point at which combined revenue from bus and connecting train trips meets or exceeds the cost of operating the corresponding Thruway Bus route. This is measured through the cost recovery ratio, calculated by dividing combined ticket revenue by operating costs; a ratio of 100% or above indicates the route has reached the break-even point and is therefore considered cost effective. The metric is valuable because it reflects both a route's ability to meet market demand and its capacity to recover operating costs through revenue.

SJJPA has successfully addressed cost effectiveness concerns in recent years through strategic route-by-route interventions, responding to ridership decreases during COVID as well as increasing operating costs. **Table ES-1** below outlines the latest available data on cost effectiveness for all routes, revealing that through its tactical approach, SJJPA has successfully ensured the cost effectiveness of most of its Thruway Bus routes. Furthermore, the overall network is cost-effective with a cost recovery ratio of 119%.

Looking to the future, it is important that SJJPA ensure that cost effectiveness of the network remains stable despite rising costs and strains on State PTA funds, which currently constitute the primary operational funding source for the Gold Runner service. On the other hand, ridership rebounds in recent years combined with good performance on most of the routes point to opportunities to increase service levels on certain routes and expand the network strategically to meet the level of demand while ensuring continued cost effectiveness. Recommendations as part of this study outline a variety of interventions that SJJPA can pursue to this end – both focusing on interventions to boost the ability of poor performing routes to recover costs, as well as looking to ways to bolster the performance of already high-performing routes.

Table ES-1: *Annual ridership (FY 25) and cost effectiveness data (Oct 2024 - Sep 2025) by route*[1]

No.	Route	Annual Route Ridership *(Oct '24 – Sep '25)*	Annual CA System Revenue[2] *(Oct '24 – Sep '25)*	Annual Operating Cost for CA[3] *(Oct '24 – Sep '25)*	Cost Recovery Ratio *(Oct '24 – Sep '25)*
1	Fresno – Bakersfield – San Diego	221,770	$12,691,271	$6,803,509	187%
1C	Bakersfield – Santa Monica	33,248	$1,343,055	$1,217,738	110%
3	Stockton – Redding	159,008	$6,705,183	$3,445,185	195%
3R	Chico – Redding	6,533	$193,035	$426,480	45%
6	Stockton – Santa Cruz	27,358	$1,055,169	$683,677	154%
7	Martinez – Arcata	46,467	$1,971,053	$3,246,049	61%
10	Santa Barbara – Las Vegas	32,382	$745,348	$123,575	603%
15[1]	Yosemite – Mammoth Lakes				
15A[1]	Merced – Yosemite	4,066	$198,271	$406,457	49%
15B[1]	Fresno – Yosemite				
18A	Hanford – Santa Maria	10,390	$193,679	$85,399	227%
18B	Hanford – Visalia (KART)	Not Available	Not Available	~$75,000	Not Available
19	Bakersfield – San Bernardino	41,390	$2,107,336	$1,743,350	121%
40	Merced – San Jose	4,707 *(Jan-Apr '26)*	Not Available	$244,355 *(Jan-Mar '26)*	Not Available
99	Oakland – San Francisco	47,564	$2,242,054	$544,557	412%

[1] Ridership and cost data is for Route 15A. Routes 15 and 15B have very low ridership and YARTS receives the bus ticket portion of the revenue from train passengers rather than a set contract amount for these routes.
[2] Includes both Thruway Bus Route and associated California train revenue (Gold Runner, Capitol Corridor, and Pacific Surfliner) for connecting bus passengers
[3] Includes bus contract payments and Amtrak payments by CA. For Routes 10 and 18A the bus operator pays most of the costs to operate these services through their interline agreements with Amtrak, but receives most of the bus ticket revenue from Amtrak.

Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this report identify a range of opportunities to maintain and build upon the existing success of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network. Because these recommendations vary in their urgency, complexity, and readiness to advance, they have been organized into three tiers to help SJJPA prioritize its efforts and establish a clear path forward. Prioritization considers the anticipated benefit to the network, the level of coordination or additional analysis required, and the appropriate timeframe for advancing each recommendation.

The three tiers are intended to distinguish between actions that can be addressed immediately, opportunities that warrant focused study in the near term, and longer-term strategies that may depend on future conditions or additional planning. This approach allows SJJPA to focus resources on the most urgent priorities while continuing to evaluate opportunities that may strengthen the network over time.

- **Tier 1 – Immediate Priorities**: These recommendations represent the immediate actions that should be advanced by the end of 2026. They generally include actions that are sufficiently defined to move forward now and where very near-term coordination, decision-making, or implementation is required.
- **Tier 2A + 2B – 2027 Priorities:** Tier 2A recommendations should be studied and assessed during the first half of 2027 and Tier 2B recommendations should be studied and assessed during the second half of 2027. They may require additional analysis, coordination with operating or transit partners, monitoring service performance, or further development before a decision on implementation can be made. Advancing these considerations will help SJJPA determine which opportunities are most appropriate to pursue.
- **Tier 3 – Longer-Term Priorities:** These recommendations represent longer-term opportunities that should remain under consideration as the Gold Runner network evolves. These recommendations provide a longer-term planning framework without requiring immediate action.

Table ES-2 below provides the full list of recommendations organized by tier.

Table ES-2: *Tiered List of Recommendations*

	Route	Recommendation
Tier 1	General	Update the Gold Runner webpage to improve the accuracy, clarity, and consistency of passenger information and provide additional information regarding routes and connectivity to other passenger rail and transit services, universities and colleges, and other key destinations on its website and marketing materials.
	General	Work with partner public transportation agencies and private operators whose services connect with Gold Runner Thruway Bus stops to try to get them to better support, promote, and market these connections.
	General	Update all stop signage and provide additional information alongside QR codes at all stops for passengers to access route schedules and ticketing.
	General	Improve online information regarding guaranteed transfer policies and passenger protections.
	General	Increase marketing and advertising of key destinations, including universities and colleges and destinations like Yosemite National Park.
	General	Utilize electronic announcements on Gold Runner trains to send advertising messages to passengers, such as reminders of connecting locations to destinations such as Yosemite.
	1	Increase marketing and advertising for the Thruway Bus connection to LAX FlyAway at Union Station and see if LAX Flyaway could get into Amtrak ticketing.
	1	Partner with the LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority to have them assist in marketing the Route 1 connections to the Pacific Surfliner.
	1C	Work with UCLA to better promote the Gold Runner service to UCLA.
	3	Coordinate with BCAG, Amtrak, and Caltrans on implementing a potential partnership to have BCAG operate the Thruway Bus service between Sacramento and Chico in advance of BCAG's proposed start of service in early 2027. Coordinate service realignment to best serve the Stockton-Sacramento-Davis corridor.
	5	Monitor ridership and revenue performance and timed train connections. Continuous active marketing measures throughout FY 26/27 and track performance.
	18	Strongly encourage KART to secure a ticketing agreement with Amtrak and to operate the Hanford to Visalia service on Sundays and holidays.
	18	Update the Gold Runner website to include KART service between Hanford and Visalia.
	19	Develop partnerships with Metrolink and other transit providers to help promote service and evaluate Route 19 arrival and departure times at Metrolink stops to achieve easy transfers.
	19	Investigate the possibility of moving the Pasadena stop to be located at the Del Mar Pasadena Gold Line Station or to the Pasadena Memorial Park Station, and the feasibility of relocating the Claremont station approximately one mile east to Montclair.
	40	Conduct targeted marketing for Route 40, particularly for the Los Banos and Gilroy markets, which were previously not served by Gold Runner, as well as Merced and San Jose, where reduced trip times make these more viable markets for Gold Runner.
	40	Market the connection to Santa Cruz to/from Route 40.

Deleted: 7

Deleted: Study feasibility of alternative service patterns and service reductions based on day of week and seasonality.

	40	Work with Amtrak to get ticketing issues fixed for markets from Route 40 and Santa Cruz Metro's Route 17 to enable ticketing to Yosemite via YARTS (15, 15A, & 15B) and then provide marketing between these routes to Yosemite.

Tier 2A	General	Ensure updated cost-effectiveness data is received from Amtrak on a semi-annual basis for all Gold Runner Thruway Bus Routes.
	General	Explore partnerships with other transit providers as both future contract partners and for better timed service connections.
	General	Work with Caltrans to have an integrated statewide passenger information system coordinating information related to rail, Thruway bus, and connecting transit services developed.
	General	Increase coordination with JPAs (SJJPA, Capitol Corridor, and LOSSAN) regarding schedule changes.
	General	Ensure the provision to collect performance and tracking data in future operating contracts.
	General	Work with Caltrans to secure Thruway Bus-specific minor capital program funding and explore alternative funding sources for bus shelters, other passenger amenities, and passenger safety/security measures.
	General	Coordinate with Flix North America (FNA), and Amtrak Real Estate on potential interline service agreements, shared facilities and interlined ticketing, and cooperative funding agreements to add service.
	General	Investigate strategies to address Gold Runner on-time performance issues.
	General	Audit and validate the GTFS feed to identify, prioritize, and correct data inconsistencies, missing or invalid records, schedule discrepancies, geographic inaccuracies, and accessibility or passenger information issues, ensuring compliance with GTFS standards and reliable trip planning information. Audit the GTFS feed to identify and correct existing issues.
	1C	Study the implications of removing Burbank Airport from Route 1C to streamline service.
	1C	Evaluate adding San Fernando to the route with the removal of Burbank Airport. Furthermore, study alternative terminus options such as LAX, Hollywood, Westwood-UCLA, and Long Beach.
	1C	Evaluate the Santa Monica stop for passenger experience and convenience and whether it remains the optimal terminus. Work with the City of Santa Monica and the local and regional transit to assist with increasing marketing to see if Santa Monica should remain a stop.
	3	Investigate opportunities to fully open Route 3 for bus-only ticketing including complementary partnerships with FNA.
	3	Request Cal State Chico to help promote the Gold Runner service and future BCAG service between Chico and Sacramento.
	6	Implement bus-only ticketing on Route 6 as indicated in the 2026 Business Plan.
	6	Study long-term implications of Route 40 ridership to San Jose in relationship to the cost-effectiveness of Route 6 (which also connects to San Jose).
	6, 40	Work with San Jose State University (RTs 6 & 40) and UC Merced (RT 40) to promote Gold Runner service.

	7	Work with Cal Poly Humboldt, Sonoma State, and Santa Rosa Junior College to better promote the Gold Runner service to these educational institutions.
	7	Initiate discussions with Caltrans and HTA regarding the possibility for long-term service coordination between Ukiah and Cal Poly Humboldt.
	10	Evaluate providing an additional round-trip between Santa Barbara and Bakersfield, additional seasonal service to UCSB, and additional weekend service along the western half of the route.
	10	Evaluate the current operating agreement for Route 10 and get Amtrak to provide more information regarding the route's performance or consider pursuing a future agreement that ensures data transparency.
	10	Work with UCSB to better promote the Gold Runner service to UCSB.
	15	Encourage and assist MCAG and YARTS in pursuing additional state and federal funding sources in coordination with Caltrans, in order to support service operations and reduce reliance on SJJPA funding.
	15	Pursue an alternative partnership/compensation structure for Route 15A in coordination with Caltrans.
	15	Include provisions in the partnership structure for holding buses for Gold Runner trains. Specifically, get YARTS to agree to have one of their later buses hold for the last Gold Runner train for at least one hour (rather than 15 minutes) should it be delayed.
	15	Work with YARTS to determine if significant number of Gold Runner passengers purchase YARTS tickets separately when taking a trip to Yosemite (and therefore the number of Gold Runner passengers and benefits for Route 15A could be significantly higher than reported).
	18	Continue partnership efforts with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to market the service and see if this partnership can be a model for working with other universities/colleges that are served by Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes.
	19	Study the implications of removing or replacing the La Crescenta stop with another stop which connects with the Gold Line.
	99	Connect service directly to the Salesforce Transit Center.

Tier 2B	General	Conduct a market assessment that looks at potential new markets and temporal demand.
	General	Audit bus stop locations across the network to see if there are opportunities to improve transit network connectivity, passenger experience, and ridership.
	General	Implement real-time tracking.
	1	Study opportunities to deploy bus-only ticketing along Route 1, including potential partnerships with public and private operators along the corridor.
	1	Study opportunities to increase Route 1 service including additional San Diego service, enhancing Burbank Airport service (including consideration of express airport connections and relocating the stop), and more service between Bakersfield and Los Angeles Union Station.
	1C	Study connectivity to LA Metro in the near term and the long-term, including implications of the D-Line extension.

Deleted: what is needed

	3	Pursue a potential partnership with SJRTD for service between Stockton and Sacramento/Davis if a partnership is established with BCAG for service between Chico and Sacramento.
	6	Investigate a potential partnership with RTD if Route 6's cost-effectiveness declines.
	7	Study locations of stops along the route for safety and customer experience including Santa Rosa, Arcata, Sonoma, and connections to Sonoma County Airport.
	7	Study connectivity to SMART stations, including Rohnert Park and the future Healdsburg Station.
	7	Partner with transportation agencies along the Highway 101 corridor to study whether targeted service modifications could streamline Route 7 operations in the North Bay Area while continuing to serve the corridor's strong ridership demand.
	7	Study feasibility of alternative service patterns based on day of week and seasonality with the goal of improving service.
	10	Evaluate seasonal or event-based service increases to Las Vegas.
	15	Analyze how passengers use Routes 15, 15A, and 15B to identify barriers, travel patterns, and market opportunities that can inform service planning, schedule coordination, and targeted marketing efforts.
	18	Study the impact of changes to the route as more data becomes available, specifically whether seasonal university service is a successful model.
	19	Evaluate additional seasonal service or daily service patterns for Route 19.
	40	Monitor the performance of this new route and its impact on Route 6.
	40	Coordinate with MCAG on a potential partnership to run a commuter round-trip between Merced and Silicon Valley (San Jose, Great America, Gilroy).
	99	Study the possibility of expanding service to connect to Caltrain at 4th and King until Caltrain is extended to the Salesforce Transit Center.

Tier 3	General	Monitor the performance of the new Route 5 to see if this is a model that can be deployed in other parts of the state.
	1	Study the feasibility of improving Metrolink connectivity at Newhall. This would include investigating a pilot program/partnership with Metrolink to have a Gold Runner Thruway bus round-trip terminate at Newhall and connect with Metrolink to provide service to Los Angeles Union Station.
	3	If a partnership can be reached with BCAG, investigate having some Route 3 service connect to the new Valley Rail Midtown Sacramento Station once it is constructed.
	6	Coordinate with VTA to strengthen connections to Mineta San Jose International Airport.
	7	In coordination with HTA, Mendocino Transit Authority, Caltrans, and Amtrak, evaluate the potential for a partnership with HTA for service between Ukiah and Arcata.
	7	Study the possibility for connecting service to Richmond, potentially through coordination with CJJPA.
	19	Evaluate opportunities to connect to future Brightline West service in Rancho Cucamonga, and to provide seasonal service to Coachella Valley or supplemental service on Route 39.

Deleted: to truncate route in Ukiah in the future

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) is responsible for managing, improving, and planning for the future of the Gold Runner Intercity Passenger Rail Service (operated by Amtrak), which runs between Bakersfield in the south and Oakland and Sacramento in the north. SJJPA is also responsible for the management of a large network of Thruway Bus routes connecting Gold Runner passengers to destinations throughout California and into Nevada (see *Figure 1*). The purpose of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Network is to extend the reach of the Gold Runner to communities with limited or no intercity rail service. This Thruway Bus Network is integral to the success of the Gold Runner service, with a significant portion of the Gold Runner service's ridership utilizing Gold Runner Thruway Bus connections to Los Angeles and other major population centers as an extension of the rail network. Typically, over 55 percent of Gold Runner train passengers use a Gold Runner Thruway Bus on at least one end of their trip. Gold Runner Thruway Bus services connect to Gold Runner trains at Bakersfield, Hanford, Fresno, Merced, Stockton, Sacramento, Martinez, and Emeryville. Thruway Buses also connect with (and provide additional ridership to) the state funded Capitol Corridor and Pacific Surfliner intercity passenger rail services and connect with numerous local/regional passenger rail and transit services throughout the state. The total Gold Runner Thruway Bus ridership in Fiscal Year 2025 (July 24-June 25) was about 627,000 passengers.



Figure 1: *Thruway Bus Services across California*

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Measurement of Cost-Effectiveness

The Gold Runner service (train and Thruway Bus Network) operational subsidy is provided by the State of California (through Caltrans) using Public Transportation Account (PTA) funds. In recent years, the cost of subsidizing the state-supported intercity passenger services (Gold Runner, Pacific Surfliner, and Capitol Corridor) has increased significantly, requiring increased PTA support. This has placed increased pressure on the PTA, which derives its revenues primarily from taxes on diesel fuel at a time when taxable diesel fuel consumption is at historically low levels. It is therefore important to the SJJPA and the State that Gold Runner Thruway Bus services are cost-effective – both as a network and as individual routes. The measurement of cost-effectiveness for the state-supported Thruway Bus services that connect to the intercity passenger rail services is dictated by specific language in the California Government Code, Section 14035.2a(3) states that Thruway Bus routes ("feeder routes") that fail to reach the "break-even" point within a reasonable time period would be restructured or discontinued. The break-even point is defined as the revenue generated from both the bus and train portions of the trips made by Thruway Bus riders meeting or exceeding the cost of providing the Thruway Bus service/route. Section 14931.8f(3) states that a Thruway Bus route shall not be terminated unless it fails to meet the cost-effectiveness standard.

Management of Gold Runner Thruway Bus Routes

Amtrak currently manages the daily operations of most of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus services. Most of the routes are operated by private bus operators under contract with Amtrak. Funding for the routes comes from Caltrans through the SJJPA (see **Figure 2**). The SJJPA contracts with Amtrak for dedicated feeder bus services (i.e., Thruway Buses), and Amtrak then contracts with bus operators. The bus routes function as part of the Gold Runner intercity rail service, with coordinated connections, guaranteed seating, integrated fares and ticketing procedures, and inclusion in Amtrak's central information and reservation system in a similar manner as the trains.

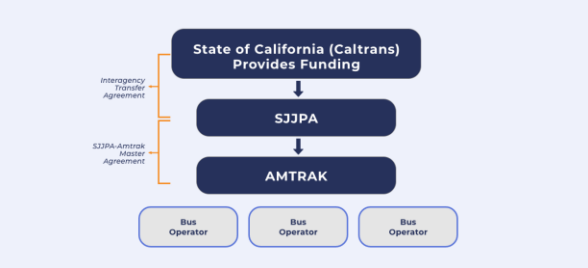


Figure 2: *Current Contract Structure for Thruway Bus Funding and Procurement*

Characteristics of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus services are typically:

- guaranteed connections to Amtrak trains,
- coordinated connections to other carrier schedules, and
- modern intercity buses with amenities such as restrooms, reclining seating, leg rests, space for luggage, individual lighting and accessibility accommodations.

Deleted: and

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted ridership on Gold Runner trains and Thruway Bus routes. As a result, in 2020 and 2021, the SJJPA took action to make reductions to the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Network. The purpose of the changes was to maintain the viability of the overall Thruway Bus Network by reducing operational costs on underperforming routes while maintaining services in strong ridership corridors and markets for the foreseeable future. SJJPA, with support and assistance from Amtrak, made the following management decisions to make route reductions to the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network:

- Route 1b between Bakersfield and San Pedro was truncated at Los Angeles Union Station (becoming part of Route1) – eliminating stops at Long Beach and San Pedro
- Route 1c between Bakersfield and Torrance was truncated at Santa Monica – eliminating stops at Westchester, El Segundo, and Torrance
- Route 6 was reduced from four round-trips down to two round-trips
- Route 7 between Martinez and McKinleyville was truncated at Cal Poly Humboldt (Arcata)
- Route 9 (now part of Route 10)
- Route 10 was reduced from three round-trips down to one round-trip
- Route 12 between Bakersfield and Victorville was eliminated
- Route 18 was reduced from two round-trips down to one round-trip
- Route 19 between Bakersfield and Hemet/Indio was truncated at San Bernardino
- Route 34 between Stockton and San Francisco was eliminated

Due to COVID-19 service impacts, the significant reductions implemented by the SJJPA constituted a discontinuation total of 34+ scheduled trips, removal of 21 stops, and a reduction of 16 buses and 6,061 daily miles. To maintain a very efficient and cost-effective Gold Runner Thruway Bus network, SJJPA took action to continue with the reduced level of Thruway Bus services after the pandemic came to an end. Over the last several years, substantially increasing Thruway Bus operations costs that were largely brought on by the impacts of the pandemic, led the SJJPA (in coordination with Amtrak) to make a number of additional key strategic management decisions, including the following actions:

- Route 1 was reduced from thirteen round-trips down to eleven round-trips between Bakersfield and Los Angeles Union Station, and the two round-trips that had continued beyond Los Angeles Union Station to Santa Ana were truncated at Los Angeles Union Station
- Route 1C was reduced from four round-trips down to two round-trips
- Route 7 had the one round-trip between Napa and Marinez eliminated
- Route 19 was reduced from four round-trips down to two round-trips

Senate Bill 742 (SB 742)

To increase ridership on Thruway Buses and reduce operating costs, the SJJPA worked with Senator Allen and RailPAC on Senate Bill 742 (SB 742) in 2019. SB 742 was passed by the Legislature in September 2019 and signed by the Governor on October 8, 2019. The primary purpose of SB 742 was to remove portions of Section 14035.55 of the California Government Code that require state-supported Thruway Bus passengers to have a rail trip as part of their ticket. The passage and implementation of SB 742 supports increasing ridership by enabling Thruway Buses to pick up any passengers (rather than only those transferring from state-supported intercity passenger trains), offering an additional opportunity to increase ridership and increase transportation options for current and future customers. The new ticketing structure that allows non-Amtrak passengers onto the Thruway Bus service is being implemented on a route-by-route basis. This new ticketing structure is referred to as “bus-only” ticketing since passengers can travel on the Thruway buses without a train trip as part of their ticket.

Since the enactment of SB 742, SJJPA has implemented bus-only ticketing on seven routes—Routes 1C, 3R (Redding and Red Bluff to Chico, Oroville, Marysville, and Sacramento), 7, 10, 18, 19, and the new Route 40 (Merced– Los Banos–Gilroy–San José). These corridors were prioritized for shared-use operations due to their rural/interregional mix and limited alternatives. SB 742 requires coordination with local, regional transit, and private intercity bus providers before opening a Thruway Bus route for bus-only ticketing. Bus-only ticketing is also allowed on the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) regional transit routes (Gold Runner Routes 15, 15A, and 15B) that serve Yosemite. Routes that allow bus-only ticketing improve load factors, increase fare revenue, advance environmental and equity goals, and complement local/regional transit. The SJJPA plans to continue to expand the number of Thruway Bus routes with bus-only ticketing consistent with the provisions of SB 742. More details on the status of the implementation of SB 742 and the reductions to the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network during the COVID-19 Pandemic are provided in Appendix A.

Strategic Partnerships with Other Agencies

SJJPA pursues strategic partnerships with regional agencies and stakeholders to enhance Thruway Bus performance, expand intercity connectivity, integrate services with local/ regional networks and reduce PTA costs borne by SJJPA through new local, regional, and state funding contributions. Efforts emphasize leveraging partner investments, pursuing new grant programs, aligning travel patterns, improving travel times, reducing duplication, and preserving seamless access/integrated ticketing for Gold Runner passengers. Interline agreements enable Gold Runner passengers to use partner intercity bus services with integrated ticketing, extending reach beyond the core network. The SJJPA evaluates these agreements for cost-effectiveness, customer benefit, and alignment with program goals through performance and financial analysis. In addition, SJJPA is positioning Gold Runner to integrate with the California High-Speed Rail Authority's (CHSRA) Early Operating Segment between Merced and Bakersfield, anticipated to begin service by 2033. This effort is focused on advancing coordinated service planning, infrastructure readiness, and operational alignment to ensure Gold Runner trains and buses are prepared to connect seamlessly with high-speed rail as a critical part of an integrated statewide intercity transportation network.

Performance Goals for Gold Runner Thruway Bus Network

Given the size and importance of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network, there is a need for the SJJPA to investigate the existing routes, performance, and governance of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes to ensure that the service provided achieves the following goals:

1. A preferred and convenient option for intercity travelers that connects to Gold Runner rail services and increases Gold Runner ridership while driving mode shift away from the highway network.
2. A cost-effective service that is responsive to structural shifts in demand, highly constrained PTA funding, and increasing costs of providing service (including maximized utilization of available funding from partner agencies for Thruway service benefits).
3. Effective business model/governance structure to oversee and administer the Thruway Bus service.
4. Providing safe, reliable, and competitive connectivity to key travel markets throughout California – particularly for transit-dependent residents (focusing on near-term improvements/changes)

Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study

SJJPA is undertaking a Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study (initiated May 2026) that is intended to be tactical in nature and focused on delivering specific, feasible, and short-term recommendations for improving the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes/network. The primary deliverable of this study will be a Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report. In addition to this introductory chapter, the report will have two additional chapters. “Route Characteristics” (Chapter 2) will provide an overview of each of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes that includes recent detailed ridership information, and “Short-term Service Optimization” (Chapter 3) that will provide recommendations and the rationale behind these recommendations for any proposed changes to the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes.

As part of the study, public/agency outreach will be conducted by SJJPA staff and consultants to gain valuable insights. In support of the public/agency outreach efforts, a Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study webpage has been added to SJJPA’s website to enable agencies and the public to get easy access to Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study information and documents and to provide input to the SJJPA. The Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study effort is being developed by a Technical Working Group that includes SJJPA staff from Operations, Passenger Experience and Marketing, Planning, Grants, and Programming, and Fiscal departments, as well as a representative from Caltrans. Initial agency and public outreach to support the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study was carried out in early June 2026. The Public Outreach Plan for this Thruway Bus Study is provided as Appendix B to this report. SJJPA staff presented to the SJJPA Board at their July 16, 2026, Board Meeting regarding existing service characteristics and proposed goals for the service as well as input from initial outreach. Additional agency and public outreach to get input on the Thruway Bus Study Draft Report will be carried out in September. Staff expect to request approval of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report at SJJPA’s November 20, 2026, Board Meeting and to also discuss implementation strategies.

Chapter 2: Existing Service Characteristics, Service Parameters, and Route Profiles

Evaluating the Existing Network

As outlined in Chapter 1, SJJPA currently oversees 14 Thruway Bus routes connecting the Gold Runner rail network to destinations across California and Nevada. The bus network serves a diverse array of markets with various partnership structures, financial considerations, and operational constraints. Each route thus requires an in-depth analysis of its context and performance to understand opportunities for strategic improvements and to work towards optimizing the entire network.

In order to evaluate each route, and the network as a whole, key metrics and characteristics were analyzed including ridership, bus-only ticketing implementation, cost effectiveness, partnership and contracting structures, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and passenger miles traveled (PMT). These characteristics provide an understanding for how well the Thruway Bus network operates and where potential opportunities for change may exist.

Table 1. More detailed information regarding each route, bus stop location, and route schedule is available on the Gold Runner website.[1]

As ridership trends and cost considerations evolve, SJJPA has continued to evaluate and optimize the Thruway Bus network. This has included interventions ranging from tactical schedule adjustments to the development of new routes. As outlined in Chapter 1, SJJPA made substantial reductions to the Thruway Bus network during the COVID-19 pandemic. SJJPA worked with Amtrak to strategically reduce the least cost-effective portions of the network. Chapter 1 also highlights the additional Thruway Bus service reductions SJJPA has made over the last several years to counter the effects of the severe cost escalation for bus operations that has occurred post pandemic. Most recently, SJJPA has made a couple of important service additions to the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network and one significant reduction. SJJPA launched Route 40 in January 2026, which provides direct service between Merced and San Jose. On August 10, 2026, SJJPA launched Route 5, replacing Route 3R and providing an improved connection to Redding. In June 2026, SJJPA significantly modified service on Route 18 with the following changes: discontinued service

[1] Gold Runner, https://goldrunner.com/

to Santa Maria, seasonal service to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and continued year-round service between Hanford and Visalia through a partnership with local transit operators.

Table 1: *Existing and upcoming Thruway Bus route destinations and frequencies*

No.	Route	Daily Round-Trips
1[1,2]	Bakersfield – San Diego	1
	Fresno-Los Angeles	1
	Bakersfield-Los Angeles	9[2]
1C	Bakersfield – Santa Monica	2
3[1]	Stockton – Chico	3
	Sacramento – Chico	1
	Stockton – Sacramento	1
	Stockton – Davis	4
3R[3]	Chico – Redding (RABA)	2
5[3]	Sacramento – Redding	2
6[1]	Stockton – San Jose	2
	San Jose – Santa Cruz	2[4]
7[1]	Martinez – Arcata	2
	Martinez- Santa Rosa	2
10	Santa Barbara – Las Vegas	1
15	Yosemite – Mammoth Lakes (seasonal)	2
15A	Merced – Yosemite	4
15B	Fresno – Yosemite (seasonal)	2
18[5]	Visalia – Hanford	1
	Hanford – San Luis Obispo	Seasonal
19[1]	Bakersfield – San Bernardino	2
40	Merced – San Jose	2
99[1]	Emeryville – San Francisco	5[6]

[1] Additional service is operated around Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break, and Labor Day.
[2] Route 1 operates 9 daily round-trips between Bakersfield and Los Angeles – 4 of these round-trips serve duplicate connections to the same Gold Runner train with varying stopping patterns. See Appendix 2.1 for further information.
[3] Route 5 replaced Route 3R service on August 10, 2026.
[4] SC Metro operates all day service between San Jose – Santa Cruz; 2 round-trips connect with Route 6
[5] Route 18 service pattern was modified in June 2026 from daily service between Visalia, Hanford, and Santa Maria to a segmented service pattern with daily service between Visalia and Hanford, and seasonal service between Hanford and San Luis Obispo
[6] Route 99 runs 19 daily round-trips, with funding split between SJJPA, CCJPA, and Amtrak in proportion with the number of connecting services. SJJPA accordingly funds 5 of these round-trips.

Ridership

Ridership is a key component of understanding the performance of a route. Ridership data is derived from monthly route-level performance reports as well as daily ridership data. This data highlights demand patterns by day of week, trip time, and stop location for each route, enabling SJJPA to evaluate demand at each of these levels. Understanding travel patterns allows SJJPA to tailor service to demonstrated levels of demand and ensures favorable train connections. Ridership of each route varies by market demand. The highest ridership routes in the network are Route 1 and Route 3, as they provide connections to some of the largest markets in the state including Los Angeles, San Diego, and Sacramento.

Bus-only ticketing

Chapter 1 describes SB 742 and the ensuing provision for bus-only ticketing on Thruway Bus routes. Bus-only ticketing represents an opportunity to capture additional ridership beyond Gold Runner train riders, especially on bus routes that are not served or are underserved by other operators. Currently, four Gold Runner Thruway Bus Routes do not have bus-only ticketing activated (Route 1, 3, 6, and 99). For Route 1 and Route 3, this is primarily due to challenges in meeting SB 742 requirements related to coordination around overlapping services provided by other agencies or operators, but there is also concern about maintaining capacity on these high ridership routes for train passengers. Strategies to implement bus-only ticketing are a key consideration in developing recommendations for the future, as this represents a potential avenue to boost route revenue and cost effectiveness.

Partnership and contracting structures

Existing routes operate through contracts with both private and public operators. The type of partnership and contracting structure used on a route impacts SJJPA's financial responsibilities in compensating the operator and consequently has the ability to significantly impact the cost effectiveness of a route. Partnerships therefore represent a key consideration in planning for the future of the network.

A majority of the Gold Runner Thruway bus routes are operated by private operators under contract with Amtrak, either through a direct contract or an interline agreement. These contracts are often straightforward in compensation structure and involve fewer stakeholders. The remaining routes on the other hand involve contracts with public operators, namely Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS), Santa Cruz Metro (SC Metro), Kings Area Regional Transit (KART), and Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA). Each of these public partnership contracts is structured differently and has unique considerations. Public operators often serve various stakeholders with different needs and

priorities, necessitating more complex agreements. With these competing priorities, it may sometimes be difficult to ensure that bus service is coordinated with Gold Runner schedules, which can greatly reduce the effectiveness of the connecting services for Gold Runner train passengers. However, agreements with public operators have the potential to leverage existing services and resources as well as expand funding sources in order to boost cost effectiveness while reaching broader passenger markets.

SJJPA is exploring new opportunities to contract with public operators to optimize the Thruway bus network. Specifically, SJJPA is looking to the contract for Route 3R with RABA as a potential model to apply to other existing or future routes. This model includes a public operator that guarantees connections with Gold Runner service, a diversified set of funding mechanisms from local, regional, and state sources, bus-only ticketing for all bus stop pairs, and integrated Amtrak ticketing. SJJPA has adapted this contracting structure to launch the new Route 5, as a replacement for Route 3R.

Contracting structures are outlined in further detail below in the Governance section.

Cost Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness is a valuable concept to understand the overall performance of a route. As discussed in Chapter 1, cost effectiveness is defined in California Government Code, Section 14035.2a(3), which notes that routes are deemed cost effective if they reach the *break-even point*, defined as the point where revenue generated from both the bus and train portions of the trips made by Thruway Bus riders meets or exceeds the cost of providing the corresponding Thruway Bus route.

Cost effectiveness can be represented by the cost recovery ratio metric, which compares the operating costs of a route with the abovementioned combined total ticket revenue generated from both bus trips and connected train trips. This ratio is calculated by dividing the revenue by the costs, whereby a cost recovery ratio at or above 100% signifies that a route has met the break-even point and can be considered “cost effective” as per the definition laid out in the California Government Code. Particularly for routes where bus-only tickets are not sold, the number of train riders associated with each bus route is typically significantly higher than the number of bus riders for the route. This is because Gold Runner bus riders often have multiple train rides associated with their bus trip (for example, a trip between Fresno and Anaheim would include a Route 1 bus trip, a Gold Runner train trip, and a Pacific Surfliner train trip).

The cost recovery ratio metric is valuable because it not only reveals the ability of the route to meet market demand but also factors in the costs required to operate the route and the route’s ability to recover these costs through revenue. Cost effectiveness data has been

provided by Amtrak for the federal fiscal year from October 2024 through September 2025.[1] **Table 2** includes the latest available data on annual ridership, operating cost, and cost recovery ratio for all routes (see Appendix 2.2 for detailed cost effectiveness summary tables for available years by route as well as the full tables provided by Amtrak for 2018 and 2025). Overall, the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network is very cost-effective with a total cost recovery ratio of 119% for federal FY 24/25 (October 2024 – September 2025).

Route 10 is the most cost-effective Gold Runner route, primarily since there is only one round-trip and the operational cost to the state is very low, as a result of the interline agreement Amtrak has with the operator. Route 99 is the second most cost-effective route of the network, in part due to its short length and high ridership. Route 1 and Route 3 also exhibit high cost recovery ratios, reflecting the success in serving high demand markets and offsetting the higher costs caused by the distance of these routes. In addition, Route 19 also shows a positive net income trend and has recently become cost-effective.

Low cost-effectiveness on Routes 15/15A/15B, and Route 7, result in the highest net cost for SJJPA, and reflect factors including low ridership, high operating costs, and limited integration with Gold Runner service. These routes need to be prioritized for identifying optimization strategies to improve their performance. Route 3R also had a low cost-recovery ratio, but this route was always envisioned as a temporary solution until Route 5 could be deployed. Route 3R has now been replaced by Route 5.

[1] The state fiscal year is between July 1 through June 30.

Table 2: *Annual ridership (FY 25) and cost effectiveness data (Oct 2024 - Sep 2025) by route*

No.	Route	Annual Route Ridership *(Oct '24 – Sep '25)*	Annual CA Total System Revenue[1] *(Oct '24 – Sep '25)*	Annual Operating Cost for CA[2] *(Oct '24 – Sep '25)*	Cost Recovery Ratio *(Oct '24 – Sep '25)*
1	Fresno – Bakersfield – San Diego	221,770	$12,691,271	$6,803,509	187%
1C	Bakersfield – Santa Monica	33,248	$1,343,055	$1,217,738	110%
3	Stockton – Redding	159,008	$6,705,183	$3,445,185	195%
3R	Chico – Redding (RABA)	6,533	$193,035	$426,480	45%
6	Stockton – Santa Cruz	27,358	$1,055,169	$683,677	154%
7	Martinez – Arcata	46,467	$1,971,053	$3,246,049	61%
10	Santa Barbara – Las Vegas	32,382	$745,348	$123,575	603%
15[3]	Yosemite – Mammoth Lakes	4,066	$198,271	$406,457	49%
15A	Merced – Yosemite				
15B	Fresno – Yosemite				
18A	Hanford – Santa Maria	10,390	$193,679	$85,399	227%
18B	Hanford – Visalia (KART)	Not Available	Not Available	~$75,000	Not Available
19	Bakersfield – San Bernardino	41,390	$2,107,336	$1,743,350	121%
40	Merced – San Jose	4,707 *(Jan-Apr '26)*	Not Available	$244,355 *(Jan-Mar '26)*	Not Available[4]
99	Oakland – San Francisco	47,564	$2,242,054	$544,557	412%

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Passenger Miles Traveled (PMT)

Table 3 shows total VMT and PMT by route derived from bus portions of passenger trips. This metric reveals part of the impact Thruway Bus service has on removing cars from the road network and lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, representing a key quantifiable benefit of the Thruway Bus service that may not be immediately apparent from an analysis of purely financial data. This metric is thus important to consider in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of each route. While the available

[1] Includes both Thruway Bus Route and associated CA train revenue (Gold Runner, Capitol Corridor, and Pacific Surfliner) for connecting bus passengers.
[2] Includes bus contract payments and Amtrak payments by CA. For Routes 10 and 18A the bus operator pays most of the costs to operate these services through their interline agreements with Amtrak, but receives most of the bus ticket revenue from Amtrak.
[3] Ridership and cost data is for Route 15A. Routes 15 and 15B have very low ridership and YARTS receives the bus ticket portion of the revenue from train passengers rather than a set contract amount for these routes.
[4] Cost recovery ratio information is not yet available for Route 40 as this route was implemented in January 2026 and has limited data available.

data only includes VMT and PMT attributed to the bus portion of passenger trips, additional data including VMT and PMT attributed to train connections to and from the respective bus routes would facilitate a comprehensive assessment of the Thruway Bus service's impact in reducing GHG emissions.

In 2026, the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation released guidance for the Statewide VMT Mitigation Program. The program recognizes access to transit as a key strategy for reducing automobile travel and allows developers to satisfy California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) VMT mitigation requirements by contributing to a state fund that supports affordable housing in transit-accessible locations. While the program does not directly fund transit operations, it reinforces the importance of demonstrating how transit services reduce both VMT and associated GHG emissions.[1]

For SJJPA, this highlights the value of tracking the transportation and environmental benefits generated by the Thruway Bus network. All routes serve more PMT than the VMT they generate, with some routes performing more efficiently than others in this regard. For example, Route 1 and 1C together exhibit the highest PMT, generating an estimated 1.4 million VMT while serving a total of 32.8 million annual PMT. Route 19, while only traveling 0.27 million annual VMT, serves 6.5 million annual PMT, representing the highest ratio of PMT to VMT – while this route just reaches the break-even point in terms of cost effectiveness, considering VMT and PMT reveals additional benefits of the route that go beyond revenue produced. These 3 routes together serve approximately 24 passenger miles per vehicle mile traveled, illustrating how these services contribute to shifting intercity trips from personal vehicles to bus services and in turn transport these passengers in a more efficient and sustainable manner, reducing overall roadway congestion, fuel consumption, and GHG emissions.

Quantifying these benefits enables SJJPA to demonstrate how the Thruway network contributes to the State's climate, housing, and VMT reduction goals, while strengthening the case for transit-oriented investment in communities served by high-performing corridors such as Route 1.

[1] Statewide Vehicle Miles Traveled Mitigation Program Guidance, https://lci.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/AB-130-Statewide-VMT-Mitigation-Program-Guidance_063026_Final.pdf

Table 3: *Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled and Passenger Miles Traveled by Route*

Route	***Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled*** *(FY 25)*	***Annual Passenger Miles*** *(April 2025 – March 2026)*
Route 1	1,171,802	32,830,611
Route 1C	191,917	
Route 3	694,413	9,366,492
Route 3R	106,580	423,812
Route 6	125,268	1,954,351
Route 7	532,170	5,777,566
Route 10	336,530	5,447,640
Route 15	Not available	259,813
Route 18	157,607	1,114,067
Route 19	267,910	6,501,620
Route 40	171,368	263,494
Route 99	30,843	390,825

Governance

Chapter 1 discusses a high-level overview of the current contract structure for Thruway Bus and Procurement. This chapter will go into further detail outlining the existing governance structure and types of contracts that are involved.

Structure of Existing Governance Framework

The State of California funds the management and operation of Thruway Bus service through SJJPA, and SJJPA procures the management and operation of the Thruway Bus network via an operating agreement with Amtrak.

Although SJJPA does not directly manage the day-to-day operation of the Gold Runner Thruway Network, it oversees the program through strategic planning, contract management, and coordination with Amtrak contracted bus operators, Caltrans, local transit agencies, and other stakeholders. SJJPA works with Amtrak to establish service expectations, monitor contractor performance, ensure contractual compliance, and support funding, budgeting, and reporting requirements that help maintain reliable and efficient service.

SJJPA also leads long-term planning and continuous improvement efforts by analyzing ridership, cost, on-time performance, customer feedback, and travel demand to identify opportunities for service enhancements. The agency coordinates route and schedule changes, improves connections between buses and trains, supports passenger information and marketing initiatives, and works with regional partners to strengthen first and last mile connectivity. During service disruptions, special events, and infrastructure

projects, SJJPA collaborates with Amtrak and operating partners to minimize impacts on passengers and maintain seamless regional mobility.

In addition, SJJPA is in charge of fare policy for both Gold Runner train and Thruway Bus routes, including bus-only ticketing. The Gold Runner service fare policy requires reserved ticketing. This is needed to prevent overcrowding and manage capacity for both Gold Runner trains and Thruway buses. Efforts to realign Gold Runner fares began in 2018, following an SJJPA board action to establish a distance-based fare setting methodology for both train and Thruway buses. Due to the Pandemic, SJJPA had refrained from adjusting fares as the focus was on rebuilding ridership. In October 2025, SJJPA implemented a 7.5% increase of fares across the service. To ensure that fares keep pace with market and operational demands, a bi-annual evaluation of a fare increase for both train and thruway bus services was implemented following a May 2025 board action.

Governance Agreements

The **Interagency Transfer Agreement (ITA) between Caltrans and the SJJPA** provides that Caltrans funds SJJPA, who then funds both the Gold Runner rail service and the associated Thruway Bus routes. More specifically, the agreement transfers responsibility from Caltrans to SJJPA to administer Gold Runner service, including the Thruway Bus network. The agreement outlines the State's responsibility to provide funding for Gold Runner service and Thruway Bus operations.

The **Master Agreement between the SJJPA and Amtrak** provides that SJJPA reimburses Amtrak based on the cost of operating Gold Runner and Thruway Bus services. Amtrak holds and manages all contracts with bus operators.[1] The Master Agreement also outlines performance measures Amtrak needs to meet. More specifically, the agreement defines the service routes and schedules that Amtrak will provide via passenger rail and Thruway Bus feeder service. Amtrak oversees the bus operators and manages a team of operations and contract management staff to implement what is set out in the agreement. The Amtrak management cost for the Gold Runner Thruway bus network is 6.62% of the Carrier Payments for each of the Thruway Bus routes. This fee is included in the Annual Route Operating Costs shown on **Table 2**. The Amtrak cost for managing the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network was $1.17 million for FY 24/25.

Thruway Bus Operating Contract Types

In **dedicated contracts between Amtrak and private bus operators**, Amtrak pays operators for route operation. Funding comes fully from SJJPA funds via ticket revenue and PTA funds. While SJJPA helps facilitate stakeholder outreach, it does not have a

[1] The ITA does stipulate that SJJPA has the authority, under ITA to procure bus services directly

contractual relationship with the operator running the service. Operators under this type of contract include *Alvand*, *American Star*, *Avalon*, and *Whitecastle* running on most of the routes in the network.

Interline service agreements with private bus operators were set up so private operators could cover the cost of running the service by receiving revenue from bus tickets and a portion of the train tickets with bus connections. Because of the reliance of this type of agreement on ticket sales, interline agreements were intended to reduce a route's annual operating cost for SJJPA. In order to ensure adequate payment to the operator, Amtrak (via SJJPA) can provide minimum revenue guarantees to the operator which are applicable in the event of a revenue shortfall. In these cases, SJJPA (through Caltrans) will provide the remainder of funds required to meet the guarantee, usually drawing from PTA funds. Routes 3R and 10 are examples of interlined routes with minimum revenue guarantees.

Public bus operator agreements provide that public transit operators will transport Gold Runner customers in addition to non-Gold Runner passengers. These routes can have different considerations depending on context, with various compensation structures possible like with private operators. Amtrak currently contracts with three public bus operators – RABA for Route 5, SC Metro for a portion of Route 6 (San Jose to Santa Cruz) and YARTS for Routes 15, 15A, and 15B. Each of the agreements were individually negotiated with distinct specifications and compensation details. While SJJPA does not hold operating contracts with bus operators, it still ultimately decides upon what service is run, where it operates, and how much service it runs.

While public operator agreements can provide benefits from leveraging existing services and resources, these agreements need to be evaluated for compatibility with the goals of the Thruway Bus service, as public operators often have other services and priorities beyond the Thruway Bus network's goal of complementing Gold Runner service.

Table 4 below shows the operator(s) by route, the operator type, and the contract agreement type.

Table 4: *Operator and Contract Type by Route*

Route	Route	Operator	Operator Type	Agreement Type
1	Fresno – Bakersfield – San Diego	Alvand	Private	Direct
1C	Bakersfield – Santa Monica	Alvand	Private	Direct
3	Stockton – Redding	Avalon	Private	Direct
5	Sacramento – Redding	RABA	Public	Interline
6	Stockton – San Jose	Whitecastle	Private	Direct
	San Jose – Santa Cruz	SC Metro	Public	Direct
7	Martinez – Arcata	American Star	Private	Direct
10	Santa Barbara – Las Vegas	Alvand	Private	Interline
15	Yosemite – Mammoth Lakes	YARTS	Public	Direct
15A	Merced – Yosemite	YARTS	Public	NA
15B	Fresno – Yosemite	YARTS	Public	NA
18	Hanford – San Luis Obispo	American Star	Private	Direct
	Hanford – Visalia	KART	Public	Non-Binding MOU
19	Bakersfield – San Bernardino	Alvand	Private	Direct
40	Merced – San Jose	American Star	Private	Direct
99	Oakland – San Francisco	American Star	Private	Direct

Route Profiles

Route 1: Fresno - Bakersfield - Los Angeles - San Diego



Figure 3: *Map of Route 1 – the route operates primarily between Bakersfield and Los Angeles, with 1 round-trip from Bakersfield to San Diego and 1 round-trip from Fresno to Los Angeles.*

Service Overview

Route 1 operates along the corridor connecting Fresno, Bakersfield, Los Angeles, and San Diego. This route connects most of the major population centers in Southern California to the Gold Runner service at Bakersfield and Fresno and is by far the highest ridership route, has the most frequent service, and is therefore the most important route in the SJJPA Thruway Bus network.

Schedule

The trunk of the route operates between Bakersfield and Los Angeles with nine daily round-trips. One round-trip operates from Fresno to Los Angeles and one round-trip from Bakersfield to San Diego. The Route 1 round-trip between Fresno and Los Angeles provides a connection between the San Joaquin Valley and the Pacific Surfliner during hours when there are no Gold Runner trains to make the connection between Bakersfield and Fresno. The Route 1 round-trip between Bakersfield and San Diego provides connections to Pacific Surfliner stations between Los Angeles and San Diego during times that the Pacific

Surfliner is not operating. Four of the Bakersfield to Los Angeles trips constitute a second bus connecting to the same Gold Runner train while operating under a different service pattern (See Appendix 2.1). This route offers transfer opportunities to and from all Gold Runner trains, with transfer times ranging from 4 to 18 minutes. **Table 5** below shows Route 1's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled travel time.

Table 5: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Bakersfield – Los Angeles	9	2h 10m – 2h 30m
Bakersfield – San Diego	1	6h 30m – 8h 40m
Fresno – Los Angeles	1	4h 45m

Ridership

Route 1 had over 221,300 total riders in FY25. **Figure 4** below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year, starting from FY 23.

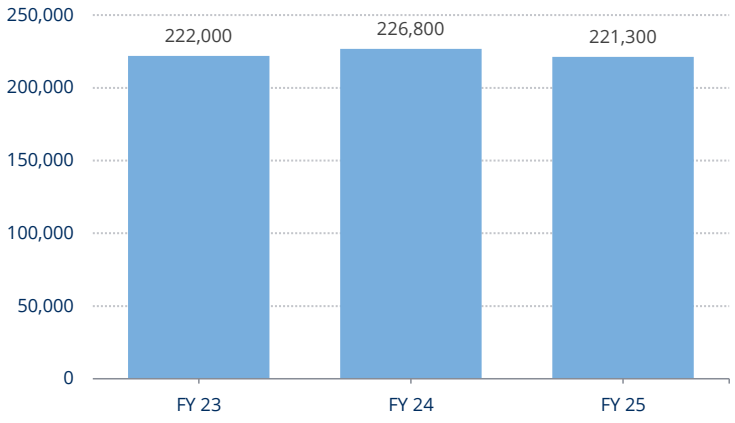


Figure 4: *Annual ridership on Route 1 by fiscal year*

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 6** below. Bakersfield and Fresno are the two Gold Runner transfer stations on this route, with 239,300 and 8,400 ons and offs respectively. Other than Gold Runner transfer stations, Los Angeles Union Station has the highest ridership at just under 200,000 ons and offs for Route 1. Union Station provides many

transfer opportunities to a robust Southern California transit network. Transfer options include metro connections to the A, B, and D lines and Metrolink connections to Orange County, Perris Valley, Riverside, Antelope Valley, and Ventura County. Union Station provides riders with more choices and access than any other Gold Runner Thruway stop. The second highest ridership non-transfer station is San Diego, which exhibits high ridership even with just one round-trip per day. While this route exhibits the highest ridership in the network, total Route 1 ridership declined by 2.4% between FY 24 and FY 25, largely driven by ridership declines in Los Angeles and San Diego. This is in contrast with the network's overall COVID-19 recovery trend.

Table 6: *Ons and offs by stop for Route 1 comparing FY 24 and FY 25.*

Stop	Ons/Offs *(FY 24)*	Ons/Offs *(FY 25)*
Bakersfield (Transfer)[1,2]	*243,852*	*238,354*
Los Angeles	201,075	196,220
San Diego	10,852	9,808
Fresno (Transfer)[1]	*7,229*	*7,844*
Santa Clarita[1]	8,076	8,024
Burbank Airport[1]	7,376	7,306
Glendale	5,831	5,547
Hanford	3,699	3,947
Oceanside	2,303	2,362
Anaheim	1,784	1,919
Santa Ana	1,488	1,595
Fullerton	1,384	1,477
Irvine	1,181	1,347
Solana Beach	457	490

Partnerships and Finances

Route 1 is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and Alvand, a private operator.

Bus-only ticketing is not active on this route. Although the route has high ridership and is cost-effective, the implementation of bus-only ticketing remains a way to increase cost-effectiveness and public benefits as the network continues to develop in the future. SJJPA

[1] Ons/offs at Bakersfield and Fresno include transfers to/from Gold Runner trains.
[2] Ons/offs at Bakersfield, Santa Clarita, and Burbank Airport represent combined ons/offs on Route 1 and Route 1C.

faces challenges with the implementation of bus-only ticketing on this route due to the well-established nature of travel along this corridor – under the existing private operator contract for Route 1, SJJPA would need to coordinate with existing intercity (like Greyhound and Flix Bus) and local/regional bus operators, that offer overlapping service before being able to implement bus-only ticketing as per the stipulations of SB 742. In addition, Route 1 is the highest ridership Gold Runner route so SJJPA would need to make sure that there was adequate capacity for intercity train passengers connecting to Route 1 before implementing bus-only ticketing.

Deleted: , like Greyhound and Flix Bus

Operating costs on Route 1 totaled $6,803,509 between October 2024 and September 2025. Total California system revenue between October 2024 and September 2025 related to Route 1 totaled $12,691,271[1]. This translates to a cost recovery ratio of 187%, signifying that Route 1 met the threshold for cost effectiveness in FY 24/25 as it has for all years with available data, even during COVID-19.

Route 1 had the highest increase in operating cost between FY 22 and FY 25 of any Gold Runner Thruway route. Expenses increased by 134% from $2.9 million to $6.8 million in three years as shown in **Figure 5**. While Route 1 is currently and has historically been a very cost-effective route, rising costs to operate this route combined with slowing ridership growth triggered SJJPA to reduce the number of Route 1 round-trips in 2023 (two fewer total round-trips and also truncated two of the round-trips at Los Angeles Union Station that had extended to Santa Ana). This management decision was important to keep Route 1's cost recovery ratio well above 100%, however Route 1's cost recovery ratio still has dropped as compared to its pre-pandemic numbers.

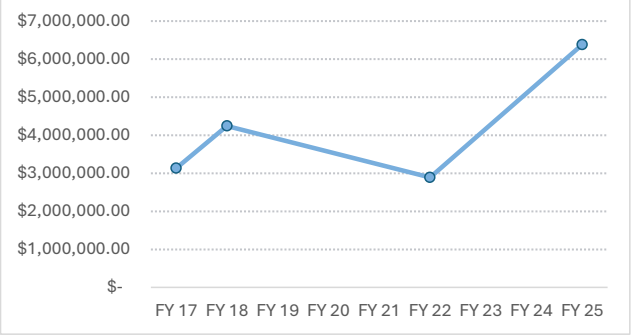


Figure 5: *Annual Route 1 expenses by fiscal year*

[1] Total California system revenue for each route includes the bus ticket revenue and the train ticket revenue associated with the bus riders that connect to the Gold Runner, Capitol Corridor, and Pacific Surfliner trains.

Route 1C: Bakersfield – Santa Monica



Figure 6: *Map of Route 1C*

Service Overview

Route 1C connects Bakersfield, Santa Clarita, Burbank Airport, Van Nuys, Westwood-UCLA, and Santa Monica along the I-5 corridor. This route connects cities in the Los Angeles metropolitan area to Gold Runner service at Bakersfield but faces relatively low ridership south of Van Nuys. The route formerly extended to Torrance, but that segment was discontinued due to low ridership.

Schedule

This route is served by two daily round-trips, with transfer opportunities to and from Gold Runner trains scheduled between 2:00 and 5:00 PM. Transfer times range from 6 to 17 minutes.

Table 7 below shows Route 1C's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled travel time.

Table 7: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Bakersfield – Santa Monica	2	3h 30m

Ridership

Route 1C had just under 32,900 total riders in FY 25. **Figure 7** below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year, starting from FY 23. Ridership grew with a 1,800-rider increase from FY 23 to FY 24, followed by a smaller 600 rider increase from FY 24 and FY 25. In 2023 SJJPA reduced the number of Route 1C round-trips by 50% (from four round-trips down to two round-trips) focusing on maintaining the highest ridership round-trips. This decision was based on the rapidly increasing operational costs. Reducing operational costs (by reducing the number of round-trips) was essential to enable Route 1C to be a cost-effective route.

Deleted: As Route 1C is close to reaching the cost-effectiveness threshold, its modest ridership gains are positive indicators that with strategic interventions, this route may achieve cost effectiveness.

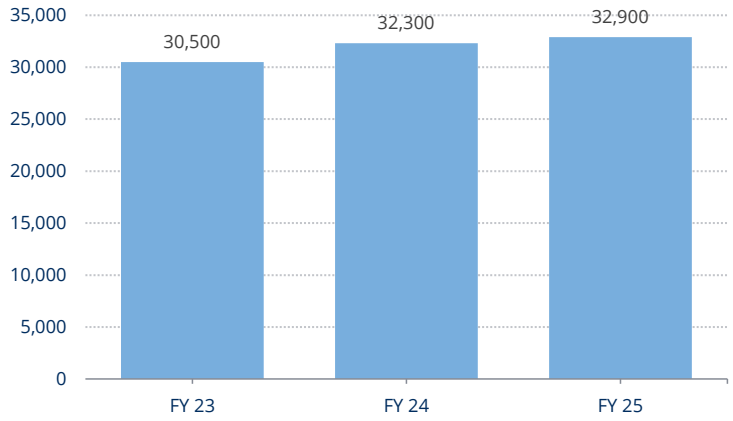


Figure 7: Annual ridership on Route 1C by fiscal year

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 8** below. Route 1C shares stops with Route 1 at Bakersfield, Santa Clarita, and Burbank Airport, with indicated ons/offs at these stops representing combined values across both routes. Like Route 1, Route1C connects with Gold Runner trains at Bakersfield. Route 1C bus stops south of Van Nuys, especially Santa Monica, demonstrate low ridership. The circuitous route between Bakersfield and Van Nuys via Burbank Airport increases travel time compared to the fastest route via I-405.

Other than Bakersfield, Van Nuys has the highest ridership on this route while Santa Monica Pier has the lowest.

Table 8: *Ons and offs by stop for Route 1C, for the latest year of available data (Mar 2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar '25 – Feb '26)
Bakersfield (Transfer)[1]	*239,318*
Van Nuys	12,543
Santa Clarita[2]	7,955
Burbank Airport[2]	7,312
Westwood-UCLA	6,918
Santa Monica Pier	1,462

Partnerships and Finances

Route 1C is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and Alvand, a private operator. Operating costs on Route 1C totaled $1,217,738 between October 2024 and September 2025. Total California system revenue related to Route 1C totaled $1,343,055. This translates to a cost recovery ratio of 110%, signifying that Route 1C met the threshold for cost effectiveness in 2024/2025. While Route 1C was marginally cost effective in FY 17, and increasing operating costs outpaced ridership increases, cost effectiveness for the route remains positive since the amount of service for this route was reduced in 2023.

[1] Bakersfield ridership (ons and offs) includes transfers.
[2] Ons/offs at Bakersfield, Santa Clarita, and Burbank Airport represent combined ons/offs on Route 1 and Route 1C.

Route 3, 3R, & 5: Stockton – Sacramento – Chico – Redding

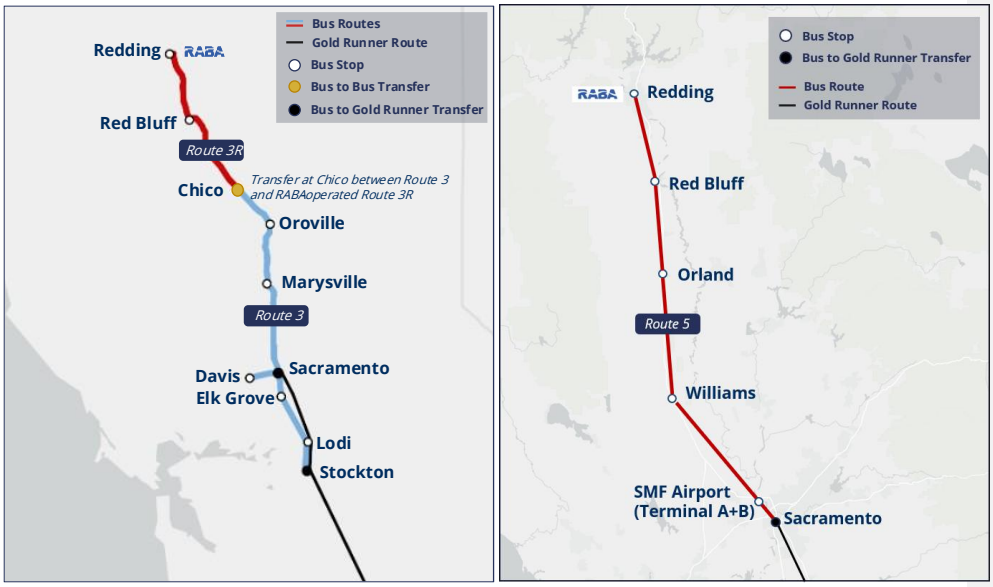


Figure 8: *Map of Route 3 and the discontinued Route 3R (left) and the new Route 5 (right)*

Service Overview

Route 3 connects Stockton to Chico via Sacramento. This route connects cities in the Central Valley to Gold Runner service at both Sacramento and Stockton. Route 3 represents the second highest performing route in the network after Route 1, with especially high ridership occurring between Stockton and Sacramento. Route 3 supplements the direct Gold Runner train trips to Sacramento by connecting to Gold Runner trains traveling to between Bakersfield and Oakland at the Stockton San Joaquin Street Station.

Prior to the implementation of Route 5, passengers could take advantage of timed transfers to Route 3R at Chico, which continued to Redding. Route 3R was implemented as a first step towards developing the new Thruway Bus Route 5 service between Redding and Sacramento. Route 3R was replaced by Route 5 on August 10, 2026, with Route 5 offering more direct service between Redding and Sacramento along the I-5 corridor. Route 5 reduces travel times, improves transfer opportunities, and connects Sacramento International Airport (SMF) to the Thruway Bus network. SJJPA has partnered with Caltrans and Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) since 2018 to develop Route 5 (formerly known as the “Salmon Runner”).

RABA has access to diverse funding sources that alleviate pressure on PTA funds disbursed through SJJPA to initiate the new route. These funding sources include annual 5311(f) operations funding through Caltrans, one-time State Highway Account funds, and annual Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds transferred from Tehama County. This partnership and funding model operated by RABA on Route 5 will be used to evaluate whether such arrangements can be used for other routes across the Thruway Bus network.

Schedule

Currently, Route 3 follows multiple service patterns, with its primary trunk serving the Stockton-Sacramento corridor with 8 round-trips. 4 of these round-trips continue to Davis, while 3 continue to Chico. The route has 1 additional round-trip between Sacramento and Chico.

Route 3 offers transfer opportunities to and from every Gold Runner train, with transfers primarily planned at Stockton with transfer times 10 to 65 minutes. The single round-trip between Sacramento and Chico offers transfers to Gold Runner trains at Sacramento, with transfer times between 4 and 14 minutes.

Route 3R served Chico to Redding daily with two round-trips and timed transfers to and from Route 3 at Chico. Route 5 now serves Sacramento to Redding daily with two round-trips and timed transfers to and from the Gold Runner at Sacramento Valley Station. **Table 9** below shows Route 3, 3R and 5's routing, daily round-trips, and travel time.

Table 9: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Stockton – Chico (Route 3)	3	3h 10m – 3h 40m
Sacramento – Chico (Route 3)	1	1h 55m
Stockton – Sacramento (Route 3)	1	1h 0m – 1h 20m
Stockton – Davis (Route 3)	4	1h 35m – 1h 55m
Chico – Redding (Route 3R – discontinued Aug '26)	*2*	*1h 35 min*
Sacramento – Redding (Route 5 – began Aug '26)	2	3h 0m

Ridership

Route 3 and 3R had 153,500 total riders in FY 25. **Figure *9*** below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year, starting from FY 19.

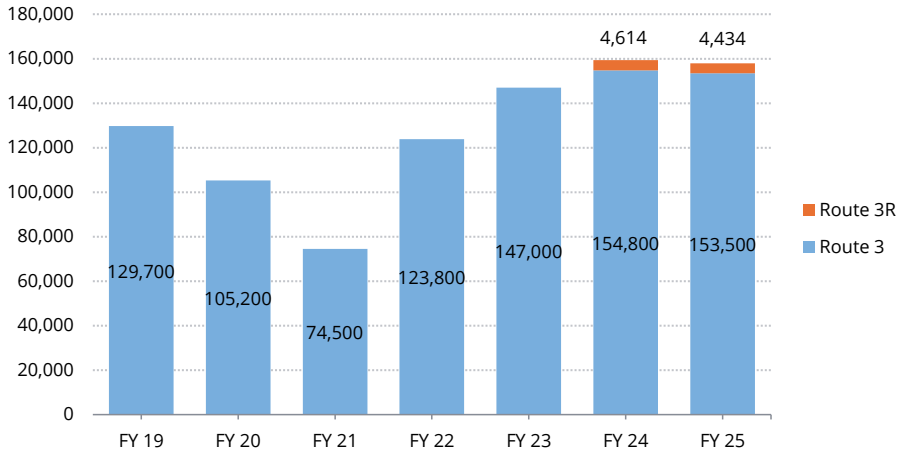


Figure 9: *Annual ridership on Route 3/3R by fiscal year*

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table *10*** below. Stockton San Joaquin Street is the primary train-to-bus transfer station on this route, with over 125,000 annual ons/offs. Stockton has two stops – Stockton San Joaquin Street Station with transfer opportunities to Gold Runner service, and Stockton Cabral Station which is served by ACE rail. Sacramento has by far the highest ridership of the bus stops, followed by Chico. Although Sacramento is a transfer station for one daily round-trip, only a very small portion of the 113,145 riders comes from rail transfers.

Route 3's ridership did not decline when it was truncated to Chico, signifying that Route 3R was successful in serving the affected riders while ridership has additionally increased elsewhere along Route 3.

Table 10: *Ons and offs by stop for Route 3, for the latest year of available data (Mar 2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar '25 – Feb '26)
Stockton (Amtrak) (Transfer)[1]	*125,035*
Sacramento [2]	*113,145*
Chico	29,833
Davis	16,218
Redding	4,522
Marysville	4,537
Elk Grove	4,018
Oroville	3,292
Lodi	2,873
Red Bluff	1,903
Stockton (ACE)	1,722

Partnerships and Finances

Route 3 is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and Avalon, a private operator. Bus-only ticketing is not active on Route 3. While Route 3 is high performing, the implementation of bus-only ticketing could be a way to increase cost-effectiveness and benefits as the network continues to develop in the future. Like with Route 1, Route 3 faces challenges with the implementation of bus-only ticketing on this route due to the well-established nature of travel along this corridor. Using the current private operator contracted by Amtrak, SJJPA would need to coordinate with existing bus operators, including Greyhound and Flix Bus, that offer overlapping service before being able to implement bus-only ticketing as per the stipulations of SB 742. SJJPA is exploring potential partnerships with public transit operators that would allow bus-only ticketing along this route.

Route 3R was contracted separately between Amtrak/SJJPA and RABA. This contract constituted an interlining agreement, with RABA receiving the ticket revenue between Chico and Redding, as well as a minimum revenue guarantee funded by SJJPA to cover operating costs not covered by ticket revenue. This model is now being used for the new Route 5.

Operating costs on Route 3 totaled $3,445,185 between October 2024 and September 2025. Total California system revenue related to Route 3 totaled $6,705,183. This

[1] Ons/offs at Stockton include Gold Runner transfers
[2] Sacramento is both a stop destination and a transfer point with only a small portion of ridership coming from Gold Runner transfers (1RT from Sacramento to Chico)

translates to a very high cost recovery ratio of 195%, signifying that Route 3 met the threshold for cost effectiveness in FY 24/25. Between October 2024 and September 2025, Route 3R cost $426,480 to operate and had total revenue of $193,035 with a cost recovery ratio of 45%. Route 3R has now been replaced by Route 5. Removing the connection from Redding to Chico from Route 3 and its associated costs, has helped Route 3 continue to have a strong cost recovery ratio. Nevertheless, with the re-introduction of the Gold Runner train service's seventh daily round-trip (the second round-trip between Bakersfield and Sacramento) on December 8, 2025, it is likely that there will be a reduction in Route 3 ridership for FY 25/26.

Route 6: Stockton – San Jose – Santa Cruz

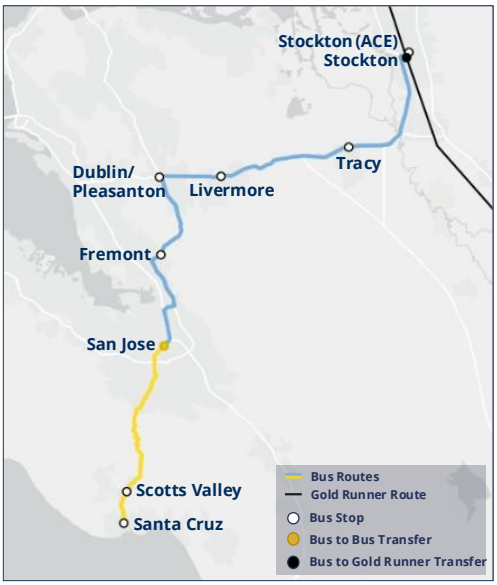


Figure 10: *Map of Route 6 and SC Metro service to Santa Cruz*

Service Overview

Route 6, which connects Stockton to San Jose, is operated by private bus operator Whitecastle. Route 6 offers transfers in San Jose to SC Metro's Route 17, connecting passengers to and from Santa Cruz.

Schedule

Route 6 runs from San Jose to Stockton with two daily round-trips, offering one morning and one evening transfer to Gold Runner service in each direction. Transfers to northbound

Gold Runner service are scheduled at 11 minutes, while transfers to southbound Gold Runner service are scheduled at 65 minutes. Route 6 connections between San Jose and Santa Cruz operate on an all-day schedule with headways between 15 minutes and 1 hour.[1] **Table 11** below shows Route 6's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled traveled time.

Table 11: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Stockton – San Jose	2	2h 5m - 2h 15m
San Jose – Santa Cruz (via SC Metro)	*All Day Service*	45-60m

Ridership

Route 6 had over 29,800 total riders in FY 25. **Figure *11*** below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year for Route 6, starting from FY 19. Since FY 21, Route 6 ridership slowly increased year over year with the biggest jump from FY 22 to FY 23 of 6,500 riders. Ridership is now at approximately 75% of the ridership in FY 19 but recovery is slowing. Route 6 ridership recovery is strong when considering that the route had four round-trips (twice the frequency) prior to the pandemic.

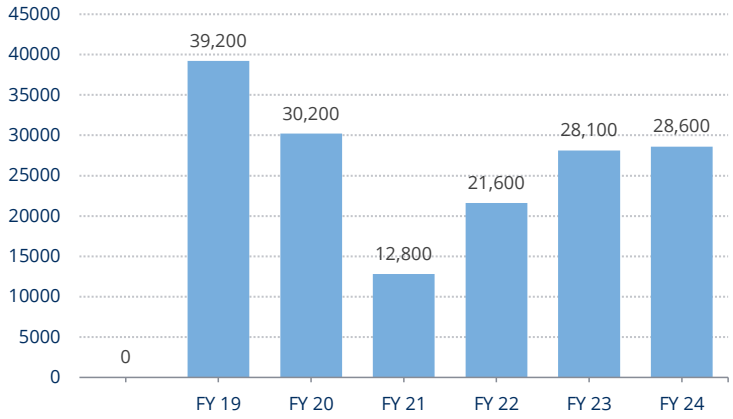


Figure 11: Annual ridership on Route 6 by fiscal year

[1] https://scmetro.org/routes/route-17/

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 12** below. The Gold Runner transfer station at Stockton has 26,100 ons and offs. Other than Stockton, Route 6 experiences its highest ridership at its terminus in San Jose, signifying the high proportion of riders using this route to travel between the Central Valley and the Bay Area. Most other stops demonstrate relatively low ridership.

The recent implementation of Route 40 connecting Merced and San Jose may draw San Jose riders away from Route 6 as Route 40 offers more direct travel between some Central Valley destinations and San Jose. Route 40 reduces the trip time between San Jose and Merced, and to destinations south of Merced, by over one hour. Since San Jose is the anchor stop for Route 6, revenue may decline as Route 40 ridership continues to develop. An analysis of early ridership data between January and May 2026 indicates that Route 6 ridership has declined by roughly 30% compared to the same months in 2025. This coincides with the implementation of Route 40 in January 2026 (see section *Route 40: Merced – San Jose* for more information on Route 40).

Table 12: *Ons and offs by stop for Route 6, for the latest year of available data (Mar2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar 25 – Feb 26)
Stockton (Amtrak) (Transfer)[1]	*26,110*
San Jose[2]	22,584
Stockton (ACE)	1,790
Dublin-Pleasanton	1,945
Fremont Park and Ride	1,883
Livermore	1,203
Tracy	1,091
Scotts Valley	No Data
Santa Cruz	No Data

Partnerships and Finances

Route 6 is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and Whitecastle, a private operator. San Jose-Santa Cruz service is operated through a partnership between Amtrak and SC Metro.

Bus-only ticketing is not active on Route 6. In the 2026 SJJPA Business Plan, SJJPA identified it as a priority for FY 26-27 to open this route to bus-only ticketing. This may

[1] Stockton ridership includes transfers.
[2] Ridership only includes passengers on Route 6 between San Jose and Stockton.

represent a strategy to recover potential ridership losses after the implementation of Route 40, by opening the route to additional passenger markets that do not overlap with Route 40.

Operating costs on Route 6 totaled $683,677 between October 2024 and September 2025. Total California system revenue related to Route 6 totaled $1,055,169. This translates to a cost recovery ratio of 154%, signifying that Route 6 met the threshold for cost effectiveness in FY 24/25. This route was also cost effective in FY 19 prior to COVID-19.

Route 7: Martinez – Santa Rosa – Arcata/Cal Poly



Figure 12: *Map of Route 7*

Service Overview

Route 7 is one of the longest routes in the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network, connecting Martinez to Napa, Santa Rosa, and destinations farther north including Ukiah, Eureka, and Arcata. Route 7 currently connects with Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) at Petaluma.

This route runs two daily round-trips from Martinez to Santa Rosa and another two round-trips from Martinez to Arcata/Cal Poly-Humboldt via Santa Rosa. It offers connections to most Gold Runner trains at Martinez with transfer times between 7 and 50 minutes.

Schedule

Route 7 schedules were recently updated to skip low ridership stops at Laytonville, Leggett, and Garberville on one of two daily round-trips in order to decrease travel times to meet federal requirements for bus operations. The schedule change also included eliminating the one daily round-trip between Napa and Martinez. Additionally, the updated schedules improve bus transfer opportunities in Ukiah while aligning northbound and southbound services to improve the attractiveness of bus-only trips. Even with the updated schedules, the length of the route poses operational complexities related to driver shifts, with the full route scheduled to take up to 6 hours and 50 minutes. As a result, the current schedule includes a 40-minute rest stop at Ukiah. **Table 13** below shows Route 7's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled travel time.

Table 13: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Martinez – Santa Rosa	2	1h 15m – 2h 15m
Martinez – Arcata	2	6h 35m – 6h 50m

Ridership

Route 7 had 45,000 total riders in FY 25. **Figure 13** below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year for Route 7, starting from FY 19. Route 7 ridership has nearly recovered to pre-COVID levels, with FY 25 ridership amounting to 95% of the route's ridership in FY 19. Ridership for the route has increased every year since FY 21. Route 7 has relatively high ridership (third highest in the Gold Runner Thruway system after Route 1 and Route 3) but induces disproportionately high operating costs due to its length. Despite this limitation, shortening Route 7 is challenging since the northern end of the route contributes a substantial amount to ridership and has limited alternative connections to major metropolitan areas in California.

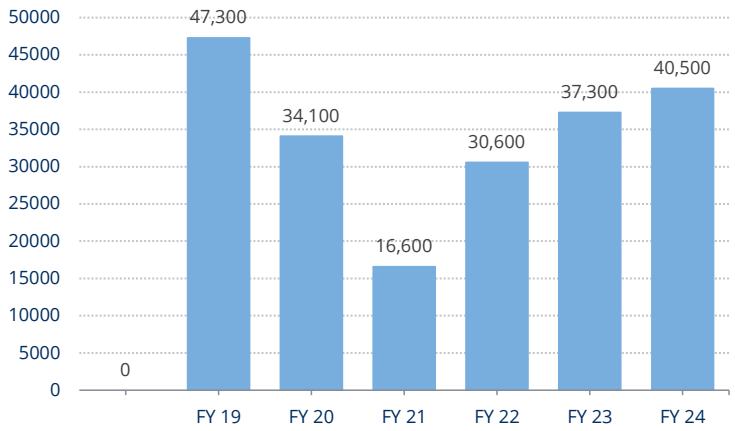


Figure 13: Annual ridership on Route 7 by fiscal year

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 14** below. The Gold Runner transfer station at Martinez has 35,000 ons and offs. Other than Martinez, Route 7 experiences its highest ridership at Santa Rosa with 10,800 ons and offs, while the Arcata and Cal Poly stops combined yield nearly 9,000 ons and offs. Eureka, Napa, and Ukiah also contribute substantial ridership to the route.

Table 14*: Ons and offs by stop for Route 7, for the latest year of available data (Mar 2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar 25 – Feb 26)
Martinez (Transfer)[1]	*35,062*
Santa Rosa	10,794
Eureka	5,750
Napa	5,313
Arcata (TC)	5,284
Ukiah	5,103
Vallejo	3,678
Arcata (Cal Poly)	3,620
Petaluma	3,053
Rohnert Park	2,613
Fortuna	1,802
Laytonville	1,691
Willits	1,643
Garberville	1,090

[1] Martinez ridership (ons and offs) includes transfers

Cloverdale	575
Healdsburg	447
Leggett	92

Partnerships and Finances

Route 7 is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and American Star, a private operator. Bus-only ticketing is active on Route 7.

Route 7 schedules have been updated to allow ample time for transfers with HTA service between Ukiah and Eureka. However, transfers between services are not guaranteed as HTA operates its service independently and is not required to modify its operations to accommodate Thruway bus transfers.

Operating costs on Route 7 totaled $3,246,049 between October 2024 and September 2025. Total California system revenue related to Route 7 totaled $1,971,053. This translates to a cost recovery ratio of 61% signifying that Route 7 did not meet the threshold for cost effectiveness in 2024/2025. In FY 17, Route 7 demonstrated substantial cost effectiveness with a 136% cost recovery ratio. In FY 18 the route showed a slight revenue loss. However, Route 7's cost recovery ratio has dipped sharply in recent years, primarily due to increasing operational costs outpacing ridership increases. Operational costs have increased by 176% since FY 22, while ridership has only increased by 47% in the same timeframe.

Route 10: Santa Barbara to Las Vegas



Figure 14: *Map of Route 10*

Service Overview

Route 10 connects Las Vegas and Santa Barbara via Bakersfield. The route was established through an interline agreement that combined the former Routes 9 and 10. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Route 9 operated between Bakersfield and Las Vegas but was suspended during the pandemic and has not been resumed as a standalone service. Route 10, which previously operated only between Bakersfield and Santa Barbara, was extended to assume Route 9's routing, creating a continuous service between Las Vegas and Santa Barbara.

The route is now over 430 miles long and is the longest route in the Gold Runner Thruway system. Due to its substantial distance paired with moderate ridership, Route 10 only operates one daily round-trip. During the pandemic, SJJPA reduced the frequency of service between Santa Barbara and Bakersfield from three round-trips down to one round-trip (the amount of service between Bakersfield and Las Vegas remained the same with one round-trip). When compared to services provided by the rest of the Thruway system, a similar percentage of Route 10 passengers board or alight at the Gold Runner transfer station in Bakersfield. The concentration of ons and offs at the Gold Runner connection indicates that despite Route 10's length, its usage patterns are consistent with the other Gold Runner Thruway routes.

Schedule

Route 10 runs one round-trip per day, providing afternoon connectivity to the Gold Runner at Bakersfield. Transfer times range from 17 to 48 minutes. A one-way trip takes 11 hours and 35 minutes, much of that travel time occurring between Las Vegas and Mojave. **Table 15** below shows Route 10's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled travel time.

Table 15*: Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Las Vegas – Santa Barbara	1	11h 35m

Ridership

Route 10 had 32,300 total riders in FY 25. **Figure 15** below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year for Route 10, starting from FY 19. While ridership peaked in FY 23, it has since declined in the subsequent years despite the implementation of bus-only ticketing. Strategies to stabilize this trend may be needed in order to ensure the route is financially sustainable in the future.

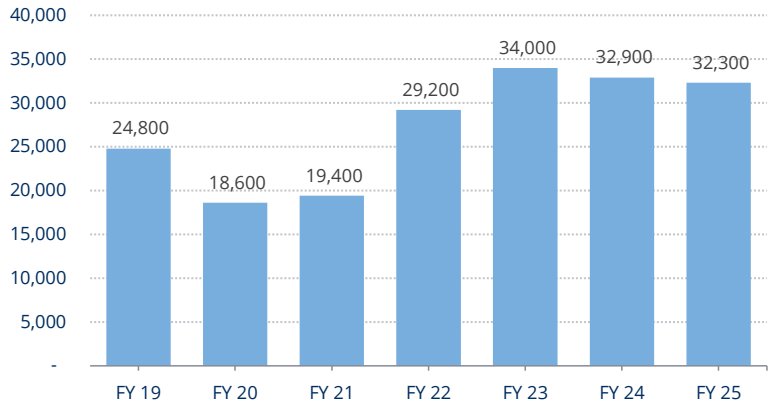


Figure 15: Annual ridership on Route 10 by fiscal year

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 16** below. Other than the Gold Runner transfer stop at Bakersfield, the highest ridership on this route occurs at Oxnard with nearly 9,800 ons and offs, followed by Santa Barbara and Las Vegas with 5,100 and 5,000 respectively. Both ends of the route contribute significantly to the route's overall ridership. Barstow has two stations, both with lower ridership, with the Barstow Bus station exhibiting especially low ridership.

Table 16: *Ons and offs by stop for Route 10, for the latest year of available data (Mar 2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar '25 – Feb '26)
Bakersfield (Transfer)[1]	*29,859*
Oxnard	9,787
Santa Barbara	5,068
Las Vegas Strip	5,015
UCSB	4,431
Las Vegas Downtown	4,426
Ventura	2,802
Mojave	2,317
Barstow Amtrak	1,713
Santa Paula	1,292
Carpinteria	1,003
Barstow Bus	782
Tehachapi	570
Fillmore	405

Partnerships and Finances

Route 10 is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and Alvand, a private operator. Route 10 includes an interline agreement with FNA where Greyhound and FlixBus are allotted a portion of the tickets that increased travel options for passengers and helped remove potential obstacles for selling bus-only ticketing on the route. The total operating cost for Route 10 is not available due to the nature of the interlining agreement; however, as part of the interlining agreement, the operator receives a minimum revenue guarantee of up to $292,000 to offset any operating revenue not covered by ticket sales. Between October 2024 and September 2025, the full amount of the revenue guarantee was not needed as the total operating cost for SJJPA was $123,575. California system revenue related to Route 10 totals $2,006,452. Based on the interline agreement, the Route 10 operator received nearly all of the bus trip portion of the revenue associated with the route, which totaled $1,261,104 between October 2024 and September 2025. Therefore, the amount of revenue used to determine the cost recovery ratio for Route 10 did not include the revenue that was paid to the operator and was almost entirely from the train portion of the revenue associated with the route. The amount of "train" revenue for Route 10 in **Table 2** totaled $745,348. From October 2024 to September 2025, Route 10 was the most cost-effective Gold Runner route with a cost recovery ratio of 603%.

[1] Bakersfield ridership (ons and offs) includes transfers.

Route 15, 15A, & 15B: Yosemite Routes

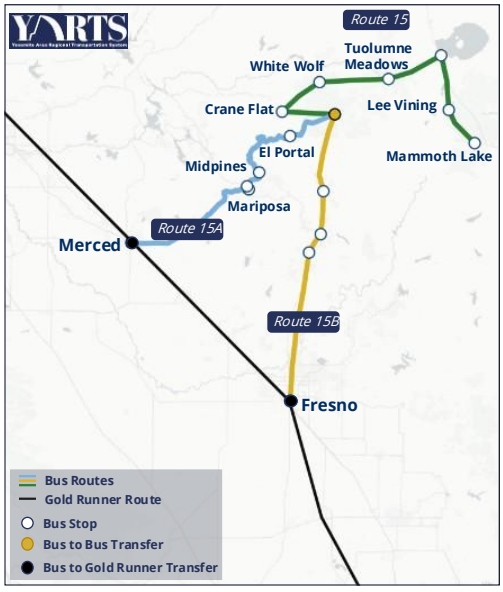


Figure 16: *Map of Route 15/15A/15B*

Service Overview

Routes 15, 15A, and 15B services are provided by the public operator YARTS. These routes link the Yosemite Valley to the Gold Runner via Merced (Route 15A) and Fresno (Route 15B). Because SJJPA only contributes a relatively small portion of the funding for these routes, accommodating Gold Runner schedules is not the top priority for YARTS service. As a result, bus schedules are not well aligned with Gold Runner train schedules. Furthermore, buses are only required to wait 15 minutes if Gold Runner trains are late, which may not guarantee transfers for passengers, hindering the benefit of these routes to Gold Runner passengers.

Schedule

Route 15 and Route 15B are seasonal routes, with two daily round-trips on each during their respective seasons. Route 15A runs year-round, operating between three round-trips in the winter and six round-trips in July and August. Up to four of these daily round-trips serve the Gold Runner station at Merced. However, due to the provisions of the agreement with YARTS derived from YARTS' own service goals focusing on transporting workers and tourists within Yosemite, connections to the Gold Runner are inconsistent, scheduled between 8 minutes and 1 hour and 45 minutes. As previously noted, where connections

exist, YARTS buses are not required to wait more than 15 minutes for Amtrak trains. The lack of timed connections between the Gold Runner and YARTS routes generates unreliability that can manifest in substantial travel time costs. **Table 17** below shows Route 15/15A/15B's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled traveled time.

Table 17: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
15 Yosemite – Mammoth Lakes	2	3h 35m
15A Merced – Yosemite	3-6	2h 21m – 3h 29m
15B Fresno – Yosemite	2	2h 5m – 2h 40m

Ridership

Route 15/15A/15B[1] had just over 4,500 Gold Runner transfer passengers in FY25. **Figure *17*** below represents a chart of combined annual ridership by fiscal year for the three routes, noting total YARTS ridership compared to Gold Runner transfer passengers. The number of Gold Runner transfer passengers in FY 25 was only 8% of the total YARTS FY 25 ridership.

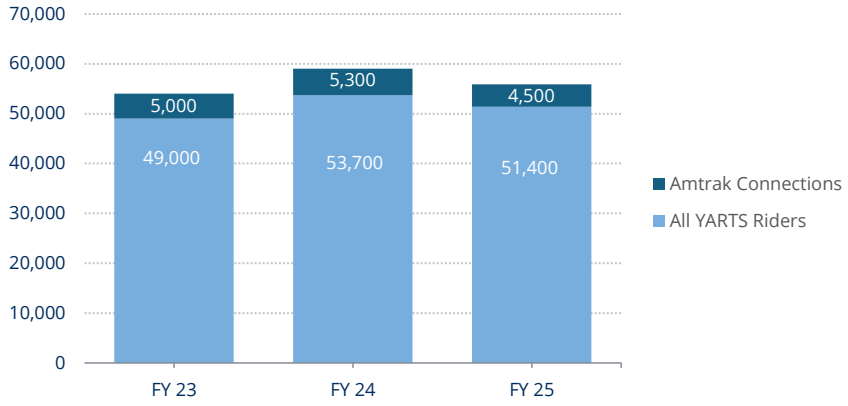


Figure 17: *Annual ridership on Route 15/15A/15B by fiscal year*

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 18** below. Route 15, 15A, and 15B all experience the highest ridership at Yosemite Curry Village at 1,300 ons and offs, followed by Yosemite

[1] FY25 ridership data does not include Route 15

Valley Lodge and Yosemite Visitor Center with 900 and 600 ons and offs respectively. The Gold Runner transfer station at Merced experiences 4,400 ons and offs. Many stops exhibit low ridership below 100 annual passengers, including Fresno despite providing seasonal transfers to Gold Runner service. Gold Runner related ridership does not contribute significantly to YARTS' overall ridership, reflecting the conflicting priorities between YARTS and SJJPA in offering this service.

Table 18: *Ons and offs by stop for Routs 15/15A/15B, for the latest year of available data (Mar 2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar 25 – Feb 26)
Merced (Transfer)[1]	*3,442*
Yosemite Curry Village	1,296
Yosemite Valley Lodge	884
Yosemite Visitor Center	628
Mariposa (Midtown)	209
Mariposa (Park & Ride)	180
El Portal	157
Midpines	95
Lee Vining	78
Oakhurst	18
Mammoth Lakes	4
Coarsegold	4
Fresno (Transfer)[26]	1

Partnerships and Finances

Routes 15/15A/15B are operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and YARTS, a public operator. The nature of the agreement allows YARTS to determine its schedules based on its own service priorities, inhibiting robust integration with Gold Runner service. SJJPA, through Amtrak, pays YARTS a daily rate per bus by route. The YARTS contract does not include fuel cost adjustment or liquidated damages provisions.

Because this route is run by a public operator, bus-only ticketing is automatically active. The majority of YARTS riders are not Gold Runner transfer passengers.

The Gold Runner Thruway contributed $406,457 toward Route 15A between October 2024 and September 2025. Total California system revenue related to Routes 15A totaled $198,271. This translates to a cost recovery ratio of 49%, signifying that the YART 15A route

[1] Ons/offs at Merced and Fresno include Gold Runner transfers

to Yosemite failed to meet the cost effectiveness threshold for SJJPA in FY 24/25 by a significant margin.

Route 18: Santa Maria – Hanford – Visalia (Route modified in June 2026)



Figure 18: *Maps of Route 18: service pattern through May 2026 (left), service pattern starting June 2026 (right)*

Service Overview

Until May 2026, Route 18 operated from Hanford to Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo, and Visalia, with one daily round-trip. **Figure 18** shows the original route through May 2026 compared with the modified route offering seasonal service from San Luis Obispo to Hanford and year-round service via KART between Hanford and Visalia. The new service pattern started in June 2026.

Route 18 was reconfigured due to declining ridership and bus revenues, making it difficult for the private operator, Classic Charters, to profit from the route. While post-COVID ridership has recovered systemwide, Route 18 has failed to experience a sustained recovery, with ridership maintaining a 57% decline since FY 18. Due to the operator of Route 18 terminating their interline agreement with Amtrak, the route has been reconfigured to focus resources on seasonal service around proven periods of high demand. This is anticipated to lower the cost of running the route and maximize the route's cost recovery.

Schedule

Starting March 31, 2026, Route 18 operated on a reduced schedule only running one round-trip per day on Friday through Monday. After May 31, 2026, Route 18 was discontinued and operations between Hanford and Visalia were taken over by KART. Since July 1, 2024, SJJPA contributes to the route, where KART operates two round-trips between Hanford and Visalia with Gold Runner transfers at Hanford. Service from Hanford to Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo will run seasonally based on peak university-based travel periods. Service to Santa Maria has been discontinued. **Table 19** below shows Route 18's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled travel time.

Table 19: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Visalia – Hanford	2	30m – 40m
Hanford – San Luis Obispo	Seasonal	1h 05m – 1h 15m

Ridership

Route 18 had over 10,600 total riders in FY 25.

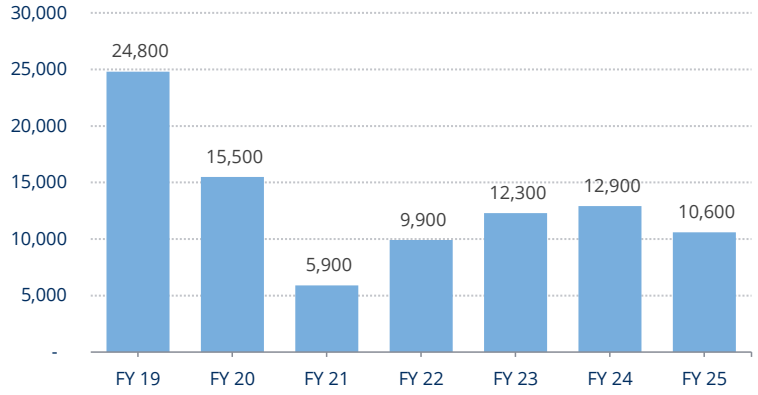


Figure 19 below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year for Route 18, starting from FY 19. Route 18 ridership declined by approximately 18% between FY 24 and FY 25.

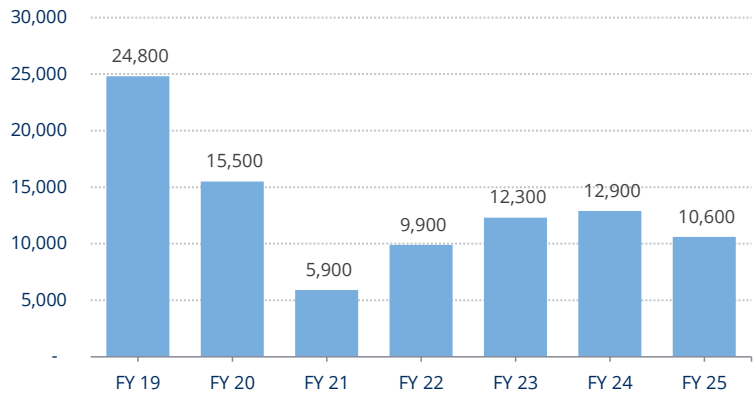


Figure 19: Annual ridership on Route 18 by fiscal year

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 20** below. Other than the Gold Runner transfer station at Hanford, the two San Luis Obispo stops together contributed the highest ridership with roughly 4,900 ons and offs. While this represents a modest level of ridership, annual data reveals a strong seasonality to ridership patterns, suggesting that the majority of ridership to San Luis Obispo occurs during peak university-related travel periods, supporting the decision to reduce service on a seasonal basis. Visalia also exhibited relatively low ridership with 2,170 annual passengers, but this service has been chosen to continue year-round due to lower operating costs and the feasibility of a partnership with the local public transit operator. Santa Maria has a similarly low level of ridership, with 2,000 annual ons and offs, and has been discontinued due to ridership not sufficiently justifying costs along this segment of the route. This ridership data does not yet reflect the recent changes to the Route 18 service pattern.

Table 20*: Ons and offs by stop for Route 18, for the latest year of available data (Mar 2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar 25 – Feb 26)
Hanford (Transfer)[1]	*8,957*
San Luis Obispo	3,199
Visalia	2,170
Santa Maria	2,003
San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly)	1,735
Grover Beach	1,454
Paso Robles	1,097

[1] Hanford ridership (ons and offs) includes transfers

Atascadero	419
Lemoore	414

Partnerships and Finances

Route 18 was originally operated by Orange Belt Stages which went out of business in 2020. Following Orange Belt Stage's closure, American Star operated the route through an interline agreement with Amtrak. After American Star recently opted to pull out of this agreement due to poor performance, SJJPA and Amtrak sought a new partnership structure to reconfigure the route.

Route 18 is now operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and American Star for seasonal service between Hanford and San Luis Obispo. An SJJPA contract with public operator Kings County Area Public Transit Agency (KCAPTA) permits KART to operate the year-round segment between Hanford and Visalia. In the future, Visalia Transit is expected to operate additional service on this route as part of the Cross Valley Corridor Phase 1[1]. KART service does not operate on Sundays and on New Years Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. In addition, KART currently does not have a ticketing agreement with Amtrak so it is not possible to purchase a connection to/from Visalia on Amtrak's website. KART is currently allowing Gold Runner passengers to ride for free by showing their train ticket.

Bus-only ticketing was always active on Route 18 but did not sufficiently counteract the route's decline in ridership in recent years.

Comprehensive operating cost data for the previous Route 18 service between Visalia and Santa Maria is not available due to the nature of the Amtrak interlining agreement. **Table 2** shows a high cost recovery ratio of 227% because of the relatively low cost for the revenue guarantee ($85,399) as compared to the train revenue generated from the connecting bus passengers ($193,679). In addition to the revenue guarantee funding, the operator received $343,579 in bus ticket revenue, but they claimed this funding was not enough to continue operations and terminated their interline agreement with Amtrak. Even at pre-pandemic ridership levels, Route 18 was not a cost-effective route with a cost recovery ratio of 75% in FY 17/18 (see Appendix 2.2). SJJPA determined it would not be cost effective to continue operating Route 18 between Visalia and Santa Maria due to declining ridership and increasing costs.

[1] The Cross Valley Corridor Plan proposes a transit corridor between Lindsay and Lemoore, including connectivity between Hanford and Visalia. Phase 1 focuses on improved express bus service along the corridor.

Route 19: Bakersfield – Riverside – San Bernardino



Figure 20: *Map of Route 19*

Service Overview

Route 19 connects Bakersfield to Riverside and San Bernardino via Pasadena. Route 19 formerly extended to Indio and Hemet, but these portions of the route were discontinued in 2020 due to low ridership.

Schedule

Route 19 runs two daily round-trips from Bakersfield to San Bernardino, offering connections to the Gold Runner in both directions between 10:30 AM and 12:45 PM and between 4:00 and 5:00 PM. Transfers are scheduled between 6 and 22 minutes. **Table 21** below shows Route 19's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled travel time.

Table 21: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Bakersfield – San Bernardino	2	4h 5m

Ridership

Route 19 had just over 41,700 total riders in FY25. **Figure *21*** below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year for Route 19, starting from FY 19. Ridership has remained largely stable in recent years; however, there was a slight decline from FY 24 to FY 25. In 2023 the number of round-trips on Route 19 was reduced from 4 down to 2. Despite this, ridership did not have a signifciant decrease, while at the same time, cost effectiveness increased.

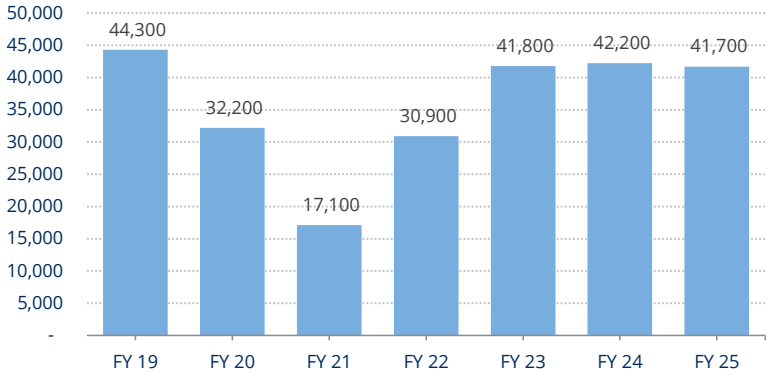


Figure 21: Annual ridership on Route 19 by fiscal year

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 22** below. Besides Bakersfield, which is a Gold Runner transfer station with nearly 40,000 ons and offs, Riverside exhibits the highest ridership with 15,365 ons and offs, followed by Ontario and San Bernardino. However, given the population in the Inland Empire region, ridership in this area is lower than expected.

Table 22: *Ons and offs by stop for Route 19, for the latest year of available data (Mar 2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar 25 – Feb 26)
Bakersfield (Transfer)[1]	*39,935*
Riverside	15,365
Ontario	8,732
San Bernardino	8,370
Pasadena	5,502
Claremont	4,650
La Crescenta	388

[1] Bakersfield ridership (ons and offs) includes transfers.

Partnerships and Finances

Route 19 is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and Alvand, a private operator. Bus-only ticketing is active on this route.

Operating costs on Route 19 totaled $1,743,350 between October 2024 and September 2025. Total California system revenue related to Route 19 totaled $2,107,336. This translates to a cost recovery ratio of 121%, signifying that Route 19 met the threshold for cost effectiveness in FY 24/25. This is an improvement over years past where cost recovery was between 69% and 94%. In 2023, SJJPA reduced service from four round-trips down to two round-trips. The change to 2 round-trips focused on the highest performing trips, and had a positive impact on cost effectiveness, even as costs continued to rise. However, with costs expecting to rise in the future, SJJPA may need to examine additional measures to increase ridership and revenue for the service.

Route 40: Merced – San Jose



Figure 22: *Map of Route 40*

Service Overview

Route 40 was implemented in January 2026, connecting San Jose and Merced. This route offers a direct alternative for many passengers traveling between the Central Valley and

Bay Area compared to Route 6, which connects Stockton to San Jose. For passengers travelling between San Jose and Merced, Route 40 saves between 45 minutes and 2 hours of travel compared to Route 6, which offers a less direct journey with a transfer in Stockton. As a result, Route 40 is expected to divert some ridership from Route 6. Route 40 is also positioned to provide an important connection from early phases of California High-Speed Rail service to the Bay Area.

Schedule

Route 40 runs two daily round-trips from San Jose to Merced, with Gold Runner connections available in the morning and evening. Transfer times are scheduled between 10 and 44 minutes. **Table 23** below shows Route 40's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled travel time.

Table 23: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
San Jose – Merced	2	2h 35m

Ridership

Route 40 was implemented in January 2026 and thus has limited historical ridership data. Available Route 40 ridership data from January 2026 to April 2026 is illustrated below in **Figure *23***. The ridership data available since Route 40 was opened indicates strong ridership growth. As the route matures, it will be critical to determine where ridership stabilizes and the corresponding impact to Route 6 ridership.

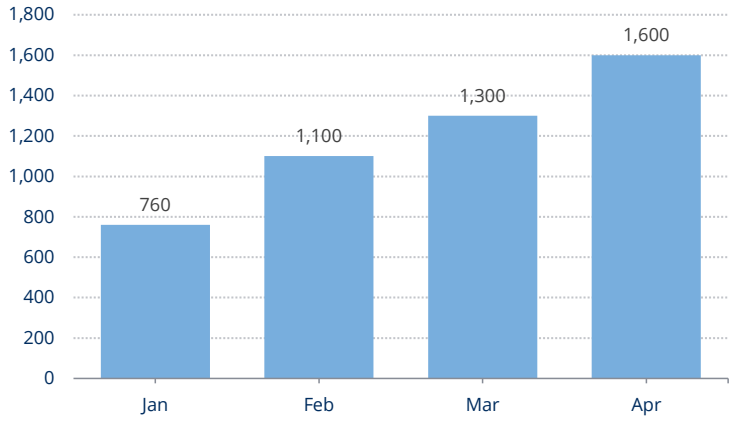


Figure 23: *Available Route 40 monthly ridership for 2026*

Ons and offs by stop between January 2026 and April 2026 are listed in **Table 24** below. The Gold Runner transfer station at Merced has 4,400 ons and offs. San Jose has 4,300 ons and offs, signifying that the vast majority of passengers on this route are traveling between Merced and San Jose. San Jose's high ridership is largely attributable to its position as a major population center and its extensive connectivity to the broader Bay Area transportation network.

Table 24: *Ons and offs by stop for Route 40, for the latest available data (January 2026 – April 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Jan'26 – Apr '26)[1]
Merced (Transfer)[2]	*4,446*
San Jose	4,252
Gilroy	459
Los Banos	257

Partnerships and Finances

Route 40 is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and American Star, a private operator. Bus-only ticketing is active on this route.

Reported operating costs between January and March 2026 were just over $244,300. Cost effectiveness data is not yet available for this route.

[1] As Route 40 is a recent implementation, data is only available between January 2026 and April 2026.
[2] Merced ridership (ons and offs) includes transfers.

Route 99: Emeryville – San Francisco



Figure 24: *Map of Route 99*

Service Overview

Route 99 connects San Francisco and Emeryville with just these two stops. This is the shortest and second most cost-effective route in the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network. While this connection is also served by BART (via the connection at the Richmond Station) and local bus operators, Route 99 represents a valuable and popular option for Gold Runner train passengers who may carry luggage or who may prefer a seamless connection to facilitate their journey to and from San Francisco.

Schedule

Route 99 has 19 daily round-trips, 5 of which connect to the Gold Runner at Emeryville between 8:00 AM and 10:00 PM. SJJPA partially funds this route, providing funding for the 5 round-trips that connect to the Gold Runner. Route 99 is a jointly managed route that is funded by SJJPA, CCJPA, and Amtrak. Gold Runner transfer times are scheduled between 6 and 18 minutes. **Table 25** below shows Route 99's routing, daily round-trips, and scheduled travel time.

Table 25: *Schedule, Scheduled Travel Time, and Daily Round-Trips*

Routing	Daily RT	Scheduled Travel Time
Emeryville – San Francisco	5	0h 25m – 0h 30m

Ridership

Route 99 had 42,800 total riders in FY 25. **Figure *25*** below represents a chart of annual ridership by fiscal year for Route 99, starting from 2021. Route 99 ridership has been relatively constant since FY 22 and exhibits a 94% ridership recovery since FY 19.

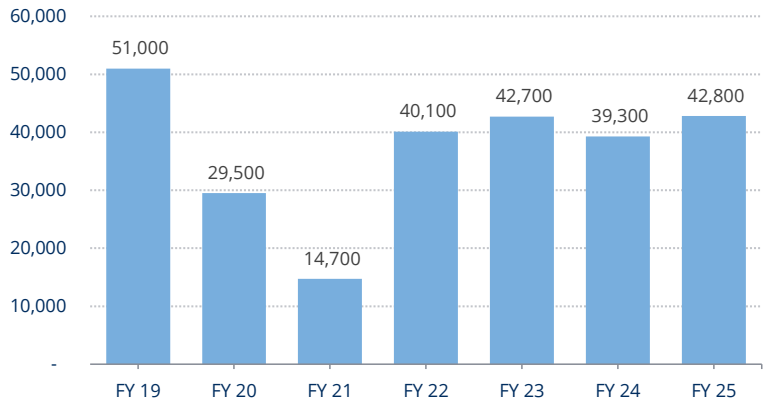


Figure 25: Annual ridership on Route 99 by fiscal year

Ons and offs by stop are listed in **Table 26** below. Because Route 99 only has two stops, total ons and offs are identical for both.

Table 26: *Ons and offs by stop for Route 99, for the latest year of available data (Mar 2025 – Feb 2026)*

Stop	Ons/Offs (Mar 25 – Feb 26)
Emeryville	43,246
San Francisco	43,246

Partnerships and Finances

Route 99 is operated under a direct contracting agreement between Amtrak and American Star, a private operator, with financial contributions shared between SJJPA, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) and long-distance Amtrak services. SJJPA is responsible for financing 22% of the route's operating costs, proportionate with the number of trips that are intended to connect with Gold Runner service at Emeryville.

Bus-only ticketing is not active on Route 99 because similar service is offered by AC Transit, the local transit agency.

SJJPA contributions toward Route 99 operating costs totaled $544,557 between October 2024 and September 2025. In the same period, Route 99 contributed to $2,242,054 of revenue for SJJPA related systems across the state. This translates to a cost recovery ratio of 412%, signifying that Route 99 exceeded the threshold for cost effectiveness in FY 24/25. This route is the second most cost-effective route in the Gold Runner Thruway Bus system. The route's short length results in low operating costs, which are easily offset by the route's substantial ridership.

A stop for Route 99 at the Transbay Transit Center is currently being negotiated and would improve the intermodal connectivity provided by the route. The bus stop at San Francisco is located outside of the Salesforce Transit Center, with the terminal itself underutilized since the pandemic. Negotiations between Transbay JPA, AC Transit, Greyhound, CCJPA and SJJPA have been ongoing (with Amtrak taking the lead). The point of contention has been the high cost to use the terminal, knowing that using the station will save the route ~5-10 minutes and will give passengers an improved experience due to improved shelter options.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 establishes a baseline assessment of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network by evaluating each route's ridership, financial performance, operating characteristics, partnership structure, and role within the broader passenger rail network. While the routes serve different markets and operating environments, several common themes emerge that help identify priorities for future improvements.

Overall, network performance is very strong. The cumulative cost recovery ratio for the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network was at 119% between October 2024 – September 2025 (FY 24/25). The cost recovery ratios for the individual routes varies considerably. Routes 1, 1C, 3, 6, 19, and 99 currently meet or exceed the State's cost effectiveness threshold, while Route 7, and Route 15A fall below the threshold and may benefit from service or

operational adjustments. It appears that Route 10 is the most cost-effective route for the state, but more information is needed regarding Amtrak's interline agreement with the operator. The analysis also shows that ridership alone does not determine performance. Operating costs, route design, transfer opportunities, partnerships, and management decisions regarding the level of service provided, all contribute to a route's financial success.

The network continues to evolve through recent service changes, including the implementation of Route 40, the replacement of Route 3R with Route 5, and the restructuring of Route 18. As additional performance data becomes available, these changes should continue to be monitored and incorporated into future planning efforts.

The findings presented in this chapter provide the foundation for Chapter 3, which evaluates networkwide strategies and route specific recommendations on how SJJPA can continue to work to improve ridership, strengthen rail connectivity, enhance the customer experience, and increase the overall cost effectiveness of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network.

Chapter 3: Service Optimization and Recommendations

Introduction

SJJPA enters this Gold Runner Thruway Bus planning effort, with a network that has strong ridership and exceptional cost effectiveness demonstrating the success of the strategic management decisions made in recent years. The network is well used, valued by Gold Runner, Capitol Corridor, and Pacific Surfliner riders, and delivers substantial environmental, social equity, and economic benefits as well as mobility throughout California. This chapter focuses on how SJJPA in coordination with Amtrak and Caltrans can build on the already successful Gold Runner Thruway Bus network through targeted opportunities to further strengthen and optimize the network through both systemwide recommendations and route-specific optimization strategies. The evaluation considers opportunities to enhance the overall network, including governance, partnerships, service patterns, connectivity, data, reliability, and the passenger experience, while also examining individual routes to identify targeted opportunities to improve service, cost effectiveness, and connectivity. Together, these evaluations provide the basis for the recommendations and optimization opportunities prioritized in the final tiered recommendations table.

As outlined in Chapter 1, SJJPA has laid out four goals to guide recommendations put forth by the Thruway Bus study:

A preferred and convenient option for intercity travelers that connects to Gold Runner rail services and increases Gold Runner ridership while driving mode shift away from the highway network

The Gold Runner Thruway Bus network extends the reach of Gold Runner rail service by connecting communities that are not directly served by rail. Every passenger who chooses the integrated rail and bus network instead of driving supports California's mobility and sustainability goals by reducing highway congestion and GHG emissions. By ensuring that the Thruway Bus network complements and strengthens Gold Runner rail service, SJJPA can increase rail ridership while maximizing the environmental and transportation benefits of the statewide network.

Accordingly, SJJPA's recommendations focus on strengthening the role of the Thruway Bus network as an extension of the rail system. Maintaining reliable, timed connections with Gold Runner trains will remain the highest priority, ensuring passengers have convenient access to communities beyond the rail corridor. Where demand warrants, SJJPA should evaluate opportunities to increase or expand bus service to improve travel options and accommodate future ridership growth. Service planning should continue to prioritize

interregional travel markets, while local transit agencies provide shorter-distance connections within their respective service areas. At the same time, SJJPA will continue to pursue opportunities to expand bus-only ticketing, allowing the network to serve additional passenger markets, improve asset utilization, and strengthen the financial performance of the Thruway Bus system.

A cost-effective service for the public sector, responsive to structural shifts in demand, highly constrained Public Transportation Account (PTA) funding, and increasing costs of providing service (including maximized utilization of available funding from partner agencies for Thruway service benefits)

As outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, cost-effectiveness is a primary consideration in planning the future of the Thruway Bus network. Each route is expected to meet established cost-effectiveness thresholds, with priority given to improving the performance of routes that fall below those standards. While maintaining a robust and convenient network for passengers remains a core objective, SJJPA must also ensure that available funding is used efficiently to support the long-term sustainability of the network. This is particularly important as operating costs continue to increase, and PTA funding remains constrained.

To continue to improve cost-effectiveness, SJJPA's recommendations address multiple aspects of service delivery, including schedules, route design, and operating partnerships. Timetables can continue to be refined using observed travel patterns and passenger demand to improve operational efficiency and strengthen rail-bus connections. Route alignments should also be evaluated to identify opportunities to reduce operating costs, improve ridership, or better balance both objectives. In addition, partnerships with public operators and other agencies can reduce operating costs, expand funding opportunities, and support the implementation of bus-only ticketing where appropriate.

Effective business models/governance structure to oversee and administer the Thruway Bus service

The current governance structure distributes responsibilities among SJJPA, Amtrak, public and private operators, and Caltrans. This model has worked well to effectively manage the Gold Runner routes and maintain predominately cost-effective routes despite the substantial operational cost escalation that has occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is important that SJJPA receives cost-recovery data on all Gold Runner routes at least twice a year from Amtrak enabling SJJPA to further strengthen oversight and better position SJJPA to align the Thruway Bus network with its service goals while maintaining a cost-effective and financially sustainable system. In addition, the new operating structure being deployed on Route 5 (Redding to Sacramento) utilizing a public operator that brings in new state, regional, and local funding while also guaranteeing connections to Gold

Runner trains and uses Amtrak ticketing, needs to be closely monitored by SJJPA. The new Route 5 partnership with RABA could be an important new model for increasing service, benefits, and cost-effectiveness for new or existing Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes.

Providing safe, reliable, and competitive connectivity to key travel markets throughout California – particularly for transit-dependent residents (focusing on near-term improvements/changes)

As travel patterns continue to evolve, the Thruway Bus network will remain a critical component of Gold Runner service and California's broader intercity transportation system. The recommendations in this study focus on ensuring that the network continues to serve key travel markets through safe, reliable, and convenient connections while responding to changing passenger demand. They prioritize near-term strategies that can be implemented over the next several years to strengthen network performance and improve passenger experience.

The remainder of this chapter outlines recommendations and optimization opportunities at both the network and route levels. General recommendations address systemwide priorities, including governance, service planning, passenger information, and reliability, while route-specific recommendations identify opportunities to improve performance, expand connectivity, and enhance cost-effectiveness across the Thruway Bus network. The chapter concludes by bringing these recommendations together into a prioritized framework that identifies the actions and analysis that should be advanced immediately, those that warrant additional study within the Fiscal Year and longer-term opportunities for consideration.

General Recommendations

Governance, partnerships, and funding

The governance structure of the Thruway Bus network affects the operation and management of all routes in the system. As a result, this can have far-reaching effects on the success of the network. As detailed in Chapter 2, the governance structure of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network positions Amtrak as the main body coordinating with operators and SJJPA as the managing body, receiving funding from Caltrans to manage Thruway Bus service and monitor productivity. This partnership between SJJPA and Amtrak has resulted in successful management of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network. Difficult decisions made during and after the COVID-19 pandemic have kept the network cost-effective. Underperforming routes were reduced (eliminating the worse performing buses and or truncating segments with very small ridership), and in some cases eliminated. The unforeseen cost escalation after COVID-19 (which has greatly increased operating costs),

led to a number of strategic management decisions to make reductions in Thruway Bus service levels. The result of these decisions is a Gold Runner Thruway Bus network which remains extremely cost-effective despite increasing costs, while at the same time has maintained most of its ridership. The magnitude of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Program should also be recognized when evaluating the network's overall performance. The system extends approximately 681 miles from Arcata to San Diego, providing statewide connectivity throughout California and to southern Nevada. In addition to connecting to Gold Runner trains, the network also provides critical connectivity to the Capitol Corridor and Pacific Surfliner state supported intercity passenger rail services as part of an integrated statewide intercity transportation network. Gold Runner buses travel approximately 11,609 miles each day, with more than 40 motorcoaches operating across the state at any given time. Maintaining a Thruway Bus network this size and geographic reach while preserving most ridership and controlling costs demonstrates the program's continued value, efficiency, and importance to California intercity transportation network.

SJJPA should continue to seek partnerships with public operators to operate portions of existing routes in order to leverage shared service goals, capitalize on additional funding sources other than from the Public Transportation Account (PTA), support cost-effectiveness, facilitate bus-only ticketing where this is not yet implemented, and utilize lessons learned from recent changes in partnership models to assess future governance models. SJJPA should closely monitor the performance of the new Route 5 between Redding and Sacramento to see if this is a model that can be deployed in other parts of the state. SJJPA needs to be careful to avoid future public or private partnerships where the cost share expected from SJJPA doesn't result in a cost-effective service with significant ridership and public benefits.

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SJJPA should coordinate with the private operator Flix North America (FNA) to explore potential partnerships that would mutually benefit Gold Runner, FlixBus and Greyhound services. FNA has proposed three complementary approaches which SJJPA may pursue in any combination or sequence:

1. **Interline service agreements** on existing Greyhound and FlixBus routes, letting passengers book one itinerary across Gold Runner and FNA service. This could potentially add no operating cost for SJJPA and extend Gold Runner's reach to every city on the FNA network nationwide. Route 10 is a successful, existing example for these types of agreements.
2. **Contracted or cooperative funding of added frequencies**, where demand exceeds Thruway capacity. Greyhound's depots, drivers, and maintenance base

and FlixBus's operating partners could allow added trips at lower marginal cost than a new stand-alone contract.

3. **Shared facilities and interlined ticketing,** co-locating at Gold Runner stations where feasible. FNA would contribute a proportional share of security, janitorial and customer service costs at shared facilities.

In summary, recommendations related to governance and partnerships are as follows:

- Monitor the performance of the new Route 5 to see if this is a model that can be deployed in other parts of the state.
- Explore partnerships with other transit providers as both future contract partners and for better timed service connections.
- Coordinate with FNA and Amtrak Real Estate on potential interline service agreements, shared facilities and interlined ticketing, and cooperative funding agreements to add service.

Service patterns, connections, on-time performance, and partnerships

General recommendations for Thruway Bus service focus on tailoring service patterns to better match the travel needs of different passenger markets, establishing more partnerships with other passenger rail, local/regional transit bus services, and private intercity bus services to promote Thruway Bus service across the broader transportation network, auditing bus stop locations across the Gold Runner network, and investigate strategies to address Gold Runner on-time performance issues.

Market demand should be assessed to determine temporal demand patterns as well as potential opportunities for geographic expansion. Providing seasonal service, for example, is a strategy that can address the fluctuations in demand observed throughout the year. This approach is currently used around the Thanksgiving holidays and should continue to be evaluated for other holidays and key travel days as well as for routes serving university markets or other highly seasonal travel patterns.

Some routes may further benefit from modified service patterns to better align capacity with weekly demand. Gold Runner typically has lower ridership mid-week (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays), indicating opportunities to decrease the level of service on these days. In conjunction, routes should be evaluated for strategic service increases on higher-demand days. Right-sizing service across the network will improve passenger convenience while ensuring available operating resources are used as efficiently as possible.

As service is refined, SJJPA can prioritize partnerships with passenger rail, local or regional bus services, and private intercity bus services to promote Thruway Bus connections to key travel markets and transportation hubs. The Los Angeles Metropolitan Area and the Bay Area remain the state's largest and most diverse passenger markets and should continue to be a focus for expanded connectivity. Similarly, airports represent an important long-distance travel market. While the current network provides access to Burbank Airport, this study recommends evaluating opportunities to expand connections to additional regional airports to strengthen the overall network.

The Gold Runner Thruway Bus network has been operating for many years, and there have been many changes to passenger rail, local and regional transit, and private intercity bus services throughout the state. SJJPA should conduct an audit of bus stop locations throughout the Gold Runner network to see if there are opportunities to improve transit network connectivity, passenger experience, and ridership.

On-time Thruway Bus departures are important not only to train riders, but also to Gold Runner bus-only riders as well. Thruway buses provide guaranteed connections with Gold Runner trains and connecting buses, which may require holding departures when trains are delayed. While maintaining these guaranteed connections remains a priority, delays can impact the reliability and desirability of the service for bus only passengers. SJJPA should explore feasible alternatives to minimize these impacts and better protect scheduled departures for bus only riders, while continuing to prioritize improvements in Gold Runner train on time performance.

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In summary, recommendations related to service patterns and connections are as follows:

- Conduct a market assessment that looks at potential new partnerships, markets, and temporal demand.
- Work with partner public transportation agencies and private operators whose services connect with Gold Runner Thruway Bus stops to try to get them to better support, promote, and market these connections.
- Audit bus stop locations across the network to see if there are opportunities to improve transit network connectivity, passenger experience, and ridership.
- Investigate strategies to address Gold Runner on-time performance issues.

Data and reliability

Data availability has historically posed a constraint in SJJPA's oversight of the Thruway Bus network. The availability of reliable data related to the performance and operations of the Thruway Bus network is essential to optimizing the network and ensuring that service can

be adjusted appropriately to address performance constraints. It is critical that Amtrak consistently provides Cost Recovery reports, at minimum on a semi-annual basis, so that SJJPA can effectively manage all routes and appropriately evaluate if changes are needed to the system. For this reason, it is important that future governance structures and operating contracts guarantee that performance data is produced and submitted to the SJJPA at regular intervals.

Additionally, upgrading data and tracking systems is essential to improving service reliability, timetable accuracy, and the overall passenger experience across the Thruway Bus network. Implementing real-time bus tracking through GTFS would provide passengers with accurate information on vehicle locations and delays while also generating the on-time performance data needed to refine schedules. By using observed travel times rather than planned schedules alone, SJJPA can better align bus and rail connections, reduce unnecessary transfer wait times, and improve the reliability of timed transfers. These improvements would enhance the passenger experience by reducing uncertainty and making transfers between Thruway buses and Gold Runner rail service more seamless.

Auditing the GTFS data feed would help identify and correct existing issues, improving the accuracy of passenger information and the overall customer experience. Currently, GTFS feeds do not consistently encode "discharge-only" restrictions for routes without bus-only ticketing.

In summary, recommendations related to data and reliability are as follows:

- Ensure updated cost-effectiveness data is received from Amtrak on a semi-annual basis for all Gold Runner Thruway Bus Routes.
- Ensure the provision to collect performance and tracking data in future operating contracts.
- Implement real-time tracking.
- Audit and validate the GTFS feed to identify, prioritize, and correct data inconsistencies, missing or invalid records, schedule discrepancies, geographic inaccuracies, and accessibility or passenger information issues, ensuring compliance with GTFS standards and reliable trip planning information.

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Communication, marketing, and passenger experience

As part of this study, SJJPA reviewed the Gold Runner website to identify opportunities to improve the accuracy, clarity, and consistency of passenger information. Opportunities include improving information on guaranteed transfers and passenger protections, better marketing Thruway routes that supplement rail service, correcting accessibility information on the Amtrak website, and enhancing station descriptions and directions to

better identify transfer opportunities. Partnering agencies should also include Thruway Bus connections in their station and trip-planning information.

Gold Runner Thruway Bus stops connect with passenger rail services and bus transit services throughout California. SJJPA should prioritize working with other partner agencies to encourage them to help improve and market these connections to the Gold Runner network (on their websites, newsletters, at stations, on trains/buses, etc.). In addition, Gold Runner Thruway Bus stops connect to universities, colleges, and other key destinations throughout California. SJJPA should investigate ways to expand marketing to/from these destinations and to try and get them to market the Gold Runner services to their students/customers.

The SJJPA's Passenger Experience and Marketing team will continue to expand college outreach efforts to increase awareness and encourage student ridership through a coordinated, multi-channel communications strategy. Staff will participate in campus events to engage directly with students, answer questions, and distribute information about available train and Thruway Bus connections. Service information will continue to be promoted through college parking and transportation websites, ensuring students, faculty, and staff have easy access to travel resources. Outreach materials will be provided for inclusion in new student orientation programs to introduce transportation options early in the academic year, and digital outreach toolkits will continue to be distributed to University of California campuses, California State University campuses, and community colleges to equip campus partners with ready-to-use promotional materials. The program will also continue to leverage its Student Ambassador Program to expand awareness of the Gold Runner Train and Thruway Service through peer-to-peer engagement, with a particular emphasis on colleges and universities located along the Thruway Bus route. Student ambassadors will serve as on-campus advocates, helping educate their peers about available transportation options, promoting special offers and service updates, and increasing visibility through campus activities and social media engagement. Together, these efforts will strengthen awareness of the service, encourage greater student utilization, and foster long-term ridership growth across the collegiate market.

In order to improve the passenger experience at bus stops, SJJPA will ensure that signage at stops is updated, with information available for passengers to access route schedules and ticketing information. Additionally, SJJPA can work with Caltrans to secure funding to improve bus shelters and other bus stop amenities, and measures to enhance passenger safety and security at Thruway Bus stops and SJJPA should evaluate how best to maintain the Gold Runner stops throughout the state.

As part of a broader statewide effort to improve the integration and ease of use across California's intercity rail network, this study recommends that the State develop an integrated statewide passenger information system centered around a single map showing rail, Thruway bus, and connecting transit services across all participating agencies. A consistent statewide network map, supported by coordinated wayfinding, transfer information, and trip-planning resources, would help passengers better understand available connections and reinforce the concept of a seamless statewide passenger rail network. Once available, this statewide information should be linked to Gold Runner, Capitol Corridor, Pacific Surfliner, and Amtrak websites. Improving statewide communication also includes utilizing announcement systems, such as in the Venture cars, to alert passengers of alternate service options. It is also important the Caltrans takes the lead role in making sure that the SJJPA, Capitol Corridor, and LOSSAN JPA coordinate before making changes to their routes and/or schedules (train and bus) that would impact the other services.

In summary, recommendations related to communication and marketing are as follows:

- Update the Gold Runner webpage to improve the accuracy, clarity, and consistency of passenger information and provide additional information regarding routes and connectivity to other passenger rail and transit services, universities and colleges, and other key destinations on its website and marketing materials.
- Work with Caltrans to have an integrated statewide passenger information system coordinating information related to rail, Thruway bus, and connecting transit services developed.
- Increase coordination with JPAs (SJJPA, Capitol Corridor, and LOSSAN) regarding schedule changes.
- Improve online information regarding guaranteed transfer policies and passenger protections.
- Utilize electronic announcements on Gold Runner trains to send advertising messages to passengers, such as reminders of connecting locations to destinations such as Yosemite.
- Update all stop signage and provide additional information alongside QR codes at all stops for passengers to access route schedules and ticketing.
- Increase marketing and advertising of key destinations, including universities and colleges and destinations like Yosemite National Park.

- Work with Caltrans to secure Thruway Bus-specific minor capital program funding and explore alternative funding sources for bus shelters, other bus stop amenities, and passenger safety/security measures.

Recommendations by Route

Route 1: Fresno – Bakersfield – Los Angeles – San Diego

Route Overview

As the highest ridership route in the network with a very high cost-recovery ratio of 187%, recommendations for Route 1 focus on furthering growth through service enhancements and improving broader network connectivity. The strong ridership and cost effectiveness of Route 1 was helped in part due to actions taken in 2023 to reduce the number of Route 1 buses and shorten several bus trips to truncate at Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS). Implementing bus-only ticketing has the potential to further boost ridership, while additional service should also be explored to meet the existing high level of demand. Additionally, stops can be evaluated to improve available connection options to local and regional transit services including Metrolink.

Greyhound and FlixBus provide direct trips from Fresno to San Diego and provide connections between Bakersfield-LA, Bakersfield-San Diego, and Fresno-Los Angeles. The cost of a ticket from Fresno to Los Angeles on Greyhound or FlixBus is competitive with the Gold Runner and Thruway Bus connection ticket; however, Greyhound and FlixBus have greater price fluctuations depending on passenger demand.

Potential Improvements

Improve connections

Metrolink's Newhall Station is a key transfer point between Route 1 and Metrolink's Antelope Valley Line connecting to the broader Los Angeles metropolitan area. Connectivity at this hub can be strengthened through increased coordination with Metrolink. For example, transfers can be improved with timed connections between Route 1 and Metrolink service at Newhall, which would require coordination to hold trains for arriving buses when necessary. A pilot program could involve connecting additional Route 1 trips between Bakersfield and Newhall, creating more transfer opportunities at Newhall for passengers whose final destination is not downtown Los Angeles. Santa Clarita Station could also be considered as an alternative transfer location. This concept would require a

considerable amount of coordination with Caltrans and Metrolink and should be evaluated through a feasibility study.

As integration with the Metrolink network expands, these connections should be prominently marketed through onboard train announcements, station signage, and online trip planning resources to ensure passengers are aware of the additional travel options. In the near-term, SJJPA should work with partner public transportation agencies whose services connect with Route 1 stops to try to get them to better support, promote, and market these connections. In particular, SJJPA should be partnering with the LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority to have them assist in marketing the Route 1 connections to the Pacific Surfliner.

Burbank Airport officially opened its new $1.3 billion passenger terminal on October 13, 2026. The new facility is located on the northeast section of the airfield near Winona Avenue and Hollywood Way. Therefore, Burbank Airport is no longer a close walk to the Gold Runner stop at the Burbank Airport South (Metrolink and Pacific Surfliner) Station. SJJPA should investigate moving the Burbank Airport stop to better connect with the airport and also investigate the option of serving the downtown Burbank Station.

Explore bus only ticketing

Bus-only ticketing has not yet been implemented on Route 1. Exploring implementation strategies consistent with the California Legislature's SB 742, which authorizes bus-only ticketing, could expand the route's ability to serve additional passenger markets with limited alternative options, particularly for travelers between Bakersfield and other destinations in Southern California. Implementation on Route 1 remains challenging, however, because SB 742 requires SJJPA to coordinate with public and private operators providing overlapping service before bus-only tickets can be sold on the corridor. This includes private operators such as FlixBus/Greyhound, which could oppose SJJPA's bus-only service if it is done in a manner which they believe competes with their existing offerings rather than a collaborative approach (such as was deployed for Route 10) . Further study is needed to identify viable strategies for implementing bus-only ticketing given these challenges. SJJPA needs to investigate establishing partnerships with private and/or public operators to facilitate implementation. Given the route's existing high demand, it may also be appropriate to consider bus-only ticketing in conjunction with increased service levels. This could provide additional capacity for potential new passengers while maintaining sufficient capacity for passengers transferring to and from Gold Runner trains. All bus-only ticketing recommendations must be studied and evaluated carefully, as Route 1 is the most important route in the system and must be

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protected and prioritized. If implementing bus-only ticketing ultimately compromises the cost-effectiveness of the route, it should not be moved forward.

Increase service

The single San Diego round trip has high ridership and is therefore a candidate for additional service. The current San Diego round trip complements the Pacific Surfliner schedule by providing service during a gap in the Pacific Surfliner's timetable. Additional service can potentially be added in remaining gaps in Pacific Surfliner's schedule, such as during the morning from San Diego and the early afternoon from Los Angeles. SJJPA could also consider bringing back service that was reduced in 2023 between Bakersfield and Los Angeles or adding additional Bakersfield to Los Angeles service during peak travel periods such as high-ridership days (Fridays and Sundays) and or around holidays.

Additionally, service to Burbank Airport can be expanded on Route 1 by adding Burbank stops to additional trips and ensuring convenient departure and arrival times at the station. This would allow all Burbank Airport service to be shifted from Route 1C, allowing Route 1C to focus on other destinations that make the service more cost-effective. Some Route 1 trips that connect to Burbank Airport could also take the form of an express service skipping Glendale, providing faster connectivity between Los Angeles and Burbank Airport. Any schedule changes regarding adding or removing Burbank from a Route 1 timetable must be further studied and coordinated with Amtrak to ensure that changes do not compromise the success of the route.

Improve marketing to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)

Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) is the highest ridership destination for Route 1, with transfer options to the LAX FlyAway Bus service with 40 daily round-trip connections to Los Angeles International Airport and 30-minute headways for the majority of the day. Improved marketing for this connection can encourage riders to use Route 1 to connect to the airport and getting the LAX FlyAway Bus into Amtrak ticketing could also significantly increase ridership. From LAUS, riders can also connect to LA Metro and either take the A-Line to Metro Center and transfer to the C Line for connection to LAX or the E Line to Expo / Crenshaw and transfer to the K Line for connection to LAX. Both LA Metro options take around 1 hour 30 minutes, compared to the 45 minutes on the LAX FlyAway Bus.

Recommendations

- Study the feasibility of improving Metrolink connectivity at Newhall. This would include investigating a pilot program/partnership with Metrolink to have a Gold Runner Thruway bus round trip terminate at Newhall and connect with Metrolink to provide service to Los Angeles Union Station.

- Study opportunities to deploy bus-only ticketing along Route 1, including potential partnerships with public and private operators along the corridor.
- Study opportunities to increase Route 1 service including additional San Diego service, enhancing Burbank Airport service (including consideration of express airport connections and relocating the stop), and more service between Bakersfield and Los Angeles Union Station.
- Increase marketing and advertising of Thruway Bus connection to LAX FlyAway connection at Los Angeles Union Station and see if LAX Flyaway could get into Amtrak ticketing.
- Partner with the LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority to have them assist in marketing the Route 1 connections to the Pacific Surfliner.

Route 1C: Bakersfield – Santa Monica

Route Overview

The recommendations for Route 1C focus on improving connectivity, strengthening access to major Southern California destinations, and positioning the service for long-term success. With the cost recovery ratio at 110%, there is still potential to improve the route's performance. To help improve cost-effectiveness, potential improvements can include removing Burbank Airport Station to streamline travel times. Additional recommendations include improving timed connections with Metrolink and other non-Gold Runner transit services, adding a stop in San Fernando if Burbank Airport is dropped, and working with the City of Santa Monica to improve the passenger experience at the route's western terminus. Looking ahead, it is worth considering the possibility of shortening Route 1C and monitoring how future transportation investments, particularly the LA Metro Purple Line Extension, will affect travel patterns and determine whether the route should evolve to serve new markets or be restructured to complement expanding rail service.

Potential Improvements

Streamline the route

Removing the Burbank Airport Station stop on Route 1C and keeping it on Route 1 is a potential route adjustment that would enable a shorter, more direct route between Bakersfield and Van Nuys (the largest Route 1C market). Route 1C makes a circuitous route between Bakersfield and Van Nuys via Burbank Airport, staying on I-5 and increasing trip times. Removing Burbank Airport would allow the route to run along I-405 and shorten trip times by approximately 15 minutes. This proposal would be coupled with added

Burbank Airport service on Route 1 to ensure that a similar overall level of service is maintained at this station.

Improve connectivity to local transit

Additional stops at LA Metro rail stations present an opportunity to better connect Thruway Bus passengers to the broader Los Angeles transit network. In West Los Angeles, serving E Line stations such as Expo/Sepulveda or Westwood/Rancho Park would provide passengers with direct connections to Metro's A, B, D, E, and K Lines, as well as numerous local bus routes. Both stations are located closer to the high-demand Westwood/UCLA area, while passengers traveling to Santa Monica, a relatively low-ridership stop, would continue to have convenient access to their final destination via local transit. SJJPA should provide Thruway bus passengers with a connection map to LA Metro on the Gold Runner website to better highlight LA Metro accessibility within the network and identify optimal connection points.

Once the LA Metro D Line (Purple Line) Extension to Westwood opens, Route 1C can be re-evaluated with the potential for Westwood to become its western terminus. This would provide a direct connection to the expanding Metro rail network, allowing passengers to conveniently access destinations throughout the Los Angeles region via local transit connections.

Evaluate additional or alternative stops

If Burbank Airport Station is dropped, San Fernando is a potential new stop location to evaluate to serve a new market while avoiding detours along the route.

The route should also be evaluated for extension to an alternative terminus. LAX, Hollywood, and Long Beach are examples of potential new markets that can be assessed for addition to Route 1C. A market assessment should be conducted prior to adding or removing any stops from the route to ensure that demand justifies any additional costs.

Enhance passenger experience at stations

The Santa Monica bus stop served by Route 1C should continue to be evaluated for its location and additional focused marketing in Santa Monica. This effort should be done in coordination with the City of Santa Monica. With the stop having very low ridership, the station’s bus stop needs to be more visible and be advertised with LA Metro and Santa Monica Big Blue Bus to promote passenger connections. Improving the stop location to be next to the E-line station could provide better visibility and connectivity to passengers. If ridership continues to be low, there should be additional evaluation on whether to remove the Santa Monica stop and truncate the route at Westwood or another location. Another option is to move the Santa Monica stop to the LA Metro E-Line at Expo/Sepulveda Station,

due to the fact that this stop provides the same transfer opportunities to the E-Line yet saves travel time compared to truncating in Santa Monica.

The stop at Westwood is at UCLA, making it a key destination for Route 1C. SJJPA should be working to increase marketing for this connection and to get UCLA to promote the Gold Runner service including putting Gold Runner information in orientation packets, e-blasts/newsletters to students. Additionally, as part of the audit of existing stops, SJJPA should study moving the stop to the intersection of Le Conte and Westwood for more seamless connections to local transit.

Recommendations

- Study implications of removing Burbank Airport service from Route 1C to streamline service
- Study connectivity to LA Metro in the near term as well as the long-term implications of the D-line extension.
- Evaluate adding new stations to the route such as San Fernando and further study alternative terminus options such as LAX, Hollywood, Expo-Sepulveda Station, and Long Beach.
- Evaluate the Santa Monica stop for passenger experience and convenience and whether it remains the optimal terminus. Work with the City of Santa Monica and the local and regional transit to assist with increasing marketing to see if Santa Monica should remain a stop.
- Work to get UCLA to better promote the Gold Runner service to UCLA.

Route 3: Stockton – Sacramento – Chico

Route Overview

Route 3, one of the network's top performing routes, has the second highest ridership of the Thruway Bus network with a high cost-recovery ratio of 195%. The route's cost effectiveness was previously improved by separating out the Chico-Redding segment to a public operating partnership, which has now been replaced by the new Route 5. There are additional opportunities to harness the high demand on this route to further improve performance and align service with demand. Recommendations include pursuing a partnership with Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) to operate service between Sacramento and Chico, in turn allowing SJJPA to truncate service in the Sacramento area and facilitating bus-only ticketing between Sacramento and Chico. Additional recommendations include serving the future Midtown Sacramento Station that would provide a connection to Valley Rail and nearby SacRT light rail service and evaluating

additional station stops where warranted. Because of the route's high ridership and cost-effectiveness, changes to the route should be thoroughly evaluated to ensure they do not have a negative impact on existing ridership.

Potential Improvements

Pursue partnership opportunities

Partnering with BCAG to serve Chico and transfer responsibility for the Sacramento–Chico segment presents an opportunity to reduce operating costs while maintaining regional connectivity and creating the potential for a public operator partnership. Beginning in Spring 2027, BCAG plans to operate more frequent service than Route 3 currently provides between Sacramento and Chico, as well as offer better access to Sacramento International Airport and more connections to Capitol Corridor service. Additional coordination is needed to quantify potential cost savings, define operational responsibilities, ticketing cooperation, and ensure service objectives remain aligned for any partnership between BCAG and SJJPA. As part of the coordination with BCAG, SJJPA should evaluate the opportunity to establish an additional connection with BCAG's Chico Transit Center (with16 local and regional services). A partnership with BCAG on the Sacramento–Chico segment would allow SJJPA to redirect operating funds currently dedicated to that portion of the route toward service improvements and expansion in higher-demand markets, particularly along the Stockton–Sacramento–Davis corridor. This would facilitate the possible addition of a stop at Sacramento Midtown.

If a partnership is implemented with BCAG, SJJPA could pursue a similar partnership with San Joaquin RTD (SJRTD) for service between Sacramento/Davis and Stockton.

Implement bus-only ticketing

Bus-only ticketing is a priority recommendation for Route 3 as it is one of the three remaining routes in the network that does not have bus-only ticketing. Like Route 1, Route 3 faces challenges with the implementation of bus-only ticketing due to alternative services (Greyhound, and Flix Bus) operating along this well-established corridor. This requires SJJPA to engage in further coordination and negotiation to sell bus-only tickets as part of the stipulations under SB 742. SJJPA should work with FNA to see if there is a potential complementary partnership opportunity for Route 3 which would enable bus-only ticketing and provide more travel options for the public. A public operator partnership could also provide an avenue to implement bus-only ticketing and may be feasible with BCAG-operated service between Sacramento and Chico and SJRTD-operated service between Sacramento and Stockton.

Add additional Sacramento stations

Route 3 has the opportunity to service the future Midtown Sacramento Station with transfer opportunities to Valley Rail and light rail service. The Midtown Sacramento Station would also provide connections to regional commuter and transit services serving Placer, Auburn, Roseville, and El Dorado counties, as well as major employment centers, state offices, and destinations throughout downtown and Midtown Sacramento. SJJPA can plan Route 3 service to Midtown Sacramento prior to future rail service implementation to establish it as a viable stop along the route. Also, due to low ridership at the State Capitol stop, SJJPA can study service discontinuation at the drop-off only stop.

Recommendations

- Coordinate with BCAG, Amtrak, and Caltrans on implementing a potential partnership to have BCAG operate the Thruway Bus service between Sacramento and Chico in advance of BCAG's proposed start of new service in early 2027. Coordinate service realignment to best serve the Stockton-Sacramento-Davis corridor.
- If a partnership can be reached with BCAG, investigate having some Route 3 service to connect to the new Valley Rail Midtown Sacramento Station once it is constructed.
- Investigate the opportunities to fully open Route 3 for bus-only ticketing including complementary partnerships with FNA.
- Pursue a potential partnership with SJRTD for service between Stockton and Sacramento/Davis if a partnership is made with BCAG for service between Chico and Sacramento.
- Request Cal State Chico to help promote the Gold Runner service and future BCAG service between Chico and Sacramento.

Route 5: Sacramento – Redding

Route Overview

Route 5 has replaced Route 3R and offers more direct service between Redding and Sacramento along the I-5 corridor, fully implementing the cost-effective measures planned for the northern-most segment of Route 3. With the introduction of Route 5 (August 2026) this service now acts as a pilot for a new operating model where SJJPA partners with local/regional transit agencies to utilize new funding sources for a Thruway Bus service that connects with Gold Runner and Capitol Corridor trains. This partnership provides new connectivity within the Redding-Sacramento corridor, including stops at Sacramento

International Airport that was highly requested by the public in Shasta County. The route's viability is contingent upon the local transit partnership approach with the Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA) to ensure cost effectiveness.

Potential Improvements

Monitor overall route performance

Following the transition from Route 3R to Route 5, it is important to monitor the timed train connections, operational performance of, and marketing for Route 5's improved connection to Redding.

Route 5 will serve as a pilot for partnering with local/regional transit agencies to operate Thruway Bus routes as part of a potentially more cost-effective service delivery model. Ongoing evaluation should assess service reliability, the effectiveness of train-holding procedures as RABA has agreed to hold northbound buses for the train, and whether the partnership structure successfully supports reliable operations and customer needs.

Additionally, Route 5 is a new corridor that serves a number of new markets along with the historically small Thruway Bus markets to/from Redding and Red Bluff, so it is critical that ridership and revenue for the route is closely monitored. A strong and continuing marketing effort in conjunction with the new service will be essential to prove route viability and meet the expected performance.

Recommendations

- Monitor ridership and revenue performance and timed train connections.
- Continue active marketing measures throughout FY 26/27 and track performance.

Route 6: Stockton – San Jose – Santa Cruz

Route Overview

Route 6 connects Stockton to San Jose with transfer opportunities in San Jose to Santa Cruz Metro's Route 17, connecting passengers to and from Santa Cruz. Route 6 is currently a cost-effective route with a cost recovery ratio of 154%, but with the recent launch of Route 40, which offers a more direct connection between Merced to San Jose, the new route may take ridership away from Route 6 due to its significantly faster travel time to much of the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California. Recommended next steps focus on evaluating the impacts of the January service addition of Route 40 and identifying opportunities to strengthen the corridor's long-term performance. This includes conducting a follow-up assessment in 2027 to measure changes in ridership and cost effectiveness, analyzing passenger travel patterns to better understand demand as a result of Route 40 implementation, and identifying new markets that could offset the effects of

Route 40 service changes. Other recommendations include evaluating coordination opportunities with SJRTD Route 150 service between Stockton and Dublin BART, to implement bus-only ticketing on Route 6 (as is recommended in the 2026 Business Plan), investigate establishing a partnership with SJRTD, and evaluate whether the service could be better structured to complement Capitol Corridor operations and expand regional connectivity. SJJPA can also consider a partnership with VTA to strengthen connections to Mineta San Jose Airport from San Jose Diridon Station. Additionally, SJJPA can work with San Jose State University to promote Thruway Bus service to students and explore opportunities for a direct marketing partnership.

Potential Improvements

Analyze and compare Route 40's impact on Route 6

Analyzing the changes in ridership and cost effectiveness of Route 6 will help compare those metrics against Route 40 once the route becomes more established.

Route 40 connects Merced and San Jose and may draw San Jose riders away from Route 6, as Route 40 provides more direct service between the Central Valley and San Jose. As mentioned in Chapter 2, preliminary ridership data between January and May 2026 shows that Route 6 ridership declined by approximately 23-40%, compared to the same period of time in 2025. This decline coincides with the introduction of Route 40 in January 2026, suggesting a need for further evaluation of travel patterns, market shifts, and the degree to which Route 40 impacts the ridership demand of Route 6. Furthermore, schedule adjustments should continue to be studied, specifically with Route 3, Route 40, and Route 6 to improve efficiency and connectivity, as outlined in the 2026 SJJPA Business Plan. If Route 40 takes away a substantial amount of the Route 6 ridership and the cost-effectiveness of Route 6 drops considerably, SJJPA should then investigate the possibility of a partnership with RTD to operate Route 6 which could include having this service truncate at the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station.

Implement bus-only ticketing

As indicated in the 2026 SJJPA Business Plan Update, implementing bus only ticketing is a priority for Route 6.[1] Bus-only ticketing on Route 6 should be complementary to existing local and regional transit along this route and should also have minimal impacts to the services offered by private intercity bus operators in this corridor. Bus-only ticketing can increase the ridership, cost-effectiveness, and benefits of Route 6 without increasing the costs of the route. To implement bus-only ticketing on Route 6, SJJPA staff will need to first coordinate with public and private operators and then bring this as an action item to the

[1] San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority 2026 Business Plan Update, https://sjjpa.com/business-plan/

SJJPA Board. As part of the coordination with private operators, SJJPA will investigate the opportunity for complementary partnerships with FNA in this corridor.

Work with VTA to strengthen connections to Mineta San Jose Airport

Route 6 can coordinate with VTA to strengthen connections to Mineta San Jose Airport from San Jose Diridon Station.

Recommendations

- Study long-term implications of Route 40 ridership to San Jose in relationship to the cost-effectiveness of Route 6 (which also connects to San Jose).
- Implement bus-only ticketing on Route 6 as indicated in the 2026 Business Plan.
- Investigate a potential partnership with RTD if Route 6's cost effectiveness declines.
- Coordinate with VTA to strengthen connections to Mineta San Jose International Airport.
- Work with San Jose State University to promote Gold Runner service.

Route 7: Martinez – Santa Rosa – Arcata/Cal Poly Humboldt

Route Overview

Route 7 is one of the longest routes in the Thruway Bus network, connecting Martinez with Santa Rosa and Arcata/Cal Poly Humboldt. With a 61% cost recovery ratio, the route's length and associated operating costs prevent it from achieving the established threshold for cost effectiveness, making it important to identify opportunities to improve efficiency while maintaining connectivity to key passenger markets.

Recommendations for this route focus on optimizing stopping patterns, evaluating stop locations to improve passenger and operator safety, and better aligning service with demand through seasonal or day-of-week service patterns. Particular attention should be given to the Highway 101 corridor, where targeted service modifications could streamline operations while continuing to serve the corridor's strong ridership demand.

Although this study focuses on near-term recommendations, SJJPA should investigate the potential for a longer-term partnership with Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) for service north of Ukiah. This approach has the potential to improve operating efficiency while maintaining connectivity to destinations in Northern California.

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Potential Improvements

Evaluate alternative service patterns

Route 7 is a prime opportunity to explore alternative service patterns to improve cost effectiveness based on ridership patterns.

The route exhibits its highest ridership from Friday through Monday, with the highest ridership occurring at Martinez, Eureka, Arcata, Santa Rosa, and Ukiah.[1] **Figure 26** below illustrates total annual ridership by day of the week for Route 7, segmented by county. Ridership for stops in Humboldt County follow the same pattern as the overall route, with lower ridership on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

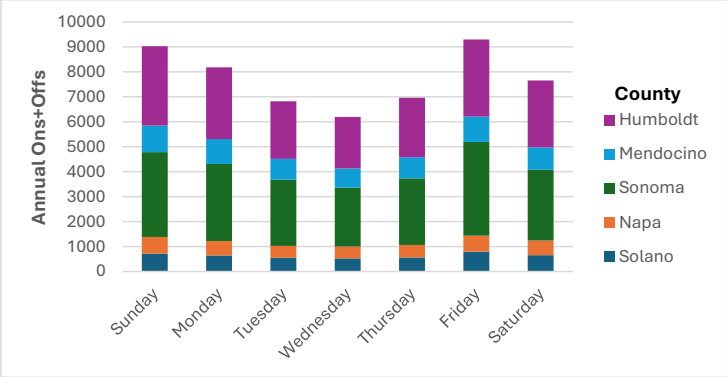


Figure 26: *Route 7 Total Annual Ridership by Day of Week and County (June 2025-2026)*

Route 7 also exhibits seasonal variation in ridership patterns. Specifically, ridership to Arcata and Cal-Poly Humboldt exhibits high peaks during key university holiday periods, indicating an opportunity to tailor service beyond Ukiah to meet demand during these peak periods. **Figure 27** below illustrates daily ridership beyond Ukiah to Cal Poly-Humboldt from June 2025 to June 2026. The data indicates that demand spikes significantly during holiday periods such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, spring break, and long weekends.

[1] On Sundays, Napa has around 40 more riders than at Ukiah

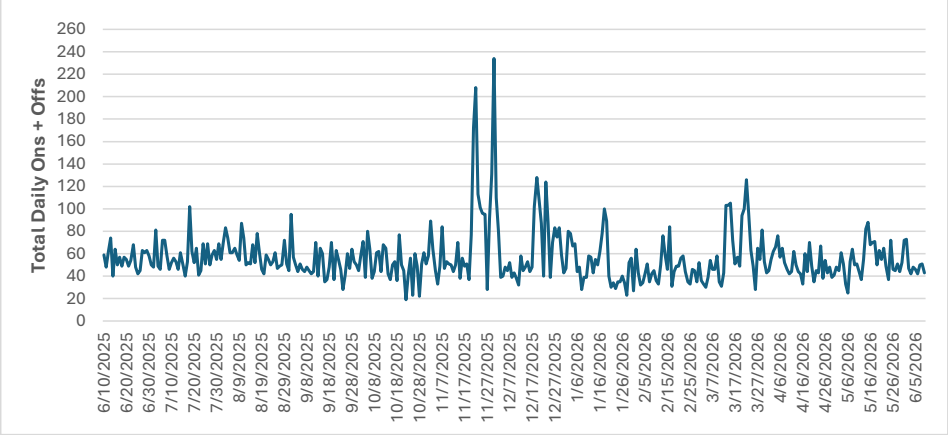


Figure 27: *Route 7 Daily Ridership beyond Ukiah to Cal Poly[1] (June 2025-2026)*

Based on these trends, there is the opportunity to adjust weekly service patterns to focus higher levels of service on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays, with lower levels of service on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

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Seasonal ridership trends indicate a potential to introduce or focus service to Arcata around peak periods. While additional round trips could be considered for these days, another option could involve a college express bus which would provide additional express service with limited stops including Santa Rosa, Ukiah, and Cal Poly Humboldt. This would reduce travel times while targeting higher performing stops with higher levels of service during peak periods. This strategy has been implemented to an extent in recent schedule modifications to Route 7, but can be further studied to align additional service with university-based peak travel periods.

Opportunities to tailor service to day-of-week and seasonal ridership patterns should continue to be explored, and planning work should be conducted in coordination with Amtrak, Caltrans, local and regional agencies, and universities along the route with the goal of improving service. This approach of aligning service patterns to observed ridership trends can constitute a pilot service model on Route 7, with key focus on the effect of a temporal demand-derived service plan on the cost effectiveness of the route. If successful, this model could be adopted for other routes facing similarly uneven ridership patterns.

[1] The chart does not include riders departing from Martinez because it is a transfer station.

Assess service in Sonoma County

Route 7 serves five stops in Sonoma County. Petaluma, Rohnert Park, and Santa Rosa exhibit particularly high ridership, while Healdsburg and Cloverdale experience very low usage. The route's stopping pattern along this corridor can be assessed to identify potential ways to cut down travel time on the route, either through express service or stop consolidation. Efforts in this region to optimize local transit services include the Marin Sonoma Coordinated Transit Plan (MASCOTS), which can be analyzed to determine potential for coordination with Route 7 and streamlining of service along Highway 101.

Evaluate stop locations and potential new stops

Stop locations across the route can be evaluated to improve service quality, safety, and customer comfort. Some stop locations to the north of the route, including Arcata, are being assessed due to safety issues. Stop locations can additionally be examined for convenience and connectivity.

Napa is of particular interest due to the detour required to serve this location. Due to the high ridership at this stop, however, the benefit of this detour to passengers may offset the length added to the route.

Rohnert Park is another stop that can be evaluated, with the potential to serve the Rohnert Park SMART station. This would create an additional transfer opportunity with SMART, while also providing closer access to the nearby Sonoma State University.

The City of Santa Rosa has requested that the Santa Rosa stop be reevaluated. Route 7 currently stops in Santa Rosa at the Coddingtown Transit Hub. The City has requested to relocate this stop to the 3rd Street Transit Mall due to the planned service changes in February 2027 that will result in all Sonoma County Transit (SCT) intercity routes terminating at the Santa Rosa Transit Mall and no longer serving Coddingtown. As a result, Coddingtown will no longer function as an effective regional transfer point. Santa Rosa is currently the highest ridership stop on Route 7, and is very near Santa Rosa Junior College – any change to this stop should avoid disrupting this ridership.

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In addition to evaluating existing stops, there are potential opportunities for new stops along the route. However, any new stops need to be combined with streamlining efforts and ensure that they do not add significant travel time to the already lengthy route.

Sonoma County has requested an additional stop in the City of Sonoma; however, with the high density of stops already serving Sonoma County and the limitations on route length and travel time, this is most likely not feasible in the near term. This request would need to be considered alongside streamlining of service in Sonoma County.

Sonoma County Airport is another potential market in this region currently not served by Route 7. While this is a highly requested stop for passengers, it would add approximately 15 minutes of travel time in each direction, which is not feasible given the preexisting concerns with the length of the route. There is potential to instead serve the Sonoma County Airport via SMART's station at Sonoma County Airport, which provides transfer opportunities to Sonoma County Airport via SMART's Connect Shuttle. These stops would require less of an increase in the route's runtime, and combined with other streamlining efforts in Sonoma County could offer a compromise between serving important markets and limiting the travel time of the route. Additionally, SJJPA should evaluate co-locating with the future SMART Healdsburg station.

Coordinate with HTA and Mendocino Transit Authority to investigate the potential for partnership with HTA between Ukiah and Arcata

While HTA is not ready or equipped to discuss a partnership with SJJPA in the near-term, SJJPA should explore the possibility for a future partnership with HTA as the operator for Gold Runner service between Ukiah and Arcata. This potential partnership would be supported with operational funding from Gold Runner (since it would be the Route 7 service between Ukiah and Cal Poly Humboldt), and other potential state, local, and regional funding sources.

SJJPA should coordinate with HTA and Mendocino Transit Authority to investigate whether a partnership model similar to that of Route 5 could work in the longer-term future for Route 7. This study would include determining if HTA could provide Route 7 service north of Ukiah while maintaining guaranteed connections to Thruway Bus service and integrated ticketing with Amtrak. This concept could potentially maintain connectivity to the full Route 7 corridor while reducing SJJPA's operational costs associated with the long route by introducing additional funding sources. This service could potentially be supported by a diversified mix of local, regional, and state funding sources, including additional support from Caltrans.

Recommendations

- Study feasibility of alternative service patterns based on day of week and seasonality with the goal of improving service.
- Study connectivity to SMART stations, including at Rohnert Park and the future Healdsburg Station.
- Study locations of stops along the route for safety and customer experience including Santa Rosa, Arcata, Sonoma, and connections to Sonoma County Airport.

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- Initiate discussions with Caltrans, HTA, Mendocino Transit Authority, and Amtrak to study the potential for a partnership in the long-term with HTA for service between Ukiah and Cal Poly Humboldt.
- Partner with transportation agencies along the Highway 101 corridor to study whether targeted service modifications could streamline Route 7 operations in the North Bay Area while continuing to serve the corridor's strong ridership demand.
- Work with Cal Poly Humboldt, Sonoma State, and Santa Rosa Junior College to better promote the Gold Runner service to these educational institutions.
- Study the possibility for connecting service to Richmond, potentially through coordination with CJJPA

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Route 10: Santa Barbara – Bakersfield – Las Vegas

Route Overview

Route 10 connects Las Vegas and Santa Barbara via Bakersfield with one daily round-trip. This route has the highest overall cost effectiveness (603%) and with only one round trip, the route may warrant additional attention in future service planning efforts to add service. Alternative service patterns may be an option to boost cost effectiveness, with the potential for seasonal service tailored to university-related travel demand at Santa Barbara and/or an additional round trip between Santa Barbara and Bakersfield.

The primary concern on this route is the current interlining and cost-sharing agreement, which limits SJJPA's ability to fully evaluate performance due to lack of details regarding the operator's costs. While the cost effectiveness for this route is extraordinary, the 603% number only includes the cost borne to the state for this route. Most of the operator's cost is covered by the bus fares collected by Amtrak which go directly to the operator. The cost recover ratio for this route is calculated by taking the train revenue associated with Route 10 riders and dividing it by the cost paid by the state.

Potential Improvements

Evaluate the current operating agreement for Route 10

Route 10 currently performs well, and the existing operating agreement is characterized by certain advantages that boost this route's performance and cost effectiveness. Nevertheless, the nature of this agreement can be further optimized to ensure adequate operational oversight by SJJPA.

Under the current agreement, FlixBus and Greyhound are allotted a portion of tickets on the route, which limits competition on the corridor and removes obstacles to selling bus-only tickets on the route under SB 742. However, despite these advantages and the route's

satisfactory performance, the lack of comprehensive data on route performance hinders SJJPA's ability to respond to ridership trends and to ensure the route meets cost effectiveness standards. Accordingly, the agreement should be refined in the future to include clear guidelines and accountability for data transparency in order to allow SJJPA oversight over the route and leverage the full utility of this agreement structure.

Evaluate additional service during peak days on the western half of the route

The western segment of Route 10 terminates at UC Santa Barbara (UCSB), with a significant portion of the route's ridership coming from the Santa Barbara and UCSB stops. Additional marketing for Route 10 can be targeted toward the student market, with emphasis on incoming students. The very high cost recovery ratio for Route 10 suggests that a second round trip between Santa Barbara and Bakersfield could be warranted. **Figure 28** below shows daily ridership for the Bakersfield-Santa Barbara portion of the route from January 2025 to February 2026. Ridership trends indicate clear peaks in ridership around university holiday periods at Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, and UCSB, with more even ridership throughout the year at the remaining stops between Bakersfield and Ventura. This indicates the potential to implement additional seasonal service to Santa Barbara during peak periods – this could take the form of additional round trips making all stops between Bakersfield and UCSB, or express services focused on faster travel between Bakersfield and Santa Barbara.

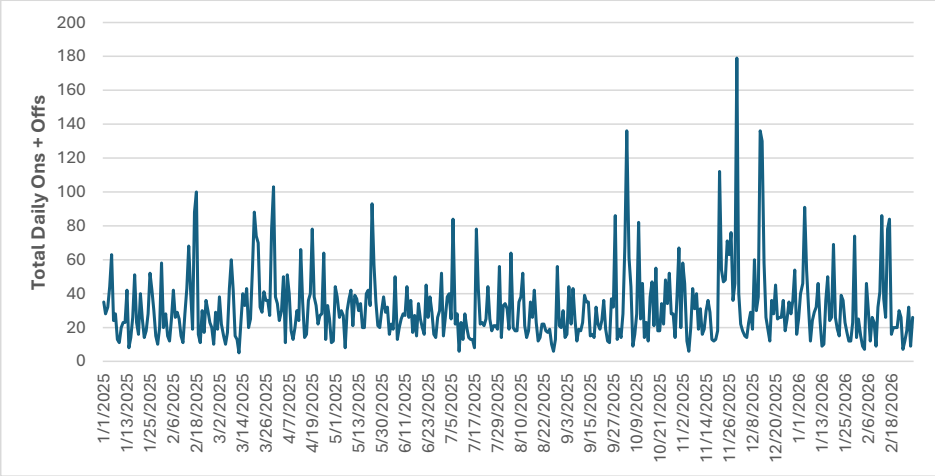


Figure 28: *Route 10 Total Daily Ons + Offs at UCSB, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria (Jan 2025- Feb 2026)*

In addition to seasonal trends, ridership on the western half of Route 10 exhibits clear trends based on day of the week. **Figure 29** below illustrates total ridership from January 2025 to February 2026 by day of the week, focusing on ridership at stops along the Bakersfield-Ventura segment and along the Carpinteria-UCSB segment. Both segments exhibit clear peaks on Fridays and Sundays, with lower ridership mid-week. This indicates a potential opportunity to add additional weekend service on this half of the route, focused on Fridays and Sundays, in order to address observed demand, facilitate weekend trips, and supplement Metrolink Ventura County Line service.

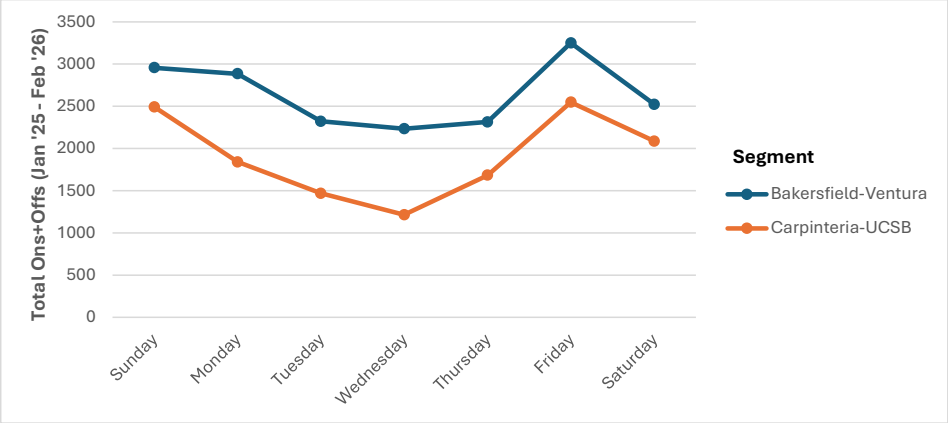


Figure 29: *Route 10 Day-of-Week Travel Patterns between Bakersfield and Santa Barbara (Jan 2025 - Feb 2026)*

Explore holiday and event-based service increases to Las Vegas

Las Vegas is the third largest market on Route 10, behind Oxnard and Santa Barbara. This is supported by FlixBus and Greyhound passengers who are able to purchase tickets on Route 10 through the current operating agreement. While Las Vegas exhibits weaker temporal trends compared to the western half of Route 10, ridership throughout the year does still peak on key dates, illustrated below in **Figure 30**. Demand to Las Vegas appears to peak regularly on key holidays like New Years, but may also spike based on major events – the spike in demand on June 6, for example, appears to be related to a major concert that took place on that day. Major events in Las Vegas vary year to year and should thus be monitored to develop strategic increases in service tailored to demand.

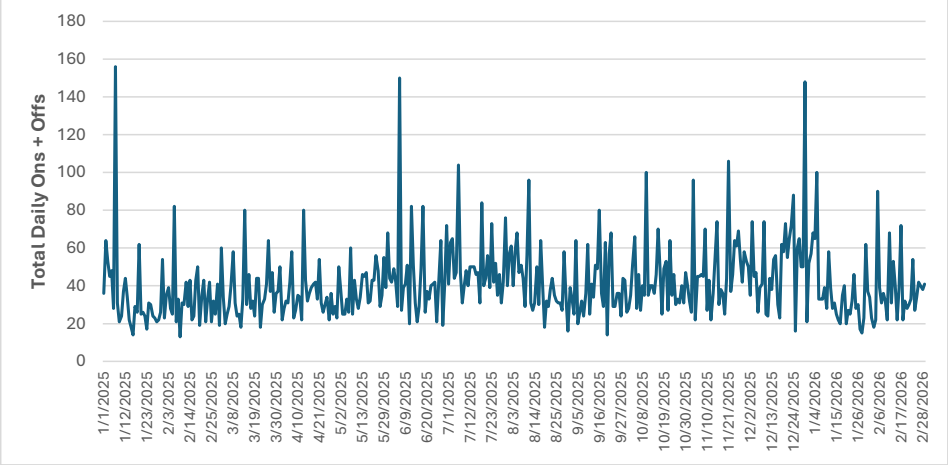


Figure 30: *Route 10 Daily Ons + Offs between Bakersfield and Las Vegas (Jan 2025 - Feb 2026)*

Recommendations

- Evaluate the current operating agreement for Route 10 and get Amtrak to provide more information regarding the route's performance or consider pursuing a future agreement that ensures data transparency.
- Evaluate providing an additional round trip between Santa Barbara and Bakersfield, additional seasonal service to UCSB, and additional weekend service along the western half of the route.
- Evaluate seasonal or event-based service increases to Las Vegas.
- Work with UCSB to better promote the Gold Runner service to UCSB.

Route 15/15A/15B: Yosemite Routes

Route Overview

Routes 15, 15A, and 15B are operated through a contract with YARTS, connecting various stops in the Yosemite National Park area to Merced and Fresno Gold Runner stations. These routes suffer from very low ridership and Route 15A doesn't meet the threshold for cost-effectiveness with a cost recovery ratio of 49%, stemming in part from limited coordination between YARTS schedules and Gold Runner trains. SJJPA is currently the second largest funding contributor to YARTS, and while the contribution represents a relatively low percentage of SJJPA's total costs across the Thruway Bus network, SJJPA and Gold Runner passengers do not experience a proportionate level of benefit from the

operating agreement. Considerations for this route relate to the nature of the contract with YARTS, as well as the utility of the service to Gold Runner passengers.

Potential Improvements

Reassess partnership and funding structure

In order to develop a management and funding structure for these routes that better serves SJJPA and Gold Runner passengers, a comprehensive review of SJJPA's financial contribution to YARTS is necessary. Strategies to reduce SJJPA's subsidy through additional State or federal funding sources can be explored, though these may be limited. Additionally, an alternative operating or partnership model that better serve SJJPA's goals may be necessary. Gold Runner payment to YARTS for Routes 15 and 15B is different from the agreement for Route 15A. Gold Runner pays a set amount for Route 15A (regardless of how many Gold Runner passengers use the service) whereas for Routes 15 and 15B Gold Runner pays YARTS based on the number of Gold Runner passengers on the routes. SJJPA needs to discuss the contract agreements with YARTS to develop a more appropriate compensation structure for Route 15A. At a minimum, any contract with YARTS should focus on guaranteeing transfers to and from the last or second to last YARTS bus of the day by requiring YARTS to hold buses for Gold Runner trains. This would provide passengers the confidence that they will be able to ride a connecting service and will not be stranded in Merced or Fresno. Currently, YARTS is only required to hold their buses for 15 minutes to wait for a Gold Runner transfer.

Understand passenger use cases

Routes 15/15A/15B represent a unique set of trip opportunities in the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network, with their primary goal to serve a tourist destination. Accordingly, it is important that SJJPA understands how their passengers use this service in practice and what the feasible use cases are to this end. While a substantial portion of passengers using these routes are for leisure or tourism purposes, there are substantial obstacles that might prevent these passengers from using the service. Trip times often make day trips difficult, and with additional outdoors equipment and luggage for multi-day trips. This makes taking Gold Runner to and from a YARTS bus connection more inconvenient and less competitive compared to private automobile travel. Given these constraints, SJJPA can opt to focus marketing of the routes on destinations that are better served by this service, such as hotels and points of interest that are easily accessible without a car. Understanding how passengers can use Gold Runner to access Yosemite National Park can better guide tactical recommendations to changes in this Thruway service, whether they be via improved train connections, revised schedules, or more robust marketing. In addition, it is possible that at least some Gold Runner train passengers purchase their YARTS ticket separately (rather than through Amtrak ticketing). If this is true, then the cost-

effectiveness of this service could be considerably higher than is being calculated. SJJPA should work with YARTS to determine if a significant number of Gold Runner train passengers are purchasing YARTS tickets separately and are therefore not being counted as passengers to Yosemite (using Route 15A) when they are actually using the service.

Encourage and support MCAG and YARTS to pursue alternate State and Federal funding for Route 15

In coordination with Caltrans, Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) and YARTS should be encouraged and supported to seek alternative state and local funding sources to support the continued operation of Route 15. Further coordination should also take place with YARTS to ensure buses better accommodate Gold Runner schedules and more likely guarantee transfers for passengers.

One state funding program to consider is the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), which provides capital assistance for agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility, with a focus on serving disadvantaged communities.[1] Caltrans should closely coordinate with MACAG and YARTS in order to ensure a seamless funding application process and / or discuss other funding opportunities that may be a better fit for Route 15 service.

Recommendations

- Analyze how passengers use Routes 15, 15A, and 15B to identify barriers, travel patterns, and market opportunities that inform service planning, schedule coordination, and targeted marketing efforts.
- Include provisions in the partnership structure for holding buses for Gold Runner trains. Specifically, get YARTS to agree to have one of their later buses hold for the last Gold Runner train for at least one hour (rather than 15 minutes) should it be delayed.
- Encourage and assist MCAG and YARTS in pursuing additional state and federal funding sources in coordination with Caltrans, in order to support service operations and reduce reliance on SJJPA funding.
- Pursue an alternative partnership / compensation structure for Route 15A, in coordination with Caltrans.
- Work with YARTS to determine if significant number of Gold Runner passengers purchase YARTS tickets separately when taking a trip to Yosemite (and therefore the

[1] Caltrans, Low Carbon Transit Operations Program, https://dot.ca.gov/programs/rail/low-carbon-transit-operations-program-lctop

number of Gold Runner passengers and benefits for Route 15A could be significantly higher than reported).

Route 18: Visalia – Hanford – San Luis Obispo

Route Overview

Route 18 has recently been modified to address concerns around low ridership and the operator terminating their interline agreement with Amtrak. As a result of the recently implemented route modification, updated cost-effectiveness numbers are not yet available. Route 18 now provides seasonal service between Hanford and San Luis Obispo, targeting peak university-related travel periods. Additionally, year-round service is provided between Hanford and Visalia through a contract with KART. Future service may additionally be provided by Visalia Transit. As this change was implemented in June 2026, data is not yet available on the updated performance of the route. This route should be monitored to evaluate the outcomes of its new configuration in the future. If seasonal service is successful in improving cost effectiveness, this may represent a service model that can be carried over to other key destinations with high seasonality. The service between Hanford and Visalia operated by KART currently does not run on Sundays and certain holidays, and tickets for this service are not available for purchase using the Amtrak website.

Potential Improvements

Evaluate the Hanford to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo route once more data becomes available

The new configuration of Route 18 represents a unique service concept within the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network. Outside of routes operated by YARTS, Route 18 is the only route that now runs on a seasonal basis, while also relying on a contract with a public agency to operate the year-round segment of the route. Performance will be monitored in the coming months to evaluate this hybrid model of service, with outcomes that may help inform optimization efforts to other Thruway bus routes in the future. While seasonal service exists on YARTS routes based on park travel, no other route in the network uses seasonality as a strategy to improve cost-effectiveness.

Due to one of the largest markets on this route coming from university-related travel to and from San Luis Obispo, this creates a prime opportunity to focus service on the student market. A key to the success of this new service focused on college students will be the partnership with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to consistently provide marketing information to students to encourage them to use this service.

Encourage KART to get a ticketing agreement with Amtrak and operate service 365 days a year

The KART service between Hanford and Visalia that initially provides increased connections to Gold Runner is the beginning of new Cross Valley Corridor express bus service between Tulare, Kings, and Fresno counties to future high-speed rail at the Kings/Tulare HSR Station. For this initial service to be successful, Gold Runner passengers need to be able to purchase tickets via the Amtrak website. This requires a ticketing agreement between King County Area Public Transit Agency (the operator of KART) and Amtrak. Furthermore, Sundays and holidays are key days for Gold Runner ridership. It is imperative for the success of the Hanford-Visalia service and future Cross Valley Corridor services that they offer daily services (365 days a year).

Recommendations

- Study the impact of changes to the route as more data becomes available, specifically whether seasonal university service is a successful model.
- Continue partnership efforts with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to market the service and see if this partnership can be a model for working with other universities/colleges that are served by Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes.
- Strongly encourage KART to get a ticketing agreement with Amtrak and to operate the Hanford to Visalia service on Sundays and holidays.
- The Gold Runner website needs to be updated to include the KART service between Hanford and Visalia.

Route 19: Bakersfield – San Bernardino

Route Overview

Route 19 connects Gold Runner trains to the Inland Empire and provides a strong example of how strategic service adjustments can improve cost effectiveness without significantly reducing ridership. In response to changing demand, Route 19 was reduced from four daily round trips to two, with service focused on the highest performing trips. This strategy was successful, as the route improved its cost-effectiveness despite increasing operating costs. While this route achieved a cost recovery ratio of 121% in 2025, it is still necessary to evaluate strategies to ensure that the cost effectiveness of this route remains stable in future years. SJJPA should look to study why Route 19 has modest ridership levels despite serving major population centers in Southern California and look for opportunities to optimize the route to make it more attractive to potential passengers. Strategies include evaluation of stop locations to address low ridership at specific stops, potential reconfiguration of service around weekly service patterns, and exploration of additional markets that may be served seasonally to attract leisure travelers.

Potential Improvements

Assess Stop Locations

La Crescenta experiences particularly low ridership, with roughly 400 annual on-offs. While service to La Crescenta runs in both directions, tickets on the Amtrak website are only available in the southbound direction; this may contribute to the reduced usage of this stop. Alternative stop locations along the same alignment can be explored in order to serve more riders. Particularly, an alternative stop along the Foothill Gold Line at Arcadia, Monrovia, Glendora, or San Dimas may be more attractive to riders while integrating with the local transit network.

Similarly, investigating moving the stop in Pasadena to the Del Mar Station or to the Pasadena Memorial Park Station to provide an additional connection opportunity to local transit is recommended.

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SJJPA should also evaluate the feasibility of relocating the Claremont station approximately one mile east to Montclair to improve connectivity with local and regional transit services, as well as Greyhound.

Explore partnerships with Metrolink, LA Metro, and local transit providers

Route 19 should evaluate the feasibility of partnering with Metrolink to better promote service and to better coordinate bus arrival and departure times to allow for more seamless connections to the San Bernardino Line at Claremont. With two round trips per day, Route 19 stops at Claremont at 3:55PM and 7:50PM en route to San Bernardino and then at 7:15AM and 12:25PM en route to Bakersfield. With clockface Metrolink service at :30 heading towards LAUS and :45 heading towards San Bernardino, connecting to the San Bernardino Line becomes a long transfer period with waits as long as 50 minutes between trains; better coordinating bus arrival times will make transfers more seamless.

The Metrolink San Bernardino Line runs parallel to the LA Metro A-Line Extension (Foothill Gold Line), which provides an opportunity to help market connections to and from Route 19. A marketing campaign can include advertising Route 19 at A-Line Extension stations and on LA Metro light rail vehicles.

Evaluate alternative service patterns

Route 19's service can be examined against ridership patterns**. Figure 31** below illustrates ridership by day of the week, while **Figure 32** below shows ridership by day to highlight seasonal trends.

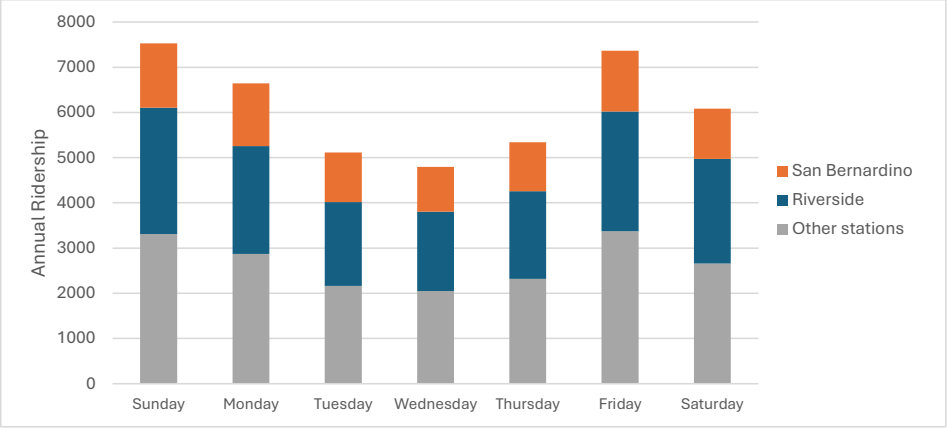


Figure 31: *Route 19 Annual Ridership by Day of Week and by Station (Jun '25 - '26)*

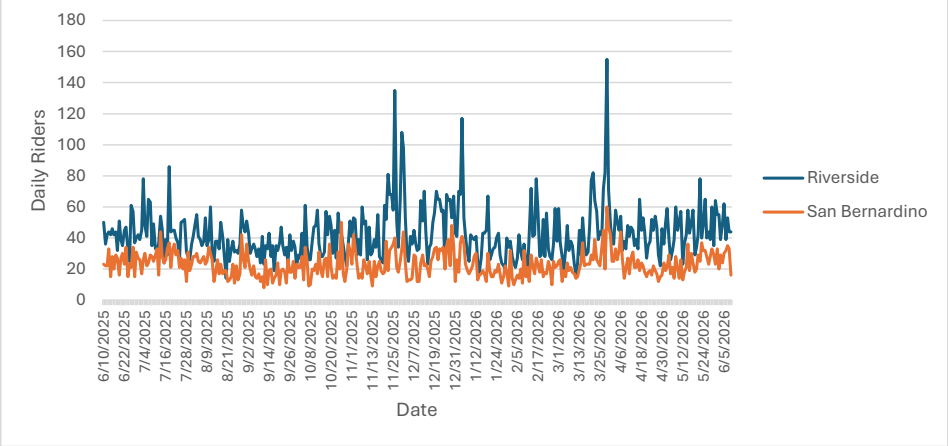


Figure 32: *Route 19 Daily Ridership at Riverside and San Bernardino (Jun '25 - '26)*

Ridership is highest on Fridays, Sundays, and Mondays, indicating the potential to focus higher levels of service from Friday to Monday to boost cost effectiveness. 64% of total route ridership occurs from Friday through Monday. Due to the route exceeding the cost effectiveness threshold, and that the route recently had its frequency reduced, it does not currently make sense to reduce service from Tuesday through Thursday – on the other hand, increasing service on peak days of the week (particularly Friday and Sunday) could be a strategy to add service in a cost-effective manner.

The route also exhibits clear seasonality, with high peaks during Thanksgiving, New Year's, and spring break periods. These peaks are especially pronounced at Riverside, likely driven by the large student population at UC Riverside. The highest ridership day at Riverside is in late March, and attracts a level of ridership 3.6 times higher than the station's daily average of 43 passengers. Based on these large peaks in demand, additional service could target Riverside and specifically UC Riverside during these times of year. Targeted service increases could improve the route's overall cost effectiveness by capturing more ridership from proven high-demand periods.

Explore opportunities for expansion

While stops currently serve multiple Metrolink stations including Claremont, Ontario, Riverside, and San Bernardino, the route may be able to attract additional ridership by providing additional connections to major population centers like Rancho Cucamonga, where Brightline West will stop. Additionally, seasonal service extensions to locations such as the Coachella Valley may be considered to address tourist and leisure travel demand during peak tourist season (October– April), with a focus on April due to high tourism for music festivals.

It also may be worth investigating coordinating Route 19 with Route 39 (without usurping Route 19 service), which is operated by LOSSAN and serves Fullerton (Metrolink OC Line & Pacific Surfliner), Palm Springs, Riverside, and Indio with two daily round trips.

Recommendations

- Study the implications of removing or replacing the La Crescenta stop with another stop which connects with the Gold Line.
- Develop partnerships with Metrolink and other transit providers to help promote service and evaluate Route 19 arrival and departure times at Metrolink stops to achieve easy transfers.
- Investigate the possibility of moving the Pasadena stop to be located at the Del Mar Pasadena Gold Line Station or to the Pasadena Memorial Park Station, and the feasibility of relocating the Claremont station approximately one mile east to Montclair.
- Evaluate opportunities to connect to future Brightline West service in Rancho Cucamonga, and to provide seasonal service to Coachella Valley or supplemental service on Route 39.
- Evaluate additional seasonal service or daily service patterns for Route 19.

Route 40: Merced – San Jose

Route Overview

Route 40 is SJJPA'S newest Thruway bus route, providing service between Merced and San Jose since January 2026. As a result, cost effectiveness data is not yet available. This route aims to provide an efficient connection between the Central Valley and Bay Area. While evaluating the route, SJJPA should also consider its broader network benefit, as Route 40 provides communities such as Fresno and other Central Valley locations with connections to the Bay Area. Riders have requested more Bay Area connections to the Central Valley; broader connectivity is a key purpose of the Thruway Bus network and should be advertised as such to potential riders. Potential improvements on this route include improved marketing for the Los Banos and Gilroy markets, connection opportunities to Santa Cruz, and service to institutions such as UC Merced and San Jose State University. Additionally, additional commuter service can be considered in partnership with public agencies.

Potential Improvements

Market Route 40 for the Los Banos and Gilroy markets

Preliminary performance data reveals that a majority of travelers using this route to access San Jose, with few riders traveling between San Jose and Gilroy and Los Banos. While this aligns with the primary goal of this route, it may also indicate potential to improve marketing of the route to these additional destinations, or connections to local and regional transit at the Merced Transit Center

Market the connection to Santa Cruz and Yosemite from Route 40

Route 40 also provides connectivity to SC Metro's Route 17 between San Jose and Santa Cruz. While this route is marketed as a connection to SJJPA's Route 6, it is currently not marketed as a connection to Route 40, which has potential to attract additional riders on this route. Evaluate performance of new route and its impacts on Route 6. Route 40 also provides a faster trip from destinations like San Jose or Santa Cruz to Yosemite, and this is something that can be marketed for this new route. However, there are currently issues with Amtrak ticketing which need to be fixed. Santa Cruz to Yosemite is currently not an option on Amtrak ticketing, and the trip from San Jose to Yosemite via Route 40 is not linked to the correct connecting YARTS 15A bus.

As Route 40 matures and more data becomes available, it will need to be evaluated against Route 6, as it is expected that Route 40 will draw some ridership from Route 6, which also connects the Central Valley to the Bay Area.

Evaluate MCAG funding additional round trip

MCAG expressed interest in providing funding to run an additional round trip on Route 40 that would be focused on serving commuter markets. This commuter service could potentially also serve the Great America stop in Santa Clara and connect to ACE shuttles that take passengers throughout the Silicon Valley. Alternatively, this service could terminate at Gilroy to connect to Caltrain services.

Recommendations

- Conduct targeted marketing for Route 40 particularly for the Los Banos and Gilroy markets which were previously not served by Gold Runner, but also at Merced and San Jose where the reduced trip times make these more viable markets for Gold Runner.
- Coordinate with MCAG on potential partnership to run a commuter round trip between Merced and the Silicon Valley (San Jose, Great America, Gilroy).
- Market the connection to Santa Cruz to/from Route 40.
- Work with San Jose State University and UC Merced to promote Gold Runner service.
- Monitor the performance of this new route and its impacts on Route 6.
- Work with Amtrak to get ticketing issues fixed for markets from Route 40 and Santa Metro's Route 17 to enable ticketing to Yosemite via YARTS (15, 15A, & 15B) and then provide marketing between these routes to Yosemite.

Route 99: San Francisco – Emeryville

Route Overview

Route 99 provides connectivity between Emeryville and San Francisco. This is the most cost-effective route in SJJPA's Thruway Bus network with a cost recovery ratio of 412%. Looking into the future, the primary consideration for this route is to secure access to the Salesforce Transit Center. Negotiations are currently in progress to achieve this and provide more seamless connectivity to this integrated transit hub in San Francisco. Due to the success of this route and joint partnership with CCJPA, significant changes are not recommended at this time. While the route overlaps with BART and AC Transit services, it remains popular as it provides a seamless and comfortable connection for rail passengers to access San Francisco. Thruway buses are integrated with Gold Runner, Capitol Corridor and Amtrak (Long-Distance) schedules and provide luggage storage, while BART and AC Transit services may be seen as less convenient and particularly difficult to access for passengers with luggage or with mobility issues.

Potential Improvements

Secure access to the Salesforce Transit Center

The primary recommendation for this route is to secure access to the Salesforce Transit Center. Negotiations are currently underway to provide a more seamless connection to this multimodal transit facility in San Francisco.

Serve additional stop to connect with Caltrain in San Francisco

With the success of the route, service extensions to connect with Caltrain at 4th and King in San Francisco would decrease travel times for passengers traveling onward to locations along the Caltrain corridor. This may be a useful temporary extension of Route 99 until Caltrain service is extended to the Salesforce Transit Center.

Pursue new contracting structure

The current contracting structure is **not** recommended to modify at this time. While AC Transit does provide similar transit services, pursuing a partnership with AC Transit would require substantial additional negotiation and for AC Transit to agree to operate the service as a connecting service for Gold Runner, Capitol Corridor, and Amtrak long-distance trains. Based on coordination with AC Transit between SJJPA, Capitol Corridor and the state, the cost to provide Route 99 would significantly increase if AC Transit was used as the operator, which would decrease the overall cost-effectiveness of this route. In addition, AC Transit would not agree to hold the Thruway Bus service for late arriving trains.

Recommendations

- Connect the service directly to the Salesforce Transit Center.
- Study the possibility of expanding Route 99 to connect to Caltrain at 4th and King until Caltrain is extended to the Salesforce Transit Center.

Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations presented throughout this chapter identify a range of opportunities to maintain and build upon the existing success of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network. Because these recommendations vary in their urgency, complexity, and readiness to advance, they have been organized into three tiers to help SJJPA prioritize its efforts and establish a clear path forward. The prioritization considers the anticipated benefit to the network, the level of coordination or additional analysis required, and the appropriate timeframe for advancing each recommendation.

The three tiers are intended to distinguish between actions that can be addressed immediately, opportunities that warrant focused study in the near term, and longer-term strategies that may depend on future conditions or additional planning. This approach

allows SJJPA to focus resources on the most urgent priorities while continuing to evaluate opportunities that may strengthen the network over time.

- **Tier 1 – Immediate Priorities**: These recommendations represent the immediate actions that should be advanced by the end of 2026. They generally include actions that are sufficiently defined to move forward now and where near-term coordination, decision-making, or implementation is required.
- **Tier 2A + 2B – 2027 Priorities:** Tier 2A recommendations should be studied and assessed during the first half of 2027 and Tier 2B recommendations should be studied and assessed during the second half of 2027. They may require additional analysis, coordination with operating or transit partners, monitoring of service performance, or further development before a decision on implementation can be made. Advancing these considerations will help SJJPA determine which opportunities are most appropriate to pursue.
- **Tier 3 – Longer-Term Priorities:** These recommendations represent longer-term opportunities that should remain under consideration as the Gold Runner network evolves. These recommendations provide a longer-term planning framework without requiring immediate action.

The full list of recommendations organized by tier can be found below in **Table 27.**

Table 27: *Tiered List of Recommendations*

	Route	Recommendation
Tier 1	General	Update the Gold Runner webpage to improve the accuracy, clarity, and consistency of passenger information and provide additional information regarding routes and connectivity to other passenger rail and transit services, universities and colleges, and other key destinations on its website and marketing materials.
	General	Work with partner public transportation agencies and private operators whose services connect with Gold Runner Thruway Bus stops to try to get them to better support, promote, and market these connections.
	General	Update all stop signage and provide additional information alongside QR codes at all stops for passengers to access route schedules and ticketing.
	General	Improve online information regarding guaranteed transfer policies and passenger protections.
	General	Increase marketing and advertising of key destinations, including universities and colleges and destinations like Yosemite National Park.
	General	Utilize electronic announcements on Gold Runner trains to send advertising messages to passengers, such as reminders of connecting locations to destinations such as Yosemite.

	1	Increase marketing and advertising for the Thruway Bus connection to LAX FlyAway at Union Station and see if LAX Flyaway could get into Amtrak ticketing.
	1	Partner with the LOSSAN Joint Powers Authority to have them assist in marketing the Route 1 connections to the Pacific Surfliner.
	1C	Work with UCLA to better promote the Gold Runner service to UCLA.
	3	Coordinate with BCAG, Amtrak, and Caltrans on implementing a potential partnership to have BCAG operate the Thruway Bus service between Sacramento and Chico in advance of BCAG's proposed start of service in early 2027. Coordinate service realignment to best serve the Stockton-Sacramento-Davis corridor.
	5	Monitor ridership and revenue performance and timed train connections. Continuous active marketing measures throughout FY 26/27 and track performance.
	18	Strongly encourage KART to secure a ticketing agreement with Amtrak and to operate the Hanford to Visalia service on Sundays and holidays.
	18	Update the Gold Runner website to include KART service between Hanford and Visalia.
	19	Develop partnerships with Metrolink and other transit providers to help promote service and evaluate Route 19 arrival and departure times at Metrolink stops to achieve easy transfers.
	19	Investigate the possibility of moving the Pasadena stop to be located at the Del Mar Pasadena Gold Line Station or to the Pasadena Memorial Park Station, and the feasibility of relocating the Claremont station approximately one mile east to Montclair.
	40	Conduct targeted marketing for Route 40, particularly for the Los Banos and Gilroy markets, which were previously not served by Gold Runner, as well as Merced and San Jose, where reduced trip times make these more viable markets for Gold Runner.
	40	Market the connection to Santa Cruz to/from Route 40.
	40	Work with Amtrak to get ticketing issues fixed for markets from Route 40 and Santa Cruz Metro's Route 17 to enable ticketing to Yosemite via YARTS (15, 15A, & 15B) and then provide marketing between these routes to Yosemite.

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Deleted: Study feasibility of alternative service patterns and service reductions based on day of week and seasonality.

Tier 2A	General	Ensure updated cost-effectiveness data is received from Amtrak on a semi-annual basis for all Gold Runner Thruway Bus Routes.
	General	Explore partnerships with other transit providers as both future contract partners and for better timed service connections.
	General	Work with Caltrans to have an integrated statewide passenger information system coordinating information related to rail, Thruway bus, and connecting transit services developed.
	General	Increase coordination with JPAs (SJJPA, Capitol Corridor, and LOSSAN) regarding schedule changes.

	General	Ensure the provisions to collect performance and tracking data in future operating contracts.
	General	Work with Caltrans to secure Thruway Bus-specific minor capital program funding and explore alternative funding sources for bus shelters, other bus stop amenities, and passenger safety/security measures.
	General	Coordinate with Flix North America (FNA), and Amtrak Real Estate on potential interline service agreements, shared facilities and interlined ticketing, and cooperative funding agreements to add service
	General	Investigate strategies to address Gold Runner on-time performance issues.
	General	Audit and validate the GTFS feed to identify, prioritize, and correct data inconsistencies, missing or invalid records, schedule discrepancies, geographic inaccuracies, and accessibility or passenger information issues, ensuring compliance with GTFS standards and reliable trip planning information.
	1C	Study the implications of removing Burbank Airport from Route 1C to streamline service.
	1C	Evaluate adding San Fernando to the route with the removal of Burbank Airport. Furthermore, study alternative terminus options such as LAX, Hollywood, Westwood-UCLA, and Long Beach.
	1C	Evaluate the Santa Monica stop for passenger experience and convenience and whether it remains the optimal terminus. Work with the City of Santa Monica and the local and regional transit to assist with increasing marketing to see if Santa Monica should remain a stop.
	3	Investigate opportunities to fully open Route 3 for bus-only ticketing including complementary partnership with FNA.
	3	Request Cal State Chico to help promote the Gold Runner service and future BCAG service between Chico and Sacramento.
	6	Implement bus-only ticketing on Route 6 as indicated in the 2026 Business Plan.
	6	Study long-term implications of Route 40 ridership to San Jose in relationship to the cost-effectiveness of Route 6 (which also connects to San Jose).
	6, 40	Work with San Jose State University (RTs 6 & 40) and UC Merced (RT 40) to promote Gold Runner service.
	7	Work with Cal Poly Humboldt, Sonoma State, and Santa Rosa Junior College to better promote the Gold Runner service to these educational institutions.
	7	Initiate discussions with Caltrans and HTA regarding the possibility for long-term service coordination between Ukiah and Cal Poly Humboldt.
	10	Evaluate providing an additional round-trip between Santa Barbara and Bakersfield, additional seasonal service to UCSB, and additional weekend service along the western half of the route.
	10	Evaluate the current operating agreement for Route 10 and get Amtrak to provide more information regarding the route's performance or consider pursuing a future agreement that ensures data transparency.
	10	Work with UCSB to better promote the Gold Runner service to UCSB.

	15	Encourage and assist MCAG and YARTS in pursuing additional state and federal funding sources in coordination with Caltrans, in order to support service operations and reduce reliance on SJJPA funding.
	15	Pursue an alternative partnership/compensation structure for Route 15A in coordination with Caltrans.
	15	Include provisions in the partnership structure for holding buses for Gold Runner trains. Specifically, get YARTS to agree to have one of their later buses hold for the last Gold Runner train for at least one hour (rather than 15 minutes) should it be delayed.
	15	Work with YARTS to determine if significant number of Gold Runner passengers purchase YARTS tickets separately when taking a trip to Yosemite (and therefore the number of Gold Runner passengers and benefits for Route 15A could be significantly higher than reported).
	18	Continue partnership efforts with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to market the service and see if this partnership can be a model for working with other universities/colleges that are served by Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes.
	19	Study the implications of removing or replacing the La Crescenta stop with another stop which connects with the Gold Line.
	99	Connect service directly to the Salesforce Transit Center.

Tier 2B	General	Conduct a market assessment that looks at potential new markets and temporal demand.
	General	Audit bus stop locations across the network to see if there are opportunities to improve transit network connectivity, passenger experience, and ridership.
	General	Implement real-time tracking.
	1	Study opportunities to deploy bus-only ticketing along Route 1, including potential partnerships with public and private operators along the corridor.
	1	Study opportunities to increase Route 1 service including additional San Diego service, enhancing Burbank Airport service (including consideration of express airport connections and relocating the stop), and more service between Bakersfield and Los Angeles Union Station.
	1C	Study connectivity to LA Metro in the near term and the long-term, including implications of the D-Line extension.
	3	Pursue a potential partnership with SJRTD for service between Stockton and Sacramento/Davis if a partnership is established with BCAG for service between Chico and Sacramento.
	6	Investigate a potential partnership with RTD if Route 6's cost-effectiveness declines.
	7	Study locations of stops along the route for safety and customer experience including Santa Rosa, Arcata, Sonoma, and connections to Sonoma County Airport.

	7	Study connectivity to SMART stations, including Rohnert Park and the future Healdsburg Station.
	7	Partner with transportation agencies along the Highway 101 corridor to study whether targeted service modifications could streamline Route 7 operations in the North Bay Area while continuing to serve the corridor's strong ridership demand.
	7	Study feasibility of alternative service patterns based on day of week and seasonality with the goal of improving service.
	10	Evaluate seasonal or event-based service increases to Las Vegas.
	15	Analyze how passengers use Routes 15, 15A, and 15B to identify barriers, travel patterns, and market opportunities that can inform service planning, schedule coordination, and targeted marketing efforts.
	18	Study the impact of changes to the route as more data becomes available, specifically whether seasonal university service is a successful model.
	19	Evaluate additional seasonal service or daily service patterns for Route 19.
	40	Monitor the performance of this new route and its impact on Route 6.
	40	Coordinate with MCAG on a potential partnership to run a commuter round-trip between Merced and Silicon Valley (San Jose, Great America, Gilroy).
	99	Study the possibility of expanding service to connect to Caltrain at 4th and King until Caltrain is extended to the Salesforce Transit Center.

Tier 3	General	Monitor the performance of the new Route 5 to see if this is a model that can be deployed in other parts of the state.
	1	Study the feasibility of improving Metrolink connectivity at Newhall. This would include investigating a pilot program/partnership with Metrolink to have a Gold Runner Thruway bus round-trip terminate at Newhall and connect with Metrolink to provide service to Los Angeles Union Station.
	3	If a partnership can be reached with BCAG, investigate having some Route 3 service connect to the new Valley Rail Midtown Sacramento Station once it is constructed.
	6	Coordinate with VTA to strengthen connections to Mineta San Jose International Airport.
	7	In coordination with HTA, Mendocino Transit Authority, Caltrans, and Amtrak, evaluate the potential for a partnership with HTA for service between Ukiah and Arcata.
	7	Study the possibility for connecting service to Richmond, potentially through coordination with CJJPA.
	19	Evaluate opportunities to connect to future Brightline West service in Rancho Cucamonga, and to provide seasonal service to Coachella Valley or supplemental service on Route 39.

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Deleted: truncate route in Ukiah in the future

Conclusion

The Gold Runner Thruway Bus network is performing very well and remains a strong and valuable component of California's intercity transportation system. In the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, SJJPA and its partners made a series of difficult but important decisions to right-size the network, including reducing lower-performing routes, portions of routes, and individual bus trips. These decisions have resulted in a highly cost-effective network, with the overall system cost-recovery ratio at 119%, while retaining the vast majority of the network's ridership. This is a positive outcome given the significant increases in operating costs experienced across the transit industry in recent years.

The strong performance of the network provides an important foundation for the recommendations in this study. These recommendations are not intended to restructure a system that is already successful, but rather to build on that success through targeted improvements. Given the reductions that have already been made, future changes to service levels should be approached carefully and strategically, with consideration given to both the benefits of additional service and the potential impacts of further reductions. The focus should remain on protecting the performance of successful routes while identifying opportunities to improve connectivity, service quality, and cost effectiveness.

The greatest need for improvement is concentrated on Route 15A (Merced – Yosemite) and Route 7 (Martinez – Arcata), where cost effectiveness remains below the desired level. These routes warrant particular attention to identify strategies that can improve performance while maintaining important connections and passenger benefits. At the same time, the broader network presents opportunities to further strengthen performance through targeted service adjustments, improved connections, enhanced data and reliability, and partnerships with local and regional transit and private intercity bus providers.

Ultimately, the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network should be viewed as exceptionally successful and cost-effective. The 119% overall cost recovery ratio for the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network is something the SJJPA, Amtrak, and Caltrans can be very proud of. The recommendations in this study provide a practical framework for preserving what is working, addressing the areas where improvement is most needed, and taking advantage of opportunities to further enhance an already successful program. By continuing to make strategic, data-informed decisions and pursuing partnerships that can expand connectivity and leverage additional funding, SJJPA can build on the progress already achieved and ensure that the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network remains a reliable, convenient, and cost-effective extension of the rail system for communities throughout California.

Appendix

Appendix 1.1: Status of SB 742 Implementation Efforts by SJJPA & Reductions made during COVID Pandemic

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) staff began working with Amtrak and coordinating with the Capitol Corridor and LOSSAN JPA on preparing for the implementation of SB 742 shortly after SB 742 was signed by the Governor on October 9, 2019. It was not practicable for the SJJPA to roll out the program on all Thruway bus routes at the same time because of the size of the network, and the coordination and documentation needed. Thus, the SJJPA concluded that the implementation of SB 742 needed to be phased in over time. SJJPA staff decided to start SB 742 implementation with routes that were underutilized and had the fewest conflicts with other existing private intercity operators and local/regional transit services. Since the passing of SB 742, SJJPA staff has continued to seek new partnerships with public or private bus operators with the goal of more efficient operations and allowing non-Amtrak passengers to utilize excess seating capacity on buses that connect with San Joaquins trains to save on operations costs.



As specified in SB 742, before offering bus-only tickets on Thruway bus routes contracted to private operators and funded by the state, SJJPA staff extensively researched and coordinated with existing public and private operators along these routes. SJJPA staff

consulted with and considered relevant local and regional public transit operators to determine whether a local or regional public transit operator could provide the planned service and attempted to avoid conflicts with existing public transit services. Staff also coordinated with private motor carrier services that provide intercity bus services along these routes. SJJPA staff researched the differences, including time of day, between the proposed motor carrier services and the existing services in communities served by the routes where bus-only ticketing was being proposed. These efforts were documented, presented, and available for public review in advance of SJJPA board meetings. Agencies, private operators, and the public were given the opportunity to comment on proposed actions.

The provisions of SB 742 became effective on January 1, 2020. At the January 24, 2020, SJJPA Board Meeting, the SJJPA took action to open selected bus stop pairs for bus-only ticketing on Route 10 (Bakersfield – Santa Barbara) and Route 12 (Bakersfield – Victorville). At the March 27, 2020, SJJPA Board Meeting, SJJPA took action to open selected bus stop pairs for bus-only ticketing on Route 1C (Bakersfield – Van Nuys – West Los Angeles – Torrance), Route 19 (Bakersfield – Pasadena - San Bernardino – Indio – Hemet), and Route 40 (Merced – Los Banos – Merced). However, after the COVID-19 pandemic hit California, the deployment of bus-only ticketing and further implementation of SB 742 needed to be delayed because of the capacity restrictions and need to make service reductions for the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes. The SJJPA took action on May 29, 2020, to make reductions to several of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes. These reductions included shortening several of the routes and indefinitely suspending some routes.

The suspension of Routes 9, 10, and 18 was included as part of the SJJPA Board action from May 29, 2020, and the SJJPA had Amtrak terminate the existing contracts for these routes. However, Amtrak was able to negotiate revenue-sharing agreements with private operators to continue providing connecting bus service along these three routes. Routes 9 and 10 were merged into a single Route 10 (Santa Barbara – Bakersfield – Las Vegas). Once Amtrak entered into the revenue sharing agreements, bus-only ticketing became available for all bus stop pairs along these routes. Bus-only ticketing had historically been available for all bus stop pairs along Route 18 since this privately operated route had pre-dated the Amtrak operated Gold Runner service.

With capacity constraints no longer in place on Gold Runner Thruway buses and service being restored to near pre-pandemic levels, SJJPA staff presented plans to the SJJPA Board to re-initiate the implementation of SB 742 for approved Gold Runner Thruway bus routes at the September 24, 2021, SJJPA Board Meeting. Additional action was taken at that SJJPA Board meeting to continue a number of the reductions that had been approved on May 29,

2020 (as a result of the pandemic) for the foreseeable future because these reductions resulted in a more cost-effective network. Action was also taken on May 29, 2020, to enable bus-only ticketing for bus stop pairs to and from Santa Monica for Route 1C. Action was taken at the November 19, 2021, SJJPA Board Meeting to open specified bus stop pairs for bus-only ticketing for Route 7. In coordination with Amtrak, bus-only ticketing became available on Routes 1C, 7, and 19 on December 13, 2021. Based on the conclusion of a study led by Caltrans on Route 7, the SJJPA took action on July 21, 2023, to open all bus stop pairs to bus-only ticketing. On January 26, 2024, the SJJPA took action to enable bus-only ticketing on Route 3 for bus stop pairs with at least one end at Redding or Red Bluff, between Redding and Sacramento. **Table 28** lists the SB 742 implementation status by route.

Table 28: *SB 742 Implementation Status by Route*

Route	SB 742 Implementation Status	Notes
Route 1 Bakersfield – Los Angeles – San Diego	Not implemented on this route. Would require coordination with public/ private operators and SJJPA Board action to be implemented.	Coordination will be needed with Greyhound, Flixbus, and public operators along the route in advance of bringing a future action item to the SJJPA Board.
Route 1B Bakersfield – Los Angeles – Long Beach – San Pedro	Route truncated. Now this is part of Route 1.	This route was truncated at Los Angeles Union Station during the pandemic. SJJPA took action to continue the truncation of this route for the foreseeable future at their September 24, 2021, Board Meeting. Bus only ticketing would be done through action on Route 1.
Route 1C Bakersfield – Van Nuys – West LA	Implemented on approved bus stop pairs	Bus-only ticketing for selected bus stop pairs was approved at the March 27, 2020, SJJPA Board Meeting for this route. Subsequent to that approval, Route 1C was changed. Several stops were eliminated, and a new terminus stop at Santa Monica was added. On September 24, 2021, SJJPA Board approved bus-only ticketing for bus stop pairs to and from Santa Monica.
Route 3 Stockton – Sacramento – Chico – Redding	Currently only available between bus stop pairs with one end at either Redding or Red Bluff – between Redding and Sacramento (approved January 26, 2024). Working with BCAG to develop a partnership to allow bus only ticketing between Chico and Sacramento.	SJJPA staff are working in partnership with the Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA) and Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) to bring new bus service (Route 5) between Redding and Sacramento along the I-5 corridor (that would include bus-only ticketing throughout this new route). The implementation of this new service is expected by the end of August 2026. Once this new intercity bus service is in operation, the Route 3 service will be truncated at Chico. SJJPA has been working with Butte Council of Governments (CAG) to study the possibility of Butte CAG providing bus service for San Joaquins passengers between Chico and Sacramento/Stockton that would include bus-only ticketing.

Route	SB 742 Implementation Status	Notes
Route 6 Stockton – Dublin/Pleasanton – Fremont – San Jose	Expected to be implemented upon coordination with public/ private operators and SJJPA Board action	Coordination will be needed with Greyhound, Flixbus, and public operators along the route in advance of bringing an action item to the SJJPA Board. Staff will coordinate with San Joaquin Regional Transit District (RTD) to determine whether a partnership can be developed to have RTD operate this route in the future.
Route 7 Martinez – Santa Rosa – Arcata	Implemented on all bus stop pairs	SJJPA staff coordinated with Greyhound and public operators along the route in advance of the SJJPA Board taking action on November 19, 2021. SJJPA worked with Caltrans, Greyhound, and local/regional agencies on an integration study for the Route 7 corridor that concluded that SJJPA should enable bus-only ticketing for all bus stop pairs. SJJPA took action on July 21, 2023, to open all bus stop pairs for bus-only ticketing.
Route 9 Bakersfield – Las Vegas	Route consolidated with Route 10	This route is currently in a revenue sharing interline service agreement between a private bus vendor and Amtrak. This route is now part of Route 10.
Route 10 Bakersfield – Santa Barbara	Implemented on all bus stop pairs (which includes the previous Route 9)	Bus only ticketing for selected bus stop pairs was approved for this route at the January 24, 2020, SJJPA Board Meeting. However, this route is now in a revenue sharing interline service agreement between the bus vendor and Amtrak, with the operations costs shifted to the bus vendor in exchange for a portion of bus revenue generated from the route. Bus-only ticketing is available on Route 10 through the interline agreement for all bus stop pairs.
Route 12 Bakersfield – Palmdale – Victorville	Route canceled	Bus-only ticketing was approved at the January 24, 2020, SJJPA Board Meeting; however, SJJPA took action May 29, 2020, to suspend this route at the beginning of the pandemic. On September 24, 2021, SJJPA took action to suspend this route for the foreseeable future because it was not a cost-effective route prior to the pandemic.
Routes 15, 15a, & 15b Merced – Yosemite	Implemented on all bus stop pairs	These routes are operated by the public local/regional provider Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS). Bus-only ticketing is available on these routes through YARTS and has been available for many years since it is operated by a public agency.
Route 18 Visalia – Hanford – San Luis Obispo	Implemented on all bus stop pairs	This route is currently operating with seasonal service between Hanford and San Luis Obispo only on key dates focused on Cal Poly San Luis Obispo students with bus-only ticketing available when operating. A partnership with KCAPTA for service between Visalia and Hanford also allows for bus-only ticketing on that publicly operated service (but it does not currently operate on Sundays and holidays). Bus-only ticketing has been available on this route for many years because its previous operator's service predated Amtrak.

Route	SB 742 Implementation Status	Notes
Route 19 Bakersfield – Pasadena – Riverside – San Bernardino	Implemented on approved bus stop pairs	SJJPA approved bus-only ticketing on Route 19 at the March 27, 2020, SJJPA Board Meeting. Pre-COVID, Route 19 operated a split route schedule that served two extensions beyond the core route between Bakersfield and San Bernardino. SJJPA took action on September 24, 2021, to continue the truncation of this route (to have all buses end in San Bernardino) for the foreseeable future. The extensions to the Palm Springs area and Hemet area contributed minor amounts of ridership and revenue to the overall route's performance and added considerable operational costs. For passengers who want to connect beyond San Bernardino, local and regional transit connections can be utilized to complete those trips.
Route 34 Stockton – Oakland – San Francisco	Route canceled	SJJPA took action to suspend this route at the May 29, 2020, Board Meeting during the beginning of the pandemic. SJJPA Board took action on September 24, 2021, to suspend this route for the foreseeable future because it was not a cost-effective route prior to the pandemic.
Route 40 Merced – Los Banos – San Jose	Implemented on all bus stop pairs	SJJPA approved bus-only ticketing on selected bus stop pairs at the March 27, 2020, SJJPA Board Meeting. This route was to be deployed in 2020 but has been delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Route 40 was deployed in FY 2025-2026 with bus-only ticketing allowed for all bus stop pairs.
Route 99 Emeryville – San Francisco	Not suitable for implementation	No changes to service are recommended at this time. Emeryville to SF market is served by AC Transit. This route is not well suited for bus-only tickets since the route is very short and already served by frequent/low-cost public transportation.

Appendix 1.2: Outreach Plan & Public Engagement Strategy

Outreach Plan Summary

The Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study outreach program will provide a comprehensive, multi-phased public engagement effort designed to gather input from riders, partner agencies, stakeholders, and corridor communities regarding the future optimization of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus network. Outreach activities will occur during two primary engagement periods: early June 2026 and August 2026, with both phases directing stakeholders and the public to a dedicated Thruway Bus Study webpage hosted on the San Joaquin Joint Powers SJJPA website. The outreach campaign will include coordinated social media promotions, e-mail marketing, onboard rider engagement, stakeholder briefings, and direct outreach to transit agencies, regional planning organizations, rail partners, and advocacy groups. The study webpage will serve as the central hub for project updates, surveys, study materials, meeting information, and opportunities for public comment. Outreach activities will be conducted in accordance with the SJJPA Public Participation Policy and will emphasize inclusive participation, multilingual accessibility, and broad regional coordination.

Outreach Objectives

1. Inform

Increase public and stakeholder awareness regarding the purpose, timeline, and goals of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study.

2. Engage

Gather operational, rider, and regional planning input from agencies, partners, riders, and corridor communities.

3. Coordinate

Align the study with concurrent statewide and regional mobility planning efforts, including intercity rail and bus integration initiatives.

4. Improve Customer Experience

Identify opportunities to improve:

- Schedule coordination

- Reliability
- Transfers
- Amenities
- Rider communications
- Multimodal connectivity

Outreach Phases

Outreach Phase	Timing	Focus
Phase 1 – Initial Outreach & Existing Conditions	Early June 2026	Introduce study, launch webpage, gather rider and stakeholder input
Phase 2 – Draft Recommendations & Alternatives	August 2026	Present preliminary findings and gather feedback on proposed improvements

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Study Webpage Strategy

Dedicated Study Webpage

A dedicated "Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study" webpage will be created on the SJJPA website to the June 2026 outreach launch.

Proposed Webpage Features

- Study overview and purpose
- Interactive corridor map
- Public surveys
- Timeline and milestones
- Public meeting information
- Stakeholder materials and presentations
- Contact information
- Study documents and updates

Website Placement & Visibility

SJJPA Website Placement

The study webpage will be prominently featured:

- On the SJJPA homepage rotating banner/hero image
- Within the “Projects & Planning” section
- Through homepage news articles and announcements
- Via featured “Latest Updates” links

Gold Runner Website Placement

The study webpage link will also be highlighted:

- On the Gold Runner homepage banner
- Through rider alerts and travel updates
- Within Thruway Bus service pages
- In digital rider newsletters and trip-planning communications

Public Outreach & Marketing Activities

Social Media Campaign

The Gold Runner marketing team and consultants will conduct coordinated outreach across:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- X/Twitter
- LinkedIn

Content Types

- Study launch announcements
- Rider survey promotions
- “Tell Us About Your Trip” campaigns
- Corridor spotlight posts
- Behind-the-scenes bus ride observations
- Public meeting reminders
- Service optimization education graphics

Social Media Objectives

- Drive traffic to the study webpage
- Increase survey participation

- Reach existing and future riders
- Engage underserved and rural communities

E-Mail Marketing & E-Blasts

Stakeholder E-Blast Distribution List

Local & Regional Stakeholders

- Chambers of Commerce
- Visitor bureaus and tourism agencies
- Economic development organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Universities and colleges
- Local elected officials
- City and county staff

Transportation & Planning Agencies

- San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council (SJV RPC)
- SJV RPC Passenger Rail, Transit & Land Use Working Group
- Network Integration Study Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) participants
- San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee
- North State Super Region Working Group
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs)

Rail & Transit Partners

- Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority
- LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency
- Amtrak
- California High-Speed Rail Authority
- California Department of Transportation
- California State Transportation Agency
- Local/regional transit operators

Private Operators & Advocacy Groups

- Greyhound Lines
- FlixBus
- Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada (RailPAC)
- Sacramento Advocates for Rail and Transit (SMART)

Onboard & Field Outreach

Rider Engagement Activities

SJJPA staff and/or Gold Runner marketing consultants with direct corridor experience will:

- Ride select Thruway routes (or have ridden routes recently)
- Conduct onboard observations
- Speak with riders
- Distribute surveys and promotional materials
- Assess transfer conditions and passenger experience

Potential Thruway Bus Routes for Ride-Alongs & Outreach

Recently Ridden / Previously Evaluated Routes

- Route 1: Bakersfield – Los Angeles – Santa Ana – Oceanside – San Diego
- Route 1C: Bakersfield – Burbank – Westwood/UCLA – Santa Monica
- Route 19: Bakersfield – Pasadena – Riverside – San Bernardino
- Route 10: Santa Barbara – Bakersfield – Barstow – Las Vegas
- Route 3: Stockton – Sacramento
- Route 6: San Jose – Santa Cruz corridor connections

Potential Future Ride-Alongs & Outreach Corridors

- Route 3: Stockton – Sacramento
- Route 6: San Jose – Santa Cruz corridor connections
- Route 7: Martinez - Arcadia
- Route 15B: Fresno – Yosemite corridor connections

- Route 18: (Seasonal) Hanford – San Luis Obispo
- Route 40: Merced – San Jose connectivity routes
- Route 99: Bay Area transfer corridors
- Route 19: Inland Empire connections
- Airport connection routes

Stakeholder Engagement Meetings

Planned Coordination Activities

- Technical working group meetings
- Stakeholder briefings
- MPO/RTPA coordination meetings
- Transit operator discussions
- Public comment opportunities
- Board and committee updates

Public Participation Policy Compliance

Outreach activities will comply with the SJJPA Public Participation Policy by emphasizing:

- Broad public access
- Transparency
- Multilingual communication
- Equity-focused outreach
- ADA accessibility
- Open public comment opportunities

Expected Outreach Deliverables

- Outreach summary reports
- Rider survey results
- Stakeholder contact database
- Meeting summaries
- Social media analytics
- Public comment logs
- Final outreach findings memorandum

Appendix 2.1: Train Connections to Thruway Bus Route 1 and 3

Route 1 serves multiple connections to the following Gold Runner trains:

NB Buses 5713 & 5813 connect to	Gold Runner train 713 at 8:58AM
NB Buses 5715 & 5815 connect to	Gold Runner train 715 at 10:58AM
NB Buses 5717 & 5817 connect to	Gold Runner train 717 at 2:02PM
NB Buses 5719 & 5819 connect to	Gold Runner train 719 at 4:02PM
SB Buses 5702 & 5802 connect from	Gold Runner train 702 at 12:41PM
SB Buses 5710 & 5810 connect from	Gold Runner train 710 at 2:39PM
SB Buses 5712 & 5812 connect from	Gold Runner train 712 at 4:39PM

Route 3 serves multiple connections to the following Gold Runner trains:

NB Buses 3715 & 3815 connect to	Gold Runner train 715 at 3:19PM in Stockton
SB Buses 3710 & 3810 connect to	Gold Runner train 710 at 10:05AM in Stockton

Appendix 2.2: Cost Recovery Data

Cost recovery by route from FY 17 to FY 25:

Route 1

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$9,736,951.00	$3,135,909.00	$6,601,042.00	310%
17-18	$8,557,377.00	$4,243,720.00	$4,313,657.00	202%
21-22	$5,872,466.00	$2,890,109.00	$2,982,357.00	203%
24-25	$12,691,271.00	$6,803,509.00	$5,887,762.00	187%

Route 1C

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$1,529,214.00	$1,483,384.00	$45,830.00	103%
17-18	$1,290,350.00	$1,758,691.00	$(468,341.00)	73%
21-22	$507,224.00	$903,871.00	$(396,647.00)	56%
24-25	$1,343,055.00	$1,217,738.00	$125,316.00	110%

Route 3

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$5,589,502.00	$2,235,279.00	$3,354,223.00	250%
17-18	$5,017,204.00	$2,618,838.00	$2,398,366.00	192%
21-22	$2,690,751.00	$1,652,505.00	$1,038,246.00	163%
24-25	$6,705,183.00	$3,445,185.00	$3,259,998.00	195%

Route 6

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$1,220,592.00	$1,104,748.00	$115,844.00	110%
17-18	$1,164,072.00	$1,280,825.00	$(116,753.00)	91%
21-22	$400,639.00	$277,292.00	$123,347.00	144%
24-25	$1,055,169.00	$683,677.00	$371,491.00	154%

Route 7

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$2,643,212.00	$1,949,426.00	$693,786.00	136%
17-18	$2,289,601.00	$2,310,428.00	$(20,827.00)	99%
21-22	$718,302.00	$1,174,546.00	$(456,244.00)	61%
24-25	$1,971,053.00	$3,246,049.00	$(1,274,996.00)	61%

Route 10

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$1,119,632.00	$1,196,949.00	$(77,317.00)	94%
17-18	$984,346.00	$1,269,862.00	$(285,516.00)	78%
21-22	$134,245.00	-	$134,245.00	-
24-25	$745,348.00	$123,575	$621,773.00	603%

Route 15

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$340,584.00	$380,236.00	$(39,652.00)	90%
17-18	$221,406.00	$432,495.00	$(211,089.00)	51%
21-22	$94,032.00	$137,873.00	$(43,841.00)	68%
24-25	$198,271.00	$406,457.00	$(208,186.00)	49%

Route 18

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$715,252.00	$966,466.00	$(251,214.00)	74%
17-18	$729,140.00	$970,293.00	$(241,153.00)	75%
21-22	$63,503.00	-	$20,344.00	-
24-25	$193,679.00	$85,399	$108,280.00	227%

Route 19

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$2,152,807.00	$2,300,087.00	$(147,280.00)	94%
17-18	$1,977,263.00	$2,849,079.00	$(871,816.00)	69%
21-22	$856,901.00	$1,234,783.00	$(377,882.00)	69%

24-25	$2,107,336.00	$1,743,350.00	$363,987.00	121%

Route 99

FY	Revenue	Expense	Net	Recovery Ratio
16-17	$1,928,779.00	$723,752.00	$1,205,027.00	266%
17-18	$1,657,456.00	$723,311.00	$934,145.00	229%
21-22	$1,107,429.00	$275,537.00	$831,892.00	402%
24-25	$2,242,054.00	$544,557.00	$1,697,497.00	412%

Amtrak Cost Recovery Dataset for Gold Runner Thruway Bus: 2018

Thruway Route Calif. Timetable Number	AFR	Amtrak Train Route Assignment	Typical Thruway Route Endpoints	Type of Service	(a) Bus Riders (Ticket Lift Closed Data)	(b) Multiride Ticket Scans on Thruway	(a)+(b) Thruway Bus RouteTotal Riders	Ticketed Riders: Pacific Surfliner (AFR 35)	Ticketed Riders: Capitol Corridor (AFR 37)	Ticketed Riders: San Joaquins (AFR 39)	Ticketed Riders: All Other Network Trains	Total Ticketed Amtrak Train Riders Connected (including Multirides)	Thruway Tickets: Ticket Lift Close Ticket Revenue	Multiride Revenue Estimate @ Factor of Regular-Price Tickets	Connecting Ticket Revenue: Pacific Surfliner (AFR 35)	Connecting Ticket Revenue: Capitol Corridor (AFR 37)	Connecting Ticket Revenue: San Joaquins (AFR 39)	Ticket Revenue: California System Total	Connecting Ticket Revenue: All Other Network Trains (AFR 00-69 except 35, 37, 39)	Bus Contract Payments	Other CC_6512 Costs	PRIIA 209 Shared Support Services	Total Costs	Net California Result	Cost Recovery Ratio (Revenue / Cost)
Gold Runner Bus Routes																									
6	71	San Joaquins	Stockton - San Jose	Dedicated	37,531	985	38,516	607	190	38,934	654	41,370	$489,584	$12,560	$9,520	$2,885	$663,087	$1,177,636	$71,327	$1,166,675	$8,742	$38,201	$1,213,618	($35,982)	97%
7	71	San Joaquins	Martinez - Arcata	Dedicated	50,640	196	50,836	1,358	13,484	35,886	3,740	54,664	$1,202,312	$3,233	$23,476	$241,837	$850,325	$2,321,183	$455,618	$2,104,517	$15,769	$68,909	$2,189,196	$131,987	106%
9	71	San Joaquins	Bakersfield - Las Vegas, NV	Dedicated	14,082	20	14,102	91	91	14,397	788	15,387	$501,718	$362	$879	$583	$350,330	$853,872	$71,464	$787,172	$5,898	$25,775	$818,845	$35,027	104%
10	71	San Joaquins	Bakersfield - Santa Barbara	Dedicated	23,978	2	23,980	381	254	24,169	471	25,277	$426,827	$34	$5,965	$3,919	$556,942	$993,687	$39,133	$1,156,689	$8,667	$37,874	$1,203,231	($209,544)	83%
12	71	San Joaquins	Bakersfield - Victorville	Dedicated	12,792	21	12,813	44	62	13,383	408	13,918	$182,429	$420	$669	$782	$358,281	$542,581	$30,502	$820,263	$6,146	$26,858	$853,267	($310,686)	64%
19	71	San Joaquins	Bakersfield - Indio	Dedicated	42,174	213	42,387	688	152	43,106	1,300	45,459	$1,006,598	$3,562	$11,284	$1,668	$966,811	$1,989,922	$106,943	$2,595,163	$19,446	$84,975	$2,699,583	($709,661)	74%
34	71	San Joaquins	Stockton - San Francisco	Dedicated	7,981	423	8,404	571	132	10,419	177	11,722	$75,281	$7,513	$8,617	$1,673	$253,102	$346,186	$15,075	$356,850	$2,674	$11,685	$371,208	($25,022)	93%
56	71	San Joaquins	San Jose - Stockton	Commuter Rail	3,229	39	3,268	118	21	4,659	56	4,893	$42,731	$451	$1,599	$461	$71,872	$117,113	$3,573	$74,344	$557	$2,434	$77,335	$39,778	151%
15A	71	San Joaquins	Merced - Yosemite	Mixed Mode	6,547	-	6,547	215	52	8,919	501	9,687	$65,211	$0	$1,856	$203	$171,926	$239,196	$54,727	$393,950	$2,952	$12,899	$409,801	($170,605)	58%
15B	71	San Joaquins	Fresno - Yosemite	Mixed Mode	208	-	208	5	2	152	13	172	$2,599	$0	$0	$19	$2,295	$4,913	$1,650	$2,629	$20	$86	$2,734	$2,178	180%
18-A	71	San Joaquins	Hanford - Santa Maria	Dedicated	21,564	595	22,159	272	308	20,258	1,194	22,627	$340,286	$5,538	$7,095	$6,278	$245,237	$604,434	$115,399	$770,883	$5,776	$25,241	$801,900	($197,466)	75%
18-B	71	San Joaquins	Hanford - Visalia	Dedicated	5,596	-	5,596	224	17	5,269	309	5,819	$25,710	$0	$3,063	$218	$97,328	$126,319	$27,534	$112,936	$846	$3,698	$117,480	$8,839	108%
1A	71	San Joaquins	Bakersfield - Los Angeles - San Diego	Dedicated	168,122	2,695	170,817	78,288	1,131	194,542	31,128	307,784	$3,079,708	$40,938	$1,371,652	$13,072	$4,164,001	$8,669,370	$3,691,397	$3,820,073	$28,624	$125,083	$3,973,780	$4,695,590	218%
1B	71	San Joaquins	Bakersfield - Los Angeles - San Pedro	Dedicated	72,679	660	73,339	1,411	31	12,193	697	14,992	$1,226,075	$12,082	$37,836	$346	$294,629	$1,570,968	$89,475	$1,665,240	$12,478	$54,526	$1,732,244	($161,275)	91%
1C	71	San Joaquins	Bakersfield - Los Angeles - Torrance	Dedicated	35,706	247	35,953	3,512	91	34,128	511	38,489	$500,568	$3,927	$89,597	$1,047	$709,116	$1,304,254	$45,878	$1,610,867	$12,070	$52,745	$1,675,683	($371,429)	78%
3A	71	San Joaquins	Stockton - Sacramento - Redding	Dedicated	136,863	4,988	141,851	4,194	18,669	130,840	20,708	179,399	$1,891,118	$75,650	$65,745	$413,031	$2,629,376	$5,074,920	$2,212,215	$2,385,441	$17,874	$78,108	$2,481,424	$2,593,497	205%
99B	71	San Joaquins	Emeryville - San Francisco	Dedicated	55,377	3,496	58,873	834	3,326	58,570	2,038	68,264	$188,855	$60,517	$12,045	$84,179	$1,351,612	$1,697,208	$276,078	$635,863	$4,765	$20,820	$661,448	$1,035,761	257%
Gold Runner Total					**695,069**	**14,580**	**709,649**	**84,560**	**36,184**	**568,784**	**54,781**	**758,889**	**$11,247,609**	**$226,786**	**$1,525,991**	**$746,285**	**$11,522,531**	**$25,269,202**	**$6,184,660**	**$20,459,554**	**$153,306**	**$669,918**	**$21,282,778**	**$3,986,425**	**119%**

Amtrak Cost Recovery Dataset for Gold Runner Thruway Bus: 2025

Thruway Routes	Route Type	Thruway Route One-way & Multi-ride Tickets	Riders - Gold Runner Trains	Riders - Capitol Corridor Trains	Riders - Pacific Surfliner Trains	Riders - Other Connecting Trains	Riders - Total All Trains	Total California System Revenue	Revenue - Other Connecting Trains	Net Operating Cost	Net Incremental Impact	Cost Recovery Ratio
Gold Runner Bus Routes												
California Thruway 01A (Fresno - Bakersfield - Los Angeles - Santa Ana - San Diego)	Dedicated	116,976	118,992	864	44,101	19,947	183,904	$6,763,078	$3,160,988	$4,148,526	$2,614,552	163%
California Thruway 01B (Bakersfield - Los Angeles)	Dedicated	104,794	132,727	384	18,071	11,299	162,481	$5,928,193	$1,817,182	$2,654,983	$3,273,210	223%
California Thruway 01C(Bakersfield - Van Nuys - Santa Monica)	Dedicated	33,248	29,656	103	995	530	31,284	$1,343,055	$66,336	$1,217,738	$125,316	110%
California Thruway 03A (Stockton - Sacramento - Chico)	Dedicated	159,008	183,285	41,219	2,261	22,656	249,421	$6,705,183	$2,865,977	$3,445,185	$3,259,998	195%
California Thruway 03R (Chico - Redding)	Dedicated	6,533	4,835	1,149	331	123	6,438	$193,035	$7,267	$426,480	($233,445)	45%
California Thruway 06 (Stockton - San Jose [buses, not ACE trains])	Dedicated	27,358	34,639	158	173	691	35,661	$1,055,169	$95,976	$683,677	$371,491	154%
California Thruway 07 (Martinez - Eureka / McKinleyville)	Dedicated	46,467	27,917	13,579	624	4,090	46,210	$1,971,053	$615,019	$3,246,049	($1,274,996)	61%
California Thruway 10 (Bakersfield - Santa Barbara - Las Vegas)	Revenue Guarantee	32,382	24,808	170	1,179	3,105	29,262	$745,348	$444,944	$123,575	$621,773	603%
California Thruway 15A (Merced - Yosemite)	Interline	4,066	6,206	13	20	325	6,564	$198,271	$40,878	$406,457	($208,186)	49%
California Thruway 18-A (Hanford Santa Maria)	Revenue Guarantee	10,390	9,070	79	400	350	9,899	$193,679	$33,136	$85,399	$108,280	227%
California Thruway 19 (Bakersfield - San Bernardino)	Dedicated	41,390	40,719	101	98	956	41,874	$2,107,336	$86,284	$1,743,350	$363,987	121%
California Thruway 34 (Stockton - San Francisco)	Dedicated	204	153	0	1	223	377	$14,639	$33,252	$16,419	($1,781)	89%
California Thruway 56 (Stockton - San Jose [ACE trains, not buses])	Interline	9,564	1,601	497	144	368	2,610	$149,957	$22,472	$79,965	$69,992	188%
California Thruway 99B (Emeryville / Oakland - San Francisco)	Dedicated	47,564	61,377	9,124	681	7,284	78,466	$2,242,054	$1,450,893	$544,557	$1,697,497	412%
California Thruway Special Event Shuttle - Gold Runner (Merced-Castle Air Museum)	Dedicated	102	210	0	0	0	210	$2,252	$ -		$2,252	
Consolidated SJJPA Routes		***640,046***	***449,886***	***43,590***	***50,840***	***51,405***	***595,721***	***$22,439,878***	***$7,785,270***	***$18,822,361***	***$3,617,517***	***119%***

Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study: Stakeholder Input from Letters & e-mails

On September 23, 2026, San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) staff released the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report for stakeholder and public input via https://sjjpa.com/gold-runner-thruway-bus-study/ as part of the Thruway Bus Study. The attached responses were collected from September 23 to October 21 as letters or emails sent directly to Authority staff. October 21, 2026 was the deadline for comments to be included in the staff report for the November 20, 2026 SJJPA Board Meeting.

Contents (submissions by)**:**

- Emily Betts - Sonoma County Transit
- Evan Tschuy - Seamless Bay Area, Transbay Coalition, and Hiking by Transit
- Zoe Unruh - Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District
- Colin Fiske - Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities
- Sara Tohamy - Flix North America
- Nav Bagri - Merced County Association of Governments
- Paul Dyson - Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada
- Steve Roberts - Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada
- Kim Bergel - City of Eureka *(received on October 28, 2026)*

Outlook

RE: [Amtrak Gold Runner] Thruway Bus Study Draft Report

From Emily Betts <Emily.Betts@sonomacounty.gov>
Date Tue 9/29/2026 12:26 PM
To David Sorrell <DSorrell@sjrrc.com>
Cc Rachel Ede (rede@srcity.org) <rede@srcity.org>; Zoe Unruh <zunruh@sonomamarintrain.org>

You don't often get email from emily.betts@sonomacounty.gov. Learn why this is important

[The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.]

Hi Dave,
Thank you for sharing the draft report. Regarding potential changes to Route 7, SCT supports the relocation of the stop to the Santa Rosa Transit Mall. We are planning service changes in February 2027 that include terminating all of our intercity routes at the Transit Mall, and no longer serving Coddingtown, meaning it will no longer be an effective regional transfer point.

Regarding service to Sonoma County Airport, we are considering the complete cancellation of Route 62, as the route is largely duplicated by SMART service. Instead of referencing the Route 62 in your report as a connection to SMART, you should reference SMART's Connect Shuttle, which runs from the Airport SMART Station to the Airport.

You might also consider planning for a transfer to SMART in Healdsburg, where they will be opening their station in around two years. Healdsburg will be the northern terminus of the line for the foreseeable future (until Geyserville/Cloverdale is constructed). We're in discussion with the City and SMART regarding a potential "intermodal" center at the station location, depending on the site and design of the station.

Let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss these further.

Best,
Emily

Emily Betts
Transit Systems Manager
Sonoma County Transit
Office: 707-565-8211
Cell : 415-385-6914
emily.betts@sonomacounty.gov
355 W. Robles Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

From: Dana Turrey <dana.turrey@sctca.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2026 10:13 AM
To: DDavenport@goldengate.org; jbrown@goldengate.org; JSandoval@goldengate.org; marce@cityofpetaluma.org; csullivan@cityofpetaluma.org; avazquez@cityofpetaluma.org; rede@srcity.org; Ykoslen@srcity.org; ssosa@srcity.org; MWilcox@srcity.org; jparker@sonomamarintrain.org; zunruh@sonomamarintrain.org; Emily Betts <Emily.Betts@sonomacounty.gov>; Steven Schmitz <Steven.Schmitz@sonomacounty.gov>; Charles Smith <Charles.Smith@sonomacounty.gov>; rbetts@marintransit.gov; dan@acerail.com; DSorrell@sjrrc.com; jacob@mendocinotransit.org; James Cameron <james.cameron@sctca.ca.gov>; Christopher Barney <chris.barney@sctca.ca.gov>; David Ripperda <David.Ripperda@sctca.ca.gov>; Seana Gause <seana.gause@sctca.ca.gov>; Margot Ocanas <Margot.Ocanas@sctca.ca.gov>; Adam Garcia <Adam.Garcia@sctca.ca.gov>; Steph Britt <Stephanie.Britt@sctca.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: [Amtrak Gold Runner] Thruway Bus Study Draft Report

Dear Transit TAC,

Please see the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report linked in the email below from Dave Sorrell. Comments are due by October 21, 2026.

Dana

EXTERNAL

Good morning, Dana, Happy Wednesday to you.

As promised, we've got an update with the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study - please share the update to the T-TAC Committee, and we're accepting comments until October 21.

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) is nearing the completion of its Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study focused on delivering specific, feasible, and short-term recommendations for improving the Gold Runner Thruway Bus routes. Please see the Authority's "Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study" webpage (https://sjjpa.com/gold-runner-thruway-bus-study/) for details about the study, the **Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report**, and how to provide comments on the draft report.

Here's the link to the draft report.

Staff expect to request approval of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report at the Authority's November 20, 2026, Board Meeting. Public input will be accepted until the approval of the study in November, but input received by October 21, 2026, will be included in the staff report for the Authority Board at their November 20, 2026, Board Meeting. Staff greatly appreciate receiving comments by October 21 to provide time for any necessary edits to the draft report prior to its submittal for SJJPA Board.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Have a great rest of the week!

Dave Sorrell, TDM-CP (He/Him/Y'all - Why is this important?)
Senior Planner (Bay Area Region), Planning, Grants, & Programming Department

San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (ACE Rail & Amtrak Gold Runner)
949 East Channel Street, Stockton, CA
(209) 395-8329 cell | DSorrell@sjrrc.com *(email is faster than phone)* | sjrrc.com | Goldrunner.com | Acerail.com

_____

Book time to meet with me

If you are not the intended recipient of this transmission or a person responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution, or other use of any of the information in this transmission in error, please notify me immediately by replying to this email or by telephone at (209) 395-8329

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E-mail send 10/19/2026

Good morning,

Seamless Bay Area, Transbay Coalition, and Hiking by Transit are pleased to submit the attached letter regarding the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report.

We are encouraged by the direction of the report, and urge you to strengthen several of the recommendations to build a more connected, more legible, and more useful intercity transportation network.

I've included a link to the letter as a Google Doc below, and can provide a PDF if that would be more convenient.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Evan Tschuy
Hiking by Transit

Letter attached:

To: Dan Leavitt, Manager of Regional Initiatives <dan@sjjpa.com>
Rene Gutierrez, Senior Regional Initiatives Coordinator <rene@sjjpa.com>

Subject: Comments on Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report

The Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report does an excellent job setting out critical steps to modernize the Thruway bus network, with better network connectivity, passenger information, and potential future partnerships. We are excited to see several recommendations from our earlier letter in the draft recommendations, and other excellent recommendations.

We are encouraged by the direction of the report. We urge you to incorporate the following changes to strengthen several of the recommendations, particularly around real-time tracking, integrated corridor planning on Route 7, and connections with local transit services, to help create the more connected, more legible, and more useful intercity transportation network we envision for all Californians.

Creating a statewide network

Tier 2A includes several recommendations that seek to create a further-reaching statewide network. We are particularly pleased to see recommendations including:

- **Potential coordination on interline service agreements** with Flix North America. Flix and Gold Runner are the only two statewide transit networks, and aligning them to work together would allow riders to take more trips to more places more frequently.
- **Exploring partnerships with other transit providers** as future contract partners and better timed service connections. Services like Sequoia Shuttle and V-Line in Visalia, the Sage Stage, and Eastern Sierra Transit are unreachable today for Gold Runner passengers. With aligned schedules, these services could offer regional connections at next to no cost. Once schedules are aligned, these routes should be included in Gold Runner maps and timetables, even if thruway bus ticketing is not available.
- **A statewide map showing rail, thruway bus, and connecting transit services**. No matter which agency at the state level owns the map, it is important that the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, as the agency in charge of the most comprehensive statewide rail and thruway bus services, take a lead role in pushing for such a statewide map.

Passenger information

The recommendations for a statewide map, improved website information on transfer policies, and updated stop signage is a strong step toward modern passenger information.

Of particular interest, the recommendation to **implement real-time tracking** is set to be transformative. Real-time tracking is a standard practice on transit vehicles in 2026, and is a baseline rider expectation. Including it as a Tier 3 priority does not reflect this expectation of riders. Installation and testing will take time, and so the launch of a real-time tracking project must be a top priority, even though implementation may take time. **Real-time tracking should be moved up to a Tier 2B recommendation**, coordinating with Cal-ITP at the state level to leverage existing state capacity on implementation of vehicle tracking technology.

Also of note, Gold Runner service was removed from the Amtrak GTFS data feed in November, coinciding with the service rebrand. **Include a Tier 1 recommendation to audit the new GTFS data feed**, to improve the following issues:

- The service name is shown as the next station. For example, at Emeryville, southbound trains show up as “Richmond Amtrak Station (RIC) (RIC)” instead of the destination (“Bakersfield (BFD)”)
- Riders have reported that the GTFS feed does not properly encode “discharge-only” information for routes without bus-only ticketing. For instance, Route 1 shows up on Google Maps for travel between Los Angeles and Fullerton.

Route 7 north of Santa Rosa

The Highway 101 corridor north of Santa Rosa is perhaps one with the most service overlap of any corridor in Northern California. Riders are presented with several different transit options at wildly differing speeds, pricepoints, and booking methods. With Route 7 struggling to meet state-mandated cost recovery, there is a strong opportunity here to work with the other agencies operating service in the region on an integrated transit plan, similar to the MASCOTS plan that resulted in a 14% increase in ridership along the Highway 101 corridor south of Santa Rosa.

In particular, service north of Santa Rosa today is a combination of Gold Runner 7, HTA North State Express services north of Ukiah, MTA 65 services south of Ukiah, and Sonoma County Transit services between Santa Rosa and Cloverdale. SMART's upcoming extension to Healdsburg and future extension to Cloverdale provide an opportunity to rationalize services between all of these cities. As a **new Tier 3 recommendation, SJJPA should take this opportunity and work with agencies in Sonoma and Mendocino counties** to streamline Route 7 operations in the North Bay Area while continuing to serve the corridor's strong ridership demand.

Route 99 in San Francisco

We are pleased to see that a stop inside the Salesforce Transit center is being negotiated, which would improve connectivity, travel time, wayfinding, and passenger experience. Even moreso, we are excited for the proposed study for an extension to Caltrain at 4th & King station. Such an extension would open the Gold Runner to peninsula riders – currently, passengers coming from the Caltrain corridor must connect to BART at Millbrae, and ride 75 minutes on BART to connect to the Gold Runner in Richmond.

Thruway stops at transit centers

As part of rationalizing thruway routes across the state, there should be a focus on moving thruway stops to better connect with local transit at existing transit centers. Placing stops at locations significantly extend the reach of the Thruway bus network by integrating with existing local bus networks, even though the local networks may not have through-ticketing or coordinated transfers. We urge you to **include a Tier 2B or Tier 3 recommendation to audit stop locations across the network** to improve transit network connectivity. An appendix with several identified opportunities across the state is provided below.

Conclusion

The draft report lays a strong foundation for a more connected, accessible, and useful statewide intercity transportation network. We encourage SJJPA to build on this vision by strengthening coordination and connection with other transit operators, ensuring that riders can connect from Thruway services to local and regional transit networks as effectively as possible. We appreciate the work that has gone into this study and look forward to seeing these recommendations incorporated into the final report and, ultimately, riding on a more connected Gold Runner network across the state.

Kaleo Mark, Seamless Bay Area
Carter Lavin, Transbay Coalition
Evan Tschuy, Hiking by Transit

Appendix: Thruway stops with potential for better local transit connections

- **Route 7**
  - Eureka: Thruway stop is 7 blocks away from the Eureka Transit Center, which has 8 connecting bus lines
  - Ukiah: the Thruway stop is 2 blocks away from the Pear Tree Center transfer center – improvements could include either moving the curb stop closer or directional signage.
  - Cloverdale: stop is at a future train station and park-and-ride. Rather than move the Thruway stop, encourage Sonoma County Transit to serve this location with local and regional buses.
  - Healdsburg: SMART and the City of Healdsburg have reopened discussion on the location of the future Healdsburg SMART station. Ideally, the needs of Sonoma County Transit and Thruway will be considered in this decision.
  - Santa Rosa - Coddingtown Mall: stop is 1/4 mile away from the Coddingtown Transit Hub, which may be a GTFS error. However, an even better stop location is the 2nd St Transit Mall, which has much better local and regional connections.
  - Rohnert Park: somewhat duplicative with Santa Rosa and Petaluma from a local transit perspective.
- **Route 3**
  - Chico: the stop is 9 blocks away from the Chico Transit Center, with 16 connecting local and regional buses. As part of the transition to BCAG service, ensure that the route connects well to other BCAG services.
- **Route 40**
  - Consider adding a stop at the Merced Transit Center for additional regional and local bus connections. The existing route passes within 4 blocks.
- **Route 18**
  - Hanford: Consider an additional stop at the new KART Transit Center in Downtown Hanford, with 17 local and regional bus lines
- **Route 19**
  - Pasadena: The stop is about 1 mile away from the Pasadena Memorial Park Metro station, which although is not a transit center, has 14 bus lines within a few blocks.
  - Claremont: Although this stop connects with 5 local buses and the LA Metro, the Monclair station 1 mile away serves 12 local and regional bus lines and 6 Greyhound lines, and is a better choice.
- **Route 1C**
  - Santa Clarita: The route currently goes within a few blocks of Santa Clarita Transit Center, serving 16 local bus lines.
  - UCLA: Although not a transit center, the intersection of Le Conte and Westwood connects to 15 local and regional bus lines instead of 7 at the current stop 3/4 mile away.
  - Santa Monica: The current stop on 2nd St is 2 blocks away from 12 local and regional lines and the LA Metro E line, all stopping along 4th St.

Hello David,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Report. Worth noting is that SMART's two highest ridership stations are Petaluma Downtown and Santa Rosa Downtown, and these two locations could serve as useful transfer points to the Route 7, if route 7 were to relocate its Santa Rosa stop was located within the Downtown Transit Mall.

As mentioned, SMART is in the process of determining the final Healdsburg Station Location, but this could be another transfer point between Route 7 and SMART.

Kindly,

Zoe Unruh (She/Her)

Planning Manager

Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District

5401 Old Redwood Highway, Suite 200

Petaluma, CA 94954

Office: 707-285-8178

October 16, 2026

Dan Leavitt
Manager of Regional Initiatives
San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission
949 East Channel St.
Stockton, CA 95202

via email: dleavitt@sjrrc.com

RE: Comments on Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report

Mr. Leavitt:

The Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (CRTP) has reviewed the draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report ("report"). We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

CRTP is an education and advocacy organization working in Humboldt County and the broader North Coast region to improve transportation safety, equity, and sustainability. Our region is served by Gold Runner Thruway Bus Route 7, which connects Arcata and Eureka in Humboldt County to the major population centers in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Since Greyhound withdrew from the North Coast several years ago, Route 7 has provided the only long-distance intercity bus service in the region. Local residents use Route 7 to access work, school, and family, as well as medical care and other services not available in our rural region. Route 7 is a literal lifeline for us.

Potential Route 7 Service Reductions

Your agency has already reduced service on Route 7 in recent years, as outlined in the draft repot (p.35). Further reductions to this limited, twice-daily service to Humboldt and Mendocino Counties would severely impact intercity transportation options for North Coast residents. In addition to the impacts on local residents, we are also concerned that significant service cuts could lead to a "death spiral" for Route 7, in which reduced service leads to reduced ridership, leading to further service reductions, until the route is no longer operationally viable.

Specifically, we object to the following proposals for service reduction:

- Truncating an additional round-trip at Santa Rosa (p.76). Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) service reaches only as far south as Ukiah. Truncating service at Santa Rosa necessitates travelers making additional transfers, and schedule coordination is not always possible, leaving this round-trip potentially out of reach for Humboldt County travelers.
- Reducing mid-week service (p.75). "Better aligning service with demand" sounds like a good idea. But the fact is that mid-week and off-peak seasonal services, though they have lower ridership, are critical for North Coast residents. In particular, many seniors and others use mid-week buses to access medical care in the San Francisco Bay Area which is not available in our rural region. See below for more discussion of "aligning service with demand."

Additionally, HTA has clearly stated its lack of interest in taking over service north of Ukiah, as proposed in the draft report (p.78). HTA is facing its own significant budget challenges, as well as perennial logistical challenges inherent to serving a very large rural region. The report should not highlight the option of handing over the northern part of the route to HTA as long as HTA is not prepared to take on this new responsibility.

Potential Route 7 Service Improvements

We support many of the potential improvements suggested in the draft study, including:

- Extending service from Martinez to Richmond (p.79). This would allow much more convenient connections to local San Francisco Bay Area transit services, which we believe could significantly increase bus-only ridership on the route.
- Investigating ways to improve safety and comfort of passengers at Route 7 bus stops (p.79).
- Coordinated promotion of Route 7 service with universities and other local agencies (p.79).
- Adding a "college express bus" to provide more service during periods with high student ridership (p.76).
- Better coordinating stop locations and schedules with local transit services (see e.g. pp.77-78).

We also encourage your agency to explore the following additional possibilities:

- Improve infrastructure at bus stops, beyond just upgraded signage (p.63). Most Route 7 stops are marked only by a small, inconspicuous sign. That means not only that passengers have no amenities as they wait for the bus, but also that other community members are often not even aware of the stop or the service associated with it. Shelters, benches, schedules, real-time signage, and more would not only improve the passenger experience, but also offer an invaluable marketing opportunity.
- Investigate the number of passengers who are buying separate bus and train tickets to ensure that connected train trips are fully accounted for in "cost effectiveness" calculations. The draft

report includes a recommendation for this kind of investigation for Route 15 (pp.84-85). Route 7 would also benefit from this kind of data collection, which could potentially be accomplished using passenger surveys.

The Basis for Potential Route and/or Schedule Changes

Route 7 has the third highest ridership of any route in the Gold Runner Thruway system (p.35). The relatively lower "cost effectiveness" of the route is almost entirely due to escalating operating costs related to the length of the route (p.37). There is no way to shorten Route 7 while still serving the cities of Arcata and Eureka, which collectively provide 28% of the route's annual riders (see Table 14).

To improve the "cost effectiveness" metric, one strategy repeatedly proposed for Route 7 in the draft report is to adjust service to meet existing "market demand," particularly "temporal demand" (p.61). The problem which this approach is partly that many of the people who rely on the service the most may use it during times or relatively lower ridership. Another problem is that demand for transportation services is not fixed. Rather, ridership responds to the convenience and quality of the service. In some cases, reducing service at certain times and in certain places based on existing ridership risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy of future ridership.

Furthermore, reductions in service meant to improve "cost effectiveness," even if successful, undermine your agency's important goals of providing "a preferred and convenient option" that "drives mode shift away from the highway network" (p.57), and providing "safe, reliable, and competitive connectivity…particularly for transit-dependent markets" (p.59).

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that "cost effectiveness," as narrowly defined in statute, cannot be the only basis for making decisions about routes and schedules. In particular, environmental and equity impacts must receive significant weight in these decisions in order to ensure progress toward achieving your agency's—and the state's—goals.

The draft report quantifies one metric in addition to cost effectiveness. The vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to passenger miles traveled (PMT) ratio (p.26 et seq.) is intended as a proxy for greenhouse gas reduction. To further refine environmental and equity impacts, your agency should investigate the trip purposes of Route 7 riders, as well as potential alternative modes of transportation. For example, a bus trip that would otherwise have been taken by airplane represents a significant emissions reduction, while a medical trip that would otherwise not have happened at all represents a significant positive economic and equity impact.

Passenger surveys would be extremely helpful in this regard. Using multiple other methods to actively engage both existing and potential passengers in decisions about routes and services is also essential.

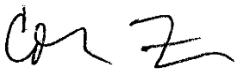
The Need for State Law Reform

It is possible that fully empowering your agency to appropriately weigh factors other than cost effectiveness in service decisions may require statutory reforms. Reforms could also help empower residents on the North Coast and along other Gold Runner Thruway bus routes to fully participate in the decision-making that affects their transportation options. Therefore, we urge you to advocate for reforms to:

- Reduce or remove the stringent "cost effectiveness" standard found at California Government Code §14035.2(a)(3).
- Introduce new equity and environmental service standards.
- Provide representation for North Coast residents and others served by Gold Runner Thruway buses on the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Board of Directors.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Colin Fiske
Executive Director & President
Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities
colin@transportationpriorities.org

Flix North America Inc. | 9773 Harry Hines Blvd. | Dallas, TX 75220 USA

October 16, 2026

Subject: Comments on the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report (September 23, 2026)

Dear Dan,

Flix North America (FNA), the parent company of Greyhound Lines, Inc. and FlixBus Inc., appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report. We commend SJJPA and its consultant team on a thorough review of a network that carried about 627,000 riders in FY 2025 and recovers 119% of its operating costs.

Greyhound and FlixBus provide scheduled, unsubsidized, farebox-supported intercity service along many of the same corridors as Gold Runner and its Thruway buses. As we discussed in our Statement of Partnership Interest, we believe we can add value to intercity service for Californians as SJJPA's partner in growing this network. Serving as a private partner to SJJPA, rather than a displaced competitor, would benefit the public overall and reduce automobile use throughout the region. Our comments below are offered in that spirit.

We are encouraged that the draft recognizes Greyhound and FlixBus throughout: in its partnership recommendations, its route analyses for Routes 1, 3, 6 and 10, its SB 742 implementation table, and its outreach plan. Our comments ask SJJPA to build on that recognition in four areas: elevating the SJJPA/FNA partnership, formalizing SB 742 coordination, revising recommendations that could harm our existing service, and reflecting the proposal and schedules we have already shared.

1. Support for partnership with Flix North America

FNA strongly supports the draft's recommendation to "coordinate with Flix North America (FNA), and Amtrak Real Estate on potential interline service agreements, shared facilities and interlined ticketing, and cooperative funding agreements to add service" (pp. ES-7, 60, 95). We also welcome the report's finding that SJJPA should "explore potential partnerships that would mutually benefit Gold Runner, Flix Bus and Greyhound services" (p. 60).

The report already shows this model works. On Route 10, FlixBus and Greyhound are allotted a portion of tickets, which the report says "limits competition on the corridor and removes obstacles to selling bus-only tickets on the route under SB 742" (p. 80).

Because this recommendation can deliver benefits quickly and at little or no cost to SJJPA, we respectfully ask that the final report:

- **Move it from Tier 2A to Tier 1**, so work begins before the end of 2026. An interline agreement on existing Greyhound and FlixBus routes requires no new operating cost to SJJPA, only a ticketing and revenue-sharing arrangement.
- **Give it fuller treatment in the body of the report.** It now appears as a bullet in the governance discussion (p. 60) and the recommendation tables. A short section

should describe the three partnership approaches, the corridors where they apply, and Route 10 as the working example.

- **Name a pilot corridor.** We suggest Bakersfield–Sacramento, where Greyhound and FlixBus already run four daily round trips, or the San Jose Thruway connections.
- **Cross-reference it in the route recommendations** where FNA service overlaps, particularly Routes 1, 3, 6, 40 and 99, and in the Tier 2A recommendation to explore future contract partners, which the report frames around public operators (p. 60).

2. Formal request for coordination under SB 742

As the draft notes, "SB 742 requires coordination with local, regional transit, and private intercity bus providers before opening a Thruway Bus route for bus-only ticketing" (p. 6). The final report should also reflect why the Legislature required that coordination. In SB 742 itself, the Legislature declared that existing intercity bus services are "critical to maintaining rural services and connections to the state's surface transportation system," and that funding under the measure "should, to the greatest extent possible, enhance those services and damage to those services should be avoided if possible, and if not, limited to the extent practicable" (Stats. 2019, ch. 652, § 1(c)). Greyhound and FlixBus are private intercity bus providers on several Gold Runner corridors and are directly affected by any bus-only ticketing decision.

SB 742 also sets out specific steps. Before contracting for Thruway connections, SJJPA "shall make a good faith effort to coordinate with private motor carrier services ... including through agreements to fund modifications or expansions of existing motor carrier services" (Gov. Code § 14035.55(b)(3)). When proposing publicly funded service, SJJPA "shall document the differences, including time of day, between the proposed motor carrier services and the existing services" (§ 14035.55(b)(4)), and must present this work for public comment at a Board meeting (§ 14035.55(b)(5)). In addition to this documentation, FNA requests that proposals for publicly funded service also include the fare analysis information and a reasonable opportunity for private operators to fully assess, comment and engage with SJJPA staff on the impact to existing services. By doing this prior to the release of the formal proposal to the public, we believe it will be easier to negotiate win-win solutions that enhance both types of service. This would also make it easier for existing operators to endorse draft plans before they are reviewed by the public and the Board. Through this type of collaboration, SJJPA would be better positioned to meet both SB 742 funding requirements discussed above: (1) enhancing existing services and (2) avoiding damage to those services.

The Legislature also anticipated that these buses would serve communities "during time periods when that transportation is not otherwise provided by private intercity transportation companies" (Stats. 2019, ch. 652, § 1(b)).

FNA therefore formally requests that SJJPA:

1. **Recognize Greyhound and FlixBus as affected providers** under SB 742 on every corridor where our service overlaps a Thruway route, beginning with Routes 1, 3, 6 and 99.

2. **Consult FNA in writing before** any bus-only ticketing is studied, proposed or implemented on those routes, and share the ridership, schedule and fare data the decision relies on, including the comparison of proposed and existing service required by Gov. Code § 14035.55(b)(4).
3. **Adopt a no-harm standard**: new subsidized service or bus-only ticketing should not displace or undermine existing unsubsidized Greyhound and FlixBus service. Where overlap exists, expansion should be structured collaboratively with FNA, through interlining or cooperative service, rather than in direct, undifferentiated competition. This reflects the Legislature's direction in SB 742 § 1(c).
4. **State this commitment in the final report**, in the Bus-Only Ticketing discussion and in each affected route recommendation.

These requests build on commitments already in the draft. It states that bus-only ticketing on Route 6 "should also have minimal impacts to the services offered by private intercity bus operators in this corridor" (p. 74). Its SB 742 status table notes that "coordination will be needed with Greyhound, Flixbus" before action on Routes 1 and 6 (pp. 101–102). And SJJPA coordinated with Greyhound before opening Route 7 to bus-only ticketing in 2021 (p. 102). We appreciate this coordination and ask that the same standard apply on every route where our services overlap.

We also support the draft's safeguard for Route 1: "If implementing bus-only ticketing ultimately compromises the cost-effectiveness of the route, it should not be moved forward" (p. 66). Finally, the draft's outreach plan lists Greyhound Lines and FlixBus among the private operators SJJPA will engage (p. 108). We ask that this engagement continue through the study and any Board action that follows.

3. Concerns with recommendations that would affect existing service

FNA has concerns with the following recommendations as drafted. We do not oppose growth of the Thruway network, but these items could place publicly subsidized service in direct competition with unsubsidized Greyhound and FlixBus service. We ask that each be revised to include the SB 742 consultation and no-harm standard above, and the partnership alternative.

Recommendation	Our concern	Requested change
Route 3: "fully open" to bus-only ticketing (Tier 2A)	The report recognizes Greyhound and FlixBus serve this "well-established corridor" (p. 71)	Condition on SB 742 consultation with FNA; consider interlining first
Route 6: implement bus-only ticketing per the 2026 Business Plan (Tier 2A)	Worded as a decided item, though the body commits to "minimal impacts" on private operators (p. 74)	Reword as "study," and carry the minimal-impact commitment into the recommendation
Route 1: bus-only ticketing and added service, including	Bakersfield–Los Angeles Union Station is a core Greyhound and FlixBus	Evaluate partnership or cooperative funding with FNA before any public-

Recommendation	Our concern	Requested change
more Bakersfield–Los Angeles trips (Tier 2B)	corridor. The body suggests partnering with public operators to facilitate bus-only ticketing (p. 66)	operator arrangement, new procurement or bus-only ticketing, as Gov. Code § 14035.55(b)(3) contemplates
Route 3: public-agency partnerships for Stockton–Sacramento/Davis and Chico–Sacramento (BCAG, Tier 1; SJRTD, Tier 2B)	Considers only public partners on a corridor FNA already serves	Include FNA as a potential partner

We also want to clarify one point. The draft states that FlixBus and Greyhound "will likely oppose SJJPA's bus-only service to compete with their existing offerings" (p. 66). FNA does not oppose bus-only ticketing as such. We oppose subsidized service structured to compete head-to-head with unsubsidized service, and we support collaborative approaches like the Route 10 agreement. We ask that the final report reflect that distinction.

4. Our partnership proposal and existing service

Our earlier Statement of Partnership Interest proposed three complementary approaches, which SJJPA may pursue in any combination or sequence:

1. **Interline service agreements** on existing Greyhound and FlixBus routes, letting passengers book one itinerary across Gold Runner and FNA service. This adds no operating cost for SJJPA and extends Gold Runner's reach to every city on the FNA network nationwide.
2. **Contracted or cooperative funding of added frequencies**, where demand exceeds Thruway capacity. Greyhound's depots, drivers and maintenance base and FlixBus's operating partners should allow added trips at lower marginal cost than a new stand-alone contract.
3. **Shared facilities and interlined ticketing**, co-locating at Gold Runner stations where feasible, such as Emeryville and Santa Clarita. FNA would contribute a proportional share of security, janitorial and customer service costs at shared facilities, reducing SJJPA's subsidy burden.

We also proposed four guiding principles: joint ridership growth, measured together rather than as a zero-sum transfer; better intermodal connections; cost-effective use of public subsidy; and no harm to existing unsubsidized service.

The table below summarizes current daily Greyhound and FlixBus service between Sacramento and Los Angeles, with every trip stopping at Stockton, Fresno, Bakersfield Train Station and Los Angeles Union Station. Full schedules are attached.

Direction	Carrier (trip)	Departs	Bakersfield Train Station	Arrives
Sacramento → Los Angeles	FlixBus (4)	6:45 AM	12:45 PM	3:40 PM
Sacramento → Los Angeles	Greyhound (6407)	9:35 AM	5:10 PM	7:55 PM
Sacramento → Los Angeles	Greyhound (6811)	3:15 PM	8:50 PM	10:50 PM
Sacramento → Los Angeles	Greyhound (6415)	10:05 PM	5:10 AM	7:45 AM
Los Angeles → Sacramento	FlixBus (5)	7:00 AM	10:10 AM	4:10 PM
Los Angeles → Sacramento	Greyhound (6802)	9:40 AM	12:05 PM	6:45 PM
Los Angeles → Sacramento	Greyhound (6812)	4:30 PM	7:25 PM	2:30 AM
Los Angeles → Sacramento	Greyhound (6414)	11:50 PM	2:15 AM	8:45 AM

All trips operate daily. Bakersfield times are departures.

5. Additional requests

- **Include FNA as a potential partner** in the Tier 2A recommendation to explore future contract partners, and give FNA notice of any future Thruway procurement.
- **Include private intercity service in the Tier 2B market assessment**, using FNA schedule data which we are prepared to share. This would also support the documentation of existing service that SB 742 requires.
- **Include Greyhound and FlixBus connections** in the integrated statewide passenger information system SJJPA proposes to develop with Caltrans.
- **Consider shared facilities in existing recommendations**, including Emeryville and Santa Clarita (alongside the Newhall Metrolink concept for Route 1). For Route 99, the draft notes that cost has been the sticking point in negotiations over Salesforce Transit Center, in which Greyhound is a party (p. 55). Shared use and cost sharing with FNA could help resolve it.
- **Consider FNA as a resource on underperforming routes.** As SJJPA studies alternatives for Routes 7 and 15A, FNA is open to evaluating whether interlining or cooperative service could lower costs.
- **Address fare variability through partnership.** The draft notes that Greyhound and FlixBus fares are competitive with Gold Runner but have "greater price fluctuations depending on passenger demand" (p. 65). Yield-based pricing is standard practice for an unsubsidized carrier, which must cover its costs from the farebox. If SJJPA sees stable fares as a public-interest goal, the solution is to partially subsidize fares on competing, interlined, or cooperative service, keeping them fixed as a public transit operator would. FNA would welcome discussing that approach.

Proposed next steps

1. A joint staff meeting to review ridership, schedules and corridor overlap for both networks.
2. Selection of one or two pilot corridors, such as Bakersfield–Sacramento or the San Jose Thruway connections.
3. A joint review of the ticketing and technology needed for interlined bookings.
4. A memorandum of understanding setting out roles, funding and performance measures.

We ask that this letter be included in the record for the study, and that FNA be notified when the final report goes to the SJJPA Board. Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
Sara Tohamy
Team Lead, Government Affairs & Strategic Partnerships – US West & Central
Flix North America

MERCED COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

PH: 209.723.3153
FAX: 209.723.0322
www.mcagov.org
369 W. 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

October 21, 2026

Subject: Comments on Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study. MCAG appreciates the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority's (SJJPA) continued partnership and efforts to improve interregional transit connectivity throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

MCAG is supportive of the study's recommendation to coordinate with MCAG on a potential partnership to provide an additional commuter-focused round trip on Route 40 between Merced and Silicon Valley. Improved service along this corridor could provide an important transportation option for Merced County residents commuting to employment and educational opportunities in the Bay Area, while helping to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

MCAG is particularly interested in further evaluating the feasibility of an additional round trip, including potential service schedules, ridership demand, operating costs, funding opportunities, and connections to other regional transit services.

MCAG looks forward to continued coordination with SJJPA to evaluate potential service improvements and partnership opportunities to provide additional transportation choices for Merced County residents.

Sincerely,

Nav Bagri

Nav Bagri
Deputy Executive Director
Merced County Association of Governments

E-mail from Paul Dyson on 10/6 regarding Draft Thruway Bus Study Report Route 1C:

Hi Dan,

Thoughts on route 1c at Burbank.

As of next Monday the airport terminal will be relocated to a site in the NE segment of the property and no longer close to the south station. You could leave the stop where it is near the south station or ask for a stop in the Airport. I'd also suggest the downtown Burbank station where there is parking, transit connections, some security and Metrolink service to LAUS etc. S/B Exit Burbank Blvd then take front street to the station. N/B exit Alameda then Flower st north. Worth taking a look. Northbound departure from downtown station is circuitous.

ALl the best,

PD

Paul Dyson, Vice President, Government Affairs, RailPAC

818 371 9516

RailPAC
Rail Passenger Association
of California and Nevada

P.O. Box 22344
San Francisco CA 94122

www.railpac.org

Dan Leavitt
Manager of Regional Initiatives
San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission
949 East Channel Street
Stockton, CA 95202

October 19, 2026

RE: Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report

The Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada has reviewed the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report and has the following comments. First a small typo – page ES-2, first sentence, it is the Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada. There is no "s" on the end of Passenger. That is the national rail advocacy organization.

Overall, RailPAC found the report very comprehensive, with overviews of each of the Thruway Bus routes as well as detailed information on ridership, passenger miles, ticket revenue, operating costs. The value and importance of the statewide network is clearly apparent to readers of the report.

Also, RailPAC applauds the many initiatives proposed to enhance the Thruway bus services. In particular, the proposed strategic partnerships not only have the potential to increase ridership by attracting new local riders, but to increase the visibility of the Thruway network to additional stakeholders.

However, RailPAC does have concerns with the report. The biggest is structural in nature and is a result of what RailPAC sees as governance shortfalls now thirty years into the Joint Powers Authority governance model. California's Thruway bus network is a statewide network and should be managed as such, preferably by the state. Also, RailPAC has concerns about this report being done in isolation without a joint analysis of the intercity motor coach network in California and potential synergies between the two networks.

Each Thruway bus route represents a continuum between two distinct roles – direct connection to rail service on the one hand and basic rural access service on the other hand. For example, Emeryville – San Francisco and Bakersfield – Los Angeles are examples of a service nearly 100% focused on train connection service compared to routes serving the Redwood Empire, northern Sacramento Valley, Salinas Valley, and Coachella Valley, which provide transportation service vitally important for these rural areas. So, on the one hand, the San Joaquin JPA is tasked with funding a social service, basic lifeline rural access transportation to northern California areas and in years past to the Coachella Valley, while for the LOSSAN JPA, Thruway bus service and especially rural access service is a far lower priority. The undervalued role of key Thruway bus routes and their role in providing a critical social service, rural access, needs to be given greater recognition in the report so its importance can be recognized by the Caltrans, legislators, and local officials.

While RailPAC applauds the initiative to develop strategic partnerships, the proposed strategy has an Achilles heel that needs to be discussed in greater detail. That issue is on-time performance. The issue was briefly mentioned in the Route 5 overview, but unless addressed it will undermine the entire strategic partnerships initiative.

On-time Thruway bus departures are important not only to train riders but for bus only riders as well. Holding for a late train means a late bus substantially reducing the value of the service for bus only riders. For a rider who has spent the last five hours flying from the East Coast to Sacramento, they do not want to hear that their Route 5 bus is late because of holding for a late train. They will likely never ride again. On-time performance is also important for partnerships involving onward local travel on transit service. In this case a missed connection is disruptive for both train connection and bus only riders. As Doug Kerr has noted, this was an issue with the Route 7 Ukiah transit connection.

The report should provide strategies to address the on-time performance issue. The best strategy would be to improve the on-time performance of the Gold Runner service. If that cannot be achieved, then additional protect schedules need to operate to provide the back-up train connection as well as protecting the original schedule for bus only riders. Alternatively, on-call van service needs to be arranged to protect the train connection. The cost of the last two options, unless sparingly used, will undermine the financial benefits of the partnership which puts the focus on the first option. In summary, unless Gold Runner on-time performance is substantially improved the financial potential of partnerships will not be achieved.

Thank you for involving the Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada, an all-volunteer rail advocacy organization whose members work and travel throughout California, participate in this study.

Sincerely.

Steve Roberts

Steve Roberts, President Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada

Dan Leavitt
Manager of Regional Initiatives
San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission
949 East Channel St.
Stockton, CA 95202

via email: dleavitt@sjrrc.com

RE: Maintaining Service on Gold Runner Thruway Bus Route 7

Mr. Leavitt:

The City of Eureka appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report ("report"). Eureka is served by Gold Runner Thruway Bus Route 7, which connects Humboldt County to the San Francisco Bay Area. Route 7 is the only long-distance intercity bus service in the region. Local residents use Route 7 to access work, school, and family, as well as medical care and other services not available in our rural region. Route 7 is a literal lifeline for our residents.

Route 7 has the third highest ridership of any route in the Gold Runner Thruway system. The relatively lower "cost effectiveness" of the route is almost entirely due to escalating operating costs related to the length of the route. But there is no way to shorten Route 7 while still serving Eureka, which contributes a significant share of its ridership.

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) has already reduced service on Route 7 in recent years. Further reductions to this limited, twice-daily service to Humboldt and Mendocino Counties would severely impact intercity transportation options for North Coast residents.

The city objects to the concept of truncating an additional Route 7 round-trip at Santa Rosa, which complicates or completely prevents Eurekans using this service from reaching the San Francisco Bay Area. The city also objects to reducing mid-week and off-peak seasonal services, which are critical for many Eurekans. In particular, many seniors and others use mid-week buses to access medical care in the San Francisco Bay Area which is not available in our rural region.

Additionally, the Humboldt Transit Authority—a joint powers authority of which the City of Eureka is a member—has clearly stated that it is not able to take over service north of Ukiah, as proposed in the draft report. HTA is facing its own significant budget challenges, as well as perennial logistical challenges inherent to serving a very large rural region. The city objects to SJJPA proposing to hand over the northern part of the route to HTA as long as HTA is not ready and able to take on this new responsibility.

THE CITY OF
EUREKA
OFFICE OF THE CITY MAYOR

531 K Street, Eureka, CA 95501 (707) 441.4144 www.ci.eureka.ca.gov

The city supports and appreciates many of the potential service improvements suggested in the draft study, including increased coordination with local agencies and transit services, improving bus stops, and extending the southern end of the route from Martinez to Richmond (allowing more convenient connections to San Francisco Bay Area transit services).

Finally, on behalf of the Eureka City Council, the city supports efforts to reform state law to provide our region with representation on the SJJPA Board of Directors, and to adopt thruway bus operating standards that go beyond narrowly defined "cost effectiveness."

Sincerely,

Kim Bergel

Mayor, City of Eureka

531 K Street, Eureka, CA 95501 (707) 441.4144 www.ci.eureka.ca.gov

Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study: Input from Thruway Bus Webpage

On September 23, 2026, San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) staff the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Report and service to public input via https://sjjpa.com/gold-runner-thruway-bus-study/ as part of the Thruway Bus Study. The attached responses were collected from September 23 to October 21 through the "**Provide Input on Gold Runner Thruway Bus Services**" section at the bottom of the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study Webpage. October 21, 2026 was the deadline for comments to be included in the staff report for the November 20, 2026 SJJPA Board Meeting.

Additional input on the Draft Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study is summarized in a separate document.

Contents (submissions by)**:**

- Valerie Gizinski
- Susanne Sabata
- Anna Marie Marshall
- Kyndra Connor
- Paige Cooke
- Winifred Creamer
- Linda Johnson
- Christel Collins
- Peggy Martinez
- Anna K Hamilton
- O Smith
- Beverly Filip
- Dana
- Graham Crawbuck
- Ann Anderson
- Kai
- Sue Bingham
- Gordon Leppig
- susan walsh
- Christine Doyka
- Jerry Martien
- charlotte cerny
- Glenn Siegfried
- Jessica Hall (2)
- Charles Sharpe
- Paula Mushrush
- Sal Jauregui
- Masako okazaki
- Scott Hazen Mueller
- sean powers
- Genevieve Serna
- Jeffrey Witter
- Tamara Wolski
- tim ross
- Leslie Quinn
- Nancy Brockington
- Lisa Caldwell
- David
- Steve Brands
- Antonio Soltero
- Linda Alm
- Carl Birks
- Patricia Kanzler
- dana maher
- Julian Nelson
- Cary Frazee
- Dan Hauser
- Amber Grimes
- Lynn Kerman
- Jerry Martin
- John Webb

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Wed 10/21/2026 7:00 PM

Name: Valerie Gizinski
Email: polka.queen@gmail.com
Message:
The Gold Runner Route 7 bus is the only direct, long-distance bus available to Humboldt County residents to travel to the San Francisco Bay Area. My daughter attended Sacramento State University and regularly came home via the train and the Amtrak Route 7 bus. It is one of the few ways we can access Amtrak trains to travel across the country. It would be a hardship for residents here to not have the access this bus affords us. If anything, I would like to see the Authority extend the bus from Martinez to Richmond, to make it easier for us to connect to local Bay Area transit. Please keep this vital bus service available to us in the remote northern region of the state. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Wed 10/21/2026 12:21 PM

Name: Susanne Sabata
Email: zudarmodej@gmail.com
Message:
Hello, I am a resident of Humboldt County and the Thruway Bus is the ONLY option for travel between our county and the Bay Area for those without access to a vehicle or receiving low income. This option is incredibly important for residents here to be able to travel in state without it being an undue financial burden. I believe bus services should prioritize community needs over cost effectiveness and this should be advocated for at the state level.

thank you
Susanne

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Tue 10/20/2026 2:24 PM

Name: Anna Marie Marshall
Email: anna.marshall81@gmail.com
Message:
I use the bus to Martinez then Bakersfield to Fullerton at least 4-5 times a year thru Amtrak, I know that there are 2 buses every day Arcata to Martinez, drop it down to just the 10:00 route even every other day would reduce costs, I do not want the entire route to be eliminated as it is the only means of getting to the Bay Area, since greyhound closed. And since I now have a small dog it has been difficult for me to take the Bus/Train, I am not sure of the policy regarding pets traveling with passengers.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Tue 10/20/2026 12:36 PM

Name: Kyndra Connor
Email: k.m.connor@hotmail.com
Message:
This transportation option is so vitally important to this community. It has provided affordable and accessible transportation for so many community members that are required to seek out live-saving healthcare in areas outside of Humboldt due to our lack of services and providers. Removing this transportation option would close the door to quality of life and mandatory healthcare treatments for so many of our community and target vulnerable populations without other means to access healthcare. The impact would be devastating. I have witnessed so many families and individuals using this service to travel for access to vital healthcare services and how grateful they are that this option exists as an alternative to resigning to what is available in Humboldt. It has been life changing for so many and created opportunities to thrive in ways that would not exist without it.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Tue 10/20/2026 11:36 AM

Name: Paige Cooke
Email: paigecooke2@gmail.com
Message:
Please continue service to Humboldt County. I work for Child Welfare and our clients need the bus service. Thank you.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Mon 10/19/2026 9:57 PM

Name: Winifred Creamer
Email: wcreamer151@gmail.com
Message:
I read in the Eureka Times Standard that the Amtrak bus from Arcata to Martinez is likely to cut back service, either running fewer days each week, or ending service in Ukiah. These changes are a disaster for people like me who need medical care only available outside our area. The proposed service cuts are likely to make it impossible to get to Santa Rosa, get to my eye appointment, and back to Eureka in one day. Right now, I get on the Amtrak bus in Eureka at 7:40 am, arrive in Santa Rosa around 1 pm, have an eye appointment between 1:30 and 3 pm, get back on the bus at 4:15 and get back to Eureka around 9 pm. The bus is frequently late, normally one hour, but up to three hours. I get to my appointment and back in one day, often a very long day. Without it, however, I'd have to stay overnight in Santa Rosa.
The bus ride is important because the only current effective treatment for macular degeneration is an injection in the eye. Driving from Santa Rosa to Eureka after that treatment is not recommended, to say the least, though I've heard of people who do that. Most patients are in their 70s or 80s. You can imagine the risks arising from the hundreds of us (really!) who have to make this trip every month. I need treatment every 4-6 weeks, and that is typical, though others may be able to wait 7 or 8 weeks between visits.
If the change ends Gold Runner service in Ukiah, there will be almost no chance of getting to Santa Rosa and back in one day by bus. By the time I arrive in Ukiah and wait for a connecting bus to Santa Rosa, I'll probably lose the opportunity to get to Santa Rosa, to an appointment, and back to Ukiah and connect to Eureka in a single day.
The bus is my lifeline. I understand that the finances don't add up to profit on the route, but access to medical from Humboldt County is important to many people besides me. Please consider options other than closing the route.
Sincerely,
Winifred Creamer

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Mon 10/19/2026 9:34 PM

Name: Linda Johnson
Email: lpooh47@gmail.com
Message:
The Amtrak bus running from Martinez to Arcata is the only affordable way for me and my family to reach medical care and family in the Bay Area and Southern California. I have relied on it for decades. Air transportation is too expensive and the routes are not reliably available. Several airlines have had flights to Los Angeles/Burbank or San Francisco/Oakland and then pulled out. My son has used the Amtrak "bus-train-bus" for 25 years to get from his father's home in Los Angeles County to my home in Humboldt County. Amtrak has been reliably available and affordable for every school vacation and holiday. The Eureka-Arcata area is remote and underserved. We lack access to many medical services. The Amtrak bus provides vital connection to areas where we can get those needed medical services. I understand the route may not be as profitable as desired, but it does have ridership and it would be devastating to our community if it were to disappear.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Mon 10/19/2026 7:05 PM

Name: Christel Collins
Email: 1@christelc.com
Message:
Humboldt is down to one ophthalmologist for the entire county. Those of us who can't see well enough to drive safely to Santa Rosa, where we have to go for our glaucoma shots every 5 weeks, rely on the bus. We will go blind if we don't receive care.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>

To: Planning Programming

Mon 10/19/2026 3:17 PM

Name: Peggy Martinez
Email: peggymartinez10@icloud.com
Message:
Hello and thanks for the opportunity to address this important issue. I ride this bus several times a year, Arcata to Santa Rosa and Arcata to Martinez for various reasons. I am a non-driver and this service is important to me for my independent travel, as I am also blind. I am aware that funding is tight. Arcata and is at an important terminus in that it is near Highway 299, and also is relatively close to points north thereby making it a reasonable place to start and end trips for many people from college students to working people to seniors. If this bus were to reduce trips mid-week, it would genuinely negatively impact many people. Greyhound stopped operations to this area several years ago so this service is our only long-distance means of getting to and from the Bay Area. Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>

To: Planning Programming

Mon 10/19/2026 1:28 PM

Name: Anna K Hamilton
Email: annasongwriter@gmail.com
Message:
Regarding potential cuts to Gold Runner Thruway Bus in Humboldt County:
1st-This system is a Necessary Public Service and should be funded as such by the State.
2nd- Conflicts innate between cost of operations, fuel prices, greenhouse gas emissions goals and technological advances in electric buses have come to a head. None are ready to meet our immediate needs.
What can we do? Prioritize investment, painful as it sounds.
1- Do we need such large buses to serve the North Coast?
2- Can we switch to propane?
3- Can Congressman Huffman find subsidies?
4- Annual membership fee for frequent riders?
5- Municipal fee for service?
Thank you for your time,
Anna Hamilton, Eureka, Ca

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>

To: Planning Programming

Mon 10/19/2026 10:58 AM

Name: O Smith
Email: oona.smith@hcaog.net
Message:
I use Amtrak Thruway to get from Humboldt County to Sacramento and Davis for work (Statewide meetings, symposia, UC Davis conferences, etc.). It is wonderful to be able to connect to the train for Davis/Sacto; it saves on costs for car rentals and parking fees, and I can do work on the bus and train. I don't own a car and taking the bus seems much safer than creating long distance, single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips. Because I use this service mostly for work, it is important to have service on weekdays. I also will use Amtrak to travel to San Francisco now that Greyhound does not serve Humboldt.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Mon 10/19/2026 10:53 AM

Name: Beverly Filip
Email: beverlyfilip7@gmail.com
Message:
To Whom It May Concern:
I am 71 years old and have age-related macular degeneration. I live in Eureka and the only place that I can receive medical treatment for my condition is North Bay Vitreoretinal Center (NBVC) in Santa Rosa. I must travel there for the rest of my life every four to eight weeks year round. My physician at NBVC informed me that there are up to 100 people per day (most of them seniors) that travel from Eureka to Santa Rosa for treatment. Public transportation on Route 7 is essential to us seniors in being able to preserve our vision as we age. Please do not reduce bus service on Route 7; this is a medical issue, a safety issue and a quality of life issue.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Mon 10/19/2026 6:37 AM

Name: Dana
Email: dctrds@sbcglobal.net
Message:
Please do not cut midweek services on Route 7. The area in Arcata served has very few options for service to and from larger markets, especially for medical care. The bus services are a life line for people unable to drive. Please pleas don't cut !!

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 2:42 PM

Name: Graham Crawbuck
Email: graham.crawbuck@gmail.com
Message:
The Gold Runner Thruway Bus Service is an ESSENTIAL service for Humboldt County. This bus service offers the only affordable transit option from airports and urban centers in the SF Bay area up to Eureka. Without this bus service, I would have to resort to flying, which would both increase my costs per service and decreases the number of visits I'd be able to make per year. Please MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE this bus service by scheduling more departures and improving reliability and timeliness.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 1:43 PM

Name: Ann Anderson
Email: annintrin13@gmail.com
Message:
I am in my eighties and can no longer drive long distances. I depend on the thruway bus to visit family in the bay area and to travel south if needed for medical care. Please do not curtail this service.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 10:40 AM

Name: Kai
Email: kaineander@gmail.com
Message:
Martinez to Humboldt County bus services are essential to the connectivity of the north coast. These routes are directly related to our communities abilities to access healthcare, education, and the larger California communities. This bus line is essential to these communities and should not be reduced any further!

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 10:13 AM

Name: Sue Bingham
Email: arrow2625@gmail.com
Message:
Please continue the thruway service to Humboldt County. Plane tickets from San francisco to other areas is 1/3 or 1/4 th the cost of a plane ticket leaving Eureka/Arcata Arport. We need a cost effective way to reach the Bay Area!!!

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 10:11 AM

Name: Gordon Leppig
Email: gtl1@humboldt.edu
Message:
I use the Route 7 Bus from Arcata to Martinez several times a year to get to Sacramento, Roseville, Berkeley and the Bay area, SFO and to take Amtrak to further points.
The Arcata to Martinez bus is extremely important to me to get to work, medical appointments, and to visit family and friends. The daily service is critical. If service was reduced to less only a couple days a week, it would not be a reliable from or transportation to get to work, school or medical appointments. It is critical to maintain daily bus service from the Bay Area to Arcata, Cutting the service will futher increase the isolation of the North Coast, result in diminished access is health care and consequent lower health outcomes. Many people like myself cannot drive to the Bay Area, Sacramento, and SFO. We desperately rely on this daily bus service.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 9:59 AM

Name: susan walsh
Email: swalshwc@gmail.com
Message:
I have not yet used the bus service from Humboldt to Bay Area but plan to do so. Loss of service would be a major detriment to folks in Humboldt needing to access specialty medical services in the Bay Area or Sacramento.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 9:52 AM

Name: Christine Doyka
Email: cdoyka47@gmail.com
Message:
Please don't stop Route 7 - I rely on it when I need to go to the Bay Area from Garberville. I'm 79 and prefer not to drive myself. And lots of students from Cal Poly use that route.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 9:43 AM

Name: Jerry Martien
Email: jerrymartien@gmail.com
Message:
I am 87 years old, a 50-year resident of Humboldt County. I live in Elk River, just south of Eureka city limits. We are not served by city or county bus lines. If I get a ride into Eureka, I can catch the Amtrak bus to visit my son and his family in Petaluma.

My only other recourse is to get into a 2014 Ford Escape and take Highway 101 South. Trust me: you do not want me driving this narrow and twisting highway.

Please do not cut this vital service. Thank you.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 8:51 AM

Name: charlotte cerny
Email: chaz.cerny@gmail.com
Message:
I can understand the economic strain due to fuel prices being thrust upon the whole country, however, a major transportation source for what may be considered an outlying community, Humboldt County, cannot and should not be cutoff from the rest of the California coast. This is not an optional recreational service, it's a main-line to other areas of importance. Not everyone can afford to own or drive a car to visit friends or make it to medical services that are only available outside of this area. And surely some of the millions provided in federal grants are for this type of situation. There are only two trips in and out a day to Eureka, if a cutback is considered it may be one or two days a week.

Please give great consideration to keeping the service running north of Ukiah all the way to Arcata.

Please do not

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 8:14 AM

Name: Glenn Siegfried
Email: glenns@humboldt1.com
Message:
I have used Amtrak's Route 7 for travel from Arcata, CA, to the SF Bay area and back. This affordable mode of transportation is an alternative to flying that is very expensive.. I ask that SJJPA not make any reduction is this service. If a reduction is needed, please consider at least offering this serve 3-4 times per week. Thank you.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 7:31 AM

Name: Jessica Hall
Email: jishica@yahoo.com
Message:
We need the Gold Runner through to Humboldt. I have used it to get to the Bay Area and Los Angeles. If I could easily get to Sonoma County airport, I would ride more frequently. To increase ridership of the bus, changes like stopping at Sonoma County airport, AND downtown where there's lots of other transit connection options (instead of at a middle of nowhere feeling mall, although that is improvement over the old Dick's Sporting goods stop) and human beings who could help you, would definitely make a difference. Being consistently able to bring your bicycle throughout the system would be big, and working with regional destination partners to ensure having bike storage for travelers (like the airport, connecting stations, etc), and a little management of the behavior of riders would be good. People are kind of disgusting on the bus, there can be some of that in the train but not nearly to the same degree.

If i we're to rely on local buses to get anywhere that a journey that could be done in a few hours, or a day, would become potentially a multi-day trip, definitely overnight. For example, I have been sent out of the area for healthcare reasons, including to Ukiah, Santa Rosa, and Redding. Timing bus travel for an appointment or surgery forces you into at least a one night stay, even to Ukiah, a 2-1/2 hr drive away.

I regularly consider Amtrak for my travel but too often discard it because of issues on the train side of things: odd arrival times (i would love to pick up amtrak in Redding to go north, or south, but not at 3 am after a public 2-bus, possibly 2-day journey along 299, for example), uncertainty about parking availability, security and cost at stations, physical discomfort at stations (our eureka stop by a diner parking lot offers riders very little- can we even park there???, the stops in the central valley along the thru-way service are also lacking), uncertainties/unreliability that I can bring a bike without having to take it apart and stuff it in a box (which defeats the purpose of "last mile" connectivity), etc. I also dislike how your app works, your robot agent, and your route finder online.

Making it harder to use public transit by cutting service - extent, frequency, and quality of experience - does not build a brand, trust, or usability. It just reduces ridership to the most desperate people who are near where you choose to retain service. Invest in a robust, pleasant, functional system for all. Including Humboldt County. (and what about the rural counties to the north/east). Making us rely on also infrequent public service is a terrible idea, as I described above. Why isn't train and bus service like you find in Europe the standard we want to perform at??

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 7:40 AM

Name: Jessica Hall
Email: jishica@yahoo.com
Message:
I just provided some comment, but want to add that I didn't realize that the thru-way bus was considered at an agency level as a link to only one of Amtrak's lines. That helps to explain some of my frustration with buying tickets, as the website and app tries to force me onto the route connected to this JPA. From a ridership perspective, the system would be better served if all train travel connectivity options were provided when doing a search, for example, Eureka to LA could include connecting to Oakland and Surfliner or Coast Starlight. Way more pleasant than changing train-bus a bunch of times because that is what serves an agency, rather than a rider.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 7:07 AM

Name: Charles Sharpe
Email: chipsharpe@icloud.com
Message:
The Amtrak service from Arcata to Santa Rosa, to San Francisco, and to cities in Southern California has recently become my preferred mode of travel. I am happy to avoid the various aggravations of airports as well as the expense of flying and hassle of airport parking.

Amtrak buses are clean and comfortable and much appreciated. For many of us here on the north coast of California, Amtrak service has become, and is becoming our only option for reaching medical care and other services as we advance in age and recognize that riding Amtrak is safer and surer than driving.

Thank you for your utmost care and attention to improving and maintaining public transportation between our communities.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Sun 10/18/2026 6:53 AM

Name: Paula Mushrush
Email: p.jmushrush@gmail.com
Message:
As a senior in an isolated region it's important we have a safe, dependable and affordable way to travel to an area with a larger population. Rather than cancelling it, advertise it. Almost no one knows about it.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Sat 10/17/2026 10:00 PM

Name: Sal Jauregui
Email: salvadorsali18@gmail.com
Message:
Hearing the news that Amtrak is considering cutting services to Humboldt County was quite shocking. I feel personally affected by these potential cuts since I utilize this route quite frequently to visit friends and family in the Humboldt Bay Area. Please reconsider this decision and continue to serve the students, friends, families and community of Humboldt County.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Sat 10/17/2026 7:56 AM

Name: Masako okazaki
Email: mokazaki5678@gmail.com
Message:
Please do not take away route 7. The bus is an integral method of transportation for many people that need to get to other areas in the state/US. We no longer have Greyhound as an option. Taking this route away would be devastating

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Fri 10/16/2026 5:17 PM

Name: Scott Hazen Mueller
Email: scott@zorch.sf-bay.org
Message:
My wife and grandkid use the Amtrak bus to travel between Napa and Eureka to visit each other. They each make the trip 2-3 times a year. Neither one is able to drive 250 miles solo. They need to travel midweek in order to arrange for pickup and dropoff in Napa. If there were no direct service, they would only be able to see each other when someone was available to drive them 500 miles round trip. We would rather pay more and still have the bus be available, but we also understand that other riders could be priced out, which could start a death spiral.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Fri 10/16/2026 5:14 PM

Name: sean powers
Email: seansshadows@yahoo.com
Message:
i've ridden this bus arcata to the bay area and sacramento since 1993 on a steady rate for business reasons , i couldn't imagine having a limited service or non at all, i noticed they have 2 buses everyday , that isn't as necessary as have everyday service , this is an essential serviceforthehumbdt and delnort county along with mendocino county

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Fri 10/16/2026 4:22 PM

Name: Genevieve Serna
Email: openstreetsarcata@gmail.com
Message:
I want to express how deeply important it is to continue the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Serve along Route 7 and now to cut services in the future. I live in Arcata, the northern most stop on this route, and this bus is a lifeline for students, seniors and anyone traveling outside of our county. This area is rural and isolated and our few transit options out of Humboldt must be preserved. I'm a frequent and satisfied rider of Route 7 and want this service to continue in the future.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Fri 10/16/2026 3:40 PM

Name: Jeffrey Witter
Email: jswitter@gmail.com
Message:
Route 7 provides an invaluable link for North Coast residents to get to and from areas further south. For many residents in Humboldt and Mendocino Counties, it's the only reliable way to access healthcare and other critical services that are found in the Bay Area. As gas prices have skyrocketed, Route 7 has become increasingly attractive for people making the journey north or south on 101, and. now is not the time to consider cutting this vital service.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Fri 10/16/2026 1:33 PM

Name: Tamara Wolski
Email: bellaskies@yahoo.com
Message:
The Amtrak bus route from Humboldt County, CA to the Bay Area is incredibly valuable for our local population. I have used it myself on multiple occasions to get down to SF for flights, and I know our local student population at Cal Poly Humboldt also relies on this service. Please do not cut our service. We are a rural area that needs to maintain access to the city for medical/travel/education/family purposes.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Fri 10/16/2026 12:00 PM

Name: tim ross
Email: mayortross@gmail.com
Message:
The option of daily bus service to Martinez is necessary. Northern California has few options with public transportation. Eliminating any service especially to Arcata with Cal Poly Humboldt a featured destination on this route.
Not everyone has a car. It is very important residents and travelers alike have options to travel to the city or back any day of the week. Connecting buses trains and planes do not eliminate service. Amtrak should definitely not eliminate the only option for many to travel without having to wonder if they can return home that day.
Do not cancel any service to Northern California destinations. Thank you amtrak- sincerely, tr

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Fri 10/16/2026 11:27 AM

Name: Leslie Quinn
Email: coyotewind15@gmail.com
Message:
Please do not stop this service. We live in a very rural community and count on this service to medical clinics and airports. Without this service continuing many people will not be able to travel south of arcata.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Thu 10/15/2026 2:43 PM

Name: Nancy Brockington
Email: nsbrock@sbcglobal.net
Message:
i like option of taking bus from
arcata to ca bay area. train and bart my preferred mode of travel. love when bus connects w them. i've friends in SC and take bus to get there.
i have a car. not digging it. heavy, dangerous, too much sunlight and other vehicles. plus burning gas which makes it worse. i like the travel w people and places i do not know.
also hoping for an oregon/washington option.
get me to amtrak train up there. is not quite doable from here. need to get to early am in redding. not safe.
or a bus from
arcata/eureka to ashland? ashland to portland?
i know is not your purview. thx for all that you do.
i like taking the bus!

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Thu 10/15/2026 1:13 PM

Name: Lisa Caldwell
Email: Lisacaldwell2007@hotmail.com
Message:
I'm a customer/rider who relies on Route 7 in Eureka, Humboldt County to get to the Bay Area to travel elsewhere. I'm disabled and don't drive so this service is vital for me, and many others, to make it to medical specialists not available in our rural county. This service has already been cut in half. For a lot of us, our health and lives depends on this service.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Thu 10/15/2026 11:34 AM

Name: David
Email: david@instruction-architecture.com
Message:
I have used the Gold Runner Thruway Bus Services many times over the years, including recently, to visit friends, family, and businesses in the Eureka, CA, area. There were many times when it was not possible to drive, and this bus line provided the only option for travel to and from the bay area. As far as I know, there are no direct passenger trains that run all the way from the San Francisco area to Eureka - and the many other towns in that vicinity, such as Arcata and Fortuna. It would be a great disservice to consumers to call for potential services cuts, including running fewer buses during certain seasons and on certain days of the week.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Thu 10/15/2026 10:11 AM

Name: Steve Brands
Email: steev.brands@gmail.com
Message:
I often use the Gold Runner service to travel to the Bay Area. It is the only transit option besides expensive and often weather delayed flights to get from Humboldt county to the Bay Area. I appreciate the services' convenience and reliability. Please preserve at least one trip each way during weekdays and weekends. My dream for this service is that we could fill a bus within Humboldt co. and be able to run express style with no stopping all the way to Martinez. Thank you for maintaining this service for Humboldt residents.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Thu 10/15/2026 8:36 AM

Name: Antonio Soltero
Email: tsoltero13@gmail.com
Message:
Please keep the gold runner in the North Coast running. Its the only way I can get home from college (Cal Poly Humboldt) to my home in L.A
I frequently use it and without it I'll have no way home.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: ⊗ Planning Programming
Wed 10/14/2026 1:39 PM

Name: Linda Alm
Email: gonzchris@gmail.com
Message:
I utilize this bus service monthly for critical health care appointments in San Francisco. It is the ONLY cost effective means for a disabled person such as myself to reliably get to my appointments. Please keep this service around.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>

To: ⊗ Planning Programming

Wed 10/14/2026 1:27 PM

Name: Carl Birks
Email: carl.birks@gmail.com
Message:
Hi and thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

I rely on Amtrak's bus service for travel between San Francisco and the North Coast. It is a vital link for those of us who rely on transit between Humboldt County and the Bay Area, and is the only bus service available now that Greyhound no longer serves the North Coast.

Just last week I traveled this route from SF to Emeryville and then from Martinez to Eureka and was very grateful to have the option to travel via train and bus rather than having to rely on renting a car and traveling in a single occupancy vehicle on already congested roads through the North Bay.

I encourage the SJPJA to continue current levels of service on this vital route, recognizing that it is the only bus service available from the North Coast to the Bay area.

Please reach out if you have any follow up questions.

Thank you,

Carl Birks
Eureka and San Francisco

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>

To: ⊗ Planning Programming

Wed 10/14/2026 12:36 PM

Name: Patricia Kanzler
Email: rivndell7@proton.me
Message:
A third of bus travelers are from Humboldt!!!!! When I was disabled, I used this, and many of my senior friends havecto!! This is discrimination against senior citizens.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>

To: ⊗ Planning Programming

Wed 10/14/2026 12:15 PM

Name: dana maher
Email: missy.yelliot@gmail.com
Message:
Route 7 is awesome! I have a neighbor who uses this bus to travel and from to the bay area when she has weekday medical appointments (for services not offered in our rural area). Busses are often used for transportation by people who cannot drive (or cannot afford to drive) to manage their lives and this is what I see my neighbor doing with route 7. This particular bus is part of the resources used by people accessing medical care.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Wed 10/14/2026 12:05 PM

Name: Julian Nelson
Email: juliannelson747@gmail.com
Message:
The Gold Runner Thruway bus service was instrumental to me moving here for school at a time when I could not drive for medical reasons. Public transportation access to Humboldt is already extremely limited and this is one of the few available services that is consistent.

? San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Wed 10/14/2026 11:56 AM

We can't verify that this email came from the sender so it might not be safe to respond to it. Learn more Delete email

Name: Cary Frazee
Email: cxfrazee@gmail.com
Message:
Please retain full service on Route 7 from Arcata to the Bay Area. It is the only public transit serving this route. The north coast will be isolated without it. Many of us in Humboldt County use medical services only available in the Bay Area. Plane service is limited, erratic, and expensive. We really need tose busses to keep running! Thank you.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Wed 10/14/2026 11:47 AM

Name: Dan Hauser
Email: dhauser@suddenlink.net
Message:
As a former Member of the California Legislature I need to make trips from Arcata to Sacramento. At 85 years of age I can no longer safely drive so take the Amtrak bus from Arcata to Martinez and the train to Sacramento. I just returned from such a trip on Monday this week. There is no longer direct airplane flights from here to Sacramento. The loss of the Amtrak bus would be a real hardship.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Wed 10/14/2026 10:31 AM

Name: Amber Grimes
Email: ernestthebass13@gmail.com
Message:
I have been riding the Amtrak bus between Martinez and Eureka since 2007, when I moved from Sacramento to Humboldt for college. I do not drive at all, so this service is important! Every 6months I head down to Sacramento to see my specialist, and the Amtrak bus/train is how I get there and back. And I visit family often. Any disruptions to this service will impact me and my family, as well as others who also rely on this service, including elderly, students, and disabled folks. I love my bus rides, and appreciate all the drivers!

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>
To: Planning Programming
Wed 10/14/2026 10:12 AM

Name: Lynn Kerman
Email: kinsaraluna@hotmail.com
Message:
Hello,

I write to encourage you to keep the Bus route from Arcata to Martinez, part of the Gold Runner route. We are pretty isolated here and this is the only way to take the bus to the bay area. It's very important for us to have this line going from Arcata.

Thanks

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>

To: ⊗ Planning Programming

Tue 10/6/2026 7:34 PM

Name: Jerry Martin
Email: m_martin48@yahoo.com
Message:
You need to look at maybe using Van Nuys Amtrak. As a Thruway Transfer point to and from Los Angeles. And even to and from transfer points along some of the Pacific Surfliner route. At one time, before the pandemic. Many of your thruway Buses connected to the same Pacific Surfliner trains. At Van Nuys and Los Angeles. Maybe using Van Nuys as the connection point. Could benefit your service. As the buses won't be stuck in the traffic as long.

S San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority<frodriguez@sjrrc.com>

To: ⊗ Planning Programming

Wed 9/23/2026 4:31 PM

Name: John Webb
Email: winnemuccaslim@hotmail.com
Message:
Gold Runner is missing out by neglecting the potential of streamlined and efficient connections enabling riders on Route 7 to travel between Arcata/Humboldt Cal Poly and San Francisco. Currently there is no marketing that encourages travelers to use the already existing SMART train between Santa Rosa and the San Rafael/Larkspur Ferry terminals with connections to San Fransisco. An additional bus route should also connect San Rafael with the Amtrak station in Emeryville. All connections must be guaranteed. A single ticket transaction must be implemented to travel between any points. Connections must be no more than 30 minutes between segments.

Currently travelers from the northern counties must travel the time consuming dog leg between Santa Rosa and Martinez thence train to Richmond or Emeryville where BART and bus connections are available to downtown SF .

There also needs to be a better SF Terminal that is safe, staffed and open at all hours.

Response Statistics

1256 Survey Visits	224 Total Responses
224 Completed Responses	0 Partial Responses
0 Disqualified Responses	0 Over Quota Responses

Help Shape the Future of Gold Runner Thruway Bus Service

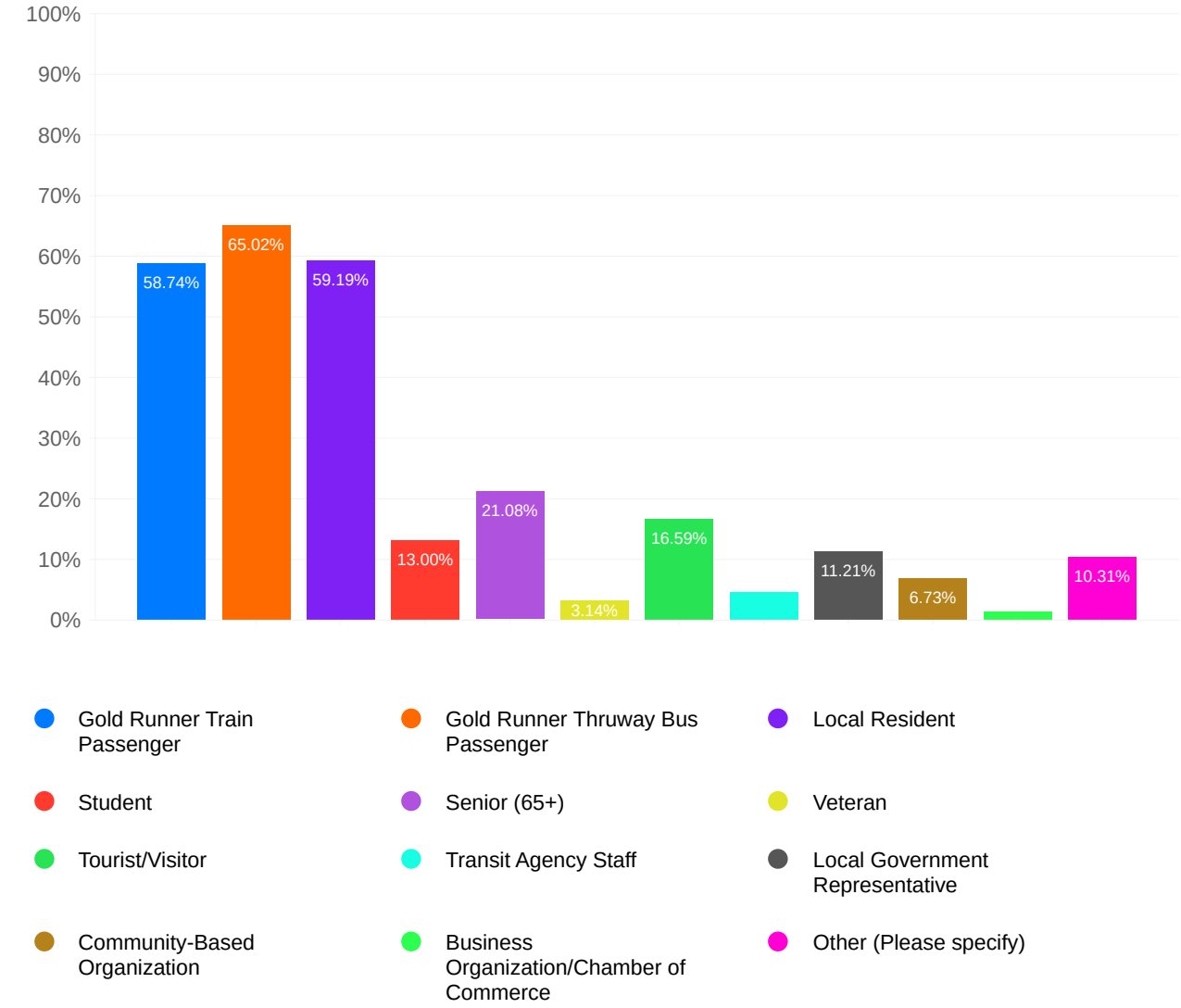
The Gold Runner Thruway Bus Study is evaluating opportunities to improve intercity bus connections throughout California. Your feedback will help identify service improvements, travel needs, and future investment priorities.

No Responses

Q1

What best describes you? (select all that apply)

Answered: 223 Skipped: 1



Choices	Response percent	Response count
Gold Runner Train Passenger	58.74%	131
Gold Runner Thruway Bus Passenger	65.02%	145
Local Resident	59.19%	132
Student	13.00%	29
Senior (65+)	21.08%	47
Veteran	3.14%	7
Tourist/Visitor	16.59%	37
Transit Agency Staff	4.48%	10
Local Government Representative	11.21%	25
Community-Based Organization	6.73%	15
Business Organization/Chamber of Commerce	1.35%	3
Other (Please specify)	10.31%	23

Q2

Where do you typically begin your trip?

Answered: 220 Skipped: 4

Field label	Response percent	Response count
Zip Code	95.45%	210 Responses
City	98.64%	217 Responses
County	94.09%	207 Responses

Q3

Where do you travel most often?

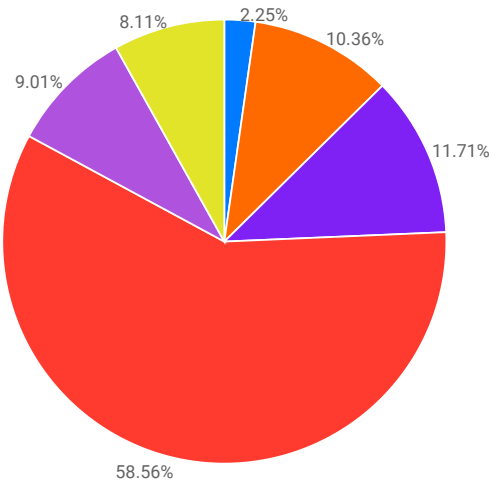
Answered: 214 Skipped: 10

Field label	Response percent	Response count
County	85.51%	183 Responses
City	97.20%	208 Responses
Specific destination	60.75%	130 Responses

Q4

How often do you use Gold Runner Rail or Thruway Service?

Answered: 222 Skipped: 2

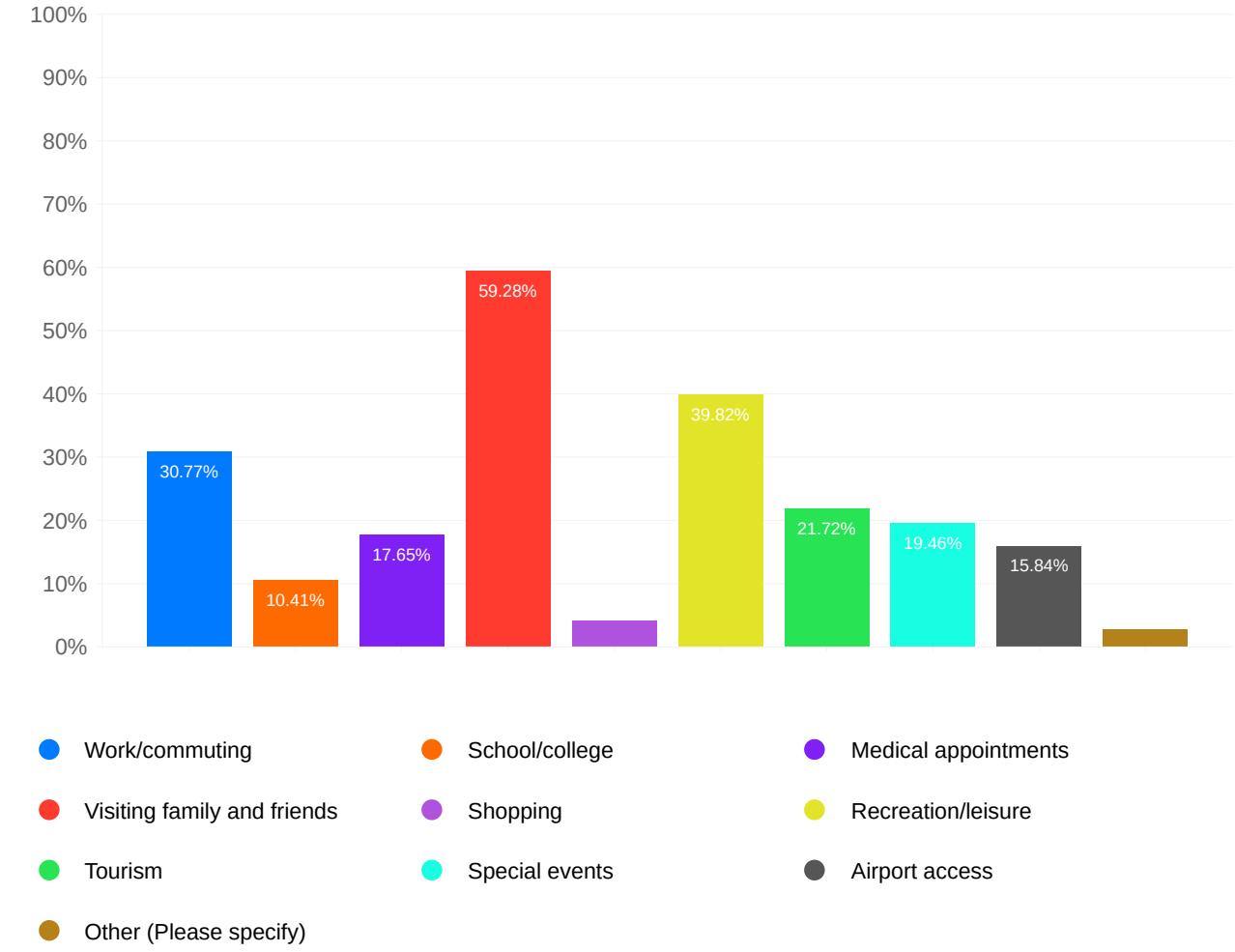


Choices	Response percent	Response count
Several times per week	2.25%	5
Several times per month	10.36%	23
Once per month	11.71%	26
A few times per year	58.56%	130
Rarely	9.01%	20
Never	8.11%	18

Q5

What are your primary reasons for travel? (Select up to three)

Answered: 221 Skipped: 3

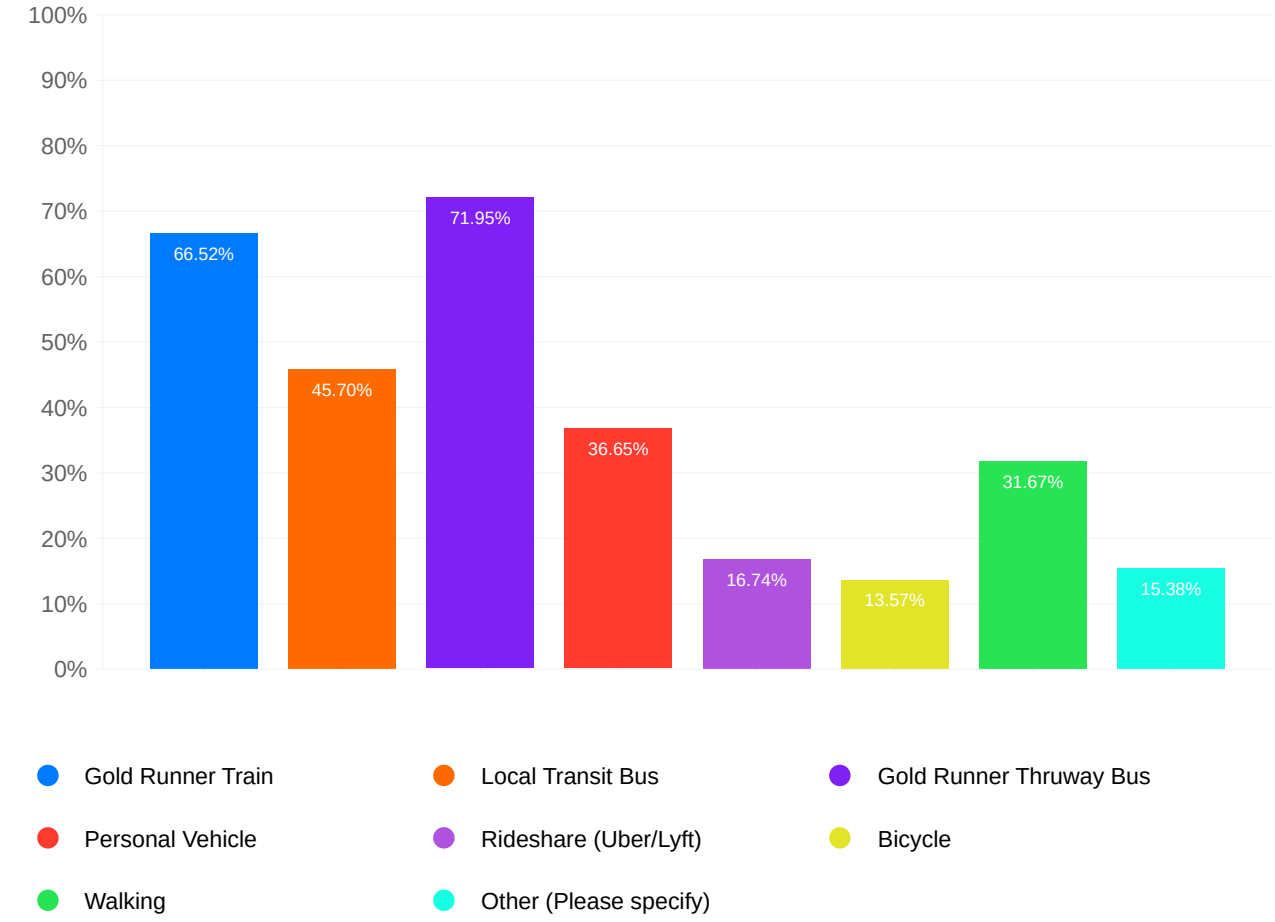


Choices	Response percent	Response count
Work/commuting	30.77%	68
School/college	10.41%	23
Medical appointments	17.65%	39
Visiting family and friends	59.28%	131
Shopping	4.07%	9
Recreation/leisure	39.82%	88
Tourism	21.72%	48
Special events	19.46%	43
Airport access	15.84%	35
Other (Please specify)	2.71%	6

Q6

Which transportation modes do you typically use on your trip? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 221 Skipped: 3

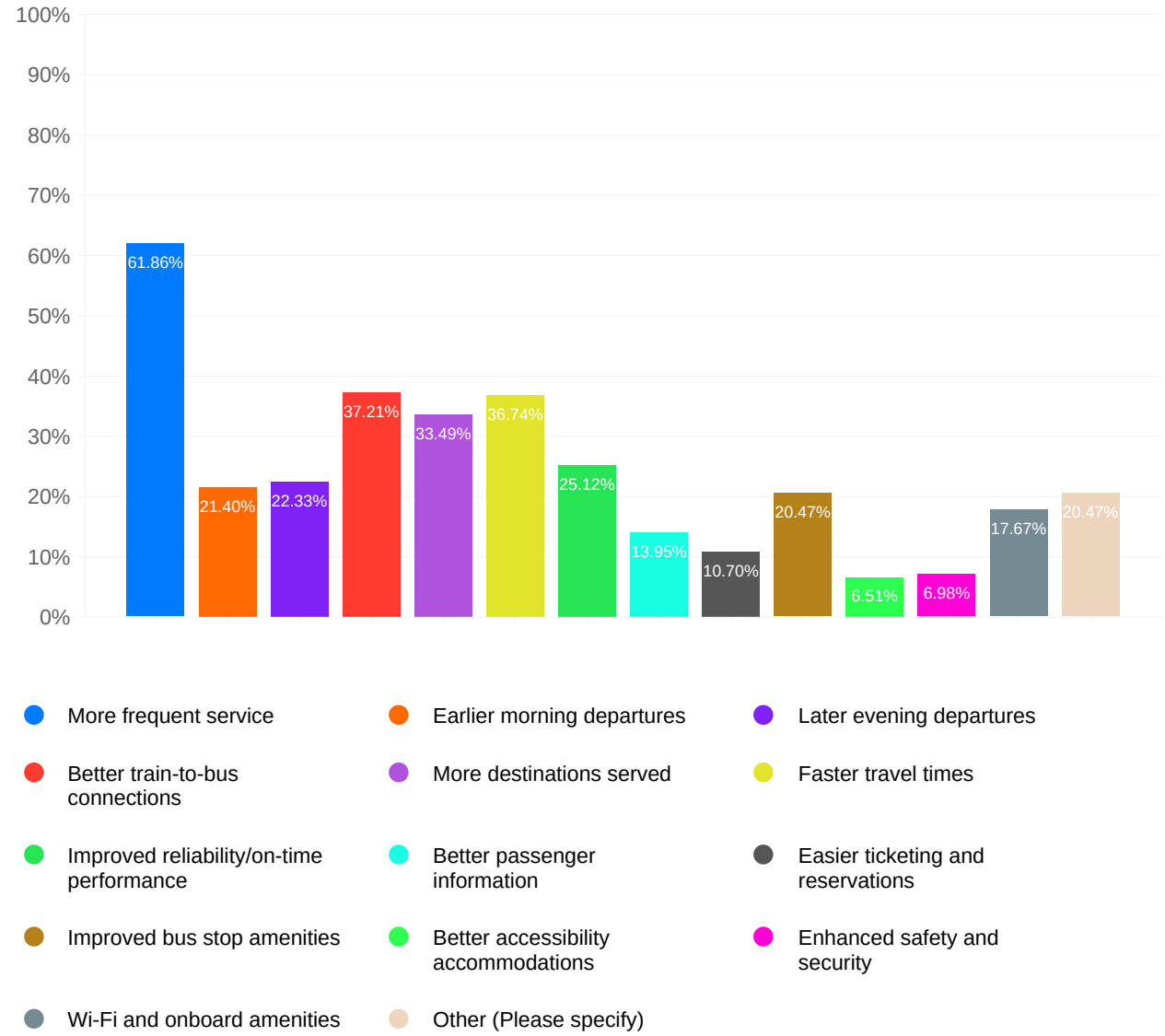


Choices	Response percent	Response count
Gold Runner Train	66.52%	147
Local Transit Bus	45.70%	101
Gold Runner Thruway Bus	71.95%	159
Personal Vehicle	36.65%	81
Rideshare (Uber/Lyft)	16.74%	37
Bicycle	13.57%	30
Walking	31.67%	70
Other (Please specify)	15.38%	34

Q7

What improvements would most encourage you to use Thruway Bus service more often? (Select up to five)

Answered: 215 Skipped: 9

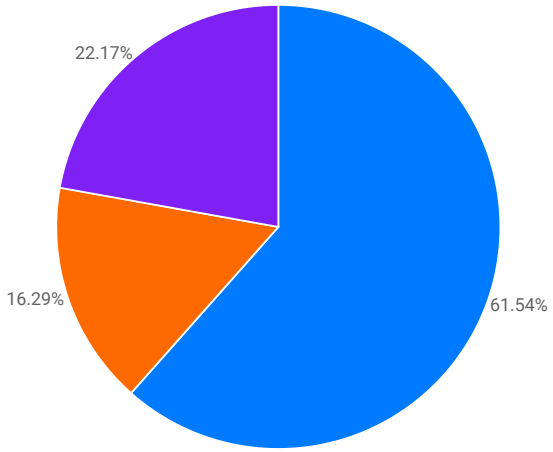


Choices	Response percent	Response count
More frequent service	61.86%	133
Earlier morning departures	21.40%	46
Later evening departures	22.33%	48
Better train-to-bus connections	37.21%	80
More destinations served	33.49%	72
Faster travel times	36.74%	79
Improved reliability/on-time performance	25.12%	54
Better passenger information	13.95%	30
Easier ticketing and reservations	10.70%	23
Improved bus stop amenities	20.47%	44
Better accessibility accommodations	6.51%	14
Enhanced safety and security	6.98%	15
Wi-Fi and onboard amenities	17.67%	38
Other (Please specify)	20.47%	44

Q8

Would you use the Gold Runner/Thruway service to access an airport?

Answered: 221 Skipped: 3



Choices	Response percent	Response count
Yes	61.54%	136
No	16.29%	36
Maybe	22.17%	49

Q9

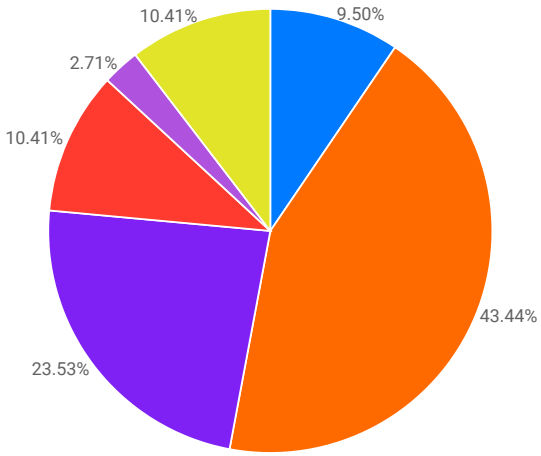
Are there destinations you would like to see better connected by Gold Runner Thruway Bus service?

Answered: 133 Skipped: 91

Q10

How satisfied are you with the current Gold Runner Thruway Bus connections?

Answered: 221 Skipped: 3

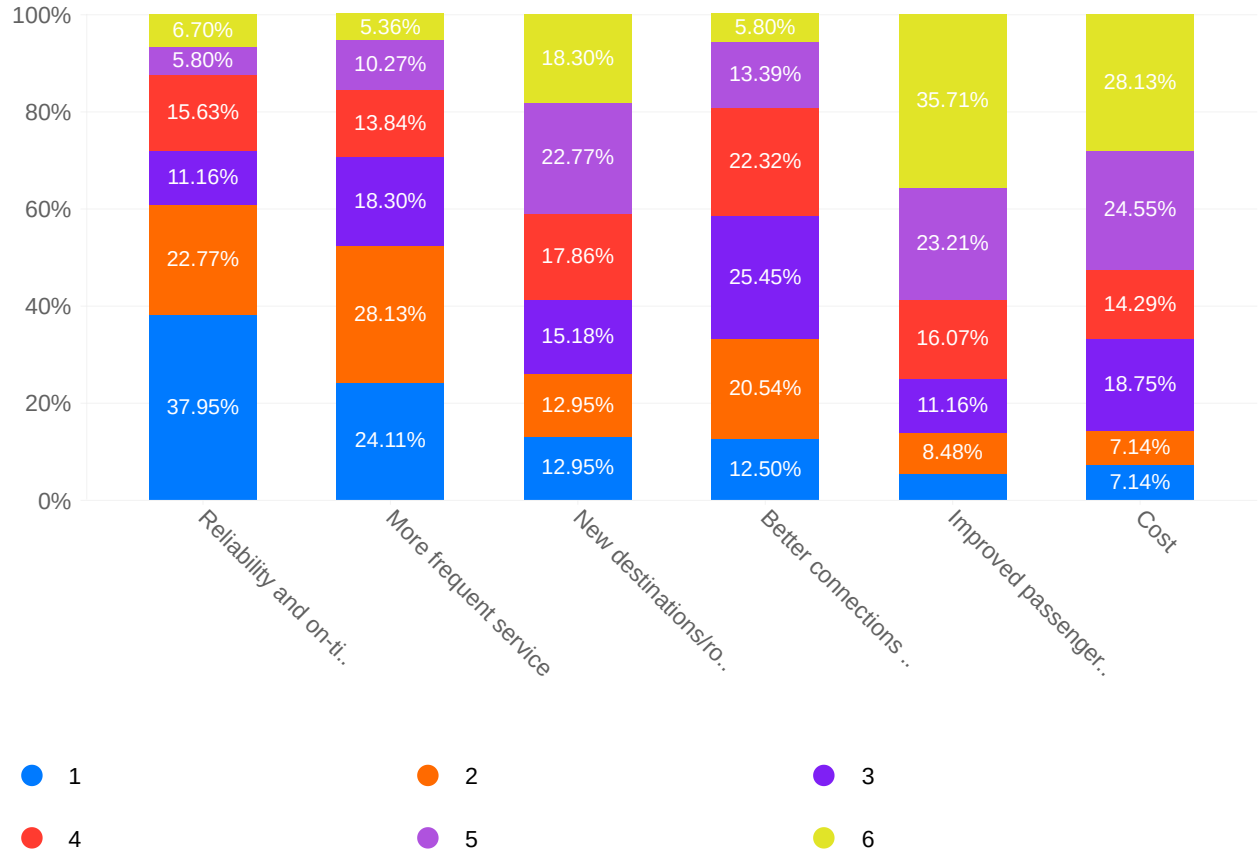


Choices	Response percent	Response count
Very satisfied	9.50%	21
Satisfied	43.44%	96
Neutral	23.53%	52
Dissatisfied	10.41%	23
Very dissatisfied	2.71%	6
Not familiar with the service	10.41%	23

Q11

Please rank the following priorities from most important (1) to least important (6).

Answered: 224 Skipped: 0



Choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	Score	Rank	Response count
Reliability and on-time performance	37.95% (85)	22.77% (51)	11.16% (25)	15.63% (35)	5.80% (13)	6.70% (15)	4.51	1	224
More frequent service	24.11% (54)	28.13% (63)	18.30% (41)	13.84% (31)	10.27% (23)	5.36% (12)	4.26	2	224
New destinations/routes	12.95% (29)	12.95% (29)	15.18% (34)	17.86% (40)	22.77% (51)	18.30% (41)	3.21	4	224
Better connections with trains and transit	12.50% (28)	20.54% (46)	25.45% (57)	22.32% (50)	13.39% (30)	5.80% (13)	3.79	3	224
Improved passenger amenities	5.36% (12)	8.48% (19)	11.16% (25)	16.07% (36)	23.21% (52)	35.71% (80)	2.50	6	224
Cost	7.14% (16)	7.14% (16)	18.75% (42)	14.29% (32)	24.55% (55)	28.13% (63)	2.74	5	224

Q12

What should be the highest priority for future Gold Runner Thruway Bus investments?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 46

Q13

What should be the second highest priority for future Gold Runner Thruway Bus investments?

Answered: 150 Skipped: 74

Q14

Please share any additional comments, ridership experience, ideas, or concerns regarding Gold Runner Thruway Bus service.

Answered: 121 Skipped: 103

What should be the highest priority for future Gold Runner Thruway Bus investments?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 46

1. Reduced travel times, better on time performance, and more frequent service.
2. Technology improvements to improve pre-travel experience. Example: live bus tracking
3. Get people on the bus to fill those trains
4. I think the highest priority should be letting people know that this service exists. I just learned about it in the past couple of months and I am a transportation advocate. There should be more info about it on social media and such.
5. More stops
6. Frequency and reliability
7. Restoring service frequencies to pre-pandemic levels.
8. Replacing them with rail connections.
9. it would be ideal to treat the gold runner and it's thruway bus connections as an intercity bus network. Washington, Oregon, and Colorado have extensive state funded bus service. It would be ideal to allow bus-only tickets for gold runner buses and more frequency, even if buses don't have a train connection.
10. Advertising
11. Enhancing Route 10 while eliminating Route 99.
12. More frequency. Better buses. Invest in more frequent bus refresh (new equipment) cycles.
13. Please try to speed up travel times. Specifically for the UCLA/Westwood to Bakersfield route, please remove the barely-used and very out of the way Burbank Airport stop and instead only serve Van Nuys for the San Fernando Valley stop. This would save close to a half-hour per trip.
14. Reliability and on-time performance
15. Through way connections with each Gold Runner station community/area
16. use it only to develop a customer base for new train service
17. Expanding the bus network in the Bay Area so that it makes sense to take the bus to the train instead of taking BART to the train.
18. Special schedules to provide additional service for holidays and weekends.
19. Better seating and passenger comfort. I am a big guy and avoid riding busses because of the cramped quarters.
20. Customer service
21. frequency
22. More and faster frequencies
23. Better coverage across California
24. More busses so you don't have to schedule your day around the bus.
25. More and more frequent service
26. Later busses to Orange County
27. Useful information about how to pay fares. More detailed information via Google Maps and Amtrak website. Specifically, whether travel from Rohnert Park to Healdsburg is permitted. Google seems to imply that it is, the website didn't say, and the operator didn't seem to understand the question. If you have empty seats going where I want to go, common sense suggests you should let me ride, for a suitable fare. Reddit indicates otherwise.
28. Tie Bay Area to Stockton, Sacramento, Bakersfield to Los Angeles. Maybe add in Yosemite park.
29. Reliability and on-time performance are the highest priority. Having trains delayed by more than a few minutes is not acceptable and puts people off from using them.
30. I'm not sure
31. improving existing service and improved travel times
32. More connections
33. Frequency
34. Reliability, more frequent service, better connection times.
35. Connecting people with transportation to jobs/travel destinations

36. Utilize the Salesforce Transit Center Upper deck in San Francisco! I ride the thruway bus to/from Emeryville and San Francisco a few times a week. The trip would be A LOT faster if the bus were to use the upper deck instead of navigating through city streets to the stop on the curb. The current location also has no amenities aside from an analog sign. There is no shelter and the seating is limited to the plaza. During the day there are food trucks along the curb making getting on and off the bus challenging. I also see Amtrak buses idling on city streets across bike lanes and driveways because they cannot stage at the current stop location. I've also been on a bus before that was very delayed getting to the stop because a commercial vehicle was staged in the curb lane blocking the bus from pulling in. We all had to wait until the driver returned to get off the bus which was extremely frustrating for everyone. If the buses were to use the upper deck of the Transit Center, it would mean a faster trip into and out of San Francisco, better amenities in areas designed for passengers including shelter, lighting, security and digital information displays that can be updated in real time. PLEASE consider utilizing the Transit Center. I understand there is a cost but the current stop location is really a disservice to the passengers and drivers. This is a very well utilized bus service, when I ride in the weekday afternoons its always at capacity and most of the time it is sold out.
37. Airport access from Trinity County and rural areas
38. Prioritize investments in the train to make it clear to riders (and taxpayers) that the agency understands: The train is the reason we are riding the bus.
39. More locations and times available
40. Business class on the train with a dedicated bus
41. Restore service to the Central Coast
42. Reliability
43. Make trains and buses more bike friendly. The bike racks that are also luggage racks in the new train cars are awful. We need the luggage cars back. I am not even sure where I would put my bicycle on a thruway bus.
44. Location/scheduling that makes it possible for more people to use.
45. More frequency connecting communities.
46. Fresno or Hanford to central coast
47. Cafe car
48. REEDING TO SAC AIRPORT!
49. Lower cost
50. Safety
51. Service frequency
52. Cost of travel
53. Te-route through Sonoma Valley
54. High speed rail connecting major cities in northern and Southern California.
55. Expansion of the service as well as easier bus only trips
56. Safety
57. More destinations. Those without a car shouldn’t be limited. It’d be great to get to the San Luis Obispo faster and more often.
58. Allowing bus-only routes to be sold online, so we dont have to always bundle rail service
59. Accommodating no matter the delays of other trains , if there are several hours delay , accommodate another transport option
60. I love the bus portion of the thruway bus. I find the drivers are friendly easily accommodating. If anything I believe they could use more support like bathroom breaks on the road stretch breaks for their safety and relaxation because they truly do so much during onboarding and deboarding. I like the idea of trying out electric smaller fleets like "speedway" routes.
61. More train connections for overall better travel coverage over California.
62. Improved amenities
63. Increase destinations
64. Affordability
65. Many Inland Empire students are first-gen college students from working class households. Would like to see better student fares.
66. Engagements with Local businesses
67. Reliability and on-time performance.
68. Optimize the existing system. Smooth transfer from bus to train in Bakersfield is important. It is OK if the trip is only 1-2 times a day since I can plan around it.

69. Convenience to customers
70. Connections that bridge where other transit does not go, plus consistent regular service.
71. New destinations and routes
72. New connections— linkages to central valley
73. More connections with other transit services
74. Replacing bus routes with regional rail
75. Change the design of the buses so that there are appropriate bike racks or sections for bikes, rather than cyclists having to wait to board last given the luggage all has to be stored first and then the bikes are stacked on top of each other amidst bus chains and other random things in the compartment
76. Bring back more buses to Riverside! Several buses were cut and it's made me less likely to use Gold Runner
77. See my comment above about service from Hanford to Visalia
78. Better connections
79. dont know
80. Better maintenance on locomotives
81. I remember when Amtrak offered two routes through Healdsburg. I'd hate for us to completely lose service. I would like to see outreach to college students across Sonoma County to inform them that they can use Amtrak to travel to/from home and various universities. I used to commute between Healdsburg and Merced when I wasn in college to reach UC Merced. It was cheap and helpful, since I didn't own a car. The Gold Runner should advertise it's college connections, like Cal Poly Humboldt, UC Davis, Sacramento State, etc. much more than it does!
82. Network planning that includes existing regional rail (BART, Caltrain, SMART) and regional buses (VINE Transit Express, Golden Gate Transit 580/101, etc.) to decrease duplication and improve interconnection.
83. Ability to transport recumbent tricycles.
84. Maintaining Amtrak bus service to Humboldt and Mendocino counties to ensure area/101 corridor connectivity with the Bay area. Need this rural transit lifeline.
85. Morning and evening availability for Gold Runner Thruway bus services. Specifically along route 19 from Ontario to San Bernardino.
86. Highest priority should be expanding service and providing more frequent service to existing locations. As a Sacramento resident, I think it would be great to have more San Joaquin valley to Sacramento connections as well as inter county thruway bus connections. I am aware of bus connections to Davis and I believe Chico but a bus to Roseville Amtrak would be great. Additionally, tourist based Amtrak services should also be expanded. For example, I am aware of a Great America or six flags bus? I've never personally used it but I believe this type of service should also be expanded, such as an overnight bus to Disneyland or Universal Studios from the Sacramento region, or something similar.
87. On time performance, faster arrival times, improved safety
88. Making sure that all connecting vehicles have a restroom.
89. Priority boarding: seniors, passengers needing assistance, parents with small children. As a senior needing assistance to board, I never received help, and most importantly, men pushed ahead of me (and others needing assistance, and families with small children) and by the time I was on the bus there was a man in every window seat, leaving nowhere for my grandchild and I to sit together. Even a mother with 3 small children wasn't enough for them to offer their seat. This happened on all 4 bus connections of my trip to Southern California and back.
90. Organized boarding: people needing assistance and people with children are prioritized to board and also get help loading their bags onto the bus.
91. Expanding the network to places unreachable by current train+bus travelers. Copy Colorado's Bustang and have a network that spans the state!
92. Clean safe buses.
93. A connection to the Sacramento International Airport from the Northstate. It's frustrating and expensive and time consuming now. I just came from the airport to the Amtrak station in Sacramento. Flight was late and taking the city bus (available once an hour) would have made me miss the Amtrak bus. I had to uber ($$) South to Sacramento, buy a train bus ticket, Davis to Chico, all to catch the Gold runner bus north. A very frequent question in Chico is how to get to the Sacramento Airport from Chico….thousands of students trying to get to the airport. Explaining the need to buy a ticket with a train trip; Chico to Davis and Uber to the airport is confusing. There is no airport shuttle company in Chico. People pay $100 for a private driver from Chico to the airport. This may not be the highest priority but it seems like Amtrak is neglecting to address this issue and disenfranchising 1000's of students/families who could be using Amtrak to get from the Northstate to the airport. In addition to the consequences on air quality and fossil fuel impacts to the Northstate. Sacramento airport is a major hub for the Northstate and Amtrak could address a non-utilized route for its customers. Additionally, I'm not sure why Chico riders have to purchase a train ticket with the bus ticket, but it would be great if Amtrak could send representatives to the college during student/family orientations and advertise the availability of Amtrak to the student population.

94. I would like to see a more direct but to Chico but I understand the need for stops to accommodate people.
95. Electrical outlets and WiFi
96. Reconnection the Central Coast to the Central Valley
97. More nighttime connections to and from coastal corridors to allow for overnight/weekend trips.
98. Speed improvements!
99. Frequency
100. Increased services or better commuter services for Sacramento to Merced
101. More frequency. I live in Sacramento and would love to be able to take the bus to Tahoe for the day and hike/bike/snow show without parking hassles. Or go to Lodi for wine tasting and be able to come back the same day.
102. Travel time and frequency
103. There should be better coordination between Amtrak and local transit services, such as Caltrain, Metrolink, BART, Los Angeles Metro, Muni, Sacramento RT, etc. Amtrak and local rail and bus agencies should coordinate schedules and provide seamless ticketing.
104. Better timed connections with trains, shorter layovers. Make sure the bus stays if the train is late
105. The North Coast - we have nothing since Greyhound quit.
106. More connections to other transit services. Airport and railway connections.
107. More routes from cities like Chico to Sacramento airport.
108. Reliability and on-time performance.
109. Stop in Sonoma between Petaluma and Novato
110. Faster, better connections. It is no acceptable that the only options to get from LA to Sacramento leave at 2am, 4am and 11am!
111. More frequent gold runner train service out of Sacramento to reduce time spent on Thruway Bus.
112. Direct route from Redding to SMF.
113. Reliability and fewer stops
114. Love the new Gold Runner single level trains. Older models are less accessible.
115. Speed and reliability
116. Frequency of trips
117. More frequent service timed to connect with more trains
118. The ability to book non-train connected trips.
119. Faster access to major cities than what Sonoma County Transit currently offers.
120. Keep it going. Very nice service.
121. Restore the connection on 99E
122. Better connections to San Fransico via SMART, Ferry.
123. Comfort
124. Reliable
125. Clean and safe bus Safe area for drop off point and safe pickup
126. Provide more frequent service that can compete with driving in rural areas
127. Frequency
128. Wifi
129. Replace it with high speed rail
130. Developing train lines so that the thruway bus is not necessary on the LA-SF route
131. Maintain current availability and add express route Eurkea to Bay Area
132. Marinating current services.
133. More connection times to other transit busses, trains, airports.
134. Assistance for passengers to learn how to take other transit connections to get to other destinations not on the Gold Runner Thruway bus
135. Keeping the service

136. Keeping service to the Northcoast , including Humboldt County.
137. lower fares
138. Travel between the Bay area and Humboldt County
139. Do not reduce the service. This is a vital transportation option for the North Coast.
140. Access to safe and reliable services for people who cannot (or cannot afford to) drive
141. Keeping travel possible
142. On-time performance and reliability with clear passenger information on current status of the routes/connections and better wayfinding signage at transfer connections between trains and busses.
143. Providing service to areas to the north.
144. Please don't cut service on Route 7 to Arcata
145. Not cutting off service to the north coast
146. Keeping Route 7 (Humboldt County) running seven days a week! People have out of town medical, business etc. appointments during the week to get to. I personally can't afford to stay in a hotel for a 5 days if you guys cut bus service to only Friday through Monday and I'm pretty sure there's a lot more people like me.
147. Better local town hubs/shelters.
148. Nicer buses,
149. Supporting rural communities.
150. Maintaining service from Arcata to Martinez and through to Sacramento
151. Better communication/marketing to current and potential passengers. Many people are ignorant of Thruway Bus service existing, don't know where to find information about it, how to buy a ticket, schedules, locations served, etc.
152. test
153. Maintain service to and from Humboldt County
154. Keeping existing schedules
155. More routes.
156. continued, long term service for people who are carless or who cannot drive due to low income, disability, health, DUIs, and other restrictions
157. Keeping current service to Humboldt County. We are incredibly isolated with few transit options out of the area and we need this line to continue serving the area.
158. Keeping the bus running as often as possible
159. Keep the busses and trains you already have running!
160. Maintain high availability.
161. Continue serving Humboldt County
162. More frequent service
163. More reliable restrooms please! I think I’ve only used the restroom once on the buses because the other times the restroom was out of service or out of toilet paper. Most times, there’s also not any soap or sanitizer, which makes the whole experience much less comfortable.
164. Better facilities at stops.
165. Maintain twice daily bus schedule from Humboldt Co. to Martinez, the Bay Area, and points beyond with good well-timed train connections.
166. ACCESS TO THE NORTH COAST
167. Maintain current routes, frequencies, and times.
168. Please keep service to rural north (Eureka/Arcata). This provides affordable connectivity especially for my daughters who are young adults and utilize the routes semi regularly.
169. Making sure the buses and trains are working properly. Better communication from bus drivers to passengers when something goes wrong. Checking tires before taking passengers.
170. More frequent service
171. More frequent service to more destinations
172. Maintain current schedule of daily service to multiple destinations, although there if could be a choice between another route with fewer stops, I.e. express , that would be welcome. But not at the cost of leaving some stops deleted altogether.

173. Amtrak is almost never on time. There isn't even an expectation of timeliness. The trains windows are filthy. The use of Amtrak for sightseeing is a joke because you can't see out of he windows. Iinformation that there is no food available on the route would be helpful.
174. Maintain service to Northern California! For non-drivers this is the only affordable way to connect with the Bay Area.
175. Maintain service in communities with no or minimal intercity alternatives, and highest priorities for maintaining markets with good ticket sales.
176. At a minimum, keep the existing level of service. Humboldt County has few transportation options.
177. Connectivity with other transit services
178. To keep the Gold Runner Thruway Route 7 bus in tact - no changes, no reduction in service.

What should be the second highest priority for future Gold Runner Thruway Bus investments?

Answered: 150 Skipped: 74

1. Business class option on buses.
2. Technology improvements to improve pre-travel experience. Example: live bus tracking
3. Allow bus-only trips, e.g., ones that don't require a train ticket to use. Sometimes I don't need to ride the train to get from point A to point B. If Gold Runner was also a regional bus system that could help a lot.
4. I think the highest priority should be letting people know that this service exists. I just learned about it in the past couple of months and I am a transportation advocate. There should be more info about it on social media and such.
5. Serve more California communities.
6. More frequent service and additional destinations, the current level of amenities is fine, money would be better spend on improving frequency or coverage
7. Restoring service frequencies to pre-pandemic levels.
8. Building passenger rights of way.
9. More frequency on all existing Thruway bus routes so that riders have the flexibility as to what train to connect to and connect from.
10. Use the actual Salesforce transit center in San Francisco, not a curb stop in front of it. Pay what is needed to be inside the station.
11. Cost
12. Reliability and on-time performance
13. Speeding up service to be more competitive with driving, using express/carpool lanes where possible and advocating for more bus-only infrastructure
14. Express schedules Friday-Monday.
15. Connect areas that would reduce the amount of cars on the most congested roads.
16. More schedule availability
17. speed
18. Improved signage at Thruway stops. Do not assume passengers can use QR codes at bus stops. Use plain English and Spanish at stops.
19. Better frequencies
20. Reliability so you know a bus will be there when it says it will.
21. Better connections and integration with other services, ie.e timed transfers, reduced dead space between bus and train departures
22. Better frequencies
23. Sonoma / Napa to Fairfield, expanding access to those counties. Tie in Sacramento Airport to SAC station.
24. Frequency is the second highest priority.
25. I'm not sure
26. reliab ility.
27. Frequency
28. Later departures
29. New destinations, routes
30. Provide safe and reliable transportation
31. My first and second priority is to use the Salesforce Transit Center's Upper Deck and stop using street level stopping locations that are not meant to be used as passenger waiting or loading locations. Also navigating to takes up a lot of travel time instead of using bus priority infrastructure that was built for this type of service.
32. Maintain the level of connecting bus service. The bus feeders support the train ridership, and the train ridership is why the agency exists.
33. Nicer buses. More legroom.
34. More frequent service
35. Hourly Service on the LA Thruways

36. More frequent service
37. Competitive costs
38. Improving travel speed
39. Cafe Car
40. More times
41. Quicker routes
42. Convenience
43. Expanding destinations
44. Reliability and on time performance
45. New routes and destinations.
46. More departures including later departures from Southern California to Bakersfield and north.
47. Punctuality
48. Cost - train and buses are way too crowded. The snacks provided For example, the drinks are hot, but the price keeps going up.
49. bus-only routes
50. I experience more delays on rail more than thruway bus. For this particular reason I'd prefer station amenities as my second priority. Bathrooms are always locked - unnecessary if you have security staff monitoring. Keep them unlocked. Have the stations open longer and staffed longer. More nutrition options via kiosk or store for passenger and staff comfort. I LOVE your bike boxes. Would love an amtrak marketing informational on how that could benefit me as a commuter.
51. More destinations.
52. faster service (less stops)
53. Connections
54. Punctuality
55. Need more materials on services/routes that can be shared with our students. Most are unaware that this bus/train service is available. Flyers/rack cards/tv screen ads/ etc.
56. New RFP or vendors Food and beverage contracts
57. adding more frequent service.
58. Keep costs affordable. If it is cheaper for me to drive myself, then the system has failed.
59. More destination options
60. Quick bus connections to major hubs.
61. More evening routes
62. More destinations
63. food service enhancements
64. Better schedules
65. Please provide optional bus service from Stockton to Modesto, given that there are extremely limited local bus options to get from Stockton to Modesto, and that the trains are consistently delayed
66. More connections to more places
67. More frequent service
68. Return the cafe car
69. Upgrade existing bus stops ammenities. In Healdsburg, the Southbound bus stop has been retrofitted with a sign and map of Route 7, but the Northbound bus stop has zero signage. The northbound bus through Healdsburg is at 1pm and hardly has any shade, which makes waiting there absolutely agonizing on mild sunny days.
70. Allow more routes to have bus-only tickets.
71. Wifi
72. On time performance and provide convenient morning and afternoon bus service times.
73. Maintaining reliability and access to these services along route 19.

74. On time performance. As a daily commuter, bus services are consistently delayed, almost daily. For example, this morning, 07/08, my morning train, the 702 was completely canceled and so the Thruway Buses were congested and had to make an extra trip to accommodate these passengers. While I understand that mechanical failures are unpredictable, there are also a multitude of other delays that happen each and every day that are not due to mechanical failures. In fact, there was a day where my thruway bus was so severely delayed that I ended up getting home at nearly 11:00 PM, instead of my expected 7:50 Pm time. A possible solution would be to have a standalone Amtrak Thruway Bus route, that is independent from trains and as such is not subject to train delays.
75. improved accessibility and priority seating for the disabled and frequent cleanings of stations and bathrooms.
76. More frequent service.
77. It would be great if there was some cafe service in the depots.
78. Food services or cafes in the depot.
79. Integration with local transit. So not just timing busses with Amtrak, but also with BART and AC Transit and all the other transit agencies.
80. More frequent runs.
81. Trying to attract more ridership by advertising to the student and community the availability of the Amtrak bus to Sacramento as a means to the Sacramento aiport. There is a large untapped population that could use amtraks services.
82. good drivers who care about passengers -- like bus driver GREG who often drives from slot 6 at Bakersfield down to burbank etc
83. On time performance but I understand somethings are out of our control.
84. Continue north past Lake Shasta
85. Easier reservations to allow for 2 Thruway Bus trips on each end in just one booking/reservation. Provide for more direct trips between Bay Area and Southland without multiple layovers in Central Valley.
86. Ensuring shorter transfer times between trains and buses
87. "One seat" train service from Sacramento to Bakersfield, without needing to transfer from bus to train in Stockton.
88. network connectivity
89. Eliminate the passenger rail gap between Bakersfield and Los Angeles
90. Seamless ticketing and branding
91. I won't know until after service exists here in Humboldt
92. Evening services for long distance routes on the north coast. For example: Bus service that leaves Marin around or 6pm to arrive in Eureka at around 10 or 11pm, to allow airport travelers to get home or medical visits to get home.
93. More connections with trains or routes to Idaho
94. Upgraded buses with better interiors and smoother ride.
95. Better integration with other local transit options
96. Station investments. It is sad that Amtrak has signs warning that they do not own the overpriced vending machines in the stations. What happened to the golden age of rail? A hundred years ago, rail travellers had better food options!
97. Timeliness while minimizing wait times between drop offs and train arrival.
98. Nice quality buses.
99. Can’t think of anything at this time.
100. Wider service area
101. More destinations served
102. Start a route that begins in Santa Rosa and ends in San Francisco , like we previously had with GGT #101. Currently must take SMART train to San Rafael, haul suitcase to bus stop and wait for GGT #101 to SF. A hassle for this 81-year-old.
103. Light Rail down I5
104. More frequent service
105. More frequent service on certain routes
106. Having more of them
107. I
108. Coordinate stops and schedules for better connections with local transit
109. Connections

110. Replace it with high speed rail. US is way behind other developed countries. It’s embarrassing to be running buses between the major cities of California
111. Developing train lines so that the thruway bus is not necessary on the LA-SF route
112. No ticketing cost increases
113. Using smaller busses
114. Lower cost.
115. More destinations
116. reliability and cleanliness of buses
117. Improve the service with more times, more stops, better accessibility.
118. Getting fancy and equipped so us professional well monied folks can reasonably integrate using the service more often to meet our travel needs (which includes: easy access to rental cars on the other ends of reliably timed trips, reliability and comfort- on board ammenities, etc and safe stops)
119. Having a Humboldt representation on the agency board
120. On-board Wi-Fi on all busses and trains.
121. Driver compensation.
122. Keeping costs low
123. Don't kill Route 7 at ALL! We, especially the disabled, in Humboldt have no other direct transit to the Bay Area. Greyhound left the area a few year ago (after they had to compete and got beat by you guys). If you guys kill this route, people like me will be literally stuck.
124. Accessibility for disabled passengers.
125. More frequent service
126. Fair pricing
127. Expanding service from Arcata to Redding to connect with Amtrak
128. Expanded service/more runs per day.
129. test
130. Use of the EARTH Center Transit Hub in Eureka, once it is constructed
131. Adding additional schedules and routes
132. Better connections with trains and other transit.
133. being the affordable, reliable, leader in connecting northern california counties
134. Service that allowed people to leave after 5 pm when work gets out. Expanding departure and arrival times.
135. Adding more runs.
136. I don't know. I think the service we already have is pretty decent. Perhaps it could improve, but I'll be happy as long as it doesn't go away. But try not to enshittify it!
137. Make ETAs more realistic, even if it makes the ETA later.
138. More frequent service
139. Reliability of schedule improvements
140. More spacious seats. I find that the current layout of seats on the buses can be so incredibly tight that even I, as a non claustrophobic person, find them uncomfortable. I recently traveled on greyhound between Roseville and Reno and found those seats to be so spacious and comfortable in comparison.
141. Maintaining service frequencies.
142. FREQUENCY
143. Do not cut current routes.
144. Connecting to trains and other transit agencies
145. Make certain busses connect with other Amtrak services, not just the Goldrunner
146. More buses, as mentioned above
147. Maintenance of safe, clean busses and trains.
148. Coordinate routing and scheduling with local transit to keep rural destinations served well. For example, maximize participation with Humboldt Transit Authority's intercity (e.g. 101 Express, 299 Express) and Del Norte's Redwood Coast Transit and Mendo Transit

149. Wheelchair accessible buses
150. Promotion of services which save GHG emissions and VMT when choose to use!

Please share any additional comments, ridership experience, ideas, or concerns regarding Gold Runner Thruway Bus service.

Answered: 121 Skipped: 103

1. Please clarify (to both customers and drivers) the exact policy on allowed baggage, specifically bicycles and micromobility. Also, bus-only ticketing should be the norm, with bus-only tickets capped (maybe 50% of capacity) to give priority to rail passengers making a connection.
2. Pick me up from Long Beach!!!
3. No comment
4. In general the Goldrunner Thruway bus services are excellent, better than most of the Amtrak system. Investment in bus connections will always be key to the success of the service. More routes and higher frequency on existing routes is always needed
5. The hour and five minute connection from #3710 and #3810 to #710 in Stockton really discourages me from taking that train. The station's location at San Joaquin St makes that transfer particularly unappealing, so I typically take #702 instead.
6. Get Gold Runner into Los Angeles by rail. Either find a way to run it on the Tehachapi Pass or build a new right of way along SR-58 to bridge the gap from the central valley to the LA basin.
7. In many markets, focus on providing service to campuses of universities so as to make it easier service to use on the campus community as a whole. This is a targeted market that would help to increase ridership as well as to increase revenue.
8. The connections times on trips from Southern California are too long in Bakersfield. Too often my bus shows up to Bakersfield very early and the train doors aren’t open, forcing me to either stand on the platform or, when hot, inside the station which is a rather unpleasant experience. There are only metal benches, poor air conditioning, and a lack of power outlets. Long story short, either: reduce the schedule pad, open the trains either, or invest in making the Bakersfield station a much nicer place to sit for a half hour.
9. Please add back the cafe cars on the Gold Runner / San Joaquins route. Amtrak is slower than Flixbus (something that should be addressed) but can be cheaper and more comfortable, and the cafe car was a big part of that. This is the number one thing that would bring me back to Amtrak, with faster travel times a very close second. Third would be increased frequencies so I can have more flexibility in when I leave. Sometimes there is a four hour gap between bus departures which is really limiting.
10. I have only had a few experiences on the Thruway Bus service, each time the bus ride was good, although the train connections were infrequent, late, and unreliable.
11. the focus should be on more and enhanced train service - not more buses.
12. Making Amtrak travel more competitive with private automobile. On rail it is about a 1 hour difference, which is manageable, but greatly increases every time you have to make a transfer.
13. Crowded buses make the experience unmeasurably worse
14. I have no experience with the Gold Runner Thruway Bus service but I would try it in the future if the price were right, the destination is somewhere I would go anyway, and I were comfortable during the ride.
15. san Diego gets one bus per day and the timing is bad. i could transfer to the surfliner in LA but that train is slow and I'd rather not make the transfer.
16. Improve connections to and from SMART trains.
17. More comfortable seats with better legroom
18. I like the idea of tying in California bus system with the rail system. This allows for day trips to visit areas without the worry of traffic.
19. One simple change to increase ridership would be to make it possible to book all buses without a connecting train ticket. This is now allowed by state law, and should have been done long ago.
20. A often commute Chico - Sacramento, using a CIC-DAV ticket. The recent schedule changes really crushed this commute option, as the 7:15 southbound bus used to get me to the office by 9:30 in the morning but now puts me in closer to 11:00, and the return trip lost the 5:00 option and only has 3:00 and 8:00 departures now (though I do appreciate having the 8:00 so I can socialize in Sacramento if I want to). This has also made it harder to take my kids to town for a day trip; our options are either to cut the trip short early or plan to stay much later than we should.
21. I do think there is a market of people who wouldn't consider a normal bus seat, but would consider a business class seat (ie, a row up front where you offered 2+1 seating, so a solo traveler could get their own seat or at least a seat wider than the normal bus seats, and a pair traveling together would still have wide seats.) I get that with a subsidized route, there is little appetite for subsidizing this kind of thing, but I suspect dedicating a row or two to this would bring in more money, reducing the subsidy.
22. Na
23. I like the new gold runner bus between Merced and San Jose I've flew out of the San Jose Airport before. Now that it stops in Gilroy I can take it there to shop at the outlets.

24. Some of the bus operators are not kind to passengers. Especially when it comes to loading luggage.
25. Return the cafe car to the trains. Having to change from bus to train is much more enticing when you can purchase hot food or a cold beverage after boarding. Likewise, it's great to buy a snack on the train to take on the bus.
26. Better inspections of the buses. They tend to break down a lot.
27. Definitely need more reliability and cafe cars.
28. I haven't taken any trips on the thruway buses because they seem much slower than than the train, there is not much room to move around, and bus interiors seem dirty. They are fine for the trip from Emeryville to San Francisco, but I would not want to be on a bus for several hours.
29. Mote trips between LA and Bakersfield
30. Bring back the cafe car, please. The complimentary snacks are nice, but cold drinks and ice would be nice.
31. Keep the Central Valley to central coast route.
32. Silvia Lopez mid-day driver from LA to Bakersfield is above and beyond fantastic!! She deserves recognition for her exceptional service!
33. I still can’t believe we had to lose the good cars. It could have elevated the journey for all the new passengers you are wanting to reach. They never took an Amtrak back in the day.
34. increase frequency, and allow people to buy bus-only routes online
35. I ADORE public transit but had a lot of route failures and delays that I'd be happy to share more if necessary.
36. Overall very satisfied. Ideally for my trip today I would have preferred leaving directly from my location (Beverly Hills) and earlier (seven or eight o’clock versus 10:30 from WES). Ideally I would like a bus connection from Davis train station to Dixon where I live.
37. Rarely have a reason to use bus service
38. There needs to be better visibility of the other, non-Gold Runner Amtrak train and bus services (Capitol Corridor, Surfliner, and Amtrak long distance). The three JPAs, Caltrans, CalSTA and Amtrak need to get together and publish one "Amtrak California" map and schedule- with all services shown in one place
39. Lack of snack car on the new trains is a huge problem. I am on the train all the way from Bakersfield to Martinez. That is in addition to sitting on the bus from Barstow to Bakersfield. There needs to be a designated meal break if you don't restore the snack car. At least make it clear what the situation is so I can plan accordingly, as I would normally eat on the train and not pack a meal.
40. N/A
41. Overall good job
42. I would use Gold Runner a lot more if there were rail service to LA. The two biggest problem with the current service are a lack of a cafe car and the fact that the train doesn’t continue into Los Angeles. Bus service is a really poor substitute for both problems. No one wants to ride on a cramped coach bus, especially after having no real food service on a 9-hour train ride!
43. Are there bathrooms on the bus? I don't think so, and if that is the case, there a thousand percent needs to be.
44. The bus at SFC should stop in the bus deck of the transbay terminal, so that riders can be sheltered from weather and enjoy express access to the Bay Bridge. I am satisfied with the amenities on the buses, which about as good as you can get on a bus, but I am not satisfied with the amenities on the Gold Runner train and stations. Eliminating the cafe car was a mistake. My typical Gold Runner trip is more than 10 hours. Every other mode of transit of that length has an option for hot food - international flights provide meals, in your car you can stop at a rest stop, and most intercity bus stops stop at rest areas as well. Gold Runner is at a real disadvantage.
45. overall a great service wish there was a route more direct up i5
46. I've had to cover Train 719 from Stockton to Oakland/San Francisco twice because a locomotive was not available. That is poor and unreliable service.
47. Please reach out to me in the future. I'd like to talk more about how Healdsburg can be more accomodating for Amtrak. My name is Mathew Lopez, here is my email: lopez64matias@gmail.com
48. It was comfortable enough
49. Need to maintain Amtrak thruway bus interregional transit service that connects Humboldt an Mendocino counties along US 101 to the Bay area (do not delete or cut this bus service).
50. On my trip from Riverside station to San Bernardino Station the bus driver was surprised that I had a ticket to board. He let me know that usually the tickets departing from Pasadena to San Bernardino are not available for purchase as they are blocked off. I have not tried to book a ticket from Pasadena so I can not confirm. However, if the bus driver of the route says it's unusual, how will passengers travel using Gold Runner if there is a need? Additionally, my bus arrived about an hour later than stated in my ticket. If possible, a notification of delay or some way to track the bus would be helpful. Overall, the bus ride was enjoyable. The bus was clean and the driver was helpful. I would ride the Gold Runner Thruway bus again.

51. For starters, there should be WiFi on every bus. Thruway buses also do not have a live bus tracker. This is extremely inconvenient because the bus is constantly late, in fact, its late almost every day I've used it. I don't want to sit in the sun (Robert J Cabral Station in Stockton does not have a bus stop shelter) for an extended period of time, sometimes reaching 45-60 minutes late. I would like to be able to see the bus on my phone while waiting inside the station without fear of missing my bus. I also think it's very inconvenient to book a bus, despite purchasing a pass between stations as the "RideReserve" feature does not allow for booking thruway buses, at least not when I tried. Other ideas - Expand tourist based Thruway Bus Services (example: similar to Six Flags bus) - independent thruway bus network (no delays) - Expanded service between major super commuter regions (bay to San Joaquin valley etc)
52. Being on Gold runner services don't really feel safe or clean. Me and other disabled passengers often report feeling unsatisfied due to the lack of accessibility, accommodations, and priority seating. The switch to single story instead of 2 story trains has caused a lot of traffic and congestion on trains. All bathrooms both in station and on train are very very dirty and require much more frequent maintenance than they are currently receiving.
53. As stated above in another comment, having Thruway service that has a bathroom is imperative for our family. We are currently looking at having to resort to taking the LONG Coast Starlight train for our trip in August, as our only options with the Gold Runner (which we love and prefer) include a segment from Redding to Sacramento that is in a van with no restroom. We travel 3-4 times per year, so this is very important to us.
54. One bus over the Grapevine was so hot everyone was feeling ill, but the driver had the ac as high as it would go. Update your busses!
55. The busses are very nice: clean, spacious, seatbelts, etc., but both of the drivers I've had today have been very unpleasant. You don't have to be overly friendly, but could you at least say 'welcome' or smile once, or maybe offer to load the bags into the luggage compartment since I'm an elderly woman traveling with a child. The driver to Auburn was extremely unpleasant.
56. Drive into Salesforce. You can do it, I believe.
57. The Petaluma to Healdsburg bus is a great option but it gets crowded and can run late.
58. I appreciate Amtrak's services to the Northstate and look forward to future developments Including extending the train to the Northstate more than just the coast starlight.
59. good drivers who care about passengers -- like bus driver GREG who often drives from slot 6 at Bakersfield down to burbank etc GREG CARES ABOUT THE PASSENGERS. HE VOICES THE RULES AND ENFORCES COURTESY YOU OTHERS. ALSO AN EXCELLENT AND SAFE DRIVER I TOLD HIM I ALWAYS HOPE HE IS THE DRIVER. Thanks, Todd
60. As stated previously, Gold Runner should consider restoration of Thruway Bus Route 18 because of its importance to statewide rail connectivity. If efficiency or route performance were factors in the elimination of this route, route modifications to stops or the corridor should have been considered rather than a complete service cut that occurred.
61. I appreciate this service as it helps my travel be successful to see my family.
62. I am excited by RABA's proposal to expand the Thruway network.
63. Work together with local transit, and maybe even airlines, for better connections.
64. Allow for non-train riders to buy bus only tickets
65. Please promote it up here in Humboldt!
66. I think the busses are comfortable. I would like the busses to be hydrogen electric like the HTA busses. (Humboldt Transit Authority)
67. The drivers are always A+
68. The booking system has bugs. It gives "bus-only trip cannot be booked" errors for destinations that are both served by trains (SKN and SJC, served by Gold Runner and Capitol Corridor).
69. Please add a stop in Sonoma Valley for transportation to Napa (& Petaluma) from Sonoma
70. More service! Also, get someone to help load luggage. It is not fair to make an entire bus's worth of people wait because a single driver has to load/unload luggage.
71. WiFI NEVER works. Long delays to service small towns with few or no passengers.
72. Appreciate the ability to work while I travel. It's made seeing family less stressful and I appreciate the choices offered for traveling.
73. Being on buses is nice when they are not crowded or stuck in traffic
74. I am very interested to hear how this new service will accommodate local residents, and will spread the word and your website & routes to my non-driver friends. Thank you for notifying me of this service.
75. Love it! Very clean and comfortable!!!!
76. The I5 service is a boon but please work with regional partners for a solution for 99E
77. A more attractive bus station in Arcata

78. More space in between the seats would be greatly appreciated. Also, maybe adding like 2 table/group seats would be cool.
79. Rode the Amtrak bus Burbank to Bakersfield 9/29/2026 11:20 am bus 5917 Driver was very professional, gave very good description of safety protocols, very very clean bus , spotless bus bathroom. Very courteous and safe driver. Please recognize him. Thank you so much for great experience!!
80. Please improve Route 7 service, don't reduce it!
81. Advertise it on instagram, in transit advocate circles!
82. It was very difficult to find any information about where to catch the Gold Thruway at SAC airport- when I used the chat the agent didn’t know and it’s nowhere on the website or ticket.
83. Drivers are good and careful
84. Believe it is shocking how long it takes to travel between LA and SF in 2026- our entire train system needs more investment and development- other counties put us to shame
85. I like the bus and would like to be able to connect to the Amtrak train at more stations other than Martinez.
86. I have been riding the Amtrak bus between Martinez and Eureka since 2007, when I moved from Sacramento to Humboldt for college. I do not drive at all, so this service is important! Every 6months I head down to Sacramento to see my specialist, and the Amtrak bus/train is how I get there and back. And I visit family often. Any disruptions to this service will impact me and my family, as well as others who also rely on this service, including elderly, students, and disabled folks. I love my bus rides, and appreciate all the drivers!
87. I watched my grandmother take this route every month for a decade... until she aged out of her ability to travel long distance. For an aging population, bus service matters a lot.
88. Please think about the entire North Coast
89. This service is essential for transit between the Bay Area and the North Coast. It is the only bus option to reach the North Coast now that Greyhound no longer serves the region. Please maintain existing services or expand service.
90. For folks who do not drive, the bus/train is the main way to get to the Bay Area from the north. for drivers, it is much cheaper than car rental. Please do not make us automobile dependent!
91. I drove someone to Grants Pass because it was cheaper and more convenient than the bus.
92. I notice Route 7 is down to one run a day instead of two. Please don't cut any more.
93. It's a needed service for the East Bay connection. Humboldt/Del Norte lacks services because we don't have the economy or population density to support them farther South or North.
94. Please keep the bus service it is so important to so many people especially students and family or friends of students at Cal Poly Humboldt and for many students who do not have cars, it is their only way to get to an Amtrak station to get home via train
95. Have a connection leave SFO twice per day. Your bus would be full each time.
96. Comment on this survey: the question "Please rank the following priorities from most important (1) to least important (6). " I tried completing this several times and each time my choices were rejected by the computer program you're using. I was unable to provide my full viewpoints on this question. This likely affected other responders' answers as well.
97. PLEASE DON’T GET RID OF HUMBOLDT’S BUS!!!
98. Google Maps and Amtrak website may both sometimes display search results that say a trip cannot be booked, when it actually can be booked as two separate trips, e.g. Eureka, CA to Denver, CO via Martinez, CA.
99. test
100. I use the bus as well as my Grandchildren coming to Humboldt County.
101. See above. The biggest issue for me is that to get south of Martinez you have to spend the night to make another Amtrak connection. Same applies going to Sacramento. We don't have a lot of options up here and ANY more choices would be greatly appreciated.
102. The drivers have all been professional, kind, and hard working. Thank you.
103. Please keep this service accessible it's been the only way to visit my family in the Bay Area without owning a car.
104. If it was absolutely necessary, I don't think it would hurt to raise ticket prices a bit (but not too high, please!) if that's what it takes to keep busses running between Eureka and Martinez. That route is an absolute lifeline for folks like me with a limited budget.
105. The bus service is nice, nothing can compete with it.
106. I have been pleased when I have used this bus except for how long it takes, especially the route north is very slow.
107. Connecting buses are great always seemless staff generally courteous and helpful
108. Route 7 service needs to be maintained, not decreased.

109. Better connections with SMART train service.
110. I use Route 7, several times a year to get to medical appointments, for work, to visit family, for wider travel across county. I cannot drive to for these trips. I rely heavily on the to get to the Bay Area and Sacramento. If the schedule was reduced to less than daily, This would greatly impact my life and make the North Coast more isolated and reduce medical and work and school access for many on the North Coast.
111. please do not reduce access to the north coast!
112. I normally have a great experience with Amtrak, but the buses have not been in the best conditions lately. I wish I didn’t have to transfer from the train to the bus because of the conditions of the buses. Also, when we got a flat tire on the bus we were traveling on, the driver did not communicate anything with us. The passengers had to continually ask what was happening. Also, the AC wasn’t working properly and hot air was coming out from the vents. It was really hot on the bus.
113. The Thruway bus is an ESSENTIAL connection between Humboldt County and the rest of the state. Any cuts to this service would have a serious impact on the rural, underserved communities in Humboldt County and isolate them further.
114. Please stop in the Sonoma Valley
115. The buses are comfortable enough, and as a person with a disability I found the drivers to be helpful and supportive.
116. Thank you for adding the stop at the Sac airport!!
117. There will be lots more hitchhikers if the bus service is cut. Everybody cannot afford to fly and the bus provides an affordable transportation option.
118. The Thruway bus is vital for Humboldt County residents (e.g., many college students) especially since Greyhound stopped serving the northern state. I use it to get to UC Davis, Sacramento conference center and Caltrans Headquarters, and San Francisco and Oakland.
119. I especially like riding the train because it's roomy and comfortable and not on the busy and dangerous highways. I feel safe on the thruway buses with good drivers that don't drive too fast. The thruway bus service is critical to connecting towns.
120. I appreciate the service, drivers always helpful, wifi generally works, busses are generally on time. I think discontinuing the service or reducing on the north coast would be genuinely detrimental for our communities as the we are doing all we can to improve our economy, we're working to promote our trails and connectivity with other modes of transit.
121. Thank you for this opportunity to respond.

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 9

Subject: **Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with BNSF Railway for Construction and Maintenance for the Madera Station Relocation Project for an Amount Not-to-Exceed $8,300,000 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project**

Agenda Action: **ACTION**

Prepared By: Alvin Piano (Senior Project Manager)

Background:

This Construction and Maintenance Agreement (C&M Agreement) covers railroad improvements required for the Madera Station Relocation Project (Project). The Project is located in Madera County along BNSF Railway's (BNSF's) Stockton Subdivision, between Avenue 12 and Avenue 13, near Santa Fe Drive. The Project includes the relocation of the existing Madera Amtrak Station to a new location that will provide improved passenger facilities, accessibility, and connectivity with the future California High-Speed Rail system.

The work to be covered by this C&M Agreement includes construction of railroad track and signal improvements within BNSF's right-of-way, along with associated railroad infrastructure necessary to accommodate the new passenger station. BNSF will perform the railroad construction work and provide construction oversight, inspection, and coordination necessary to complete these improvements. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) will separately procure a general contractor to construct the passenger platform, station facilities, parking lot, access roadway, and associated site improvements, subject to BNSF's requirements for work within its right-of-way.

The C&M Agreement will establish the respective responsibilities of the Authority and BNSF for performing the railroad improvements, reimbursing BNSF's eligible actual costs, coordinating construction activities, and addressing ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the affected railroad facilities.

This C&M Agreement establishes the responsibilities of BNSF Railway and the Authority for the construction, oversight, compliance, and maintenance of railroad improvements associated with the Madera Station Relocation Project. The agreement provides for BNSF's oversight of construction activities within its railroad right-of-way to ensure compliance with approved plans, applicable BNSF engineering and safety standards, American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) guidelines, and railroad operational requirements. BNSF's responsibilities include coordinating railroad flagging and track protection, overseeing work affecting active railroad operations, inspecting and accepting grading and drainage improvements prior to track installation, and performing the installation and final connection of track and signal improvements. The agreement also establishes requirements for contractor safety training, railroad access, insurance, construction coordination, and compliance with applicable permits and environmental regulations. Following construction, BNSF will own and maintain the track and signal improvements, while the Authority will retain responsibility for the station platform and other non-railroad improvements.

Non-Competitive Procurement:
Section 7.3 of the Rail Commission's Procurement Manual (4th Amended), which the Authority adopted in 2015, sets forth the criteria allowing for non-competitive procurements with host railroads.

Pursuant to Sections 7.3.1. "Other approved non-competitive procurements include the following types of procurement of goods and/or services and are exempt from competitive procurement requirements under SJRRC policy" and 7.3.1.1 "Host railroads (UPRR, BNSF, Caltrain, etc.) maintain exclusive real property rights, regulatory obligations, and operational control over its tracks and right of way. Host railroads are recognized as the sole source capable of executing or approving work within their operating corridors. This exemption applies exclusively to agreements with the host railroad for work performed by their own workforce or contractor, for, for flagging services, preliminary engineering services, right of entry (ROW) permits, easements, construction management services, and construction."

The Procurement and Contracts Department, the Contract/Project Manager, and the Director of Rail Services have confirmed that the procurement qualifies as a non-competitive procurement, budgeted funds are available, and Legal Counsel has been consulted.

Rail Commission staff, in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 7.1.2. of the Procurement Manual have determined that this agreement qualifies as non-competitive procurement.

Fiscal Impact:

Capital Project Budget Line Item	Madera Station Relocation
Phase for this Agreement	Right-of-Way
Funding Sources for this Phase	Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) Cycle 7
Budget for this Phase	$11,000,000
Encumbrances for this Phase	$0
Budget Remaining for This Phase	$11,000,000
Agreement Amount	$8,300,000
Budget Remaining For this Phase if Approved	$2,700,000

Recommendation:
Adopt a Resolution Approving an Agreement with BNSF Railway for Construction and Maintenance for the Madera Station Relocation Project for an Amount Not-to-Exceed $8,300,000 and Authorizing the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project.

SJJPA RESOLUTION 26/27 -

RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH BNSF RAILWAY FOR CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE FOR THE MADERA STATION RELOCATION PROJECT FOR AN AMOUNT NOT-TO-EXCEED $8,300,000 AND AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OR DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, AWARD, AND EXECUTE ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS AND DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECT

WHEREAS, this Construction and Maintenance Agreement (C&M Agreement) covers railroad improvements required for the Madera Station Relocation Project (Project); and

WHEREAS, the Project is located in Madera County along BNSF Railway's (BNSF's) Stockton Subdivision, between Avenue 12 and Avenue 13, near Santa Fe Drive and includes the relocation of the existing Madera Amtrak Station to a new location that will provide improved passenger facilities, accessibility, and connectivity with the future California High-Speed Rail system; and

WHEREAS, the work to be covered by this C&M Agreement includes construction of railroad track and signal improvements within BNSF's right-of-way, along with associated railroad infrastructure necessary to accommodate the new passenger station; and

WHEREAS, BNSF will perform the railroad construction work and provide construction oversight, inspection, and coordination necessary to complete these improvements; and

WHEREAS, the C&M Agreement will establish the respective responsibilities of the Authority and BNSF for performing the railroad improvements, reimbursing BNSF's eligible actual costs, coordinating construction activities, and addressing ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the affected railroad facilities; and

WHEREAS, BNSF requires that work affecting its railroad infrastructure be performed or overseen by its personnel to ensure compliance with BNSF standards, approved plans, and railroad operational requirements; and

WHEREAS, The Procurement and Contracts Department, the Contract/Project Manager, and the Director of Rail Services have confirmed that the procurement qualifies as a non-competitive procurement, budgeted funds are available, and Legal Counsel has been consulted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority hereby Approves an Agreement with BNSF Railway for Construction and Maintenance for the Madera Station Relocation Project for an Amount Not-to-Exceed $8,300,000 and Authorizes the Chief Executive Officer, or Designee, to Negotiate, Award, and Execute Any and All Agreements and Documents Related to the Project.

PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Authority Board on this 20th day of November 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

SAN JOAQUIN JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

_____
CHRIS ORLANDO, Secretary

_____
DOUG VERBOON, Chair

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

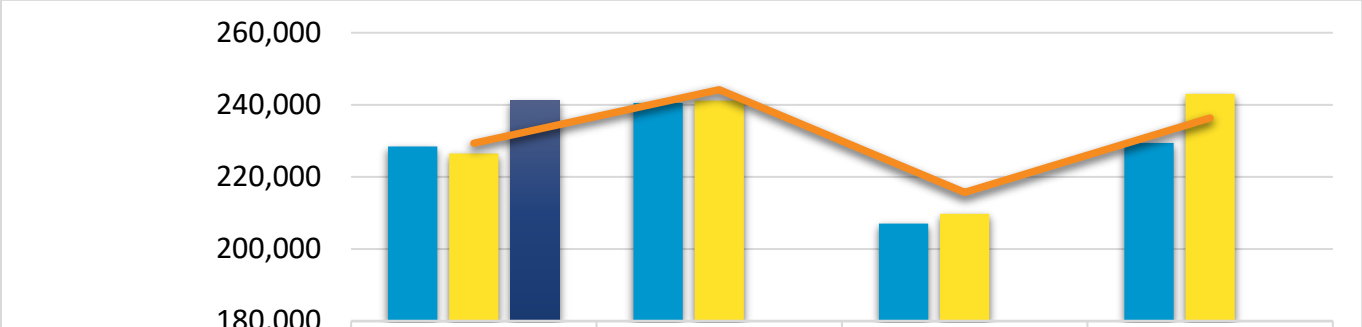
STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 10

Subject: **Quarter 1 Gold Runner Service and Performance Update**
Agenda Action: **INFORMATION**
Prepared By: Nathan Alastra (Operations Superintendent) and Chad Duvauchelle (Transportation Research Analyst)

Background:
For the Gold Runner service, Quarter 4 (Q4) of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY25/26), both ridership and revenue saw a notable increase in year-over-year performance. Key highlights for the period include the strongest ridership performance of the year and revenue that exceeded forecast expectations.

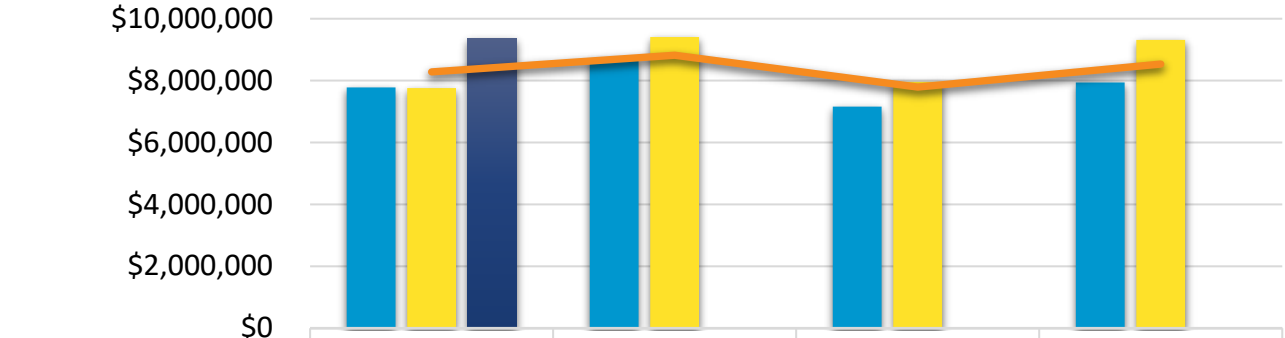
Gold Runner Ridership:



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
FY 24/25	228,435	240,516	207,053	229,435
FY 25/26	226,482	241,167	209,747	243,038
FY 26/27	241,140			
FY 26/27 Forecast	229,312	244,195	215,702	236,349

Q1 FY26/27 performance reflects continued ridership growth, with stronger results compared to the prior year, while also exceeding forecasted expectations. Total ridership reached 241,140, an increase of approximately 6.0% compared to Q1 FY24/25 (228,435), representing growth of 12,705 riders year over year. Ridership also exceeded the FY26/27 forecast of 229,312 by approximately 5.2%, surpassing expectations by 11,828 riders. Compared to Q1 FY25/26 (226,482), ridership increased by approximately 6.5%, highlighting continued strengthening demand across the corridor. Overall, Q1 FY26/27 results indicate sustained positive ridership momentum, with performance exceeding forecast and establishing a strong start to the fiscal year.

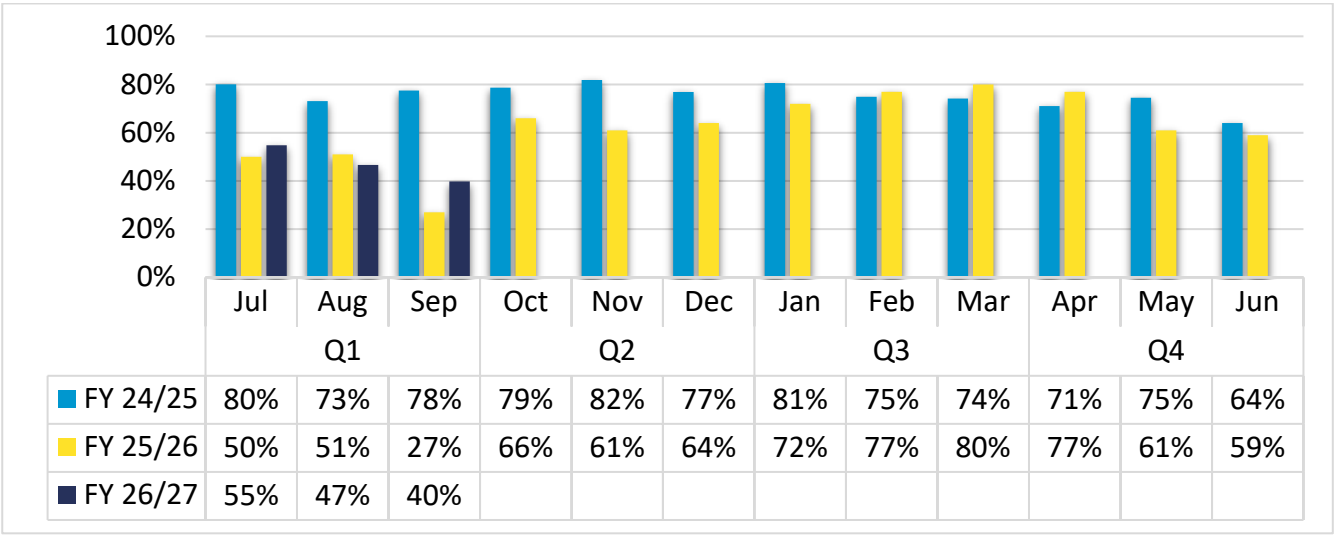
Gold Runner Revenue:



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
FY24/25	$7,781,109	$8,702,483	$7,159,719	$7,941,372
FY25/26	$7,757,773	$9,408,957	$7,962,282	$9,317,790
FY26/27	$9,367,433			
FY 26/27 Forecast	$8,282,965	$8,820,351	$7,791,562	$8,537,208

Q1 FY26/27 financial performance reflects strong year-over-year growth and a continuation of strengthened revenue, significantly exceeding forecasted expectations. Total Q1 revenue reached $9.37 million, representing an approximate 20.4% increase over Q1 FY24/25 revenue of $7.78 million, an increase of approximately $1.59 million year over year. Revenue also exceeded the FY26/27 forecast of $8.28 million by approximately 13.1%, outperforming expectations by $1.08 million. In comparison to Q1 FY25/26, which reached $7.76 million, revenue in Q1 FY26/27 increased substantially by approximately 20.7%. This growth was fueled by increased ridership and stronger fare revenue. The quarter exceeded both prior-year results and forecasted expectations, positioning the agency in a strong start to the fiscal year.

Gold Runner End-Point OTP:



	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		
FY 24/25	80%	73%	78%	79%	82%	77%	81%	75%	74%	71%	75%	64%
FY 25/26	50%	51%	27%	66%	61%	64%	72%	77%	80%	77%	61%	59%
FY 26/27	55%	47%	40%									

Q1 FY26/27 On-Time Performance (OTP) remained well below the 83% goal and declined

throughout the quarter. Monthly OTP fell from 55% in July to 47% in August and 40% in September, for a quarter average of 47%. Only five of 92 service days met the goal.

Passenger train interference and freight train interference were the largest delay categories all quarter. Much of this was due to a track project between Lake and Escalon that took Main 1 out of service, leaving trains to meet each other and be metered through single track in the area until the work was complete.

Speed restrictions were also elevated throughout the quarter. A broken rail and a freight train traction motor fire that damaged the track in the southern region of the corridor both required repairs, and those repairs brought temporary speed restrictions that stayed in place for some time. The Lake-to-Escalon work added further slow orders during the quarter.

Reliability issues with the equipment and terminal delays were the second-largest category of delays in July and August. September saw freight interference rise as a separate freight breakdown held several trains on the same day.

Compared with prior years, Q1 FY26/27 was about four points above the Q1 FY25/26 average of 43%, but well below the Q1 FY24/25 average of 77%.

Fiscal Impact:
There is no fiscal impact.

Recommendation:
This is an informational item. There is no action required.

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

STAFF REPORT

Meeting of November 20, 2026
Item 11

Subject: **Marketing Partnerships and Allensworth Update**
Agenda Action: **INFORMATION**
Prepared By: Carmen Setness (Community Outreach Coordinator)

Background:
As part of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (Authority) Marketing and Outreach Plan, strategic marketing partnerships serve as an important component in expanding brand awareness, increasing visibility, and positioning the Gold Runner as a convenient and accessible transportation option for regional travel. These partnerships focus on building mutually beneficial relationships with tourism destinations, cultural attractions, sporting organizations, event venues, and community organizations that align with the Gold Runner's service markets and target audiences. By collaborating with established destinations and organizations, the Authority can extend its marketing reach beyond traditional advertising channels and introduce rail travel opportunities to new and existing audiences.

A key objective of this strategy is to leverage partner marketing resources while maximizing the value of Authority-owned advertising assets. Through cross-promotional opportunities, partners can utilize the Gold Runner's marketing platforms to promote their destinations and events, while the Authority receives increased exposure through the partner's established communication channels. To support these efforts, the Authority has developed a Marketing Partnership Toolkit, which includes an asset valuation framework to establish the value of Authority-owned advertising and promotional opportunities. This framework provides a foundation for negotiating reduced-cost memberships, sponsorship opportunities, and reciprocal marketing agreements. By assigning value to available advertising assets, the Authority can strategically exchange promotional exposure and secure additional marketing opportunities while minimizing out-of-pocket expenses. The Authority has established several productive marketing partnerships that demonstrate the value of collaborative promotion and shared audience engagement, as shown in the table below.

Marketing Partnerships	
California State Railroad Museum	Collaboration supports shared audiences interested in rail history, transportation, and regional tourism, creating opportunities to promote Gold Runner travel alongside cultural attractions.
San Francisco Bay Ferry	Provides an opportunity to highlight regional transportation connections and encourage multimodal travel through shared promotional efforts.
Oakland Museum of California (OMCA)	Creates opportunities to reach audiences interested in arts, culture, and California history while promoting the Gold Runner as an alternative way to access regional attractions.
Lodi Grape Festival	A strong example of cross-promotional engagement, incorporating Gold Runner ticket-holder benefits, complimentary shuttle connections from the Lodi station, and shared event marketing to encourage visitors to travel by train

Allensworth Special Trains:

Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park: Partnership opportunities have helped promote heritage tourism and connect visitors with a unique Central Valley destination through special train service and destination-focused marketing.

The Gold Runner has been partnering with the state park for six (6) years by running special trains to the park for their Juneteenth and Rededication events. In 2024, the Gold Runner was able to run an extra train to the park during Black History Month with the help of being awarded the Route to Parks Grant in the amount of $34,034.

In 2025, with the help of staff and its Bay Area marketing and outreach consultant, Winter Consulting, LLC., the Authority was awarded a Route to Parks Grant in the amount of $50,000. This grant funding was used to conduct outreach to underrepresented communities to educate them about Allensworth, overcome travel barriers by covering transportation costs, and provide food vouchers for meals during park events. The ridership figures reflect calendar year 2026 totals to date and are not representative of a full fiscal year. Outcomes from this program include:

- 128 passengers transported to the Black History Month Celebration;
- 205 passengers transported to the Juneteenth Celebration;
- 182 passengers transported to the October Rededication event; and
- Partnered with Tulare Transit for shuttle service to and from the train platform and into the park for each special train event.

The Authority is continuing to build upon best practices to deepen existing relationships and expand to new partners. The Authority will continue to participate in the 2027 events with the next special train to Allensworth on February 13, 2027, June 12, 2027, and October 9,2027.

Fiscal Impact:
There is no fiscal impact.

Recommendation:
This is an informational item. There is no action requested.