

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

This is a living document that we will continue to update to reflect project progress, stakeholder input, new information, and decisions that are made as the project progresses.

## BACKGROUND

### WHAT IS THE CALTRAIN BUSINESS PLAN AND WHAT WILL IT COVER?

Caltrain is one of the largest commuter rail systems in the country, and demand for our service is growing. To meet current and future ridership demand, we need to develop a vision for the future of the Caltrain service. The Caltrain Business Plan will develop this vision and the path to achieving it. This planning project is a joint effort with agency partners and communities along the corridor. Together, we will develop a better understanding of the region's future transportation needs and the role that the Caltrain corridor and service can play in meeting these challenges.

The Caltrain Business Plan includes four major focus areas to address key questions that will shape the future of the system:

- **Service:** What is the long-range service vision for Caltrain? How can the service grow and change over time to meet the needs of the communities we serve? How many trains should we run? How do we best match service to what riders want? What additional infrastructure are necessary to meet service demand? How can Caltrain effectively connect to other rail and transit providers?
- **Business Case:** How can we maximize the value of our current and future investments in the corridor, both to the Caltrain system and the region as a whole? How much will the Caltrain system cost to operate? How will we fund it?
- **Community Interface:** What are the benefits and impacts of the service vision to the communities on the Caltrain corridor? How can we work together to develop a plan that balances corridor communities' priorities and goals with the demand for expanded Caltrain service and the need to operate a safe and efficient railroad? How can we ensure this planning process and the outcomes are equitable?
- **Organization:** What is the best organizational structure for overseeing and growing Caltrain service in the future? What new ideas and best practices will help us deliver the best possible service to our customers?

### WHY DOES CALTRAIN NEED TO DO A BUSINESS PLAN?

The Bay Area population and economy have continued to grow, leading to:

- Traffic congestion and longer, unreliable commutes
- Over-crowded trains
- Increased cost of transportation and housing

Caltrain already provides a cost effective and convenient alternative to driving. We want to make sure that our capacity and service continue to meet current and future demand. Electrification of the Caltrain corridor is underway and will allow Caltrain to run faster, more frequent service while reducing noise and emissions. Electrification creates opportunity to expand Caltrain service to meet the current and future needs of our region. The Business Plan will identify the best strategies for maximizing this potential by developing a long-term service vision for the corridor, defining the infrastructure needed to support that service vision, and identifying funding opportunities for the implementation of these improvements over time.

## WHAT IS THE BUSINESS PLAN SCHEDULE?

We initiated conversations about the Caltrain Business Plan with key stakeholders in fall 2017 and anticipate completing the Business Plan in 2020. Our key milestones include:

- Fall 2017: Initial workshop with key local, regional, and state stakeholders
- Spring 2018: Business Plan development begins
- Spring 2018 through 2020: Detailed analysis and plan development
- Fall 2018 through 2020: Broad public and stakeholder outreach and feedback
- Fall 2019: Adoption of a long range service vision by the Caltrain Board
- Spring 2020: Adoption of a full Business Plan by the Caltrain Board

## SERVICE VISION

### THE CALTRAIN BOARD ADOPTED A SERVICE VISION IN FALL 2019. WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Caltrain's Long Range Service Vision plans for a substantially expanded rail service that will address the local and regional mobility needs of the corridor while supporting local economic development activities.

The adopted Vision recommends a service that triples Caltrain's current ridership to 180,000 riders a day. It envisions express trains every 15 minutes, comprehensive coverage of local stations and greatly expanded frequencies in the middays, evenings and weekends over the full length of our system. It is a vision for a system with increased capacity, longer trains and level boarding. It is a vision that includes the Downtown Extension to the Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco, potential new rail connections across the Dumbarton Bridge to connect communities across the bay, and the rebuilding of a new Diridon Station in San Jose. It is a vision that includes expanded electrified service to Gilroy and a shared corridor with High Speed Rail. It is a vision that considers the growth and needs of each of the communities along the Caltrain corridor.

Caltrain's Long Range Service Vision further directs the railroad to continue to plan for a potential "higher" growth level of service in the context of major regional and state rail planning. Finally, the Board made a commitment to periodically reaffirm the Vision to ensure that it continues to provide relevant and useful guidance to the railroad.

Read more about the technical analysis and process for selecting the Vision: <https://caltrain2040.org/long-range-service-vision/>

## COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

### IF I RIDE CALTRAIN, WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT THE PLAN?

As a rider, you may already experience crowded trains that are often at or over capacity. Increasing the number of trains and adjusting the schedule and frequency is a major tool Caltrain can use to address this issue. The Business Plan will help identify ways to establish a long-term sustainable future for Caltrain. This both gives riders increased certainty about the future of the service and shows our commitment to meeting the needs of riders.

### IF I LIVE CLOSE TO CALTRAIN, WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT THE PLAN?

Even if you don't ride Caltrain the future of the railroad may be important to you. By improving the frequency and capacity of rail service, we hope to attract more people to ride our trains, taking more cars off the road and benefiting everyone. Caltrain is working with policy makers and staff representatives from each of the 21 jurisdictions along the Caltrain corridor to better understand the interactions between Caltrain and the local communities. Through the Business Plan effort, we will work to identify ways to maximize benefits and minimize impacts to communities along the corridor.

### HOW WILL CALTRAIN ADDRESS STREET/RAIL CROSSINGS ALONG THE CORRIDOR?

We understand that many communities along the corridor are concerned about traffic and safety at at-grade (street-level) crossings. As we think about a future with more trains operating in the corridor, this issue is even more important.

We are working with each of the 21 jurisdictions along the Caltrain corridor to understand their concerns about at-grade crossings. Some communities may already be actively planning for or considering grade separating the street and the railroad. Communities that have not yet considered grade separations may begin to do so in anticipation of significantly increased service on the corridor – even if increased service is years away. As we develop the Business Plan, we will consider options and costs associated with different levels of street-level crossing improvements and separations. We will also work with cities, counties, and other stakeholders to identify a long-term approach for coordinating and funding improvements, before and after we develop and complete the Business Plan.

## ENGAGING WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND THE PUBLIC

### WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE BUSINESS PLAN?

There are many stakeholders who are an important part of developing the Caltrain Business Plan, including cities, counties, transportation agencies, transit operators, community groups, local businesses, employers, and many more. We understand that each of the 21 jurisdictions we serve has a unique set of priorities, projects, and plans for growth. We are working closely with policymakers, stakeholders, Caltrain riders, and community members to make sure the Caltrain Business Plan considers everyone's perspective. We have established various committees to help our staff understand local and regional needs and inform our recommendations. Ultimately, we will present our recommendations to the Caltrain Board for approval.

### HOW ARE STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED IN THIS PROJECT?

To help ensure stakeholders are actively engaged, we are meeting with a variety of committees, which meet regularly to discuss and help guide development of the Caltrain Business Plan. This includes:

- **[Joint Powers Board \(JPB\)](#)**: Monthly meetings of the JPB, which is the Caltrain Board of Directors, consists of representatives from San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. The JPB owns and operates Caltrain. The Board members receive monthly updates regarding the Business Plan, and quarterly in-person presentations and workshops. Meetings are open to the public.
- **[Joint Powers Board Citizen Advisory Committee \(JPB CAC\)](#)**: Monthly meetings of nine volunteer members who serve in an advisory capacity to the JPB, providing input on the needs of current and potential rail customers, and reviewing and commenting on staff proposals and actions as requested by the Board. The CAC receives monthly updates regarding the Business Plan, and quarterly in-person presentations and workshops. Meetings are open to the public.
- **[Joint Powers Board Ad-Hoc Committee \(JPB AH\)](#)**: Monthly meeting of a subset of JPB members to focus exclusively on the Caltrain Business Plan.
- **[Project Partners Committee \(PPC\)](#)**: Monthly meetings of staff representatives from each of the partner agencies who contribute to the oversight, funding, operations, or management of Caltrain.
- **[Local Policy Maker Group \(LPMG\)](#)**: Monthly meetings of elected representatives from jurisdictions along the Caltrain corridor. Meetings are open to the public.
- **[City/County Staff Coordinating Group \(CSCG\)](#)**: Monthly meetings of staff representatives from jurisdictions along the corridor.
- **[Project General Managers \(PGM\)](#)**: Quarterly meetings of the general managers from each of the partner agencies who contribute to the oversight, funding, operations, or management of Caltrain.
- **[Stakeholder Advisory Group \(SAG\)](#)**: Quarterly meetings, to which a selected group of representative stakeholders are invited, including community and advocacy groups, large employers and business representatives, member agencies, funding and coordinating agencies, local jurisdictions, and other peer transit and rail agencies.
- **[State and Federal Elected Officials \(SFO\)](#)**: Quarterly calls with state and federal elected officials and their staff.

- **Sister Agencies:** Quarterly briefings with the boards of other transit owners and operators along the Caltrain corridor.
- **Caltrain Commuter Coalition (C3):** As-needed briefings of the C3, made up of Bay Area employers focused on advancing policies that promote improved rail service.

## HOW WILL CALTRAIN ENGAGE WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC?

We want to hear from riders and community members about your experience with Caltrain – understanding your needs is critical to the development of the Business Plan. There are a few key timeframes during which we will be sharing information and looking for feedback from the public. We are also engaging with a variety of stakeholders and project partners who represent many different interests through committees – some committee meetings, as listed in the previous section, are open to the public, providing another opportunity to participate.

Check back to our website at [www.caltrain2040.org](http://www.caltrain2040.org) to see how our work is progressing. Visit the [calendar on our Get Involved page](#) for the latest on upcoming public meetings and other outreach activities. You can also email us or call us with comments and questions: [BusinessPlan@caltrain.com](mailto:BusinessPlan@caltrain.com) or 650-508-6499.

## COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROJECTS

### WHAT RELATED PROJECTS ARE ALREADY TAKING PLACE?

There are many different projects underway that relate to this effort being led by both Caltrain and other local agencies. These include:

- **Caltrain Electrification:** The Caltrain Electrification Project is a key component of the Caltrain Modernization (CalMod) Program and will electrify the corridor from San Francisco’s 4th and King Caltrain Station to the Tamien Station in San José. CalMod is in construction and expected to be complete in 2022. This transformational project will lay the foundation for future train capacity and infrastructure investments.
- **High Speed Rail:** California high-speed rail will connect the mega-regions of the state, contribute to economic development and a cleaner environment, create jobs, and preserve agricultural and protected lands. The system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in under three hours. High Speed Rail will share Caltrain tracks in the San Francisco Bay Area through a blended system, through which Caltrain and High Speed Rail use the same tracks in a coordinated schedule. The blended system planning and environmental project is being led by the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Caltrain is a key stakeholder and partner in the effort.
- **Diridon Station:** The existing San José Diridon Station is a major transit hub located within downtown San José. It is a historic station with transit service provided by Amtrak, Altamont Commuter Express, Caltrain, and VTA light rail and bus service. With the addition of BART and High Speed Rail service, the future station is expected to become one of the busiest intermodal stations in North America. Caltrain is working closely with partner agencies on plans for improving the design, functionality, and development of Diridon.
- **Dumbarton Corridor:** In August 2018, SamTrans entered into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement with Cross Bay Transit Partners, a joint venture between Facebook and the Plenary Group. The parties are going to evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of a transit project on the Dumbarton rail corridor. This effort follows work that was completed as part of the [2017 Dumbarton Transportation Corridor Study](#).
- **Salesforce Transit Center:** The Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco will ultimately be the northern terminus for High Speed Rail and Caltrain service. The Transit Center sits at the heart of the Transbay District - a visionary mixed-use area that is transforming south of Market into a new walkable and transit friendly neighborhood. The project, to develop a rail connection between the current terminus at 4th and King and the Salesforce Transit Center (the “Downtown Extension, or DTX”), is led by the Transbay Joint Powers Authority. Caltrain sits on the board of the Transbay Joint Powers Authority and participates in planning efforts.