



# 2018 CALIFORNIA RAIL PLAN SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

2018 California State  
rail plan

## Survey Overview

As part of the effort to develop the **2018 California State Rail Plan (Rail Plan)**, Caltrans released an early engagement survey in January 2016 seeking public input for inclusion. This summary report provides an overview of the survey results. The survey was available through the Caltrans website and distributed to an extensive rail plan mailing list; through organizations represented on the Rail Plan stakeholder advisory committee, and through press releases and Amtrak and Caltrans social media sites. The survey received a total of **2,189 responses** between January 27 and March 4, 2016.

The goal of this survey was to obtain input from a large range of current and potential rail riders in California to help guide the Rail Plan which will present a **vision for California's future passenger**

**and freight rail network**, and address strategies to achieve a **modernized and integrated rail system**. The Rail Plan fulfills state and federal rail plan requirements, and is an important element in the comprehensive examination of transportation investment strategies for the next 50 years.

Survey questions inquired about respondents' current usage of California rail, their opinions on the current state of California rail, and their highest priorities for improving California rail in the future. Additional optional demographic questions helped garner general information on respondents' affiliations, age, gender, income, race, and contact information to enter them into a raffle for a \$50 Amtrak gift card. Five winners from across the State were randomly selected and contacted.

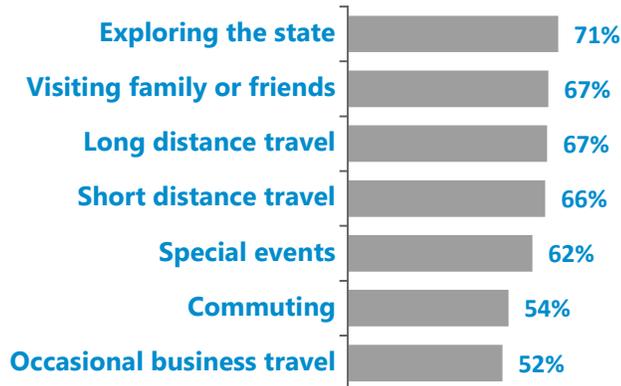
## Survey Results

- **The top reasons WHY current rail riders use rail:** The top reason (more than 75%) was enjoyment of riding the train. Following that, respondents selected saving money, time, and safety as their top reasons for using the train.
- **The TOP FIVE IMPROVEMENTS Caltrans should make to passenger train services** were focused on a) serving more places / expand coverage; b) adding more trains per day; c) improving connections with local transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access; d) improving on-time performance and reliability; and e). making transfers between different trains easier and faster.
- **The MOST IMPORTANT FREIGHT RAIL IMPROVEMENTS were listed as:** a) separating freight from passenger lines and b) encouraging more use of freight rail for shipping to relieve roadway congestions.
- **For SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS**, an overwhelming majority of respondents believed the highest priority should be improving crossings with grade separations.
- **WHY NOT the Train?** The main factors selected as preventing respondents from choosing the train as a regular means of travel were a) trains not operating frequently enough; and b) trains not going where respondents want to go. (Less than 6% of respondents chose trains being too crowded or inadequate bicycle facilities as their reasons for not using the train regularly.)
- **Top choices selected for how the rail network should SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH were:** a) providing more mobility choices for people to encourage economic activity, b) fostering transit oriented development, and c) reducing highway congestion.

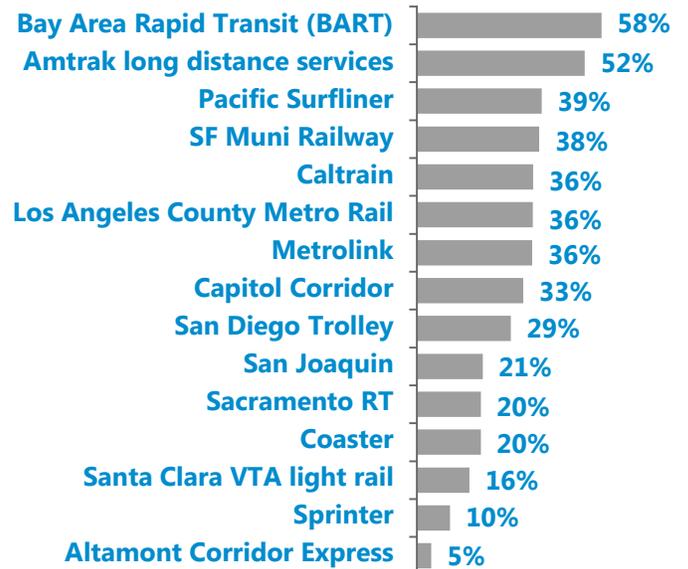
# Detailed Responses

The following provide a detailed breakdown of the responses received and a sample of additional write-in responses, where applicable.

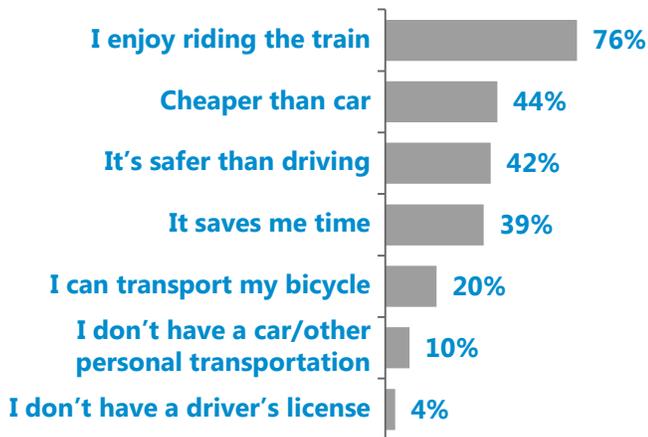
## What do you use or would like to use rail travel for? Please select all that apply. (1,910 responses)



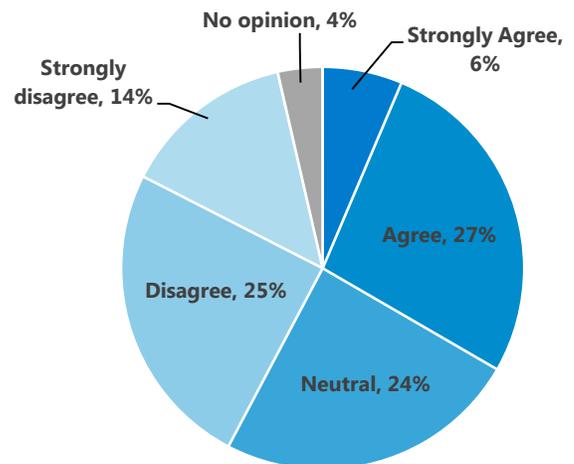
## If you are a current rail passenger, which passenger rail systems have you been on? Please select all that apply. (1,676 responses)



## If you are a current rail passenger, why do you use rail? Please select all that apply. (1,650 responses)



## Please rate your current rail transportation options in California based on your level of agreement with this statement: *Rail gets me where I want to go in a timely manner with minimal inconvenience* (1,884 responses)

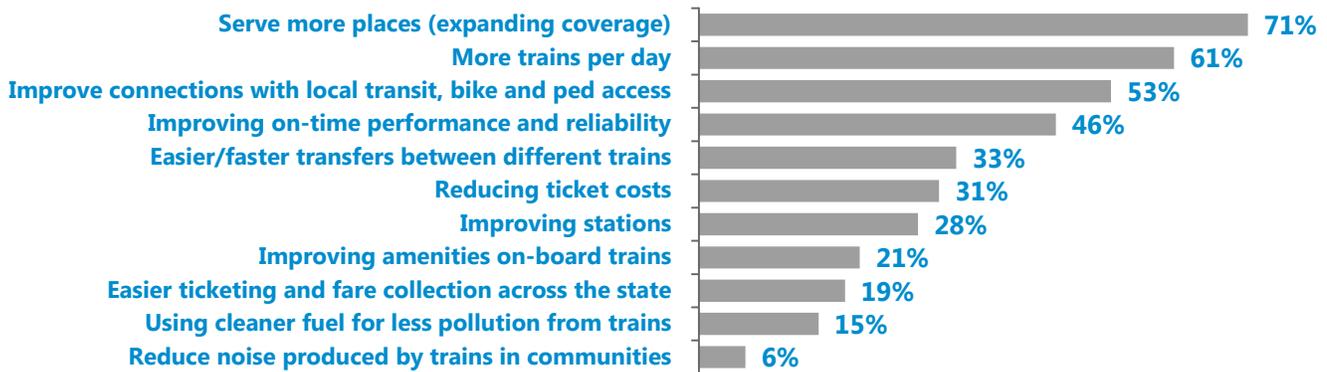


### Additional write-in responses:

- Lower stress than driving
- Climate crisis requires us to emit less GHG
- Unlike bus or airplane modes, passenger rail allows me to change cars during the trip. This increases comfort: stretch legs, get away from noisy passengers, find car with cooler or warmer climate.
- Better for the environment



## What are the most important improvements Caltrans should make to passenger train services in California? Please select your top 5. (1,940 responses)



### Other comments:

- Passengers deserve priority over cargo on many lines as well as High Speed Rail within state and beyond
- Improved speed. Must compete with cars on speed.
- Make trains faster: Upgrade from 79 to 110mp wherever possible, build HSR.
- Adding security to prevent thefts and harassment
- Hyperloop!
- Longer hours of service (late-night)

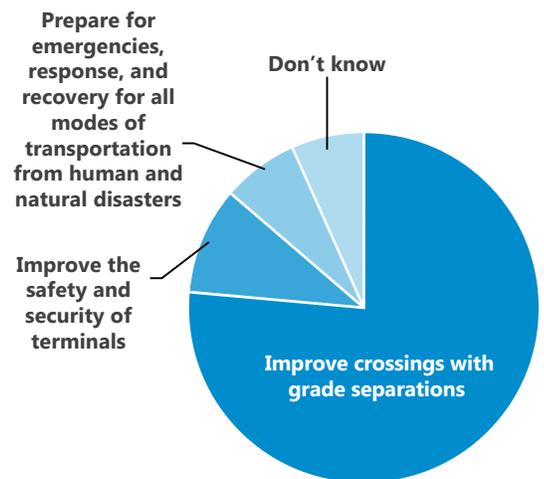
## What prevents you from choosing the train as a regular means of travel? Please choose all that apply. (1,816 responses)



### Other comments:

- There is no parking at station, others are too expensive to park
- It's hard to do without my car at the destination
- Need direct link to major airports
- Harassment of women, profane music, loud music (LA Blue Line)

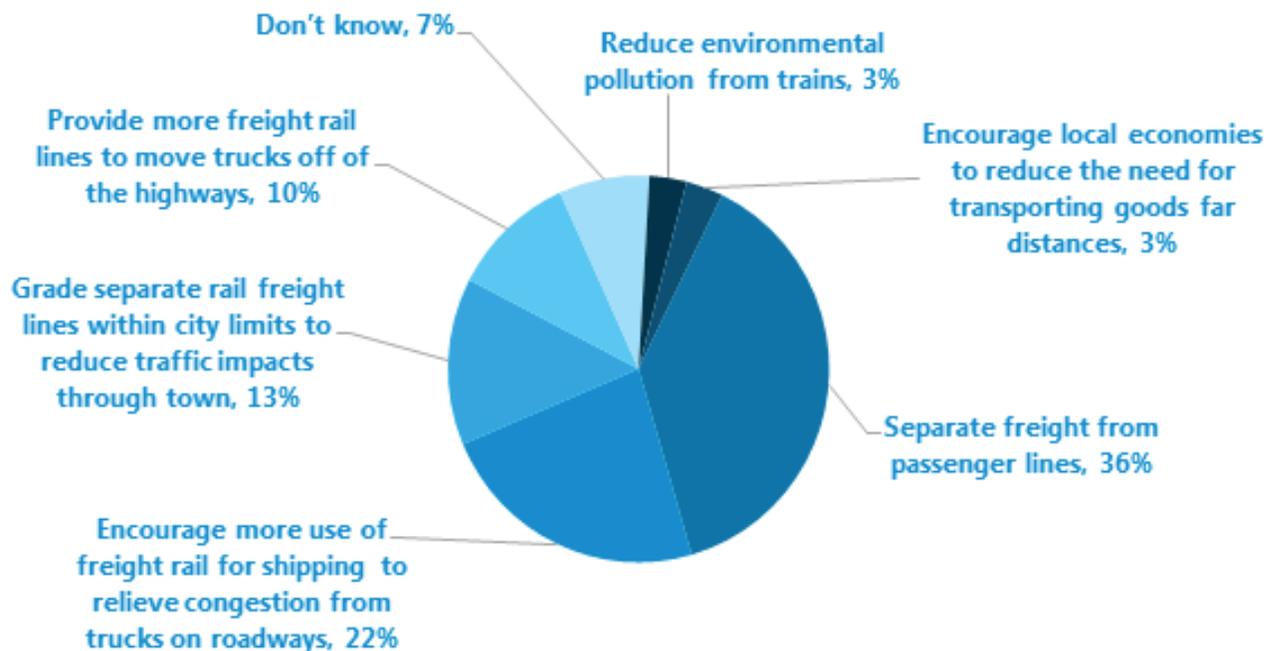
## What do you think Caltrans' highest priority should be for investments to enhance rail safety? (1,815 responses)



### How this information will be used in the 2018 Rail Plan

The California State Rail Plan Team is reviewing the detailed survey responses to ensure that all comments are recognized and the priorities included in the development of the planning process. The vast majority of comments and priorities are supportive of what technical teams and planners are focusing on and are very helpful in confirming the direction of the Rail Plan planning process.

**California's freight rail system is privately operated and provides many of the tracks utilized by public passenger trains. What do you think California's highest priority should be to improve its freight rail system?  
(1,821 responses)**



**How should the rail network support economic growth?  
Please select your top three.  
(1,843 responses)**



# Respondent Demographics

INTEREST / ASSOCIATION	RESPONSE %
Current rail passenger	64.0%
Interested member of the California public	57.0%
Previous rail passenger	33.7%
Local or state government employee	21.9%
Potential rail passenger (never taken a train)	8.3%
Advocacy group/NGO	5.3%
Local, metropolitan or regional planning agency	4.1%
Community leader/or elected official	3.0%
Passenger rail operating agency	2.3%
Freight rail provider	1.5%
Transportation Industry representative	1.2%
Tribal Representative	0.5%

TIME SPENT COMMUTING PER WORKDAY	RESPONSE %
Less than 30 minutes	30.1%
30 minutes – 1 hour	27.3%
1-2 hours	19.5%
2-3 hours	6.4%
More than 3 hours	3.4%
Do not commute to work	13.2%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	RESPONSE %
\$0 to \$9,999	1.7%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	3.7%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	9.8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	14.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.6%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	16.5%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	7.1%
\$150,000 to \$174,999	7.5%
\$175,000 to \$199,999	3.8%
\$200,000 and up	9.3%

AGE	RESPONSE %
Under 19	1.0%
20-24	4.9%
25-34	20.6%
35-44	17.9%
45-54	18.9%
55-59	12.7%
60-64	10.2%
65-74	9.3%
75 to 84	2.5%
85 years and older	0.3%

GENDER	RESPONSE %
Female	26.1%
Male	72.8%

RACE OR ETHNICITY	RESPONSE %
White or Caucasian	71.2%
Asian-American/Pacific Islander	8.6%
Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	7.1%
Multiple ethnicities	4.4%
Black or African-American	2.8%
Native American /Alaska Native	1.8%

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	RESPONSE %
English	97.8%
Spanish	3.0%
Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin)	2.1%
Tagalog	0.9%
Other	2.3%



## CONCLUSION

The more than 2,000 responses to the 2018 California State Rail Plan Survey will help shape the vision for the Rail Plan. This vision will guide California’s future passenger and freight rail network. According to responses to the survey, top priorities and themes include:

- To **expand coverage and increase service for passenger rail**. These were the top two priorities for improving passenger rail and the top two factors preventing people from using rail regularly. Additional priorities include: **Improve transfers, connections with local transit, reliability and on-time-performance**
- The majority of respondents choose rail because they **enjoy riding the train**, and the train is **often cheaper than using a car**
- They use or **would like to use rail for a variety of different reasons**, from leisure travel to commuting
- Highest priority for safety improvements are to **improve crossings with grade separations**

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