



JPB Board of Directors  
Meeting of June 1, 2023

Correspondence as of May 31, 2023

<u>#</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1	RE_ Cal Train Bench - Redwood City
2	Caltrain FY2024 & FY2025 Comments
3	RE_ Weekend caltrain schedule
4	Addressing Caltrain's lowered ridership
5	RE_ Ticket help

**From:** [PRCS-Joanna Barrett](#)  
**To:** [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Cal Train Bench - Redwood City  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 30, 2023 9:15:20 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image006.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)

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Good Morning and thank you for your response. I called the resident back and told her this information. She will follow up with pictures that will hopefully help narrow down what bench she is referring to.

Appreciate the quick response.

Thank you,

Joanna

Joanna Barrett  
Management Analyst II,  
Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department  
Office: 650-780-7252  
Fax: 650-368-5087  
Email: [jbarrett@redwoodcity.org](mailto:jbarrett@redwoodcity.org)  
[www.redwoodcity.org/parks](http://www.redwoodcity.org/parks)



Redwood City Events on [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)

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**From:** Board (@caltrain.com) <[BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com](mailto:BoardCaltrain@samtrans.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 30, 2023 8:55 AM  
**To:** PRCS-Joanna Barrett <[jbarrett@redwoodcity.org](mailto:jbarrett@redwoodcity.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Cal Train Bench - Redwood City

Good morning Joanna.

Thank you for reaching out and notifying us of a broken bench possibly at the Redwood City station.

All of the benches at the Redwood City station were inspected on Friday and none were found to be in need of repair. There are several benches in the surrounding areas that are the responsibility of the City, Shopping center or others to maintain.

Regards,

Margaret

*San Mateo County*  
**TRANSIT DISTRICT**



Margaret Tseng  
Deputy District Secretary

San Mateo County Transit District  
1250 San Carlos Avenue | San Carlos, CA 94070  
d: (650) 551-6108 | e: [tsengm@samtrans.com](mailto:tsengm@samtrans.com) | [Message via Teams](#)

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**From:** PRCS-Joanna Barrett <[jbarrett@redwoodcity.org](mailto:jbarrett@redwoodcity.org)>

**Sent:** Thursday, May 25, 2023 3:06 PM

**To:** Board (@caltrain.com) <[board@caltrain.com](mailto:board@caltrain.com)>

**Subject:** Cal Train Bench - Redwood City

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Good Afternoon,

I work in the Parks and Rec Department for Redwood City and trying to help a resident out who called about a broken bench. She enjoys sitting on the bench with her daughter watching the trains go by but this one has been broken and is unsafe. Could you please point me in the right direction on who is responsible for replacement unsafe benches?

Thank you!

Joanna

Joanna Barrett  
Management Analyst II,  
Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department  
Office: 650-780-7252  
Fax: 650-368-5087  
Email: [jbarrett@redwoodcity.org](mailto:jbarrett@redwoodcity.org)  
[www.redwoodcity.org/parks](http://www.redwoodcity.org/parks)



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**From:** [esplada@sonic.net](mailto:esplada@sonic.net)  
**To:** [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))  
**Subject:** Caltrain FY2024 & FY2025 Comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 30, 2023 10:28:58 AM  
**Attachments:** [JWS Bdgt Ltr to Caltrain Board 053023.docx](#)

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Attached are comments to the Caltrain JPB Board for consideration in budget discussions at the June 1, 2023 meeting

May 30, 2023

Send to board@caltrain.com

Honorable Chair Gee and other members of the Caltrain Board

**Subject: Caltrain FY2024 and FY2025 Budget Comments**

During the last three years the pandemic and its after-effects have severely roiled Caltrain ridership and operating results. Fiscal 2024 is a crucible year in which Caltrain must adeptly execute major capital programs to prepare for electric train operation and concurrently adapt services to the new travel environment surrounding work from home and hybrid office protocols.

Staff proposals for the FY2024 and FY2025 budget prompt the submission of these comments for consideration of the Board regarding how best to ensure the future financial and operating well-being of Caltrain.

To place these budget comments in context, we note the following recent Caltrain operating statistics:

	Avg Wkdy Riders	Op Exp/Boarding Passgr	Op Subsidy/Boarding Passgr.
FY 2019	64,492	\$7.71	\$ 1.91
FY 2020	50,654	\$9.57	\$ 4.01
FY2021	4,104	\$106.67	\$80.98
FY2022 (prel.)	12,065	\$38.29	\$29.46

These historic statistics show that Caltrain operating subsidy per passenger in FY22 was over 15 times that in FY19 pre-COVID, while ridership was only 19% for the same time comparison.

**Importance of Board Prudent Stewardship:** We believe it is particularly important that the Caltrain Board demonstrate prudent fiscal stewardship and careful use of public resources under its control. The proposed budget is void of such evidence. It seems imperative that Caltrain recognize that San Francisco and Silicon Valley office workers are not returning to pre-pandemic numbers and that remote work and hybrid office protocols will likely prevail for a long time. Caltrain must soon begin to scale its services and operating budget to this new reality.

Staff recommends that Caltrain continue running 104 trains per weekday (since 2021) with only 17,000-18,000 per day vs. 92 trains pre-pandemic when it carried 67,000 weekday passengers. Cost per Caltrain passenger trip is now five times as much as pre-pandemic.

We observe that staff's proposed budget for FY2024 and 2025 is devoid of serious attention to cost control. One example: proposed administrative expense, sans debt service and contribution to reserves, is 23.3% higher for FY2024 than FY2023 budgeted and an additional 10.6% for FY2025. The added administrative expense includes over 10 new FTE employees.

**Estimated FY2024 Ridership:** Staff guesses that FY2024 weekday Caltrain ridership will be 45% of pre-COVID. Ridership for FY2023 through January 2023 averaged 16,626 per weekday or only 28%; the maximum was 18,700 for September 2022. Pre-COVID FY2020 through January 2020 averaged 68,813, with September 2019 ridership at 72,387.

**For FY2024 weekday ridership to be at 45% of the 68,813 pre-COVID period would require average ridership of 30,965 per weekday. So if FY2024 starts with approximately 17,000 average weekday Caltrain riders, then staff projection means that Caltrain at the end of FY2024 would have to be attracting 45,680 weekday ridership. That increase of 168% over FY2023 results is highly implausible. It cannot be justified.**

**Diesel Train Retirement:** It is abundantly clear that operating both diesel trains and electric trains will entail high Caltrain costs for dual parts inventories, equipment maintenance, personnel staffing, and training. Yet materials produced by staff indicate intent to continue dual operation through at least 2030. This is not fiscally responsible. There are multiple options to address the non-electrified Gilroy to Diridon service issue, but they require pro-active leadership by the Board. The issues involve political accommodations which necessitate Board negotiations, including high-level interactions with State, Federal, and local officials to explore, assess and reach suitable agreements. The battery electric train option being advanced by staff cannot be implemented in a reasonable timeframe. Moreover, it too would benefit from active Board intervention, as would another option for Capitol Corridor and/or state rail operation. Due diligence in exploring all potential initiatives is needed to enable timely resolution concurrent with the introduction of eMU service.

**4<sup>th</sup> Train to Gilroy:** Staff proposes a fourth train to Gilroy be added in FY2024. This recommendation is without evidence that it is the most effective investment to increase ridership. Current passenger boardings between Gilroy and Diridon have fallen over 70% from pre-pandemic, and are estimated at approximately 400 per weekday based on Clipper O-D analyses (Nov 2022). Additionally, over sixty percent of these boardings originate at the Tamien Station

**Electricity Cost Estimates FY2025:** All observers have to be unpleasantly surprised by the very high-cost estimate for Caltrain electric service shown in staff budget proposals. Hedging may very well by one prospect for reducing actual electric expense, but a serious analysis of alternative ways to bring these expenses into more reasonable alignment is recommended.

**Capital Budget Detail:** There are notable unexplained changes between staff materials presented at the May 4<sup>th</sup> Board meeting and materials updated May 22<sup>nd</sup>. We believe this reflects a flux in the status of readiness of the capital budget.

For example, Item 44 [Mini-High Platforms]; the May 4<sup>th</sup> budget materials showed \$460K in FY 2024 and \$0 in FY2025, whereas the May 22<sup>nd</sup> update had \$460K in FY 2024 and \$1.7516M in FY2025. A separate Capital Item [27 and 28 respectively] budgets \$1.04M for a Level Boarding Roadmap, but it fails to identify engineering/architectural plans and preliminary cost estimates as a product, or to link the Mini-High Platforms and Level Boarding Roadmap. Nor are all Caltrain stations included in what is presented.

We, and numerous others, regard level platform boarding among the most important operations improvement and ridership attraction that Caltrain needs to implement. It will assist mobility impaired riders and cyclists, improve safety, reduce dwell times, enable higher reliability, attract new riders, and increase train equipment and personnel productivity. Here is why: Passenger trips on Caltrain average about 24 miles which means each trip would experience from 3 minutes to 9 minutes travel time saving due to level boarding platforms plus a reduction in the train scheduling slack now required to allow for boarding dwell time uncertainty. We strongly encourage Caltrain to put moving to level boarding as a high priority.

Sincerely,

James W. Schmidt, P.E.

**From:** [Sarah Nabong](#)  
**To:** [skyenyaard@gmail.com](mailto:skyenyaard@gmail.com)  
**Cc:** [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))  
**Subject:** RE: Weekend caltrain schedule  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 30, 2023 1:45:53 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Dear Skye Nygaard,

Your message to the Caltrain Board of Directors was referred to me for response. The Board members will receive a copy of our correspondence.

I apologize for any inconvenience and frustration caused by the absence of the weekend train schedule on Google maps. While I understand the importance of having accurate and up-to-date information readily available for planning your trips, adding the weekend train schedule to Google maps requires significant time and labor resources that make it difficult to accomplish with the various service changes. We have also encountered inconsistencies in the past when attempting to integrate our temporary weekend schedules with third-party platforms, which led us to focus on maintaining accurate information on our official website and directing all customers to use that for the latest information.

However, we continuously strive to improve our services and make information as accessible as possible. We will take your feedback into consideration as we explore potential solutions in the future. In the meantime, we recommend utilizing our official channels, such as our website and mobile app, to access the most accurate and up-to-date weekend train schedules.

Thank you for your understanding and for being a valued Caltrain rider.

Kind regards,

**Sarah Nabong, Customer Service Representative 2**

1250 San Carlos Ave San Carlos, CA 94070

Phone: 650.508.7925

Websites: [Caltrain](#) | [SamTrans](#) | [TA](#)



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I am writing to express my extreme frustration and disappointment with your failure to push the weekend train schedule to Google maps. As a regular Caltrain rider, I rely heavily on Google maps to plan my trips and ensure that I arrive at my destination on time. However, I have recently discovered that the weekend train schedule is not available on Google maps, making it extremely difficult for me and other riders to plan our weekend travel.

This is simply unacceptable. Caltrain is a public transportation system that is supposed to serve the needs of its riders. By failing to push the weekend train schedule to Google maps, you are making it difficult for riders to plan their trips and causing unnecessary stress and inconvenience.



I urge you to take immediate action to correct this issue and ensure that the weekend train schedule is available on Google maps even during construction. This is a basic service that should be provided to all riders, and it is unacceptable that it has been overlooked.

I expect a prompt response from the Caltrain board regarding this matter and look forward to hearing about the steps you will take to address this issue.

**From:** [Balch, Ryan](#)  
**To:** [friends@friendsofcaltrain.com](mailto:friends@friendsofcaltrain.com); [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)  
**Subject:** Addressing Caltrain's lowered ridership  
**Date:** Friday, May 26, 2023 1:37:21 PM

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Hi Peninsula Corridor JPB members and Friends of Caltrain Board members,

I am a student at Mountain View High School in the south peninsula. For a project in my math class in which we performed data analysis on real-world problems, I chose to focus on analyzing Caltrain ridership numbers and the significant decline since the pandemic. As we all know, ridership on public transportation has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels and is very far from its highs.

However, even before the pandemic, ridership levels were plateauing according to the published data. As a concerned citizen who believes in the value of public transportation to combat climate change and foster low-congestion, affordable living conditions throughout the Bay Area, I believe it is critical to encourage increased ridership on Caltrain. Our roads are once again full of cars as people return to offices and resume their normal activities. Caltrain should play a bigger role in their daily transportation considerations.

Our math class project also tasked us with developing solutions to the problems we studied. In my analysis conclusions, I proposed several potential paths to address increasing Caltrain ridership. Some of my proposals include incentivizing ridership via:

- Advertising the pros of using public transit (reduced pollution, using commute time to read or work, not needing to worry about finding parking at the destination, etc.)
- Reducing the cost of ridership (lowering ticket prices, offering reduced prices for frequent riders, creating discounts for riders with different income levels)
- Creating a safer environment in transit (increasing police presence on trains and stations, installing security cameras on trains)
- Promoting how Senate Bill 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, is funding system improvements for Caltrain

More details about my analysis of the Caltrain ridership data is available in my report at the following link: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wli4YVfPcvOpJxb8s0QQWkUslbKyLaHz9gvBqFoFmSQ/edit>.

The problem of reduced ridership levels is a complex one with many factors to consider and no straightforward solutions. I hope that some of my suggestions will be helpful as you look at how to encourage more riders to return to Caltrain. Thank you for your efforts to ensure Caltrain remains a vital and reliable part of the Bay Area transit system.

Sincerely,  
Ryan Balch  
Mountain View resident and MVHS student, Class of 2026

**From:** Lisa Chan

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 31, 2023 7:23 AM

**To:** 'Michael Lebowitz' <[mlebowitz07@gmail.com](mailto:mlebowitz07@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** RE: Ticket help

Dear Michael,

Our app does not allow for pre-purchases and tickets are immediately activated except for special events such as Bay to Breakers. Our app mirrors the tickets purchased on ticket vending machines, with One-Way passes and Zone Upgrades expiring in four (4) hours and Day Passes expiring at end of service day (3 a.m.). You are also welcome to visit <http://www.caltrain.com/Fares/howtobuy/CaltrainMobile.html> for the complete purchasing rules and guidelines. Since this was your first purchase, we completely understand and would be glad to issue a refund.

Please complete a refund request form at [https://samtranscore.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_efXgZ3pn25HIHHL](https://samtranscore.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_efXgZ3pn25HIHHL) and reference order#2216718 for a potential refund in the amount of \$21. For future app purchases, Caltrain recommends purchasing tickets for travel at least 10 minutes prior to boarding the train, but not so far in advance that you run the risk of ending up with another expired ticket.

Thank you for riding Caltrain. Enjoy your day.

**Lisa Chan, Public Affairs Specialist**

1250 San Carlos Ave, San Carlos, CA 94070

Phone: 650.551-6131

Websites: [Caltrain](#) | [SamTrans](#) | [TA](#)



**Please note that my hours are M-F 7am-3:30pm.**

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**From:** Michael Lebowitz <[mlebowitz07@gmail.com](mailto:mlebowitz07@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 30, 2023 9:16 PM

**To:** Caltrain Mobile Ticket Support <[ctmobileticketsupport@caltrain.com](mailto:ctmobileticketsupport@caltrain.com)>

**Subject:** Ticket help

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [mlebowitz07@gmail.com](mailto:mlebowitz07@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

I just now ordered a day pass that I was planning on using tomorrow but it was auto activated for some reason the second I bought it.

Can you please issue a refund so I can order one tomorrow?

Is this normal as the previous times I have bought tickets I activated them on the train.

Thanks!

Michael