



JPB Board of Directors  
Meeting of July 9, 2020

Correspondence as of June 12, 2020

# Subject

- 1 Idling Trains
- 2 Caltrain Reciprocity
- 3 Real-Time COVID Detectors
- 4 Senate Confirmation of Caltrans Director T. Omishakin

On Thu, May 21, 2020 at 4:19 PM Tietjen, Brent <[TietjenB@samtrans.com](mailto:TietjenB@samtrans.com)> wrote:

Hi Raymond,

Our operations team went to the station earlier this week and worked with the field crews to review the schedule and minimize the need for idling when possible. They confirmed that, in general, trains should not be idling more than an hour prior to departure or an hour after arrival. There may be some extraordinary circumstances that may require idling for longer periods of time, however, this should not be the norm.

For your first question, there are a number of factors that require us to complete the light maintenance work at the terminal stations. The main reason is that to service all trains at the maintenance facility in San Jose would require us to run trains back and forth from the facility prior to each day of service. The maintenance facility in San Jose is also used for more intensive maintenance/inspections, such as wheel grinding and engine repairs. The daily operations of our service does not allow us to utilize that facility for the lighter maintenance activities that occurs at the terminal stations. There are no alternative locations to perform this work. There is some construction for Caltrain Electrification nearby and that can affect the ability for trains to come in and out of the station, but overall the maintenance activities have been occurring at the station for many years .

We appreciate the comments about reducing service, but at this time there are no plans for further reductions.

I hope this helps. Let me know if you'd like to discuss further via a call.

Thanks,

Brent

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**From:** Raymond Chang [<mailto:raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 2, 2020 2:28 PM  
**To:** Tietjen, Brent <[TietjenB@samtrans.com](mailto:TietjenB@samtrans.com)>  
**Cc:** Public Comment <[PublicComment@samtrans.com](mailto:PublicComment@samtrans.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Idling Trains at San Francisco Station Caltrain

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the San Mateo County Transit District. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.**

Hi Brent,

Hope you are doing well - just wanted to follow up on my previous email. I have seen some improvements in regards to idling trains, but the improvements seem to be sporadic (I've noticed over the previous weekends that trains seem to be idling less, but the weekdays are a different story - seems like there's little to no improvement in that regard). A lot of the nearby residents share the same sentiments as me, so I created a petition here: <https://www.change.org/p/caltrain-reduce-caltrain-idling-at-4th-and-king> and managed to get close to 50 signatures.

I've been recording video of the trains idling and sharing them on my Twitter account, and here are several examples:

[https://twitter.com/ray\\_chang/status/1267546836169920512](https://twitter.com/ray_chang/status/1267546836169920512)

[https://twitter.com/ray\\_chang/status/1267348376577732608](https://twitter.com/ray_chang/status/1267348376577732608)

[https://twitter.com/ray\\_chang/status/1265361206753157120](https://twitter.com/ray_chang/status/1265361206753157120)

(there's a lot more examples and I can share video proof from my apartment. Granted, I can't tell exactly how many trains are idling at a given time, but I can definitely hear them...)

Another resident of the area has also shared with me images of the trains idling without using available wayside power:

<https://twitter.com/hadlock/status/1267291792879128577>

I've shared correspondence with another nearby resident, Toby Levine (who previously shared her sentiments about the excessive idling in this [SF Chronicle article from 2017](#)) and this is what she observed over the years:

When we moved here in 2007, we were shocked by the Caltrain noise and pollution, much of which was caused by engine idling. We organized a lot of complaints and protests. Eventually, Caltrain began to listen. We came to agreements that included the use of ground power. By using ground electric power, they could really limit their engine idling, which they did. However, the diesel engines were still filthy and very, very old and continued to cause pollution. Then two things happened. Funds began to be available to switch to all electric power, and that is what they have been doing for the past several years. However, they also switched to an outside firm to manage the trains, rather than Caltrain doing so. We observed that they were idling much more and had little interest in maintaining the old reduced idling schedules and using their ground power.

At this point, I'm not sure how strictly these anti-idling measures have been enforced. Given the current schedule, there should be 1-2 trains idling at once max, but sometimes it seems like there are 5+ trains idling all at once. This makes it really hard for the people in our community to have our windows open (and given that summer is approaching, there are times where we need to have our windows open), due to both the noise and pollution. Even with all windows closed, I can still hear a constant rumbling noise (using my phone, it measures at around 91hz, which can't be easily blocked with just windows, and sounds similar to this [90hz test tone](#)).

I would appreciate some sort of resolution on this matter - and if trains are indeed only idling for 1 hour pre-departure and post-arrival, I would like to get some proof of that, because from what I can tell, it just doesn't seem to be the case. I truly appreciate your time to listen to my concerns (and the concerns of those who live near the station).

Thanks,  
-Raymond

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**From:** Tietjen, Brent <TietjenB@samtrans.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 8, 2020 3:43 PM  
**To:** Raymond Chang <raymond.cj.chang@gmail.com>  
**Cc:** Public Comment <PublicComment@samtrans.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Idling Trains at San Francisco Station Caltrain

Hi Raymond,

I wanted to acknowledge that we have received your email. I am working with our team to get you a response.

Best,  
Brent

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND  
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

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Dear Caltrain Board (via email),

Redwood City's Transportation Advisory Committee would like to urge Caltrain to accept SamTrans and VTA tickets and passes so that bus riders can choose to ride Caltrain during the current pandemic.

Accepting bus riders' tickets would help relieve crowding on the heavily traveled El Camino routes and help keep down the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. These routes are seeing roughly 50% pre-pandemic ridership numbers and physical crowding. Allowing more physical distancing by expanding riders' options to Caltrain will benefit Redwood City residents, workers, and visitors. Moreover, giving bus riders access to commuter rail will improve transportation equity.

Please give bus riders the choice of using Caltrain during this COVID pandemic to reduce crowding, use the available space on trains and give lower-income constituents the opportunity for a fast trip.

Yours sincerely,

*LaShonda Kennedy*

LaShonda Kennedy  
Chair  
Transportation Advisory Committee  
City of Redwood City

**From:** Roland Lebrun <ccss@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 12, 2020 3:10 AM  
**To:** BART Board  
**Cc:** SFCTA Board Secretary; MTABoard@SFMTA.com; Board (@caltrain.com); VTA Board Secretary; MTC Info; cacsecretary [@caltrain.com]; SFCTA CAC; cac@sfmta.com  
**Subject:** Real-time COVID detectors

Dear President Simon and Board members,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you verbally during yesterday's Board meeting. The intent of this email is to substantiate and elaborate on the comments I made about Airborne Virus Detectors (AVDs).

### Background

- BART and other transit agencies are already working on measures to counteract a CDC recommendation to avoid public transit because social distancing is not always effective in enclosed spaces requiring forced ventilation.
- BART and other agencies have correctly identified that UV filtration is key to the restoration of public confidence in mass transportation.

### Airborne Virus Detectors (AVDs)

Unlike UV filtration systems, AVDs are passive devices:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/srep17462>



Detection of airborne viruses using electro-aerodynamic deposition and a field-effect transistor | Scientific Reports

We report a technique for the detection of aerosolized viruses. Conventional field-effect-transistor (FET)-based techniques use solution-based processes, thus require antibody binding to the ...

[www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com)

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/04/200421112520.htm>

### The proposal

The proposal is to supplement UV filtration with AVDs as follows:

- 1) Use AVDs during the R&D cycle to verify that UV filtration systems are performing as designed.
- 2) Deploy AVDs as real-time monitoring devices for UV filtration systems by incorporating two AVDs into the final product (one AVD ahead of the UV filter and one behind it).

3) Incorporate visual and audio devices into the UV filtration casing:

- **Green**: all systems are working as expected.

Passengers should use social distancing.

- **Yellow**: primary AVD detected COVID in an air duct inlet.

Light audio "ding" every 30 seconds.

Passengers should be aware of their immediate surroundings and observe rigid social distancing protocols.

- **Red**: secondary AVD detected COVID in an air duct outlet.

Light audio buzzer every 15 seconds.

Passengers should be aware of a UV filtration system malfunction and that social distancing is no longer effective.

### **Preventing station access**

AVDs could be used to prevent access to ticket vending machines, shutdown infected TVMs and alert station staff when disinfection is required.

Fare gates could also be enhanced to prevent COVID-infected passengers from entering the system.

### **Funding**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) should be responsible for funding R&D and deployment of devices designed to ensure the safety of passengers.

I hope you find this information useful.

Roland Lebrun.

CC

SF MUNI Board of Directors

SFCTA Commissioners

Caltrain Board

VTA Board of Directors

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June 11, 2020

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
Senate President pro Tempore  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Confirmation of Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin- SUPPORT**

Dear Senate President pro Tempore Atkins,

On behalf of the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans), the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain), and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (Transportation Authority), I write to respectfully request Senate confirmation of Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin.

Our agencies have been working diligently for several years to address safety and congestion management along goods movement arterials, such as Highway 101, which runs down the Bay Area Peninsula through the heart of Silicon Valley, while simultaneously working on providing multi-modal options through the pursuit of commuter rail service, enhanced public transportation and ferry service, and active transportation projects to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We strive to continue improving air quality and mobility while also accommodating heavy traffic within our region. Director Omishakin's willingness to understand the opportunities and challenges presented in each region to balance addressing mobility, throughput, and clean air has been appreciated.

In addition, his emphasis on improving safety and congestion management on the state highway system, and background in delivering multi-modal options during his previous tenure with the Tennessee Department of Transportation, will allow for greater collaboration to meet state and regional objectives.

For these reasons, we strongly support Senate confirmation for the appointment of Toks Omishakin as Caltrans Director.

Sincerely,

Jim Hartnett  
General Manager/Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director

CC: Members of the California State Senate  
Governor Gavin Newsom  
David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency  
Toks Omishakin, Director, California Department of Transportation  
The Honorable Marc Berman, Assembly Member, 24<sup>th</sup> District  
The Honorable Kevin Mullin, Assembly Member, 22<sup>nd</sup> District  
The Honorable Phil Ting, Assembly Member, 19<sup>th</sup> District  
San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors  
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board of Directors  
San Mateo County Transportation Authority Board of Directors