

**Bicycle Advisory Committee**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**Part 2**

**May 14, 2013 – May 16, 2013**

## Averill, Joshua

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**From:** Bartholomew, Tasha  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2013 3:37 PM  
**To:** 'Jonathan Dirrenberger'  
**Cc:** Martinez, Martha; Averill, Joshua  
**Subject:** RE: Bikes on Caltrain - Bicycle Bump Report

Hello Mr. Dirrenberger,

I know you have written Caltrain a number of times regarding bike bumps and possible solutions to the problem. I was able to speak with management in our Rail Operations Department about your concerns and suggestions. Here is what I found out:

- 1) Though some conductors allow it when done properly, it should be Caltrain policy to allow 5 bikes per rack provided they don't go over the line on the floor. Sometimes, bikes can be packed very tightly so that 5 can be as compact as 4 done sloppily. Caltrain is required to keep the aisles clear, but it seems that there is no law that says how many bikes can be on a rack, correct? I think Caltrain needs to look at being more flexible while still meeting legal requirements, and I feel like there are some opportunities here. I feel Caltrain is hung up on the pendantics/letter of some rule created a long time ago (long before bicycle bumping was an issue) and its time to revisit this rule.

Answer: **While there is no regulation with the number of bikes per rack onboard Caltrain, our Rail Operations Department believes four bikes per rack is what we can offer to ensure the safety of the riders.**

- 2) [This is the best solution] Add a 6th car to certain trains during peak hours, this car being a bike car. I have never heard a good explanation as to why Caltrain isn't pursuing this option to both increase its cyclist and non-cyclist capacity in the ensuing decade before electrification and the accompanying upgrades are complete. As far as I can tell, Caltrain has absolutely no plan on how to upgrade capacity in the next decade, and given the exploding ridership, this is unacceptable. Adding a 6th car will undoubtedly introduce complications (a half dozen or so extra cars will need to be purchased, these trains will go a little slower requiring a rejiggering of the schedule, some stations will need their platforms extended, etc.), but these are easily solvable with a little willpower and effort. It's certainly \*much\* cheaper than the electrification plans. I just don't understand what Caltrain's plan is for meeting the increasing demand for the next 5-10 years before electrification. Is the plan really to make riders, especially cyclists, suffer more and more and make their commutes more unreliable and often just plain miserable? Is this really the business plan? Because this is where it's headed, and I haven't heard a word on what Caltrain's plan is for the short- and medium-term for accommodating the increasing growth which is already overwhelming the system.

Answer: **The Rail Operations Department is looking into expanding service in the near future. This includes potentially buying some new rail cars (Bombardiers), and adding a 6<sup>th</sup> train car to some of the consists. This could likely happen within the next year.**

- 3) Why can't the limited southbound train 236 stop at 22nd St? There is a high demand for southbound trains at 22nd St in the mornings and it seems like a waste that this train just blows right by the station. This especially would help cyclists. In fact, all morning southbound trains should be stopping at 22nd St. Why can't this be implemented?

Answer: **The current schedule was developed in 2005. Advocates pushed for more service at 22nd Street, as we only had half of the Baby Bullet trains stopping there (again, only in the AM southbound). That got changed (all AM southbound Baby Bullet trains stop at 22nd Street) as part of public input and it turned out to be the right move. With the increase in overall ridership since 2005, there are many tweaks we would like to make to the timetable (including**

possibly adding stops at 22nd Street) but we need to make them as part of a comprehensive change to the timetable, which is not an easy feat. All of the requests that we have received will be taken into consideration when we begin working on a new timetable.

Finally, to make the experience more pleasant for cyclists who already have to deal with routinely being bumped, Caltrain MUST enforce a rule that non-bicyclists should be actively discouraged from sitting in the bike car and taking away the already-insufficient seating for bicyclists who need to keep an eye on their bike. The conductors need to make announcements about this and, since they are often in the bike car anyway bumping bicyclists, actually enforce the rule. I can guarantee you that the vast majority of non-bicyclists sitting in the bike car do so out of ignorance and do not understand the plight cyclists on Caltrain go through. This policy should be a no-brainer and is extremely easy to apply. To help, you need much better and more prominent signs expounding the policy. To start, why can't you paint the floors in the entrance ways with bright yellow arrows indicating bicyclists go one way and non-bicyclists the other? Also, why can't you paint the platform in the general area where the bicycle cars stop to help infrequent or first-time bicyclists determine where to go? You could also put \*prominent\* signs on the platform in the same area saying something like "Priority Boarding for Bicyclists" so that bicyclists boarding aren't slowed down by non-bicyclists cramming in the same door.

Answer: While conductors cannot tell non-cyclists not to sit in the bike car, they can encourage them to sit in the other cars as a courtesy to bicyclists. Many people have asked, "Why can't the seats in the Caltrain bike car be reserved for only bicyclists?" To answer that, we look to guidance provided by the federal Department of Transportation.

Department of Transportation Americans with Disabilities Act regulation 49 Code of Federal Regulations section 37.167(j) requires transit operators to request that riders move to allow an individual with a disability to sit in priority seating and requires the posting of signs identifying priority seats, also stating that able-bodied riders should make seats available to passengers with disabilities. The regulation then goes on to relieve operators of any requirement to force riders who say "no" to moving. Consistent with 49 CFR section 37.167, Caltrain doesn't require people sitting in priority seats to move to accommodate individuals with disabilities - who are a protected class. So, to require such movement from non-bike users to accommodate bike riders would be inconsistent, essentially placing the rights of bike riders on a higher level than the rights of people with disabilities.

Lastly, I have passed on your comments about painting the entrance floors with bright yellow arrows to our Rail Operations Department for consideration.

Best,

**Tasha Bartholomew, Community Relations Officer**

Office of Public Affairs

San Mateo County Transit District (*SamTrans, Caltrain, TA*)

1250 San Carlos Ave., San Carlos CA 94070

650.508.7927 (direct line)

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**From:** Jonathan Dirrenberger [mailto:[jonathan.dirrenberger@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.dirrenberger@gmail.com)]

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 08, 2013 8:19 AM

**To:** lindella@samtrans.com

**Cc:** Bartholomew, Tasha; bikesonboard@sfbike.org; Martinez, Martha; cac@caltrain.com; Caltrain, Bac (@caltrain.com)

**Subject:** Bikes on Caltrain - Bicycle Bump Report

Hi,

On Wednesday 8 May 2013 on southbound train 322 with the Bombardier cars (which are not standard on this train), approximately 15 bicyclists were bumped at 22nd St and 4 at Millbrae (I was barely able to get on at 4th & King St, and then only because the conductors were reasonable enough to acknowledge that 5 bicycles can be packed tightly enough to stay out of the aisle). Especially now with the nice weather and more cyclists riding, Caltrain \*needs\* a solution to the limited bicycle capacity. I have a few solutions/ideas and would love to hear a well-thought out response on each.

1) Though some conductors allow it when done properly, it should be Caltrain policy to allow 5 bikes per rack provided they don't go over the line on the floor. Sometimes, bikes can be packed very tightly so that 5 can be as compact as 4 done sloppily. Caltrain is required to keep the aisles clear, but it seems that there is no law that says how many bikes can be on a rack, correct? I think Caltrain needs to look at being more flexible while still meeting legal requirements, and I feel like there are some opportunities here. I feel Caltrain is hung up on the pendantics/letter of some rule created a long time ago (long before bicycle bumping was an issue) and its time to revisit this rule.

2) [This is the best solution] Add a 6th car to certain trains during peak hours, this car being a bike car. I have never heard a good explanation as to why Caltrain isn't pursuing this option to both increase its cyclist and non-cyclist capacity in the ensuing decade before electrification and the accompanying upgrades are complete. As far as I can tell, Caltrain has absolutely no plan on how to upgrade capacity in the next decade, and given the exploding ridership, this is unacceptable. Adding a 6th car will undoubtedly introduce complications (a half dozen or so extra cars will need to be purchased, these trains will go a little slower requiring a rejiggering of the schedule, some stations will need their platforms extended, etc.), but these are easily solvable with a little willpower and effort. It's certainly \*much\* cheaper than the electrification plans. I just don't understand what Caltrain's plan is for meeting the increasing demand for the next 5-10 years before electrification. Is the plan really to make riders, especially cyclists, suffer more and more and make their commutes more unreliable and often just plain miserable? Is this really the business plan? Because this is where it's headed, and I haven't heard a word on what Caltrain's plan is for the short- and medium-term for accommodating the increasing growth which is already overwhelming the system.

3) Why can't the limited southbound train 236 stop at 22nd St? There is a high demand for southbound trains at 22nd St in the mornings and it seems like a waste that this train just blows right by the station. This especially would help cyclists. In fact, all morning southbound trains should be stopping at 22nd St. Why can't this be implemented?

Finally, to make the experience more pleasant for cyclists who already have to deal with routinely being bumped, Caltrain **MUST** enforce a rule that non-bicyclists should be actively discouraged from sitting in the bike car and taking away the already-insufficient seating for bicyclists who need to keep an eye on their bike. The conductors need to make announcements about this and, since they are often in the bike car anyway bumping bicyclists, actually enforce the rule. I can guarantee you that the vast majority of non-bicyclists sitting in the bike car do so out of ignorance and do not understand the plight cyclists on Caltrain go through. This policy should be a no-brainer and is extremely easy to apply. To help, you need much better and more prominent signs expounding the policy. To start, why can't you paint the floors in the entrance ways with bright yellow arrows indicating bicyclists go one way and non-bicyclists the other? Also, why can't you paint the platform in the general area where the bicycle cars stop to help infrequent or first-time bicyclists determine where to go? You could also put \*prominent\* signs on the platform in the same area saying something like "Priority Boarding for Bicyclists" so that bicyclists boarding aren't slowed down by non-bicyclists cramming in the same door.

Thanks for your time, and looking forward to your response.

Jonathan Dirrenberger  
San Francisco, CA

## Averill, Joshua

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**From:** Mike Swire <mswire@credomobile.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2013 12:19 PM  
**To:** Bartholomew, Tasha; Caltrain, Bac (@caltrain.com); bikesonboard@sfbike.org; Martinez, Martha; CAC Caltrain; Nabong, Sarah; Steve Vanderlip  
**Subject:** RE: Bike thefts on Caltrain

Thanks for the response, Tasha.

I don't think that reporting non-cyclists will be of much benefit. The thieves often take a beater bike on the train and then leave with another bike so identifying non-cyclists won't be a big help. Also, there are 7-10 non-cyclists in the bike car every afternoon – how is pointing these people out to the conductor going to help?

Ultimately, the only way to solve this problem is to enable people to watch their bikes. People can't watch their bikes when they are forced to sit in another car. People can't watch their bikes when there are 10+ people standing in the aisles. Both of these situations are caused by non-cyclists sitting in the bike car.

You say that you already *request* that seats be given to the disabled, but that you don't need to force riders to sit elsewhere. If you are so interested in being consistent, why not afford cyclists the same treatment:

- Clear markings on all trains and throughout the bike car ASKING non-cyclists to sit elsewhere
- Regular announcements on all trains ASKING non-cyclists to sit elsewhere
- Placement of conductors at the bike car door during boarding, ASKING non-cyclists to sit elsewhere
- Give cyclists priority boarding at bike car doors, instead of having to wait for a horde of non-cyclists to clog up the bike car, delaying onboarding

Thanks,

Mike Swire

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**From:** Bartholomew, Tasha [mailto:bartholomewt@samtrans.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2013 10:59 AM  
**To:** Mike Swire; Caltrain, Bac (@caltrain.com); bikesonboard@sfbike.org; Martinez, Martha; CAC Caltrain; Nabong, Sarah; Steve Vanderlip  
**Subject:** RE: Bike thefts on Caltrain

Mr. Swire,

Thank you for your comments and the photo of a person of interest regarding bike thefts. I have forwarded your email to our Transit Police Department, who will look into the situation.

I have spoken with both the Transit Police and Rail Operations departments about this issue. The Transit Police recognize that bike thefts onboard Caltrain and at stations are a problem. The Transit Police are in the process of doing more enforcement. More uniformed and plain clothed deputies are expected to be on trains to monitor the situation. They also are encouraging people to report suspicious activity whenever they see non-cyclists hanging near the bike area, just as you have done.

While conductors cannot tell non-cyclists not to sit in the bike car, they can encourage them to sit in the other cars as a courtesy to bicyclists. Many people have asked, "Why can't the seats in the Caltrain bike car be reserved for only bicyclists?" To answer that, we look to guidance provided by the federal Department of Transportation.

Department of Transportation Americans with Disabilities Act regulation 49 Code of Federal Regulations section 37.167(j) requires transit operators to request that riders move to allow an individual with a disability to sit in priority seating and requires

the posting of signs identifying priority seats, also stating that able-bodied riders should make seats available to passengers with disabilities. The regulation then goes on to relieve operators of any requirement to force riders who say "no" to moving. Consistent with 49 CFR section 37.167, Caltrain doesn't require people sitting in priority seats to move to accommodate individuals with disabilities - who are a protected class. So, to require such movement from non-bike users to accommodate bike riders would be inconsistent, essentially placing the rights of bike riders on a higher level than the rights of people with disabilities.

This bike theft issue will be discussed at the next Bicycle Advisory Committee scheduled for tomorrow evening at 6:45 p.m. If your schedule allows, I encourage you to attend. Again, thank you for your input.

Best regards,

**Tasha Bartholomew, Community Relations Officer**

Office of Public Affairs

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**From:** Mike Swire [<mailto:mswire@credomobile.com>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2013 10:34 PM

**To:** Bartholomew, Tasha; Caltrain, Bac ([@caltrain.com](mailto:@caltrain.com)); [bikesonboard@sfbike.org](mailto:bikesonboard@sfbike.org); Martinez, Martha; CAC Caltrain; Nabong, Sarah; Steve Vanderlip

**Subject:** FW:

Hi Caltrain,

I was dismayed to read in the monthly correspondence file that bike theft is on the rise in the bike car. I am not surprised, however, given the number of cyclists forced to sit in other cars or upstairs given Caltrain's unwillingness to help cyclists find seats near their bikes.

Not sure if you caught anybody last month, but here is a suspect! This dude was looking mighty suspicious on the bike car this afternoon, southbound leaving SF at 520p – no bike tags, checking out others' bikes, moving in and out of the bike car and looking around a lot, moving his crappy bike from rack to rack for no apparent reason. Kind of grubby.

I informed the conductor. He seemed unaware that there were recent thefts. I would expect conductors to be on the lookout given the recent thefts.

Mike Swire

415 706 1653

[Mswire@yahoo.com](mailto:Mswire@yahoo.com)

## Averill, Joshua

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Follow us on [@SamTrans\\_News](https://twitter.com/SamTrans_News) and [@Caltrain\\_News](https://twitter.com/Caltrain_News)

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**From:** Mike Swire [mailto:mswire@credomobile.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2013 10:34 PM

**To:** Bartholomew, Tasha; Caltrain, Bac (@caltrain.com); bikesonboard@sfbike.org; Martinez, Martha; CAC Caltrain; Nabong, Sarah; Steve Vanderlip

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Mike Swire

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**Subject:** FW:  
**Attachments:** 20130514\_174002.jpg

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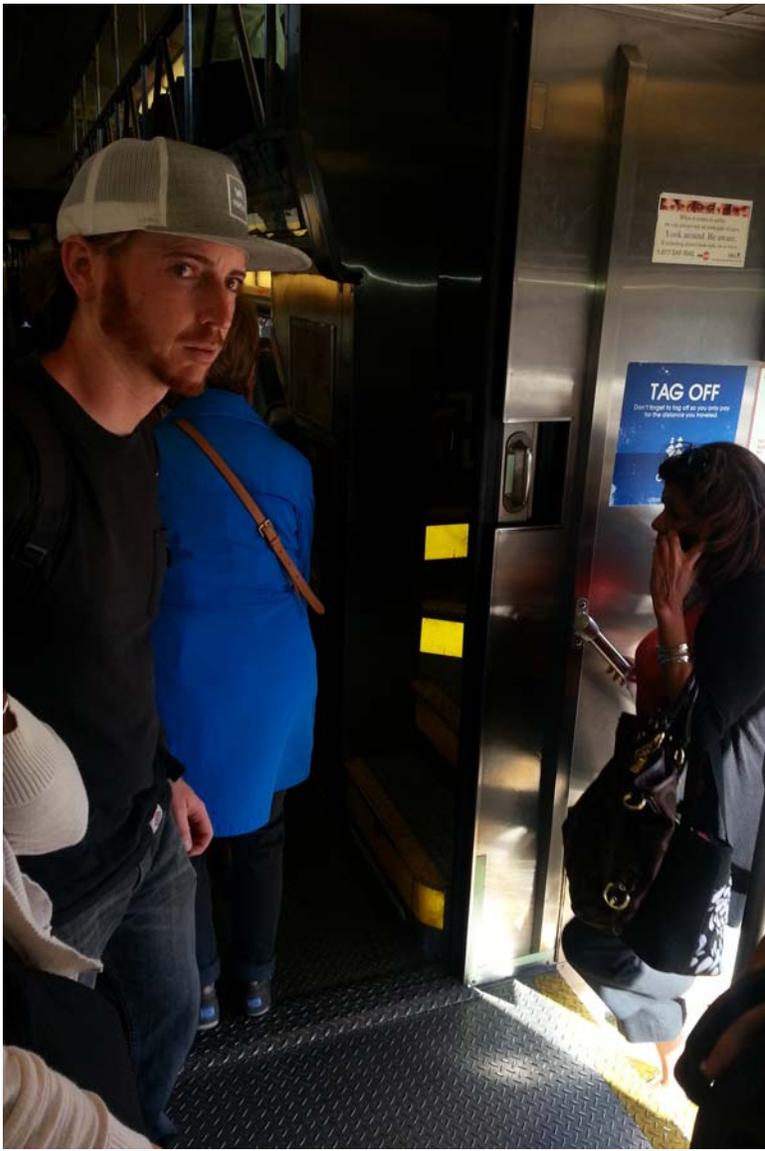
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Mike Swire

415 706 1653

Mswire@yahoo.com



## Averill, Joshua

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**From:** Shirley Johnson <dr\_shirley\_johnson@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2013 7:18 PM  
**To:** Caltrain, Bac (@caltrain.com)  
**Subject:** Caltrain is NOT meeting demand for onboard bike space  
**Attachments:** Report\_Caltrain\_Loses\_Ridership\_100921.pdf

Dear Caltrain Staff and Bicycle Advisory Committee,

I'm disheartened to see that Caltrain staff continues to claim they are nearly meeting demand for onboard bicycle capacity. This misinformation has been perpetuated for years, and it masks the gross inadequacy of current onboard bike space as well as distorts projections for future planning.

I reviewed the presentation titled "2013 Annual Passenger Counts" posted on Caltrain's website. Slide 20 states "System is accommodating 99.8% of [onboard bike space] demand." This statement is flatly false. It is based on a ratio of bumped cyclists to bike boardings, a ratio that ignores demand from:

- (1) cyclists who tried Caltrain but gave up after getting bumped too many times, and
- (2) cyclists who have never even tried Caltrain for fear of getting bumped.

Please refer to the attached report titled "Caltrain loses ridership and revenue by denying service to cyclists," which includes published letters to the editor from cyclists who quit riding Caltrain due to getting bumped. Given that few people take the time to write letters to the editor, I venture to say that we're looking at the tip of the iceberg. There are probably hundreds more cyclists who would ride Caltrain, if they knew they wouldn't be bumped. The demand is much higher than just those cyclists that Caltrain counted getting bumped during the 2013 passenger counts.

The SFBC BIKES ONboard team did an analysis to project future demand for onboard bike space that reveals approximately 13% of passengers would bring a bike onboard in 2013, if only there were sufficient bike space. See <http://tinyurl.com/SFBC-Plan>.

Caltrain's 2013 passenger counts show that 10.4% of passengers bring a bike onboard today, instead of the projected 13%. Therefore, instead of meeting 99.8% of demand, as Caltrain staff claims, Caltrain is actually meeting more like only 75% of demand.

I urge Caltrain staff to be more objective in their data analysis. It's not fair to your customers, taxpayers, or your internal planners to bury the facts under misleading statistics.

Sincerely,  
Shirley Johnson, PhD

# **Caltrain Loses Ridership and Ticket Revenue by Denying Service to Cyclists**

**BIKES ONboard project  
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition  
September 21, 2010**



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# 1. Introduction

There appears to be a pervasive belief among Caltrain staff that service denial does not drive cyclists away from using Caltrain. This belief is exemplified by statements such as:

"I personally haven't seen any of the correspondence from people saying that they no longer are taking the train."

Todd McIntyre, stated at the Caltrain Bicycle Advisory Committee meeting, August 25, 2010.

"Just adding more bike spaces doesn't necessarily mean all these spaces will be occupied. In fact, we already have a lot of trains during the day with plenty of (bike) capacity."

Christine Dunn, quoted in the San Mateo County Times in an article titled "Caltrain riders fight back against service cut proposals, offer new ideas", August 22, 2010.

"We don't know that there is latent demand for onboard bike space."

Michelle Bouchard, stated at Caltrain public meeting about raising fares and cutting service, San Francisco, May 27, 2009.

The documentation in this report demonstrates that many who have been denied onboard bicycle service (bumped) caused by capacity constraints have stopped riding Caltrain, because it has proved to be an unreliable commute method. By providing sufficient and consistent onboard bike capacity, Caltrain could win back these customers, entice new bikes-on-board clientele, and thereby increase ticket revenue.

## 2. Public Comment at Joint Powers Board Meeting

From minutes of the Joint Powers Board Meeting held April 1, 2010, posted at [http://www.caltrain.com/Assets/\\_Agendas+and+Minutes/JPB/Board+of+Directors/Minutes/040110+JPB+Minutes+Final.pdf](http://www.caltrain.com/Assets/_Agendas+and+Minutes/JPB/Board+of+Directors/Minutes/040110+JPB+Minutes+Final.pdf).

### Public Comment

Elizabeth Newton, Sunnyvale, said every time she has tried to take Caltrain with her bike there have been capacity issues. Getting bumped from Caltrain is a large risk for passengers and she has gone back to driving her car.

## 3. Letters to the Editor

The following letters to the editor are posted at [www.sfbike.org/caltrain\\_bob\\_media](http://www.sfbike.org/caltrain_bob_media). The pertinent statements are highlighted in yellow below.

### 3.1 Letter to the Editor #14: Caltrain makes driving attractive

Published in the *San Jose Mercury News* – September 20, 2008; published in the *San Mateo Daily Journal* – October 2, 2008

When I started employment with the city of Mountain View over two years ago, I drove from San Francisco four days a week. When I began using my bike and Caltrain, the change in my commute changed my life: my commute actually took less time, I was less stressed out when I got to work and when I got home from work — and I saved a ton of money on gas.

Unfortunately my commute has become inconvenient because I have been "bumped" multiple times and spent up to 45 minutes waiting for another train. This has happened so often, I've taken back to commuting by myself, in my car. It's a bummer, but it's now the less stressful mode of commuting, which is ludicrous. It seems to me that the more customers Caltrain has, the more revenue it has, and therefore the more money Caltrain can spend on getting the trains rolling in the most efficient manner. I understand that Caltrain is proposing and hoping more bike commuters will leave their bikes in lockers; but for those of us that have a mile or two to ride to each destination it is not feasible to ditch the bike.

I absolutely think the world of Caltrain employees, but the way it meters out the bike-cars absolutely mystifies me. I really hope Caltrain listens to the bike commuters themselves. We can make Caltrain more efficient, and hopefully run much smoother together.

Carrie Sandahl  
Mountain View

### **3.2 Letter to the Editor #20: Caltrain, let more bikes on**

Published in the *San Mateo Daily News* – October 2, 2008; published in the *San Mateo Daily Journal* – October 2, 2008

I'm a longtime daily Caltrain bike commuter and have recently been getting bumped from my relatively short rides between Mountain View and Palo Alto.

I've reviewed Caltrain's Draft Bicycle Access and Parking Plan, which doesn't address the fundamental problem of removing cars at both ends of the commute, mitigating the need for more parking spaces. The key is simply providing more bike capacity on board during heavy commute hours.

I therefore support the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition's Draft Plan for Bicycle Carriage.

I greatly appreciate the work Caltrain has invested during the past few years upgrading our rail transit and introducing Baby Bullet service. Clearly, there is a financial gain made by these investments which has resulted in increased ridership. Unfortunately, Caltrain is now turning away bicyclists like me who cannot accept the unpredictability of getting to work or returning home on time.

Case in point: I stopped purchasing monthly passes when bicyclists began getting bumped so am now driving on the two days when I cannot be late. I'm asking Caltrain to please invest in bikes on board by increasing bike capacity during heavy commute hours.

Gary Downing  
Menlo Park

### **3.3 Letter to the Editor #25: Promptly ignored**

Published in the *San Mateo Daily Journal* – October 14, 2008

Bike parking will not resolve the current issue for 99 percent of the bicyclists who use the train onboard capacity.

I, too, have stopped taking the train. I could not afford any more missed appointments, late arrival times for meetings, etc., due to lack of capacity on the train. Leaving my bike at a station is not an option for me, or most others who use the system. It is depressing that after more than six years of riding I had to

give it up because everyone else suddenly realized what a good idea it was. Now, it doesn't work for anyone anymore.

For me, there is no point to attending any more meetings with Caltrain staff. So far, we have been asked for our opinions; we've given them; and they have been promptly ignored. Why continue to make the effort to tell Caltrain what is needed when the reciprocal effort to do something about it does not exist. The calls for help have been clear — we need more bike capacity on the trains. When will Caltrain be ready to stop ignoring its customers and start providing the service that people have asked for time and time again? Until then, I will not waste my time repeating myself over and over again. It's obvious, no one is listening.

Christina Becher  
San Mateo

### **3.4 Letter to the Editor #31: See you on the freeway**

Published in the *Palo Alto Weekly* – November 7, 2008

Last week I was "bumped" from the bicycle portion of Caltrain not once but twice at the Mountain View station. This is not the first time I was denied boarding as I have commuted by bicycle via Caltrain for nearly seven years. November will be my last month of ridership.

In addition ... there are no rain or wind shelters in the bicycle waiting area. ... Being bumped and standing in the rain is not my idea of a tolerable commute!

... Summer is no picnic either. At the Palo Alto (downtown) station, lack of sun shelter on the concrete waiting platform causes northbound passengers to crowd into the tunnel ... to escape the heat, thereby making tunnel access for passers-by more difficult.

My challenge to those cities that are always crowing about how "green" they are becoming is this: Please consider putting your money where your mouth is and contributing funding to Caltrain (perhaps based on population) so that an additional bicycle car can be purchased along with shelters for sun and rain. More benches would be welcome, too! Train passengers ... are also your residents. Until then, **I'll see you on the freeway.**

Karen Escobar  
Mountain View

### **3.5 Letter to the Editor #33: Caltrain: plan for rush hour**

Published in the *Burlingame Daily News* – November 12, 2008; published in the *San Mateo Daily Journal* – November 18, 2008

First off, I love Caltrain. I live down in Palo Alto and work in SoMa and I couldn't imagine a more convenient mode of public transit. Only downside is the occasional bump I get during rush hours to and from San Francisco: The bike cars are often full, leaving me and sometimes up to 20 other bikers stranded until the next train comes through.

Being able to carry my bike on Caltrain is an essential component of my commuting, saving me on average 45 minutes a day so I don't have to get on Muni or take a cab or (deep breath) drive to work. **Every time I'm prevented from getting on Caltrain due to capacity issues, the time savings is eliminated and I think a little more about driving the car to work just to avoid the hassle and uncertainty.**

I understand there are budgetary constraints, and that adding an extra car might seem unnecessary given the fact that many more non-bikers use Caltrain than bikers, but the current capacity issues are causing similar reservations in the minds of many other bike commuters as well. By adding another bike car to rush-hour trains, Caltrain would keep us from ditching the bikes and encourage others to ditch their cars and get two wheels.

Max Haines-Stiles  
Palo Alto

### **3.6 Letter to the Editor #50: Bikes onboard Caltrain**

Published in the *San Mateo Daily Journal* – January 20, 2009

Without the Bikes Onboard program, I would drive rather than take Caltrain. Bumping is a real deterrent to biking with Caltrain. If a transit mode cannot offer reliable time of arrival, people will not use it.

I take Caltrain for several reasons. It is the right thing to do for the environment and the future of the planet, it is the right thing to offer my fellow Bay Area residents, to relieve traffic congestion and it provides me with personal benefits — a healthy brief workout four times each day with no traffic stress, and extra time to work and relax.

Caltrain riders who are deterred from biking (due to bumping fears) represent lost ridership. In this new era of cheap-again gas and recession-induced reduced traffic congestion, last year's recent gains in ridership are at risk of loss if Caltrain riders and bikers revert to driving.

Jaime Guerrero  
San Francisco

### **3.7 Letter to the Editor #57: Thank you, Caltrain**

Published in the *Palo Alto Daily News* – March 10, 2009; published in the *San Mateo County Times* – March 11, 2009

I am a commuter dependent on Caltrain to get me to work. I have put up with being bumped routinely by sucking it up and walking to and from the station most days, extending my commute at least half an hour each day, rather than risk the high likelihood of being bumped from several trains and waiting an hour or more at the station to get to work or home late. I have been driving more frequently rather than risk sitting on the platform wasting my time.

I'm glad Caltrain finally sees the larger picture and I'm glad the plan to remove extra seating has finally caught on. The trains have almost never been 100 percent full of non-bike passengers (the only time it's even close is during Giants games!), yet cyclists get bumped while seats are still empty. I have never seen a train turn away an on-time non-bike passenger, but I have seen several trains turn away more than 30 cyclists waiting to get home, and have been bumped more times than I can count.

Taking out the empty passenger seats that make no money to allow additional fare paying cyclists on board makes too much sense to ignore. I would go back to riding my bike on Caltrain more often for days I now normally drive, and I'm sure more cyclists that have reverted to driving will again start riding the train if the likelihood of being bumped is greatly reduced.

Theral Mackey  
Burlingame

### **3.8 Letter to the Editor #65: Caltrain no place for bikes**

Published in the *San Francisco Examiner* – June 11, 2009

I was recently bumped from Caltrain twice on the same day due to limited bike capacity. On 22nd Street at 8:19 a.m. going south, about 10 other bikers were there and some had been bumped three consecutive times that morning. Then, I was bumped again in Palo Alto heading north at 6:06 p.m.

I need to get to work on time, and if this happens with any regularity I will be forced to drive rather than take Caltrain. The railway needs to add more bike capacity during peak commuting hours.

Jason Wolfe  
San Francisco

### **3.9 Letter to the Editor #67: Caltrain inconvenience necessitates driving**

Published in the *San Francisco Examiner* – September 22, 2009; published in the *San Mateo Daily Journal* – September 23, 2009; published in the *San Mateo Daily News* – September 24, 2009; published in the *Mountain View Voice* – September 25, 2009

I am a Caltrain monthly pass holder who, along with other cyclists, is regularly bumped at the San Antonio stop. I occasionally have an early meeting and need to take this train, and now always drive to work instead because I know I cannot rely on this train. Ridiculous!

Matt Foist  
Mountain View

### **3.10 Letter to the Editor #87: Bikes and Caltrain**

Published in the *San Mateo Daily News* – December 3, 2009

I greatly appreciate bringing my bike on Caltrain every morning to get to work. Having used public trains everywhere from New York to Chicago to Shanghai, I've been very impressed with the punctuality of the service, comfort and cleanliness of the trains, and the professionalism of the personnel. I was extremely satisfied with the provisions for bringing bicycles onboard when, unfortunately, two days in a row my regular morning Caltrain No. 230 arrived with only a single bike car and I was unable to board. As a result, I was approximately 40 minutes late.

I really want to be able to ride Caltrain, but I need a reliable way of getting to work. If this keeps happening, I'm not going to have any choice but to drive to work, since punctuality is important to me and my company. It's unfeasible to take advantage of Caltrain without my bicycle, as I live too far from the nearest station to make walking an option.

With expanded and standardized bicycle capacity, it would make Caltrain a more viable option for commuting. This would be an easy win for everyone involved, as it could increase ridership and revenues while reducing traffic congestion and pollution.

Felix Pomerantz  
San Francisco

### **3.11 Letter to the Editor #94: Be bike friendly, Caltrain**

Published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* – January 3, 2010

As a frequent Caltrain rider, it is very important to me that Caltrain's Short-Range Transit Plan do as much as possible to facilitate bicycle commuters (like me) who bring their bicycles on the train.

I greatly appreciate the addition of second bike cars to some peak-hour routes. Even so, I continue to be bumped once every week or two.

The risk of experiencing such a disruptive event discourages me from riding Caltrain when I am on a tight schedule. I would like to ride Caltrain five days a week, but with current bike capacity I cannot do this (and choose to drive instead).

Some concrete suggestions that would enable me to rely on Caltrain more often are: meet pent-up bike demand by replacing empty seats with additional bike racks, and add bike cars to the Bombardier trains, because bike capacity on a Bombardier bike car is about half the capacity on a Gallery car.

Additional bike capacity and the improved reliability it would bring are the surest ways to increase my personal Caltrain ridership.

Michael Dworsky  
San Francisco

### **3.12 Letter to the Editor #102: Room for cyclists, please**

Published in the *San Mateo Daily Journal* – May 14, 2010; published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* – May 17, 2010

There is a clear indication that two bike cars are necessary on all limited and baby bullet trains. These are heavily utilized commuter trains and it is unacceptable that a train can be overfilled before it has begun service at the Fourth and King Caltrain Station. Turning away paying customers who are trying to get to work or return home is unacceptable. I would prefer to keep control over my commute schedule and drive home if Caltrain cannot maintain appropriate space for all of its riders.

If Caltrain cannot guarantee space on the train for me after I have purchased a ticket then I will simply not ride anymore. Caltrain must provide enough room for cyclists or inform us before we purchase our tickets that they will not be honored.

DJ Allison  
San Francisco

### **3.13 Letter to the Editor #110: Caltrain bumps itself out of money**

Published in the *San Mateo Daily News* – August 6, 2010; published in the *San Mateo Daily Journal* – August 11, 2010

Once again, five bicyclists with valid tickets were denied boarding on the southbound Caltrain bullet No. 324 at the 22nd Street station as the conductor claimed both bike cars were full. For a limited bullet train service, more bike capacity is required to serve customers.

My journey to work in San Jose took 45 minutes longer than planned and the unreliability of Caltrain will require me to drive rather than take the train on any working day when being late is unacceptable.

As Caltrain faces budget cuts, wouldn't the additional revenue from carrying more bikes help to fill the gap?

Simon Aspinall  
San Francisco

### **3.14 Letter to the Editor #118: Bumping bikes**

Letter to the Editor, published in the San Mateo Daily Journal – September 7, 2010

On my morning commute on Caltrain, it came to my attention that there were several fewer bike racks than bikers. One guy was bumped off the train, and several people had to stack bikes hilariously deep or simply stand for their entire ride.

Looking around the rest of the train, there were more than enough seats for everyone. I would estimate this only has to happen a few times before I would just start driving to work, and I've been told that droves of people have done exactly that.

Caltrain probably says they don't have the money to replace empty seats with bike racks, but this is such a quick payback that I'll preemptively say that Caltrain's reasoning is off a bit. I don't know how hard it is to remove seats and install racks, but I have a power drill and it would only take a few hours I bet.

Steve Connor  
San Francisco

## **4. Survey of Cyclists**

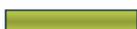
The BIKES ONboard project conducted a survey of all cyclists who reported bumps to Caltrain Customer Service from August 5, 2008 through August 28, 2010 . The survey was sent via email on August 29, 2010, and results were compiled September 2, 2010. Fifty-nine cyclists responded to the survey.

The survey results demonstrate that Caltrain has lost ridership due to unreliable bike capacity, forcing cyclists to find other commute methods. The most common alternate commute method is driving alone, increasing traffic congestion, pollution, and fossil fuel usage. Survey responses are shown on the next page.

**Have you ever decided not to ride Caltrain with your bicycle to avoid the risk of getting bumped?**

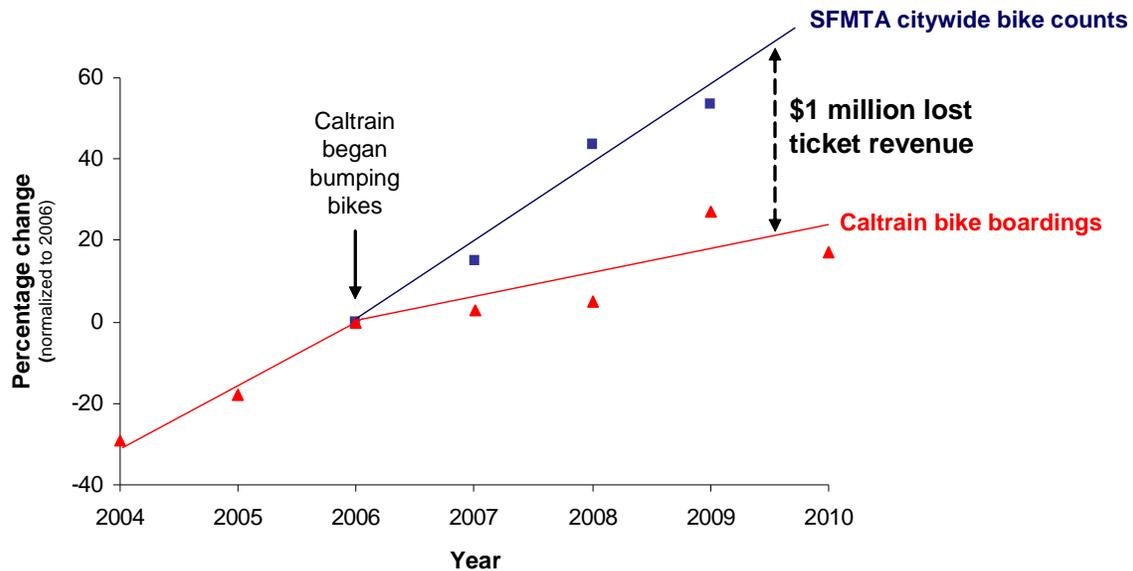
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		79.7%	47
No		20.3%	12
		answered question	59
		skipped question	0

**If you have ever chosen another commute method to avoid the risk of getting bumped, what was it (select all that apply)?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
I have not chosen another commute method to avoid the risk of getting bumped		17.2%	10
Drive alone		53.4%	31
Bike the whole way		27.6%	16
Park my bike at the station, ride Caltrain, and then use bus, shuttle, or walk at the other end		24.1%	14
Carpool or vanpool		6.9%	4
Bus		8.6%	5
Shuttle		8.6%	5
BART		8.6%	5
Walk		8.6%	5
Telecommute		22.4%	13
		answered question	58
		skipped question	1

## 5. Analysis of Increase in Bicycle Ridership

Figure 1 shows that Caltrain bicycle boardings were increasing at the same rate as citywide bike counts in San Francisco. In 2006, however, Caltrain ran out of bike space, and started routinely denying service to cyclists. As a result, bicycle boardings on Caltrain suddenly fell off, while citywide bike counts continued the same upward trajectory. Caltrain lost over one million dollars in ticket revenue last year due to limited bike capacity.



**Figure 1:** Increase in bicycle ridership as measured by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and Caltrain annual passenger counts. Lost ticket revenue was calculated assuming an average ticket price of \$3.60.

## 6. Conclusion

Unreliable service due to insufficient bike capacity has forced many cyclists back into their cars, costing Caltrain ridership and revenue.

Caltrain can win these customers back by increasing bike capacity to consistent 80 bikes per train. Eight train sets already have 80 bike spaces, so Caltrain just needs to upgrade the remaining 12. With reliable bike capacity, more cyclists will ride the train and bring badly needed operating revenue to Caltrain.

## Averill, Joshua

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**From:** Margaret Pye <pyem@sonic.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2013 6:41 PM  
**To:** Nabong, Sarah  
**Cc:** bikesonboard@sfbike.org; Martinez, Martha; Bartholomew, Tasha; cac@caltrain.com; Caltrain, Bac (@caltrain.com)  
**Subject:** Bikes on Caltrain Comment-- I \*almost\* got bumped

Hi,

This morning, I boarded the southbound train # 206, with my bike, in San Carlos at 6:44am. (I was headed to Cal Ave in Palo Alto.)

Between San Carlos and Redwood City a conductor came through and said we had too many bikes, and some would need to get off the train in Redwood City, or the train would not move until we got off.

I realized I was the most recent bike on the train, so I would have to get off.

I asked the conductor if the other bike car had any room and she said no, the other bike car was also at full capacity.

So, when we got to Redwood City, I got off the train, looked mournfully over my shoulder at the train, and set off towards El Camino on my bike (realizing that I would be late for work, and that I would have paid \$5.00 for a \$3.00 trip).

However, I noticed another bicyclist running like mad from one bike car to another.

I realized that the other bike car had room for more bikes!

I also ran like mad to the bike car and got on the train, and continued my trip.

I made it to work on time.

So this is a bike success story and an "almost bumped" report.

I would like to recommend that conductors not tell bicyclists about available bike space in the \*other\* bike car, unless they actually know their info to be true.

I was given erroneous info by the conductor, and that almost resulted in a disastrous morning commute for me.

I don't ride Caltrain to work very often, and I'm afraid this morning's experience will encourage me to continue avoiding Caltrain.

I don't like the uncertainty of whether I will be allowed on the train.

I'd rather bicycle all the way to Palo Alto, get good exercise, and be confident that I am in control of my commute, not at the whim of the train rules and regulations. And I'd rather keep my \$5.00 for special things, not motorized transport.

Thanks for listening!

--Margaret Pye  
San Carlos