

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for weekend track replacement work between the Richmond and El Cerrito del Norte stations.

Why are you doing this work?

BART is moving forward with a systemwide rebuilding campaign supported by voter-approved Measure RR. The track replacement work happening near the Richmond Station is critical to ensure the safety and reliability of the BART system for its riders. The work team will be replacing vital track components that have been in use since the start of service in 1972. Thanks to voter-approved Measure RR there are now more rebuilding projects happening at BART than at any point in the system's history.

When will the work be happening?

Preliminary work for this project started in October to prepare for five track shutdown weekends between the Richmond and El Cerrito del Norte stations. The scheduled shutdown weekends are January 16-18 (Martin Luther King Jr. weekend), January 30-31, February 13-15 (Presidents' Day weekend), February 27-28, and March 13-14. Once the shutdown weekends are complete it's anticipated that crews will continue to work on the project through May, but no additional shutdowns are expected to be needed for this final work.

Why do you need to shutdown BART service instead of just reducing service around the work?

Safety always comes first for BART. That's true for our riders as well as our work crews. This project involves the removal and replacement of oversized trackway components making it impossible to run trains through the work area during much of the construction. Also, BART worker-safety rules prevent train service from continuing during this sort of work. Track maintenance at BART typically happens in the overnight hours when there is no service, but a project of this scope is too large to happen in such a short amount of time.

Why is this work happening now?

There's never a good time for a track shutdown. BART strives to avoid track shutdowns, but they are necessary to perform large-scale rail replacement and rebuilding work such as is happening near the Richmond Station. As much work as possible will be performed during overnight hours so we can limit the number of weekends when we must shut down the tracks. By doing shutdown weekends over holidays it gives crews the extra time they need to get the work done as quickly as possible.

Why are you doing a track shutdown during the Martin Luther King Jr. and Presidents Day holiday weekends?

These weekends are traditionally low-ridership periods for BART. Doing this work now allows BART to impact fewer people while gaining a huge increase in construction productivity. Whenever BART does track replacement work it takes a combined 14 hours to decommission a section of track and later recertify that the replacement track is ready for service. This fixed amount of time is a key factor in planning for any track project. During a typical weekend shutdown that allows a window of approximately 36 hours for productive construction work. But during a three-day period that window is extended up to 60 hours. That represents a nearly 67% increase in time for productive construction.

What's a bus bridge and how will it work?

Since we're unable to run trains between the Richmond and El Cerrito del Norte stations on shutdown weekends, regular service will be replaced with free buses between those stations. Riders at those two stations will be directed by BART staff on to the appropriate bus. There will be extra BART staff at both stations to help you. Riders also have the option to simply bypass the Richmond Station and go directly to El Cerrito del Norte to avoid construction impacts.

Will the track shutdown between Richmond and El Cerrito del Norte impact BART service elsewhere in the system?

While we're advising riders who need to travel between the Richmond and El Cerrito del Norte stations to add 15-20 minutes to their travel plans, shutdown weekends should not impact service on the rest of the BART system. You are encouraged to plan ahead by going to the BART Trip Planner at <https://www.bart.gov/planner>.

Will this work be disruptive to the neighborhood around the Richmond Station?

In order to perform this critical work, BART crews will need to set up lights, cranes, generators and other heavy equipment near and on the trackway. This will happen during track closure weekends as well as overnight hours on some weekdays. This will mean some neighbors will hear noises, which include but aren't limited to, beeping from trucks backing up, industrial sized saws, drills and other powerful equipment. Residents will also see bright lights at night.

Will there be any impact to roads near the worksite?

BART crews may close Portola Avenue near Richmond Station to stage materials and equipment. Among the equipment to be staged will be the largest crane to every be used for a BART rebuilding project. The crane has a lift radius of 155 feet and an overall capacity of 70,000 pounds. To ensure public safety Portola Avenue between Roosevelt Avenue and 16th Street would be closed for all shutdown weekends and Barrett Avenue between Marina Way and 18th Street will have lane closures for one day.

What are you doing to limit construction impacts for neighbors?

BART has mounted an extensive public outreach campaign leading up to the start of this vital track work. This includes direct mailers to neighbors of the Richmond Station, briefings for local elected officials, and outreach to the press. Noise levels are expected to be similar to sound levels from past maintenance work in the area. The results of this project will be a safer and more reliable system for riders and a quieter system for neighbors.

Will riders see any benefits from this work?

Once the work is complete the noise level of trains will drop, and passengers will experience a smoother, safer, and more reliable ride. These track improvements will benefit thousands of riders every day for decades to come. Rebuilding projects like this one have helped BART to boost its on-time train performance to more than 90%.

Has BART done this sort of work before?

BART has successfully completed numerous track rebuilding projects. BART has successfully completed similar track replacement projects in Oakland, Concord, Lafayette, Orinda, and Hayward. Those projects have delivered on the promise of providing riders with a more reliable, quieter, and safer ride.

How is this work being paid for?

Funding for this work is coming from Measure RR, which was approved by BART District voters in 2016. Measure RR provides \$3.5 billion in bonds to rebuild the BART system over the coming years. RR funds have also been used to rebuild other portions of trackway. The expenditure of RR funds is monitored by an independent Bond Oversight Committee to ensure projects are cost-effective, meet quality standards, and are completed in a timely manner.

What are you doing to protect workers on the project from the coronavirus?

BART has adjusted its job site protocols and all contractors that perform rebuilding work are required to develop social distancing policies for all their employees. Job briefings that used to take place in a huddle are now happening in a way that allows workers to spread out. More vehicles are being used to transport workers to job sites. 55-gallon drums of clean water and soap are deployed at work sites and workers have been instructed to wash their hands more often. Social distancing is enforced during breaks and mealtimes. Workers are spread out on job sites but sometimes the nature of the project make it very challenging to achieve social distancing. In those instances, all BART workers are required to wear N95 masks.