

SF RAILYARDS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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OVERVIEW

What is the SF Railyards project?

The railyard is a 20-acre site at the intersection of SOMA, Mission Bay, and Showplace Square, owned by Prologis, also where Caltrain has a perpetual easement, and the location of Caltrain's station at 4th and King as well as an active train yard.

The SF Railyards project will explore a re-envisioning of the site with potential new track layouts, an improved station, and mixed-use development concepts to transform the site into a regional transit center with a new rail station, added Caltrain service, housing, offices, and public spaces.

The project is moving forward in two components:

Caltrain/Prologis Business Case:

- By 2040, Caltrain envisions running trains every 7.5 minutes at rush hour and express service all day. Caltrain and Prologis are evaluating rail options for the SF Railyards site that can meet the operational needs of this vision, while also supporting feasible mixed-use development.
- Deliverable: Evaluation of various preliminary concepts using an evidence-based framework to identify whether concepts meet goals for the site. Preliminary concepts would consider recommended track layouts, and new station and development concepts to be further detailed in later phases. The Preliminary Business Case report is currently expected in 2023.

SF Railyards Development Concept:

- In partnership with public agencies, Prologis will propose a design and development concept for the SF Railyards and nearby rail tracks. The mixed-use concept will include housing, office, commercial spaces, open space, and community facilities, as well as new streets and pathways to connect SOMA, Showplace Square, Mission Bay and Mission Creek.
- Deliverables: Detailed development proposal with zoning changes and community benefits priorities. Initial concepts are expected in 2023.

Why does this project matter?

Redesigning the SF Railyards is an opportunity to:

- Accommodate increased Caltrain service and future Caltrain operations, and support connections to CA High-Speed Rail, the Downtown Rail Extension, the future Pennsylvania Avenue Extension, SFMTA Central Subway, and other SFMTA transit lines.
- Create transit-oriented development to add housing and increase access to jobs in San Francisco and across the region.
- Reduce climate impacts by replacing car trips with enhanced regional transit options.
- Connect downtown San Francisco neighborhoods to the waterfront, schools, and open spaces.
- Increase the resilience of the station and the neighborhood in preparation for earthquakes and sea-level rise.

Who is on the project team?

The project team is an integrated partnership of public agencies and a private development sponsor:

- Caltrain - Regional train corridor operator and owner
- Prologis – SF Railyards site owner and development lead
- SF Planning - City’s lead for planning, design, and outreach
- SF Office of Economic and Workforce Development - City’s lead development partner
- SF Mayor’s Office of Transportation - Policy lead
- Transbay Joint Powers Authority - Builder and operator of the Downtown Extension rail tunnel, 4th & Townsend station, and Salesforce Transit Center
- SF County Transportation Authority - Pennsylvania Avenue Extension technical lead
- CA High Speed Rail Authority - High speed rail builder and operator

Why now?

Several related transportation projects are already underway that are seeking to bring new and increased rail service to downtown San Francisco and better connect the region. A redeveloped railyard can provide improved Caltrain facilities in conjunction with a mix of housing, commercial, and community space.

What are the goals of the SF Railyards project?

- To create a feasible transit-oriented development project.
- Enable Caltrain to continue providing reliable transportation services to the public, and respond to growth in travel through implementation of its long-range service vision.
- To support related transportation projects.
- Goals and objectives established through the Preliminary Business Case process
 - Maintain and enhance rider/transit facility user experience
 - Facilitate safe and efficient rail operations
 - Unlock the economic and financial potential of the site for all stakeholders
 - Pursue low carbon and climate resilient solutions
 - Unlock social benefits (and added social value) for existing and future communities
 - Deliver a welcoming, accessible, safe, and inclusive urban environment

RELATED PROJECTS

What are the related transportation projects?

- **Downtown Rail Extension (DTX)** – A new underground 4th and Townsend station and tunnel connection to Salesforce Transit Center that will bring rail service to downtown San Francisco. The project team’s goal is to integrate any SF Railyards track and station changes seamlessly with the 4th and Townsend station design. The DTX project is currently in design.
- **Pennsylvania Avenue Extension (PAX)** – A proposal to extend the underground rail tunnel south of 4th and Townsend to the 22nd Street station area. PAX would eliminate the existing surface track and street closures at 16th Street and Mission Bay Drive (currently up to [20] minutes of “gate-down” time during every rush hour). The proposal is endorsed by Mayor and BOS and is currently under preliminary study.
- **California High Speed Rail (CAHSR)** – The statewide project to provide high-speed rail service from downtown San Francisco and SOMA to San Jose, the Central Valley, and Los Angeles.

Each project has its own schedule and public process, independent of the SF Railyards project.

What’s going on with the Downtown Extension (DTX)?

The Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) recently reached the milestone of 30% design for the DTX, a critical milestone for cost estimating and securing funding. Further design refinements and responses to federal and state grant applications are anticipated this fall. Pending the securing of additional funding, work on utility relocation for the tunnel is anticipated to start late next year.

What’s going on with high-speed rail?

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) released the Final EIR/EIS for the San Francisco to San Jose project section. The Authority’s Board of Directors certified the EIR at a two-day board meeting August 17 and 18. The EIR alternatives include an interim rail station at 4th & Townsend– until the connection to Salesforce Transit Center is made – as well as a light maintenance facility for high-speed trains in Brisbane.

Caltrain Electrification?

Caltrain Electrification is building California's first electrified commuter rail and the West’s first diesel to electric rail system. When complete in 2024, it will transform the way people travel between San Francisco and Silicon Valley, converting 51-miles of rail and replacing 75% of the existing aging diesel fleet with state-of-the-art electric trains. The project serves as a critical foundation of the state’s future high-speed rail system, and will provide faster, safer, more reliable service while enhancing equity and access for underserved communities, and mitigating climate change.

[Learn more about electrification.](#)

Pennsylvania Avenue Extension (PAX)?

Currently in preliminary planning phases with environmental review expected to begin in 2024.

What's going on with Amazon at 900 7th Street?

Amazon paused their work on 900 7th Street. They have not provided any further information on their intentions for the site.

What about the Southeast Rail Station Study?

The Southeast Rail Station Study (SERSS) considered station location options to improve Caltrain access between the future underground 4th and Townsend station and the Bayshore Station. The study considered options for two station geographies: one station to restore regional rail service to the Bayview community that was lost when Paul Avenue Station closed, and a second station at or in place of 22nd Street, serving the growing Dogpatch/Potrero/Mission Bay neighborhoods. The Planning Commission passed a resolution to advance SERSS, including recommendation for a Bayview Caltrain station between Jerrold/Oakdale, consideration of future 22nd Street in current location or Mariposa/16th Street, and advancing the PAX.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

What kind of development is being proposed for the site?

Specific development proposals, designs, and program uses have not yet been established, but will likely consist of a mixed-use development that includes housing, office, retail, and public space that is integrated with the proposed transit improvements.

When there is a proposal, what is the process for approving and developing the SF Railyards?

The project will undergo a robust public process to develop a package of land use changes, environmental review, community benefits, and development entitlements. The primary approval document is a Development Agreement (DA), which is a contract between the City of San Francisco and a private landowner. Precedent projects are Pier 70, Mission Rock, and Potrero Power Station, which all have Development Agreements. DAs are different from other projects in that they usually:

- Amend and overlay the Planning Code to enable specific uses and controls for the project.
- Require public benefits beyond City requirements (e.g., affordable housing, public parks).
- Identify Developer and City obligations throughout implementation and operation of the project.
- Must be approved by Board of Supervisors (& several City Commissions and Boards).
- Are constructed over a longer period and in phases.
- Provide certainty and streamlining for approvals of individual buildings.

Since Caltrain has a right to operate transit on the SF Railyards site, any Development Agreement would require Caltrain's support.

How long will this DA process take?

Development Agreements take several years to be developed and involve a wide range of tasks, including environmental review, negotiation of public benefits, master planning and design, among others. Community engagement occurs throughout the process and shapes the content of the final agreements. Some expected milestones for the SF Railyards DA process are:

- Fall 2022 - Prologis, Caltrain and the City of San Francisco start public outreach and engagement, and continue these public conversations until final approvals.
- 2023/4 - Prologis submits a draft development concept to the Planning Department for a Preliminary Project Assessment (PPA). The PPA is the first formal step in the planning process. A PPA is an initial review of a development concept for consistency with City policy, plans, and community priorities. The project will be refined based on the PPA analysis, transportation analysis, and public input.
- 2024 - The refined project will be submitted for environmental review, per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Environmental review can take up to two years.
- [2026] – The project documents are finalized and submitted to public policy bodies for review and approval.

What are the development constraints on the site?

The project is unique due to its active use as a rail yard and regional train station. The preliminary Business Case process is focused on identifying and assessing development constraints of this unique site – first and foremost of which is the need for active rail uses to remain on the site into the future. Project

phasing is also a critical constraint because Caltrain will need to maintain operating rail service over the course of construction. In addition, the site sits partially on fill, is subject to sea-level rise inundation, and is adjacent to I-280 overpass and off-ramps. Each of these elements are being analyzed and will shape the eventual proposals for mixed-use development.

How will the SF Railyards project be funded?

The project is anticipated to be a public-private partnership involving both public funding sources and private investment. As with all large regional transportation projects, the Caltrain improvements including the new track layouts, operational improvements, and new station designs, will likely seek funding through a variety of public sources. The site owner and development partner, Prologis, will leverage typical private and public funding sources to enable the mixed-use development component of the project. The project team will be working holistically on a financing plan to enable a feasible project that can achieve the required transportation investments and a robust package of community benefits.

Who will build the SF Railyards project?

Construction of the project is still many years away, as an extensive pre-development process must occur before construction can begin. The Preliminary Business Case, which is underway now, will help to inform decisions about the timing and degree of public investment, if any. After the PBC is complete, environmental review, design, financing, and numerous other pre-development activities must be undertaken before the project can move to construction. When the project is ready for construction, contractor selection for the public improvements will follow all of the requirements of a public agency procurement process.

Who is Prologis?

Prologis is a logistics real estate company headquartered in San Francisco, CA. Prologis owns, manages, and develops logistics and intermodal facilities in major cities worldwide.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

How is the community involved?

To reach diverse audiences, public engagement will include an SF Railyards Working Group (RWG), digital newsletters, community meetings, and public events. See sfplanning.org/railyards for more information. The RWG will begin meeting in fall 2022 and will help develop the public engagement plan with the project team

What is the SF Railyards Working Group?

- The SF Railyards Working Group (RWG) consists of 10-15 community representatives of diverse races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status
- The RWG will hold public working meetings to convey project information, identify community priorities, discuss tradeoffs, and bring diverse perspectives to the SF Railyards project.
- By representing a range of stakeholders and priority communities, the RWG can inform the public engagement strategy, identify project opportunities, and discover synergies for expanding public benefits.
- The RWG started meeting quarterly in Fall 2022.

What about all the past projects and planning work that have already been done for the area?

The project team's understanding of community priorities is based on years of public input into: the Rail Alignment and Benefits Study (2018), Central SOMA plan (2018), SNACS (2019), Connect SF (2019-2021), the Housing Element of the City's General Plan (2022), Environmental Justice Framework of the General Plan (2022), and strategies from local cultural districts, community organizations and community benefit districts. The draft priorities are:

- Provide open space, housing and other essential community benefits
- Integrate with and improve connections between neighborhoods
- Address resilience and sea-level rise at this site
- Complement San Francisco's skyline
- Compatibility with the Downtown Extension and Pennsylvania Avenue Extension

What is the SF Railyards approach to Racial and Social Equity?

Caltrain is committed to enhancing equity in its system, focusing on the diverse constituency of residents and riders who depend on transit for essential travel and addressing the historical inequities that have caused the rail service to be disproportionately utilized by lower income riders and people of color. Caltrain is committed to engaging in research, community dialog and planning to understand how best to provide meaningful access and connections between the SF Railyards and historically underserved low-income and minority communities along the corridor. The SF Railyards Project seeks to advance equity through the public outreach process and through racial and social equity metrics in its project evaluation framework. Through engagement with community organizations, CACs, and the Railyards Working Group, the project aims to expand the participation of priority groups, including but not limited to: American Indian, Black, Filipino-American, and other communities of color; LGBTQ+ communities; Low-income communities; Communities with limited English proficiency and Women and youth.

Read more:

- Caltrain's [framework for equity](#), connectivity, recovery, and growth.
- SF Planning's community [equity commitments and programs](#)

How do I stay informed?

- [SF Planning](#) + newsletter
- [Prologis website](#)

What is currently at the SF Railyards site?

The railyards site is an end-of-line passenger station, and an active train yard used by Caltrain for maintenance and storage operations. Caltrain operates a station at the eastern end of the site at 4th & King Streets that provides passenger boarding facilities for train service to the peninsula. The existing Caltrain station was intended to be a temporary station. It was built in 1975 at 4th & King when the original station entrances were moved from 3rd Street. The existing station faces a number of operational, service, and safety challenges due to its age and configuration.

CALTRAIN OPERATIONS

How will the SF Railyards project impact Caltrain operations?

Caltrain's goal is to maintain operations during the phased delivery of the SF Railyards project, however, there may be temporary impacts during the construction. Maintaining Caltrain operations is a priority part of the preliminary Business Case evaluation criteria.

Can I keep using the 4th & King station now, and when will it be closed?

Caltrain will continue to operate at the existing station during the entitlement and planning phases with little impact on its operation or schedule. The timing of construction will depend on the environmental and planning process, project approvals, as well as the progress of the related transportation projects.

Will the railyards be moved? If so, where will the tracks go?

Caltrain and Prologis are currently developing a preliminary Business Case that will inform what the railyards will look like in the future and where any relocated track service will move to. The Business Case process is designed to optimize Caltrain service and integrate any potential development. Initial results from the preliminary Business Case work are expected in summer 2023.