Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for weekend track replacement shutdowns between the Bay Fair and South Hayward stations.

Why are you doing this work?

The track replacement work happening near the Hayward Station is critical to ensure the safety and reliability of the BART system for its riders. BART is moving forward with a systemwide rebuild supported by voter-approved Measure RR. In this case, crews 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.

The primary goal of this project is to replace four track switches that are at the end of their useful lives. These are large track components that can measure up to 200 feet in length and allow trains to move from line to line. These switches are as important to a railway as intersections are to cars. Crews will also install 4,000 feet of new running rail, replace 1,000 tons of rock ballast that is used to stabilize the trackway, and accomplish several other priority rebuilding objectives.

When will the work be happening?

Preliminary work for this project started earlier this year to prepare for several track shutdown weekends between the Bay Fair and South Hayward stations. The scheduled shutdown weekends are August 1-2, August 22-23, September 5-7 (Labor Day Weekend), September 19-20, and October 3-4.

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 Hayward 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 one of the shutdown weekends over the Labor Day holiday it gives crews the extra time they need to get the work done as quickly as possible. It's a priority to finish this work before weather conditions become a concern.

Why are you doing a track shutdown during Labor Day Weekend?

Labor Day weekend is traditionally a low-ridership period 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 Bay Fair and South Hayward stations on shutdown weekends, regular service will be replaced with free buses between those stations. Riders at Bay Fair, Hayward, and South Hayward stations will be directed by BART staff on to the appropriate bus. There will be extra BART staff at all three stations to help you. Buses will run directly between Bay Fair and South Hayward as well as between Bay Fair, Hayward, and South Hayward.

Will the track shutdown between Bay Fair and South Hayward impact BART service elsewhere in the system?

While we're advising riders who need to travel between the Bay Fair and South Hayward stations to expect delays of 20 to 40 minutes, 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 Hayward 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 a few hundred yards south of the Hayward BART Station between the station and D Street. This will happen during track closure weekends as well as overnight hours on some weekdays. This will mean nearby 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. Additionally, BART crews will be using the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to access the work area with their trucks. Crews will also use that area to stage cranes, which will lift heavy equipment and materials in and out of the trackway.

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 Hayward Station, briefings for local elected officials, and outreach to the press. The nearest residence to the project is approximately 200 feet from the jobsite. 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. It will also mean that BART will not have to do this sort of work in the same neighborhood for decades to come.

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 tens of 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. Two of the latest examples include major track renovations near the Lafayette and Pleasant Hill stations. Both of those projects were completed without requiring additional track shutdown weekends. Those projects have also 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.