



JPB Board of Directors
Meeting of March 7, 2024

Correspondence as of February 2, 2024

<u>Item #</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1	Caltrain POP Fare Evasion and Operating Cost Savings
2	Public NOP of an Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material in Tidal March Restoration Project

From: [Adrian Brandt](#)
To: [Jeff Carter](#)
Cc: [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#); [John Hogan](#); [Michelle Bouchard](#); [Mueller, Raymond \[rmueller@smcgov.org\]](#)
Subject: Caltrain PoP fare evasion & operating cost savings
Date: Friday, February 2, 2024 1:27:54 PM

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Hi Jeff & Ray,

I am cc'ing the honorable Caltrain board as I'd like to reach directors and staff that are just as interested in fare evasion and potential operating cost savings as we are .

As you know one of the key attributes & advantages of the self-ticketing “proof-of-payment” (PoP) fare collection model (pioneered in Europe and which Caltrain adopted around 30 years ago) is that when implemented correctly, it is optimally cost-efficient, user-friendly, and barrier-free.

Annoyingly, it is sometimes mischaracterized as the “honor system” by those who either ignore or misunderstand that fare inspections coupled with stiff fines for fare evaders are an absolutely integral and essential component. As with a casino the statistical odds of “winning” must be correctly managed or the business model breaks down. It's Caltrain's job to ensure fare evaders (gamblers) are certain to eventually be caught **and cited**, thereby statistically more than negating their successful evasions (“wins”) and ensuring that Caltrain (“the house”) always wins in the end. The value of inspections cannot only be measured by the rate of evaders cited since they serve as the only deterrent to would-be fare evaders. Indeed, the less evaders inspectors encounter speaks to their effectiveness as a deterrent to those who might otherwise be tempted to cheat.

The absence of barriers not only allows stations to be simpler & cheaper, but also more permeable and rider-accessible. No expensive fare gates for riders to have to negotiate like livestock forced to slowly funnel through narrow choke points before settling into a seat and getting off their feet aboard their trains.

But the way Caltrain handles SF is a significant and more labor intensive deviation from the PoP model, however. Rather than allowing early-arriving riders to just board their waiting trains and get comfortable, as is standard practice at European terminal stations, Caltrain keeps the platforms locked and forces riders to mill around, sometimes in great numbers in less than ideal conditions (unpleasant weather, insufficient seating, encountering discomfiting local “street life”) until the “human fare gates” decide it's close enough to departure time and open the gates whereupon the assembled crowd must slowly jostle and funnel past the “human fare gates” as every ticket is slowly checked.

Mooo!

Apart from it deviating from customer-friendly European best practices where platforms are always open, this somewhat cumbersome practice artificially and substantially skews the fare evasion-to-checks ratio downward because would-be evaders are either dissuaded from trying to access the platforms or are turned away — and therefore never counted or cited.

So to more properly account for and at least partially offset this “invisible evaders” skew, the gate checks must be removed from the fare evasion rate calculation. Since only evaders discovered on-board are subject to citation, to calculate a more honest and accurate onboard evasion rate we should properly use only on-train checks instead:

$$\text{on.train.checks} = \text{total.checks} - \text{gate.checks}$$
$$\text{fare.evasion.rate} = \text{evaders.caught} / \text{on.train.checks}$$
$$\text{fare.evasion.percentage} = 100 \times \text{fare.evasion.rate}$$
$$\text{evaders.cited.rate} = \text{citations.issued} / \text{evaders.caught}$$
$$\text{evaders.escape.rate} = 1 - \text{evasion.citation.rate}$$

In Europe, where the whole PoP regime or model was pioneered over 50 years ago and widely adopted and perfected ever since, evaders boarding in SF would — like evaders boarding at any other station — eventually be caught and cited while aboard the train.

(If there is concern about non-riders accessing or loitering on SF platforms, then these could be designated and marked as “paid” areas just as our trains are, and subject to fare inspections & citations.)

The deterrence would be as it is everywhere else on PoP systems: reliant on specially-trained roving fare inspectors (not costly conductors trained for other tasks, and which may not even be aboard) working in teams of two or more transferring from one train to another after each inspection. Inspection & citation aboard trains (and sometimes in “paid” station areas) is their sole job and focus, and they are properly managed for productivity. So they are efficient, wise, and dogged about catching and citing evaders ... they even follow uncooperative evaders (sometimes even off the train and away from stations) while summoning local or transit police, if necessary, until they can properly ID evaders to issue citations.

If evaders learn they cannot get away with being uncooperative or playing other games, they generally won't.

If in the other hand they learn that all they have to do is be uncooperative, then that's what they'll (mostly) do ... and then you'll have a situation like Caltrain has where our conductors have only been able to properly cite 5-10% of evaders they catch onboard and over 1,600 unable to be cited monthly due to simply refusing to identify themselves.

More labor & cost efficiency advice:

Work toward reducing expensive conductors to **one** per train. Let them be excellent, friendly, helpful, non-adversarial, door-operating ambassadors (and boarding assisters), and leave fare evasion up to small teams of purpose-trained roving crack fare inspectors that hop on and off various trains for the duration of their shift.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration, feedback, and questions,
Adrian

P.S.: BART staff tells its board it is now saving millions by running shorter off-peak trains ... what would it take for us to do so with our EMUs and what would the energy savings, car-mile & maintenance savings, and potential labor savings amount to? Remember, these savings would accumulate and should easily have a positive ROI to offset the additional cost of having Stadler provide us with some 4-car sets (the BEMU will be only 4 cars long with only 3 for passengers!). And remember: operating a 4-car set on the same schedule as all the 7-car sets on order should consume approximately 43% less of that increasingly-costly energy that is a large factor in Caltrain's projected budget deficits for at least the next decade.

On Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 20:14 Jeff Carter <jcartrain@aol.com> wrote:

Thank-You Ray,

I admire your dedication to try to exclusively use transit on the coast-side and between the coast and the bay-side. Its has been many years or decades since I visited the coast-side on transit. It would be interesting to hear more about your transit experience on the coast.

There should be a way to extrapolate how many don't pay their fare based on the over 1,600 missed citations out of 361,320 fare inspections in November 2023. The reported total ridership for November 2023 is 488,117, this works out to an inspection rate of 74%, if I am reading this correctly?

With over 1,700 violations encountered by conductors, how many total per month are not paying their fare?

The more fares paid (by fare evaders), the more revenue and ridership for Caltrain which will help the bottom line. For this to happen there has to be better fare enforcement and citations issued, to make the risk of not paying your fare a strong deterrent.

Regards,

Jeff Carter

In a message dated 2/1/2024 5:52:11 PM Pacific Standard Time, rmueller@smegov.org writes:

Thanks Adrian,

Respectfully Jeff, I said I decided to try to exclusively use transit to travel my 340 square mile district. I wanted to see what is was like for people on the Coast to try to use transit to travel to the Bayside and vice versa.

Appreciate the information contained below.

Best,

Ray

From: Adrian Brandt <adrian.brandt@gmail.com>
Date: Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 4:30 PM
To: Jeff Carter <jcartrain@aol.com>
Cc: John P. Hogan Jr. <hoganj@caltrain.com>, Michelle Bouchard <bouchardm@samtrans.com>, Ray Mueller <rmueller@smcgov.org>
Subject: Re: Comments By Board Member Ray Mueller / Fare Enforcement

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Hi Jeff,

I've copied director Mueller and Caltrain staff on this message.

Yes, I watched the whole meeting and listened to Ray's comments with great interest.

Riders using the app or certain time-based passes (eg monthly) or TVM-issued paper tickets don't need to tag in or off ... so failure to tag on/off is not by itself an indication of fare evasion.

PoP fare inspections & citations on European transit are handled by specially-trained roving fare inspectors (sometimes even college students) — not by expensive unionized train conductors who have different training and often aren't even used or aboard — and usually working in groups of 2 or more (which helps when they encounter a noncooperative fare evader).

Inspection frequencies can vary depending on known problem areas, the time, day, line, location and agency ... but they are typically infrequent and unpredictable. This gives the best bang for the buck, so to speak. Unlike Caltrain, they summon and wait for police while staying with uncooperative fare evaders (even if they get off) anytime an evader refuses to ID themselves to be cited. Caltrain conductors on the other hand, according to the CAC agenda package staff reports, **fail** to cite as many as 90-95% of fare evaders they catch due to their refusal to ID themselves. That amounted to over 1,600 citations "lost" (not issued) in just the last monthly report!

Adrian

On Thu, Feb 1, 2024 at 15:46 Jeff Carter <jcartrain@aol.com> wrote:

Hi Adrian,

I don't know if you saw the whole Board meeting this morning ?

Ray Mueller commented that he decided to "use" transit. He commented that on Caltrain nobody was paying and nobody was checking fares. He said that he chose not to tag-on also and nobody came to check fares.

He also observed that most people were not tagging clipper cards. Approximately 3:19:xx on the meeting video.

Of course, POP is completely random (outside of SF gate checks). And monthly passes and GO-Pass stickers are not required to tag every trip.

In my travels I often see people get off the trains and don't tag-off, I don't know what fare product they are using.

In your experience in Germany, what is the rate of POP checks?

BTW, fares were checked on my way home from the meeting, train #119.

Jeff

Margaret Tseng

From: VTA's Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material in Tidal Marsh Restoration Project
<beneficial.reuse@vta.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 4:00 PM
To: Board (@caltrain.com)
Subject: Public NOP of an Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material in Tidal Marsh Restoration Project

You don't often get email from beneficial.reuse@vta.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

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**Gentle Reminder*

VTA's Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material in Tidal Marsh Restoration Project

Please reference the [Notice of Preparation \(NOP\)](#) and the [Digital Flyer](#) for VTA's Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material in Tidal Marsh Restoration Project.

Dear Valued Community Member,

The public scoping period for the joint EIS/EIR for the proposed Beneficial Reuse of Excavated Material in Tidal Marsh Restoration Project begins January 19 and ends February 20, 2024. During this period, the public is encouraged to provide input on the scope of the Project by attending either the in-person or virtual meeting, [emailing comments](#), or using the [comment form](#).

COMMENT DUE DATE

Comments regarding the scope of analysis and content for the EIS/EIR are invited from all interested parties. **Please submit comments no later than 5 p.m., Tuesday, February**

20. 2024. However, we would appreciate your response at the earliest possible date.

SCOPING MEETINGS

Two public scoping meetings (one virtual and one in-person) will be held.

- The [virtual meeting](#) will be held via [Zoom](#) on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. To register for the virtual meeting, please go to the [VTA website](#).
- The [in-person meeting](#) will be held on Wednesday, February 7, 2024, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the Alviso Branch Library located at 5050 N. First Street, San Jose, CA 95002 (*this location is served by VTA Bus 59*).

The details of the public scoping meetings are also posted on the [VTA website](#). Project information will be presented at the meetings.

Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the public scoping meetings should [email VTA](#) sufficiently in advance of the meeting to allow time to process the request. All meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Individuals who require language translation, American Sign Language, or other assistance are requested to contact VTA's Community Outreach and Public Engagement team at (408) 321-7575 or beneficial.reuse@vta.org, at least five (5) business days before the public information meeting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Details about the Beneficial Reuse Project will be posted on the [VTA website](#) as the project is further developed.

Best,

Valley Transportation Authority

¿Puede leer este documento? Si no, podemos ayudarle a leerlo. Si desea recibir asistencia, llame al Departamento de Relaciones con la Comunidad de VTA al (408) 321-7575.

이 문서를 읽을 수 있습니까? 읽지 못하신다면 저희가 도와드릴 수 있습니다. 무료도움이 필요하시다면, VTA 커뮤니티 관계 부서에 (408) 321-7575 로 연락주시기바랍니다.

Kaya mo bang basahin ang dokumentong ito? Kung hindi, matutulungan ka naming basahin ito. Para makatanggap ng libheng tulong, mangyaring tumawag sa Community Relation Department ng VTA sa (408) 321-7575.

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Bạn có thể đọc tài liệu này không? Nếu không, chúng tôi có thể giúp bạn đọc tài liệu này. Để được trợ giúp miễn phí, vui lòng gọi Bộ Phận Quan hệ Cộng đồng của VTA theo số (408) 321-7575.

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