

YOUTH TRANSIT AUDIT REPORT

JUNE 2026

..... PROJECT OVERVIEW

In April and May 2026, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) recruited high school students to participate in a transit safety audit project in collaboration with the Coalition for Community Safety and Justice (CCSJ). In total, 28 students were recruited through outreach to each of the CCSJ organizations, the SF Youth Commission, the SFMTA Youth Transit Advisory Board, and transit clubs at SFUSD high schools.

Students were trained on how to use the audit tool, which is a survey with 35 multiple choice questions and four short answer questions to be filled out while actively riding Muni. They then rode Muni during the daytime to perform an audit and attended a focus group session, which had an independent brainstorming activity in addition to full group discussion. This report analyzes the data recorded in the audits and the qualitative responses that participants shared in both the audit and focus group sessions.

..... PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

- 75% of the participants identified as female, and 25% identified as male
- 79% of the participants were SFUSD students representing ten different schools in total, with: one recent graduate, two 9th graders, nine 10th graders, eight 11th graders, eight 12th graders
- Prior to completing the audit, 68% of participants said they already feel safe while riding Muni regularly and all participants rode Muni daily or multiple times per week
- There was strong geographic diversity of where students live with a concentration of participants in the southern/southwestern part of the city (D7 and D11)

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Participants do not feel safe riding Muni at night.** While 71% of participants said they felt safe on their Muni audit ride, only 46% said they would feel safe on that same Muni ride if it were at night. There was a similar drop off (77% currently versus 41% at night) for how participants felt at bus stops; On the other hand, waiting alone or with others did not have an impact on feelings of safety.
2. **Most participants would not feel comfortable intervening if they saw someone being harassed.** Most participants (71%) said they would feel uncomfortable intervening if they saw harassment on their Muni ride. Some shared it would be unsafe for them to intervene or draw attention to themselves and would prefer other methods to address these issues (see recommendations below).
3. **Participants waited at dirty bus stops, which had an impact on their feelings of safety.** Less than half (45%) said the stops on their ride were clean, and during the focus groups, youth expanded on how cleanliness impacts how safe and welcome they feel. One participant shared feeling safer when it's clean "because it's an easier environment to trust" when they know someone is looking out for that bus stop. Youth auditors mentioned that at times, there was the presence of people who were loitering near bus stops or in the bus with unpredictable behavior that contributed to feelings of unsafety.
4. **Pedestrian safety is lacking at times, which impacts feelings of safety at Muni stops.** Multiple participants noted that they felt unsafe getting to or from their Muni stops due to dangerous behaviors from other drivers, like people who were driving too fast, trying to pass Muni vehicles that were loading passengers, or blocking boarding areas with their cars. Narrow sidewalks also impacted feelings of safety, noting that participants said that 38% of their stops were in hazardous or poor shape.
5. **Young people defined safety in more affirmative terms, rather than as the absence of crime.** Notably, fear of crime or being the victim of crime was not mentioned in the audits or the focus group, even when participants noted they felt unsafe. Instead, safety was based on their experience getting to and from the bus stops, the conditions at the bus stops, and the quality of their ride.
6. **Of the 28 completed audits, only two participants had uniquely negative Muni audits and rated their experience as "very unsafe."** Both auditors experienced dirty conditions at their bus stops and on the bus, and both expressed feeling unsafe when seeing people who were unhoused or using substances. To address these concerns, they both wanted to see more adults willing to intervene if issues arose; one said they wanted an option to report issues immediately or an adult who's aware of the situation and would step in.

7. **Overall, participants appreciated the audit experience and felt it helped them notice more details about their daily Muni ride.** One participant shared the following: “I’ve never really poured much thought into public transport [...] However, when I began this journey to writing an audit, I realized how it made me feel when I paid attention to the small discrepancies. Then I began to think [about] how others might be affected too. All in all, if it weren’t for this opportunity, [I would have] continued riding MUNI without paying much attention when the reality is that there is a lot to work on seeing as how important our public transport lines are for every day commutes.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Increase cleaning and maintenance of Muni stops and buses.** Participants directly attached feelings of safety to cleanliness, especially at Muni stops.
2. **Improve pedestrian safety at and around Muni stops.** Participants noted that their safety getting to/from their Muni stop was impacted by narrow sidewalks, dangerous street crossings, and unsafe behaviors of other drivers on the street.
3. **Enhance Muni stops with additional lighting, seating, and real-time displays.** Participants acknowledged that these enhancements improved their Muni experience and when lacking, they felt less welcome.
4. **Increase ambassadors and other safety presence, particularly at night, to help resolve larger society challenges of homelessness and substance use.** Participants felt that the presence of people at Muni stops and on Muni that appeared unhoused or using substances (such as actively smoking or seeing used syringes nearby) made them feel unsafe and unwelcome. Some participants shared positive experiences seeing and interacting with SFMTA’s Muni Transit Assistance Program ambassadors, especially as credible figures that can offer assistance to people in need.
5. **Establish and promote methods to report safety concerns inconspicuously or anonymously.** Only 54% of participants saw signs on the bus of how to report issues such as harassment or unsafe conditions. Participants felt they would put themselves at risk if they intervened but were open to inconspicuous or anonymous ways of flagging issues, such as a text message line or phone app.
6. **Develop and implement an audit tool for Muni capital improvement projects and for SFMTA’s Muni Safety Equity Initiative.** Participants found immense value in completing an audit. By thinking more critically about their everyday transit ride, they also appreciated what worked well and engaged more productively in providing ideas of how to improve Muni. As one participant shared, “I felt that completing this audit was very easy to do. It helped bring awareness to the stuff that happens around me on Muni. I really appreciated doing this.”

..... CONTACT INFO

This project was jointly led by the Coalition for Community Safety and Justice (CCSJ) and Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA). For more information about this project, contact CCSJ Coalition Director Janice Li at jli@caasf.org.

Learn more about CCSJ at ccsjsf.org.

Learn more about CAA at caasf.org.