SOUTH BAY CONNECT

Unlocking Possibilities

CAPITOL CORRIDOR SOUTH BAY CONNECT
Frequently Asked Questions

JUNE 2024

PROJECT BACKGROUND

WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED?

By shifting Capitol Corridor service to a shorter, more direct route between Oakland and San Jose, South Bay Connect will improve operational efficiency and reliability for the overall train service and provide intermodal connections to the existing transbay bus and shuttle services at the proposed Ardenwood Station. The project will also reduce overall rail congestion on the Niles Subdivision by eliminating 14 Capitol Corridor trains daily, thereby improving freight rail operations in the East Bay.

This passenger improvement project 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 service provides essential access and a travel alternative to driving on congested freeways in the area.

WHICH STUDIES IDENTIFIED THE NEED FOR THIS PROJECT?

The South Bay Connect Project is a key element in Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority's (CCJPA) 2014 Vision Plan Update and 2016 Vision Implementation Plan, both of which called for relocating Capitol Corridor service from the Niles Subdivision to the Coast Subdivision between Oakland and Newark to provide a shorter and more direct route from Oakland to San Jose. Improvements to the rail network and operations between Oakland and San Jose are also both components of the 2018 California State Rail Plan, which called for rerouting passenger rail service from the Niles Subdivision to the Coast Subdivision to facilitate faster travel times. The project's rail improvements are also consistent with the Alameda County Transportation Commission (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 established a clear roadmap for Capitol Corridor that identifies service improvements to be implemented over time.

COVID-19 SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED COMMUTER BEHAVIORS AND LESS PEOPLE ARE COMMUTING TO WORK, SO WHY DO WE STILL NEED THIS PROJECT?

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 into the future. CCJPA will be monitoring ridership and travel demand trends throughout the project phases and make changes to the project as necessary.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE SOUTH BAY CONNECT PROJECT?

The South Bay Connect project proposes to relocate Capitol Corridor passenger rail service to the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UP) Coast Subdivision between Oakland and Newark to improve operational efficiency and reliability. The proposed Project also includes constructing a new passenger rail station on the Coast Subdivision at the existing Ardenwood Park-and-Ride to serve southern Alameda County passengers and facilitate connections to existing transbay transit services between the East Bay and the San Francisco Peninsula.

WHO IS LEADING THIS PROJECT?

CCJPA is the lead agency.

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

The estimated cost for the proposed Project is between $700-900 million. Funding is already committed for the environmental analysis and design phases as well as a portion of the 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?

The current phase of planning began in January 2019 and will extend through late 2024 when the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is estimated to be ready for review and approval by the CCJPA Board. Final Design is slated to be completed by the end of 2027. If the final EIR is approved and adopted by the CCJPA Board in late 2024, the project is anticipated to begin construction in 2027 with construction expected to be complete in 2029. The project timeline is subject to change pending funding availability.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The South Bay Connect Project issued their Project Definition Report in 2019, outlining the project's components and the process in which the project would deliver those components. As part of the environmental review process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the South Bay Connect Project released a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR in 2020. The Public Scoping period offered the public an opportunity to provide comments on the draft project description, the proposed alternatives, and the environmental scope of the Project to be included in the draft EIR. The Public Scoping period concluded in August 2020, leading the project into the development of the draft EIR.

PROJECT BENEFITS

WHAT BENEFITS WILL CAPITOL CORRIDOR ROUTE RELOCATION PROVIDE?

By shifting Capitol Corridor service to a shorter, more direct route between Oakland and San Jose, South Bay Connect will improve operational efficiency and reliability for the overall train service and provide intermodal connections to the existing transbay bus and shuttle services at the proposed Ardenwood Station, which is adjacent to the existing Ardenwood Park-and-Ride. South Bay Connect will also improve air quality and promote sustainability by reducing train idling and vehicle miles traveled as passengers shift their commuting mode of choice from use of congested freeways towards a convenient and connected multi-modal transit network.

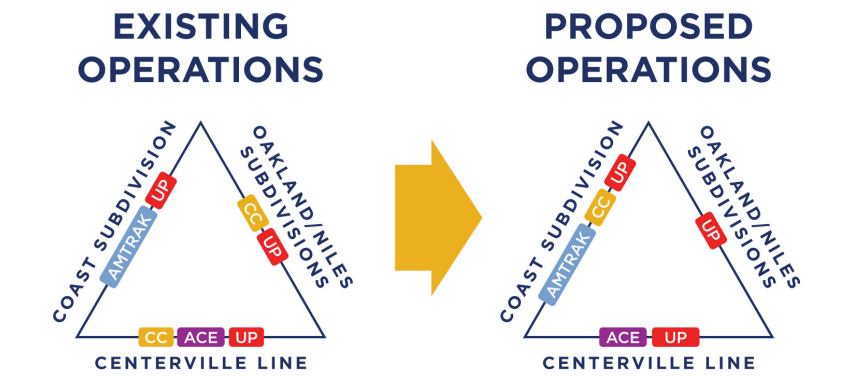
HOW DOES RELOCATING THE CAPITOL CORRIDOR ROUTE IMPROVE OPERATIONS?

The Niles Subdivision is the 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 sees fewer train volumes compared to the Niles Subdivision with two Amtrak Coast Starlight passenger trains daily and limited UP freight trains. And it is a shorter, more direct route between Oakland and Newark.

Capitol Corridor will improve the operational efficiency and reliability of the overall service by shifting service onto a shorter and less congested route between Oakland and San Jose.
Up to 13 minutes of travel time savings is expected from the route relocation.



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 CCJPA's 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 and maintain operational capacity for both passenger and freight rail usage. Rail improvements as part of South Bay Connect may include:

- Shift and replace existing track to improve train speeds
- Construction of additional track within existing rail right-of-way
- Safety improvements to 25 existing at-grade crossings
- Replacement/modification of existing railroad bridges over water/culvert crossings
- New railroad bridges over water/culvert crossings

THE RAIL SYSTEM TODAY

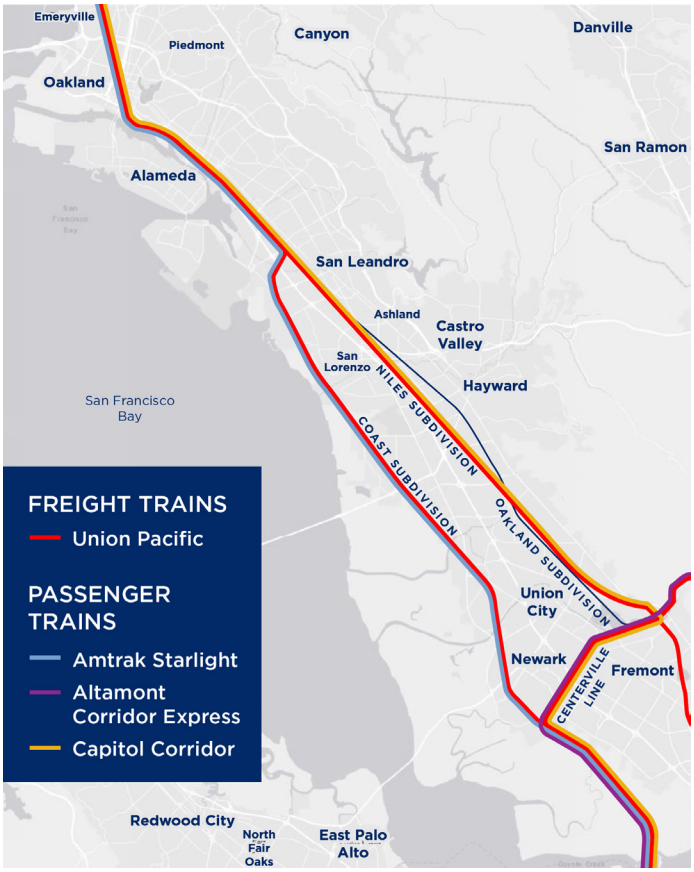
WHAT IS THE EXISTING RAIL OPERATION TODAY?

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 UP, are utilized for freight and three passenger rail services (Capitol Corridor, 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, operates 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 trains are typically four to five cars with a locomotive; 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.

DOES SOUTH BAY CONNECT MEAN MORE FREIGHT TRAINS?

While South Bay Connect improves passenger rail efficiency, the proposed 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.

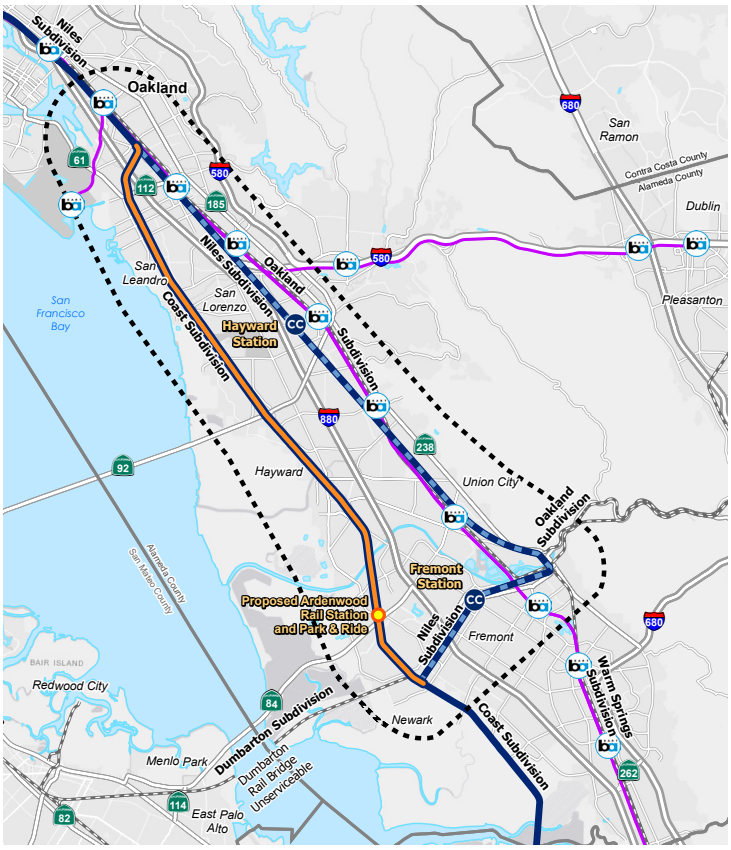
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE EXISTING STATIONS ALONG THE CURRENT CAPITOL CORRIDOR ROUTE BETWEEN OAKLAND AND SAN JOSE?

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 service, 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 bus and shuttle connections at Ardenwood Station will provide much-needed intermodal transit access 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 accounts for about 3-4 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 feasibility and constructability. 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.

- Project Study Area
- Station where Capitol Corridor (CC) Service to be Discontinued
- Existing and Planned BART Stations
- Proposed Ardenwood Rail Station and Park & Ride
- Existing CC Service
- CC Route to be Discontinued
- Proposed New CC Service Route via Coast Subdivision
- BART Alignment
- Railroad
- County Boundary

WHY WAS THE ARDENWOOD AREA CHOSEN FOR A STATION AND NOT THE ALTERNATIVES?

Three areas in Hayward, Newark, and Ardenwood were studied for potential station locations. The ridership analysis looked at the three proposed areas to determine the location with the highest ridership potential. Several criteria were used in the analysis, including the key ability for a station to create multi-modal connections, especially to transbay transit services. Local transit connections were considered as a smaller factor than transbay transit connections, which can be more difficult to reroute from the highway to local streets. The proposed Ardenwood Station in Fremont scored the highest across many criteria and was selected as the preferred station location.

For more information on the ridership analysis, view the **Project Definition Report**.

WHAT FEATURES WILL THE ARDENWOOD STATION INCLUDE?

The proposed Ardenwood Station would provide a new passenger platform with a pedestrian overcrossing allowing access across the tracks and to the platform. The proposed passenger rail station would be configured to include a center boarding platform located between the tracks. The station would include ADA ramps and other accessibility improvements in accordance with California requirements.

Pedestrian and bicycle access would be constructed to connect adjacent business complexes to the new Ardenwood Station. A multi-use pathway would be constructed under State Route 84 facilitating access to areas south of the freeway, where currently there is no direct pedestrian access between the north and south sides of State Route 84.

Parking for the new passenger rail station would be built northwest of it on a vacant parcel.

WILL THIS PROJECT PROVIDE ENOUGH PARKING SPACES FOR TRAIN PASSENGERS?

Providing additional parking at the Ardenwood Station is part of the proposed Project. The parking facility would initially consist of a surface parking lot with the potential for the construction of a future two-level parking garage at the same location, depending on the need for additional parking.

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 are addressed within the draft EIR with appropriate mitigation measures identified to minimize impacts resulting from the proposed Project. Learn more about the environmental review process on the project website's **Environmental Planning** page.

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

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 San Jose/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 San Jose-Diridon stations.

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 environmental document, in this case 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 includes an assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project on the physical, human, and natural environment. A wide variety of resource areas are analyzed during the environmental review to identify potential impacts.

Best management practices (BMPs) and Mitigation Measures are applied to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potentially significant impacts and are identified and evaluated in the EIR. During the environmental assessment phase, multiple points for public engagement are part of the process, including during the Public Scoping period and the 45-day Public Comment and Review period after the release of the draft EIR.

WILL THE PROJECT INCLUDE AT-GRADE CROSSING QUIET ZONES?

Quiet Zones have been identified as a mitigation measure in the draft EIR for construction and operation activities near at-grade crossings. Quiet Zones are federally regulated by the FRA and negotiated between the local municipality and the railroad track owner, so CCJPA would not be directly involved in the implementation of a Quiet Zone but would support local municipal efforts to establish Quiet Zones with UP.

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, the same train frequency as the pre-COVID Capitol Corridor schedule. UP has indicated that they do not expect significant changes of freight traffic on the Coast Subdivision as a result of this Project.

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 the proposed Project.

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

This concern regarding this resource area, along with many others listed on the website under **Environmental Planning**, have been analyzed during the environmental process and addressed in the draft EIR.

STAY INVOLVED AND INFORMED

HOW CAN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATE IN THE PLANNING EFFORT AND STAY INFORMED?

Visit **southbayconnect.com** to join our email list and receive project information updates such as upcoming public outreach events. You can provide comments on the project and receive additional information:

Through the project website at **southbayconnect.com**

Calling the project informational hotline at **(510) 244-3667**

Sending an email to **info@southbayconnect.com**

Submitting a formal letter to **CCJPA, South Bay Connect, 2150 Webster St., 3rd Floor, Oakland, CA 94612**

There are several key milestones for public engagement in the environmental phase of project development, including scoping (completed in 2020) and the public comment period on the draft EIR.

CAPITOL CORRIDOR®
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

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.