

TRAFFIC

Here's what new all-electric Caltrain cars will look like for riders in 2022

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ABC7 News has received a sneak peek at what the new all-electric Stadler Caltrain cars will look like for public transit riders in 2022.

SALT LAKE CITY (KGO) -- On Friday, ABC7 got a sneak peek at the new all-electric Caltrain cars expected to arrive in the Bay Area in 2022.

Four hundred workers at a factory in Utah are busy making the new electric trains that Caltrain plans to have rolling down the Peninsula in less than two years.

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The outside shells of seven next-generation electric cars have already been produced in Salt Lake City.

Over the next two years, the European rail car manufacturer Stadler will make 19 of them for Caltrain.

Christoph Bocker is a senior project manager at Stadler, and likens the train cars to a familiar vehicle on Bay Area streets.

"If you like the sound of the electric sound of a Tesla," Bocker says, "you'll also like the sound of our electric train."

Virtual reality video released by Caltrain provides a detailed look at what lies inside.

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One thousand Caltrain riders offered comments to pick color schemes and the seats.

Power outlets and wi-fi are planned, and each train will have two cars set aside for bikes with cameras for security.

The restrooms appear spacious and also include an infant changing table.

Caltrain's chief rail operations officer Michelle Bouchard adds the technical specs of the trains will also be improved with the switchover to electric cars.

"The great benefit of these trains, compared to our diesel right now," Bouchard explains, "is that they'll be able to stop much more quickly and start much more quickly and get up to speed."

Initially, the new cars will be held to the same 79 miles-per-hour maximum speed as their diesel engine trains.

But the electric trains will have a rated top speed of 110 miles-per-hour.

Before the pandemic, Caltrain was carrying 65,000 passengers per day.

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U.S. Representative Jackie Speier says the future of Caltrain looks bigger and bolder.

"We're going to be able to triple that number over the next 20 years with electrification," Speier says.

The conversion to electric trains is the result of \$1 billion in federal funding with a similar amount coming from state and local government.

That investment should help to ease some Peninsula freeway congestion, says Caltrain director of government and public affairs Casey Fromson.

"Today Caltrain carries the equivalent of four freeway lanes of 101 traffic, and in the future," Fromson explains, "we'd be carrying an additional five and a half lanes of freeway traffic on our trains."

The first electrified train will be sent to Colorado in January for a year-long track test.

Caltrain will receive its first delivery next summer with phased-in service expected in 2022.

If you'd like to check out more video of the new cars in virtual reality, Caltrain is offering a limited number of cardboard viewers [on its website](#).