



**KATY TANG**  
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**SAN FRANCISCO SUPERVISOR KATY TANG AND SFMTA ANNOUNCE  
POLICY CHANGE TO ADDRESS MUNI SWITCHBACKS**

*New action plan decreases switchback numbers throughout city*

Supervisor Katy Tang and the SFMTA announced a policy change today to address the ongoing issue of Muni switchbacks.

A switchback occurs when a MUNI rail line changes directions from outbound to inbound in the middle of a scheduled run. This usually occurs to address service gaps throughout the system.

Muni customers, and Sunset District residents in particular, have raised concerns about switchbacks and the difficulties associated with having to disembark from a train and wait for another vehicle to carry them to the end of the line.

Since taking office, Supervisor Tang has worked with the SFMTA to address this issue. After identifying issues with the previous protocol, the SFMTA developed a new action plan for switchbacks and started implementing changes in June 2013.

“It already takes between 30 and 45 minutes to travel from the Sunset District to the heart of the City, and people travelling home from a long day at work rely on these trains to take them all the way home,” said Supervisor Tang. “Having passengers disembark in the middle of ride is unacceptable for our residents. We are happy to see that the SFMTA has made a good faith effort to carefully identify issues with their switchback procedure and that they have made changes resulting in fewer switchbacks.”

Details of the new Switchback Action Plan include:

- Only the Line Management Center (LMC) can authorize switchbacks. Previously, Line Inspectors, who are physically in the field, were able to determine when a switchback would occur. LMC staff is able to monitor the Muni system as a whole and determine when switchbacks are necessary.



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- Switchbacks must be called in by the Metro Rail Operator (MRO) and logged into the control log. Previously, switchbacks were severely underreported as it was left up to the individual operator.
- A daily report of switchbacks is logged to improve transparency.
- Switchbacks are restricted during peak hours.
- Switchbacks are restricted to situations where service gaps in other parts of the system will result in wait times longer than 20 minutes.
- MUNI will now swap operators to put them on time instead of switching back trains.

Next steps include:

- Continuing subway improvement initiatives such as reducing trains taken out of service for minor issues.
- Provide service delay information on SFMTA website

“One of our top priorities is to improve the rider’s experience on Muni,” said Ed Reiskin, SFMTA Director of Transportation. “Our operations team has been working hard to improve overall service, while working closely with Supervisor Tang, and other supervisors, to significantly reduce the practice of switchbacks on the system.”

Based on revised counts, SFMTA was reporting 309 switchbacks per month in their Central Control Log compared to over 400 in August 2013 and 700 in April 2013.

In the Sunset District, switchbacks have decreased on the N-Judah from 283 in April 2013 to 105 in November 2013. On the L-Taraval, numbers in April 2013 were at 91 and in November 2013 decreased to only 27.

“I look forward to when the SFMTA is able to reduce switchbacks even further so that they are not relied upon as a tool to deliver the service that San Franciscans expect from our transit first city,” Supervisor Tang said.

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