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At Long Last, Regional Trains to Extend Deep Into Eastern Contra Costa County

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October 29, 2010

Local, state and federal officials gathered at the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station today for the groundbreaking for the extension of the BART system into Eastern Contra Costa County. Reaching 10 miles from the Pittsburg/Bay Point station to the city of Antioch, the eBART line will use clean-diesel technology, which is 60 percent less expensive to build than conventional BART.

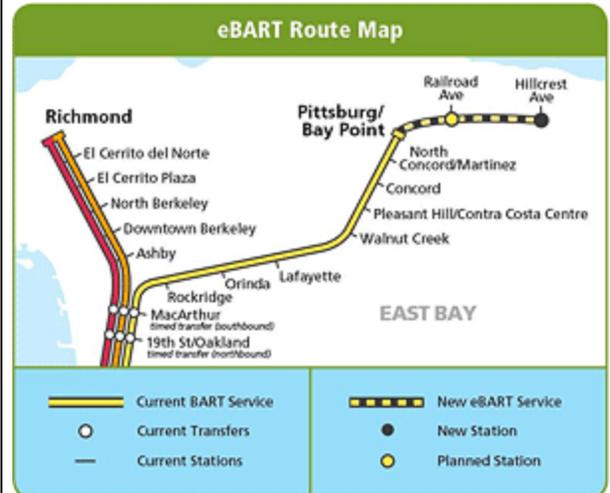
Scheduled for participation in the event were U.S. Representative John Garamendi (D-Walnut Creek), state Senator Mark DeSaulnier (D-Concord), Caltrans District 4 Director and MTC Commissioner Bijan Sartipi, BART Board President James Fang, Contra Costa Transportation Authority Executive Director Randy Iwasaki, local mayors from Brentwood, Pittsburg, Antioch and Oakley, along with MTC Commissioner and Contra Costa County Supervisor Federal Glover, MTC Commissioner Amy Worth and MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger.

The eBART project will run along the Highway 4 median and is being built in coordination with the Highway 4 widening project. According to BART, when it begins service in 2015, the eBART extension is expected to carry as many people as an additional lane of Highway 4.

"It will be a 10-minute ride (from Antioch) to the Pittsburg/Bay Point transfer station compared with the 40 minutes it sometimes takes to drive the same distance during commute hours," MTC Commissioner Federal Glover pointed out in an [op-ed](#) appearing in the *Contra Costa Times* this week, adding that Antioch commuters make up 35 percent of the riders on the current BART line that terminates at Pittsburg/Bay Point.

The project is tagged at \$462 million, a bargain compared to the more than \$1 billion to extend service with traditional BART train technology. MTC contributed \$283 in bridge tolls and other funds for eBART, or 60 percent of the cost. The project is predicted to generate over 600 construction jobs.

Although clean-diesel is a new type of train for BART, the technology is widely in use in



Europe and elsewhere in the U.S. Called diesel multiple-unit trains, or DMU, they are smaller than BART trains, with a capacity of 300 to 400 people per two-car train. Not only are they cost-effective, but per BART, DMU trains are environmentally sustainable and meet all applicable U.S. and California air quality standards thanks to their use of ultra-low sulfur fuel. Here in California, San Diego County uses a DMU system on the popular Sprinter line. According to BART, eBART is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 260,000 pounds per day.

Discussion of an extension deep into Eastern Contra Costa County dates back to the early days of BART. The project got the nod from MTC in 2001 when the Commission included eBART in Resolution 3434, the [Regional Transit Expansion Program](#). That same year, BART and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority launched a feasibility study. The project got a funding boost in November 2004 when the MTC-sponsored Regional Measure 2 passed, which provided substantial bridge toll funding for eBART. That same election saw passage of Contra Costa County's Measure J sales tax renewal, which is providing \$135 million for eBART. The project also is benefiting from two other bridge toll pots, Regional Measure 1 and AB 1171.

"This extension is remarkable not only for the introduction of a new, cost-effective technology into the Bay Area transportation mix, but also for the fact that it is entirely funded by local and regional money, without a penny of federal aid," said MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger. "The biggest single source of funding is bridge tolls, and a big chunk of that funding resulted from ballot measures sponsored by MTC and approved by Bay Area voters."



U.S. Representative John Garamendi



State Senator Mark DeSaulnier

Under MTC's Regional Transit Expansion Program, any new rail investment in the Bay Area must go hand-in-hand with compact housing development in the vicinity of new stations – a concept known as transit-oriented development, or TOD. Under MTC's policy, the eBART project has a requirement of 2,200 new residential units per each of the three stations along the line, or 6,600 total. The total number of units projected for the three eBART stations is roughly 6,570, which essentially meets the 6,600-unit threshold.

With the start of construction on eBART, the region's rapid rail system is now building three major extensions simultaneously. The others are the 5.4-mile [extension to Warm Springs](#) — the first leg of a link to San Jose and Silicon Valley — and the 3.2-mile [Oakland Airport Connector](#).

For more details about the eastern Contra Costa County project visit www.bart.gov/projects or check out a BARTtv News story that includes eBART animation at www.bart.gov/BARTtv.

See also:

- [Federal Glover: eBART extension to East County breaks ground](#)
Contra Costa Times, October 28, 2010
- [BART and project partners break ground on extension to East Contra Costa County](#)
- [eBART Fact Sheet](#)



Contra Costa County Supervisor and MTC Commissioner Federal Glover



MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger



Photos: Karl Nielsen

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