

IN THE NEWS



East County eBART project could be completed by May 2018

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The long-awaited East County eBART project is inching toward the finish line.

BART officials are in the process of installing and testing various pieces of equipment while training employees in hopes of opening to the public in May 2018.

The 10-mile BART extension will link Pittsburg and Bay Point to Antioch, down the Highway 4 median.

“It’s very exciting,” said Joel Keller, a BART board member.

“I know a lot of people have been looking forward to this for a long time.”

Key pieces of the \$524 million project that still need to be completed include installing ticketing equipment, fare gates and elevators; testing the trains and the train control system; and training employees, said Alicia Trost, a BART spokeswoman.

The 10 miles of new track will accommodate riders traveling between the existing Pittsburg-Bay Point BART Station and the City of Antioch with stations set up along the Highway 4 median near Railroad Ave.

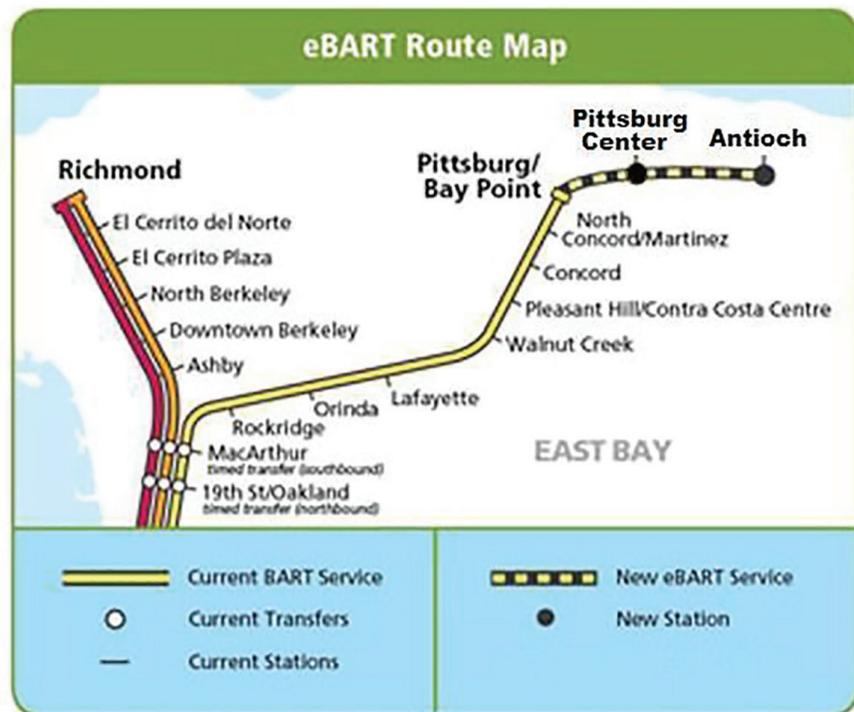
BART officials estimate trips between the two locations taking about 10 minutes. The operation will run on the regular BART schedule.

Keller said it’s tough to estimate how many riders will use the system at the start, but ridership is expected to jump to 10,000 riders a day by 2030.



Photo by Tony Kukulich.

Unlike conventional BART cars that operate on a heavy rail and draw power to the electric motor from a paddle on the train that touches a third rail, the new system will use diesel multiple units (DMU) that operate on a standard-gauge rail. The new trains are equipped with an electric motor and a diesel engine with the engines providing the energy for the motor. Three DMUs can be linked together to accommodate up to 600 passengers at a time.



Courtesy of BART. The much-anticipated East County eBART project could be completed by May 2018. The 10-mile BART extension will link the Pittsburg-Bay Point Station to Antioch down the Highway 4 median.

“The 10.1-mile extension to Antioch will give people an opportunity to access public transportation sooner than they can now,” Keller said. “It should shorten their commute, because it’s a 10-minute ride into the transfer station, which should be quicker than car or bus.”

While the project is nearing a smooth finish, the path to completion was bumpy.

BART started working on the extension between Pittsburg and Antioch in 2001, to utilize the unused Union Pacific Railroad that runs parallel to Highway 4 all the way to Tracy. But plans went awry when Union Pacific decided not to sell the track, share it or even allow BART to build a second track next to it.

BART officials jumped at the opportunity to use the center median of the revamped Highway 4 but then had to halt their plan for taking the service beyond Antioch because of its high cost. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, the City of Pittsburg, the state and other East Contra Costa transportation commissions contributed funds to cover the project’s steep price tag.

The cost of the trip between the Pittsburg Bay-Bay Point and Antioch stations will be \$2 with a clipper card or \$2.50 using a paper ticket. In addition, there will be a daily fee of \$3 to park at the Antioch Station and the Pittsburg Center – located in between the Pittsburg-Bay Point and Antioch stations. A single day reserved permit will cost \$6, long-term will cost \$7 and a monthly reserved permit will be \$105. Monthly parking permits will be available to riders beginning Jan. 16, at 11 a.m., at www.select-a-spot.com/bart.

For more information, visit www.bit.ly/2yYYhk8.