

JPB CAC

CORRESPONDENCE  
AS OF

February 18, 2025

**From:** [Rosalind Kutler](#)  
**To:** [cacsecretary \[@caltrain.com\]](mailto:cacsecretary [@caltrain.com])  
**Cc:** [rohit@sarathy.org](mailto:rohit@sarathy.org); [Pete Wickman](#); [Adrian Brandt](#); [Amit Lohe](#); [dalbohm@gmail.com](mailto:dalbohm@gmail.com); [Melody Pagee](#); [Leonard Acosta](#); [kris@linquist.com](mailto:kris@linquist.com); [Patricia Leung](#); [Ashish Kulkarni](#); [John Hogan](#)  
**Subject:** Re: WIFI  
**Date:** Friday, January 24, 2025 3:47:56 PM

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I'm seeing lots of morning computer use. Would be excellent to survey early trains on Mon/Tue/Wed if we have any resources to draw from.

Roz Kutler

On Thu, Jan 23, 2025, 3:28 PM cacsecretary [[@caltrain.com](mailto:@caltrain.com)] <[cacsecretary@caltrain.com](mailto:cacsecretary@caltrain.com)> wrote:

CAC,

I know we have discussed issues that some of you have had with our new wifi system. Robert Tam is our Project manager for the WIFI project. Can you elaborate on some of the issue you have had recently? Please be as specific as you can. We are looking at finishing this project up and want to make sure we have addressed everyone concerns.

John

**From:** [Kris Liguist](#)  
**To:** [cacsecretary \[ @caltrain.com\]](mailto:cacsecretary [@caltrain.com])  
**Cc:** [rozkutler@gmail.com](mailto:rozkutler@gmail.com); [rohit@sarathy.org](mailto:rohit@sarathy.org); [Pete Wickman](#); [Adrian Brandt](#); [Amit Lohe](#); [dalbohm@gmail.com](mailto:dalbohm@gmail.com); [Melody Pagee](#); [Leonard Acosta](#); [patriciaoqra@gmail.com](mailto:patriciaoqra@gmail.com); [Ashish Kulkarni](#); [John Hogan](#)  
**Subject:** Re: WIFI  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 8:20:08 AM

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You don't often get email from kris@linquist.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**ATTENTION:** This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

One last email on the subject... another bad experience this morning. Train 409, car 314.

Big "outages" around San Antonio and Menlo Park again. One lasting 140 seconds, another 144 seconds. Around 8:16AM.

-Kris

On Jan 28, 2025, at 5:27 PM, Kris Liguist <kris@linquist.com> wrote:

I once again experienced poor wifi on my train home, train 146, car 3335.

5:22PM, just past San Antonio, an outage that lasted 60 seconds.

I also asked a fellow daily rider named Janek who I interact with regularly about his experience. This is what he said:

Apropos of our Wi-Fi discussion and Caltrain's reaching out to CAC, 514 today (I'm sitting in car 3256) is one of those trains with "poorer" WiFi. I do think December's software update "raised the floor," in that WiFi is at least nominally functional on most trains, but it remains inconsistently so; there are trains where WiFi is quite consistently good now, and those where it's less consistent, as if the software update only partially resolved EMI issues.

I think Caltrain, or the vendor, needs:  
monitoring to understand which trains are working well and which aren't;  
one more round of resolution for the few trains that still have bad WiFi

... before they close out the contract. In theory we could crowdsource this, but this shouldn't be on the passengers to help debug, there should be metrics they can capture

-Kris

On Jan 28, 2025, at 9:14 AM, Kris Linqvist <kris@linquist.com> wrote:

Hi John,

I had a pretty poor wifi experience this morning , 28 January, on train 409.

I was in car 304

8:24AM, approaching San Antonio, I had 100 seconds of downtime  
8:33PM, approaching Menlo Park, I had 50 seconds of downtime  
8:43AM, approaching Hillsdale, I had 32 seconds of downtime.

I was running a continuous ping every second to a known cloud server. I remained connected to the wifi network - the issue was the train's connection to the internet.

Previously, I sent Alex a wifi acceptance test - do we know if those tests were run by anyone at Caltrain or the wifi provider?

**In my opinion, as part of ongoing maintenance, the provider should be providing monthly wifi statistics to Caltrain.** They should be gathering metrics from the routers and know when a train connects or disconnects. Any disconnection > X seconds should be investigated and fixed. I think X should be 20 or 30 seconds.

I should mention that today's experience was worse than normal. However, wouldn't call it an outlier, since I do have experiences like this once or twice a week.

-Kris

On Jan 23, 2025, at 3:28 PM, cacsecretary  
[@caltrain.com] <cacsecretary@caltrain.com> wrote:

CAC,

I know we have discussed issues that some of you have had with our new wifi system. Robert Tam is our Project manager for the WIFI project. Can you elaborate on some of the issue you have had recently? Please be as specific as you can. We are looking at finishing this project up

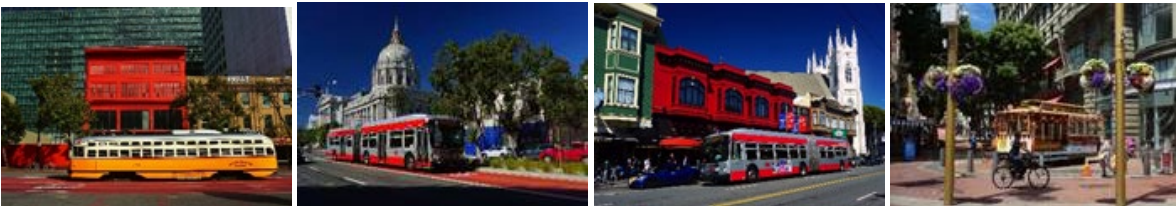
and want to make sure we have addressed everyone  
concerns.

John

**From:** Howard  
**To:** Board (@caltrain.com); cacsecretary [ @caltrain.com]; Caltrain, Bac (@caltrain.com)  
**Subject:** TRANSIT FUNDING + REGIONAL PLANNING + PANDAS  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 6:20:51 PM  
**Attachments:** ~000-PANDAS\_DOWNTOWN\_SAN FRANCISCO.docx.pdf  
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## TRANSIT FUNDING: SIMPLER HOLISTIC PLANNING +++

Like in Pennsylvania, the State can shift (flex) federal funding from highways to public transit. SFMTA (Muni) can flex funding from capita projects to operations. Flexing is a temporary fix, allowing time for a Regional Transportation Revenue Measure in November 2026's election---which can pass if transit advocates take the lead and help shape a transformative Bay Area mobility vision. Near-term Muni service cuts are too damaging---causing cascading ridership drops and dampening economic growth.

**STREETSBLOG:** Pennsylvania Shifted Cash From Highways to Transit – But Other States Could Go Even Further <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2024/11/27/pennsylvania-shifted-cash-from-highways-to-transit-but-other-states-could-go-even-further>

**STREETSBLOG:** Illinois could help beat the transit fiscal cliff by shifting federal funding from highways to public transportation <https://chi.streetsblog.org/2024/12/16/illinois-could-beat-the-transit-fiscal-cliff-by-shifting-federal-funding-from-highways-to-public-transportation>

**SFMTA:** Flexing Capital Funds to Operations: [https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/MFWG\\_Service\\_Cuts\\_Options\\_for\\_Discussion\\_-\\_20\\_Nov\\_2024.pdf](https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/MFWG_Service_Cuts_Options_for_Discussion_-_20_Nov_2024.pdf)

**SFMTA:** Muni Funding Working Group---Data and Options: <https://www.sf.gov/resource--2024--muni-funding-working-group-meeting-materials>

**FUNDING OUR FUTURE:** A Roadmap for Equitable and Sustainable Transportation Action in Massachusetts: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NVfwtrvoQnMIS68Z11jyrGnw5kJBxx34/view?pli=1>  
Note: An overview of common transportation revenue problems, recommendations and case studies.

**SWI:** Swiss reject plans for bigger motorways and extra rights for landlords <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss-politics/swiss-reject-plans-for-bigger-motorways-and-extra-rights-for-landlords/88277982>



## REGIONAL TRANSIT + PANDAS DOWNTOWN SF (ATTACHED)

**REGIONAL TRANSIT TEAMWORK:** *Occam's razor* (problem-solving principle): "Entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily" and "The simplest explanation [solution] is usually the best one."  
Consider regional transit efficiencies and new funding sources through regional collaboration, integration, planning, and teamwork. As budget fiscal cliffs threaten transit existentially, the Bay Area's 27 transit agencies can work as a collective ---because a well-oiled sum is greater than its disparate parts. Around the world, regional metropolitan agencies are great models, better serving their constituent parts (cities, counties, provinces, states, towns). The Bay Area can do the same---for cost savings, operating efficiencies, shared resources, purchasing power, system simplifications, and more ridership/ revenues. MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) has already made great strides in its regional network management programs; and even without legal mandates, transit agencies can accelerate collaboration---for survival. Moreover, regional planning can connect high-volume destinations/ urban nodes/ transit centers; and design regional transit magnets, like a world-class Panda/ Conservation Center.



**NEXT CITY:** Should Cities Reject Bad Transit Until Something Better Comes Along? A Lesson from Zurich: <https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/should-cities-reject-bad-transit-a-lesson-from-zurich> Rather than moving its surface transit underground, Zurich decided to strengthen and speed up the bus and tram networks through dedicated transit lanes and priority at stoplights (approved in 1977), and to expand trams to the city's outer reaches and beyond (still under construction). [NOTE: Keep it simple.]

**WEBINAR:** Lessons from Switzerland for Bay Area and US Public Transit (Seamless Bay Area): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbqaGgkvJk8>





### MASS TRANSIT: Employee Initiative Drives Growth and Success at C-TRAN

<https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/article/21279565/employee-initiative-drives-growth-and-success-at-c-tran> Establishing a work environment that celebrates communication and authenticity empowers employees to spark change and forge new paths for continued growth and success. Much of C-TRAN's success has been made possible by employees of all levels feeling empowered to not only make the agency a better place, but the community a better place. "We give people the opportunity to lead...".

### KTVU: BART could take steps to cut the cost of transfers to other transit

<https://www.ktvu.com/news/bart-directors-could-take-steps-cut-cost-transfers-other-transit>

BART & Caltrain Transfers: <https://www.bart.gov/guide/transit/transfers>

MODAL SHARE CHART: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modal\\_share](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modal_share)

## EXCERPT: ATTACHED---PANDAS DOWNTOWN SF

**QUICK CASE STUDIES: PANDAS AND CONSERVATION ZOOS:** During election seasons, the entire political spectrum hashes out societal problems and solutions. After elections, the same divisive cycle begins again. Holistic/ visionary ideas should be seriously considered. By example, Downtown San Francisco offers the largest potential Panda Habitat---with the flexibility for state-of-the-art facilities and technology---and maximum regional benefits and fundraising prospects, as well as longest-term financial sustainability. Some panda projects (See more in Attached):



**Berlin Panda Paradise:** The new 59,000 square feet facility includes a Visitors Pavilion inspired by 1898 Chinese architecture. The panda house has tiled facades and Chinese-style gates, railings, and colors. Bamboo plants, rock formations and small waterways are modelled after natural Sichuan habitats. <https://www.zoo-berlin.de/en/news/zoo-news/detail/plans-unveiled-for-our-panda-paradise>



**Ueno Zoo (Tokyo):** The 73,200 square feet habitat has the look and feel of China's mountainous Sichuan Province---with trees, boulders, and caves. Called "Panda no Mori", the center's name can be translated as Panda Forest, but the word "mori" also means "conservation"---including a nursing facility for newborns. <https://www.timeout.com/tokyo/news/ueno-zoo-has-opened-a-new-panda-enclosure->





**Adelaide Zoo Bamboo Forest:** Visitors flow through a sequence of rooms, both indoor and outdoor, for a series of experiences---duck water glades to circular amphitheater spaces. The 55,400 square feet facility has a separate conservation center---research, breeding, and education. <https://architectureau.com/articles/giant-panda-bamboo-forest-adelaide-zoo/>



**Smithsonian Zoo (Washington DC):** Along a landscaped Asian Trail, the 40,000 square feet Panda Habitat was uniquely designed---with the help of pandas whose preferences were observed for years. Rolling rocky terrain, dense planting with bamboo/ perennials. large trees, grottos, and water features. <https://zoolex.org/gallery/show/964/>

**GUARDIAN: Zoos weigh up the costs of China's 'pandanomics'**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/13/edinburgh-zoo-pandas-tian-tian-china-pandanomics-birth-cub> Having a panda can be ruinous, say some zoos, and could even take money away from other conservation work. Washington, Atlanta, Memphis, and San Diego zoos are said to have spent \$33m more on pandas from 2000-03 than they received from showing them.

**BBC: Why paying for pandas is not so black and white**

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190516-why-paying-for-pandas-is-not-so-black-and-white> Looking after each panda also costs many hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Pandas are the most expensive animal to keep in a zoo, costing about five times as much as an elephant.

**PANDAS DOWNTOWN SF: STRATEGIC CRITERIA**

**BIGGER FLEXIBLE SPACE:** Downtown offers more square footage than the existing SF Zoo---overcrowded, aging infrastructure. Portions of Macy's 400,000 square footage could be reimagined for a modern Panda habitat. Public spaces (Geary Boulevard, sidewalks, public air-rights, Union Square) could be reimagined as green parkways. Or other sites?

**DONATIONS-IN-KIND:** Macy's could donate portions of their building---in exchange for added value to their property, tax advantages, and advertising returns. Public parks, streets, sidewalks, and air-rights are existing public assets---no cost. Or Emporium Center or ?

**FUNDRAISING DIVERSIFICATION:** Widens the pool of donors---with broad swaths of downtown and the region benefiting from Pandas Downtown.

**ATTACHED: FULL ANALYSIS + MORE PANDA PROJECTS**

Howard Wong, AIA [wongaia@aol.com](mailto:wongaia@aol.com)



# PANDAS DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO

By Howard Wong, AIA [wongaia@aol.com](mailto:wongaia@aol.com) November 2024

**CASE STUDY: An example of integrated regional planning---to tackle multiple regional problems simultaneously.** Leveraging regional funding, expertise, and resources, a centralized world-class Panda Conservation Center would spark regional economics, transit and more---within a faster schedule. Think stellar architecture, animal care and customer experience. Think Design+Economics+Jobs+Technology+Tranist---everything, everywhere, all at once---utilizing public land and public/ private partnerships. Some panda projects:



**Central Park Zoo:** In the middle of Manhattan, a thriving downtown zoo (off 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 64<sup>th</sup> Street)---founded in 1861 and transformed in 1988 into a wildlife conservation center. Animals include grizzly bears and red pandas. <https://centralparkzoo.com/about>



**Copenhagen Yin-Yang Panda House:** Working with China experts in zoology and veterinary medicine, natural habitats were created. The 26,000 square feet facility has harmoniously linked indoor-outdoor gardens---viewable from multi-directions. <https://www.archdaily.com/927643/panda-house-big>



**Berlin Panda Paradise:** The new 59,000 square feet facility includes a Visitors Pavilion inspired by 1898 Chinese architecture. The panda house has tiled facades and Chinese-style gates, railings, and colors. Bamboo plants, rock formations and small waterways are modelled after natural Sichuan habitats. <https://www.zoo-berlin.de/en/news/zoo-news/detail/plans-unveiled-for-our-panda-paradise>



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**Smithsonian Zoo, Washington DC:** Along a landscaped Asian Trail, the 40,000 square feet Panda Habitat was uniquely designed---with the help of pandas whose preferences were observed for years. Rolling rocky terrain, dense planting with bamboo/ perennials. large trees, grottos, and water features. <https://zooex.org/gallery/show/964/>



**Pavilion Capital Giant Panda Forest, Singapore:** A glass bio-domed roof encloses a climate/ humidity-controlled forest (in tropics). The 16,150 square feet natural habitat has lush plantings, trees, boulders, and water features. A special bamboo-growing program provides fresh food and toys for the insatiable pandas. <https://www.mandai.com/en/river-wonders/animals-and-zones.html>



**Beijing Zoo Panda Hall:** Built in 1989, the facility covers an area of 108,000 square feet. Lush bamboo and bushes simulate the natural habitat of southwest China. Here in 1963, the first birth of a giant panda in captivity occurred. In 1978, the first artificial insemination success, facilitating friendship pandas' travel around the world. <https://www.mybeijingchina.com/beijing-attractions/beijing-zoo/>

### MITIGATE PANDA RISKS: HEALTH, FINANCIAL, BAD PRESS....

What is best for the pandas? Poorly-designed Zoo enclosures have demonstratively harmed pandas. Experts already question the conservation benefits of captivity, as evidenced by the reliance on artificial insemination for breeding. A panda's death in the Memphis Zoo was preceded by weight loss and declining health. **SEE BELOW FOR BETTER STRATEGY.**

**PANDAS INTERNATIONAL: Pandas Around the Globe**

<https://www.pandasinternational.org/pandas-around-the-globe/>



**Panda Pavilions, Chengdu Research Base:** Four ring-shaped pavilions are organized around open-air courtyards, serving as outdoor playgrounds with a continuous connection to nature. Merging architecture, landscape and ecology, the pavilions are integral with the park's natural woodland topography---with terraced spaces for pandas. Visitors view pandas close-up from connected paths and bermed glass viewing galleries.  
<https://www.designboom.com/architecture/eid-architecture-panda-pavilions-expansion-chengdu-research-breeding-center-china-03-22-2023/>



**Macao Giant Panda Pavilion:** The 32,300 square feet fan-shaped pavilion adapts to the terrain's natural undulations---with two 3,550 square feet indoor habitats, a 6,460 square feet outdoor yard, and a 9,688 square feet indoor exhibit area. At the front of the fan-layout indoor area are two layered viewing paths---accessible to two streams of visitors. The logistics center contains panda dens, bamboo-washing/ storage, feed preparation/ warehouse, control center, veterinarian clinic.  
<https://www.macaotourism.gov.mo/en/shows-and-entertainment/family-fun/macao-giant-panda-pavilion>



**Qatar's Panda House:** At 1,292,000 square feet, one of the largest panda enclosures in the world---with viewing atriums and green spaces. Designed to mimic the Minshan mountains, the pandas inhabit an air-conditioned indoor exhibit hall, separate bedrooms, and grounds---with swimming pools, play platforms, interactive landscapes, and hospital.  
<https://visitqatar.com/intl-en/things-to-do/get-inspired/panda-park#:~:text=Panda%20House%20at%20AI%20Khor&text=The%20pandas%20live%20in%20supreme,them%20in%20Mandarin%20and%20English.>



**Panda Passage, Calgary Zoo:** The 23,600 square feet renovation of an existing building incorporates cutting-edge habitat design, wildlife conservation, and natural materials. 'Panda-priority' programming led to a mountain forest environment---with lush landscaping, grassy/ rocky terrain, waterfall, stream, and play features. The pandas' cultural significance is further conveyed by Chinese Feng Shui and biophilic design elements. Since the pandas may leave in five years, the space is designed for future adaptability for other species' habitats.  
<https://zeidler.com/projects/panda-passage-calgary-zoo/>



## **COUTERPUNCH: Zoo Troubles: the Plight of Two Pandas Lays Bare the Flaws**

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/09/15/zoo-troubles-the-plight-of-two-pandas-lays-bare-the-flaws/> Over the years, panda lovers have noticed a significant deterioration in both pandas' appearance as a result of the zoo's negligent treatment. It is apparent to visitors that their enclosures are lacking in enrichment. Interactions between the keepers and YaYa and LeLe are rarely seen. They are both very thin and often show signs of mental distress. YaYa has mites all over her body and patches of shedding fur. She has experienced several artificial inseminations over the years and had at least three miscarriages. As far as food is concerned, the quality of bamboo given to them is often yellow and dry.

## **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC: Captivity can screw up pandas' internal clocks:**

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/giant-pandas-captivity-circadian-rhythms-behavior#:~:text=Living%20outside%20their%20natural%20Chinese,not%20be%20captive%20at%20all.&text=Giant%20pandas%20delight%20zoo%2Dgoers,play%E2%80%94especially%20in%20the%20snow>

## **GUARDIAN: Zoos weigh up the costs of China's 'pandanomics'**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/13/edinburgh-zoo-pandas-tian-tian-china-pandanomics-birth-cub> Having a panda can be ruinous, say some zoos, and could even take money away from other conservation work. Washington, Atlanta, Memphis, and San Diego zoos are said to have spent \$33m more on pandas from 2000-03 than they received from showing them.

## **BBC: Why paying for pandas is not so black and white**

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190516-why-paying-for-pandas-is-not-so-black-and-white>

Looking after each panda also costs many hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Pandas are the most expensive animal to keep in a zoo, costing about five times as much as an elephant.

## **ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION: Zoo reveals terms of panda deal with China**

<https://www.ajc.com/entertainment/calendar/zoo-reveals-terms-panda-deal-with-china/LwtJNKWq0OLmNSK6s9C8TL/> In details revealed exclusively to the AJC on Thursday, Zoo Atlanta president and CEO Dennis Kelly said the deal calls for the zoo to pay China \$570,000 yearly during the next five years, compared to the \$1.1 million that it paid annually over the last decade.

**NIKKEI ASIA: China's Panda Business:** <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Big-Story/China-s-panda-business-How-zoos-from-U.S.-to-Japan-fund-Beijing-soft-power#:~:text=A%20survey%20by%20Nikkei%20Asia,%2C%20the%20world's%20second%2Dbiggest>. Nikkei found Ahtari's experience to be consistent with a trend observed in zoos around the world. Edinburgh Zoo also did not see many long-term financial benefits from hosting its pandas, beyond an initial increase in visitors.

## **SMITHSONIAN: Two Pandas Arrive at the San Diego Zoo, the First to Enter the U.S. in 21 Years**

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/two-pandas-arrive-at-the-san-diego-zoo-the-first-to-enter-the-us-in-21-years-180984636/?utm> For months, the only pandas in the country had been in Atlanta. Next, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., are expected to also receive pandas this year.

## **DEZEEN: BIG completes yin-and-yang-shaped Panda House at Copenhagen Zoo**

<https://www.dezeen.com/2019/11/05/big-panda-house-copenhagen-zoo-architecture/> Together this provides the pandas with plenty of opportunity to rest, explore, eat and find shade and sun depending on the season, temperature and preference.

## **SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL ZOO Receives \$4.5 Million to Fund Giant Panda Program:**

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/news/smithsonians-national-zoo-receives-45-million-fund-giant-panda-program>



## PANDAS DOWNTOWN ANALYSIS:

Hello Everyone: My Chronicle Letter to the Editor (see below) proposed a concept for Pandas Downtown. A strong design process needs divergent thinking with more options---rather than convergent thinking with one solution. Pandas Downtown has more regional benefits, and arguably, more benefits for the Pandas---especially by designing the largest state-of-the-art facility possible. Also, greater potential fundraising and revenue. Let us holistically study the project's premises, needs, variables, and possibilities. Regards, Howard Wong, AIA

**CHRONICLE LETTER TO EDITOR (May 1, 2024): Build a Panda Park:** Regarding "Is this real? San Francisco' panda plan has many hurdles ahead" (San Francisco, SFchronicle.com, April 26): Thinking as an architect, why not locate S.F.'s pandas downtown? Attracting crowds would help nearby businesses and tourism would thrive. What if China could guide the construction of an appropriate habitat using an existing downtown building---prefabricated units can be slipped into structural bays at lower costs than new construction. Indoor facilities could be linked to an outdoor enclosure. Reimagine the block of Geary Boulevard flanked by Macy's at Union Square. The Macy's structure could house an indoor habitat and a glass bridge could connect to an outdoor panda park on a portion of Union Square. The pandemonium would energize regional transit, spark investment and lure workers back to offices. **Howard Wong, San Francisco**

## PANDAS DOWNTOWN SF: STRATEGIC CRITERIA

**BIGGER FLEXIBLE SPACE:** Downtown offers more square footage than the existing SF Zoo---overcrowded, aging infrastructure. Portions of Macy's 400,000 square footage could be reimaged for a modern Panda habitat. Public spaces (Geary Boulevard, sidewalks, public air-rights, Union Square) could be reimaged as green parkways. **OR** other site---like San Francisco Center/ Powell Street Station, Justin Herman Plaza/ Embarcadero Park.....

**DONATIONS-IN-KIND:** Macy's could donate portions of their building---in exchange for added value to their property, tax advantages, and advertising returns. Public parks, streets, sidewalks, and air-rights are existing public assets---no cost. Or San Francisco Center?

**FUNDRAISING DIVERSIFICATION:** Widens the pool of donors---with broad swaths of downtown and the region benefiting from Pandas Downtown.

**BENEFACTORS AND SPONSORS:** High quality and well-designed Panda Habitats are worthy of attracting big underwriters, who covet being associated with something special.

**STATE-OF-THE ART:** With more flexible square footage, China could help implement state-of-the-art Panda technology. Prefabricated shelter units, food/ medical/ research pods, air/ environmental quality controls, bamboo farming/ processing and more.

**PANDA HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:** More space allows for more natural habitats---room to roam and places to hide. Unlike other Zoo enclosures, no need to cram animals into tight spaces. A large natural Panda Park enables optimal health benefits.

**LOCAL AND REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS:** Pandas Downtown would be a centralized regional asset. With frameless glass-walled habitats (built-in privacy designs), the exhibit

could nearly operate around the clock. Downtown and SF economic benefits would be huge--assuring reinvestments into panda health and the existing SF Zoo & Gardens.

**PANDA GLASS BRIDGE:** A slightly arched glass bridge can connect the indoor Panda House to the outdoor habitat on a portion of Union Square and over Geary's sidewalk/ street. The bridge also serves as a "Panda Run" for exercise---and panda sightings. Or elsewhere?

**LONG-TERM PLANNING:** A large regional Panda Park could be designed for multi-purpose uses---even if Pandas return to China. The facility could be flex-designed for Grizzly Bears, Polar Bears or Red Pandas---linking to green event spaces and convention facilities.

## PANDAS DOWNTOWN SF = REGIONAL TRANSIT HUB



**REGIONAL INTEGRATED TRANSIT** can be jumpstarted by a regional Panda Conservation Center---with world-class architecture and park planning---a public transit magnet.

**Dynamic Marketing Communiqué: Snakes on a bus?! How a Danish zoo attracted so much attention [Gorillas of Guerilla Marketing]:** <https://www.valens-research.com/dynamic-marketing-communicue/snakes-on-a-bus-how-a-danish-zoo-attracted-so-much-attention-gorillas-of-guerilla-marketing/>





## More Panda Projects:



**Panda Trek, San Diego Zoo:** The Zoo Wildlife Alliance significantly upgraded its existing panda enclosure, expanding to 6,000 square feet in size. The architects enlivened the guest queuing experience with themes/ interpretive structures, exhibits and management structures for Takins, Red Pandas and Asian Vipers. Design approvals via an [application submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Alliance](https://fpbarch.com/portfolio/panda-canyon-at-the-san-diego-zoo/).  
<https://fpbarch.com/portfolio/panda-canyon-at-the-san-diego-zoo/>  
<https://fox5sandiego.com/news/local-news/san-diego-zoo-lays-out-plans-for-pandas-in-application-filed-ahead-of-arrival/>



**Red Panda Exhibit, Toronto Zoo:** Modern zoo designers attempt to set new standards in transforming existing facilities. An enlarged management center integrates the existing with modern, flexible housing systems and naturalistic habitats. Hidden barriers, climbing structures, live landscapes and water features promote natural behavior---prioritizing animal care, staff functionality, and public education. Viewing areas, exhibit spaces, and ADA-accessible pathways are seamlessly balanced.  
[https://salasobrien.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/AdobeStock\\_916000281-1536x1023.jpg](https://salasobrien.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/AdobeStock_916000281-1536x1023.jpg)



**Pandasia at Ouwehands Zoo, Rhenen, Netherlands:** A radical redesign transformed the zoo into a thriving attraction and conservation center. A Dutch/ Chinese team built two unique traditional Chinese buildings---joined by a bridge. The panda enclosure covers 36,600 square feet---within another 9,400 square feet of habitats for other Asian species. The zoo established a foundation, supporting nature and conservation projects all over the world.  
<https://blooloop.com/animals/in-depth/giant-pandas-ouwehands-zoo/>



**Ahtari Zoo, Finland:** Returned pandas to China because of high costs of upkeep and a preservation fee to China---costing 1.5 million euros (\$1.6 million) annually. Special bamboo was flown in from the Netherlands.  
**A zoo in Finland is returning giant pandas to China because they're too expensive to keep;** <https://apnews.com/article/finland-giant-pandas-china-449b913189d85e7fef7ded9897db7f9d>  
**Finland to return pandas to China early due to cost** <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd0z289ervmo>  
**Visitors flock to Ähtäri Zoo for final glimpse of pandas** <https://yle.fi/a/74-20119018>

**BE BOLD**---Not a time to be timid, especially when leveraging regional resources and funding gets exponential bang for the buck. Panda renovations at the existing dilapidated SF Zoo will not solve its pervasive problems. But a regional Panda Conservation Center would spark regional planning, urban design, public transit, economic benefits and if done right, regional architectural/ design quality---and most importantly, thriving pandas.



Howard Wong, AIA [wongaia@aol.com](mailto:wongaia@aol.com)



**From:** [Lincoln Smith](#)  
**To:** [cacsecretary \[@caltrain.com\]](mailto:cacsecretary [@caltrain.com])  
**Subject:** Hillsdale Station  
**Date:** Friday, February 14, 2025 7:44:21 AM

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**ATTENTION:** This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Dear Caltrain Citizens' Advisory Committee:

The Hillsdale Caltrain station -- one of the newest to be built -- is an absolute eyesore. It is constructed of bare concrete and glass, which is already broken and vandalized. Everywhere there are sharp edges and depressing gray tones. There are often folks camped out in the weather shelters who are not riding the train.

Couldn't Caltrain partner with local artists to give the station some love with painted murals or sculpture? I really enjoy the mural across from the downtown San Mateo station, and the sculptures in the Millbrae station.

Thank you very much for bringing this matter up with Caltrain.

Best regards,  
Lincoln Smith  
San Mateo, CA

**From:** [Lincoln Smith](#)  
**To:** [cacsecretary \[@caltrain.com\]](mailto:cacsecretary [@caltrain.com])  
**Subject:** Hayward Park parking lot  
**Date:** Friday, February 14, 2025 7:50:21 AM

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**ATTENTION:** This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links from unknown senders.

Dear Caltrain Citizens' Advisory Committee:

Can you please get Caltrain to re-pave the parking lot at the Hayward Park station, next to Station Park Green? They did some work there over the last year involving heavy machinery and really tore up the lot, to the point that the rough surface is cracked everywhere. It is not comfortable or safe for bicyclists or pedestrians to cross the lot.

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Best regards,  
Lincoln Smith  
San Mateo, CA