

Bayview/ Hunter's Point Leaders Discuss CalTrain Proposals

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (4/21)- Local community leaders gathered at the historic Bayview Opera House in an effort to discuss three major proposals that many people say will alter the shape and nature of the Bayview/ Hunter's Point. Some of the Caltrain proposals that were discussed were:

* Quint St. Bridge: The rail bridge over Quint St. is more than 100 years old and needs to be replaced, which may entail a street closure at the bridge. Three design options have implications for cost, local access, and a future Caltrain station at Oakdale Ave.

* Quint-Jerrold Connector Road: Design concept for a possible connecting road to improve local access if Quint St. is closed at the bridge.

* Proposed Caltrain Oakdale Ave. Station: Results from the Caltrain Oakdale Ave. Station Ridership Study.

According to organizers of the event, "Join Caltrain, the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, and Supervisor Malia Cohen for an informational open house to learn more about these projects and how they will affect your neighborhood. You will have the opportunity to speak with planners, ask questions, view presentations, and voice your opinion..."

Many local residents came aware of the projects, with concerns of their own. Community activist Debray Carpenter (a.k.a. Fly Benzo) stated, "I want to make sure that the community businesses get an equal opportunity in regards to being awarded contracts, especially if state or federal money is used, as it states in the health and safety codes..." Tenecia Kent, Calvary Apostolic Church, stated, "Well, I'm concerned about how the station is being built, and how it will affect services, parking, and activities at our parish, for people who drive and don't drive..."

Dorris Vincent, community elder and unofficial historian for the neighborhood stated, "Well these are projects which have been vetted through the community. We are looking for changes because the old Caltrain stop is dark, decrepit, and doesn't have adequate lighting, and for the most part, dangerous. It was felt that with the creation of a new Caltrain stop at Oakdale and Newcomb, it would be more localized, near the City College campus, and certainly more accessible to public transportation. Right now the station is only accessible with the 15 or 29 lines, with little to no bus service. But with the new proposal, the Caltrain station would be accessible by the 24, 44, and 23 lines. With the routes the buses run, would put you less than 2 blocks from the proposed station. This is a community driven project and I believe it is a wise decision..."

Many people came away with a new understanding and many questions. Toni Battle stated, "They are basically saying Caltrain is building and financing a new stop for the high-speed rail bullet train, which would grant people in the community access to Silicon Valley... This may pit many of the neighborhoods against each other over the placement of the Bullet Train stop..." Debra Helem said, "I originally came to address the issue of MUNI fast passes for the youth. Currently with the proposed cuts, it makes it hard for children to get onto public transit due to the amount of money they have to spend regarding the Clipper Cards. This is often money that they can't afford, making it hard for children to get onto trains or buses to get to school... In regards to the Caltrain proposals, due to the fact that I live in the neighborhoods, and travel it on a daily basis, I believe it will be a benefit to the community. But with the time limit placed on the project, I wonder if we will actually live to see these projects come into completion. It sounds very positive. I have lived here all my life, and I think it will benefit the community..."

Addressing thoughts about the future of the projects, Dorris Vincent had much to say. In regards to the near-future and construction, Vincent stated, "I don't know where its going to go, but in the short-term it will disturb the campus of City College of San Francisco, and possibly housing in the area, but for the most part, I don't think it will cause a lot of problems. In the long-term, we have people who are now travelling by Caltrain to Brisbane, San Mateo and even San Jose. These projects will create a major improvement. It will allow us to travel to Silicon Valley and the South Bay by either car, train or bus, instead of currently, wherein you can only travel by bus or car. In the meantime, this community is interested in redevelopment. The last time this issue was discussed, we demanded at least 50% of the contracts be awarded locally. I believe the community still wants this and possibly more..."

City Supervisor Malia Cohen said , "I came here to hear what the community was thinking regarding these projects. This is a community building exercise, with major projects being proposed, we have to make decisions quickly..."

Organizers of the event were pleasantly surprised with the turnout and the response from the community. Gina Simi, Interim Community Relations Manager for Caltrain, stated, "I think this was a fantastic turnout, especially on a gorgeous and sunny San Francisco morning, which is rare for San Francisco... We got a lot of questions and comments from a lot of people, **thanks to the hard work of LeBlanc and Associates**. People got to discuss projects that affect their neighborhoods. I'm certainly glad to hear the input. I am glad to say that all of these comments and suggestions will be taken into consideration..." Brigitte Le Blanc, Le Blanc and Associates, proudly stated , "I am glad to see that the turnout was great, with over 75 people. The audience was made up of residents and small business owners, and as the process moves forward, and the next steps in the process are made, I certainly hope that the **community continues to hold Caltrain accountable regarding the issues of jobs and local hiring for District 10 residents and small business owners**. This is just the first of many community events wherein I hope we continue to engage the community..."

- Jose Ricardo G. Bondoc

Future community meetings will be held:

Southeast Community Facility Commission
Wednesday, April 25th (4/25), @6:00PM- 8:00PM
Southeast Community Facility, Alex Pritcher Room
1800 Oakdale Avenue

Hunter's Point Shipyard Citizens Advisory Committee
Planning, Development, and Finance Subcommittee
Thursday, May 10th (5/10), @6:00 PM- 8:00PM
Hunter's Point Shipyard Trailers Conference Room
Near Donahue at Ingalls

Hunter's Point Shipyard Citizens Advisory Committee
Full CAC
Monday, May 14th (5/14), @6:00PM - 8:00 PM
Southeast Community Facility, Alex Pitcher Room
1800 Oakdale Avenue

For additional updates and upcoming presentations: www.sfcta.org/quint and www.sfcta.org/oakdale

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