



JPB Board of Directors
Meeting of August 3, 2023

Correspondence as of June 2, 2023

<u>#</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1	Looking Ahead
2	Stay Informed On The VTA's BART Phase II Extension Project

From: [Cautn1](#)
To: [Gee, Jeff \[jgee@redwoodcity.org\]](mailto:Gee, Jeff [jgee@redwoodcity.org]); [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](mailto:Board (@caltrain.com))
Subject: Looking Ahead
Date: Monday, May 29, 2023 8:23:07 PM
Attachments: [Embedded9da371ddc2294df99a5a4c4cc8579cbc.png](#)

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May 28, 2023

Dear Chair Gee and other members of the Caltrain Board:

During the last several months a series of questions have arisen as to how best to ensure the future financial and operating well-being of Caltrain.....a critically important element of Bay Area transportation infrastructure that deserves top priority.

In a recent BATWG newsletter we noted that the hardest part of Caltrain's development program lay ahead, especially given the unavoidable oncoming funding shortages. Under these circumstances there is a critical and overriding need for Caltrain to:

- o get out of the diesel operating business as soon as the new all-electric trains are up and running,

- o take full advantage of other opportunities to cut costs, including cutting service and

eliminating or reducing unnecessary employee categories,

- o find a cost-effective way of accommodating the relatively small number of riders traveling from Gilroy to the Diridon Station,

- o switch to efficient level-boarding as soon as possible,

- o work productively with the San Francisco and San Jose programs designed to create major new transit connections at the north and south ends of the line.

While we've been assured by your staff that all these factors have been taken carefully and fully into account, we remain unconvinced.

Despite Caltrain's impending financial shortfall and the 71% drop in Caltrain ridership from 67,000 riders a day in 2019 to just 17,000 riders a day in late 2022, there still seems to be a plan to operate 104 Caltrain trains a day, even more that were running pre-COVID? Why? How can that be justified?

The Gilroy to Diridon ridership has also dropped substantially from the already low number of riders that were using that section of the line before the pandemic. Why, despite this, are there plans for continuing to operate 3 or 4 diesel trains a day between Gilroy and San Francisco? Why not instead accommodate the riders south of the Diridon Station either by a separate battery-powered line, or a fast and comfortable bus line operating mostly or entirely out of traffic congestion, or by working with the other stakeholders to include the Gilroy section as part of the Capitol Corridor diesel service?

To get the new electrified service up and running in 2024, while minimizing delay, avoiding cost overruns, encouraging new riders and increasing farebox revenue, will require a well-coordinated effort by a team highly experienced in expeditiously bringing new infrastructure on line. It is recommended that henceforth all work proceed in conformity with a carefully thought-out CPM Schedule and that strategy meetings are held at least every two weeks so that section heads can report upon both their progress and their problems.

At the May 22nd Caltrain Finance Committee meeting new issues were raised, including a welcome new emphasis on accelerating the level-boarding program. This new information prompts a few additional questions:

When will the preliminary drawings of the 13 or more level loading platforms and the accompanying preliminary engineering cost estimate of the level boarding project be completed? What is the expected completion date of the project? When will the EMU's begin operating using level boarding stations?

With regard to the service south of the Diridon Station what is the status of the BEMU "pilot program"? Has the FRA approved joint UP/BEMU operations? When will BEMU service begin? If there is still uncertainty as to the practicality of the BEMU alternative, what other travel options for the line section south of Diridon are being considered?

What about the reportedly superfluous assistant conductors? Is this employment category being phased out? Are any other staffing reductions in the works?

Sincerely yours,

Gerald Cauthen

Gerald Cauthen P.E.

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From: VTA BART Phase II <vtabart@vtabsv.com>
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2023 9:00 AM
To: Board (@caltrain.com)
Subject: Stay Informed On The VTA's BART Phase II Extension Project

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Stay Informed On The VTA's BART Phase II Extension Project

Greetings!

We hope this email finds you well. As a valued community member, we wanted to let you know of all the channels we have to keep you up to date with the latest information on activities, milestones, and new content regarding VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension Project. With construction in the not-too-distant future, we want all our communities to stay informed and involved.

The future is here, and BART will take you there! Be part of the future and be sure to follow us on your preferred social network.

[Updating your user preferences is quick and easy and you can help us gain more insight by taking the three question survey you are redirected to after.](#)

Best Regards

VTA BART Phase II Extension Team

Project Background

VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension (Phase II Project) is a six-mile, four-station extension of BART from Berryessa / North San José Station (opened 2020) through downtown San José to the City of Santa Clara. The Phase II Project is planned to include an approx. five-mile subway, three stations with underground platforms (28th Street/ Little Portugal, Downtown San José, and Diridon), one ground-level station (Santa Clara), a train maintenance and storage facility, and additional facilities.

Have a question for us about Phase II?

Visit www.vta.org/bart or email us vtabart@vtabsv.com



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