



STRATEGIC PLAN  
2006 - 2010



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# About the Plan

The individual members of our California Transit Association focus on moving people from where they are to where they need and choose to be. And, our California Transit Association focuses on the same concept on a different scale. Our members have spoken loudly from throughout our ranks that the California Transit Association shall support their work to bring fully funded, efficient and effective public transit systems to all California citizens.

The following pages reflect the role of the California Transit Association to help support our members. The plan is an evolutionary and unprecedented step in the Association's work to reflect the collective vision of its members from a statewide perspective.

California's economic vitality and social strength depends on the ability for all our citizens to move freely and easily within and between our growing and increasingly congested communities. For the California Transit Association's members, that means a strategy ensuring our transit networks can operate in the most beneficial legal and regulatory environment. Therefore, our Strategic Plan makes strategic advocacy its top priority with an added emphasis on financial resources for our state's public transit services.

Right behind the primary focus of advocacy, our members want information and services to help improve the services they provide. So, the *Strategic Plan* continues the California Transit Association's rich history of member participation to develop mutually beneficial conferences, committees, work groups, training sessions, and other forums. Our members, our leadership, and our Association staff will work together to communicate, share information, build consensus, innovate, and to develop Association policy.

Finally, the California Transit Association's management functions will share the high standards that each of our members cherish within their own organizations. These include a healthy participatory constituency, well represented governance, accountability, and sustainability.

So, by developing this comprehensive *Strategic Plan* for the California Transit Association, all of our members have come together to strengthen public transit services for all of California's citizens. And, they share the vision that the plan on the following few pages is essential to the successful development of a healthy, effective, and vibrant public transit presence throughout California.

*We thank and acknowledge the American Public Transportation Association for its excellent Strategic Plan, from which several of this document's elements derive.*

## Vision, Mission and Core Values

### Vision Statement

This statement contains our long-range vision for the transit industry and portrays the desired future the Association seeks to achieve.

*Our Association's vision is:*

***Fully funded, efficient, and effective public transit systems operating in a balanced transportation network.***

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### Mission Statement

This statement describes how the Association will accomplish its vision.

*Our Association's mission is:*

***Support the needs of California's public transit systems through advocacy and education.***

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### Core Values

These describe how the Association's members and staff will conduct themselves and the business of the Association.

*Our Association's core values are:*

- > Ethical Behavior
- > Honesty
- > Integrity
- > Accountability
- > Serve the Public good
- > Informed Participation
- > Consensus-Based Decision Making & Inclusiveness

## Three Strategic Goals

The following are the three strategic goals the California Transit Association will pursue over the next five years:

### 1. Advocacy

*Influence decision makers to enact policies and supply funds supporting and advancing public transit.*

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### 2. Member Services

*Provide members timely information and services enhancing the strengths and effectiveness of their organizations.*

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### 3. Organizational Management and Development

*Increase the Association's ability to achieve its goals by aligning financial resources, staff expertise, work program, member participation, and governance process.*

The following pages contain the *objectives* that must be met – expressed in terms of *outcomes* and *indicators* – in order to determine the success of the *Strategic Plan* in achieving these three goals, and display a menu of *tactics* for each strategic goal from which the Executive Committee and staff will choose for implementation in each year's work program and budget.

## Advocacy

Influence decision makers to enact policies and supply funds supporting and advancing public transit.

### Objectives

#### OUTCOMES

##### *a. Existing transit funds are protected.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- a-1. No existing transit funds, including TDA, PTA, TCRP, or Proposition 42 funds, are eliminated, terminated, shifted or otherwise used for non-transit purposes, without specific repayment terms.
  - a-2. All previous loans or shifts of transit funds are paid back to the appropriate account from which the funds were taken, plus interest.

##### *b. New transit funds are secured.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- b-1. New sources of transit funding are enacted to meet the needs identified by the Association.

##### *c. Laws and regulations that support transit are enacted and those that impede transit's ability to meet the public's mobility needs are defeated.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- c-1. Sponsored bills and policies contained in the Association's annual State and Federal Legislative Programs are enacted.
  - c-2. All bills designated "oppose" of Lobbying Action Level 2 or higher are defeated.

#### MENU OF TACTICS

1. Annually develop and adopt a State and Federal legislative program based on the objectives listed above, that identifies mid- to long-term legislative or regulatory threats to and opportunities for public transit, including general policies to be supported or opposed and specific legislative or regulatory goals for sponsorship.
2. Lobby in support of or against legislation, regulations and budget and policy developments identified in the State or Federal Legislative programs, as appropriate, and enlist the similar efforts of members of the Association where necessary.
3. Monitor, analyze and report to members on all bills, regulations, and budget or policy developments that do or could affect public transit.

4. Improve relationships with key legislators, staff and administration officials.
5. Position transit as a bi-partisan policy issue.
6. Continually educate legislators, staff and administration officials about public transit, with an emphasis on how funding works and transit's funding needs.
7. Proactively position the transit industry and improve the way the state looks at public transit, including:
  - > urging APTA to tailor products to a media and public relations strategy that emphasizes California's unique structure and extraordinary size.
  - > developing a proactive, positive media relations campaign or capacity
  - > developing a reactive, negative media response system or capacity
  - > developing a message and tool-kit to assist local agencies in branding public transportation to make it part of a positive public policy "big idea," and in promoting it to the influential groups that can impact funding, land-use and other related decisions
8. Increase awareness among legislators of the industry's macro and micro issues, through development of products or resources for use by the Association's legislative advocates, members and allies, tailored to California when appropriate and feasible, such as:
  - > strong "transit does work" messages and collateral
  - > research and message development that flows into general "pro-transit" products or collateral
  - > research and message development that flows into specific products or collateral related to individual bills, regulations, and budget or policy developments
9. Build stronger partnerships with influential groups that do or should care about preserving and growing public transit funding and enhancing public transit service (i.e. bus interests, rail interests, and partners such as labor, business or health care), and mobilize particular groups when appropriate (e.g. in support of a pro-transit bill, or against a proposed transit funding cut), including:
  - > launching a roundtable group of transit-related businesses and the larger employer community to support public transit
10. Increase opportunities for transit to influence local planning efforts (i.e. land use and development decisions) through the state legislative and regulatory process.
11. Compile a database of individual supporters of public transit and educate and mobilize them as appropriate and when needed; for instance, by working with member agencies to activate their riders and local community groups.
12. Develop a program or options in which private sector financial resources are provided to candidates for state office on behalf of transit, such as a political action committee or informal fund-raising events, for subsequent review and action by the Executive Committee.
13. Develop a program for increasing California transit's advocacy effectiveness at the Federal level, for subsequent review and action by the Executive Committee.

# Strategic Goals

## Member Services

Provide members timely information and services enhancing the strengths and effectiveness of their organizations.

### Objectives

#### OUTCOMES

**a.** *Threats and opportunities that effect members are identified.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- a-1. Analyses are completed.
  - a-2. Appropriate experts are brought together.
  - a-3. Information is distributed.
  - a-4. Action results are affected.

**b.** *Cost-effective opportunities for member and individual peer-to-peer exchange, networking, and substantive education are provided.*

- Indicators >>**
- b-1. Plan and execute annually a Transit Lobby Day, Spring Legislative Conference, and Annual Fall Conference.
  - b-2. Attendance at all events remains stable or grows year-over-year.
  - b-3. Manage costs and execution of conferences through development and administration of a balanced budget.
  - b-4. Attendee evaluation forms indicate stable or growing satisfaction levels year-over-year.

**c.** *Efforts to increase ridership by members are supported.*

- Indicators >>**
- c-1. Collateral is produced, and information is disseminated, including at events, focused on increasing ridership.

## MENU OF TACTICS

1. Monitor policy and operational trends in transit, including communications from member organizations and legislative or regulatory developments, assign important new or evolving issues to standing committees (or appoint task forces as necessary) for analysis and development of recommendations, take positions as appropriate, and disseminate analysis and information to members as it becomes available and mobilize members as needed.
2. Develop pertinent and customized information and improve tailored dissemination to members (i.e. differentiating between bus-policy analysis and members vs. rail-policy analysis and members, urban vs. rural, small vs. large, etc.).
3. Offer peer-to-peer exchange, networking and substantive education opportunities, including high quality conferences, focused on mid-level and upper-level managers and technical staff, and transit agency governing board members, where common problems can be shared and solutions developed and disseminated.
4. Provide opportunities for small organizations to learn from the large organizations, and the large to learn from the small, including through the development and dissemination of:
  - > best practices
  - > a reference library
  - > match making
  - > comparative analysis
  - > technology solutions
  - > a clearinghouse of and links to existing research, messaging and training opportunities

## Organizational Management and Development

Increase the Association's ability to achieve its goals by aligning financial resources, staff expertise, work program, member participation, and governance process.

### Objectives

#### OUTCOMES

##### *a. Increased overall membership.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- a-1. Annually achieve a net increase in new members over the previous year.
  - a-2. Attract members from all segments of the industry.

##### *b. Members in every legislative district in the state join Association.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- b-1. At least one member in every state legislative and congressional district.

##### *c. Increased member satisfaction.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- c-1. Increased utilization of Association products and services.
  - c-2. Annual survey is conducted, results showing positive improvements in all advocacy, member service, and organizational management areas.

##### *d. Contracted staff and vendors are skilled and experienced to meet the organization's needs.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- d-1. Performance evaluation of program management firm occurs annually.
  - d-2. Process is in place to ensure knowledge transfer between existing and any new contracted staff.
  - d-3. Strengthened leadership and skills in information technology.

##### *e. Increased use of new and innovative technology by Association to enhance communication and improve analysis capabilities.*

- INDICATORS >>**
- e-1. Improved information sharing and analysis capabilities.

**f. Increased inclusiveness and participation of Association's diverse membership in conferences, committees, policy development, and organizational leadership.**

- INDICATORS >>**
- f-1. All members are encouraged to participate and opportunities are provided.
  - f-2. Committee appointment and decision-making processes are clarified.
  - f-3. Review of committee rosters and chairs occurs formally every two years.

**g. Continued financial stability and accountability.**

- INDICATORS >>**
- g-1. Balanced annual operating budget and year-end reconciliation.
  - g-2. Adherence to financial policies.
  - g-3. Unqualified annual audit opinion.
  - g-4. Dues revenue annually meets or exceeds previous year.

**MENU OF TACTICS**

1. Develop and submit to the Executive Committee annually a staff & committee work program designed to achieve the objectives of the *Strategic Plan* as much as possible given current resources and effort, based on the tactics listed in the plan, concurrent with a budget and forecast based on available resources and current effort, and identifying additional resources and / or effort required to achieve more of the *Strategic Plan's* objectives.
2. Continually review and adjust as necessary the Association's organizational and governance structure and resource allocation to ensure accomplishment of the advocacy and member services strategic goals.
3. Approach the business of the Association methodically and deliberately, using internal quality control measures and effective management techniques.
4. Implement ways to ensure continued participation by agency general managers.
5. Conduct annual member satisfaction surveys.
6. Conduct annual management firm performance evaluations.
7. Ensure committees or task forces of members serve as advisors on development of conference programs and other member services, to ensure offerings are timely and provide usable information and services, and that they would retain existing and attract new members.
8. Increase number of new members through the development of targeted campaigns to identify and recruit viable prospect candidates.
9. Recruit members in every congressional and state legislative district in the state.
10. Provide affordable and relevant conferences, by emphasizing investment in quality speakers and presentations, and de-emphasizing obtaining a net profit.

## **Organizational Management and Development** *(continued)*

11. Promote conferences, committee activities, products, services, and leadership opportunities, to increase participation of the Association's diverse membership.
12. Offer new products and services to better serve our members.
13. Strengthen leadership in information technology functions. Improve the membership database to better track members needs and activities; and, attain higher levels of website functionality to better serve member needs.
14. Look for opportunities to generate additional revenue consistent with adopted policy.
15. Use Web-based technologies for webinars, e-learning, and other member support services.

## Implementation of the Strategic Plan Timeline

The California Transit Association actively uses the *Strategic Plan* to guide its activities and assess its performance. This includes the efforts of the Association's leadership, staff, and committees; the ways time, money and other resources are programmed; the considerations that go into decision making; and, how progress and results are tracked and reported to the Association's leaders and the membership at large.

As our tactical implementation of the *Strategic Plan*, staff prepares an annual Work Program, which contains specific activities by which each of the strategic goals will be implemented in a given year, including performance measures. Staff also prepares an annual Budget and Forecast, which detail how revenues match expenditures to support the strategic goals and produce the results called for in the Work Program. The Work Program and Budget are submitted to the Executive Committee each November, for adoption and implementation in each upcoming calendar year.

Progress reports are made regularly at meetings of the Association's Executive Committee and to the full membership via publications and the website.

The *Strategic Plan* is occasionally revised and fine-tuned during its five-year life to respond to changing conditions that impact the organization and to keep the plan relevant in guiding the California Transit Association to fulfill its mission and best serve its members.

## Process for Periodic Review and Update

This *Strategic Plan* is a "living" document, and shall be used continually to guide staff and Executive Committee actions, not only over the five-year horizon of the document, but within each year itself. As such, the Executive Committee is committed to a formal, annual assessment of the plan's goals, objectives and tactics, informed in part by yearly membership satisfaction surveys, and will make changes from year-to-year as necessary to ensure that the California Transit Association is meeting the needs of its members going forward.

The annual review takes place by each July, to inform staff's development of the annual Work Program and Budget, submitted to the Executive Committee each November.

In addition to these annual reviews, the Executive Committee will also conduct a comprehensive analysis and update of the whole *Strategic Plan* once every five years. This assessment would take into account, amongst other factors, fundamental shifts in the needs of the public transit industry, as well as any major changes in the political or economic environment in which the California Transit Association and its members operate.

Thus, the membership should expect to see annual updates to this plan, and to participate in a major reassessment every five years.

## Acknowledgements

### STRATEGIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

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