

Caltrain Bicycle Master Plan
Technical Advisory Group

November 8, 2007 (Thursday)
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

4th fl Dining Room
Caltrain Administrative Offices
1250 San Carlos Avenue,
San Carlos CA

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Presentation on Station Workshops*
3. Next steps

* Attachment

Announcements:

Next Technical Advisory Group meeting:
November 14, 2007 6:30 PM,
Caltrain Administrative Offices 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA

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The Caltrain Administrative Offices are located one block from the San Carlos Caltrain Station and El Camino Real.

Transit Access: Caltrain; Samtrans 260 295 390 391 397 PX KX.

Bike parking: There are 6 rack spaces in front of the building entrance, east of the statue.

Bicycle Workshops at Caltrain Stations: Cyclist Recommendations and Comments

Caltrain is developing a Bicycle Master Plan, which will address bicycle access to and parking at stations, as well as issues related to bringing bicycles on-board the trains. An important part of the Plan development process was a series of workshops at the ten stations with the most passengers who use a bicycle to reach the station. An equally important step in the Plan development process will be the Technical Advisory Group's November 8, 2007 meeting where cyclists will have an opportunity to review the findings of these workshops and suggest changes or additions to these recommended improvements.

Each of the ten workshops—held on weekday evenings in August-September, 2007—was a one-hour walkabout facilitated by Caltrain staff and consultants. In most cases, local agency staff were also present to talk about local plans and projects that may impact bike access within surrounding station areas.

The workshops were publicized via email to the Technical Advisory Group and to Caltrain cyclists who had indicated an interest in attending the workshops as part of the online bicycle survey that was conducted in May-June 2007. The workshop announcements were also posted on station bulletin boards and announced by conductors on board the trains.

Workshops took place at San Francisco (4th/King), 22nd St, Millbrae, Hillsdale, San Mateo, Redwood City, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, and San Jose Diridon stations. These stations were chosen because they have higher bike traffic than other Caltrain stations.

Cyclists also provided input on several other stations, including Hayward Park, Menlo Park, and San Antonio. This information will be included in the Bicycle Master Plan.

Roughly 65 cyclists attended the ten workshops; all of whom provided valuable comments and good recommendations. (A dozen cyclists who were unable to attend the workshops also emailed their comments.) The cyclists' input can be organized into three categories:

- A. Station-specific
- B. Station-systemwide
- C. Non-station related

Caltrain's initial comments/ responses are shown in italics.

A. Station- specific

There is an attachment to this memo that covers issues unique to each of the ten stations. For each station, there are: (1) two aerial photos of the station: one showing issues raised by cyclists; the other showing cyclists' recommendations and (2) comments and

discussion notes illustrated with photographs. These individual station materials provide the preliminary basis of station-specific information that will be included in the Bicycle Master Plan and are, therefore, very important to review.

B. Station-systemwide

Throughout the workshops, cyclists raised several common issues applicable to two or more stations, which are discussed here (rather than repeated in the individual packets.)

1. ADA access raised ramps (known as mini-highs): Trains often stop at stations such that the bike-car door opens onto the mini-high, which is about a foot from the edge of each platform, creating an obstruction to getting in and out of the bike-car, especially for those carrying a bicycle.
Caltrain has plans to acquire new rolling stock with low-floor or even level boarding within a decade, as Gallery cars become obsolete. Depending on the specifications, the mini-highs could be eliminated, especially if platforms get raised.
2. Platform area for bikes waiting to board the northern-most bike car: There should be a stencil on the ground (or a sign) indicating that this is the area for bikes waiting to board the train. (Strong concern at San Francisco and Palo Alto.)
Implementation of this idea would require careful thought and design, as well as thorough introduction and outreach to avoid confusion for cyclists and non-cyclists. For instance, some cyclists might think it implies that even those waiting to board a second bike car should wait at the north end, etc.
3. Queuing system: Also at the waiting area on the platform, there should be a system—as simple as a series of numbered dots painted on the ground—for bicyclists to queue up so that those arriving first at the platform board the train first.
4. Bike channels for stairs: Install bike channels on stairways so cyclists can roll their bikes instead of having to carry them.
In many cases, there are ADA ramps that cyclists may use to roll their bikes. It is an option that is available, even if it may be less convenient, i.e., the cyclist would have to dismount and walk their bike, or have to go more out of their way.
5. Bike parking contact information: Post contact information, such as agency name and phone number, clearly and visibly for renting lockers, and using bike sheds and bike stations.
6. Install day-use lockers. Bicycle lockers are needed to serve the occasional cyclist who does not have reason to rent a locker on a monthly or semi-annual basis.

7. Install more racks. More bicycle racks are needed at all stations, particularly near platforms where the bike car stops, so cyclists can lock their bicycles in the event there is not space for their bicycle onboard the train.
8. Routinely remove abandoned bikes from bike racks: To maximize available bike rack spaces, periodically tag bikes on racks with a dated notice that the bike will be removed from the racks after a designated period. Following this period, the abandoned/stripped bikes should be removed from the racks.

The following are also relevant to non-cyclists:

9. Way-finding signage: There should be signage indicating the direction to platforms, bike car boarding, bike parking, ticket vending machines, ten-ride ticket validators, buses, local destinations, etc. This needs to be implemented carefully to avoid clutter and confusion.
10. Station area map: Post the station map to help orient passengers to station features such as platforms, bike car boarding area, bike parking, ticket machines, and buses. Station area maps should also be posted online.
11. Crossing arm downtime: Crossing arms sometimes don't come back up even when trains have come to a stop in the station, which poses a problem to passengers needing to cross from one platform to the other to board the train. If the crossing arms do not come back up before the train leaves the station, the passenger misses the train. This is particularly a problem at Hillsdale and Mountain View stations. At Hillsdale, the crossing arms sometimes come down even when there are no trains coming through the station.
12. Ten-ride ticket validators are often out of service.
13. Install ten-ride ticket validators closer to the platform entry points.
14. Public restrooms are needed at all stations. Currently only San Francisco 4th/King has restrooms.

C. Non-station related

The two most common non-station-related concerns communicated at the workshops and via email were:

1. Advance notice of a Second Bike Car: The lack of notification as to how many bike cars a train pulling into the station has. Conductors do not consistently announce this information. Cyclists would like to have as much advance notice as possible on this subject, whether via a published schedule or real-time information such as PA system announcements and messages on the variable message signs. These accommodations would help reduce the uncertainty of being able to board

with bike and the frustration of getting bumped. Having bike cars clearly identifiable with lights or other means from the platform would also help.

2. Bike Locker customer service and maintenance: Many cyclists found it a time-consuming hassle who try to rent a bike locker (or other long-term bike parking) Phone call and email inquiries for locker availability are not returned for weeks. It is also confusing to have to figure out which agency to contact, since there are several agencies that manage bike parking at Caltrain stations (especially when contact information is not posted.)

Lockers are poorly managed and maintained, i.e. lockers that are damaged are not fixed. And lockers are not monitored for abuse in being used to store other items than bikes.

These issues will not be reviewed at the November 8 meeting, but will be discussed at a later Technical Advisory Group meeting.

Next Steps:

If you cannot attend the November 8 meeting, please provide any suggested changes or additions to the information contained in the station-specific packets, as well as bike access and parking issues for other stations in the system by November 30, 2007.

In addition to bicycle parking to and access at Caltrain stations and bicycle access onboard Caltrain vehicles, the Bicycle Master Plan will include usage trends and other background information; feasibility and time-frame of proposed improvements; and other plans and projects that would have an impact on the station, etc.