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Livermore BART allies ready to show support

■ Citywide petition drive nears end with about 700 signatures hoping to make extension a greater priority

By Mike White

STAFF WRITER

LIVERMORE — Supporters of a BART extension to Livermore plan to turn in petitions with about 700 signatures today at the agency's board meeting in Oakland.

Organizers hope the signatures from potential Livermore BART users will encourage the board to make the long-sought extension a greater priority.

The signatures are not necessarily from registered voters and they carry no legal authority, but organizers hope they will raise a few eyebrows among those who say there is no money for a Livermore extension, which could cost more

Please see **BART**, Valley 2

BART petition drive nearing conclusion

► **BART**, from Valley 1

than \$1 billion.

Many of the signatures came from San Joaquin Valley commuters who want a BART station at the base of the Altamont. Organizer Linda Jeffery Sailors said she will turn in the signatures during the public comment period of the meeting and make a brief statement. The board will have no authority to act on what she says during the meeting, but could schedule a longer discussion for a future meeting.

"The signatures that we have collected have come from people who feel very strongly about BART to Livermore," Sailors said. "I have been receiving 10 to 12 calls a day requesting petitions with comments such as 'We have been paying for 40 years — it's our turn!'"

Sailors said 75 to 100 petitions are still circulating in the community, and she will continue gathering the signatures and will deliver them to BART when she receives them.

The petition says Livermore is the only station in the original BART district that has not yet been planned and funded. The issue has long been important to Livermore residents, in part because they have paid property taxes for the system for some 40 years.

Proposition A, approved by voters in 1962, authorized \$792 million in BART bonds. The resulting property taxes to pay off these general obligation bonds began in 1963 and lasted until 1999. Livermore residents continue to fund the system through the half-cent sales tax for BART that was enacted by the Legislature in 1970.

A Livermore extension is not among a list of priorities for BART for the next 10 years for several reasons. Local leaders insist they want the extension from Pleasanton to Livermore to go through the median of Interstate 580, and BART officials say there is no money for such a project, which could cost \$100 million per mile.

Meanwhile, plans are proceeding for a BART extension from the Pittsburg-Bay Point station to Antioch, Oakley, Brentwood and Byron in eastern Contra Costa County. This extension would use diesel powered trains, the same technology that a panel of officials from Alameda County and cities such as Livermore and Pleasanton rejected.

Plans are also under way for a San Jose extension. Santa Clara County voters have agreed to pay for the extension, which is estimated to cost \$4.7 billion. State and federal funds would also be involved.

While Sailors has received support from those unhappy about BART not building a station in Livermore, where the agency owns property for a future station, she has ruffled the feathers among some in Livermore's local political scene. Sailors, a former Dublin mayor, supported a project for homes and parks in North Livermore that lost by a landslide vote in November.

Opponents of homes in North Livermore gathered more than 10,000 signatures on an urban growth boundary initiative several years ago.

Ten thousand signatures "is the standard in Livermore for an honest display of effort to sample public opinion," development opponent Clarence Hoenig said in a letter to the newspaper. "Most serious petition drives would be embarrassed to crow about 500 signatures for such a serious subject as BART-To-Livermore." Hoenig's reference to the 500 number refers to an earlier count of signatures.

Sailors said she expects to make her public comments and turn in the signatures near the end of BART's meeting, which begins at 9 a.m. at the Kaiser Center, 20th Street Mall, 344 20th St., Oakland.

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