



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **MST ANNOUNCES A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH CALTRANS, VISA INTRODUCING CONTACTLESS FARE PAYMENT DEMONSTRATION**

Monterey-Salinas Transit announced on Monday a first-of-its-kind partnership with Caltrans and Visa to implement contactless fare payment technology in public transit buses to allow riders to use a contactless credit, debit, prepaid card, or contactless-enabled mobile device to pay their fare on any MST bus line. MST is the first transit agency in California to introduce a contactless payment solution on its system as part of the California Integrated Travel Project, an initiative to facilitate easy and accessible travel planning and payments.

Beginning in mid-September, MST riders can get around the Monterey-Salinas area by tapping a Visa contactless card or digital wallet to ride MST buses, removing the need to stand in line to purchase or load a separate transit card or handle cash while boarding. Whether a local or visitor to the Monterey area, the rider experience is the same – fast, easy and secure. Cybersource, a Visa solution, is supporting the project's enablement by providing the integral connection points between MST and other partners, making it quicker and easier to implement and launch.

Caltrans' California Integrated Travel Project highlights the need for transit customers across the state to access a suite of common tools to seamlessly plan and pay for their transit trip and receive any special discounts for which they may be eligible due to age, disability, income, or veteran status. Caltrans selected MST to assess the feasibility of seamless contactless payments for transit in a "real-life" environment for six months. There are hundreds of transit agencies in California, with no uniform way to plan and pay for a trip. This technology demonstration sets the stage for passengers traveling from one area to another to possess the ability to simply pay for a trip with their contactless credit, debit or prepaid card, or mobile device as they board the local transit system of their choice.

"Creating an easy-to-use, standardized payment method across different transit agencies is an important element of the California Integrated Travel Project's goal of increasing transit ridership, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting equity throughout our state's vast transportation network," said Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin.

*Advocating and delivering quality public transportation as a leader within our community and industry.*

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The demonstration between MST, Caltrans and Visa beginning in September will focus on establishing an improved rider experience for MST customers that can scale to create consistency across hundreds of transit agencies throughout California. Through results collected from the MST Rider Survey conducted during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, MST learned that customers would prefer a contactless fare payment option over using cash. In line with this trend, MST will join a growing number of cities that offer open, contactless fare payments in transit.

“Contactless payments have shaped the way consumers pay all over the world, saving valuable time and delivering a safe and secure way to pay. We are excited to be working with Monterey-Salinas Transit and Caltrans to not only improve the daily journeys of MST riders with a safe and convenient way to get around, but also showcase the benefits of open, contactless payments for transit customers and operators across California,” said Josh Martiesian, Senior Director of Transit, North America, Visa.

“As we begin the recovery of the region, MST is driven to protect, serve, and innovate as we continue providing safe, convenient and affordable mobility solutions. This pilot will protect our passengers and drivers by enabling credit and debit card holders to tap to pay for their ride quickly rather than spending time at the farebox with loose change. In a recent survey of our riders, 81% said they felt that MST’s COVID-19 cleanliness protocols are excellent or good, and 68% said they had heard about contactless credit and debit cards, so we think the time is right to launch this partnership with Caltrans and Visa,” said Carl Sedoryk, MST’s General Manager/CEO.

“The City of Monterey is known as California’s First City, so it is befitting that MST is first to implement this new technology. Many of our riders pay with coins and dollar bills. Well, now, riders can pay with any credit or debit card with the tap to pay symbol. We think this will be a major advantage for our customers,” said Dan Albert, MST Board Chair and City of Monterey vice-mayor.

“The Monterey-Salinas Transit demonstration is a great example of how transit operators can quickly and easily implement contactless fare payments to deliver safe and seamless journeys, regardless of the size or scale of their system,” said Fernando Souza, Vice President, Cybersource. “Cybersource is proud to enable and facilitate payments for this important milestone for the transit experience across California.”

The contactless readers will be installed on buses in early September, and passengers can start taking advantage of this payment option shortly thereafter. During the ensuing six months, MST will evaluate the performance of the fare payment option to determine whether it makes sense for MST and the community it serves.

For schedule information, visit [www.mst.org](http://www.mst.org) or call MST toll free at 1-888-MST-BUS1 (1-888-678-2871). For RealTime bus arrival information, text “Next” and your four-digit bus stop ID (ex., “Next 9103”) to 25370, call 1-888-MST-BUS1 with your four-digit bus stop ID, download the free Transit App, or use Google Maps. Follow MST on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/mst\\_bus](https://www.twitter.com/mst_bus) for the latest service alerts.

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