

# Peninsula Rail 2000 Staying on Track

www.rail2000.org No. 99-3 October 1999

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## VTA Ignores Calls For More Caltrain Service No Santa Clara County Sales Tax Funds For More Trains

Ignoring the overwhelming comment asking for greater train frequency, VTA has decided not to use Santa Clara County sales tax funds to increase Caltrain service. About 100 members of the public submitted written comments or attended three public meetings about Caltrain projects in August and September.

According to the draft plan proposed by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and approved by the VTA Caltrain Policy Advisory Board (PAB) on September 29, no additional trains will be funded by the County's Measure A/B sales tax.

Instead, all of the Caltrain funds from the sales tax will be used on items such as expanding automobile parking, facilities for buses and shuttles, outside boarding platforms only at stations south of San Jose,

and construction of a second track between San Jose and Gilroy.

VTA staff's draft plan for spending the Caltrain portion of Santa Clara County's Measure A/B sales tax funds allocates millions of dollars for expansion of auto parking at various stations, including Palo Alto and Sunnyvale. In contrast, the proposal mentions only one additional round trip weekday train each year for a total of six more weekday round trips. The soonest any new train would be added is July 2000. This is no improvement over the current rate of train service increase by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board which runs Caltrain.

The money for increased train service will come from VTA, not Santa Clara County sales tax funds. Except for service south of Tamien, no more trains

*See "VTA ... more Caltrain service," page 2*

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## November 2 election

## Yes on H in San Francisco: downtown Caltrain station

Peninsula Rail 2000 strongly urges San Franciscans to vote "Yes" on Proposition H on the November 2 ballot, to extend Caltrain to the Transbay Terminal downtown. Prop. H forbids the city from approving development that would obstruct the new station or tunneled rail route. With frenzied redevelopment forces transforming South of Market, efforts to keep the right of way clear are vital.

Prop. H represents the culmination of a 1 1/2-year effort by PR2000 working with the Sierra Club, the SF League of Conservation Voters to put this issue to a vote.

By late September, over 25 civic and

neighborhood organizations officially endorsed Prop. H, including the SF Democratic, Republican, and Green Parties, the Central Labor Council, the SF Chamber of Commerce, and Rescue Muni. However, on Monday, October 4, the SF Chronicle published an editorial opposing Prop. H. Letters to newspapers are needed to counter the Chron's opposition. See [www.faqtory.com/caltrain](http://www.faqtory.com/caltrain) (javascript, frames) or [www.rail2000.org/dtx](http://www.rail2000.org/dtx) (no frames) for arguments in favor.

The Yes-on-H campaign needs your financial support! Contributions (not tax-deductible) can be made in care of Peninsula Rail 2000. Send to the address on the back page, make your check out to Peninsula Rail 2000 and write in the memo line: "for DTX campaign."

# Calendar of events

Monday, October 11, 7:05 PM

## Peninsula Rail 2000 monthly meeting, East Bay-Silicon Valley Rail Connections, part 2.

San Carlos Depot Cafe. See back page for details.

Tuesday, October 12, 6:30 - 8:30 PM

**BayPeds Organizational meeting.** Sierra Club, 85 2nd Street (between Mission & Market), 3rd Floor, Yosemite Room. Please RSVP to Zac Wald at 510-540-6509 or baypeds@netspace.org

Wednesday October 13, 10 AM - 1 PM

## California Transportation Commission Public Transit Committee Workshop on South Bay Rail.

San Jose City Council Chambers, 801 North First Street, Room 205. Rail Transit Plans, Gaps, Funding Sources, and Future Service. Pro-Peninsula/South Bay BART extension

officials dominate this workshop: SJ Mayor Ron Gonzales, Mike Nevin of San Mateo County, Jim Lawson of VTA, Charlotte Powers (MTC and ACE commuter rail), Steve Cone (Capitol Corridor JPA).

Thursday, October 14, 8:30 AM

## Dumbarton Rail Corridor Task Force

Eco-Touch Systems, 6500 Kaiser Drive, Newark. Includes presentation by Parsons Transportation Group

Saturday, October 16, 10 AM-Noon

**VTA Community Outreach Information Workshop,** VTA Light Rail Project Construction Office, 2011 Capitol Ave., San Jose

Monday, October 18, 10 AM

## Preview of new Caltrain railcars

(to enter service by May 2000), SF Caltrain station, 4th & King Sts. New railcar No. 4021 to arrive on special train at 10:15, tour the car and ride to Bayshore station.

**VTA ... more Caltrain service** — from front page than what the JPB would have added are planned. In 1996 voters were told that \$68 million from Santa Clara County's Measure A/B would be used for "Improving CalTrain rail service by adding trains and improving facilities" (see box on page 2). VTA

already had committed to funding service south of San Jose/Tamien prior to passage of Measures A and B in 1996.

About ten members of the public attended the PAB meeting on September 29. Many of those in attendance expressed concern that the overwhelming public comment asked for more frequency and less emphasis on parking and station construction. Yet no substantial changes were made in the VTA plan to reflect this input at three meetings held by VTA in recent weeks. Attendees also voiced concern that over 50% of the Measure A/B Caltrain funds would be used for service between San Jose and Gilroy, away from concentrations of employment and population. Currently only 4% of Caltrain trips extend south of Tamien.

No increases in weekend service are planned, and no specifics were provided as to which weekday trains might be added. VTA plans called for increases in weekday pre-peak, midday, and late night service, the times of least ridership. Requests by the public for more shuttle and bus service to the stations were also ignored by the VTA plan.

According to sources close to the VTA, VTA made no serious attempt to determine which times would be best for additional trains. Throughout the process, VTA planned to move forward with the capital improvements advocated by the cities. The cities are not, by most accounts, advocating more frequent train service.

PAB members Linda LaZotte and Charlotte Powers, both San Jose City Council members, argued that more housing instead of parking should be built near stations. County Supervisor Joe Simitian prior to the meeting requested a report comparing cost-

## 1996 Measure A includes "increase CalTrain service"

Measures A and B were passed by Santa Clara County voters in November 1996.

In the full text of Measure A, the following list was presented at top as a brief summary of the projects to be funded by the Measure B sales tax:

- fix streets, potholes;
  - link to BART;
  - synchronize all expressway;
  - build Tasman, Capitol, Vasona Light Rail;
  - widen Highways 880, 101, 87,17;
  - increase CalTrain service;
- [last four bullets omitted here]

In the more detailed "Project Package" part of Measure A, the bulleted items pertaining to Caltrain (among 12 other bullets) specified the following:

- CalTrain Improvements from San Jose North: Improving CalTrain commuter rail service by adding trains and improving facilities from San Jose to Palo Alto.
- CalTrain Improvements between Gilroy and San Jose: Improving CalTrain rail service by adding trains and improving facilities between Gilroy and San Jose.

# **YES! I Support Faster, Cleaner, More Frequent Caltrain Now!**

**I agree that Caltrain has been neglected for too long, and our elected officials should make it the centerpiece of a well connected, regional transit system.**

**I think the most important improvement is:**

**I can help by:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_Phoning or writing to local politicians when you tell me about an important transportation issue

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_Handing out flyers/newsletters to train riders

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_Contributing to pay for additional mailings for Caltrain and regional transit

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\$25 \_\_\_\$35 (regular membership) \_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\$100

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_Other\$ \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

All contributors receive our newsletter.

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effectiveness of building ridership through parking spaces versus other modes such as bicycle and bus.

Despite showing sympathy and interest in the public comment at the PAB meeting, the PAB adopted the VTA staff recommendations. The PAB approved immediate commencement of Tier 1 projects, including a \$6.7 million parking garage in Sunnyvale, facilities for expanded bus and shuttle service at Lawrence, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, and Santa Clara stations, and expanded parking at Lawrence station.

Tier 2 projects, subject to negotiation with Union Pacific which owns the tracks south of San Jose, all involve stations on that portion of the line. Tier 3 projects which "require further study" include parking expansions and grade separated pedestrian crossings at stations between Palo Alto and San Jose. Tier 2 and Tier 3 projects require larger proportions of matching funds from the cities or other funding sources.

While Tier 1 projects have been given the green light, the full plan will be reviewed by the VTA Board of Directors. The next VTA meeting is October 7, but VTA staffers told the public that the plan would be put on the November meeting agenda. Upon approval, the plan will go before the County Board of Supervisors. Monthly meetings of the VTA Board of Directors are held on the first Thursday of the month.

What can train riders who attended VTA's public meetings learn from this? Riders need to lobby officials in their home cities for more trains. Also

## **What is Peninsula Rail 2000?**

We are an 17-year-old all-volunteer citizen group dedicated to ringing the bay with convenient, state-of-the-art rail transit. We need your help to continue our efforts to achieve a regional transit system today.

Board members: Adrian Brandt, president (408) 565-7291, Sylvia Gregory, Margaret Okuzumi (408) 732-8712, Richard Mlynarik, Russell Reagan, Paul Wendt.

Visit our web site: **[www.rail2000.org](http://www.rail2000.org)**

Voice mail/monthly meeting announcement: (650) 961-4493

early involvement in the planning process is important. Despite the public meetings, VTA is not showing a willingness to actually revise its plans based on public comment this "late" in the process.

Capital projects such as the Sunnyvale parking garage are now essentially "set in stone" as Tier 1 projects ready to go forward. Critics of parking expansion suggest that Sunnyvale would have done better to arrange lot-sharing with Town and County Village across Evelyn Avenue, which has opposite peak demand. The latter fills up on weekends, but is nearly empty on weekdays during working hours.

Is VTA's policy an effective way of using public funds to increase transit use? Critics argue that this can be achieved without increased parking facilities, and that each parking space costs about \$17,000 per new rider accommodated.

Most fundamentally, VTA has chosen to ignore the public's calls for more trains, a promise made to voters three years ago when they approved Measures A and B.

# Come to Peninsula Rail 2000 meetings!

**Next meeting: Monday, October 11, 7:05-8:30 PM:**

**Topic: *East Bay–Silicon Valley rail, part 2***

We will continue discussion of proposals for connecting the East Bay and Silicon Valley via the Dumbarton Bridge and UP rail lines, with assistance from member **Vaughn Wolffe**. **Andy Chow** will discuss the next steps for seeking support of officials and the public at large.

Each month we feature a presentation by a transit expert or official. Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month, at the Depot Cafe in the San

Carlos Caltrain Station. Meetings begin at 7:05 PM and end at 8:30. Meetings begin and end so that arrival and departure via Caltrain from the north or south is convenient. An optional \$7 buffet-style soup, salad and sandwich dinner is available.

Next meetings: Monday, October 11; Monday November 8; Monday, December 13.

Call (650) 961-4493 for updates, or see our web site: [www.rail2000.org](http://www.rail2000.org).

## **Peninsula Rail 2000**

**3921 East Bayshore Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94303**

forwarding and address  
correction requested

### **PR2000 Members Running for Political Office**

**Michael Barber** is running for a seat on the Burlingame School Board this November. He welcomes your campaign support. You can contact him at [michael.barber@centurasoft.com](mailto:michael.barber@centurasoft.com) or 650-596-4883.

**Cathy Baylock** is running for a seat on the Burlingame City Council. She welcomes your campaign support. You can reach her at [cathyb@baylock.com](mailto:cathyb@baylock.com) or 650-579-2623.

Check the PR2000 web site [www.rail2000.org](http://www.rail2000.org) or news/message line (650) 961-4493 after Monday, October 25, for **PR2000's endorsements** in the Burlingame Council and other local races.

## **We envision a cost-effective rail system for the Peninsula and San Jose–East Bay: Upgrade Caltrain to a quiet, fast, frequent, electric transit level service.**

See [www.rail2000.org/maps/ebay-lines](http://www.rail2000.org/maps/ebay-lines) for proposed routes of new rail lines on existing tracks to link the East Bay and Silicon Valley. For more information about the train in this picture, see [www.railway-technology.com/contractors/suburban/bombardier/](http://www.railway-technology.com/contractors/suburban/bombardier/)

