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## BART Fleet of the Future May Take a While

By Cathy Tyson



Although a final design has not been chosen, this image shows the most favored selection. Illustration provided

voters may be asked to approve a tax to help defray costs.

Riders will see a payoff in modern, sleeker, more contemporary design made with more functional materials that can be wiped clean. Goodbye nasty carpet and seats. Three doors on each car will assist those getting in and out - especially during peak commute hours. BMW Designworks came up with a layout that allows for more room for bikes, wheelchairs and packages made possible with input from approximately 10,000 riders and concerned residents. "The public spoke loud and clear that maximizing seating was a top priority. Designing seat configurations is a delicate balancing act of comfort and capacity," noted a report from BART on their Fleet of the Future.

Once the final contract has been awarded to one of the three finalists, the supplier will provide an actual size mock-up that will be available to the public for inspection, tentatively scheduled for later this year. Comments about the sample car will be taken into consideration for the final design. "We've had robust public feedback to the program," said BART spokesperson Luna Salaver. The first actual train car will arrive for testing in 2013. Deliveries of the road tested shiny new redesigned cars should commence in January, 2015. If all goes according to schedule, delivery of the 260 new and improved cars for Phase 1 should run from approximately September of 2016 to December 2018. Finding a reliable, comfortable fleet to handle a growing number of commuters obviously takes a while.

For Lafayette residents getting tired of the shrill screeching noise coming from the tracks, Salaver recommends contacting BART Customer Service directly. Multiple comments and complaints will go to their maintenance department to encourage grinding the divots along the track that are to blame for the racket. Go to BART.gov, then click on "About BART" for the "Contact Us" page; phone numbers, along with e-mail and regular mail information can be found there. For your convenience, station agents also have postage paid comment cards. The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

Also in Lafayette, there were rumors of an Antique Faire in the BART parking lot starting this spring. Organizers withdrew their application and now plan on locating in downtown Concord.

It's only natural to start noticing a few gray hairs and wrinkles around a milestone birthday. As BART turns 40, it's taking a hard look at the nation's oldest transportation fleet. Regular riders know that most of the cars in the system have seen better days and can definitely use a face lift.

On average a single car currently runs 110,000 miles per year; collectively the cars are nearing the end of their useful life. The BART Car Replacement Project will replace BART's existing 669 cars over time and is currently projected to cost approximately \$3.2 billion in year-of-expenditure dollars, according to Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) report in January. Approximately three-quarters of the overall funding will come from the MTC, with BART contributing 25%, approximately \$800 million.

BART's Board of Directors is expected to award a contract in May selecting one of the three finalists; all are from outside of the U.S.: Alstom - France, Bombardier Transit - Canada, and Hyundai Rotem - South Korea. The lucky winner will be expected to manufacture ten test cars for Phase 1 of the massive project to be delivered in early 2015.

Phase 2 is slated to follow a similar formula, but

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