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Letters to the Editor

Widen I-580 for BART

Dear Editor,

One of my last acts as a 14-year BART director was to secure the West Livermore station site on Airway Boulevard. That 53-acre site--far larger than any other BART station site--made practical the coming Isabel (SR-84) freeway interchange. Earlene DeMarcus, who succeeded me, got an even larger site near the truck scales for an East Livermore station site and train yard.

A BART rail line--track, signaling, power, ductwork and fencing--in a widened freeway median should cost about \$15 million per mile. (Stations, land, structures, earthwork, freeway widening, cars, a yard, shop, and "implementation" would be extra.)

BART should stay in a widened freeway median to east of Greenville Road. It should then curve under westbound I-580 up to the former SP roadbed aimed for later extension to Mountain House and Tracy. An ACE inter-modal facility there, with direct Altamont Pass freeway access and financed by parking fees, would ease I-580 congestion at no cost to BART taxpayers.

Stations near the Isabel interchange, the truck scales and at the inter-modal would give commuters an alternative to crowded I-580. Until BART rail comes, good bus service should link the future stations to BART trains at Dublin-Pleasanton.

Planning a widened right of way and compatible development should come first in capital spending. Caltrans has a crucial role in making it possible. They should acquire land ASAP to widen I-580; build heavy-duty truck lanes and shoulders just outside the existing truck lanes; resurface those for light vehicles; and convert existing inside lanes into a wide median for HOV lanes and future BART rail.

Funding for ACCMA's eastbound HOV lane project, which would greatly increase the cost of BART rail to Livermore and benefit few other than Central Valley carpoolers, should go instead to a coherent I-580 widening program. Everyone would benefit!

BART valley floor land at East Livermore could be put to far higher use than storage tracks and shops. More earthwork would be required to put them beyond the UP/ACE overpass, but, with on-site borrow and waste, there would be little haul.

Caltrans' top priority should be planning for, protecting and acquiring land for widening I-580 from Tassajara Creek to Greenville Road. ACCMA's eastbound HOV project is a dreadful waste of scarce Alameda County funds--akin to Spare the Air subsidized rides on transit.

Robert S. Allen

BART Director (1974-1988)

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