

Brentwood Comments sought on eBART project

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About 50 residents filed into the Brentwood Community Center last week to discuss the eBART train service, which promises to link East County to the Pittsburg/Bay Point BART station via existing railroad lines.

It was the first formal opportunity residents had to put their comments on the record, though BART representatives say there will be many more meetings in the future.

At this point, the \$390 million project calls for a 23-mile rail system along existing train tracks in East County. It won't be the same as regular BART - proposed eBART diesel technology would be cheaper, at \$16 million a mile as opposed to \$100 million a mile spent on regular BART.

At the same time, transportation officials are promising a clean, environmentally friendly, high-quality system. They're also saying they won't put the train in the Highway 4 median as earlier proposed. And they're promising a seamless transition for passengers between eBART and the Pittsburg BART station - something residents have said is paramount, or they won't use it.

As proposed, the East County train will snake through Pittsburg, Antioch, Brentwood and Oakley, and will end in Byron/Discovery Bay. Plans call for six different stations in those cities - one at Railroad Avenue, one in central Antioch near the fairgrounds, one near Hillcrest Avenue, one possibly on Empire Avenue in Oakley, one in downtown Brentwood and then one in an unspecified location in Byron/Discovery Bay. Construction could start as early as 2007 and the service could be running by 2010.

Anyone interested in submitting formal comments on the eBART project can do so in the following ways: by visiting www.ebartproject.org, by e-mailing info@ebartproject.org, by faxing at 510-464-7673 or by calling 1-866-596-BART.

Comments are due by Aug. 19. There will, however, be opportunities to comment during future phases.