



San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
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PROMOTING THE BICYCLE FOR EVERYDAY TRANSPORTATION

June 2, 2015

Re: Bike Capacity on Access on Electric Multiple Units

To Caltrain Joint Powers Board of Directors:

As you are aware, Caltrain has an important decision to make on July 2 in determining what the future of the transit agency will look like and the service it will provide for the millions of trips taken by riders every year. The Caltrain Modernization Project is an ambitious and challenging project, and we applaud the Joint Powers Board (JPB) for continuing to move forward to make the project work for as many Caltrain customers as possible.

The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition recognizes the importance and weight of this decision and strongly encourages the JPB to take the following suggestions into account to ensure that Caltrain continues to serve all riders:

- Set a transit agency goal that a minimum of 20% of passengers will access Caltrain by bike by 2020;
- Provide bike capacity for at least 16% of Caltrain passengers, or approximately a 6:1 seat-to-bike space ratio;
- Allocate and invest significant resources, including funding, staff time and station space, to develop robust bike parking facilities and plan for the integration of the upcoming bike share expansion;
- Ensure the most accessible platform and car design as possible for all passengers, including seniors, children, people with disabilities and people bringing bicycles onboard.

We recognize that there are a lot of constraints and challenges with the Caltrain Modernization Program and its coordination with high-speed rail, and we appreciate the amount of time and discussion the JPB has put into making sure the future of Caltrain is the best it can be.

While recognizing the balance that needs to be struck and the limited space on board, Caltrain bike ridership is rapidly outpacing even the growth of overall ridership. Based on Caltrain ridership reports, the number of passengers taking their bikes onboard has grown by nearly four times in the last 10 years. This means that the electric multiple units ("EMUs") need to plan for bike capacity for at least 16% of its passengers by 2020.

Caltrain staff has begun moving forward proposals to allocate significant resources to bike parking, and we are excited to hear more and engage our membership into the visioning and planning process. These resources are essential in order to encourage more people who complete the first and last mile to Caltrain by bike to not bring their bike onboard. We look forward to working closely with Caltrain staff as they implement the bike parking grant they were recently awarded by Caltrans.

At the same time, the SF Bicycle Coalition also expresses its strong concern for the compatibility and accessibility of platform levels and car design. To ensure safe and timely on- and off-boarding, both the mid-term and blended scenarios must be accessible for all, in particular those with bikes, especially given the large number of bikes that enter or exit at 4th and King and other major stations along the corridor.

Lastly, we strongly encourage Caltrain, through the leadership shown by the JPB, to complete detailed analysis of access modes to and from their stations by their passengers. There is insufficient or incomplete data that shows how passengers access stations by bike, making it difficult for the agency to set data-driven goals with relevant strategies. Given limited information, we support the analysis that has been done by the BIKES ONboard project and encourage Caltrain to build a transit system that does not turn away its bike ridership.

We are all well aware of the natural connection between bikes and transit. Caltrain has historically taken the lead on providing bike access on their trains and agencies around the Bay Area and beyond have followed in suit. Bikes are a necessary first and last mile connection for many and are sustainable both for Caltrain and the environment, especially as the population along the 77.4-mile long Caltrain corridor continues to boom. With the above recommendations, Caltrain would also follow in suit with modeshift goals sets by the City of San Francisco, with a citywide goal of doubling biking in the next three years, and the State of California, with a statewide goal of tripling biking by 2020.

We sincerely appreciate the time and energy put forth by the JPB as well as Caltrain staff, led by Seamus Heaney, Sebastian Petty, Casey Fromson and Tasha Bartholomew. Thank you for taking our letter into consideration, and we look to continue working closely with you and the rest of Caltrain staff on a bike-friendly future for Caltrain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JL' with a stylized flourish.

Janice Li
Community Organizer
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition