



JPB Board of Directors
Meeting of August 6, 2020

Correspondence as of July 21, 2020

Subject

1 Idling Trains

2 Saving Caltrain

3 Caltrain Ballot Measure

4 Atherton Station

From: [Tietjen, Brent](#)
To: [Raymond Chang](#)
Cc: [Public Comment](#); [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)
Subject: RE: Idling Trains at San Francisco Station Caltrain
Date: Friday, July 17, 2020 1:50:43 PM

Hi Raymond,

Thanks again for your email. I have continued the conversations with our operations team and they have assured me that we are doing everything we can to reduce idling to the extent possible. As outlined in the policy I shared earlier, in general trains should be shut down within an hour of arrival and not be started prior to an hour before departure. There will be circumstances where adjustments in the field need to be made and where trains may need to idle longer.

We have asked our field crews to utilize track 12 to shutdown trains that are arriving earlier in the evening and that are not going back into service when possible. As with all the protocols outlined, there will be times when this does not occur because of extraordinary circumstances and unplanned train moves.

At this point, staff has done all we can to reduce idling at the station. I have forwarded all of your suggestions to our operations team for consideration and review. Going forward, I encourage you to direct any comments or additional suggestions to our Customer Service line at 1.800.660.4287.

Best,
Brent

From: Raymond Chang [mailto:raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 4:28 PM
To: Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com>
Cc: Public Comment <PublicComment@samtrans.com>; Board (@caltrain.com) <BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Idling Trains at San Francisco Station Caltrain

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the San Mateo County Transit District. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Hi Brent,

I'd like to follow up on my previous email. I'm aware that the funding situation for Caltrain is probably the biggest issue right now, and I do hope that Caltrain can have its funding situation figured out. But I personally would also greatly appreciate it if Caltrain is able to be a good neighbor to the people who happen to live around the 4th and King Station.

If the idling situation cannot be improved upon, can operations at least consider my proposal to have the idling trains idle in the middle tracks surrounded by trains that are done for the day?

Thanks,
-Raymond

On Wed, Jul 8, 2020 at 12:41 PM Raymond Chang <raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com> wrote:
Hi Brent,

Thanks again for your time responding to my concerns. However, I still feel like there's a need for me to follow up.

In regards to the wayside power unable to be used for cleaning / unloading of passengers - that doesn't make much sense to me. I know it's easier to leave the train idling during cleaning, but when there's a long turnaround time, then shouldn't the trains be shut down as soon as possible upon arrival and unboarding of passengers? I was cc'd on an email from Adrian B. who echoed the same sentiments regarding the usage of wayside power.

For example, last night I observed one of the trains idling on Platform 12 as early as 9:30 PM (which is... already quite late). I thought the train was going to be done for the night, but it turns out that it was idling prior to the **12:05 AM** departure, so that particular train was idling for at least 2.5 hours, only to depart carrying less than 10 passengers total. And the last arrival into San Francisco decided to park at Platform 11, so I heard idling trains at least until **1:20 AM**. And both of these trains happened to be powered by the MP36PH-3C (aka the newer locomotives), which from my observation happen to be the loudest.

Proof:

https://twitter.com/ray__chang/status/1280751810978803712

https://twitter.com/ray__chang/status/1280760657441255424

Once again, I'm asking for:

1. reduced **unnecessary** idling of locomotives. Per our previous correspondence, you mentioned that under normal circumstances, trains should not be idling for more than 1 hour prior to departure. But I've observed cases (per my example above) where that is clearly not the case. I understand that train idling is necessary to some extent, but having a **train idling for almost 3 hours** past 9 pm seems... unnecessary.
2. I would kindly ask for more consideration regarding track placement of locomotives. I would ask that:
 - trains that need to idle past 8/9 pm **aren't placed on Platforms 11/12**. If they need to idle, place them in the **middle tracks** so that the other trains can absorb some of the noise.
 - to **not have locomotives 923 - 928 idle at the outer tracks** at any time. Those ones seem to be the **loudest** trains in Caltrain's fleet (which is odd, considering they are newer)

It's really frustrating to have to write these emails and have nothing to show for them - it's been 3+ months, and nothing really has changed at all. I know that Caltrain is suffering from funding issues and is considering a sales tax measure to help support Caltrain's operations. I'd normally be all for such a measure, but based on my interactions the past several weeks, all prior goodwill with Caltrain has been completely lost.

Thanks,
-Raymond

On Tue, Jun 30, 2020 at 4:05 PM Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com> wrote:
Hi Raymond,

Thanks again for your email. In response to your question #1 on June 22, our operations team let me know that the wayside power cannot be used during cleaning because both the HEP and main engine are connected and provide the power/air for all of our safety devices such as the radio, intercoms, brakes, doors, and lighting.

With regards to trains operating past 8pm, please note that we have many revenue service trains coming in and leaving the San Francisco Station past 8pm with our last train arriving at 12:05am. There are also times when operations will have to run dead head trains to prepare for service in San Jose, shift trains to our maintenance facility for repair as well as a number of other circumstances where you may see trains that are not on the schedule.

Unfortunately, we do not have the agency staff and resources to provide evidence of train movements, platform arrivals and start/end time of each train. Our crews are doing what they can to reduce idling as much as possible with the constraints of running a railroad. I have forwarded your suggestion for track placement the operations team for consideration.

Thank you again for your comments and suggestions.

Best,
Brent Tietjen

From: Raymond Chang [mailto:raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 2:56 PM
To: Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com>
Cc: Public Comment <PublicComment@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Idling Trains at San Francisco Station Caltrain

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the San Mateo County Transit District. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Hi Brent,

Just another quick follow up - I've been in correspondence with someone else frustrated at the current idling situation, and they suggested the following:

Documenting for each platform:

- train or locomotive arrival time (date, time, incoming train #, locomotive #)
- train or locomotive departure time (date, time, outgoing train #, locomotive #)

While also recording the start and/or end time of each of the following for each platform:

- tests (along with type)
- inspections (along with type)
- maintenance (along with type)
- locomotive shutdown or restart

- locomotive leaving w/o train or arriving to couple to train
- connection or disconnect train to wayside power (not the same as loco shutdown or restart)

Collection and analysis of this kind of **very easily recorded data** would very quickly reveal any **failure** to follow procedures, instead of having things improve for 2-3 days, and reverting back to normal.

Caltrain spent **millions of dollars** installing the wayside power in SF, SJ and at their CEMOF maintenance facility, so why not use the equipment for saving fuel, reducing engine hours, and cutting both air and noise pollution ... and maybe even improve the livability of the surrounding areas. Once again, just a reminder that the new electric trains are at least several years away, and it's unreasonable for current residents of Mission Bay to deal with this ongoing issue, especially when we're being asked to stay at home due to COVID-19, **AND** the fact that there is already existing equipment available that can help mitigate this issue.

And once again, I want to suggest that trains that will need to **idle late into the night** (i.e past 8/9 pm) be **parked at the central platforms**, so the other empty trains can act as a **sound barrier**. I would love to have an actual enclosed station, but at this rate, that would probably happen by 2050...

Thanks,
-Raymond

On Thu, Jun 25, 2020 at 4:05 PM Raymond Chang <raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com> wrote:
Hi Brent,

Just wanted to follow up on my previous email - I've noticed that the idling situation has been really bad the past several days. I've heard idling noises past 1:20 AM last night right before I went to bed...

I saw a public comment by Chad H. who suggested:

1. The first train that is ready to be shut down for the night, park it at **Platform #12**. This will create a wall that blocks noise from other trains. The trains are over 12 feet wide and almost 20 feet high, they act as a fantastic noise wall.
2. **Do not idle trains at platform #12**. The noise echoes down King street and adds significantly to neighborhood noise. If you need to idle trains **past 9pm** in the neighborhood, park those trains on **platforms 4-9**, and as a backup on **platforms 2-3**

IF for some reason, the anti-idling policies are unable to be enforced properly (and this could be done in conjunction with reducing idling), this would at least alleviate some of the noise pollution issues nearby residents face, because the empty trains would be able to block out some of the idling noises. However, this won't really solve the air pollution issue...

I personally am a fan of public transportation and the fact that it helps decrease overall car reliance. However this back-and-forth the past several months has made me extremely frustrated at the lack of improvements, despite my constant pestering. I've already tried doing the following:

- filing a noise complaint: for some odd reason when I called SFPD, they redirected me to the

San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, which didn't do much unfortunately

- wrote to the California Air Resource Board (CARB) - they reached out to Caltrain, but unfortunately they don't have anyway to enforce idling limits
- called the Bay Area Air Quality Management District - they unfortunately also don't have anyway to enforce idling limits
- wrote to the Caltrain Board of Directors, my district supervisor, Mayor London Breed
- wrote to a SF Chronicle Reporter who wrote an article about prior complaints about idling (<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Some-Mission-Bay-neighbors-fuming-over-12383764.php>)
- posting a bunch of idling videos on my Twitter and tagged the Caltrain Twttier handle in them - no dice
- created a petition and shared it during the board meeting - things seemed to improve for about 2 days. Then went back to normal

At the end of the day, I just want Caltrain to do their job in ensuring the noise and air pollution is reasonable to the nearby residents. At this rate, I don't think Caltrain is doing enough, considering all the anti-idling procedures and equipment available, because I don't really see them being enforced / used.

Thanks,
-Raymond

On Mon, Jun 22, 2020 at 3:34 PM Raymond Chang <raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com> wrote:
Hi Brent,

I appreciate your response to my concerns. I do realize that with the schedule changes due to COVID-19, it might present scenarios where the layover time of trains might be increased compared to the normal schedule. However, I do have some follow up questions / suggestions:

1. In the operation protocol document sent above, it states the following:

| Typically, both the HEP and Main engines run during passenger unloading and cleaning.

Why do both the HEP and main engines need to be on during passenger unloading and cleaning? Isn't that one of the reasons why wayside power exists at the station? According to the Caltrain website:

| Wayside power or "hotel power" allows Caltrain to plug into electricity during key maintenance activities to minimize diesel fuel consumption and idling emissions.

If there is a reason why the engines need to be running while cleaning the train + unloading passengers, then I would like to know why that is. It doesn't seem like an entire diesel locomotive is required to clean a train...

2. I do appreciate having these operation protocols in written form, but is there a way to ensure their enforcement? I'm thinking that if there's a timesheet of when trains are started / stopped would prove helpful (and it would probably be nice if this could be done in an automated fashion) - would be nice if this information could be shared with me, but I understand if it's not possible.

I really wish I don't have to keep on writing these emails, but I think it's important for both the environment and the nearby residents that the idling situation improves - even though I know that the new EMUs are on the horizon, there's still several more years until those are in

service.

Thanks,
-Raymond

On Tue, Jun 16, 2020 at 4:36 PM Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com> wrote:
Hi Raymond,

Thanks for reaching out again. On Monday, June 15, we implemented a new schedule with additional train service. Our operations team will continue to monitor the crews in the field to ensure they are keeping the idling to a minimum. We understand this can be a frustrating time to be living next to a railroad as we are required to shelter-in-place. I will continue to share your complaints with the operations team to check it against our protocol procedures.

I have worked with our operations team to update the station protocols and I have attached that document here for your information. As mentioned previously, these are protocols that will be followed during normal operations. There will be times where field crews will have to adjust which may result in trains idling longer than one hour. Examples of this would be if an issue with the train was discovered during inspection/arrival. This may require crews to idle the train to troubleshoot and resolve the issue. Unexpected changes in operations (e.g. vehicle strike) may also require changes to the operations at the station.

Thanks,
Brent

From: Raymond Chang [mailto:raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 3:46 PM
To: Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com>
Cc: Public Comment <PublicComment@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Idling Trains at San Francisco Station Caltrain

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the San Mateo County Transit District. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Hi Brent,

I'd like to follow up on this email - I distinctly remember observing that from 6/4 - 6/7 (where 6/4 happened to be the day of the Caltrain board meeting, where I brought attention to the previous email I sent during a public comment), I observed a lot less idling at the station. However, things have reverted back to where they were before, with plenty of instances where there was no train that arrived prior to an hour before, and where there were no trains departing in the next hour, yet there were still several trains idling at once (for example - https://twitter.com/ray_chang/status/1272369753332445185 was a clip I took last night at 8:26 PM, with the last arrival at 7:22 PM, and the next departure at 9:37 PM).

As much as everyone wishes that the new EMUs are up and running soon, currently they're scheduled to enter service by 2022 at the earliest (and based on what I've seen with other

public transportation projects in the Bay Area i.e the SF MUNI Central Subway, the BART Berryessa extension, I am highly pessimistic that there won't be any delays, but that's besides the point here). Given the amount of noise and sound pollution these diesel engines make, I don't think it's reasonable for residents of the area to deal with this for the next 2 years, especially considering that there are systems in place to reduce the engine idling. By reducing idling time, Caltrain can save on fuel costs, and help reduce air and noise pollution in the neighborhood.

I've been extremely frustrated over the past 2 months, spending much of my time and energy trying to improve this situation. At times, I've seen improvements in regards to the idling situation, but those improvements only last about 2-3 days, before reverting back to normal. This whole situation with the idling trains has made me strongly consider moving out of the area, but even if I end up doing so, I believe Caltrain has responsibility to not excessively harm the environment, and the mental wellbeing of the residents that live nearby the stations.

I sincerely hope I can receive some sort of resolution on this matter, as this issue is affecting a lot of nearby residents, and with all the craziness going on in the world today, it would be nice if we didn't have to worry about excessive train idling as well.

Thanks,
-Raymond

On Mon, Jun 8, 2020 at 3:43 PM Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com> wrote:
Hi Raymond,

I wanted to acknowledge that we have received your email. I am working with our team to get you a response.

Best,
Brent

From: Raymond Chang [mailto:raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 2:28 PM
To: Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com>
Cc: Public Comment <PublicComment@samtrans.com>
Subject: Re: Idling Trains at San Francisco Station Caltrain

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the San Mateo County Transit District. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Hi Brent,

Hope you are doing well - just wanted to follow up on my previous email. I have seen some improvements in regards to idling trains, but the improvements seem to be sporadic (I've noticed over the previous weekends that trains seem to be idling less, but the weekdays are a different story - seems like there's little to no improvement in that regard). A lot of the nearby residents share the same sentiments as me, so I created a petition here: <https://www.change.org/p/caltrain-reduce-caltrain-idling-at-4th-and-king> and managed

to get close to 50 signatures.

I've been recording video of the trains idling and sharing them on my Twitter account, and here are several examples:

https://twitter.com/ray__chang/status/1267546836169920512

https://twitter.com/ray__chang/status/1267348376577732608

https://twitter.com/ray__chang/status/1265361206753157120

(there's a lot more examples and I can share video proof from my apartment. Granted, I can't tell exactly how many trains are idling at a given time, but I can definitely hear them...)

Another resident of the area has also shared with me images of the trains idling without using available wayside power:

<https://twitter.com/hadlock/status/1267291792879128577>

I've shared correspondence with another nearby resident, Toby Levine (who previously shared her sentiments about the excessive idling in this [SF Chronicle article from 2017](#)) and this is what she observed over the years:

When we moved here in 2007, we were shocked by the Caltrain noise and pollution, much of which was caused by engine idling. We organized a lot of complaints and protests. Eventually, Caltrain began to listen. We came to agreements that included the use of ground power. By using ground electric power, they could really limit their engine idling, which they did. However, the diesel engines were still filthy and very, very old and continued to cause pollution. Then two things happened. Funds began to be available to switch to all electric power, and that is what they have been doing for the past several years. However, they also switched to an outside firm to manage the trains, rather than Caltrain doing so. We observed that they were idling much more and had little interest in maintaining the old reduced idling schedules and using their ground power.

At this point, I'm not sure how strictly these anti-idling measures have been enforced. Given the current schedule, there should be 1-2 trains idling at once max, but sometimes it seems like there are 5+ trains idling all at once. This makes it really hard for the people in our community to have our windows open (and given that summer is approaching, there are times where we need to have our windows open), due to both the noise and pollution. Even with all windows closed, I can still hear a constant rumbling noise (using my phone, it measures at around 91hz, which can't be easily blocked with just windows, and sounds similar to this [90hz test tone](#)).

I would appreciate some sort of resolution on this matter - and if trains are indeed only idling for 1 hour pre-departure and post-arrival, I would like to get some proof of that, because from what I can tell, it just doesn't seem to be the case. I truly appreciate your time to listen to my concerns (and the concerns of those who live near the station).

Thanks,
-Raymond

On Thu, May 21, 2020 at 4:19 PM Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com> wrote:
Hi Raymond,

Our operations team went to the station earlier this week and worked with the field crews to review

the schedule and minimize the need for idling when possible. They confirmed that, in general, trains should not be idling more than an hour prior to departure or an hour after arrival. There may be some extraordinary circumstances that may require idling for longer periods of time, however, this should not be the norm.

For your first question, there are a number of factors that require us to complete the light maintenance work at the terminal stations. The main reason is that to service all trains at the maintenance facility in San Jose would require us to run trains back and forth from the facility prior to each day of service. The maintenance facility in San Jose is also used for more intensive maintenance/inspections, such as wheel grinding and engine repairs. The daily operations of our service does not allow us to utilize that facility for the lighter maintenance activities that occurs at the terminal stations. There are no alternative locations to perform this work. There is some construction for Caltrain Electrification nearby and that can affect the ability for trains to come in and out of the station, but overall the maintenance activities have been occurring at the station for many years .

We appreciate the comments about reducing service, but at this time there are no plans for further reductions.

I hope this helps. Let me know if you'd like to discuss further via a call.

Thanks,
Brent

From: [K.W](#)
To: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))
Subject: Saving Caltrain
Date: Friday, July 17, 2020 8:31:20 PM

I live in SC county and rely on the train for work in a medical clinic as many of us did pre covid
How do we support ways to prevent a shutdown?
Who do we contact?
I know the proposed tax is on the block and struggling
Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

July 20, 2020

Honorable David Pine, Chair
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors
1250 San Carlos Avenue
San Carlos, CA 94070
Via email: dpine@smcgov.org

RE: Caltrain 1/8-cent sales tax ballot measure- SUPPORT

Dear Chair Pine:

Larry Klein
Mayor

Nancy Smith
Vice Mayor

Gustav Larsson
Councilmember

Glenn Hendricks
Councilmember

Russ Melton
Councilmember

Michael S. Goldman
Councilmember

Mason Fong
Councilmember

On behalf of the City of Sunnyvale, I am writing to express my strong support for the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board's (Caltrain's) efforts to allow voters to consider a one-eighth cent sales tax in the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara for the purpose of operating, maintaining and improving Caltrain commuter rail service.

Caltrain performs one of the most important transportation services in the state. The Caltrain Corridor closely parallels Highway 101 between San Francisco and San Jose. This portion of Highway 101 is both one of the most congested highway corridors in the country as well an economic juggernaut. Expanded Caltrain service is needed to help accommodate continued job and population growth throughout a corridor that supports innovative solutions not just for the region but also the state and country.

Caltrain is the only passenger rail service in the Bay Area without a dedicated permanent source of funding. With ridership demand expected to triple by 2040, it is essential that the agency be equipped with the resources to maintain and increase services.

A one-eighth cent sales tax across all three counties would generate approximately \$100 million per year to help support the operation of enhanced Caltrain service levels throughout the corridor from San Francisco to Gilroy. Enhanced service levels will more fully serve expected market demand on the Caltrain corridor over the next decade and beyond. It will deliver many benefits to the Caltrain corridor communities, including:

- increased capacity to support ridership growth
- longer time periods for peak service, and
- additional service in the off-peak periods

This enhanced service will lead to a massive increase in service frequency along the Caltrain corridor, resulting in most of Caltrain stations receiving service levels of 4- or 8-trains per hour per direction (as compared to just a handful of stations that receive this level of service today).

In addition to benefiting the Caltrain corridor communities, the enhanced service would allow Caltrain to provide the service and capacity needed to make maximum use of the Downtown Extension once that project is open, and it will be foundational to the development of an integrated regional rail network, including potential future connections with the East Bay via the San Francisco-Oakland Transbay Rail Crossing.

Enhanced service will also allow for greater all-day connectivity to the larger regional transit network, and significantly advances equity on the Caltrain corridor by providing high quality off-peak service that meets the needs of customers who wish to use the system for reasons outside of traditional commuting.

The City of Sunnyvale is supportive of an enhanced electrified Caltrain service and a one-eighth cent sales tax ballot measure is a critical step towards that future. Thank you for consideration of our position and please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Larry Klein
Mayor

cc: Peninsula Joint Powers Board of Directors
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Board of Directors
City Council
Kent Steffens, City Manager
Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager

July 20, 2020

President Norman Yee
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Pl #244,
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Caltrain 1/8-cent sales tax ballot measure urgency ordinance

Dear President Yee,

On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, I am writing to express my strong support for the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board's (Caltrain's) efforts in enacting a one-eighth cent sales tax in the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara for the purpose of operating, maintaining and improving Caltrain commuter rail service.

The City of Palo Alto understands that in the absence of significant ridership gains, Caltrain is likely to run out of operating funds before the end of the year. Given the urgent need to identify new funding, **the San Francisco Board of Supervisors must support an urgency ordinance for a 1/8-cent sales tax on the November 2020 ballot.**

Caltrain provides a vital link in the region's transit network, which provides critical alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel. Thousands of essential workers and transit-dependent riders continue to use the service. Former riders have indicated that they are prepared to return to the system when allowed to do so, and as the regional economy continues to struggle, we will likely see a growing number of transit-dependent riders throughout the Bay Area. Allowing Caltrain to fail will leave all of these riders without a transit option. We owe it to the communities we serve to do everything we can to prevent that from happening.

We were excited to learn that Caltrain's recent poll revealed that support for new revenue to maintain and improve Caltrain has increased compared to where it was a year ago. Voters clearly understand how important Caltrain is to regional economic recovery, managing traffic congestion, and enhancing mobility. We cannot let this opportunity to secure Caltrain's future go by. This is an opportunity to save Caltrain, and at the same time create revenue to improve it, tripling ridership and making the system more affordable and accessible for everyone.

Improving Caltrain was always dependent on dedicated funding, but now the system's survival depends on it. Before the pandemic, Caltrain's member agencies signaled that they could not afford to increase their contributions, and now their financial situation is even more precarious. Opportunities to create new funding for transit operations are incredibly limited. With so much at stake, we cannot let this one pass us by.

Sincerely,



Adrian Fine
Mayor
City of Palo Alto

Cc:

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board
San Francisco Mayor London Breed
San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency Board of Directors



From: [Tom DuBois](#)
To: Norman.Yee@sfgov.org
Cc: [City Council](#)
Subject: Caltrain 1/8-cent Sales Tax Ballot Measure Urgency Ordinance
Date: Monday, July 20, 2020 5:24:56 PM

July 20, 2020 President Norman Yee

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr Carlton B Goodlett Pl #244,
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Caltrain 1/8-cent sales tax ballot measure urgency ordinance

Dear President Yee,

Regarding the July 20 letter to you from Mayor Adrian Fine of Palo Alto, I'd like to clarify that neither the City of Palo Alto nor the City Council has any position on the proposed Caltrain sales tax increase. Despite its claims, the letter represents the position of Mayor Fine individually and does not carry any more weight than the position of any other member of our City Council. If it is represented to be more than an individual position, then the letter would be contrary to the authority of the mayor under our city charter.

Speaking on my own behalf, I strongly support a modernized, electrified Caltrain and want to find solutions to ensure its long term success, including potential improvements to its governing structure, and the most effective operational plan during the severe disruptions of the pandemic and beyond. I believe we need both stable funding for Caltrain and governance changes, but putting the tax on the ballot now is an issue that we, as a Council, have not yet discussed.

I recommend that the Caltrain board engage with the cities along the corridor to explore the best response to the impacts of the Covid19 emergency on their capital and strategic plans, and whether this presents an opportunity to accelerate Caltrain modernization and prepare Caltrain for greater success as we return to normal.

As a council member in the city with the second highest Caltrain ridership outside of San Francisco, I would welcome the opportunity to be more directly involved in the governance and long term strategy planning for Caltrain.

Let's work together to find solutions for Caltrain that consider our current environment, appropriate funding sources, and sound, representative governance.

Sincerely,

Tom DuBois
Vice Mayor
City of Palo Alto

Cc: Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board
San Francisco Mayor London Breed
San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency Board of Directors
Palo Alto City Council

From: [Fine, Adrian](#)
To: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); [MayorLondonBreed@sfgov.org](#); [Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org](#); [mayoremail@sanjoseca.gov](#); [BoardOperations@cob.sccgov.org](#); [MTABoard@SFMTA.com](#); [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#); [VTA Board of Directors](#); [Pine, Dave \[dpine@smcgov.org\]](#); [Groom, Carole \[cgroom@smcgov.org\]](#); [Horsley, Don \[dhorsley@smcgov.org\]](#); [wslocum@smcgov.org](#); [dcanepa@smcgov.org](#)
Cc: [Council, City](#)
Subject: Caltrain 1/8-cent sales tax ballot measure
Date: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:28:50 AM

Date:
July 21, 2020

To:
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board
San Francisco Mayor London Breed
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency Board of Directors

Regarding:
Caltrain 1/8-cent sales tax ballot measure

Honorable Officials,

I wouldn't normally write a message like this but my colleague's disputatious and misleading message to you on 7/20 forces me to do so. This letter only speaks for myself.

On Monday morning, you received a letter from the City of Palo Alto - signed by me - supporting placing Caltrain's 1/8 cent sales tax measure on the ballots in our three counties. This note was written in full accordance with city council and city policies, including our [2020 legislative priorities](#) and our council [advocacy guidelines](#). The intent was to encourage each agency to place the measure on the ballot so that voters could decide on the measure. The Palo Alto City Council and others can still take a position on that measure.

In short, the letter is not contrary to my authority as Mayor; my colleague the Vice Mayor just disagrees with the substance of the letter and is using process to dispute that. It's a pattern I've seen before, and it undermines the credibility our city has. Maybe that's the purpose.

On the substance of the measure, of course there are issues with governance, ridership during

COVID-19, and the regressive nature of a sales tax. But the focus on governance and process issues that the Vice Mayor raises - while some of them valid - is really just a road to nowhere, a do-nothing approach. My city and I support regional transit, and Caltrain is a vital part of our transportation network. I have a hard time imagining our three counties without robust Caltrain service.

I'm disappointed to air Palo Alto's dirty laundry in a letter like this. Personally, it's become tiresome and predictable to continuously have the Vice Mayor run interference on the city's business with which he disagrees. I hope you all have colleagues who work in partnership and in service of your communities as you discuss and decide on the region's transportation future.

My Best Regards,
Adrian Fine
Palo Alto Mayor

Adrian Fine
Mayor, City of Palo Alto
adrian.fine@cityofpaloalto.org

Cc:
Palo Alto City Council



City of Santa Clara

The Center of What's Possible

Mayor

Lisa M. Gillmor

Councilmembers

Raj Chahal
Debi Davis
Karen Hardy
Teresa O'Neill
Kathy Watanabe

July 21, 2020

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors
1250 San Carlos Avenue
San Carlos, CA 94070

RE: Caltrain 1/8-cent Sales Tax Ballot Measure

Dear Chair Pine:

On behalf of the City of Santa Clara I am writing to express my support for the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board's (Caltrain's) efforts in enacting a one-eighth cent sales tax in the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara for the purpose of operating, maintaining and improving Caltrain commuter rail service.

Caltrain performs one of the most important transportation services in the state. The Caltrain Corridor closely parallels Highway 101 between San Francisco and San Jose. This portion of Highway 101 is both one of the most congested highway corridors in the country as well an economic juggernaut. Expanded Caltrain service is needed help accommodate continued job and population growth throughout a corridor that supports innovative solutions not just for the region but also the state and country.

Caltrain is the only passenger rail service in the Bay Area without a dedicated permanent source of funding. With ridership demand expected to triple by 2040, it is essential that the agency be equipped with the resources to maintain and increase services.

A one-eighth cent sales tax across all three counties would generate approximately \$100 million per year to help support the operation of enhanced Caltrain service levels throughout the corridor from San Francisco to Gilroy. Enhanced service levels will more fully serve expected market demand on the Caltrain corridor over the next decade and beyond. It will deliver many benefits to the Caltrain corridor communities, including:

- increased capacity to support ridership growth
- longer time periods for peak service, and
- additional service in the off-peak periods

This enhanced service will lead to a massive increase in service frequency along the Caltrain corridor, resulting in most of Caltrain stations receiving service levels of 4- or 8-trains per hour per direction (as compared to just a handful of stations that receive this level of service today).

In addition to benefiting the Caltrain corridor communities, the enhanced service would allow Caltrain to provide the service and capacity needed to make maximum use of the Downtown Extension once that project is open, and it will be foundational to the development of an integrated regional rail network, including potential future connections with the East Bay via the San Francisco-Oakland Transbay Rail Crossing.

Enhanced service will also allow for greater all-day connectivity to the larger regional transit network, and significantly advances equity on the Caltrain corridor by providing high quality off-peak service that meets the needs of customers who wish to use the system for reasons outside of traditional commuting.

Improving Caltrain services was always dependent on dedicated funding, but now the system's survival depends on it. Prior to the pandemic, Caltrain's member agencies signaled that they could not afford to increase their contributions, and now their financial situation is even more precarious. Opportunities to create new funding for transit operations are incredibly limited. With so much at stake, we cannot let this one pass us by.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Gillmor
Mayor, City of Santa Clara

cc: Peninsula Joint Powers Board of Directors
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Board of Directors



July 21, 2020

Chair Pine
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors
1250 San Carlos Avenue
San Carlos, CA 94070

RE: Caltrain 1/8-cent sales tax ballot measure

Dear Chair Pine,

Thank you for everything the Caltrain Board is doing to keep the system operating in the face of truly unprecedented challenges. Given the timing, the City Council of Menlo Park has not had sufficient time on their agenda to consider a position on the proposed sales tax. As the City Manager, however, I understand that in the absence of significant ridership gains, Caltrain is likely to run out of operating funds before the end of the year.

I also understand that identifying new external revenues will be critical to maintaining service and personnel during the remainder of the fiscal year and through FY 22. Given the urgent need to identify new funding, **I urge you to take the actions needed to place a 1/8-cent sales tax on the November 2020 ballot.**

Caltrain provides a vital link in the region's transit network. Thousands of essential workers and transit dependent riders continue to use the service, including many City employees. Former riders have indicated that they are prepared to return to the system when allowed to do so, and as the regional economy continues to struggle, we will likely see a growing number of transit dependent riders throughout the Bay Area. Allowing Caltrain to fail will leave all of these riders without a transit option. We owe it to the communities we serve to do everything we can to prevent that from happening.

Many of the City Council's decisions around land use are based on Caltrain's availability to riders within half a mile of the train station. Reduced or eliminated availability will substantially erode the viability of these land use decisions.

Caltrain's recent poll revealed that support for new revenue to maintain and improve Caltrain has actually increased compared to where it was a year ago. Voters clearly understand how important Caltrain is to regional economic recovery, managing traffic

congestion, and enhancing mobility. We must act on this opportunity to secure Caltrain's future. This is an opportunity to save Caltrain, and at the same time create revenue to improve it, and making the system more affordable and accessible for everyone.

Improving Caltrain was always dependent on dedicated funding, but now the system's survival depends on it. Prior to the pandemic, Caltrain's member agencies signaled that they could not afford to increase their contributions, and now their financial situation is even more precarious. Opportunities to create new funding for transit operations are incredibly limited. With so much at stake, action must be taken.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Starla Jerome-Robinson

Starla Jerome-Robinson

City Manager

Cc: San Francisco Mayor London Breed
San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors
San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency Board of Directors

July 19, 2020

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board

P. O. Box 3006

San Carlos, CA 94070

Subj: Proposed Closure of Atherton Caltrain Station (Wednesday, July 29, 2020)

Honorable Chair and PCJPB Board Members:

The permanent closure of the Atherton Station would be a broken promise, a promise that was made by Caltrain to restore service as soon as the system was electrified. The Atherton Drop Station, then known as Fair Oaks, was the oldest train stop in the entire state of California, serving this area since 1866, a full 57 years prior to Atherton's incorporation in 1923. I served on the Atherton City Council for 24 years, and during that time I served on several regional boards, including the San Mateo County Transportation Authority. In 1988 an Expenditure Plan Committee was formed to identify projects that would be funded with the Measure "A" sales tax funds. I was one of seven members on this committee (4 city council members, 2 board of supervisors members and one SAMTRANS member). The proposal provided only \$20 million total for Caltrain over a fifteen-year period. Caltrain's survival depended upon receiving additional funds for capital improvements, Right-of-Way acquisition, etc. as the ten-year State of California subsidy was ending in two years. I was the sole dissenting vote. This expenditure plan needed the support of a majority of San Mateo County cities prior to going to a public vote. Along with Frank Pagliaro, then mayor of Burlingame, the two of us were able to get a majority of San Mateo County cities to oppose this expenditure plan. We then formed a new Expenditure Plan Committee, which included all twenty cities, two supervisors and one SAMTRANS member. We made Caltrain the top priority, with half of all the sales tax funds going to Caltrain, which provided approximately \$500 million over a twenty-year period. With the successful passage of this measure in 1988, we formed the San Mateo County Transportation Authority to administer these funds. I chaired this authority, and with the sales tax funds received during the first three years we were able to acquire the rail Right-of-Way, including loans to San Francisco County and to Santa Clara County, as their expenditure plans had not included that expenditure.

The point in reviewing this history is to demonstrate Atherton's support for Caltrain over some of the most critical times in Caltrain's history. Atherton residents supported the renewal of Measure "A" with a seventy one percent support for this measure, whose support assumed continued rail service at our Atherton Station. Permanent closure of our station would be a serious breach of promise to Atherton residents. An earlier survey of Atherton residents showed an overwhelming 84% support for retaining rail service at our Atherton Station.

There has been a history of Caltrain eliminating our peak time service, apparently in an effort to eventually deny our service all together. Previously we had many school children using the Atherton station to travel to their schools. Their train service was eliminated. Atherton train stops were reduced significantly in 2002 and 2004. When Caltrain eliminated all weekday service the town was assured that we would receive restoration of our services when the system was electrified. We believed that promise. With Caltrain considering a new sales tax measure it would be important for voters to have

confidence that they could trust Caltrain to honor its promises, that services would not be indiscriminately eliminated.

Additionally, Atherton residents have made a large investment in Caltrain through the sales tax funds. Based upon the 2004-2005 Caltrain Allocation (from sales tax in San Mateo County) Caltrain's allocation was estimated to be \$29,167,758 (of which \$547,770 was from Atherton residents). Over the 20-year life of this Measure "A" Atherton residents paid an estimated \$9,389,991. If service is permanently taken from Atherton the residents would still have to continue paying this sales tax, but would no longer be served by Caltrain. Atherton would become the only city on the entire Caltrain line that received no service. I don't want to even consider what the consequences would be from this discriminatory treatment of an entire city.

There would be major disadvantages to Atherton residents if the station were permanently closed. Atherton riders enjoy many conveniences using the Atherton station, including unlimited parking. All other Caltrain stations limit parking to twenty-four hours, with cars towed away at the end of the twenty-four-hour period. Several of us worked with Facebook on a plan that would increase Facebook employee Caltrain ridership from stations to the north, with a shuttle running from the Atherton station to the Facebook campus, so ridership numbers are not a justification for denying Atherton its historic rail service.

In summary, public service has always been an important part of my life, believing that our government is here to honestly serve the needs of the public. In addition to serving on our city council and several regional bodies I served thirty-two years in the Navy, retiring as a naval captain. I have believed that the public should be able to reliably count on our governmental bodies to honestly serve the needs of our public and that their word is their bond. Upon my retirement from the city council and regional bodies an Almanac editorial was written describing my tireless efforts on behalf of preserving Caltrain. If you have any doubt as to my efforts on behalf of preserving peninsula rail service I would refer you to the Almanac editorial "Malcolm Dudley the unsung hero"

Thank you.

Malcolm Dudley