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Caltrain's Fiscal Crisis

Caltrain is the only transit system in the Bay Area without a permanent, dedicated source of funding.

As a result, for years, Caltrain has been wrestling with a continuing fiscal crisis – a budget that starts out short of funds every year.

This year, the crisis has reached a critical point and that threatens the Caltrain system, now and in the future.

The possibility of drastic, even devastating cuts in Caltrain service understandably has attracted much public attention and prompted many questions about how things got this way and what can be done about it.

It is important to note – no decisions have been made and nothing has been ruled out.

Decisions about service cuts or fare increases may be made by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB), which owns and manages Caltrain, as early as its April 7 meeting.

The JPB is a partnership between the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans), the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and the City and County of San Francisco through the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). SamTrans is the managing partner.

Caltrain is working very aggressively with local, regional, state and federal partners to find near-term and long-term solutions to its fiscal crisis.

That includes exploring a wide range of alternatives in close collaboration with regional and local partners, with the Silicon Valley Leadership Group and the Friends of Caltrain, and, most importantly, listening to the public.

To assist in these efforts, we have prepared this Web page containing as much information as possible about the current crisis, including the range of alternatives that are being explored.

On this page, you will find answers to many of the questions that have been raised by residents and customers, political leaders and key stakeholders. We also are providing easy connections to such basic information as Caltrain ridership details, current and past budgets and recent public presentations on these issues.

Caltrain simply cannot spend money it does not have. The budget process starts from there – what Caltrain can afford at this moment.

While Caltrain has a balanced budget for this fiscal year, we continue to look for ways to resolve the structural deficit stemming from the lack of a dedicated funding source. Caltrain's funding partners structured a two year agreement using one time only funds to balance the FY 2012 and 2013 budgets but that money will not be available in 2014. As a result we are looking at several options for balancing the budget, including new sources of dedicated funding that will help Caltrain reach full electrification. Electrification is expected to cut the need for an operational subsidy by approximately 50 percent.

In addition to the questions [on this page](#), here are links to key documents that provide greater detail on the Caltrain partnership and funding over the past few years, as well as the SamTrans funding situation and how it affects funding for Caltrain.

Comments and questions can be sent to: Fiscalcrisis@caltrain.com or Caltrain, Office of Public Affairs, P.O. Box 3006, San Carlos, CA 94070-1306.

Links to important information

[Frequently-Asked-Questions](#)

[Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Agreement](#) (PDF, 1.42MB)

[Caltrain public meeting presentation on the budget crisis and the 48-train schedule](#) (PDF, 112KB)

[Caltrain ridership data, including station-by-station figures](#)

[Caltrain budgets](#) (PDF, 112KB)

[SamTrans budgets](#) (samtrans.com)

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