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**Scorecard grades California rail transit station areas
Which stations serve as hubs of thriving neighborhoods and which don't?**

*Walkability, downtown-like environments contribute to transit station success
Successful transit systems reap higher regional economic, environmental rewards*

SAN FRANCISCO — A new analysis of California's rail transit systems discovers which transit stations serve as hubs of thriving, walkable areas that encourage residents and workers alike to ride the train, and which station areas need improvement.

[Grading California's Rail Transit Station Areas](#), issued by the nonprofit nonpartisan group Next 10 (www.next10.org) and prepared by the Center for Law, Energy and the Environment (CLEE) at the UC Berkeley School of Law gives the highest grade statewide to San Francisco Municipal Railway's (MUNI) Market and Church Street station, which performs the best overall when it comes to connecting riders to key amenities, cutting the environmental impact of transportation and contributing to a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly community. San Diego Metropolitan Transit System's Gillespie Field Station, by contrast, was assessed the lowest statewide score for lack of ridership and access to amenities and services.

"Top-performing transit stations tend to be located in the center of downtown-like environments and thriving, rail-oriented neighborhoods. These stations provide access to housing, shopping, places of work and other amenities," said Next 10 founder F. Noel Perry. "Most low-performing stations are on the outer edges of rail systems, often situated in low-density, industrial or auto-oriented neighborhoods."

Among the rail transit station areas featured in the report:

- As mentioned, MUNI's Market and Church Street station scored a chart-topping A+ thanks to a near-perfect walkability score and a high rate of transit use and zero-vehicle households in a half-mile radius around the station.
- No MUNI station received a failing grade, though the Third Street and Marin Street station received a D, the system's lowest score, for lack of walkability and amenities.
- San Francisco's Powell Street BART station scored high for walkability and levels of ridership while the South San Francisco BART station scored low primarily for low usage by residential riders and limited access to amenities.
- The Santa Clara VTA's Japantown/Ayer Station performed the best system wide, receiving a B+ from the researchers, while the Middlefield Station, located in a low-density area toward the edge of the system's service area scored low across all indicators.



- San Diego's Gillespie Field Station, located in a car-dependent area, received an F—scoring poorly across the board.
- The Los Angeles area's best-scoring station is LA Metro's Westlake/ MacArthur Park station, which scores high on diversity of destinations, walkability, transit access, and affordability, but gets a poor safety score because of crime.
- Sacramento's Longview Drive and I-80 station is next to a major interstate, and is used for park-and-ride services. But it is the region's lowest-scoring area in terms of fostering a vibrant transit neighborhood, with very low train use among local residents and workers.
- The San Joaquin Valley is California's fastest-growing region, but lacks rail transit. Researchers analyzed key busy bus station areas instead, awarding them separate grades ranging from B to D.

CLEE researchers analyzed 489 neighborhoods within a half-mile radius of stations in six California rail transit systems. Of the six transit systems evaluated, MUNI scored a B, the statewide highest average station area grade. MUNI was followed by BART, which earned a B-, Los Angeles Metro Rail and Sacramento Regional Transit, both of which scored Cs and San Diego Metropolitan Transit and Santa Clara VTA, both of which scored C-.

“Stations serving walkable neighborhoods with plenty of conveniently located homes and businesses scored highest,” said Ethan Elkind, lead author and associate director of the Climate Change and Business Program at CLEE. “Neighborhoods that provide these local amenities encourage ridership. And the more demand, the better the economic performance of the transit system.”

“We hope that grading the state's rail transit station areas for how well they encourage ridership and create vibrant, rail-oriented neighborhoods will help highlight best practices,” said Perry. “Transit provides an opportunity to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, take cars off the road, and protect open space, which is important given that the state's population is expected to increase by nearly 30 percent over the next 35 years.”

The report divided rail transit station areas into three types: residential, employment and mixed and calculated grades based on 11 key indicators including walkability, ridership levels, existing land-use and permitting policies, affordability and transit quality.

Researchers offered recommendations to improve station area performance, including prioritizing rail transit for neighborhoods that already contain high concentrations of jobs and housing and financing development projects in under-performing regions.

About Next 10

Next 10 is an independent, nonpartisan organization that educates, engages and empowers Californians to improve the state's future. With a focus on the intersection between the economy, the environment, and quality of life, Next 10 employs research from leading experts on complex state issues and creates a portfolio of nonpartisan educational materials



to foster a deeper understanding of the critical issues affecting our state.

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About The Center for Law, Energy & the Environment (CLEE)

The Center for Law, Energy & the Environment channels the expertise of the UC Berkeley community into pragmatic law and policy solutions to pressing environmental and energy issues. The Center's current initiatives focus on climate change, sustainable land use, healthy oceans, and clean water for California's future.