

# Staying on Track

Fall-Winter 2005

No. 2005-2



## BayRail Vision

# Caltrain Metro East

## A Better Rail Plan for the South Bay

By Margaret Okuzumi

Imagine a new rail line that connects all rail transit in the South Bay. A service that provides easy access to Mineta San Jose International Airport and to the heart of San Jose's proposed "second downtown" along North First Street. A service that links Caltrain, BART and ACE from the San Joaquin Valley, Amtrak Capitol Corridor trains from Sacramento, and the VTA light rail system. Finally, imagine this line as a first step in a statewide high-speed rail system.

This new line, Caltrain Metro East, can become a reality — if we ask for it. It would provide faster, more useful transit options for more people and provide them much sooner than the planned BART extension to San Jose would. Yet the project would cost less than a third of the BART project's cost and would not require voters to approve another increase in county sales tax.

Caltrain Metro East would utilize the proposed Dumbarton rail line between Redwood City and Fremont combined with a new line between Fremont and San Jose. This new line would lay the groundwork for future high-speed rail (which voters will

have a chance to vote on in 2008), and would be built to accommodate fast trains from Los Angeles when that system becomes operational.

Caltrain Metro East would link to ACE and the Amtrak Capitol Corridor trains at the Centerville station in Fremont, to BART at a new station south of the existing one, and to Caltrain's existing service at Redwood City and in San Jose.

Unlike the proposed BART project, Caltrain Metro East would have a station right at Mineta International Airport, as well as a stop in north San Jose, where the city plans to create a denser, more walkable community. Caltrain Metro East would also serve high-tech companies in Milpitas where it would connect with VTA's light rail line to downtown San Jose and downtown Mountain View.

Caltrain Metro East would enable additional rail service to the Tri-Valley and the Central Valley as well as to Morgan Hill and Gilroy in south Santa Clara County. Major stations would be served by fast Baby Bullet express service like Caltrain's — service that BART's fixed structure is not capable of providing.

The line would use electric trains

of a type used around the world and which Caltrain is considering for its electrification. Trains would run frequently and be timed to meet BART at the new Fremont station and Caltrain on the Peninsula and in San Jose. Across-platform transfers to ACE and Capitol trains would be fast and easy at the Centerville station.

With more transit options, better connections, lower costs, faster startup — and no new taxes — this plan sounds like a winner. Unfortunately, merit alone won't build the line. We must convince voters that it's in their best interest to support the plan.

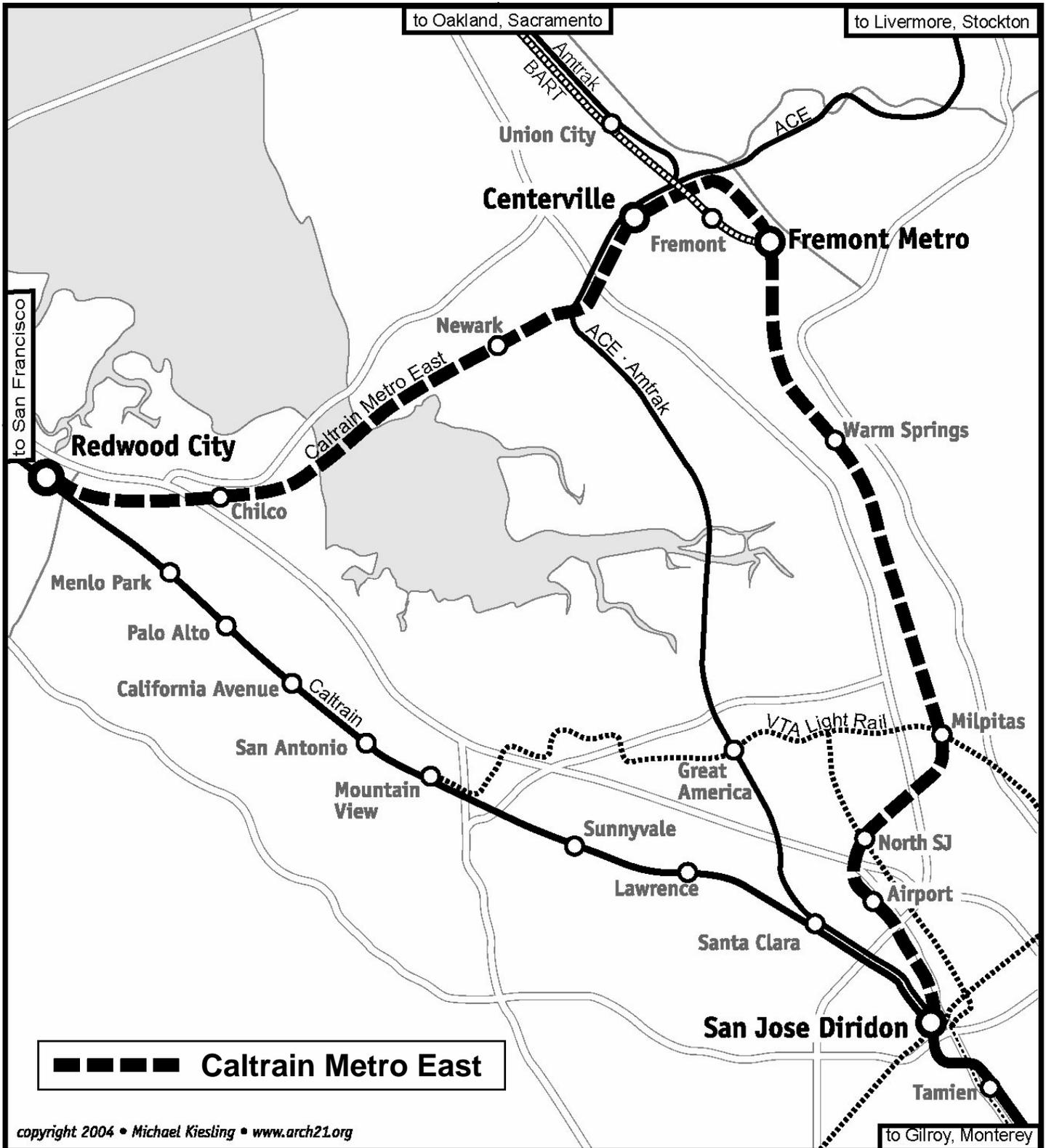
*(See BayRail's envisioned map p.2*

## In this issue...

<i>BayRail Vision: Caltrain Metro East</i>	1
Proposed South Bay Rail Map	2
<i>South Bay: BART history in Santa Clara County</i>	3
BART's original plan map from 1960	4
BALLOT: Elect two BayRail Alliance Board members	3
<i>Peninsula: Caltrain tweaks new 96-train schedule</i>	5

BayRail Vision

# Caltrain Metro East



**ABOVE:** This map portrays BayRail Alliance's vision for an East and South Bay rail transportation network based on enhancing and upgrading existing rail routes. Service would be started sooner, be faster, be less costly to implement, and would serve more people than the proposed \$5 billion BART extension to San Jose.

# History of BART in the South Bay

By Andy Chow

It's a common myth in the Bay Area that if Santa Clara County voters had been given the opportunity in 1962 to vote on the original BART system, it would have been built to serve the South Bay and San Jose. Our own research indicates that the opposite is true. Had Santa Clara County insisted on joining the original system, perhaps it never would have been built at all.

Early BART studies suggested that the primary role of the system was to serve the greater San Francisco area. The first phase included lines radiating from San Francisco into the East Bay via an underwater trans-bay tube, down the Peninsula through Daly City to Palo Alto, and across the Golden Gate to the North Bay.

The line to San Jose was not considered to be a part of the initial phase, but as phase two (*see original map, next page*). Consideration was given to building a line to San Jose as a part of the phase one, but that was rejected at the staff level because its

projected population density at the time would not support its inclusion.

In the late fifties, when the state legislature was forming the Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Santa Clara County's Board of Supervisors unanimously requested to be excluded. Knowing that San Jose was not part of phase one, Santa Clara County decided not to pay taxes that would subsidize BART construction in other counties, including Marin.

In short, BART planners were not really interested in Santa Clara County at that time. And Santa Clara County made a decision to opt out based on realistic expectations. Back then, the technical specification for the BART system has yet to be determined and cost overruns were not expected. After formation of the BART district, San Mateo and Marin Counties dropped out for similar and other reasons.

Population density was the political justification for BART's construc-

tion. In 1962, when the original bond issue (which also included the construction of MUNI's Metro system) was placed on the ballot, the state legislature put in a special approval requirement of 60% of voters of the three counties combined.

The voters barely approved BART by 61.2%. A county breakdown showed overwhelming support from urban San Francisco with 66.9%, marginal support from Alameda County at 60%, and insufficient support by Contra Costa County at 54.5%.

San Francisco voters carried the election and allowed the construction of BART. Had voters in other Bay Area counties, including Santa Clara County, voted on the BART bond, the combined total would likely have been less than 60%, and BART would not have been approved. It is reasonable to conclude that if Santa Clara County had been included in the BART district, the bond issue would have failed. *See BART, p.4*

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## BALLOT

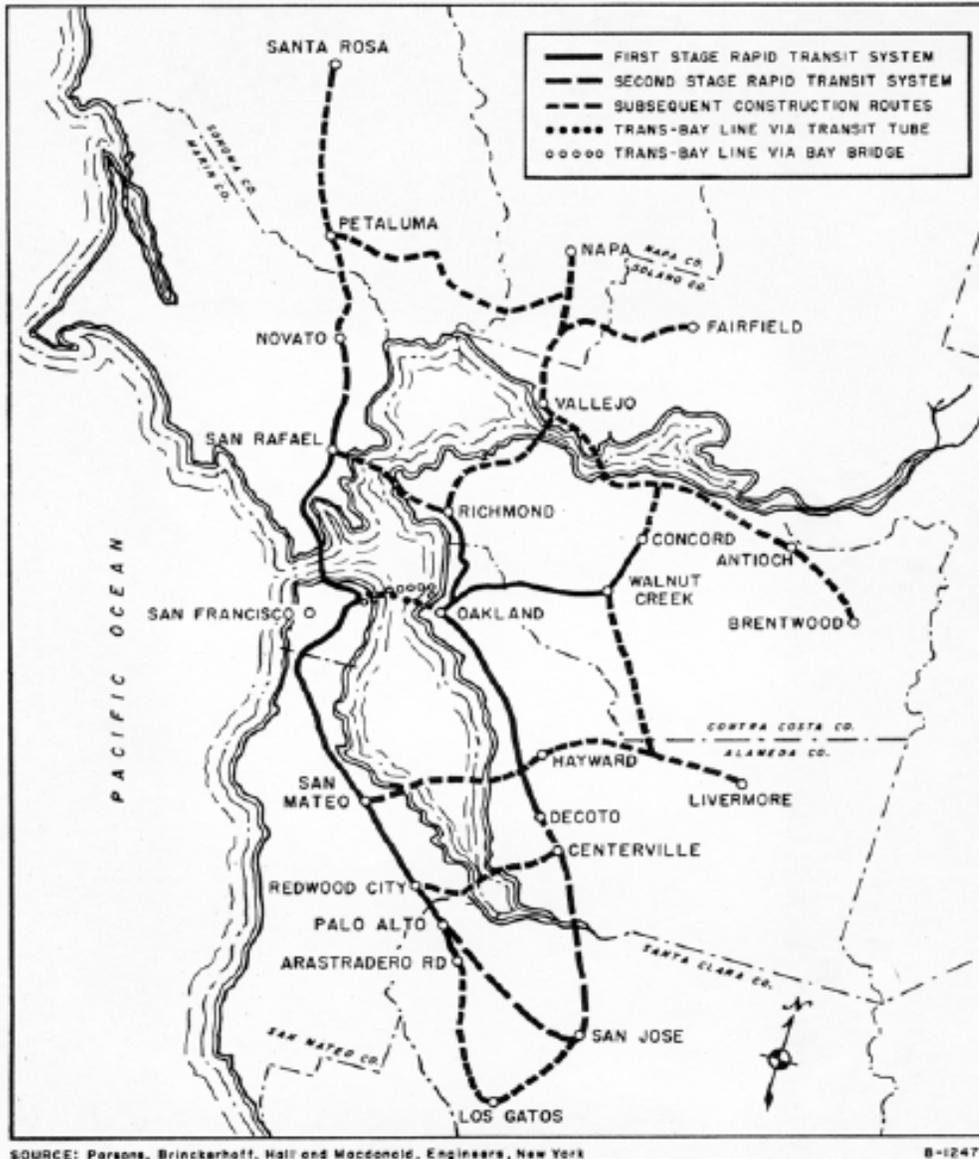
**To elect two members to BayRail Alliance Board of Directors  
to serve two-year terms.**

**Please vote for two and place an **X** in two (2) of the following boxes:**

- Michael Graff**
- Michael Kincaid**
- Write-in \_\_\_\_\_
- Write-in \_\_\_\_\_

**Turn in your completed ballot at the next BayRail General Meeting or mail it to the BayRail Alliance address on the last page by November 15.**

**BELOW:** This map portrays the original BART system envisioned by planners in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Santa Clara County and San Jose were planned for the second phase but county supervisors voted to be excluded to avoid asking voters for taxes to support other counties. This decision probably saved BART's voter approval.



SOURCE: Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Hall and Macdonald, Engineers, New York

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**BART**, continued from p.3

Building BART to San Jose will not permit easy expansion to meet future rail needs. Since the original plan, new regional transportation corridors have emerged. Economic centers have developed and expanded beyond San Francisco.

The original BART proposal did not include the route south of San Jose to Gilroy, now served by Cal-

train. BART's original plan did not predict the need for service from the Central Valley to San Jose through Altamont Pass, presently provided by ACE. Standard rail technology meets those needs.

The proposed BART extension from Fremont to San Jose, although it would help fill a vital transit gap in the East Bay, is considerably overpriced and does not facilitate

future expansion in other developing corridors, particularly from the Central Valley to the Bay Area.

Will merely fulfilling the 1960's vision of BART be sufficient to meet transit needs of today and provide flexibility for future expansion? We do not think it will.

PENINSULA

# Caltrain Tweaks New 96-Train Schedule

Effective Monday October 10, Caltrain fine-tuned its latest schedule, adding a few minutes to selected trains to restore on-time performance. In addition, three southbound early evening Baby Bullet trains now depart San Francisco about a half hour later than previously.

The new schedule is a mid-course correction of the 96-train schedule introduced August 1 that included 10 additional Baby Bullet express trains.

Some of Caltrain's faster new trains took longer to load passengers than had been expected, prompting the adjustments. The new schedule tweaks departure times during the commute period by a few minutes to restore Caltrain's excellent on-time

performance record.

The changes affect only the weekday peak-periods, and timetables for connecting shuttles will be adjusted as needed. The main changes are as follows:

- ✓ Northbound morning trains were adjusted by adding an average of four minutes, while northbound afternoon trains had about three minutes added.
- ✓ Southbound afternoon trains depart about four minutes later. But Baby Bullet trains departing San Francisco at 4 p.m., 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. will depart 33 minutes later than previously.
- ✓ Train 189 no longer serves Tamien; that station is now served by trains 285 and 191.

These changes were made in order to facilitate on-time operations by better positioning the Baby Bullet trains within the overall mix of local and limited-stop peak commute hour trains.

The schedule changes are online in PDF format, and new timetables with a yellow title are on the trains.

[http://www.caltrain.com/pdf/timetable\\_effective\\_10\\_10\\_05.pdf](http://www.caltrain.com/pdf/timetable_effective_10_10_05.pdf) .

The increased limited express and Bay Bullet service has been extremely popular, prompting more commuters to leave their gas-guzzling SUVs at home.

Trains 216 and 275 are quite popular with "reverse" commuters to and from Silicon Valley.



## Staying on Track

SOT2005-2



### YES! I support improving Caltrain and Regional Transit!

I support BayRail Alliance's efforts to promote a regional transit system by upgrading Caltrain and extending it to downtown San Francisco, improving connections between buses, trains, and other transit modes, and establishing a High Speed Rail system connecting the Bay Area and Southern California.

*I am enclosing a contribution to help fund BayRail Alliance's programs.*

- \$35 Regular     
  \$50 Sponsor     
  \$100 Patron  
 \$250 President's Club     
  \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 \$15 Student/low income

- New member  
 Renewal of membership

We are supported entirely by member contributions. Voting memberships start at \$15 or \$35, as applicable. As we engage in lobbying, dues are not tax-deductible at this time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (Evening): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### I can help by:

- Calling or writing local public officials when you tell me about important transportation issues.  
 Volunteering two hours a month (or more)

Mail to the address listed on the back, or contact us toll free at: 1(866)267-8024

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**BayRail Alliance General Meetings**

Caltrain Joint Powers Board (JPB) Meetings  
 Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meetings

3rd Thursdays 6:45 pm

1st Thursdays 10:00 am  
 3rd Wednesdays 6:00 pm

**Location of all meetings listed above:**

SamTrans administrative offices, 2nd floor auditorium, 1250 San Carlos Ave., San Carlos, one block west from the San Carlos Caltrain station. Meeting dates, topics and locations are subject to change without notice. **For the latest information, go to [www.bayrailalliance.org](http://www.bayrailalliance.org)**

**BayRail Alliance Board of Directors**

- Margaret Okuzumi (Executive Director)
- Andy Chow (Vice President)
- Michael Graff (President)
- Sylvia Gregory
- Ryan Hoover
- Michael Kincaid
- Brian Stanke
- Paul Wendt (Membership Director)

**BayRail Alliance** is a 22-year old, all volunteer, entirely member-supported transit group working to promote the creation of a modern rail network to serve the greater San Francisco Bay Area. BayRail is not affiliated with any rail or transit agency, contractor or vendor. Our goals include: 1) converting Caltrain to electric propulsion; 2) increasing Caltrain frequency to at least once every 10 minutes at peak times and every 30 minutes off-peak; 3) extending Caltrain to downtown San Francisco at a new TransBay Terminal and to the East Bay via the Dumbarton Rail Bridge; 4) expanding ACE and Amtrak Capitol Corridor service; and 5) building the proposed high speed rail line connecting the Bay Area and Southern California through Altamont Pass.

**Staying on Track** newsletter is published by BayRail Alliance. Contributors: Andy Chow and Margaret Okuzumi. Layout: Ryan Hoover

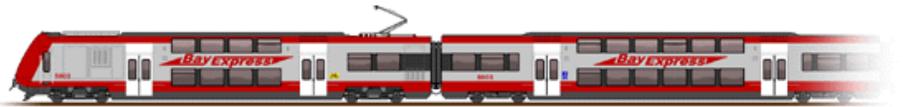
**Submissions:**

We welcome submissions via email. Please include your name and phone number, and send them to [ryanhoov@aol.com](mailto:ryanhoov@aol.com). We especially encourage submissions that include information on what interested readers can do and any photographs or other graphics.



*Caltrain is running 22 daily Baby Bullets since August 1*

<b>BayRail Vision: A Better South Bay Plan</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>History of BART in Santa Clara County</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Caltrain Modifies New 96-train schedule</b>	<b>5</b>



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**Forwarding and address correction requested**