



TA Board of Directors
Meeting of August 6, 2026

Correspondence as of July 2, 2026

Subject

1. Reimagine Dumbarton Study - Letter from Atherton

From: [Michael Gallagher](#)
To: chuangm@samtrans.com
Cc: [Board \(@samtrans.com\)](#); [April Chan](#); [Board \(@smcta.com\)](#); [Anthony Suber](#); [Robert Ovadia](#)
Subject: Reimagine Dumbarton Study - Letter from Atherton
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2026 1:39:19 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-oha2nvuk.png](#)
[Dumbarton Letter 063026 SamTrans Chuang.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon, SamTrans and SMCTA Board of Directors.

Attached to this email is a formal letter from the Atherton City Council concerning the Reimagine Dumbarton Study.

A paper copy of this letter has been sent in the mail as well.

If you have any questions or concerns for Atherton City Council, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or City Clerk Anthony Suber.

Michael Gallagher
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Atherton, CA 94027



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TOWN OF ATHERTON

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
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ATHERTON, CALIFORNIA 94027
(650) 752-0500

June 30, 2026

Marie Chuang, Chair
SamTrans Board of Directors
166 North Rollins Road
Millbrae, CA 94030

SUBJECT: Reimagine Dumbarton Study

Dear Ms. Chuang:

The Town of Atherton writes to provide formal feedback on the Reimagine Dumbarton Corridor Study currently being conducted by SamTrans. The Town appreciates and commends SamTrans' effort to reimagine this long-dormant rail corridor, which has been an unused eyesore for decades and represents a genuine opportunity to improve connectivity between the Dumbarton Bridge area and the Redwood City Transit Center. We are supportive of this corridor being improved and put to productive use for the benefit of the region.

As the project has been described to the Town, the evaluation is leading towards providing a dedicated right-of-way for transit services, with multiple routes and potential headways of as little as 15-minutes during commute periods, classifying the service as Bus Rapid Transit under various legislation. The introduction of Bus Rapid Transit service along this corridor would trigger serious and unacceptable consequences for Atherton and other communities along the route under Senate Bill 79 (SB 79).

Under SB 79, any transit service that meets the definition of Bus Rapid Transit would cause stops along this corridor to be designated as transit-oriented development sites. That designation would grant developers the right to construct high-density residential buildings of seven to nine stories within a quarter to half-mile radius of each stop, with limited local land use authority to regulate or condition that development. The Dumbarton Rail corridor runs through or immediately adjacent to established residential neighborhoods in Atherton and other San Mateo County communities. The imposition of SB 79 entitlements along this corridor would expose those neighborhoods to a scale and intensity of development that is wholly inconsistent with their character and for which no infrastructure planning has been done. This is not a hypothetical concern. It is a direct and foreseeable consequence of the law as written. Complicating matters, SB 79 extends to "planned" Transit Oriented Development Stops and provides such development rights before service is available and proven viable. Additionally, these development rights are provided regardless of accessibility. Currently, there are no directly accessible pedestrian pathways and bikeways for Atherton residents to access the corridor and any proposed stops, and current state laws may not allow Atherton to require development to construct these needed access improvements.

The Town does not oppose Bus Rapid Transit service along this corridor as a matter of principle. Bus service, if well-designed, appropriately scaled to demonstrated demand, and accessible could provide genuine transportation benefits to the region. The Town cannot, however, support a Bus Rapid Transit designation under current law. The risk to residential neighborhoods along the corridor is too significant and the legislative remedy too straightforward to ignore.

With this letter, the Town is seeking the SamTrans' support in seeking legislative amendments to SB 79 to exclude newly established transit corridors of this type from its automatic transit-oriented development provisions, where transit is new, unproven, or in early planning stages, reducing land use impacts to communities along the corridor until the project is built, operating, and serving its intended ridership. If SB 79 is amended to address these concerns, the Town would be prepared to engage constructively on the full scope of the Reimagine Dumbarton project, including its Bus Rapid Transit component.

The Dumbarton Rail corridor has enormous potential. The Town of Atherton wants to see that potential realized in a way that benefits the region without imposing unplanned, disproportionate impacts on the communities through which the corridor runs. We urge SamTrans to advance the active transportation components of this project without delay, and to seek the statutory fix that would allow this community and communities like it throughout the state to say yes to the full vision of this project.

Sincerely,



Stacy Holland

Mayor, Town of Atherton

cc: Board of Directors, SamTrans
April Chan, General Manager/CEO, SamTrans
Board of Directors, San Mateo County Transportation Authority