

CAPITOL CORRIDOR SOUTH BAY CONNECT

Frequently Asked Questions

DECEMBER 2020

PROJECT BACKGROUND

WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?

Shifting Capitol Corridor over to the Coast Subdivision will reduce rail congestion on the Niles and Centerville Line by eliminating 14 Capitol Corridor trains daily on those lines. It also provides riders with a faster, more direct trip between Oakland and San Jose and connects to existing transbay bus and shuttle services at the proposed Ardenwood Station.

This passenger and freight rail operational improvement is one of several identified by State and Local agencies for phased implementation to improve our ability to connect and move people and goods within the Northern California Megaregion.

As the only transit service that directly connects the Greater Sacramento region to the Bay Area and Silicon Valley, Capitol Corridor provides essential access and a travel alternative to driving on congested freeways in the area.

WHICH STUDIES IDENTIFIED THE NEED FOR THIS PROJECT?

South Bay Connect service route was listed within CCJPA's 2014 Vision Plan Update and 2016 Vision Implementation Plan, as well as in the 2018 California State Rail Plan and Plan Bay Area 2040. The project's rail improvements are also consistent with the Alameda CTC 2016 Goods Movement Plan, Countywide Transit Plan and 2018 Rail Safety Enhancement Program, the 2017 Dumbarton Transportation Corridor Study, and Dumbarton Forward Design Alternatives Assessment. The collective plans establish a clear roadmap for Capitol Corridor that identifies service improvements to be implemented over time.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE SOUTH BAY CONNECT PROJECT?

The South Bay Connect project proposes to relocate the Capitol Corridor passenger rail service between the Oakland Coliseum and Newark from the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) Niles Subdivision rail line to the Coast Subdivision rail line. It also proposes to create new transbay connections for Capitol Corridor passengers between the East Bay and the Peninsula, which has been identified in previous studies as an underserved market for Capitol Corridor. While the project is not proposing an increase in Capitol Corridor service frequency or change to UP's freight service, it does not preclude service growth in the future.

WHO IS LEADING THIS PROJECT?

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) is the lead agency working in partnership with Caltrans, UP, Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC), Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the cities of Hayward, Union City, Fremont and Newark.

HOW MUCH WILL THE PROJECT COST AND HOW WILL IT BE FUNDED?

The estimated cost for the project is approximately \$264 million. Funding is already committed for the environmental analysis and design phases as well as half of the estimated construction costs. Funding has come from multiple state, regional and local sources including Caltrans State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), California State Transportation Agency's State Rail Assistance (SRA), MTC's Regional Measure 3 (RM3) and Alameda CTC's Measure BB.

WHEN WOULD THIS PROJECT BE CONSTRUCTED AND WHAT IS THE OVERARCHING PLANNING SCHEDULE?

If the Final EIR is approved and adopted by the CCJPA Board, the project will not be constructed until early 2024. Construction will most likely take two years to complete with service opening late 2026/early 2027. The current phase of planning began in January 2019 and will extend through early/mid-2021 when the Final EIR is estimated to be ready for review and approval by the CCJPA Board. Final Design is slated to take approximately two years and be complete by the end of 2023.

PROJECT BENEFITS

WHAT BENEFITS WILL CAPITOL CORRIDOR ROUTE RELOCATION PROVIDE?

The relocation will improve operations for both freight and passenger rail services by facilitating the separation of freight and passenger rail on the Niles Subdivision and reducing rail congestion on the Niles and Centerville Line by eliminating 14 Capitol Corridor trains daily. It also provides Capitol Corridor riders with a more direct route between Oakland and San Jose, which reduces passenger travel times. Lastly, the route shift creates enhanced connections between residents in the East Bay and jobs on the Peninsula through a new station at the Ardenwood Park-and-Ride, which is currently served by public and private transbay bus and shuttle services. South Bay Connect will not only link affordable housing and jobs, but also improve air quality and promote sustainability by reducing train idling and vehicular miles traveled as passengers shift their commuting mode of choice from use of congested freeways towards a convenient and connected multi-modal transit network.

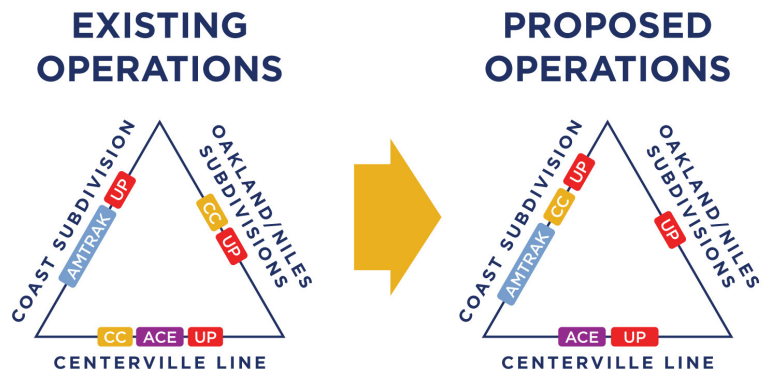
HOW DOES RELOCATING THE CAPITOL CORRIDOR ROUTE IMPROVE OPERATIONS?

The Niles Subdivision is a main route for UP freight trains heading south from Oakland to San Jose and further beyond, or East via Niles Canyon to key destinations within the Central Valley.

The Centerville Line is utilized by UP, Capitol Corridor (14 trains daily) and the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) who carry passengers between the Central Valley and Bay Area via eight daily trains. These train trips make the Centerville Line a highly congested corridor with several at-grade crossings within Central Fremont.

The Coast Subdivision has limited train use with two Amtrak Coast Starlight passenger trains daily and some UP freight.

South Bay Connect route relocation will increase efficiency, minimize train congestion on the Niles Subdivision and Centerville Lines, while also facilitating the separation of freight and passenger rail on the Niles. Freight trains will be able to travel east more efficiently through new rail infrastructure connections along the Niles Subdivision and near Shinn Junction.



The South Bay Connect route relocation will reduce rail congestion on the Niles and Centerville Line and facilitate the separation of freight and rail services on the busy Niles rail corridor.

HOW WILL SOUTH BAY CONNECT CREATE TRANSBAY CONNECTIONS?

The proposed Ardenwood Station at the Park-and-Ride near State Route 84 will provide a direct connection and transfer opportunity to transbay bus services linking Alameda County to San Mateo and western Santa Clara counties including the Dumbarton Express, AC Transit U Line, Stanford shuttles, and numerous employee shuttles. On an average weekday, 125 buses and shuttles stop at the Ardenwood Park-and-Ride. This critical transbay link was identified in Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority Service Optimization work as the largest unrealized connection in the Capitol Corridor system.

WHAT RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES ARE INCLUDED WITH THIS PROJECT?

As part of South Bay Connect, CCJPA is working closely with UP to identify railroad improvements within the project area on the Coast Subdivision line to bring it up to the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA's) Class 5 standards. Railroad upgrades will also be included on the Niles and Oakland Subdivision lines to allow UP freight trains going to the Central Valley to travel a more direct route south on the Niles Subdivision line, shifting east via a new rail connection near Niles Junction in the Shinn area. Rail improvements as part of South Bay Connect may include:

- Rail track and tie replacements
- Installation of new signal technology
- Right-of-way safety and security modifications such as fencing
- New sidings or passing tracks to reduce train idling
- At-grade crossing safety upgrades
- New Niles and Oakland Subdivision connection near Industrial Parkway
- Grade separation at Industrial Parkway
- New freight rail connection near Niles Junction

THE RAIL SYSTEM TODAY

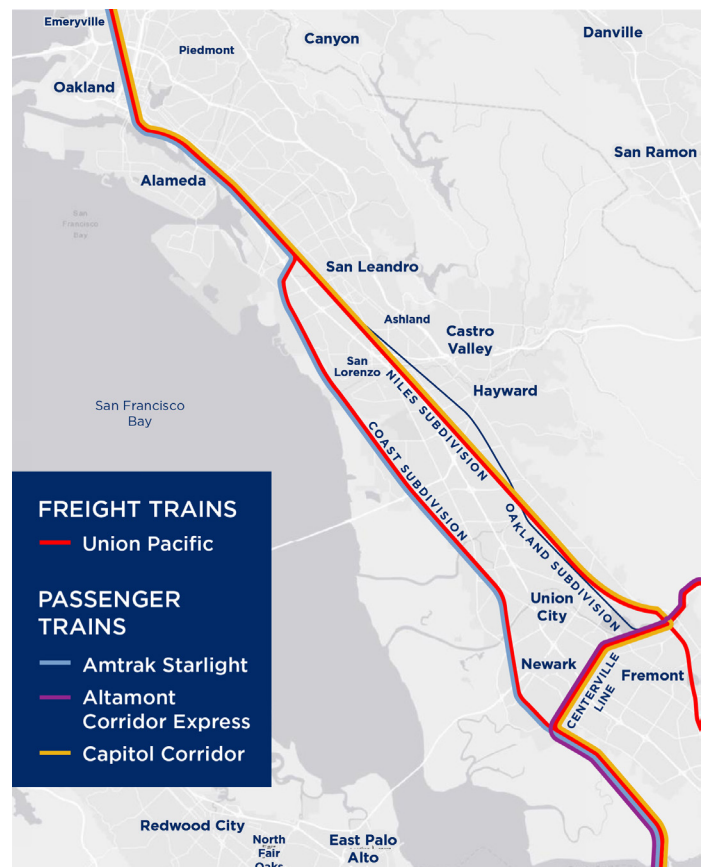
WHAT IS THE EXISTING RAIL OPERATION TODAY?

Within the East Bay project area, there are three rail lines running north/south (the Coast, Niles and Oakland Subdivisions) and two running east/west (Oakland Subdivision through Niles Canyon and Centerville Line through Fremont). The rail lines, owned by Union Pacific Railroad (UP), are utilized for freight and three passenger rail services [Capitol Corridor, Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and Amtrak Coast Starlight].

Today, Capitol Corridor must travel indirectly between Oakland and San Jose on the Niles Subdivision, across the Centerville Line in Fremont before turning south at Newark Junction on the Coast Subdivision.

The Niles Subdivision is also a main route for Freight trains heading south from Oakland to San Jose and further beyond.

The Centerville Line is utilized by ACE passenger trains traveling between the Central Valley and San Jose, and the Coast Subdivision used by Amtrak Coast Starlight. Both the Centerville Line and Coast Subdivision are used for UP freight trains as well.



WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FREIGHT AND PASSENGER RAIL TRAIN OPERATIONS?

Freight Trains: Vary greatly in weight depending on length, type of cargo, and amount of cargo loaded. Typical weight range is 5,000 to 10,000 tons with extreme examples outside of this range. Freight trains can be over a mile long, and due to length and weight generally travel at slower speeds within urban corridors that can cause noise, vibration and delays for local travel near at-grade crossings. UP, like other private freight companies, operate service as the market demands, so daily train counts and hours of operation vary. Freight rail activity generally reflects overall market conditions and business demands for goods.

Passenger Trains: Capitol Corridor are typically five cars, ACE are seven cars and Amtrak Starlight are 10 cars. Capitol Corridor passenger trains weigh between 511 to 710 tons depending on specific equipment and number of passengers on board, and go up to 79 miles per hour within project area, causing less noise, vibration and delays at local at-grade crossings compared to freight trains. Capitol Corridor service operates seven round trips daily (pre-COVID-19 schedule) between Oakland and San Jose.

Click [here](#) for more information, or visit southbayconnect.com/resources.

DOES SOUTH BAY CONNECT MEAN MORE FREIGHT TRAINS?

While South Bay Connect improves passenger rail efficiency, the project will not affect freight train frequency. Freight train volumes are determined by the demand for goods. There are many variables that affect goods movement, such as shipping routes, market demand, trade agreements, port operations and costs.

Click [here](#) for more information, or visit southbayconnect.com/resources.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE EXISTING STATIONS ALONG THE CURRENT CAPITOL CORRIDOR ROUTE BETWEEN OAKLAND AND SAN JOSE?

The route change would discontinue Capitol Corridor service at the Hayward and Fremont Centerville Stations, while proposing a new passenger rail station at the existing Ardenwood Park-and-Ride on the Coast Subdivision line. While these stations are proposed to be discontinued for Capitol Corridor, other regional rail and transit access will remain within the corridor including BART and ACE which will continue serving the Fremont-Centerville Station. The new connection at Ardenwood will provide a much needed intermodal transbay connection to bus services between the East Bay and Peninsula.

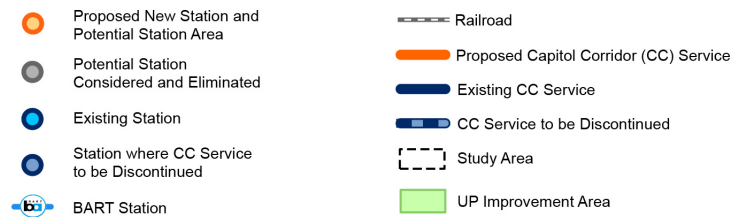
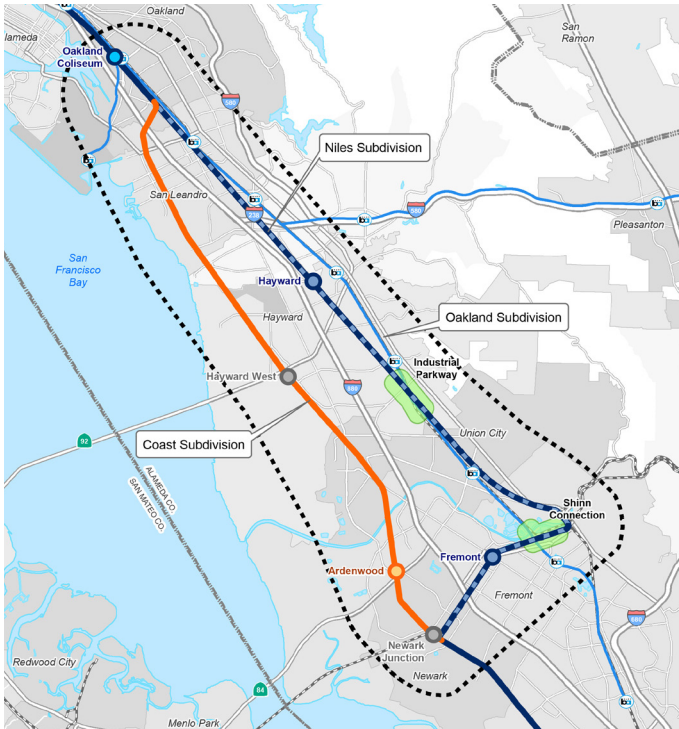
HOW MANY PASSENGERS CURRENTLY ACCESS THE HAYWARD AND FREMONT-CENTERVILLE STATIONS?

The combined ridership at Hayward and Fremont Stations account for about 3 percent of Capitol Corridor's ridership for the entire system.

PROPOSED ARDENWOOD STATION

IS THE ARDENWOOD STATION THE ONLY STATION BEING CONSIDERED ON THE NEW ROUTE?

Several station options were put through an early screening process to determine feasible and constructible solutions. The Ardenwood Station in Fremont was identified as the most feasible solution to serve the communities and create a seamless connection to bus service routes. To learn more about the Station evaluation process, view the Project Definition Report on the project website's Resources page.



WHAT FEATURES WILL THE ARDENWOOD STATION INCLUDE?

Capitol Corridor stations typically have platforms, parking and multi-modal access for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and buses. A pedestrian bridge is proposed for the Ardenwood Station to allow safe access from the parking lot to the train platform. The Ardenwood Station will be better connected to the City of Fremont's planned bicycle facilities.

The 2019 Capitol Corridor Station Policy describes the following required station elements:

- 800-foot long platforms with eight-inch top of rail clearance
- Passenger access that does not cross a mainline track at-grade
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access and egress standards

Further details of the Ardenwood Station will be identified as the project moves forward.

WILL THIS PROJECT PROVIDE ENOUGH PARKING SPACES FOR TRAIN PASSENGERS?

Providing additional parking at the Ardenwood Station is part of the project, however, the specific additional capacity will be determined through ridership modeling as part of this current phase of work.

WILL THE PROPOSED ARDENWOOD STATION ADD NEW AT-GRADE CROSSINGS OF THE RAIL LINE?

No, this project is not proposing to add new at-grade crossings at the Ardenwood Station.

THE FREMONT/ARDENWOOD AREA IS A QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD TODAY SO HOW WILL THIS PROJECT ADDRESS INCREASED NOISE POLLUTION, TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND OTHER SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS SURROUNDING THE PROPOSED NEW STATION?

As part of the environmental analysis and review, these areas of concern, along with many others such as air quality, aesthetics and biology will be addressed within the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) with appropriate mitigation measures identified to minimize impacts as a result of the proposed project. A full list of environmental resource areas that will be studied as part of the review can be found under Environmental Planning on the project website.

HOW WILL THIS NEW TRAVEL ROUTE FOR PASSENGER RAIL CONNECT TO OTHER RAIL NETWORKS, TRANSPORTATION HUBS (E.G., BART, ACE, DUMBARTON)?

Capitol Corridor is working collaboratively with transit agencies and stakeholders along the corridor to optimize connectivity to existing and future transit services. New connections to existing transbay bus and shuttle services will be made possible at the proposed Ardenwood Station, and Capitol Corridor will continue to connect to Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) at Richmond, Oakland Coliseum and again at the future BART Diridon Station. ACE regional commuter rail service connecting the Central Valley to the Bay Area will continue to stop in Fremont. ACE service connects with Capitol Corridor at Santa Clara-Great America, Santa Clara-University and at San Jose-Diridon stations. CCJPA will continue to coordinate with ongoing Dumbarton rail planning efforts, which are currently unclear on station locations in the East Bay.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS & ANALYSIS

WHAT IS THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)?

CEQA is a California statute that was passed in 1970 shortly after the United States federal government passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). CEQA institutes a statewide policy of environmental protection. The purpose of CEQA is to disclose to the public the significant environmental effects of a proposed discretionary project through the preparation of an EIR. View the CEQA steps under California Environmental Quality Act Process on the project website.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE EIR?

The EIR will assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project on the physical, human and natural environment. A wide variety of resource areas will be studied during the environmental review to identify potential impacts and among them, water resources including flood plains.

Measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any potential adverse impacts will be identified and evaluated in the EIR. During this environmental assessment phase, there will also be multiple points for public engagement, such as during the Public Scoping Period after the Notice of Preparation is issued and the Public Comment Period after the Draft EIR is released.

WILL THE PROJECT INCLUDE QUIET ZONES?

Quiet Zones may be a part of a future identified mitigation measure if noise is identified as an impact. However, Quiet Zones are federally regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration and negotiated between the local municipality and the track owner, so CCJPA would not be directly involved in the implementation of a Quiet Zone.

HOW WILL THIS PROJECT INFLUENCE PROPERTY VALUES ALONG THE COAST SUBDIVISION?

The economic effects of the project will be considered as part of the analysis, including property values, during the EIR process. However, property values are market-driven and cannot be adequately quantified through this EIR process.

I LIVE NEXT TO THE COAST SUBDIVISION TRACKS SO HOW MANY MORE TRAINS WOULD BE EXPECTED DAILY ALONG THIS RAIL LINE?

This project would result in up to 14 Capitol Corridor passenger trains daily on the Coast Subdivision line, the same train frequency as the pre-COVID Capitol Corridor schedule. While we cannot control how UP operates, the project will improve rail infrastructure allowing freight trains to travel east more efficiently from the Niles Subdivision via new connections to access Niles Canyon.

WILL BOTH PASSENGER AND FREIGHT TRAINS CONTINUE TO USE THE COAST SUBDIVISION?

Yes, both freight and passenger rail will utilize the Coast Subdivision between Oakland and San Jose. UP does not anticipate changes to their existing freight movement on the Coast as a result of this project.

HOW WILL THIS PROJECT ADDRESS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON WILDLIFE IN THE SURROUNDING AREA AND THE COYOTE HILLS REGION?

This concern and resource area along with many others listed on the website under Environmental Planning at www.southbayconnect.com will be analyzed during the environmental process and addressed in the Draft EIR.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

WITH COVID-19, LESS PEOPLE ARE COMMUTING TO WORK, SO WHY DO WE NEED THIS PROJECT?

Even though transit ridership, including that on the Capitol Corridor, has significantly declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we anticipate that the need for this project will still be relevant in a post-pandemic future. The need to improve rail transit, decrease congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and offer convenient, non-auto alternatives for people to travel within the Northern California Megaregion will persist beyond today's challenging times. CCJPA will be monitoring ridership and travel demand trends throughout the project phases and make changes to the project as necessary.

HOW WILL THE PROJECT EVOLVE ALONGSIDE COVID-19 AND THE EVERCHANGING LIFESTYLE CHANGES THAT ARE EMERGING?

Even though transit ridership across the county, including Capitol Corridor, has significantly declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we anticipate that the need for this project will still be relevant in a post-pandemic future. The need for improved rail transit, congestion relief, reduction of regional greenhouse gas emissions as well as convenient, non-auto travel alternatives for people within the Northern California Megaregion will persist beyond today's challenging times. CCJPA will be monitoring ridership and travel demand trends throughout the project phases and make changes to the project as necessary.

STAY INVOLVED AND INFORMED

HOW CAN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATE IN THE PLANNING EFFORT?

During this time of social distancing, we have provided multiple convenient and safe ways for public engagement. You can provide comments on the project:

- Through the project website at **www.southbayconnect.com**
- Calling the project informational hotline at **(510) 244-3667**
- Sending an email to **info@southbayconnect.com**
- Submitting a formal letter to CCJPA at **300 Lakeside Drive, 14th Floor East, Oakland CA 94612**

During this environmental phase, there will be several key milestones for public engagement such as during the Public Scoping Period after the Notice of Preparation is issued and the Public Comment Period after the Draft EIR is released.

HOW CAN I STAY INFORMED?

You can stay informed by visiting **www.southbayconnect.com** and subscribing for project updates. For questions or additional information, please call the project information hotline at **(510) 244-3667** or email **info@southbayconnect.com**.



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CCJPA is a partnership among six local transit agencies and provides fast, reliable, and affordable train service to 18 stations in eight Northern California counties.

