

Staying on Track

Spring 2006

No. 2006-1



BayRail Action Alert, San Francisco

Save Transbay Terminal ! On June 6,

Vote YES on Prop. C

By Margaret Okuzumi, Dave Massen

A proposition has been placed on the June 6 ballot in San Francisco to change how San Francisco makes appointments to the Transbay Terminal Joint Powers Board, the entity that is in charge of the Transbay Terminal Project. Bay-Rail Alliance recommends that you vote **Yes on Proposition C**.

Currently the three San Francisco representatives to the five-member board are the general manager of MUNI; a representative from the San Francisco board of supervisors; and another person appointed by the Mayor.

Under Prop C, sponsored by Supervisor Chris Daly, the three representatives would become the mayor, not a designee; the board of supervisors' representative to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission; and the supervisor who represents District 6 in which the Transbay terminal site is located.

Daly now represents that district. In the event that the latter two people were the same, second seat

would be filled by a person nominated by the Rules Committee of the Board of Supervisors and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

BayRail says "YES on C"

BayRail Alliance submitted the following paid argument in favor of Prop C.

It's time to deliver on this \$1.5 billion package voters approved with Prop H in 1999, Prop K in November 2003, and RM2 in March 2004. Sadly, bureaucratic infighting threatens the completion of this regional transit project.

Our whole region urgently seeks San Francisco's leadership — best provided by elected officials we can hold accountable, such as the Mayor, rather than non-elected staff. That's why environmental and transit groups urge **YES on C**.

The Transbay Project at 1st and Mission will connect new high-speed trains from San Jose and Los Angeles with buses from throughout our city and region, making

transit speedier and more convenient for residents and commuters alike. It creates new housing and commercial development, new jobs and a vibrant downtown.

All of the other regional representatives to the Transbay board are elected officials. San Francisco deserves the same. This project is too important to our city's future to delegate to non-elected appointees.

Improve oversight and accountability for the Transbay Terminal Project. **Vote YES on C!** **I**

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**VOTE on June 6
For Better Transit!**

BayRail Action Alert, Santa Clara County

Vote NO on Measure A

By Andy Chow

Vote NO on Santa Clara County's Measure A

BayRail Alliance urges that you vote **NO on Measure A** in Santa Clara County on June 6. Measure A is a 30-year general half-cent sales tax and requires only a simple majority to pass, not two-thirds as with 2000's A.

If Measure A passes, the Santa Clara county tax rate would be increased to 8.75% and tie with Alameda County as the highest sales tax in the state. BayRail Alliance opposes Measure A because we believe it is a backroom deal to funnel more money to VTA for BART.

Since last year, the Santa Clara County Board or Supervisors evaluated a quarter-cent general sales tax to address the projected deficit for county services. At the same time, VTA was also planning its own tax to bailout the raising cost of the BART extension from Fremont to San Jose.

VTA was unable to obtain support from north and south county cities for the new tax because of the overly-optimistic tax revenue forecast similar

to the revenue forecast made in 2000.

Instead of seeking consensus among the community and creating an expenditure plan, tax supporters like the Silicon Valley Leadership Group lobbied the Board of Supervisors to place a larger general sales tax on the ballot, with the likelihood that half of such revenue would be diverted to VTA.

It is important to note that Measure A is a *general* sales tax that cannot be earmarked for specific purposes.

BayRail is offended that the Yes on Measure A campaign materials have mentioned Caltrain, creating a false promise in what supposedly a general tax. Despite the clear language included in the 2000 Measure A for Caltrain projects including electrification, SVLG has continued to lobby against the project.

BayRail has no confidence that such as false promise in the pro-Measure A propaganda would be kept. Tell the County that you're tired of false promises. Vote **NO on A**.

BayRail also believes that VTA does not need a new tax and can meet

its funding needs if Caltrain Metro East, BayRail's more cost effective integrated alternative to BART and the San Jose Airport people mover, were to be built instead.

BayRail has consistently endorsed good transportation funding programs with well-drafted expenditure plans and wide community consensus, such as San Francisco's Proposition K in 2003, Regional Measure 2 in March 2004, and San Mateo County Measure A in November 2004.

Unfortunately, Santa Clara County's Measure A circumvents consensus building for an expenditure plan and would not provide sufficient revenue to complete the list of projects that SVLG proclaims would support.

On June 6, join BayRail Alliance and the VTA Riders' Union and vote **NO on A**. The county can put a quarter-cent sales tax on the November ballot to support county services.

Don't let VTA hijack your taxes for needed county services to fund the BART to San Jose extension. On June 6, vote **NO on Measure A!** **I**

Tip for Faster Caltrain Ticket Purchases

Caltrain ticket machines (TVMs) have an audio feature for the visually disabled. The audio button starts voice instructions on using the numeric keypad located on the left side of the TVM screen.

You can use this feature for faster ticket purchases. For instance, an adult one way ticket to San Francisco can be bought by

entering 1110 (one-one-one-zero). The leading digit is the ticket type (1 = one way, 2 = day pass); the second digit is the destination fare zone (1-6); the third is the number of tickets purchased. The trailing zero instructs the TVM to begin the payment routine.

This works on all TVMs in any zone. "1110" on a San Jose TVM gets you a four-zone one-way ticket to San Francisco; the same code on a TVM in Bay-

shore gets a one-zone ticket to the City.

For example:

1210—one-way, Millbrae-RWC, 1 adult
2320—day-pass, SF-Mtn View, 2 adults
2410—day-pass SF-SJ, 1 adult

For Seniors, Disabled, or Youth, press "92" first and then use the same code as for adult tickets. **I**

Thanks to Andy Chow for this tip.

High Speed Rail in Britain

UK's *Eurostar* Link from the "Chunnel" to London is Nearing Completion

By Michael Kiesling

The saga of England's first high speed rail line, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), is drawing to a close and will enable a 2-hour, 15-minute trip between the city centers of London and Paris.

While France had a high speed connection for *Eurostar* trains ready shortly after the Channel Tunnel (Chunnel) opened in 1994, it took a decade for the first section of England's connection to get approved and built. It's still just over a year until the final link into London will finally be complete.

Conservative politics in Britain delayed the decision to build the Chunnel itself and then the line connecting it to London, driving up costs. Then it was decided to rely on private entities to get the job done.

The 67-mile line (about the same distance as from San Jose to Stockton) is being built in two sections. The first section, from the Chunnel to the far southern edge of London, opened in 2003. The second section, including a tunnel under the River Thames, three new stations, and two long tunnels into central London will open in 2007.

With the opening of the second phase, the *Eurostar* terminus will move from Waterloo Station to a fully-restored St. Pancras Station, served by five subway lines, trains to the Midlands and the new Kent Express high speed commute trains from adjacent Kings Cross Station.

CTRL has been designed, financed and built by an international consortium, London & Continental Railways (LCR), which includes diverse partners like San Francisco based Bechtel and the rail operations group of Virgin.

Virgin operates both passenger

Aspects of the situation in London are not unlike what is going on with the Transbay Terminal project, in that the redevelopment of a neighborhood is being used to develop a new transportation terminal.

The difference is that in England, the transportation and redevelopment projects are all carried out by LCR, contractually required to deliver the transportation project but free to seek out innovative ways to keep costs low.

The Transbay Terminal JPB is using the traditional public works model, in which there is a disconnect between the design and construction phases and in which political institutional infighting and turf wars over what should be engineering and economic decisions can result in projects never being built.

We need to watch large ongoing projects worldwide where private groups are financing and building public works. Beyond England, the new Dutch high-speed railway is being built in much



Restored St. Pancras Station, London. — Photo by Michael Kiesling

trains and airlines in the UK and understands that the two modes compliment each other. LCR is also responsible for the development of the property around the stations.

Like the area around the Transbay Terminal in San Francisco, the area around St. Pancras has seen better days but is now undergoing a massive economic revival, brought on by the investment in expanding the transportation hub.

the same way.

If private companies can do a better job of delivering projects, we should see if their expertise can be used here to get us the railways we want and deserve. We need to realize that the expertise of the private for which it is liable — and the public interest of seeing infrastructure built in a timely and cost-effective fashion are actually a good fit.

See UK's CTRL, page 5

High Speed Rail in Japan

Mini-Shinkansens Provide Economical Direct Links to Tokyo

By Ryan Hoover

Japan's high speed rail (HSR) *Shinkansen* infrastructure is built to standard gauge with as few curves and grades as possible. It utilizes many expensive tunnels, fills and viaducts, totally separated from grade crossings of highways and other railways.

Such expense isn't justified on less-traveled narrow gauge corridors to smaller cities. But people still want direct service to Tokyo without having to change trains.

Operating company JR East (East Japan Railway Co.) has found a solution. They widened the existing narrow gauge Ōu Main Line to Yamagata and Tazawako Line to Akita to standard gauge.

The introduced two series of "Mini-Shinkansen" HSTs built smaller, lighter and shorter than full-sized bullet trains, but which are just as fast.

These new 400 series and E3 series EMUs — run in multiple coupled with full-sized HSTs on the dedicated Tohoku HSR north from Tokyo. At Fukushima and Morioka, respectively, the "minis" cut off and proceed on the re-gauged lines.

The *Yamagata Shinkansen* provides *Tsubasa* (Wings) service between Tokyo and Shinjo, in Yamagata Prefecture.

Between Tokyo and Fukushima, they run combined with full-size *Yamabiko* (Mountain Echo) equipment at 149 mph. From Fukushima, on the Ōu Line, they reach a maximum speed of only 81.

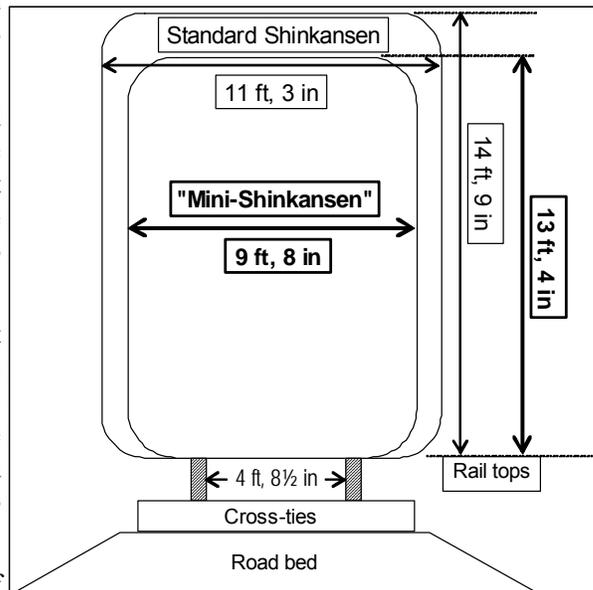
Similarly, the Akita Shinkansen runs 6-car E3 *Komachi* (Belle) HSTs coupled with full-sized E2 HSTs in 171 mph *Hayate* (Fast Wind) service to Morioka. From there, the *Komachis* travel on the re-gauged Tazawako Line, also at 81-mph, top.

The 400s and E3s fit the former smaller loading gauge or clearance profile (see diagram), which was unchanged when the rails were converted to standard gauge. Both lines also still have grade crossings and dual-gauged portions of the Ōu Line run freight and container trains.

Passengers can now travel between Tokyo and the new "mini" destinations without changing trains.

One can easily envision what might have been possible if BART planners had had the foresight build to standard gauge or had at least built to accommodate a loading gauge height consistent with bi-level commuter cars. Re-gauging or dual-gauging could have been a distinct possibility.

Incidentally, UK's CTRL (see p.2) is planning to buy some mini-Shinkansen trains from Hitachi for high speed commuter service. **I**



Loading gauges of standard and "Mini-Shinkansen" high speed train equipment. — Drawing by Ryan Hoover



JR East 400 series "Mini-Shinkansen" train on the re-gauged Ōu Line to Yamagata. — Photo courtesy of "Train Front Views" © 2006 Curoka, www.alpha-net.ne.jp/users2/curoka/e_he.e3t.htm

Links: JR East: www.jreast.co.jp/e/index.html

Akita: <http://encyclopedia.the-free-dictionary.com/Akita+Shinkansen>

Yamagata: <http://encyclopedia.the-free-dictionary.com/Yamagata+Shinkansen>

UK's CTRL, continued from p.2

We need to realize that the expertise of the private sector in maximizing development potential and controlling costs — for which it is liable — and the public interest of seeing infrastructure built in a timely and cost-effective fashion are actually a good fit.

Bringing in a third party with a strong commercial interest in seeing the project advance, would be a way out of an impasse in which public agencies fight over who is in control rather than what is built, when it is built, or how much it costs. **I**

Links to more information:

CTRL Project: www.railway-technology.com/projects/chunnel/

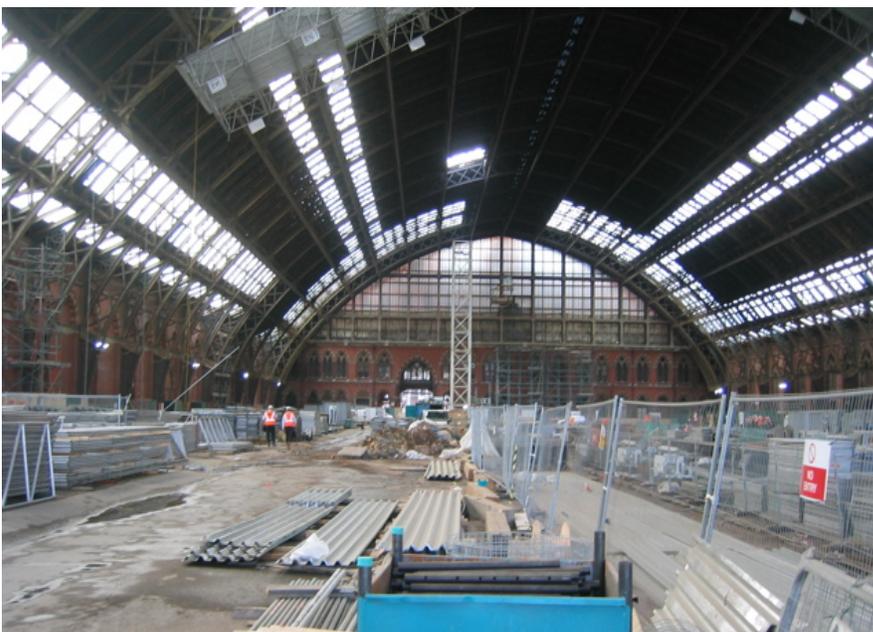
London & Continental Railways: www.lcrhq.co.uk

St. Pancras Area Development: www.argentkingscross.com/

Stratford Development: www.futurestratford.com/project.php

Station Area Development: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_railways/documents/page/dft_railways_035483.hcsp

Dutch High Speed Project: www.hslzuid.nl/hsl/uk/hslzuid/



New train shed being built at St. Pancras Station, London, the final terminus for Eurostar service to Paris. — Photo by Michael Kiesling



Staying on Track

SOT2006-1



YES! I support improving Caltrain and Regional Transit!

I support BayRail Alliance's efforts to promote a regional transit system by upgrading Caltrain and extending it to downtown San Francisco, improving connections between buses, trains, and other transit modes, and establishing a High Speed Rail system connecting the Bay Area and Southern California.

I am enclosing a contribution to help fund BayRail Alliance's programs.

- \$35 Regular \$50 Sponsor \$100 Patron
- \$250 President's Club \$ _____ Other
- \$15 Student/low income

- New member
- Renewal of membership

We are supported entirely by member contributions. Voting memberships start at \$15 or \$35, as applicable. As we engage in lobbying, dues are not tax-deductible at this time.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (Day): _____ Phone (Evening): _____

Email: _____

I can help by:

- Calling or writing local public officials when you tell me about important transportation issues.
- Volunteering two hours a month (or more)

Mail to the address listed on the back, or contact us toll free at: 1(866)267-8024

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BayRail Alliance General Meetings 3rd Thursdays 6:15 pm
 Held at Cafe Yulong, 743 W Dana St, Mtn View, 3 blocks from Caltrain & VTA LR

Caltrain Joint Powers Board (JPB) Meetings 1st Thu 10:00 am
Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meetings 3rd Wed 6:00 pm

SamTrans administrative offices, 2nd floor auditorium, 1250 San Carlos Ave., San Carlos, one block west from the San Carlos Caltrain station.

Meeting dates, topics and locations are subject to change without notice.

For the latest information, go to www.bayrailalliance.org

BayRail Alliance Board of Directors

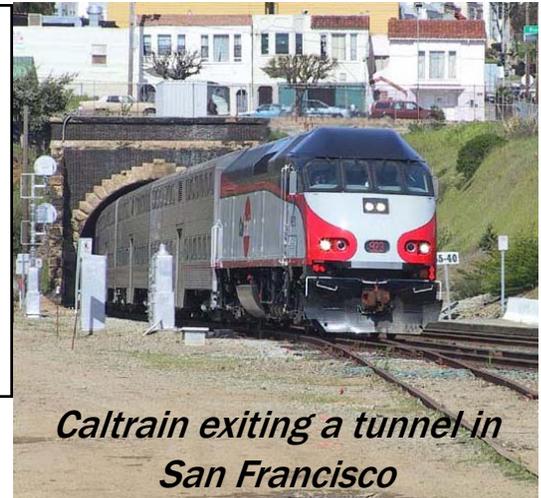
Margaret Okuzumi (Executive Director) Andy Chow (Vice President) Michael Graff (President) Sylvia Gregory
 Ryan Hoover Michael Kincaid
 Brian Stanke Paul Wendt
 (Membership Director)

BayRail Alliance is a 22-year old, all volunteer, entirely member-supported transit group working to promote the creation of a modern rail network to serve the greater San Francisco Bay Area. BayRail is not affiliated with any rail or transit agency, contractor or vendor. Our goals include: 1) converting Caltrain to electric propulsion; 2) increasing Caltrain frequency to at least once every 10 minutes at peak times and every 30 minutes off-peak; 3) extending Caltrain to downtown San Francisco at a new TransBay Terminal and to the East Bay via the Dumbarton Rail Bridge; 4) expanding ACE and Amtrak Capitol Corridor service; and 5) building the proposed high speed rail line connecting the Bay Area and Southern California through Altamont Pass.

Staying on Track newsletter is published by BayRail Alliance. Contributors: Andy Chow and Margaret Okuzumi. Layout: Ryan Hoover. Guest contributor: Michael Kiesling

Submissions:

We welcome submissions via email. Please include your name and phone number, and send them to ryanhoov@aol.com. We especially encourage submissions that include information on what interested readers can do and any photographs or other graphics.



Caltrain exiting a tunnel in San Francisco

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Forwarding and address correction requested