

JPB CAC

CORRESPONDENCE

AS OF

March 18, 2025

From: [David Russo](#)
To: [cacsecretary \[@caltrain.com\]](mailto:cacsecretary [@caltrain.com])
Subject: Onboard Ticket staff radios
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 8:44:44 AM

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I ride Caltrain for work daily. The onboard ticketing agents are absolutely lovely. They are curious, warm, helpful, and greatly appreciated by riders.

A small request: might they be able to use in-ear microphones attached to their radios? The loud clicking, static, and staff-to-staff coms is disruptive, off putting, and should be kept private. I think staff would appreciate being able to keep some of their communications private between them.

Thank you.
David Russo
408-839-3522

From: [Dan Lieberman](#)
To: cacsecretary1@caltrain.com
Subject: Caltrain e-News - February 2025
Date: Friday, February 28, 2025 3:23:46 PM

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• February 2025 | [View online](#) •

Getting Better Every Day

As the chill of a wet winter begins to recede, we are still hard at work on the rails. In this month's issue, we will share recent polling information that shows Caltrain has a 82%

favorability rating among likely voters. Caltrain is proud to see that the people and communities we serve are overwhelmingly in support of the services we provide up and down the Peninsula. We will also highlight a prestigious environmental award we received, our growing ridership, and our partnership with the NBA for All-Star Weekend.



Caltrain Support Polls Strongly in All Three Counties

Eight in 10 respondents reported a favorable view of Caltrain, with seven in 10 respondents stating that more funding is needed for public transit, demonstrating an appetite for new transit funding sources.



Learn More about Caltrain's Polling

Caltrain Named 2025 Sustainability Award Winner

Caltrain was honored by Sustainable San Mateo County, in recognition of the many environmental benefits of its new electric service running on 100% renewable power.

[Learn More about Sustainability](#)

2024 Closes with Growing Ridership

Ridership continues to grow after the launch of electric service, with a 41% increase in December 2024 ridership over the previous year.

[Learn More about Ridership](#)

High Marks in Customer Appreciation Survey

Caltrain was rated highly in its latest Customer Appreciation Survey, scoring 4.02 out of 5, with the highest marks reserved for conductors and safety.

Learn More about Customer Survey

Caltrain Celebrates 2025 NBA All-Star Weekend

Caltrain delivered fans to All-Star events all weekend for Feb. 14-16, offering opportunities for free NBA swag for diehard fans.

Learn More about All-Star Weekend

••• Get ***All Aboard*** sent to your inbox | [Subscribe](#)•••

UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 6 - [Caltrain Board Meeting](#) - San Carlos Station
- March 8 - [Giants Fan Fest](#) - San Francisco Station
- March 18 - [NVIDIA GTC Keynote](#) - San Jose Diridon Station

Join our team!

- [Intern](#)
- [Rail Network Planning Manager](#)
- [Warranty Administration Assistant Project Manager](#)

Learn More about Job Opportunities at Caltrain

Forward *All Aboard* to your friends, so they can [subscribe](#) too!

Editor: Dan Lieberman
LiebermanD@Samtrans.com

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1250 San Carlos Ave. San Carlos, CA 94070

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From: [Roland Lebrun](#)
To: [Baltao, Elaine \[board.secretary@vta.org\]](#)
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); [cacsecretary \[@caltrain.com\]](#)
Subject: March 13 Diridon ESC item 8 station alternatives
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 4:29:01 PM
Attachments: [12.h. Comments on Diridon Station Design Alternatives.pdf](#)
[Item 8 Station alternatives comments.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chair Heminger,

Further to my October 3, 2024 response to your direction to staff to carry both the "at Grade" and the "Elevated" alternatives (attached), please find attached my response to the March 2025 ESC staff report which can be summarized as follows:

- Fatally flawed guiding principles
- Lack of familiarity with modern best practice viaduct construction methodology
- Lack of familiarity with environmentally-cleared work completed by others (Google)

Respectfully presented for your consideration.

Roland Lebrun

From: Roland Lebrun <ccss@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 3, 2024 1:55 AM
To: Caltrain Board <board@caltrain.com>
Cc: Caltrain CAC Secretary <cacsecretary@caltrain.com>; Caltrain BAC <bac@caltrain.com>
Subject: Item 12.h Diridon Design Alternatives

Dear Chair Heminger,

Thank you and Director Gee for directing staff to carry both the "At Grade" and "Elevated" alternatives forward.

Please find my comments attached.

Key points:

- The relocation of the LRT station to the east side requires the demolition/reconstruction of the Historic Depot.
- The relocation of the LRT station conflicts with the 2018 BART to Silicon Valley Phase II SEIR.
- The relocation of the bus depot to the north side of West Santa Clara requires excessive clearance under the station's northern throat resulting in impacts on multiple buildings

and the Union Pacific Warm Springs line.

- There is \$24M in RM3 funding available for environmental clearance if MTC rescinds the \$24M misappropriated by VTA for the purchase of 32-60 Stockton.

Sincerely,

Roland Lebrun

Dear Chair Heminger,

Thank you and Director Gee for directing staff to carry both the “At Grade” and “Elevated” alternatives forward.

Introduction

I started working on the Diridon redesign in 2009 through the San Jose Downtown Association in collaboration with San Jose DOT (Hans Larsen) and the RDA (Walter Rask) disbanded by Governor Brown in 2010. Our initial design was based on London’s Stratford International station and was nearly identical to what became known as Google’s “Downtown West” 9 years later.

I designed and presented “Diridon at grade” to the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association in 2019. **I spent the first 18 months of “Shelter-in-Place” (March 2020-September 2021) designing “Diridon Elevated”.**

Here are my comments on the Diridon Station Design Alternatives presented at the September 25 AMP meeting.

Positive developments

- The nexus with the CEMOF relocation has been eliminated.
- *"An elevated station would be able to be built above the Historic Annex".*

Remaining Challenges

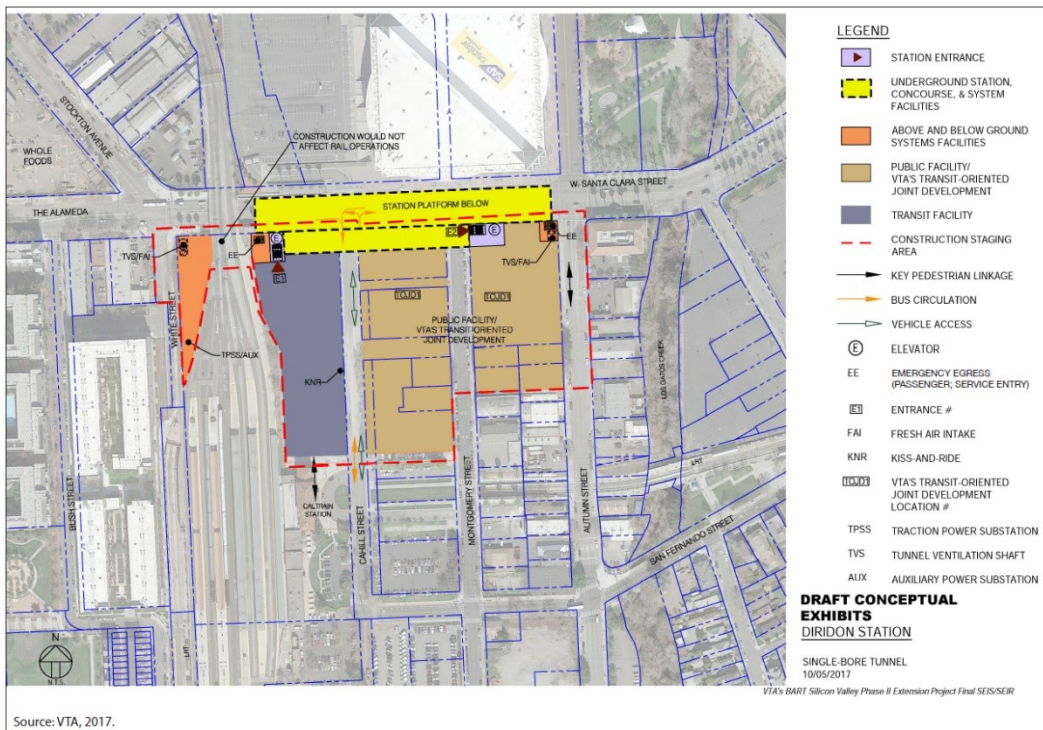
- **The relocation of the light rail station to the East side eliminates the tunnel curve by going right through the Historic Depot.**
- **The relocation of the light rail station to the East side conflicts with the 2018 BART SEIR** which selected the “Diridon North” (West Santa Clara) alternative.
- **The “At Grade” alternative impacts the Paseo de San Fernando bike/ped corridor** by introducing significant discrepancies in elevations between the east and west sides of the station.
- **The northern tip of the station platforms is pushed at least 100 feet too far north** and introduces conflicts with a seamless BART interface as well as multiple property impacts north of West Santa Clara.
- **The southern end of the station is completely missing** (the platform layout looks like the tail end of a storage yard).

- The single “BART tunnel” to the single-bore tunnel “knock out” panel cannot possibly handle the flow of passengers transferring to/from BART.
- The “Diridon BART station” platform cannot possibly handle the flow of passengers from Caltrain, ACE, Capitol Corridor, Amtrak and HSR, let alone a crowd of passengers leaving an event at the Arena.
- The bus depot and the drop-off are on the wrong (north) site of West Santa Clara.
- The raising of West Santa Clara back to grade eliminates the opportunity to repurpose the existing at-grade track bed as a pedestrian plaza above West Santa Clara and Park as requested by the community back in 2019.
- The raising of West Santa Clara back to grade and the relocation of the bus depot under the northern station throat triggered a requirement for excessive elevations (at least 15 feet more) which resulted in impacts extending all the way to CEMOF (and the Union Pacific Warm Springs line which was not discussed at all in the presentation).
- The estimated costs of both alternatives are excessive (it is unclear how a 2-mile 4-track viaduct extending from West St Julian to West Virginia could possibly cost more than \$2B).

Opportunities

- 1) The relocation of the light rail station to the environmentally-cleared West Santa Clara station box (designed like one of San Francisco’s Market Street stations) eliminates the following challenges:
 - **Impacts on the Historic Depot (Complete Demolition/reconstruction)**
 - Suboptimal transfers between LRT, BART, Caltrain, ACE, Amtrak and HSR.
 - Necessity to relocate the bus station to the north of West Santa Clara.
 - Conflicts with the 2018 BSVII SEIR which states:
“The North Option would maximize the potential and flexibility for development by consolidating transit infrastructure close to Santa Clara Street, whereas the South Option would bisect the station area and would restrict future underground parking garages and development densities. Near-term, the North Option would provide opportunities to reduce construction impacts to transit rider and business patron parking through construction sequencing and coordination efforts.”

Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report Certification and VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension Project Approval - Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (iqm2.com)



- 2) The extension of the environmentally cleared station box under the heavy rail tracks (potentially up to White Street) enables the addition of 3 escalator tubes (total 9 escalators) down to the 300X90 ft LRT/BART concourse.
- 3) The extensions of the West Santa Clara and Park underpasses to Montgomery Street provide the following opportunities:
 - The extended overpasses can be repurposed as pedestrian plazas linking the station to the Arena thereby eliminating the need for LRT and BART entrances on the north side of West Santa Clara.
 - The bus bays and the drop-offs can be relocated under the Cahill Plaza "Just like Denver" as recommended by chair Davis, rescinding the \$24M in RM3 funding expended on 32-60 Stockton for environmental clearance.
 - The relocation of the bus bays and the drop-offs to the underground Cahill location facilitate seamless connections between the underground parking garages and the station concourse.

Constructability of the elevated option

Q: "How do you build another level of infrastructure over an operating railroad?"

A: By using a launch gantry designed to lift two tracks at a time through the erection of 10-foot prefabricated viaduct segments cast offsite.

<https://youtu.be/s56v97fPKEQ?t=70>



Funding for environmental clearance

The relocation of the bus bays and the drop-offs to the underground Cahill location invalidates VTA's purchase of 32-60 Stockton Avenue thereby releasing \$24M in RM3 funds for environmental clearance (MTC Resolution Nos. 4606, 4607 and 4608).

*"While staff recommends approval of the allocation to VTA for the San Jose Diridon Station Project, **reimbursement of expenses related to the Project with RM3 funds is contingent on the following:***

- *Satisfaction of the requirement that appropriate determinations under CEQA/NEPA have been made by the lead agency prior to disbursement of RM3 funds;*
- ***Agreement between MTC and VTA on the mechanism to ensure the return of RM3 funds used to purchase property for the Project in the event that the Project does not proceed to construction and/or the property in question is not used for the Project;***

Respectfully presented for your consideration
Roland Lebrun

Diridon March 13, 2025 Executive Steering Committee.
Item 8 Station Alternatives

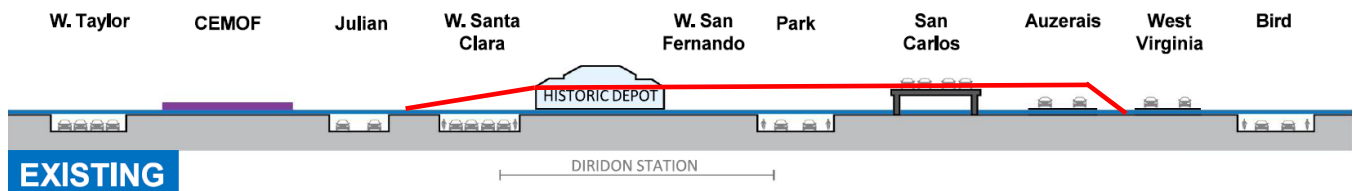
Dear Chair Heminger,

Further to my October 3, 2024 email to the Caltrain Board (attached), I believe that a root cause analysis of how the current consultant team arrived at a fatally flawed recommendation to the Diridon Executive Committee can be summarized as follows:

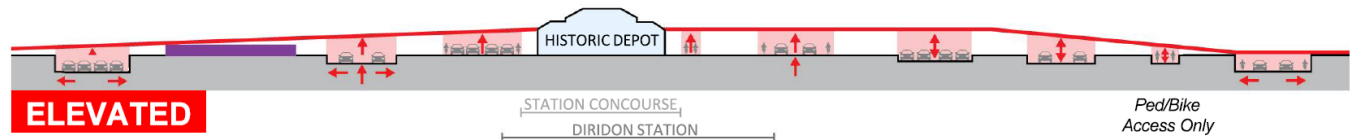
- Fatally flawed guiding principles
- Lack of familiarity with modern best practice viaduct construction methodology
- Lack of familiarity with environmentally-cleared work completed by others

1) Fatally flawed guiding principles

The boundaries of the viaduct **MUST** be constrained to south of Julian to north of West Virginia, **NOT Taylor to Bird**



This is what triggered the so-called “**CEMOF FATAL FLAW**” which appears to be collateral damage caused by the entire station having been shifted too far north combined with the inexplicable raisings of Julian, West Santa Clara and Park back to grade. **Thereby introducing multiple opportunities for conflicts between vehicular and bike/ped traffic.**



“Under the Elevated Alternative, construction impacts will occur for the full length of the elevated track and at the rail crossings from approximately West Virginia Street in the south to about Taylor Street in the north”

Please note that the I280 freeway located between Auzeais and West Virginia is missing from the diagrams.

2) Lack of familiarity with modern best practice viaduct construction methodology:

It is apparent that the team assumed that the only way to construct the Diridon elevated option was from the ground up instead of from above the existing tracks as exemplified in this [video](#) which depicts a launch gantry using a balanced cantilever construction technique to erect 10-foot viaduct segments above a waterway.

Failure to consider this kind construction methodology led to multiple incorrect characterizations of the Elevated Alternative as follows:

- “10-12 years” (the viaduct in the video was completed in 4 years).
- “\$5B-\$10B” (the viaduct in the video cost \$2B including the temporary service road built above the waterway to erect the piers)
- “*The Elevated Alternative construction boundary significantly encroaches outside of the existing rail corridor*”. Unlike the recommended at-grade alternative, the Elevated Alternative does not have any impacts outside the existing corridor other than temporary shooflies between West Santa Clara and West St Julian during construction.
- “*Impacts on the Annex*”. The balanced cantilever construction method depicted in the video DOES NOT require the demolition of the annex for two reasons:
 - 300-foot spans are feasible so it is possible to construct a viaduct above the annex without demolishing it.
 - The footprint of the station can be extended further west because the viaduct depicted in the video can be built above the existing light rail platforms until they are relocated to the BART train box on West Santa Clara.
- “*Additional space is needed to safely build an above ground viaduct while maintaining operations on existing tracks at approximately street level.*” The construction method depicted in the video makes it possible to relocate most staging activities to the existing Caltrain right of way at West Virginia where the viaduct segments can be stored until they are moved over the viaduct itself to the launch gantry for erection. The only impacts on station operations are the demolition of the existing tracks and the erection of the piers while awaiting the arrival of the launch gantry.
- Finally, it is apparent that the consultant team is not familiar with the advantages of direct rail fixation (without a ballasted rail bed) to the viaduct to enable reliable operation of crossovers and switches at 2% grade (**this is critical to achieve a viaduct landing south of West St Julian**).

3) Lack of familiarity with environmentally-cleared work completed by others

The staff memo states *“The Elevated Alternative significantly encroaches into PG&E property requiring relocation of the substation facility on site.”*

It is unclear why this is even mentioned as an issue when considering the following facts:

- Members of the public introduced the committee to the [advantages of Gas-Insulated \(GIS\) substations](#) during the December 15 2016 JPAB.

- Google subsequently seized this opportunity to shrink the existing substation to less than 10% of its existing footprint by incorporating it into the Downtown West DEIR.

[https://sj-admin.s3-us-west-](https://sj-admin.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/2020_0820_Arup_DTWInfrastructurePlan.pdf)

[2.amazonaws.com/2020_0820_Arup_DTWInfrastructurePlan.pdf](https://sj-admin.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/2020_0820_Arup_DTWInfrastructurePlan.pdf)

(Section 8.1.4. Proposed Electricity and Gas System)

- Google’s consultant (Arup) further shrank the substation to a 75x90 building that can be undergrounded (attached below).

Respectfully presented for your consideration.

Roland Lebrun

SUBSTATION BUILDING FLOOR PLAN

