



JPB Board of Directors  
Meeting of June 2, 2022

Correspondence as of May 13, 2022

# Subject

- 1 Millbrae Connection
- 2 Caltrain Support for SamTrans Low Emissions Grant Program Applications
- 3 Service & Fares

**From:** [Ian Griffiths](#)  
**To:** [boardofdirectors@bart.gov](mailto:boardofdirectors@bart.gov); [@caltrain.com](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))  
**Cc:** [Robert Powers](#); [Bouchard, Michelle](#)  
**Subject:** It's time to fix Millbrae  
**Date:** Sunday, May 8, 2022 12:20:30 PM

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To the Caltrain & BART Board of Directors:

As a transit-dependent rider of both of your services, and on behalf of Bay Area transit riders, I urge you to develop a joint strategy to facilitate seamless connections between your services at Millbrae.

As you chart a course to ridership recovery, fixing this link is one of the most effective things you could be doing to build rider confidence back.

As I shared on Twitter, yesterday May 7th, I had a tight, and ultimately unsuccessful and incredibly frustrating connection to make at Millbrae, going from BART to Caltrain. <https://twitter.com/icgee/status/1523050205511241728?s=20&t=GDguD4gOo2NPQ-ZXBPVL6Q>

I had planned my trip in advance with some 'slack'; I had picked a BART train that would have given me 15 minutes to make the connection to Caltrain. But, due to a BART service disruption, that transfer was going to be a close call.

As you can see in the video, the Caltrain was not at the normal southbound platform on the west side of the station; instead, it was waiting on the east side, which is the northbound platform. No announcement was made on the BART train about this. There was no obvious sign about this change on the journey between the two platforms; the only point when a rider learns about this change is once you have arrived on the southbound Caltrain platform; and then, only occasionally, do the real time displays indicate that the southbound trains are in fact on the northbound platform. (Keep in mind that when a train is not moving, it is impossible to know what direction it is going in - so even though I saw there was a train on the Northbound platform, my assumption was that it was a northbound train, not a southbound train.)

Obviously, for a tight connection, only providing this information on the platform is too late - I missed my train. And I was running. Imagine how a person who had difficulty walking or who required use of the elevator would navigate this, and how long it would take them to backtrack after realizing they were waiting on the wrong platform.

It doesn't have to be this way. In my view the following several actions could improve this situation and put the customer first:

(1) BART train operators running trains into Millbrae should be given accurate information about the next Southbound Caltrain trains - both when they are expected to arrive and what platform customers should go to in order to wait for them. If, as was the case yesterday, the train is right across the platform, operators should instruct riders to simply walk across the

platform, through the fare gates, to make their connection, instead of going up and over. This should be done in the same way that BART operators give clear instructions to passengers transferring between two lines of the BART system, such as at MacArthur or 19th St. Oakland. (A [BART train operator on twitter indicated that this is definitely doable](#))

(2) In turn, Caltrain - especially during midday and on weekends when service frequency is low and there is plenty of slack in the schedule - needs to have a transparent policy of actually holding trains for passengers when a BART train is within a minute or two of arriving. It was not actually obvious to me that, even if I had picked the right platform initially yesterday, that I would have been let on the train - the Caltrain doors actually looked closed already when I got off the BART train. A type of transparent 'connection guarantee' campaign would do a lot to build the confidence of riders. Imagine something like "Making a tight connection? We'll hold the Caltrain for BART trains at Millbrae arriving within x minutes, when the next Caltrain isn't for more than 30 minutes, so that you can make your connection" - or something like that. I guarantee you'd get a lot of great free PR and love from riders if you came out with a policy like that - and actually delivered on it.

(3) Both agencies must provide much better signage -- both static and real time - in an integrated way. While the BART operator could have made an announcement as the train was pulling in about the Caltrain train status and location, lots of people still wouldn't have heard it - they might not be paying attention, or they might have a disability where they can't hear. Clear signage should be provided at the key decision points where passengers need to make a decision. At Millbrae, this is both at **the bottom of the stairs on the BART platform**, and on the concourse (bridge) level.

A quick fix for this in the near term would be a sandwich board at the bottom of each of the stairs/escalators and by the elevators that instruct riders looking for Southbound Caltrain trains which platform to go to.

A more permanent, longer term fix would be installing large real time screens at these key decision points - showing in very large type what the next Caltrain trains are and which platforms they're on.

I'm grateful that BART and Caltrain staff have actually worked to align, and promote integrated schedules at Millbrae. However, this is only part of the solution - as my experience demonstrates, schedule disruptions are common, and there needs to be a common approach to communicating with customers on how they can make connections.

As a closing idea, I'd like to propose a joint visit to Millbrae station with a subset of BART and Caltrain board directors, senior staff, and riders. I'd propose a walkthrough of the actual connection on a weekend or during midday when there is a platform change. I'd be happy to organize a set of riders to join us if this is something any of you would be interested in - please reach out to [ian@seamlessbayarea.org](mailto:ian@seamlessbayarea.org) if you agree this would be a valuable activity.

Ian

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Ian Griffiths  
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May 4, 2022

Mark G. Bathrick  
Division Chief, Urbanized Area Programs  
Federal Transit Administration  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**Re: Support for SamTrans applications for FY 2022 Low or No Emissions Grant Program and the Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program**

Dear Mr. Bathrick:

On behalf of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain), I write in support of the San Mateo County Transit District's (SamTrans) applications for the Fiscal Year 2022 Low or No Emissions Grant Program and the Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program to help fund the SamTrans South Base Zero-Emission Infrastructure Project.

Caltrain provides commuter rail service along the Bay Area Peninsula and relies on SamTrans buses to create pathways to our stations and connect commuters, especially those from low-income and disadvantaged communities.

The Zero-Emission Infrastructure Project is a critical next step in SamTrans' commitment to transition to a 100 percent zero emission fleet by 2040. As part of this project, SamTrans proposes to install electric charging infrastructure at its South Base Maintenance Facility (in San Carlos, California) to support the District's initial transition from diesel to clean, zero-emission buses. Grant funding will help procure electric charging equipment and construct infrastructure needed to support SamTrans' first fleet of battery electric buses (BEBs) planned for delivery in the next two years. The proposed infrastructure will not only support the District's near-term BEB fleet, but is designed to be easily scaled and expanded as the BEB fleet grows.

With an average weekday ridership of 36,000 SamTrans serves a low-income, transit dependent customer base. Nearly 80 percent of respondents to a recent triennial rider survey said they do not have access to a car, making SamTrans service a vital transportation resource. In addition, over 90 percent of SamTrans riders are low-income, with 64 percent of those identifying as extremely low-income. The BEBs and supporting charging infrastructure will benefit not only those who rely on public transportation, but also help improve air quality while reducing greenhouse gas emissions in historically underserved and low-income communities in the SamTrans service area.

Mark G. Bathrick  
May 4, 2022  
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Caltrain is working to complete its Electrification Project, which will modernize our 150-year-old rail corridor, replacing 75% of the existing aging diesel fleet with high-performance electric trains. Introduction of the SamTrans BEB fleet would add to the benefits of Caltrain's electrification efforts by further lowering emissions and improving commuter experience throughout the SamTrans service area. Connecting with SamTrans zero emission BEBs along the corridor is a necessary step in achieving the region's ambitious goals for greenhouse gas emissions reductions, improved service frequency and reliability, improved air quality, and increased connectivity for disadvantaged communities.

This project demonstrates SamTrans' commitment to providing sustainable public transit services for riders in San Mateo County and I strongly encourage your support of the SamTrans grant applications. Please contact Government and Community Affairs Manager Jadie Wasilco at [wasilcoj@samtrans.com](mailto:wasilcoj@samtrans.com) with any questions or requests for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Bouchard', written in a cursive style.

Michelle Bouchard  
Acting Executive Director

cc: Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors

**From:** [Shirley Ingalls](#)  
**To:** [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)  
**Subject:** Service/Fares  
**Date:** Thursday, May 12, 2022 8:07:06 PM

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**ATTENTION:** This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

As a regular rider for many years, until the pandemic hit, I'm writing to urge you not to cut service or raise fares because, if you do, it will discourage me and others from getting back into habitual ridership. So, please decide to maintain a regular schedule of several trains an hour and keep the fares as they are now. If you do, I will definitely start using the train again as my regular mode of transport.

Thanks,

Shirley Ingalls  
Mountain View