



JPB Board of Directors
Meeting of April 2, 2020

Correspondence as of March 25, 2020

Subject

- 1 Shelter in Place Response
- 2 WPLP Data Request
- 3 Zoom Public Comment Suggestions
- 4 Equity & Connectivity Studies Letter

From: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))
To: "Martin J Sommer"; [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))
Cc: CalMod@caltrain.com
Subject: RE: During Shelter In Place Public Health Order
Date: Monday, March 23, 2020 11:09:24 AM

Dear Mr. Sommer,

Both the Bay Area and the Governor's Order identified transit as an essential service that should continue to operate in a way that allows for essential travel for those that need it, and accommodates social distancing consistent with CDC recommendations.

We thank you for contemplating the welfare of Bay Area citizens in this difficult time.

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>
Sent: Saturday, March 21, 2020 11:55 AM
To: Board (@caltrain.com) <BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com>
Cc: CalMod@caltrain.com
Subject: During Shelter In Place Public Health Order

Hello,

I find it strange, that Caltrain continues to run during the "Shelter In Place Public Health Order". Can you please, just shut the trains down, until the order is lifted?

Perhaps, now is a good time to advance electrification construction, without the trains running?

Martin

--
Martin Sommer
650-346-5307
martin@sommer.net
www.linkedin.com/in/martinsommer

"Turn technical vision into reality."

From: [Jeff Carter](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Cc: JCARTRAIN@aol.com
Subject: WPLP Committee Meeting 25-March-2020 Item #7 COVID Update.
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 12:48:15 PM

Good Afternoon,

First of all, a big Thank-You very much to Caltrain Staff for continuing on with Caltrain business and operations during this difficult time.

Regarding my questions during the March 23, 2020, Finance Committee Meeting, I appreciate staffs hard work and efforts in preparing the COVID-19 report and the response that they will provide more data to me when feasible. This appears as item #7 on today's WPLP Agenda. I might suggest a simple solution to my inquiry: the charts presented in the report are most likely produced from an Excel spreadsheet. If the worksheets that created the charts can be provided in the agenda packet as backup information (in PDF) it would be quite helpful.

Thank-You,

Jeff Carter

From: [Adina Levin](#)
To: [Public Comment; Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)
Subject: Public comment for remote meetings
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2020 10:12:04 AM

Dear Caltrain board members and staff,

Thank you very much for hosting remote meetings and allowing public comment.

We are starting to see a number of jurisdictions use Zoom features for Public Comment.

See, for example:

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bos/Pages/Meetings.aspx>

City of Milpitas
<https://twitter.com/StevenDLee/status/1242466290620461059/photo/1>

We would urge Caltrain to do the same to facilitate public input.

Thank you very much,

Adina
Adina Levin
Friends of Caltrain
<https://greencaltrain.com>
650-646-4344

From: [Adina Levin](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Caltrain Business Plan - Equity and Connectivity
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2020 1:23:59 PM
Attachments: [Caltrain Business Plan - Equity and Connectivity.pdf](#)

Honorable Board Committee members,

Attached please find a joint letter regarding the equity and connectivity studies and recommendations in the Caltrain Business Plan agenda item.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

- Adina
Adina Levin
Friends of Caltrain
<https://greencaltrain.com>
650-646-4344



FRIENDS
OF
CALTRAIN



Seamless
Bay Area



SPUR



URBAN
HABITAT



sv@home

Date: March 25, 2020
To: Caltrain Work Program – Legislative – Planning Committee
Re: Caltrain Business Plan - Equity and Connectivity

Honorable Committee Members,

Thanks very much to the Caltrain Board for seeking the follow-up studies on equity and connectivity and to staff for doing the assessments. We are pleased to see the solid analysis and recommendations, and would like to add some commentary.

The analysis confirms that Caltrain's ridership is in fact disproportionately whiter and wealthier than the population near the corridor, and that there are actions that can be taken to diversify the ridership to be more representative of the communities it traverses.

We support the strategies that Caltrain identifies to diversify and expand ridership, including:

- Expanding service during off-peak hours and commute times outside of the white collar 9-5pm work schedule.
- Offering low-income fare products, starting by participating in the regional MTC SMART means-based discount pilot.
- Evolving and simplifying fare structure so that discounts and transfer benefits accrue equitably to all types of riders.
- Expanding and investing in first- and last-mile access improvements that enable riders to get to and from stations more safely and easily without a car.

Better integration with connecting transit - good for equity and for all

In particular, we would like to highlight the conclusion in the assessment that improving fare and schedule connections between Caltrain, BART, and local bus/light rail service is a potentially powerful strategy to diversify ridership and improve convenience for all. Caltrain's analysis also shows that improving connections with other transit lines is also a far more cost-effective strategy for increasing ridership than adding more car parking infrastructure.

The potential equity benefits of better bus/train connections is reinforced by recent results from the Reimagine SamTrans comprehensive operational analysis. SamTrans' quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups presented to the Stakeholder Advisory Group showed that one of the top improvements desired by current bus riders is better access to rail. Current SamTrans bus riders, as you know, include a greater share of low-income residents and people of color than Caltrain and than the San Mateo county population...

Opportunities for communication and understanding

In addition to pursuing improvements to service and fares to diversify and expand ridership, we also urge Caltrain to strengthen its communication to potential customers who have not had access to Caltrain in the past. We encourage outreach about the availability and value of Caltrain, in culturally appropriate ways and in relevant languages, for the neighborhoods that would benefit from improved access to Caltrain, including wayfinding signage and other materials.

As part of its regular programs of user research, we strongly encourage Caltrain to add research to uncover the needs and expectations of riders and potential riders with low-incomes. For example, In the current analysis Caltrain uses current trip data to infer that lower-income people would primarily use Caltrain for non-commute trips. We would also like insight to the question of whether low-income people would also seek to make commute trips that aren't accessible today. We hear anecdotal information about people who do not take advantage of educational and work opportunities because of lack of affordable and convenient transportation. We suspect that there would be increased opportunities for education and work that would come from opening up access to Caltrain.

Benefits, challenges and opportunities for regional coordination

Caltrain's conclusions echo the results recently found by MTC, which awarded the grand prize for a "transformative project" submission to the nonprofits SPUR and Seamless Bay Area for their proposal on regional fare integration. MTC's modeling indicated that fare integration would result in greatly increased transit ridership over time, a very high 5:1 benefit-cost ratio, and significantly improved social equity. MTC's modeling also indicated that fare integration would likely be revenue-positive over time, although there may be transition costs.

Fare integration could also help Caltrain's capital projects score better in regional project assessment processes. In the first round of analysis for PlanBayArea 2050, Caltrain's proposals for capital improvements to increase capacity and ridership scored poorly on equity. However, MTC's assessment

of regionally integrated fares showed that applying fare integration alleviated inequities associated with rail projects.

We understand that integrating fares and coordinating schedules among services provided by different agencies poses challenges under the current funding and institutional structure of Bay Area transit. Each agency reports to a different board and has a different budget; there is no entity with a clear mandate or resources to create standards for coordination. While coordinating fares and schedules would lead to greater ridership, equity, and financial benefits, there is no source for transition costs to a coordinated system, and no public entity with the authority to lead the transition.

Therefore, we urge Caltrain to support and actively participate in regional and potential state-initiated processes to overcome barriers to greater system integration, including exploring reforms to institutional structures and funding.

Housing and Caltrain access

We agree with the feedback recorded in the report, with a recommendation for Caltrain to “partner with jurisdictions along the corridor to prioritize developing affordable housing and implement anti-displacement or local preference policies near stations.”

However, we do not see this included yet in the staff recommendations.

In its recently adopted TOD policy, the Caltrain board set goals for affordable housing on land that it owns. However, most of the land near Caltrain is not owned by Caltrain and the land use policies are not set by Caltrain.

In addition, according to Caltrain’s assessments for the TOD policy, capital improvements for Caltrain and key stations are likely to have the impact of increasing property values. These capital improvements could increase the risk of displacement for lower-income renters in those areas if mitigation measures are not taken.

Therefore, we would encourage Caltrain to support strategies such as:

- The use of value capture in areas with major capital programs to generate funding, with the use of this funding to include affordable housing.
- Guidelines to support increased density and affordable housing in areas accessible to Caltrain on land not owned by Caltrain, similar to BART’s TOD Guidelines.

Thank you very much for these additions to the business plan regarding equity and connectivity, providing recommendations for ways to grow and diversify the ridership.

We urge you to support the staff recommendations, support the processes of institutional change that will enable the recommendations to be implemented, and in addition pursue housing policies that provide the benefits of Caltrain access to a greater diversity of people.

Thank you for your consideration,

Adina
Adina Levin
Friends of Caltrain
<https://greencaltrain.com>
650-646-4344

Hayley Currier
Policy Advocacy Manager
TransForm
<https://transformca.org>

Ian Griffiths
Policy Director
Seamless Bay Area
<https://seamlessbayarea.org>

Arielle Fleisher
Transportation Policy Director
SPUR
<https://spur.org>

Cat Carter
Interim Executive Director
San Francisco Transit Riders
<https://sftr.org>

Bob Allen
Director of Policy and Advocacy Campaigns
Urban Habitat
<https://urbanhabitat.org>

David Meyer
Director of Strategic Initiatives
Silicon Valley at Home
<https://siliconvalleyathome.org>