Caltrain Customer Experience Focus Group Report

Prepared for:
Caltrain

Submitted by:

EMC Research, Inc.

11/22/2016

Contacts:

Sara LaBatt | Principal | Sara@EMCresearch.com
Travis Bunner | Vice President | Travis@EMCresearch.com
436 14th Street Suite 820 | Oakland, CA 94606
(510) 844-0680

Contents

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to understand the attitudes of Caltrain riders and non-riders, with a focus on their perceptions of Caltrain, their satisfaction with Caltrain service, and their assessment of the efficacy of Caltrain's communications. For Caltrain riders, the research was designed to gain an understanding of satisfaction levels, challenges in riding, and desired improvements. For non-riders and infrequent riders, the research explored general attitudes about transit ridership, motivations for mode choice, and barriers to Caltrain ridership.

Methodology

A qualitative focus group methodology was chosen for this research, to allow participants to discuss their thoughts openly in a group discussion format, without the tight constraints associated with quantitative survey research. Focus groups are not designed to be projectable across the population, but rather to explore the diversity of attitudes and experiences present in the community.

Three focus groups were held on the evenings of September 21 and 22, 2016, at a professional focus group facility in Sunnyvale, CA. The facility was centrally located and accessible by Caltrain, with the Sunnyvale station being the closest Caltrain station. Participants were split into three groups based on their frequency of riding and their familiarity with Caltrain:
- Group 1, the Frequent Rider group, consisted of participants who ride Caltrain at least once per week.
- Group 2, the Infrequent Rider group, was made up of those who ride Caltrain less than once a week, but at least twice in the past year.
- Group 3, the Non-Rider group, consisted of participants that have ridden Caltrain less than twice in the past year, or those who are open to taking public transit and are familiar with Caltrain, but have never ridden it.

Participants were recruited by both email and telephone. They were invited to a centralized facility in Sunnyvale, and were offered a monetary incentive and a light dinner for their participation in a two-hour discussion. Each participant took a screening questionnaire to ensure eligibility for the focus groups, assign them to the correct group, and understand their demographic profile. Every effort was made to ensure a diverse mix of focus group participants.

The following table describes the mix of participants in each group.

Distribution of Focus Group Participants *(number of participants shown)*

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Male	5	5	5
Female	5	5	5
White	7	4	6
Asian	2	4	2
Hispanic	1	0	1
African-American	0	2	1
18-39	4	5	3
40-59	5	3	5
60+	1	2	2
Some College or less	1	3	6
Bachelor's Degree	6	4	4
Post Grad	3	3	0
Employed	10	8	8
Unemployed	0	1	0
Retired	0	1	2
Use public transit less than once a month	0	0	6
Use public transit at least once a month	0	5	4
Use public transit at least once a week	10	5	0
Use Caltrain less than once a month	0	2	10
Use Caltrain at least once a month	0	8	0
Use Caltrain at least once a week	10	0	0
Use Caltrain for commute	8	5	0
Use Caltrain for special events	2	2	5
Use Caltrain for occasional meeting	0	2	1
Use Caltrain for something else/Don't use Caltrain	0	1	4

People were not eligible if:
- They or someone in their household works for a public transportation agency or in the transportation industry
- They have participated in a focus group in the past six months
- They would not ever consider riding public transit
- They are "not at all familiar" with or "never heard" of Caltrain
- They would never consider replacing one of their trips with a trip on Caltrain

Summary of Findings

Overall Summary: Caltrain was generally viewed positively by participants in all of the focus groups, from the most frequent riders to those who had not ridden at all. Whether or not they rode Caltrain depended largely on their perception of the convenience of the service for them, in terms of station locations, train schedule, and how they felt about driving. The perception was that riders are people who happen to have a commute that allows them to ride Caltrain (including schedule flexibility), and infrequent and non-riders would be open to riding if they had such a commute, but they do not feel that is the case currently.

For all focus group participants, the idea of a centralized communications platform was very appealing. For frequent riders, this was something that told them about changes that might impact their regular trips, whereas for less frequent or non-riders it was something that encompassed the information they would need should they choose to take the train, such as regular schedules, fare payment details, and information about the stations and connectivity to other transit systems. The paper communications that were shown in the groups seemed old-fashioned, static, and difficult to interpret for a population that largely expects to find what they need in an app or online. They were looking for information that was real-time, dynamic, easy to find, and easy to understand.

Frequent Riders Summary (Group 1): This group was generally very satisfied with Caltrain, had purposely chosen Caltrain over driving on the area's congested freeways, and had strategies for riding that made the service work for them. The biggest challenge this group faces is getting the service information they need when their regular schedule is interrupted, whether that's due to a breakdown, track interference, or special event service. They did not generally blame Caltrain for service interruptions, accepting them as part of the challenge of running an at-grade train service through a very populated area, but they did not feel that Caltrain did a good job of communicating timely and actionable information to them, their best and most loyal customers. While they felt somewhat equipped to manage these service interruptions given their familiarity with the system, they often felt stranded on the tracks during a breakdown/accident, because Caltrain wasn't directly communicating about the problem or the timeframe for a solution and wasn't letting them know how to resume their trip. Poor cellular service with no reception along parts of the line exacerbated the problem. They also worried about those who were less familiar with the system coping with service interruptions and fare payment mishaps.

Infrequent Riders Summary (Group 2): This group liked the idea of riding a train instead of driving, but they didn't see Caltrain as a regular option for their commute. This was largely due to where they live and/or work, although for some it was an issue with Caltrain's limited schedule and fear of unanticipated service interruptions that might delay their arrival. Many in this group rode public transit, but rode Caltrain only occasionally to get to special events or non-work destinations. They felt that their Caltrain trips required a fair amount of research, planning ahead, and contingency planning to go smoothly. Many of the details of riding Caltrain were intimidating or confusing for them, including fare payment, making connections with other transit systems, and station amenities and location. This group's lack of familiarity with the system and fear of something "going wrong" meant they would only ride if they felt they had plenty of time and schedule flexibility to accommodate potential challenges.

Non-Riders Summary (Group 3): This group was largely made up of people who do not see riding Caltrain as a viable option for them and drive to most of their destinations. To them, riding Caltrain and other transit systems meant introducing potentially uncontrollable delays, inconveniences, and challenges to their days, and they did not feel the upsides outweighed those challenges. While they did sometimes ride transit for very specific situations (like to get to the airport, or a sports event), they did it very rarely and more often chose to drive even when they knew there was a transit option available. This group was not very familiar with Caltrain, and what they did recall was largely news stories about breakdowns or track mishaps. They were extremely intimidated by even the idea of starting to plan trip on Caltrain, and believed it would be confusing and had a high potential of not going well. However, for some in this group, the idea of riding the train was almost romantic or nostalgic, and they would like to think they could do it "someday," perhaps with their family or friends.

Detailed Findings

Group 1: Frequent Caltrain Riders

Perceptions of Bay Area Transportation

This group felt that getting around the Bay Area was very difficult given the amount of traffic, particularly along the Peninsula corridor. They viewed public transit as a less stressful way to commute than driving a car, and they enjoyed not needing to sit in traffic, and being able to eat, drink, sleep or work while in transit. While their experience with Caltrain is a main point of reference in their discussions about public transit options, many in this group also used other public transportation options such as BART, SamTrans, Amtrak, and VTA. Furthermore, some participants also used a bike or drove a car on their commute.

One of the main frustrations this group raised about the challenges of public transit ridership was lack of service frequency (particularly in off-peak hours) and the inflexibility of having to adhere to service schedules.

> *"[The bus] is not really viable if you have to go to work early or if you have to go to work late."*
>
> *"At night time it's not really good, it's only during peak hours when you have frequent service…if I don't get that train then I have to wait an hour."*

They also discussed challenges with unanticipated delays and service interruptions, and poor or untimely communications from transit providers that made it a challenge for them to complete their trip or make alternative mode choices when needed. This was a particular problem on train-based services (as compared with buses) because they would have to choose to leave the system to gain access to a backup mode, whereas if a bus was interrupted they felt they had other choices (such as rideshare apps like Uber) more immediately accessible at a street location.

> *"When the system goes down, there's no one there to help you. When I get off, I don't know what train or what bus, and there is nobody at the station…But when it goes smooth it's great."*
>
> *"What I don't like is that you are not quickly notified when there is a delay. They announce it over the loudspeaker or on Twitter ten minutes after the train is supposed to be there."*

Perceptions of Caltrain

Frequent riders had an overall positive perception of Caltrain and the services they provide. They felt they had figured out strategies that worked for them in the areas of schedule, fare payment, first/last mile, and accepting the inevitability of service delays. They are very knowledgeable about fare payment, train types, and schedules. They were proud to be Caltrain riders, and felt they had

made a positive choice to ride for a number of reasons, including their mental health, stress levels, budget, convenience, and the environment.

> *"I think the biggest thing they can do is maintenance on the trains…I think the engines should work, the air-conditioning should work, the lights should work…Caltrain cannot control if someone drives onto the track, but they can control that the trains work."*

Most of the frequent rider participants had a story about a time when they faced an unanticipated service delay on Caltrain. They were far more likely to blame outside actors for service delays and interruptions (such as car drivers and pedestrians getting hit on the tracks) than to blame Caltrain equipment breakdowns. However, there was also a shared frustration that riders are left in the dark when delays occur. When delays do occur, limited on-train communications and inconsistent cellular service leave them feeling stranded and uninformed on how long a delay might last, when a delayed train might arrive or start again, or whether they should choose another mode to get where they are going.

> *"There was a fatality once, and [the train] stopped in south city…we didn't know how long we are going to be, so we got off the train, we walked…and by the time we got to the next station, there was the train."*
>
> *"I give them credit…It's something they can't doing anything about. If trucks want to park in the middle of train tracks and get hit, there's not much that Caltrain can do about it."*

Caltrain Riding Experience

Riders were generally happy with their typical commute on Caltrain, and were not clamoring for significant upgrades or changes to the service or equipment. They generally felt they had chosen to ride given the current system's parameters, and they were happy it got them where they were going and out of their cars and traffic congestion. They didn't need anything fancier than what they had, they just needed the system to continue working reliably. There was some discussion of the age of trains and issues with the heating and cooling systems, but as long as they were working as they should, riders were not complaining. While they could come up with additional amenities, such as additional overhead storage space, more bathrooms, and redesigned train layouts, that would be nice to have, they were not demanding them.

For many in the frequent riders group, special events along their route were irritating. Some changed their commute schedule just to avoid catching their regular train if it might be full of special event riders, calling them rowdy, disruptive, and lacking rider etiquette. They asked that conductors be more proactive in enforcing the rules, but also recognized that sometimes trains get so crowded that there is not much that conductors can do. Some were frustrated when an event took them by surprise, and would like Caltrain to be more proactive in communicating with regular commuters when events might impact their regular service.

Fares & Fare Payment

Frequent riders did not have a problem with the cost of riding Caltrain or navigating the pay structure. They saw the value and were willing to pay what they were already paying for the services Caltrain currently provides. Given the lack of fare gates, they were concerned that some infrequent riders might not be paying for their ride (whether intentionally or not), and they wanted conductors to check tickets more often to ensure that everyone had paid the fare.

> *"I love paying with Clipper for Caltrain, for BART, and for Muni."*
>
> *"My problem is with the zone upgrades; I can't believe in this area that I can tag onto VTA or SamTrans and it knows not to charge me $2 because I am a monthly pass holder…but I can't tag on in Santa Clara and tag out in San Francisco, and Caltrain can't charge me $2. It knows for every other system, but with Caltrain it's not integrated."*

Frequent riders did appreciate being able to use their Clipper card to pay their fares for all the different local public transportation options. However, they found using a Clipper card to pay for Caltrain to be unintuitive and a hassle, especially in comparison with using Clipper on other transit services in the Bay Area. Riders have difficulty remembering when they need to tag off, are frustrated that the Clipper scanner machines are often broken, frustrated that they can't purchase zone upgrades with a monthly pass, and want to be able to also use the Clipper card for transit-related costs, like parking or bike lockers at the stations.

Caltrain Communications

Frequent rider participants felt that Caltrain does not do a good enough job in communicating with riders about service delays. When a train had an unplanned delay, they felt they were stranded with little information and spotty cellular service, and that Caltrain had an obligation to tell them what was happening and when they might be able to resume their trip. This obligation also extended to telling people not yet on the system that a delay was happening, either as they enter a station or as they purchase a ticket, so that all riders can make informed mode choices based on real-time system information.

Riders often found themselves searching twitter or using third-party Caltrain apps to find information about delays and service announcements. Having no information boards on the train and no map of the system made it difficult for riders to know where they were when trains break down. Announcements can help, but many riders are unable to hear the operator make announcements when they do. The speaker systems make it very difficult to hear and understand the communications.

> *"When the going gets tough, and they are seriously off because of an accident, they go dark. Monday is a perfect example, I'm sitting on California Avenue, 3 minutes late, 5 minutes late, 10 minutes late, I don't need you to tell time for me…tell me the truth, give me an estimate about how long is it going to be."*

The need to check many apps or information sources was frustrating as well, and there was little agreement on the "best" or "most accurate" source of information. In addition, when different sources were in conflict, they didn't know which to believe or trust, or who might be the most up to date. One participant said communication would be better if there were more twitter updates, but they need to be more straightforward. The participant said he had various apps, but they are not always consistent. The Caltrain website itself was seen as static and challenging to navigate on a mobile device, and not the best information source for real-time updates on delayed trains or other real-time information.

The lack of a reliable source of real-time information about train arrival and departures was very frustrating for regular Caltrain riders. Without a way to track where a train is in real-time, if a train is running late, they did not know if it was running a few minutes late or hours late. This frustrated riders as they tried to determine if they needed to make alternative travel arrangements or if they could wait it out, and they worried about making the wrong choice like leaving the station and having the delayed train show up soon thereafter. They felt that Caltrain probably had more information than they were giving riders, whether that was intentional or due to communications structure limitations.

In addition to the challenges above, regular riders identified a lack of communication of basic information at stations, like train numbers and track assignments. Because there are rarely Caltrain staff at the stations who can help, this made them worry about new riders, infrequent riders, and tourists, who might get lost trying to navigate the system with limited signage to help them get where they need to go.

> *"As long as there are trains running they need to have somebody communicating even if it's some kind of app or even a map system where I can look it up."*

Potential Caltrain Improvements

While frequent Caltrain riders could think of things that might improve their experience, few were really clamoring for much on the trains themselves beyond what they were getting now. Suggestions included more flexible train seating configurations, larger overhead spaces, and additional tables for working while in transit.

The idea of a mobile app came up from the group before it was even introduced by the moderator. A centralized, organized, and accessible communications platform that keeps them informed at all steps of their trip, including before they arrive at the station, while they are waiting for their train, and while they are on board, is the main improvement this group would like. They saw it as a clearinghouse for all information Caltrain, including real-time train information, special event schedules, and station information. They also wanted the app to push necessary information to them when needed, such as a popup before their scheduled train saying it was delayed, or a notification when they entered a station with real-time next train arrival information.

> *"We need some real-time information, that's live."*
>
> *"When something is wrong, we need estimates for the future, not just tell us what's happening in the past."*

Connectivity was a challenge for riders, and they would like to have access to a reliable internet connection all along the route. They did not necessarily mean Wi-Fi (in fact, many were skeptical of the quality or security of "free" Wi-Fi setups); rather, they felt a better cellular connection all along the tracks would go a long way to both allowing people to use commute time productively, as well as find information when delays interrupted service.

Frequent rider participants also liked the ideas of a mobile ticketing app, more parking, and updated ticketing machines. While they themselves had developed strategies for navigating the Caltrain system such as reminding themselves to tag on and tag off, checking the Caltrain website before leaving, and reloading their monthly pass on the first of the month, they saw these improvements as ways to make riding easier and more approachable for people who were not regular riders now. They were less interested in a live customer service chat feature, which they felt would not be able to help them with the one thing they needed, which was real-time information to allow them make alternative plans due to service delays.

Frequent riders would also like to see improvements from Caltrain in helping riders complete the last mile of their commute, especially when service delays occur. They were frustrated when their train was delayed and the connecting mode did not wait for delayed passengers, making them feel stranded through no fault of their own. In particular, for shuttles that are expressly for Caltrain riders, they did not understand why those shuttles could not adjust their schedules when a train was delayed.

> *"When there's delays it would be nice for Caltrain to ask the shuttle companies to hold the shuttles…if there's a delay to train one, it usually means trains two, three, and four are going to be delayed, it sucks to arrive at your station and the shuttle is long gone. The shuttles are there to support Caltrain."*

Electrification

Frequent riders thought that the electrification of trains would ultimately be a benefit to Caltrain riders, but were concerned about its cost, increased ticket fares, potential increased ridership, and station impacts. One participant questioned how long it was going to take, and how it would impact service during the electrification. Others noted that there are only so many trains that can ride on one set of tracks and wondered if these improvements would have as big of an impact as Caltrain claims. Some doubted that it would ever happen due to opposition from cities along the route or an inability to pass a large enough funding measure.

In addition, there was some confusion among participants that the electrification of trains was tied to integration with high-speed rail in the future. They thought that electrification might include grade separation of the tracks, and limiting track access system wide. Some participants thought that since there was opposition to high speed rail in the area, that it also meant opposition to any sort of upgrades to train systems.

If electrification was to happen and fares rise, many are unsure whether they are willing to pay the extra price. How much will it actually improve Caltrain services? Could they add more trains? There is only one track going each way, how many more trains could they fit? The peak routes are already

very busy; would this improvement just attract more riders and make it more difficult for current riders to use?

Others had reservations about how it would impact their commute during construction, and how long the upgrades would take. Participants noted how long it took other public transportation improvements, such as the BART extension to be completed, and if stations were to be temporarily moved or closed during this time.

Riders were aware of some successful projects along the tracks, like new grade separations, and they could see how that has improved service and traffic in those areas. However, they also remembered previous station relocations, and worried how new relocations might impact them directly by moving or closing a station they used.

Group 2: Infrequent Caltrain Riders

Perceptions of Bay Area Transportation

Like the frequent rider group, infrequent Caltrain riders also felt that getting around the Bay Area was very difficult given the amount of traffic, particularly along the Peninsula corridor. They recognized that traffic was an increasing problem, and they had considered or used other modes of transportation like biking, ride-shares, VTA, and employer provided shuttle buses. Some of the infrequent rider participants were former Caltrain commuters, but stopped due to either changing jobs or moving homes.

This group mainly commuted by car, but did use public transit for some trips when they felt it might be more convenient than driving. They did have a general awareness of the public transit options that were available to them, although their knowledge about price, service area, and frequency was limited compared with the frequent Caltrain riders.

> *"I drive every day. Maybe once or twice a week, if I am going into San Francisco I will take Caltrain."*
>
> *"On days when I don't have a car, I'll take Caltrain."*
>
> *"I usually drive everywhere if I have an urgency too, but I do appreciate all the public transportation in the Bay Area…I hate driving in the City, I can just hop on BART and in ten minutes I'm downtown."*

When determining what mode of transportation to take, this group's participants stated that price and perceptions of convenience were their main considerations. When deciding whether to take public transportation, they often weigh the benefits against the ease of just driving to their destination. They take into consideration the potential cost, the parking situation, the flexibility of their schedule, and the difficulty in navigating the system. While these participants appreciated the number of public transportation options available to them, they wanted greater frequency of service, more interconnectivity, and better coordination between transit agencies.

Infrequent Caltrain riders were open to taking public transit more often, but they did not feel they could justify it. One participant said, "I haven't been able to figure out a way to save money and time by leaving my car at home."

Perceptions of Caltrain

Infrequent riders viewed Caltrain as a service that is mainly meant for commuters going up and down the Peninsula, whose employer is located near a station. They may use Caltrain if they have a special reason to and if it is more convenient then driving. For example, some participants will take Caltrain to get into San

> *"[Caltrain] seems to be aimed at commuting for work, it doesn't seem to be aimed at different things."*

Francisco for appointments or for leisure, since they want to avoid the traffic and parking. Caltrain is not generally seen as an appealing option for shorter trips due to the limited frequency of the trains and the cost.

Infrequent riders felt that Caltrain was more comfortable, cleaner and safer than BART. However, they felt that Caltrain was less reliable than BART, and that Caltrain does a poorer job of communicating information about delays. Furthermore, infrequent riders enjoyed the flexibility that comes with driving a car. There needs to be a compelling reason for them to give up that flexibility to use Caltrain.

> *"I didn't mind the train; the only problem is I don't like living on a schedule…it only comes once an hour so you're living by your watch…I wish it came more frequently."*

While infrequent riders would like to be able to ride Caltrain more often, given their current commute patterns they don't think they will, at least not to commute. Giving them more information about other places they could go on Caltrain, how to navigate the system, and how to get to their destination from the station may help them see Caltrain as a real option for getting around the Bay Area.

Fares & Fare Payment

Infrequent Caltrain riders reported being very confused by the fare payment system, and that was a major deterrent to riding Caltrain for some. They understood that they could use Clipper or pay per ride, but they were not confident they knew how to do that, and without fare gates they were worried they might mess up inadvertently and get fined. They did not feel that there was adequate guidance in the stations to help them navigate payment correctly.

While they knew about Clipper and felt it should make riding transit in the Bay Area easier, in reality this just added to their confusion. With different fare structures and methods for different systems, they were very intimidated by the idea of getting on a transit system and figuring out how to pay with Clipper. Participants felt that while the Clipper card made paying for all of the local transit options more convenient, the differences between how you pay, how you board, and the schedules they ran on made the whole public transit system feel fragmented rather than unified. Instead of being a positive feature of Caltrain, and public transportation in general, the Clipper card was actually a deterrent. For Caltrain specifically, they found the tag on, tag off Clipper system hard to remember to do, especially given the lack of fare gates.

> *"The Clipper card would work better if it is just like a toll, where it would just charge you once you use it."*

This confusion about the payment system and using a Clipper card is one of the more frustrating parts of the participants' Caltrain experience. One participant said that he had "donated" a lot of money because he frequently forgot to tag off. Another participant mentioned that one time she had to drive back to the Caltrain station because she forgot to tag off. Some participants expressed frustration that they couldn't buy the right kind of pass with a Clipper card, and others recalled times when they couldn't add value to their Clipper card because the machines were down.

For many infrequent Caltrain riders, the cost of Caltrain service was also a deterrent to riding. When they looked at the cost of the trip they would take, it seemed "expensive," and without a way to calculate the actual cost of driving they felt it was cheaper to drive.

Caltrain Communications

Infrequent riders felt that the materials (see Appendix III) shown in the focus group were too confusing for less experienced riders, and that confusion turns people off from wanting to ride Caltrain. They assumed much of the information they needed was available online, but they hadn't really looked for most of it. They felt that nobody reads printed brochures, and even if people were to, no new rider would be able to figure it out because there is so much information presented.

> *"The schedule is difficult to read if you don't know where things are…if I'm not familiar with these stops, then it's confusing about where to go."*

Infrequent riders were not sure how to find out information about Caltrain, particularly in the case of service delays. They talked about using the Caltrain website, Twitter, and other apps for service alerts, but there was not consensus on which was the most reliable information source. They voiced a preference for an official Caltrain source that centralized the information they would need in one place, to help them be confident they were getting the best information. They were frustrated that there was no single source for real time information, and there was no communication from Caltrain telling them where to find this information.

> *"It's not enough for it to say that there is a delay at a certain station, there needs to be more information. Be transparent about a delay, here are your options"*

Potential Caltrain Improvements

Participants viewed all the potential improvements presented in the focus group as ways to better their Caltrain experience and attract new riders, although they did not believe that those alone would make them ride Caltrain more often given their current home and work locations.

A Caltrain app, better connectivity, and better customer service support were all attractive because they felt they would help navigate what was to them a confusing system. Participants also stated that if Caltrain did not have the capabilities to make their own map then they should release their API so that third party developers could create their own. Wi-Fi would be appreciated if it were freely available, but there is a concern about the reliability of that service and would rather just have an improved cellular connection along the route. They were also attracted to improvements that made the first and last mile connections easier, such as parking and biking improvements and better coordination with other transit services.

Although they were receptive to improvement ideas, participants questioned how they it would be paid for, and were hesitant to say they would be willing to accept a higher fare in order to fund these improvements.

Electrification

Participants liked the idea of having more frequent and faster train service, but also had doubts about feasibility. One participant said, "there is a limit to electrification, there are still cars that are going to get in the way, there is only one track." Participants also mentioned that as long as the track remains at grade there would always be delays and service interruptions.

Riders were receptive to riding Caltrain more often if the electrification brought about more frequent and quicker service, and if it improved Caltrain's reliability, but it still has to make sense for their commute and they wouldn't necessarily pay more for the improved service.

Group 3: Non-Riders

Perceptions of Bay Area Transportation

Non-rider participants felt that traffic in the Bay Area was getting much worse. They find traffic stressful, and they reported taking extra steps (such as leaving early) to try to avoid it. Despite the increase in traffic only some of the participants had tried using public transportation. They preferred driving because they felt more in control of when they were going to leave, when they were going to arrive, and getting to their destination. Their frustration with driving increases when this sense of control is interrupted, such as when an accident occurs.

> *"Driving is stressful, I'm always afraid someone is going to hit me…so I avoid rush hour traffic…"*
>
> *"I hate that I have to leave so early because I never know when I'm going to get there"*
>
> *"I like being in control of when I can leave. I used to take the bus when I was in high school, and sometimes the bus was running late…I didn't like being in control of where I was going, and how was I getting there."*

Non-Caltrain riders did have some awareness of public transportation options in the area, but had only limited experience using them. Non-riders found public transit to be confusing. They believed that public transportation was good for special events, and for those that did use it, a less stressful and more convenient option than driving to those events.

For many of the non-rider participants, they had tried to use public transportation, but it did not go well, shaking their confidence. One participant attempted to use Caltrain to go to San Francisco, but was so confused about the zones and how to pay that she decided to drive instead. The participant had wanted to use Caltrain because she felt it would be a more convenient option than driving. However, she became so frustrated at using the Caltrain website to figure out how much it was going to cost, that she gave up.

In addition, there was confusion about all of the public transit options and which areas they serve. When trying to plan a trip using public transportation, they felt there were too many steps (like transferring to a different system) they would have to take to get to their destination, especially when comparing it to the simplicity of just driving.

Perceptions of Caltrain

Non-rider saw Caltrain as a convenient mode of transportation for those who live and work along its route, but that didn't apply to most of them. They did not see it as particularly connected to the other transit systems in the Bay Area, and there was

> *"If you are right on that artery, on that main route it's probably great. The one time I road it, it seemed cleaned…If I had more cause to ride it, I would probably like it, but I don't need to ride it."*

confusion about what areas Caltrain serves. One participant who had ridden Caltrain once before found the whole process so confusing that he had not tried it again.

Non-riders viewed Caltrain as an old system, and most of their awareness of Caltrain was about accidents or breakdowns. One participant noted that she knew that many of the trains were older, and not known to be well maintained. There was also some general confusion about Caltrain service among participants. One participant confused it with BART, and thought that it served the East Bay, while another believed it ran more frequently than the VTA.

Non-riders are open to using Caltrain to go to special events if it is cheaper and more convenient than driving. They also noted that, if they knew more about it, they could be more open to using it, but their previous attempts to learn more about Caltrain left them confused. They specifically noted that the website wasn't well organized and was outdated.

Even though these participants do not ride Caltrain now, there was a novelty to riding a train that they appreciated. However, while they like and romanticize the idea of riding a train to get somewhere (or even just to ride the train for fun), they are too intimidated by the details and the fear of facing unanticipated challenges to take those first steps. They have very little idea about what specific trips they might take or places they might be able to go on Caltrain.

Caltrain Communications

Participants were confused by all the information provided in the brochure, and some had trouble understanding the fare pay structure, types of trains, how the schedule works, and how to use a Clipper card. Simply providing information about Caltrain does not make non riders want to take Caltrain.

> *"It's data overload. [The brochure] is so overloaded when you first look at it that it makes you want to drive."*

Participants found the way the schedule is presented in the brochure to be overwhelming, and compared the visual presentation unfavorably to other transit systems. They found that even after reviewing the brochure they still didn't understand where exactly Caltrain goes, or where it could take them. They also don't know how to find out how to get to their final destination after riding Caltrain. One participant said, "I still have no idea about what transfers to local services, and I would be scared because I don't know what [any of the information] means"

Many participants were also unaware about how to pay even after reviewing the information. They found the zones system unintuitive, and that it wasn't explained in any written form in the brochure they were provided. Some of the participants were unaware of what a Clipper card was, although participants who had taken other forms of public transportation were. Those who were unaware of the Clipper card did not understand its purpose; only after other participants explained it, did they understand the perceived benefits.

> *"The Clipper card might be a link that would have me potentially ride it, if I could find out how it all works."*

One participant said, "I still don't understand why it's more efficient for me to ride Caltrain than for me to drive my car." Other participants could not see the benefits for riders who are not commuters, and did not know where to find information about special events or other reasons to ride Caltrain. They suggested Caltrain run advertisements that show the reasons why a non-commuter would or could use Caltrain.

Electrification

Participants thought the potential benefits of electrification would be good for the community; however, that was not a reason for them to use Caltrain themselves. Some questioned how it was going to be paid for, if it would be a bond measure or if there would be an increase in fares. Some participants said that they would consider riding Caltrain if these upgrades occur, but not if it were to cost more than it does now. Other participants said that the cost of service wasn't an issue because they did not know how much the price was to go from place to place currently, and did not have any sense of what a reasonable price would be. At the end of the conversation many still couldn't come up with a reason to ride Caltrain after electrification.

<u>Recommendations</u>

The following recommendations are changes that Caltrain may want to consider in light of the focus group findings. We put these forward knowing that some may be more difficult to accomplish than others and that some may already be in development. Even if one or more of these recommendations cannot be accomplished, we believe any related improvements will go a long way to improving the customer experience for Caltrain riders and non-riders.

- Provide more up-to-date information through current communication channels when service delays occur and let riders know where to find this information

- Find ways to increase communications and/or the clarity of communications on-board trains

- Develop an official Caltrain app or allow third parties to use Caltrain data to develop their own

- Work to streamline the payment system or make it easier to buy fares and reload Clipper Cards

- Consider changing the Clipper payment system for Caltrain to make it more similar to other popular Bay Area systems, like BART, or work with other agencies to create a uniform system across all transit systems

- Give non-riders more reasons to ride Caltrain by promoting local events in the service area corridor, offering special trips to serve not just sporting events, but smaller community events as well and by exploiting the novelty of riding the train for new riders and young families

- Provide increased connectivity through the improvement of cellular service or installing Wi-Fi on trains (it would be most appreciated if it were offered to riders for free)

<u>Appendix I</u>

EMC #16-6180: Focus Group Recruiting Script

Geography: Residents of San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties.

Groups dates:
September 21
September 22
Two groups on the 21st, one group on the 22nd: Group 1 at 6:00pm, Group 2 at 8:00pm (Sept. 21); Group 3 at 7pm (Sept. 22)

Groups Location:
Nichols Research
333 W. El Camino Real, Suite 130
Sunnyvale, CA 94087-1968

For each, **recruit 12 for 10 to show up**
- Group 1: Frequent Caltrain Riders **(IF Q13 = 1)**
- Group 2: Infrequent Caltrain Riders **(IF Q13 = 2-4)**
- Group 3: Non Caltrain Riders **(IF Q12 = 1-2 OR Q13 = 5)**

FOR LISTS:
- Email List **(Recruit up to 24 for Groups 1 and 2)**
- Recruiting Database **(Recruit a minimum of 12 for Group 3)**

Quotas: for each group, recruit:
- A mix of Genders; no more than 7 Women per group
- A mix of Race categories; no more than 8 White/Else/Refused per group
- No more than 2 Unemployed per group
- Recruit 5-6 each from ages 18-49 and 50+; no more than two 65+ per group

Hello, my name is _____. May I speak to **<u>NAME ON LIST</u>**. (Must speak to name on list). Hello, my name is _____ and I'm taking a brief survey for Nichols Research. The survey will take just a couple minutes and your responses will be kept confidential.

LIST SOURCE
1. Email List **(Recruit up to 24 for Groups 1 and 2)**
2. Recruiting Database **(Recruit a minimum of 12 for Group 3)**

1. GENDER **(record from observation; Recruit a mix of genders, no more than 7 Women per group)**
    1. Male
    2. Female

2. Do you, or does anyone in your household work for a public transportation agency or in the transportation industry? **(TERMINATE IF YES)**
    1. Yes → **TERMINATE**
    2. No

3.   In the past six months, have you participated in a focus group discussion? **(TERMINATE IF YES OR DON'T KNOW)**
        1. Yes → **TERMINATE**
        2. No
        3. Don't Know → **TERMINATE**

4.   What is your age? (Read categories if needed) **(Recruit 5-6 each from ages 18-49 and 50+; no more than two 65+ per group)**
        1. 18-29
        2. 30-39
        3. 40-49
        4. 50-64
        5. 65-74
        6. 75+ → **TERMINATE**
        7. Refused → **TERMINATE**

5.   Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic/Latino, White, Black/African-American, Asian, or something else? **(Recruit a mix of Race categories; no more than 8 White/Else/Refused per group)**
        1. Hispanic/Latino
        2. White
        3. Black/African-American
        4. Asian
        5. Something else/Other
        6. (Refused)

6.   In general, how do you typically go to work, school, or other places that you travel to in the area? **(READ LIST) (IF NEEDED:** Please choose the one that you use most often**)**
        1. Drive alone → **CONTINUE TO Q7**
        2. Public transit **(READ IF NEEDED:** Caltrain, Muni, SamTrans, VTA, BART, etc.**)** → **SKIP TO Q8**
        3. Carpool with others → **CONTINUE TO Q7**
        4. Walk → **CONTINUE TO Q7**
        5. Taxi/Uber/Lyft → **CONTINUE TO Q7**
        6. Other (specify _____)→ **CONTINUE TO Q7**

7.   **(If Q6=1, 3, 4, 5 or 6; NOT primarily a public transit rider)** Do you ever ride public transit?
        1. Yes → **CONTINUE TO Q8**
        2. No → **SKIP TO Q9**
        3. (Don't know) → **SKIP TO Q9**

8.   **(IF Q6=2 OR Q7=1; Public transit rider)** In general, how many days per week do you ride public transit like Caltrain, Muni, SamTrans, V-T-A or BART?
        1. At least once a week
        2. Two or three times a month
        3. Once a month
        4. Less than once a month

9. **(If Q7=2 OR 3; NOT Public transit rider)** How likely would you be to consider riding public transit if that option was available to you - very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?
    1. Very likely
    2. Somewhat likely
    3. Not too likely
    4. Not at all likely →**TERMINATE**
    5. Don't know

(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)

10. How familiar are you with Caltrain? Would you say you are very familiar, somewhat familiar, not too familiar, or have you never heard of Caltrain?
    1. Very familiar
    2. Somewhat familiar
    3. Not too familiar
    4. Never heard → **TERMINATE**
    5. (Don't know/Refused) → **TERMINATE**

11. Have you ever ridden on Caltrain?
    1. Yes → **SKIP TO Q13**
    2. No → **CONTINUE TO Q12**
    3. (Don't know/Refused) → **CONTINUE TO Q12**

12. **(IF Q11=2; non Caltrain rider)** How likely would you be to consider replacing just one of your trips, be it a commute trip, an occasional trip, or a trip to a special event like a concert or sporting event, with a trip on Caltrain - very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?
    1. Very likely → **Recruit for Group 3**
    2. Somewhat likely → **Recruit for Group 3**
    3. Not too likely → **TERMINATE (to start, will want feedback to see if this is too restrictive)**
    4. Not at all likely → **TERMINATE**
    5. (Don't know) → **TERMINATE**

13. **(If Q11=1; Caltrain rider)** In the past year, how often would you say you have ridden on Caltrain? **(READ LIST)**
    1. At least once a week → **Recruit for Group 1**
    2. At least once a month → **Recruit for Group 2**
    3. At least once in the past three months → **Recruit for Group 2**
    4. At least once in the past six months → **Recruit for Group 2**
    5. Less than twice a year → **Recruit for Group 3**
    6. (Don't know/Refused) → **Recruit for Group 3**

14.   **(IF Q11=1; Caltrain rider)** What would you say is the main reason you have ridden Caltrain? **(READ LIST; ACCEPT MULTIPLE)**
   1. Commute to/from work
   2. Commute to/from work
   3. To go shopping
   4. To visit friends or relatives
   5. For special events, such as concerts or sports
   6. For an occasional meeting, event, or appointment
   7. (Something else)
   8. (Don't know/Refused) →**TERMINATE**

15.   **(IF Q11=1; Caltrain rider)** How do you typically pay for your trip when taking Caltrain? **(READ LIST IF NECESSARY)**
   1. One-way ticket (from the ticket machine/vendor)
   2. Day pass (from the ticket machine/vendor)
   3. Go pass
   4. Clipper cash value
   5. Clipper 8-ride ticket
   6. Clipper Caltrain monthly pass
   7. (Something else)
   8. (Don't know/Refused)

(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)

16.   What is the last grade you completed in school? **(READ IF NECESSARY)**
   1. High school Graduate or less
   2. Some college/Associates/Technical/Vocational
   3. Bachelor's Degree
   4. Graduate/Masters/PhD/Professional
   5. (Refused) →**TERMINATE**

17.   In terms of your job status, are you employed, unemployed but looking for work, retired, a student or not working outside of the home? **(Recruit no more than 2 Unemployed per group)**
   1. Employed
   2. Unemployed
   3. Retired
   4. Student
   5. not working outside the home
   6. (Don't know/Refused)

18.   **(ASK if Q17=1, Employed)** What is your occupation?
   _____

19.   **(ASK if Q17=3, Retired)** What was your occupation, before you retired?
   _____

[AFTER Q18 AND Q19: Terminate if work for:
- **A public transportation agency**
- **BART**
- **Caltrain**
- **SamTrans**
- **VTA**
- **Muni]**

(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE)

20.   We are going to be conducting a focus group. A focus group is a discussion with ten to twelve people just like yourself. The focus group will be held on _____(DATE) at _____(TIME) at _____ (LOCATION). The focus group will last for approximately two hours. For your participation in the focus group, you will be paid _____, and a light meal will be provided. The group will include listening, talking and reading materials in English, so you must be comfortable hearing a group discussion, and reading and discussing these materials. Will you be able to participate in a focus group?
    1. Yes → CONTINUE
    2. No → **TERMINATE**

Great, could I confirm your name and phone number_____

And in order to send you directions, can I have your address/email address?_____

You will be receiving directions soon. Thank you for your time!

Recruiter's Name_____

Appendix II

MODERATOR'S GUIDE
Group 1 – Frequent Riders
September 21, 2016, 6:00 PM

1. **Introductions (10 minutes in length/10 minutes elapsed)**
   a. Welcome, moderator introduction, explain focus group process
   b. Explain confidentiality, note audio/video recording and observers
   c. Participant introductions:
      i. Name
      ii. How long you've lived in the Bay Area
      iii. Where do you live
      iv. Who do you live with? (Family/pets)
      v. If you have any kids, what ages are they?

2. **Transportation in the Bay Area (15 minutes/25 minutes)**
   a. How do you usually get around?
      i. What do you enjoy most about your regular mode of travel?
      ii. What is your biggest frustration with your regular mode of travel?
   b. Where are the places you go most frequently?
   c. How do you choose your mode of travel?
      i. Do you use different modes of transportation when you commute vs. other trips? (e.g., running errands or doing something for leisure)
      ii. Do you ever use more than one mode of transportation to get somewhere? For example, do you drive a car to a park & ride and catch a carpool, or ride a bike to public transit?
      iii. Do you use different modes of transportation for special events? (e.g. Giants game or concert)
   d. How do you feel about the public transit options in your area?
   e. How often do you use public transit systems other than Caltrain?

3. **General Feelings toward Caltrain (15 minutes/40 minutes)**
   a. How often do you ride Caltrain?
   b. Why do you ride Caltrain?
   c. How do you feel about Caltrain overall?
      i. What do you like best about riding Caltrain?
      ii. What do you like least?
   d. What do you feel Caltrain could do better?

4. **Caltrain Riding Experience (20 minutes/60 minutes)**
    a. Describe your typical trip on Caltrain
        i. Where are you going?
        ii. How long does your ride take?
        iii. What do you do while you are riding?
        iv. How crowded is it?
        v. How do you get to the station?
        vi. How do you get from the station to your destination?
        vii. How do you plan your trip?
        viii. How do you pay your fare?
    b. Thinking about all of those things we just talked about, are there parts that could be better?
    c. How do you feel about Caltrain's on-time performance?
        i. What happens when they are not on time?

5. **Caltrain Communications (20 minutes/80 minutes)**
    a. How do you feel about how Caltrain communicates with riders?
    b. Do you generally feel well-informed as a Caltrain rider?
    c. How do you feel about how Caltrain communicates with you on…
        i. Schedule changes
        ii. Fare changes
        iii. Delays
        iv. Special event service
        v. Are there other areas Caltrain should be communicating with you on?
    d. Do you follow Caltrain on social media?
    e. Have you visited the Caltrain website?

6. **Caltrain Improvements (25 minutes/105 minutes)**
    a. Caltrain is looking for ways to make their service better for riders like you. Do you have any suggestions of improvements you'd like to see Caltrain make?
    b. Now I'd like to share with you some changes Caltrain is considering and I'd like to get your reactions. I'd like you to read over this sheet and then we'll discuss each item:

        i. Real-Time App: An app that would provide real time information to your smartphone including departures, arrivals, and service information such as special event service and system delays.

        ii. System Information Monitors at End Stations: Information boards in a central location at the San Francisco and San Jose Diridon stations that display departure and arrival times, track assignments, and information about special event service and system delays.

        iii. Customer Service Online Chat Availability: A chat feature for the Caltrain website that will allow customers to talk with a customer service rep.

    iv. Upgraded Ticket Vending Machines: Upgraded ticket vending machines at stations that will allow for more payment methods and ticket types.

    v. Mobile Ticketing App: An app that will allow riders to purchase their tickets from their smartphone ahead of time.

    vi. Onboard Electronic Train Information Display: Electronic displays on each train to display train number and type, next station information, and information about special event service and system delays.

    vii. Improvements to bike amenities

    viii. Improvements to parking lots

    ix. WiFi availability

c. For each, ask:
   i. Do you feel like this is a good or a bad idea? Why?
   ii. Is this something you personally think you would use?
   iii. Is this something you think other riders would use?
   iv. How do you feel this would change your Caltrain experience?

d. What other improvements would you like to see from Caltrain?

7. Electrification of Trains (10 minutes/115 minutes)
a. Have you seen or heard anything about Caltrain's electrification project?
   i. What have you seen or heard?

Hand out sheet with description:
Caltrain is upgrading and electrifying their trains to improve the performance, operating efficiency, capacity, safety and reliability of Caltrain's commuter rail service. The electrification will allow Caltrain to operate quieter, cleaner, more frequent and faster train service to more riders. Increased capacity and improved service will help Caltrain meet increasing ridership, and it will provide substantial environmental benefits to the region's air quality through a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise be present through the use of diesel powered trains.
   ii. Do you feel like this will impact you as a Caltrain rider? How?
   iii. What are the benefits to this electrification project?

8. Conclusion / Wrap up (5 minutes/120 minutes)
a. Is there anything else you'd like to add to the discussion before we dismiss?
b. Thank and dismiss!

MODERATOR'S GUIDE
Group 2 – Infrequent Riders
September 21, 2016, 8:00 PM

1. **Introductions (10 minutes in length/10 minutes elapsed)**
   a. Welcome, moderator introduction, explain focus group process
   b. Explain confidentiality, note audio/video recording and observers
   c. Participant introductions:
      i. Name
      ii. How long you've lived in the Bay Area
      iii. Where do you live
      iv. Who do you live with? (Family/pets)
      v. If you have any kids, what ages are they?

2. **Transportation in the Bay Area (10 minutes/20 minutes)**
   a. How do you usually get around?
      i. What do you enjoy most about your regular mode of travel?
      ii. What is your biggest frustration with your regular mode of travel?
   b. Where are the places you go most frequently?
   c. How do you choose your mode of travel?
      iii. Do you use different modes of transportation when you commute vs. other trips? (e.g., running errands or doing something for leisure)
      iv. Do you ever use more than one mode of transportation to get somewhere? For example, do you drive a car to a park & ride and catch a carpool, or ride a bike to public transit?
      v. Do you use different modes of transportation for special events? (e.g. Giants game or concert)

3. **Public Transportation (15 minutes/35 minutes)**
   a. Now I'd like to talk about public transportation. What public transit options are available in your area?
   b. How often would you say you use public transportation?
      i. Where do you go – to what places, or for what purpose?
      ii. Do you ever ride transit as part of a longer trip or commute?
   c. Are different types of transit for different types of trips?
   d. How do you feel about the quality of the public transit options in your area?
   e. What are the biggest challenges in getting around on public transit?

4. **General Feelings toward Caltrain (15 minutes/50 minutes)**
   a. Some of you mentioned Caltrain, I would like to focus on Caltrain for a moment.
      i. How often do you ride Caltrain?
      ii. Why do you ride Caltrain?
   b. How do you feel about Caltrain overall?
      i. What do you like most about riding Caltrain?
      ii. What do you like least?
   c. What do you feel Caltrain could do better?

5. **Caltrain Riding Experience (20 minutes/70 minutes)**
   a. Describe your typical trip on Caltrain
      i. Where are you going?
      ii. How long does your ride take?
      iii. What do you do while you are riding?
      iv. How crowded is it?
      v. How do you get to the station?
      vi. How do you get from the station to your destination?
      vii. How do you plan your trip?
      viii. How do you pay your fare?
   b. Thinking about all of those things we just talked about, are there parts that could be better?
   c. How do you feel about Caltrain's on-time performance?
      i. What happens when they are not on time?

6. **Caltrain Communications (15 minutes/85 minutes)**
   a. How do you feel about how Caltrain communicates with riders?
   b. Do you generally feel well-informed as a Caltrain rider?
   c. How do you feel about how Caltrain communicates with you on…
      i. Schedule changes
      ii. Fare changes
      iii. Delays
      iv. Special event service
      v. Are there other areas Caltrain should be communicating with you on?
   d. Do you follow Caltrain on social media?
   e. Have you visited the Caltrain website?

7. **Caltrain Information (10 minutes/95 minutes)**
   a. Now I'd like to tell you a little bit about Caltrain.

[Hand out Caltrain Timetable Brochure, Caltrain Giants Schedule Brochure, Caltrain Safety Brochure, and Caltrain Bike Access Brochure (see Appendix III), give them 5 minutes to look over.]

   b. Have you seen this information before?
   c. Did this tell you something new about Caltrain that you didn't already know?
   d. Are you more likely to consider riding Caltrain after seeing this information?
   e. Is there more information you would like to know about Caltrain in order to consider riding it?
8. **Caltrain Improvements (10 minutes/105 minutes)**
   a. Caltrain is looking for ways to make their service better for riders like you. Do you have any suggestions of improvements you'd like to see Caltrain make?
   b. Now I'd like to share with you some changes Caltrain is considering and I'd like to get your reactions. I'd like you to read over this sheet and then we'll discuss each item:

      i. Real-Time App: An app that would provide real time information to your smartphone including departures, arrivals, and service information such as special event service and system delays.

    ii. System Information Monitors at End Stations: Information boards in a central location at the San Francisco and San Jose Diridon stations that display departure and arrival times, track assignments, and information about special event service and system delays.

    iii. Customer Service Online Chat Availability: A chat feature for the Caltrain website that will allow customers to talk with a customer service rep.

    iv. Upgraded Ticket Vending Machines: Upgraded ticket vending machines at stations that will allow for more payment methods and ticket types.

    v. Mobile Ticketing App: An app that will allow riders to purchase their tickets from their smartphone ahead of time.

    vi. Onboard Electronic Train Information Display: Electronic displays on each train to display train number and type, next station information, and information about special event service and system delays.

    vii. Improvements to bike amenities

    viii. Improvements to parking lots

    ix. WiFi availability

c. For each, ask:
    i.   Do you feel like this is a good or a bad idea? Why?
    ii.   Is this something you personally think you would use?
    iii.   Is this something you think other riders would use?
    iv.   How do you feel this would change your Caltrain experience?

d. What other improvements would you like to see from Caltrain?

9.   **Electrification of Trains (10 minutes/115 minutes)**
   a.   Have you seen or heard anything about the Caltrain electrification project?
      i.   What have you seen or heard?

Hand out sheet with description:
Caltrain is upgrading and electrifying their trains to improve the performance, operating efficiency, capacity, safety and reliability of Caltrain's commuter rail service. The electrification will allow Caltrain to operate quieter, cleaner, more frequent and faster train service to more riders. Increased capacity and improved service will help Caltrain meet increasing ridership, and it will provide substantial environmental benefits to the region's air quality through a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise be present through the use of diesel powered trains.
      i.   Do you feel like this will impact you as a Caltrain rider? How?
      ii.   What are the benefits to this electrification project?

10. **Conclusion / Wrap up (5 minutes/120 minutes)**
   a.   Is there anything else you'd like to add to the discussion before we dismiss?
   b.   Thank and dismiss!

MODERATOR'S GUIDE
Group 3 – Non-Riders
September 22, 2016, 7:00 PM

1. **Introductions (10 minutes in length/10 minutes elapsed)**
   a. Welcome, moderator introduction, explain focus group process
   b. Explain confidentiality, note audio/video recording and observers
   c. Participant introductions:
      i. Name
      ii. How long you've lived in the Bay Area
      iii. Where do you live
      iv. Who do you live with? (Family/pets)
      v. If you have any kids, what ages are they?

2. **Transportation in the Bay Area (15 minutes/25 minutes)**
   a. How do you usually get around?
      i. What do you enjoy most about your regular mode of travel?
      ii. What is your biggest frustration with your regular mode of travel?
   b. Where are the places you go most frequently?
   c. How do you choose your mode of travel?
      i. Do you use different modes of transportation when you commute vs. other trips? (e.g., running errands or doing something for leisure)
      ii. Do you ever use more than one mode of transportation to get somewhere? For example, do you drive a car to a park & ride and catch a carpool, or ride a bike to public transit?
      iii. Do you use different modes of transportation for special events? (e.g. Giants game or concert)

3. **Public Transportation (15 minutes/40 minutes)**
   a. Now I'd like to talk about public transportation. What public transit options are available in your area?
   b. How often would you say you use public transportation?
   c. Regardless of whether you use it or not, how do you feel about the quality of the public transit options in your area?
   d. What are the biggest challenges in getting around on public transit?
   e. What are the biggest reasons to use public transit?
   f. What are the biggest reasons **not** to use public transit?

4. **Familiarity and Perceptions of Caltrain (25 minutes/65 minutes)**
    a. Now I'd like to talk about one specific public transit service in this area, Caltrain.
    b. What do you know about Caltrain?
        i. What is it?
        ii. Where can you take it?
        iii. Who rides it?
        iv. Is there a station close to where you live? Close to where you work?
    c. What is your general impression of Caltrain?
    d. Do you ride Caltrain yourself?
        i. Why or why not?
    e. Does anyone you know ride Caltrain?
    f. Would you like to be able to ride Caltrain?
        i. What would make it easier for you to ride Caltrain?

5. **Caltrain Information (30 minutes/95 minutes)**
    a. Now I'd like to tell you a little bit about Caltrain.

[Hand out CalTrain Timetable Brochure and Caltrain Giants Schedule Brochure (see Appendix III), give them 5 minutes to look over.]

    b. Have you seen this information before?
    c. Did this tell you something new about Caltrain that you didn't already know?
    d. Are you more likely to consider riding Caltrain after seeing this information?
    e. Is there more information you would like to know about Caltrain in order to consider riding it?

6. **Electrification of Trains (10 minutes/105 minutes)**
    a. Have you seen or heard anything about the Caltrain electrification project?
        i. What have you seen or heard?

Hand out sheet with description:

Caltrain is upgrading and electrifying their trains to improve the performance, operating efficiency, capacity, safety and reliability of Caltrain's commuter rail service. The electrification will allow Caltrain to operate quieter, cleaner, more frequent and faster train service to more riders. Increased capacity and improved service will help Caltrain meet increasing ridership, and it will provide substantial environmental benefits to the region's air quality through a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise be present through the use of diesel powered trains.

        i. Do you feel like this will impact you? How?
        ii. What are the benefits to this electrification project?

7. **Conclusion / Wrap up (5 minutes/110 minutes)**
    a. Is there anything else you'd like to add to the discussion before we dismiss?
Thank and dismiss!

Appendix III

Caltrain Timetable Brochure

Northbound - WEEKEND SERVICE to SAN FRANCISCO

Southbound - WEEKEND SERVICE to SAN JOSE

FARES

Caltrain fares are based on the number of zones that are entered or traversed through by the passenger.

Ticket Type

HOW TO BUY

Ticket Machine
1. Select Ticket Type
2. Choose Destination Zone
3. Select Number of Tickets
4. Purchase Tickets
5. Insert Cash or Credit Card

REMINDERS

Clipper Tips
- Must have at least $1.25 on card
- Monthly Pass customers only tag on and off for first trip of the month
- Cash and 8-ride Ticket customers must tag on and off for every trip

SERVICE INFORMATION

BABY BULLET EXPRESS SERVICE

LIMITED-STOP SERVICE

TIMED TRANSFERS

HOLIDAY SERVICE

WEEKEND SERVICE

ONBOARD AMENITIES

ACCESSIBLE STATIONS

CALTRAIN SYSTEM MAP

Caltrain Safety Brochure

Trains on the Caltrain corridor...

- ...travel up to 79 mph and weigh about 1 million lbs
- ...take a mile or more to stop. That's the length of 18 football fields!
- ...overhang the tracks by at least 3 feet. Straps and other objects on the train may reach even farther.
- ...operate on a push-pull system. Trains can be pushed or pulled by the locomotive, making it harder to tell which end of the train is the "front". Always look carefully to see which way the trains are moving.
- ...move faster and are closer than they appear. An optical illusion gives the impression that trains are farther away and moving slower than they actually are.

KNOW THE SIGNS

Be sure to know the following signs and signals indicating a railroad crossing is ahead:

Pedestrian Crossing

On the Road

Signs & Devices at the Crossing

Rail Safety Presentations

In partnership with California Operation Lifesaver, the Caltrain Office of Public Affairs offers rail safety presentations for people of all age groups, especially students.

These presentations teach individuals how to stay safe while around the rail system and gain a better understanding of the behaviors to avoid hazards. The presentations use engaging videos and other materials to actively involve audiences in rail safety.

For more information or to schedule a presentation, call 650.508.7927.

Stay Safe with Caltrain

Caltrain's "Don't Shortcut Life" safety campaign focuses on education, engineering and enforcement. Know and follow the safety tips and share them with your loved ones. Stay safe, arrive alive and don't shortcut life.

caltrain

1250 San Carlos Ave.
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306
www.caltrain.com

facebook.com/Caltrain
@gcCaltrain
@Caltrain_News

Don't Shortcut Life

You play an important part in ensuring the rail system remains a safe place for you and others. Following the basic rules of rail safety will keep you, other passengers and the community safe around the tracks.

Every month, Caltrain operates more than 138,000 miles of trips up and down the Peninsula, carrying an ever-growing number of people to work, to play and to many other destinations, safely and on time.

Trains have become a routine part of daily life for many Peninsula residents. After all, trains have been operating on Caltrain tracks for more than 150 years, and many people who live and work in the area have come to take them for granted.

But it takes only a split second for someone to drop their guard or try to squeeze around a closing gate to realize ignoring the basic rules of safety near the tracks can be a devastating decision.

When Near Railroad Tracks Always…

1
LOOK. LISTEN. LIVE
Trains cannot steer. It's your responsibility to stay off the tracks. Today's trains can be quiet, so listen carefully and look both ways before crossing the tracks.

2
EXPECT A TRAIN ON ANY TRACK, IN ANY DIRECTION AND AT ANY TIME
Freight, special event and other trains are not on the Caltrain schedule. Always expect a train when crossing or traveling near the tracks.

3
CROSS AT A PUBLIC CROSSING
Public crossings are the only safe place to cross railroad tracks. Crossing anywhere other than a public crossing is dangerous and illegal.

4
PAY ATTENTION
Pay attention to warnings, crossing signs, gates and instructions when crossing tracks, standing on platforms and while on the train. Headphones, cell phones and other distractions don't mix with being safe around the tracks.

5
WAIT FOR THE GATE
Whether you're driving, walking or cycling, always wait for the gate to completely rise before crossing tracks. Going around the gate is not only illegal, it could cost you your life.

6
WATCH FOR A SECOND TRAIN
When crossing multiple tracks, be careful of other trains that you may not see. The first train can block your view and give you the impression that the tracks are clear when they're not. Wait for the first train to completely clear your view of the tracks in both directions before crossing.

TRANSIT WATCH

Do your part to keep the rails safe! If you see something, say something. Call Caltrain Transit Police at 1.877.SAF.RAIL (1.877.723.7245) immediately to report any unsafe situation or suspicious activity. Save the number in your cell phone for quick and easy access.

PASSENGERS
Stand Behind the Yellow Line
Stand behind the yellow safety line on the platform at all times. Trains may express through stations at up to 79 mph.

Running Late?
There's nothing worse than knowing you cut it too close and your train is about to depart. But taking shortcuts across tracks or around pedestrian safety gates is illegal and extremely dangerous. It's better to arrive late than not at all.

CYCLISTS
Walk Your Bike
Always walk your bike - don't ride - when on station platforms or when crossing tracks.

Cross at 90-degrees
Always cross tracks at a 90-degree angle.

DRIVERS
Steer Clear of the Tracks
Only cross railroad tracks when you know you can completely clear all of the tracks. Remember, trains overhang the rail by at least 3 feet. You are not safe until you are all the way across the tracks.

Stalled Cars
If your vehicle stalls while on a crossing, immediately get everyone out of the vehicle and move quickly away from the tracks in the direction from which the train is coming. Debris flies in the direction that the train is traveling.

Caltrain Giants Schedule Brochure

Caltrain Bike Access Brochure

BIKE RULES

Caltrain would like to remind bicyclists to follow the onboard posted instructions for bike placement. The aisle in the bike car must be kept clear for emergency access purposes.

Bicyclists are legally responsible for damage to Caltrain equipment and/or injury to other passengers due to the bicyclist's negligence. Caltrain assumes no responsibility for theft or damage to bikes while on the train.

General

- Bicyclists must be at least 6 years old. Cyclists younger than 12 years of age must be accompanied by an adult and be able to carry their own bike on and off the train.
- No extra charge to board a bike.
- Bike cars are marked with this decal
- Only single-rider bikes permitted.
- Maximum bike length: 80 inches.
- No fuel-powered bikes or three-wheeled bikes.
- Detachable and collapsible trailers aren't allowed. Large bulky attachments which expand bike width such as saddlebags, backpacks and baskets, aren't allowed to remain on bike.
- Bikes are not allowed on escalators and should be walked on station platforms and ramps.

Boarding

- Board designated bike cars only.
- Boarding is on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Be prepared to board when the train arrives; however, allow passengers to disembark first.
- Conductors are prohibited from handling bikes.

Onboard

- Quickly enter the bike car and allow room for other bicyclists that follow.
- Use bike "tags" to aid in organizing bike storage.
- No more than four bikes per rack.
- Keep kickstands up.
- Use the bungee cords provided to secure your bike, not bike locks.
- Aisle must be kept clear for emergency access.
- Sit or travel in the bike car if possible; keep the entrance area clear.
- Allow non-bike passengers to disembark first.
- In an emergency, follow the direction of train personnel and leave your bike on the train.

Caltrain

BIKE ACCESS

Caltrain has the most extensive bike access program in the nation, allowing bikes on all of its trains. Trains have 2-3 bike cars. Bombardier cars (newer, bi-level passenger cars) carry a total of 72 bikes on 3 bike cars and the gallery car sets carry 80. Collapsed folding bikes no wider than 32 inches are allowed to travel in non-bike cars.

Caltrain offers more than 1,000 lockers at its stations for rent. Information and application at **www.caltrain.com/bikelockers**

Other bike parking options are listed at **www.caltrain.com/bikelockers**

For capacity or bike car issues, follow **@bikesoncaltrain**.

Caltrain Information
caltrain.com/bicycles
1.800.660.4287 (TTY 650.508.6448)

9/16 - 10K - E - JB