

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

ContraCostaTimes.com

BART starts long-awaited push into East Contra Costa

By Paul Burgarino
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 10/29/2010 12:37:46 PM PDT

Updated: 10/30/2010 05:21:59 PM PDT

PITTSBURG -- After more than a decade of planning, regional leaders and BART officials broke ground on BART's long-awaited extension into eastern Contra Costa County on Friday.

Dubbed eBART, the extension's diesel battery-operated trains will carry passengers about 10 miles from BART's terminus at the Pittsburg-Bay Point station to a planned station in Antioch near Hillcrest Avenue. The trains, which will also stop at an eBART station near Railroad Avenue in Pittsburg, will run down the middle of Highway 4.

Local leaders were thrilled at the prospect of rapid transit finally coming to the growing region.

"It's been discussed, analyzed and criticized, but now we're finally able to bring the best, affordable, deliverable transit option for this corridor," said BART board member Joel Keller, who was among the local and regional leaders who spoke at the groundbreaking event at the Pittsburg-Bay Point station.

"It was a promise made, and we're starting to see a fulfillment of that promise. It's been a huge effort to

take this from concept to this day of reality," said county Supervisor Federal Glover.

Oakley Mayor Pat Anderson added: "Today, we're one step closer."

The eBART project is anticipated to cost \$462 million and be completed by 2015, though the timeline hinges on how the widening of Highway 4 proceeds.

"We're trying to add as many features for BART as possible. They just have to lay down the track," said Susan

Miller, project manager with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

The Highway 4 widening is in progress, with an estimated cost of \$500 million.

Construction will start by December, though work probably won't be noticeable until a few months later, said Ellen Smith, the eBART project manager.

The eBART project will create about 600 local construction jobs and 40 to 80 permanent jobs when the trains begin operation, Keller said. About 85 percent of the parts used will be made in the United States, he said.

Over the years, many East Contra Costa residents have grown weary of paying into the BART system with little to show for it.

The eBART proposal was presented to regional leaders in 2001, and some officials and residents have expressed frustration since then that the region isn't getting traditional BART service.

"I remember thinking what's an eBART. We've been paying into the system for BART," Glover said.



We focus on automating Marriott® Hotels' global invoice process. So they don't have to.

Learn more at RealBusiness.com

Ready For Real Business 

Print Powered By 

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

ContraCostaTimes.com

The region is not getting the electric-powered service because of cost. Extending traditional BART to Hillcrest would cost more than \$1 billion, Keller said.

Conventional BART still could be built on the eBART line someday, he said.

East Contra Costa leaders say they've struggled to convince the public of the merits of eBART, but the result will be worth the wait.

"We've received a lot of disdain, discourse and strife," Antioch Mayor Jim Davis said. "But, I think like in 2016, when people take a look back and they see Highway 4 widened, traffic is moving and eBART is going all the way to Hillcrest, they'll stop and say, 'What was all the fuss about?'"

Antioch Councilwoman Martha Parsons agreed. Having been on a similar train in San Diego, she said: "A lot of people will change their mind and think it's the better of the two."

Antioch resident Doyle Keeton travels on BART each day, and it takes him an hour bus ride, including a transfer, to get home.

"I can't wait; it will help me get home quicker," he said outside the Pittsburg-Bay Point station.

The first piece of the project is a crossover platform just east of the existing BART station. Passengers will walk across the platform to get from standard BART trains to the smaller eBART cars.

Novato-based West Bay Builders Inc. won that project this month with a bid of \$26.1 million.

BART planners and Antioch officials continue to discuss the design of the Hillcrest station.

Regional leaders hope to see BART service eventually extend beyond Hillcrest. The station's design is expected to be presented to Antioch leaders early next year.

BART and Pittsburg are still working out details for the station near Railroad Avenue. That station will be funded by Pittsburg, said Joe Sbranti, the city's assistant city manager.

Keller also hopes to secure \$2 million to complete environmental studies and ultimately \$100 million to extend eBART to a station off Laurel Road on the Antioch-Oakley border.

Those additional three miles could increase ridership by 40 percent, and would be "the best transportation bargain in the Bay Area," Keller said.

"We're trying to find funding for past Hillcrest. We're going to continue no matter what," he said.

Contact Paul Bugarino at 925-779-7164. Follow him at [Twitter.com/paulbugarino](https://twitter.com/paulbugarino).



The Daily Deal
50% OFF
Zuppa

San Francisco : \$25 for \$50 Worth of Italian Food and Drink at Zuppa Restaurant in SoMa

Get this and other Daily Deals at:
www.PrintGroupon.com/81



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™