

Staying on Track

Bay Rail Alliance. <http://www.bayrailalliance.org> Issue 2001-02

New Directions for Rail

By Margaret Okuzumi, Executive Director



We've had our share of disappointments this fall, but also some successes and continuing opportunities.

We were all terribly disappointed with the Governor's veto of AB 1419, which if passed would have expedited the planned Caltrain downtown extension into a new Transbay Terminal. I want everyone who wrote a letter and worked so hard for its passage to know that your efforts were tremendously valuable and transfer that the legislation would have accomplished.

We managed not only to stave off the possible death of the Caltrain Downtown Extension and Transbay Terminal project, but also to create momentum for its inclusion as a top-priority Track 1 project in the Regional Transit Expansion Plan, along with Caltrain electrification! Thanks to all of you who wrote and phoned and emailed, MTC was overwhelmed with public comments in support of these projects. This public support, along with the diligent work of Caltrain staff and board members to identify funding and negotiate regional support, enabled Caltrain projects to compete



well among the region's many transportation projects. Despite a substantially upward-revised cost estimate for Caltrain electrification, and stringent and accelerated deadlines for project submittal, Caltrain did very well in the overall plan. Some say it's a miracle given all the very real obstacles faced. We congratulate all of you who took the time to act, as well as those hardworking Caltrain staff and dedicated Caltrain board members Sue Lempert, John McLemore, Art Lloyd, Maria Ayerdi, and Mike Burns, among other regional players.

Our influence continues to increase as Caltrain, under the able leadership of Mike Scanlon, demonstrates it's serious about paying attention to public input. One case in point is the recently announced shutdown of Caltrain on weekends, for up to the next two years starting in April, to accommodate track construction required for the new "Baby Bullet" express train service. Our comments prodded Caltrain to choose a construction option that we felt was least disruptive to most riders and neighbors, as well as the safest. We em-

Peninsula Rail 2000 changes its name to BayRail Alliance

Peninsula Rail 2000, after much discussion, has changed its name to BayRail Alliance. A name change was needed for two reasons. The first is the obvious "Y2k" problem, which the founders of Peninsula Rail 2000 in 1983 apparently did not anticipate (in the hopes that all of their goals would have been accomplished by now!).

Second, we were experiencing increasing discomfort with the "Peninsula"-only context of our name. Many Caltrain riders who live in southern Santa Clara County or San Benito County did not identify well with a "Peninsula" labeled group. We also have members from around the Bay and a growing concern for complementary rail services such as the ACE and Capitols in addition to Dumbarton rail. This made for some awkwardness when we were advocating for these services on the regional level.



So, as the new year approaches, it's out with the old and in with the new. We hope that you like our new name. We also have an impressive new website, thanks to board member John Tseng. Check it out at www.bayrailalliance.org

phasized reliability, and prodded Caltrain to develop supplementary express bus service, so that long-distance Caltrain riders would not be stuck with slow local bus service as their only transit option during the weekend shutdowns of the train service. Without our input, a much different scenario of daily disruptions and no supplementary bus service had been planned.

Finally, we'd like to congratulate Jeff Carter for his persistence in demanding that Caltrain provide adequate New Year's Eve service. Every year for a number of years, Jeff has complained to the Peninsula Corridor (Caltrain) Joint Powers Board about the inadequate service for partygoers, and this time around staff finally anticipated his complaints and came up with a plan for more trains after midnight. Reportedly, this New Year's Eve Caltrain will run southbound trains from San Francisco at 11:59 am, 12:45 am, and 2:15 am. And for the first time in recent memory, Caltrain will provide a northbound train leaving San Jose at 12:30 am. So all of you folks who have wanted to have friends over from the city, who have had a problem with being stranded without a train in years past, can happily start planning your New Year's celebrations now!

December Caltrain Joint Powers Board Update



Items of interest from the December 6, 2001 JPB meeting Santa Clara County representatives Valerio and Yeager were absent.

- The following directors have been appointed to the nominating committee for officers for the JPB in 2002. Art Lloyd representing San Mateo County, Ken Yeager representing Santa Clara County, and Maria Ayerdi representing San Francisco County.
- There was a discussion and presentation on Caltrain's new fare policy. The changes include increasing the fee for purchasing ticket on-board from \$1 to \$3, and changing the validity period of one-way and round trip tickets from 6 months to 30 days. The board approved these changes, which will go into effect with the next Caltrain timetable change in April or May 2002.

High Speed Rail

Check out the High-Speed Train Alignments and Stations Screening Evaluation Summary Report for the Bay Area-Merced region at

http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/eis_eir/bay/files/BayArea-Merced_Screening_Summary.pdf

Reports for other segments are also available on-line. A short summary can be found at

<http://www.bayrailalliance.org/hsr/>

- The board approved the Lenzen maintenance facility agreement that was recently ratified by the San Jose City council.
- There was a discussion of the weekend shutdowns for the Caltrain north and south CTX projects. Caltrain's general manager/CEO revealed that he had been favoring the seven-days-a-week nighttime closure scenario, but that this was changed to weekend closures due to the strong input from the CAC and the rest of the public. The public had favored the weekend shutdowns with supplementary bus service because it shortened the overall construction period, would result in less noise and disruption to neighbors along the line, was safer for construction crew members and riders, and reduced the risk of disruption to peak commute trains. Also, supplementary bus service was deemed more reliable than single-tracked Caltrain service. Many riders experienced unpredictable and unacceptable 30-minute delays from single-tracking during the two-year Ponderosa Project which was recently completed. Staff unveiled a proposal to run supplementary express bus service which would take approximately the same amount of time (or less) than the train would, with stops only in San Jose, Palo Alto, and San Francisco. It was suggested to them by representative Sue Lempert as well as BayRail that a stop in San Mateo County would also be desirable. Staff is continuing to work on developing and refining the proposal for supplementary bus service during the shutdown.
- The board unanimously agreed to support the MTC staff proposal for the Caltrain Electrification Project and the Downtown Extension in Track 1 of the RTEP, with amended language that recognizes the ability of the JPB to negotiate the proportion of local share contributions among the three counties. The board also acted to support inclusion of Caltrain Express Phase 2 in the Blueprint portion of the Expansion Policy.
- It was announced that additional Caltrain service will be provided on New Year's Eve to supplement the regular holiday schedule. Trains from San Francisco will leave at 11:59 pm, 12:45 am, and 2:15 am. For the first time, a post-midnight train will leave from San Jose going north at 12:30 am.
- There will be a "Toys for Tots" steam train running this weekend on Saturday and Sunday. See the Caltrain website at www.caltrain.com for details.

The next Caltrain Joint Powers Board meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, January 10, 2002, at 10:30 am in San Carlos. Please note that this is a week later than its usual occurrence on the first Thursday of the month, due to the holidays.

Next General Meeting

MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2002

Topic: Meet Your CAC Members

The Caltrain Citizen's Advisory Committee was formed in 1992, when San Francisco, San Mateo County, and Santa Clara County took over the old Southern Pacific line and its operations from the state department of transportation, CalTrans. In the early days, this committee of appointed citizen representatives was quite powerful and had well-attended meetings. However, Caltrain board members and staff gradually disempowered the CAC through political maneuvers, so that in recent years very few members of the public were attending meetings and the CAC had little influence on Caltrain's decisions.



Under pressure from Peninsula Rail 2000 (now BayRail Alliance), this body has started to increase its influence on Caltrain's decisions, and several very able members have been appointed to the CAC in recent years.

Who are these people who represent the citizens of San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties? We invite you to meet with some of them, to find out their priorities and concerns and to give you a chance to share your concerns and ideas with them.

BayRail Alliance General Meeting

Monday, December 10

6:45 pm

Menlo Park Round Table Pizza

1225 El Camino Real

\$8 pizza, salad & soda dinner available

Calendar of Events Online at

<http://www.bayrailalliance.org/calendar>

[12/10/2001](#) 6:30 pm [PR2K General Meeting](#)

[1/10/2002](#) 10:00 am [JPB Board Meeting](#)

[1/16/2002](#) 9:00 am [CAHSR Board Meeting](#)