

## MTC Regional Transit Connections Map: Context and Criteria

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Since the 1980s, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has produced a regional transit map showing transit services and connections across the nine-county Bay Area. The new version, created for the Regional Mapping & Wayfinding Project, uses the new regional design language to give riders an engaging and informative view of major bus, train, and ferry routes that connect different transit agency service areas and key populated places and attractions.

### Balancing multiple priorities

The Regional Map must balance several needs:

A. Inspiring discovery, awareness, and curiosity:

- Discovery: What places can I reach by transit in the Bay Area?
- Awareness: Which agencies or routes can take me there, and how often do they run?
- Curiosity: Where can I learn more about these services?

B. Managing geography and scale:

The Bay Area spans more than 140 miles from Cloverdale to Gilroy (about the same distance as San Francisco to Yosemite National Park), so the map must stay readable. That means limiting the amount of information shown and carefully choosing which routes, stops, and places to include, whether served by transit or not.

C. Ensuring equity:

MTC aims to present all bus, train, and ferry services from all transit agencies impartially, showing a unified regional network across both transit-dense and less transit-dense areas.

### Criteria for displaying places at the regional scale

- Always label:
  - Sub-regions (e.g., Peninsula, East Bay, South Bay, North Bay)
  - Major Places (400,000+ population, 2022)
  - Big Places (100,000-400,000 population, 2022)
- Label only when conditions are met:
  - Small to Medium Places (5,000-100,000 population, 2022) – labeled only if a transit stop is shown
  - Very Small Places (<5,000 population, 2022) – labeled only on routes serving tourist or recreational destinations

## Criteria for displaying regional transit services

The Regional Map shows the broadest view of the Bay Area transit network. It works alongside fixed guideway maps and local transit maps, which provide more detail for trip planning.

Because of limited map space, not all high-performing routes appear here; instead, the Regional Map includes routes based on the criteria below to balance clarity and usefulness across the 140-mile region.

### 1. Fixed guideway services (train, Bus Rapid Transit, and ferry routes)

*Fixed guideway services are often highly visible in the region, particularly trains that operate on separate rights of way.*

- **Include all fixed guideway routes**, except where doing so would reduce legibility in downtown San Francisco (e.g., Muni historic services)
- **Include stations** as follows:
  - **If the service crosses county lines**, include all stops (except Caltrain’s schools/event stops at Stanford and College Park).
  - **If the service is fully within one county**, include only transfer points, terminals, or stops serving regionally significant destinations.
  - **In constrained areas**: use shortened stop names (e.g., “16 St” for 16th St Mission BART or “Chinatown” for Chinatown-Rose Pak Muni).

### 2. Bus services

*Bus services are represented in two ways: 1) local service areas and 2) select individual routes.*

- Show all local bus service areas:
  - Depict each agency’s bus service area with a golden yellow shape showing the general geographic extent of service.
  - Service areas may include locations accessible only by paratransit.
- Highlight individual bus routes only if they meet at least ONE criterion below. A route is included if it:
  - Connects two or more transit service areas not otherwise linked by a fixed guideway route or a more frequent bus route; OR
  - Provides more service than a parallel fixed guideway route within a single agency service area; OR
  - Provides a direct, frequent link between Very Small – Medium Places, or a Very Small – Medium Place and a multimodal transit hub, within a single agency service area; OR

- Provides a direct, frequent link to a distinct neighborhood(s) in a Major Place not already connected or paralleled by a fixed guideway route or a more frequent bus route; OR
- Connects to Very Small Places that are tourist and/or recreational destinations; OR
- Provides a direct connection to a commercial airport that isn't otherwise provided by a fixed guideway service.

## **Updates to route inclusion on the map**

The Regional Map is a living document. When transit agencies restructure service, extend fixed guideway routes, or modify routes already shown, MTC will update the map in a way that is consistent with this criteria.

## **Transit services beyond the Bay Area**

### *Interregional services*

The map includes select interregional routes that link the Bay Area to nearby counties and provide meaningful regional connections (e.g., Capitol Corridor, Gold Runner, and Amtrak Thruway bus routes 6, 9, and 40). Not all interregional services are shown.

### *Interstate services*

Interstate routes such as long-distance Amtrak, Greyhound, or private intercity bus carriers are not shown.

## **Transit service frequency at the regional scale**

Frequency is based on the longest time between vehicles between 7:00 am – 7:00 pm, regardless of weekday or weekend.

- Routes operating at least 65 minutes AND daily: shown with thicker lines.
- Routes operating less than 66 minutes AND/OR less than daily: shown with thinner lines.

## **Highlighting regional attractions**

To generate rider curiosity and support regional identity, the map includes several transit-accessible activities, festivals, and recreational features:

### *Activities and festivals*

The map features transit-accessible activities and/or festivals:

- Sports/special event facilities: Oracle Park (baseball), Chase Center (basketball), Levi's Stadium (football), SAP Center (hockey), PayPal Park (soccer)
- Apple (Sebastopol Gravenstein Apple Fair)

- Garlic (Gilroy Garlic Festival)
- Pumpkin (Half Moon Bay Art and Pumpkin Festival)
- Redwood trees (representatively placed near Samuel P. Taylor State Park, near Muir Woods, & in “East Bay Regional Parks” parks near Oakland)
- Wine grapes (Healdsburg, Livermore, Napa Valley, Sonoma, and Windsor wineries)

### *Landmarks*

The map shows select landmarks that serve as visual anchors or regional markers, including:

- Mountains (Mt. Diablo, Mt. Hamilton, Mt. Tamalpais, Mt. Umunhum)
- Towers (UC Berkeley Campanile, Stanford Hoover Tower, SJSU Tower Hall, Golden Gate Bridge)
- Wind turbines (Altamont Pass)
- Cargo container ship (Pacific Ocean/navigable waterways)
- Sacramento River Delta

### *Institutions of higher learning*

Four-year colleges and universities with 15,000+ enrollment (Fall 2022) are included as landmarks or through station names:

- University of California, Berkeley (45,307)
- San Jose State University (35,751)
- San Francisco State University (25,282)
- Stanford University (18,283)

### *Parks*

Most parks shown on the map are recreational areas that residents or visitors may not know are accessible by transit services. Consequently, many parks within denser areas, like San Francisco’s McLaren Park or Fremont’s Lake Elizabeth Park, are not shown. The current set of parks was aligned with recommendations shared with the project by an independent group, Hiking by Transit. Parks shown on the map are:

- Almaden Quicksilver County Park
- Alum Rock Park
- Angel Island State Park
- Black Diamond Mines Regional Park
- Bothe-Napa Valley State Park
- Briones Regional Park
- Coyote Hills Regional Park
- Crockett Hills Regional Park
- Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Park

- East Bay Regional Parks (a blanket area covering parks within the Richmond/El Cerrito/Berkeley/Oakland hills)
- Golden Gate National Recreational Area (the area between Golden Gate Park and Muir Woods; Alcatraz; Rancho Corral de Tierra)
- Golden Gate Park
- Mission Peak Regional Park
- Muir Woods National Monument
- Point Reyes National Seashore
- Samuel P. Taylor State Park
- Santa Teresa County Park
- Trione-Annadel State Park