

JPB Board of Directors Meeting of September 5, 2024

Correspondence as of August 30, 2024

### # Subject

- 1. Letter from Dave Price RE: Reporting of Deaths
- 2. Staff Reply to Mr. Emil Lawrence RE: Complaint about Redi-Wheels Application
- 3. BART-Caltrain Connection: Another Way? -- Will transit experts have a say?
- 4. New Caltrain schedule
- 5. RE: New Cal Train Is it Accessible? Staff Response

From: Caltrain BOD Public Support
To: Board (@caltrain.com)

Cc:Jan Alexis Salandanan; Blytha BowersSubject:FW: Letter for the Caltrain boardDate:Monday, August 26, 2024 8:22:24 AM

Attachments: caltrain-let-8-23-24.pdf

FYI- Letter addressed to M. Bouchard.

From: Dave Price <price@padailypost.com>
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2024 11:41 PM

To: Caltrain BOD Public Support < CaltrainBODPublicSupport@Caltrain.com>

Subject: Letter for the Caltrain board

You don't often get email from <u>price@padailypost.com</u>. <u>Learn why this is important</u>

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

Please deliver the following two-page letter to the members of the Caltrain board.

Dave Price
Editor and Publisher
The Daily Post
385 Forest Ave., Palo Alto CA 94301
(650) 328-7700
price@padailypost.com



Palo Alto Daily Post 385 Forest Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301 (650) 328-7700

Aug. 23, 2024

Michelle Bouchard, Caltrain CEO and the Caltrain Board of Directors 1250 San Carlos Ave. San Carlos, CA 94070

Dear Ms. Bouchard,

In response to your letter of Aug. 23, we're only asking that Caltrain report on a same-day basis whether a death has occurred on the tracks. We're not asking for you to say immediately whether the death was intentional or accidental. We understand that determination can take months.

Commonly, police departments will report that a death has occurred on the same day it occurred. It might take police and the coroner days or weeks to determine the cause and manner of death, but they promptly report when a death occurs.

If Caltrain remains silent when a death takes place, speculation will grow in the community. When a Menlo-Atherton student died Aug. 11, information giving his name and where he died spread throughout the community the next morning. Your policy of silence made things worse by creating an information gap that was filled with erroneous and inappropriate information. Authoritative information from Caltrain would have stopped the whispers.

The idea of refusing to provide any information on deaths runs contrary to the document you cited in from the World Health Organization. Those guidelines assume that the basic information about a death would be released to the public. The guidelines deal with how the media should use the information about a death. I'm not aware of any media guidelines that call for an information blackout. Caltrain's policy is outside the mainstream of public agencies in the United States.

Your policy is flawed because you developed it in a vacuum without consulting with the media or experts on suicidology. You didn't even hold a public hearing on it. Had the policy been developed in an open process, you would have learned that the Werther Effect (the copycat theory) has been debunked — other researchers have been unable to replicate its results.

Finally, I question the statistical validity of Caltrain's three-month test (two deaths from May to July). Over the years, under the old policy, there have been many three-month periods when there were only one or two deaths. For instance, between January 2023 to July 2023, Caltrain only had two deaths — and that's under the old policy.

Caltrain's information blackout is outside the mainstream when it comes to public information policies of government agencies. Sweeping a problem under the rug won't make it go away. Instead of hiding information, you should focus your attention on preventing suicides. Censorship is never the answer.

Sincerely,

Dave Price Editor and Publisher



August 26, 2024

Emil Lawrence 1000 Twin Dolphin Dr Unit 14/B Redwood City, CA 94065

Dear Mr. Lawrence:

This letter is regarding the inquiry received about your Redi-Wheels Paratransit application submitted in February of this year. The Eligibility staff had received your application and tried several attempts to reach you at 650-254-4126 but unfortunately, they have not been successful in reaching you.

We are once again sending you a Paratransit Application to complete and return to their office. Once received they will contact you to set up your initial interview. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact them directly at 650-366-4856.

Sincerely,

SamTrans Accessible Transit Services

**Emil Lawrence MBA** 

Paralegal Investigator

Hotel Shores Landing Second Floor-Unit 14/B 1000 Twin Dolphin Drive San Carlos/RWC CA 94065 Cell-650-254-4126

July 16, 2024

PCJPB Board and CEO SamTrans/Caltrain 1250 San Carlos Avenue San Carlos, CA 94070

Re; The PCJPB ReadiWheels No Show since January 2024. One Can Write or Call, but the Handicap auxiliary "ain't going to do notting."

#### PCJPB Board Members:

What actually has to happen at the PCJPB, to make it more responsible? What has to happen to make this Board work for the county, instead of for the extra time in private sessions? One of the most powerful forces on this planet is the "denial" of Caltrain transportation assaults. I am still reverberating from the two minutes in citizen-speaking time given me in March of this year. Maybe we need the media to be involved, or a federal investigation of PCJPB practices-on racial hostility-by the white-collar division of the FBI, or the California state Transportation Committee.

On 12/29/23, I was hit by a car in the rain-on the Redwood Shores Parkway (RWSP)-about 8 PM. There is no sidewalk at the bus stop-on the RWSP-so I was crossing the street with three white bags of groceries. Before I knew it, the vehicles at the red light were racing from the light and one was right on my back. I turned sideways, while this vehicle's bumper caught my pants and foot. I went down with a slam on one knee in the rain. None of the vehicles stopped, until they got to the next light. "A hit and run." People got out of their cars, including the vehicle that hit me. But, there I was on the side of the road, sitting in the rain until an ambulance showed up. At one point, there were ambulances, fire trucks, and the police. The RWC police took my ID while I am in the ambulance. The officer never came back. At the SF Veteran's Medical Center (SFVAMC), I found that I had many bruises and two broken toes. Soon, I caught COVAD-19, and was hospitalized at the (SFVAMC) for a week.

However, later, I found-more incompetence-the RWC police officer-who may have grown up in Mexico-never interviewed the victim-me-nor did he get any license plate numbers. Without talking to the victim, he amended the complaint to an "incident," and now it is not an "accident." So, I fire off a letter to the RWC police captain. But, not hearing from the RWC captain's office, I shoot a letter to the County Sheriff. As of this date, I'm still waiting for their replies. I will be writing to the District Attorney.

As of today, this is another case of San Mateo County's "Due Diligence." Weeks after leaving the SFVAMC, I was limping and using crutches.

In January 2024, I call Caltrans Reddywheels (RW) for assistance. In February 2024, I call RW, again. I am, walking/limping throughout San Carlos and Caltrans. But, I notice RW-always-traveling empty. I have never seen anyone inside the units. In February 2024, the administrator to my building gave me RW forms to fill out and these were sent in within days. Again, I called RW last month. They lost the forms. Then, they claimed someone tried to call me. What, where, when and how? I have no phone, email or hard mail records of this claim. I was limping at the Caltrain station the day your African Conductor denied me access to this transportation venue, and kicked me off the train.

Sincerely,

Emil Lawrence

Emil Lawrence MBA

CC: Warren Slocum, State Transportation Committee

From: LoopWorks <rob-milpitasprt.com@shared1.ccsend.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 27, 2024 6:47 PM

**To:** Board (@caltrain.com)

**Subject:** BART-Caltrain Connection: Another Way? -- Will transit experts have a say?

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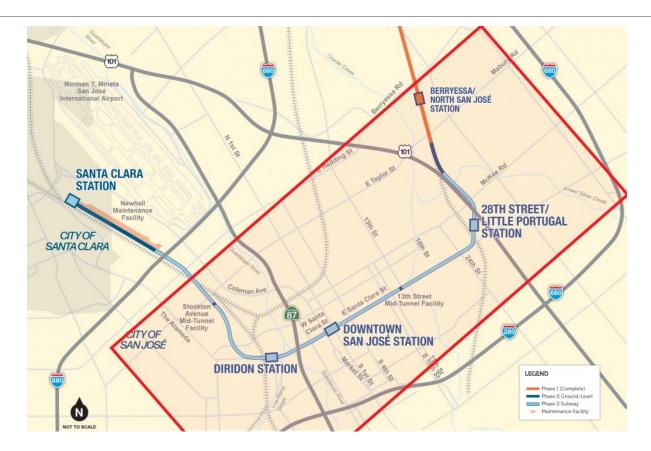
View as Webpage

### BART-Caltrain Connection: Another Way? - Sept. 4

Caltrain Board of Directors,

Who will represent your interests in this public conversation about connecting the BART Berryessa Station with the Caltrain Diridon Station? Early this month an invitation was sent to you citing our Climate Crisis and fiscal cliffs threatening transit agencies around the Bay. If you or your organization's agent plans to attend, please RSVP here so we can guarantee you a seat.

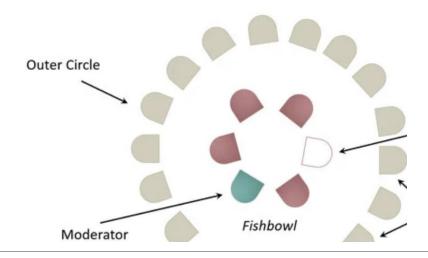
Here in Santa Clara County, VTA moves forward with a \$12B mega-project that will do nothing to address our congestion and Climate problems until 2037 or later - if we can pay for it! Already, some public voices are questioning the venture.



A renewed public conversation about how to connect the BART Berryessa station with the Diridon Caltrain station is needed. **LoopWorks**, leader of the Milpitas **podcar project**, **invites you to a public discussion** using an **open fishbowl conversation format** (shown below).

Four panelists occupy the center circle of chairs, where one chair is left empty. Panelists will represent the interests of VTA, transit users, environmentalists, and Personal Rapid Transit (PRT or podcars). The moderator introduces the topic, and the panelists start the discussion. Attendees outside the fishbowl listen in on the conversation; those wishing to participate do so by taking the empty seat.

We expect attendees and online viewers will quickly grasp current transit challenges, and start community-level thinking about next steps. If you or your organization's agent plans to attend, please let us know so we can guarantee you a seat.



Join the conversation *BART-Caltrain Connection: Another Way?*Wednesday, Sept. 4, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm (online and in person)
Milpitas Library Auditorium at 160 N Main Street.
Moderator: Belinda Quesada, KCXU (92.7 FM) Radio Host
Due to the tight schedule, we plan to start promptly at 6:30 pm.

Visit our **BART-Caltrain Connection webpage** for details, agenda, list of invitees, and streaming link.

Because the Library Auditorium is limited to 120 people, please RSVP here if you plan to attend in person.





https://MilpitasPRT.com Info@MilpitasPRT.com 408-262-8975

LoopWorks | 1421 Yellowstone Av | Milpitas, CA 95035 US

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From: <u>Cole Allen</u>

To: Board (@caltrain.com); Michelle Bouchard; Sam Sargent; cacsecretary [@caltrain.com]

**Subject:** New Caltrain schedule

**Date:** Wednesday, August 28, 2024 11:48:07 AM

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Hello,

My name is Cole Allen. I am a frequent Caltrain rider and I am VERY excited that electrification is now finally a reality with Caltrain. I took my first ride on one of the electric trains last week, and it was amazing! This ride felt so much more modern.

There is one thing I did want to bring up with Caltrain about the new schedule that will be effective September 21. I have been riding Caltrain since 2013 - I initially rode the train every day to/from SF and my home in Redwood City, but during the pandemic that changed and I now telework for the most part, but I do still ride about 2 or 3 times a month to the city for conferences or other work-related events (or to get to the city on weekends without the hassle of parking) and with the express trains, I noticed that up until now, all peak direction express trains would run nonstop between SF and Millbrae and prior to the pandemic, there were two station stop patters for the express trains (Pattern 1 was SF, Millbrae, Hillsdale, Palo Alto, Mountain View and SJ while Pattern 2 was SF, Millbrae, San Mateo, Redwood City, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, SJ and Tamien), but in the new schedule, it shows that the express trains will only do one station pattern (all the "baby bullet" stops rather than just half and half) and they will also stop at 22nd Street and South SF as opposed to running nonstop between SF and Millbrae. I'd like to ask: WHY is Caltrain doing this - I highly implore Caltrain to instead revert to the exact same express train stopping patterns that they previously did BEFORE the pandemic in order to decrease travel time even more, and not have express trains stop at 22nd St. since all the local trains would stop there anyway and that a popular place for peak direction commuters to disembark in the morning or board in the evening.

Best, Cole Allen

Sent from my iPhone

From: Tina Dubost <dubostc@samtrans.com>

Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 8:28 AM

To: Richard Skaff < richardskaff1@gmail.com>

**Cc:** PIU.PIU@doj.ca.gov <PIU.PIU@doj.ca.gov>; Ida A. Clair <ida.clair@dgs.ca.gov>; Eric Driever, AIA, CASp <eric.driever@dgs.ca.gov>; London Breed <MayorLondonBreed@sfgov.org>; San Francisco

Board of Supervisors <board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org>; Caltrain BOD Public Support <CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com>; accommodations@calcivilrights.ca.gov

<accommodations@calcivilrights.ca.gov>; Access Complaints - Kevin Kish

<contact.center@calcivilrights.ca.gov>; Dr. Sachin Dev Pavithran <info@access-board.gov>; Eddy

Cummins <ecumins@sonomamarintrain.org>; Bill Gamlen, P.E. & ADA Coordinator

<BGamlen@sonomamarintrain.org>; Aaron Peskin <aaron.peskin@earthlink.net>; Aaron Peskin <aaron.peskin@sfgov.org>

Subject: RE: New Cal Train - Is It Accessible?

Dear Mr. Skaff:

Thank you for your email.

In response to your email, we reviewed the restrooms on the new Caltrain EMU's and verified that the restrooms are consistent with 49 CFR Part 38, Subpart E, Section 38.107.

The minimum clear floor space is more than 35 inches by 60 inches.

The height of the water closet is 18 inches.

A 24-inch grab bar is mounted behind the water closet and a horizontal grab bar at least 40 inches is mounted on the side wall.

Faucets and flush controls can be operated with one hand and do not require tight grasping.

Doorways meet the requirements for minimum clear opening.

Thank you for your interest in Caltrain. Tina Dubost Manager, Accessible Transit Services

**From:** Richard Skaff <richardskaff1@gmail.com> **Sent:** Wednesday, August 14, 2024 7:55 PM **To:** Tina Dubost <dubostc@samtrans.com>

**Subject:** Re: New Cal Train - Is It Accessible?

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# Tina Dubost, Manager Accessible Transit Services Cal Train

Hello, Ms. Dubost.

First, thank you for the detailed response. Much appreciated.

Agency's Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC), reviewed a mock-up of what is now the Cal Train "accessible" bathroom and found the mock-up to be completely accessible. Apparently, those committee members determined that, when built, the new Cal Train on-board bathrooms would be fully and completely accessible for everyone, including those with mobility disabilities, who use a manual or electric wheelchair, or electric scooter for mobility.

Please provide the names as well as the State Building Code and federal regulatory standards experience of each member. I will need that information to better understand how each of the Committee

members came to that conclusion.

Your email also stated that, "The restroom was designed in compliance with 49 CFR Part 38, Subpart E, Section 38.107 which stipulates the design of onboard restrooms for commuter railcars."

Although I have not physically been on any of the new Cal Trans electric trains or had an in-person opportunity to see any of the Cal Train new "accessible" bathrooms, based on the on-line photos of the Cal Train "accessible" bathrooms that I've seen, it appears that the actual "accessible" bathrooms may, in fact, not be accessible to those using large electric wheelchairs.

At some point, I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you and members of your Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) that determined that the final design of the train bathrooms, are, in fact, completely accessible.

I look forward to your timely response.

Thank you.

Richard Skaff, Executive Director Designing Accessible Communities

Cell: 707-755-1681

Email: richardskaff1@gmail.com

"Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America"

A statement made by civil rights leader, John Lewis

"Fighting Hate,

Teaching Tolerance,

Seeking Justice"

The Southern Poverty Law Center

"Nothing About Us Without Us!"

The Disability Community Mantra for full and direct participation in all decisions that impact their lives

On Wed, Aug 14, 2024, 5:20 PM Tina Dubost < <a href="mailto:dubostc@samtrans.com">dubostc@samtrans.com</a>> wrote:

Dear Mr. Skaff:

Thank you for your interest in the Caltrain electric vehicles.

As part of the design of the new trains, we engaged with numerous groups, including the Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee (CAAC) who played a pivotal role with their feedback. A full-scale mock-up of the restroom was created, allowing CAAC members to interact with it. (Several members who use power wheelchairs went into the mock-up restroom.) Their input led to multiple beneficial changes, including the placement and addition of multiple grab bars and emergency buttons, signage improvements and details such as coat hooks that are flush to the wall when not in use.

The restroom was designed in compliance with 49 CFR Part 38, Subpart E, Section 38.107 which stipulates the design of onboard restrooms for commuter railcars. The design has been reviewed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) passenger rail division and they took no exception to the design. The force required to open/close the restroom door is 5 pounds.

Each train car has wheelchair locations for people who use manual or electric wheelchairs or scooters. The wheelchair locations have windows. Caltrain does not have dining cars.

Wheelchair users are not able to travel between cars while the train is in motion. They may disembark and travel on the platform to get to another car.

For blind, low vision and deaf/hard of hearing riders, there are audio and visual announcements on the train. On the station platforms, there are audio and visual announcements. There is directional tile to get to the ticket vending machines and to the area for people needing

assistance. The Clipper card readers emit a beep to make it easier for blind and low vision people to find them to tag on and off. There is warning tile at the platform edge.

People needing assistance may wait in the blue boarding assistance area at the north end of the platform. Conductors are trained to go to people in the boarding assistance area to ask how they can assist.

We will work with our communications team to review and update our website to convey the accessibility designs of the new trains.

Our goal is to provide safe, accessible, and inclusive transportation for all passengers. We appreciate your dedication to this cause and welcome any further input you may have as we work together to create a more accessible and accommodating travel experience for everyone.

My background includes over 26 years of experience working in accessible transportation. I work closely with other expert team members, including people in Rail, Communications and Facilities.

Thank you for your interest in Caltrain.

Tina Dubost

Manager, Accessible Transit Services

Office: 650-508-6247

**From:** Richard Skaff < richardskaff1@gmail.com >

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:55 AM **To:** Tina Dubost < dubostc@samtrans.com>

Cc: PIU.PIU@doj.ca.gov; Ida A. Clair < ida.clair@dgs.ca.gov >; Eric Driever, AIA, CASp

<eric.driever@dgs.ca.gov>; London Breed <<u>MayorLondonBreed@sfgov.org</u>>; San Francisco Board

of Supervisors <<a href="mailto:supervisors@sfgov.org">board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org</a>; Caltrain BOD Public Support

<<u>CaltrainBODPublicSupport@caltrain.com</u>> **Subject:** Re: New Cal Train - Is It Accessible?

You don't often get email from richardskaffl@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

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Tina Dubost, ADA Coordinator

Caltrain

Ms. Dubost.

Although I greatly appreciate your response to my email inquiry, your email didn't provide any details relating to your statement that all of the new train cars are accessible and the bathrooms are accessible.

Your response provided no details supporting those statements.

When you state that all train cars are accessible, what does that mean? Are there seating locations in each car for passengers who use manual or electric wheelchairs or scooters? If so, do each of those accessible seating locations include all of the accoutrements that are available at the seating locations for the general public, including view windows, electrical outlets, and tables? And, can a person using a wheelchair or scooter travel between cars? If so, what is the door operating force at the end of each car?

As to the "accessible bathrooms", what was the bathroom design based upon? What is the door force to close and open the bathroom door? Is the door powered, for those unable to operate the door manually? The toilet appears to only provide a forward approach, which in most cases wouldn't allow a person using a wheelchair to transfer from their chair to the toilet. And although required in an accessible single use bathroom, there appears to not be a grab bar on the wall behind the toilet. And overall, there appears to be only limited forward facing space for a person using a wheelchair, making it impossible to turn around to better access and open/close the bathroom door.

What features in the new electric Cal Train cars and stations have been used to help blind and low visioned passengers safely negotiate the Cal Train stations and train cars? Please also provide details about the station and cars that will help a blind/deaf passenger to function safely in the new Cal Train system.

Your email stated that the Cal Train website is being updated. What, if any features will be included in that system to make that service accessible to everyone, including potential train passengers with mobility, sight, and hearing disabilities?

I would also appreciate being provided your training and background. Your contact information on the Cal Trans website states that you are the "Acting" ADA Coordinator. How long have you been in that position and were you responsible for the "accessibility" features of the new Cal Train cars?

If Cal Train has a disability advisory committee, did the members "approve" all of the access features in the new Cal Train cars, including the "accessible" bathroom? Who actually designed the new Cal Train "accessible" bathrooms?

And last, I'm still expecting a response to all of the other issues I raised in my August 5th email to you.

Thank you.

Richard Skaff, Executive Director

Designing Accessible Communities

Cell: 707-755-1681

Email: richardskaff1@gmail.com

"Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America"

A statement made by civil rights leader, John Lewis

"Fighting Hate,

Teaching Tolerance,

Seeking Justice"

The Southern Poverty Law Center

### "Nothing About Us Without Us!"

The Disability Community Mantra for full and direct participation in all decisions that impact their lives

On Tue, Aug 6, 2024, 7:40 AM Tina Dubost < <a href="mailto:dubostc@samtrans.com">dubostc@samtrans.com</a>> wrote:

Dear Mr. Skaff:

We are in the process of updating our website before the launch of the new Caltrain service in late September.

All of the train cars on the new electric service are wheelchair accessible.

The restroom is accessible.

Thank you for your interest in Caltrain.

**Tina Dubost** 

Caltrain

**From:** Richard Skaff < richardskaff1@gmail.com >

**Sent:** Monday, August 5, 2024 7:15 PM

**To:** Richard Skaff < richardskaff1@gmail.com >

**Cc:** PIU.PIU@doj.ca.gov; Tina Dubost < dubostc@samtrans.com >

**Subject:** New Cal Train - Is It Accessible?

You don't often get email from richardskaffl@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

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

I don't know about you, but I find the website I've pasted below for the Cal Train, absolutely insulting!

We, people with mobility disabilities, who use mobility devices like wheelchairs and

scooters, should apparently just shut up and accept having only three wheelchair seating locations in a brand new electric train system as acceptable! Really?

How many "other", non-disabled riders are permitted to ride on those same trains when they are full?

https://www.caltrain.com/rider-information/accessibility/riding-disability/using-wheelchair

This is not a very old train or train system. It's a new system with new equipment that uses electricity to operate instead of diesel as the train's fuel.

And people with disabilities have been provided three wheelchair seating locations? And for those three seating locations, do each have access to an accessible bathroom, windows, table, and dining car (if there is one) available to them?

At best, this is unacceptable!

Richard Skaff, Executive Director Designing Accessible Communities

Cell: 707-755-1681

Email: richardskaff1@gmail.com

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## Using a Wheelchair

### Wheelchair Accessibility

The **Gallery train** sets have at least one wheelchair-accessible car that can accommodate three wheelchairs and use an onboard wheel-chair lift.

The **Bombardier train** sets have up to five wheelchair-accessible cars and use the

accessible ramp or the mobile platform wheelchair lift.

Wheelchairs are boarded (oh, the people that use those wheelchairs aren't boarded? Just their wheelchairs?) at all accessible stations listed in the box on back. For all trains, please wait at the blue international wheelchair symbol painted on the platform for the conductor to assist you.

- If a train already has the maximum number of wheelchair/mobility device customers on board, the conductor will ask you to wait for the next train. (Is that what the conductors tell all of the other passengers wanting to use the new electric train system, or does that, based on a available seating, happen?)
- If it is the last train of the day, Caltrain will provide you with paratransit service to your destination. (And, how long will that effort to get a paratransit vehicle show up?
- If you or your attendant can fold your wheelchair and you can transfer to a seat, you may board the train even if all the wheelchair spaces are occupied.