



JPB Board of Directors
Meeting of August 6, 2026

Correspondence as of July 16, 2026

Subject

1. Re: Palo Alto Throne Pumping Concerns
2. Fwd: Operational concerns
3. Caltrain floor
4. Re: Operational concerns – *Staff response*
5. Request for Immediate Pest Control at Menlo Park Caltrain Station

From: [Martin J Sommer](#)
To: [Jason Baker](#)
Cc: [Brent Tietjen](#); [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)
Subject: Re: Palo Alto Throne Pumping Concerns
Date: Friday, July 10, 2026 3:27:39 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

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Hi Jason,

The University Ave Throne pumping has started to be at 3am again!!! Can you please look into this?

Thank you,
Martin

On 2/18/26 7:34 PM, Jason Baker wrote:

Dear Mr. Sommer,

We have done our best to answer your questions and to accommodate your concerns as best we can. Specifically, pumping on weekends will always be later in the day, during regular business hours.

At our request, Throne has been attempting to move as much of the weekday pumping to the later timeslot, around 5:00 or 5:30 a.m., in the timeframe when you mentioned that garbage trucks also come.

Throne's records show that, at least since January 29th., pumping has been in the 5:00-5:30 a.m. time slot or later.

The drivers of the trucks have, on occasion, stopped to clean the facility earlier than that time, so a truck would occasionally have been onsite, but pumping was reserved for the 5:00-5:30 timeslot or later and we expect that will be the norm going forward.

We hope you will view this as some good news, although I realize this does not entirely resolve your concerns.

Thank you again for reaching out. We apologize for inconvenience you have been caused. I hope that our efforts have made some progress towards

addressing your concerns.

Jason Baker

Director, Government Relations and Community Affairs, Caltrain

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>

Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 7:56 PM

To: Jason Baker <BakerJ@caltrain.com>

Cc: Brent Tietjen <TietjenB@caltrain.com>; Board (@caltrain.com) <BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com>; Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>; Board (@samtrans.com) <board@samtrans.com>

Subject: Re: Palo Alto Throne Pumping Concerns

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cc: Caltrain and VTA Boards

Dear Jason,

There seems to have been a major misunderstanding in our communication. These question were not simply and question/answer session, but an effort to change the situation! In reading your email, nothing has changed regarding early morning (2 - 3am) pumping, during the work/school week. What a waste of time!!!

From your perspective, what do I need to do to make that change? Do I need to file an official legal action, or what?

Please respond.

Martin

On 2/12/26 5:19 PM, Jason Baker wrote:

Mr. Sommer,

Thank you again for our discussion late last week. I promised to get answers to some questions you had.

First, you noted that the loudest and most alarming noise is the first few minutes when the pump first starts. You asked if they could do that part more slowly and quietly.

From the information I gathered, the first 2-3 minutes or so is indeed the shorter and louder part of the process. That is the vacuum pump removing the waste. Once that's done, the second pump pumps the fresh water into the tank. That takes longer (10-15 minutes or so) and is much quieter. Unfortunately, the volume is not at the operator's discretion.

You also noted that you were aware of at least one occasion when a pump truck was pumping in the much later morning once - in the 10 a.m. timeframe.. We believe that was not a Throne truck but an outside, independent contractor that was there on an ad hoc basis and which is not part of our agreement with Throne.

We do have a firm commitment from Throne that weekend pumping at Palo Alto will always be mid-morning. Although this doesn't address your entire concern, we are hopeful it helps.

Throne will also attempt to reduce the number of very early weekday pumps. As I understand it, they have been able to move some pumping to the 5:00-5:30 a.m. time and are working to see if they can move more.

While I realize that is still not ideal, I understand from you that it's preferable to the even earlier morning times, in part because garbage trucks also come around the 5-5:30 time.

Finally, you asked why the restrooms at Palo Alto station could not be opened in advance of the full station opening. As you may know, Caltrain has already committed funds to support the station activation through our partners at VTA. However, the station does require some modification and renovation before the station area can be opened, and that includes the restroom facilities. There are also maintenance and other challenges with opening restrooms without an open station.

I will connect with VTA to get an update on the process and timeline for reopening Palo Alto station and pass that information on to you.

Thank you for reaching out. We apologize for inconvenience you have been caused.

Jason

Jason Baker
Director, Government & Community Affairs
1250 San Carlos Ave
San Carlos, CA 94070
Cell: 650-399-6093
www.caltrain.com



SAFETY
FIRST AND ALWAYS

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>

Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 5:40 PM

To: Jason Baker <BakerJ@caltrain.com>

Cc: Brent Tietjen <TietjenB@caltrain.com>

Subject: Re: Palo Alto Throne Pumping Concerns

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Thank you!!

Martin

On February 5, 2026 4:32:14 PM PST, Jason Baker
<BakerJ@caltrain.com> wrote:

Mr. Sommer.

Thank you for taking my call this afternoon. I think we achieved a common understanding of where the situation is at and why, with a few threads left to chase.

I definitely learned from our call and your description of the issue; and I agreed to take back some homework questions - both internal and throne questions- and get some answers.

I'll get back to you early next week with an update on what I've been able to learn.

Thanks again for taking the time. I'll reach out next week!

Jason Baker
Director,
Caltrain Government Relations and Community Affairs

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From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 9:40 PM
To: Jason Baker <BakerJ@caltrain.com>
Cc: Brent Tietjen <TietjenB@caltrain.com>
Subject: Re: URGENT ... Re: 3am pumping

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Jason,

It is unacceptable to be forcibly woken up during the middle of the night, especially on work and school days. This is having a profound impact on both my work, and my son's performance at Palo Alto High school. In addition, it is unacceptable for a company to do this, based on their "due to their trucking logistics".

I request that Caltrain remove the Throne facility, and actually fix the restrooms at the University Ave station. The station has restroom facilities, they just need to be opened, and potentially repaired.

What do we need to do, to make this happen?

Thank you,
Martin

On 2/4/26 11:23 AM, Brent Tietjen wrote:

Hi Martin,

Thanks again for your patience as we discussed this with Throne. As mentioned in my email on Friday, they are able to move weekend servicing of this facility to mid-days.

For weekday servicing (expected 2 times a week), they are not able to consistently commit to later times due to their trucking logistics. Throne has said they may be able to move some of the services to around 5-5:30a, but depending on the day, it may continue to be earlier. The timing is influenced by their other service locations and the start/end points for the truck which limit flexibility on weekdays.

I'm also copying Jason Baker, Director of Government and Community Relations, in case you had additional questions or concerns.

Thanks,

Brent

From: Martin J Sommer <martin@sommer.net>

Sent: Saturday, January 31, 2026 12:13 PM

To: Brent Tietjen <TietjenB@caltrain.com>

Cc: Rick Peredia <PerediaR@caltrain.com>

Subject: Re: URGENT ... Re: 3am pumping

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Thanks Brent,

It is encouraging to see Caltrain take this issue seriously. Please work with Throne, to move all pumping to mid-morning.

Attached is a photo from yesterday (Friday) mid-morning. Perhaps, Throne has already adjusted the weekday schedule? Did you get the update, that you were expecting?

Martin

On 1/30/26 11:29 AM, Brent Tietjen wrote:

Hi Martin,

We have worked with Throne and they have confirmed they are able to move the weekend pump truck to mid-mornings. This will reduce the weekday pumps to two.

I am still waiting for more clarity on their weekday plans but hope to have more clarity to you by the end of today. They are working with their driver to see what is possible given their routing and other sites.

Thanks
Brent

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Martin Sommer
650-346-5307
martin@sommer.net
www.linkedin.com/in/martinsommer

"Turn technical vision into reality."

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Martin Sommer
650-346-5307
martin@sommer.net
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"Turn technical vision into reality."

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Sent from my Android device with K-9 Mail. Please excuse my brevity.

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"Turn technical vision into reality."

--

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650-346-5307

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"Turn technical vision into reality."

From: [John Cerelli](#)
To: [Customer Service](#)
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)
Subject: Fwd: Operational concerns
Date: Friday, July 10, 2026 8:56:24 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jcerelli@yahoo.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.

Just following up with this email I sent in April and I have not received a response. The same issue happened again after last night Giants game on July 9, 2026. Can this be addressed?

Begin forwarded message:

From: John Cerelli <jcerelli@yahoo.com>
Date: April 22, 2026 at 9:05:49 PM PDT
To: customerservice@caltrain.com
Subject: Operational concerns

Hello,

As a long time Caltrain customer (over 30 years) I am writing to alert you to a operational and service level concern. Specifically, I have two concerns. The first concerns the boarding process at the San Francisco terminal at 4th & Townsend. The boarding procedure is extremely slow. It takes so long in fact that I recently missed the train even though I was at the station 20 minutes before the train was scheduled to leave. The reason is that the line to get on was excessively long. This particular instance occurred after the Giants game ended on Wednesday March 25. The line was so long it went up 4th, turned left on Townsend and then proceeded past 5th towards 6th, almost to the freeway entrance. While I certainly understand the difficulties of handling a large crowd, the fact remains Caltrains has been doing this for 26 years since the ballpark opened, so you should be very experienced in handling crowd exits.

The problem appears to me to be 2 fold:

- 1) you need to let people board earlier. The train is there, yet the doors are shut, creating an unnecessary bottleneck. Open the doors and let people board as soon as the previous train departs. That would give you more time to check tickets and get customers on the train and speed the boarding process. It would also eliminate the stress that the customers and the employees feel. It would also eliminate the issue of people cutting in line and creating unnecessary arguments. Years ago, you let people board the train earlier, but when that policy changed it was a bad decision that created the bottleneck.
- 2) there appears to be a problem with the new clipper cards and the mobile card reader which is causing extra scan time when tickets are checked at the door. That is adding to the bottleneck. This needs to be corrected and fixed immediately.

Quite frankly, it is terrible customer service to have rolled out this solution without adequate testing.

I hope these issues can be corrected immediately. Solution 1 is simple and should be implemented starting today. Solution 2 requires some IT support but hopefully that can get corrected quickly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your reply and a better Caltrain experience.

Sincerely,
John Cerelli

From: [Elisa Stevenson](#)
To: [Jason Baker](#); [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)
Subject: Caltrain floor
Date: Friday, July 10, 2026 2:03:59 PM
Attachments: [IMG_4514.jpeg](#)

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From: [Caltrain BOD Public Support](#)
To: jcerelli@yahoo.com
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)
Subject: Re: Operational concerns
Date: Monday, July 13, 2026 10:53:14 AM

Dear John Cerelli,

Thank you for contacting Caltrain and for taking the time to share your detailed feedback. We appreciate your many years of riding Caltrain and value your perspective.

We understand your concerns regarding the boarding process at San Francisco Station, particularly during peak commute hours. Our crews currently conduct fare inspections before boarding at San Francisco Station to help ensure passengers have valid proof of payment before entering the train. We recognize that this process can result in longer lines during periods of high passenger volume.

Your comments have been shared with the appropriate department for review as we continue to evaluate ways to improve the boarding experience and reduce delays for our customers.

Thank you again for your thoughtful feedback and for your continued support of Caltrain.

Sincerely,

Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team

From: John Cerelli <jcerelli@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2026 8:56 AM
To: Customer Service <customerservice@caltrain.com>
Cc: Board (@caltrain.com) <board@caltrain.com>
Subject: Fwd: Operational concerns

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Date: April 22, 2026 at 9:05:49 PM PDT

To: customerservice@caltrain.com

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I hope these issues can be corrected immediately. Solution 1 is simple and should be implemented starting today. Solution 2 requires some IT support but hopefully that can get corrected quickly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your reply and a better Caltrain experience.

Sincerely,
John Cerelli

From: [Quinn Maloney](#)
To: [Tina Dubost](#)
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); [Communications Division](#)
Subject: Request for Immediate Pest Control at Menlo Park Caltrain Station
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2026 9:11:51 AM

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

Dear Caltrain Customer Service,

I am writing to report what appears to be a significant cockroach infestation at the Menlo Park Caltrain Station.

Over multiple visits, I have observed numerous cockroaches around the station, particularly during the evening hours. Their presence raises concerns regarding station cleanliness, sanitation, and the overall passenger experience. Beyond being unpleasant, an infestation of this nature can create public health concerns and negatively affect public confidence in the station.

I respectfully request that Caltrain investigate the station as soon as possible and, if warranted, schedule professional pest control services along with an inspection of trash receptacles, drainage areas, landscaping, and other locations where infestations may originate.

If helpful, I am willing to provide photographs, videos, dates, times, and the specific areas where the insects were observed.

Please let me know whether this issue has already been reported and what steps Caltrain intends to take to address it.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for helping maintain a clean and safe transit system for everyone.

Sincerely,

Quinn Maloney