



Two Years Into BART Vinyl Seating Retrofit: **Costs Down, Satisfaction Up**

In 2012, the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system began to renovate its oldest fleet in the nation train cars by replacing fabric seats, which were costly to clean and difficult to maintain, with wipeable, easy-to-clean material. The decision to invest in new seat coverings was driven by the desire to meet passenger demands for cleaner seats and to help freshen the aging train cars in a cost effective way. BART had received extensive media attention when several types of mold and bacteria strains were found in a random testing of the public transportation system's seats. BART sought an upholstery product that would meet the agency's standards for durability, safety and environmental properties.

BART found the answer with OMNOVA Solutions, which offered an engineered vinyl upholstery solution that provides durability, health safety and customer satisfaction.

More than two years have passed since the phased roll-out of the new seating, which uses OMNOVA Solutions' **PreVaill Transit™** vinyl upholstery with **PreFixx®** protective finish.

This product is engineered for mass transit applications, offering excellent durability and cleanability. The improved appearance and longer life expectancy also have achieved tremendously positive reviews from customers.

PREVAIL™
TRANSIT with **PreFixx®**

OMNOVA Solutions is an innovator and global provider of emulsion polymers, specialty chemicals and functional surfaces that are expertly designed to meet the needs of today and tomorrow. Originally part of The General Tire & Rubber Company, then GenCorp, the company was spun off as OMNOVA Solutions in 1999. OMNOVA is a market leader in the manufacturing of coated vinyl and polyurethane fabrics, and laminates for use in the transportation, residential housing, commercial building, industrial and healthcare segments.

For more information, visit www.omnova.com or call 866-332-5226.

The following interview with Alicia Trost, communications department manager for BART, brings us up-to-date on the project and future expectations.

Do All existing BART fleets have the new vinyl seats?

We started this project in March 2012 and, of the 669 train cars, 439 have the new vinyl seating. We are targeting that, by year-end 2014, the remaining 230 train cars will be completed with the new vinyl seats.

BART was very interested in getting customer feedback regarding the new vinyl seating. What has been the reaction from your customers now two years into the new seating?

We did a formal random sample survey on the trains with 1,250 riders shortly after installation of the new seat covers began. Feedback was very positive with 93% of the respondents rating them Excellent or Very Good. Three-quarters (75%) preferred them over the fabric seats (15% had no preference, and 10% preferred the fabric).

As each car was outfitted with new vinyl seat covers, car cards were put in the car soliciting feedback by email, text or phone. The car cards have been taken down now, but we are still receiving positive feedback.

“Going vinyl has been a huge positive for BART. Our riders overwhelmingly prefer the new seats and BART saves money on cleaning and maintenance costs. We have decals on the outside of each train car that is equipped with the new seat covers, and riders have told us they seek out those decals when a train is pulling into the station.”

Alicia Trost

Communications Department Manager
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

From a business perspective and customer satisfaction, what are the key benefits?

OMNOVA's vinyl seats are easier to clean, and they save money by reducing the costs we incur when we dry clean the wool fabric seats. BART's new vinyl seating has a longer life expectancy, which means savings to our overhead. The most important thing is that the customers really like them. The new upholstery freshens up our aging fleet of train cars (most of which are 40-years-old) with an attractive design that is healthy and recyclable when the time comes.

What does not having to replace upholstery every three years mean to your bottom line?

It costs roughly \$10,000 to retrofit a train car with vinyl seats. These seats are expected to last 10 years. We will spend roughly \$100,000 annually on cleaning and repair when the fleet of 669 cars is fully converted.

Comparatively, it costs roughly \$15,000 to install all new wool seats in a train car. These seats are expected to last 3 years. We spent roughly \$600,000 a year on cleaning and repair of wool seats in a fleet of 669 cars.

Savings and sustainability with the new vinyl seating are significant. Dry cleaning, manpower and costs associated with upkeep have been replaced with mild soap and a cloth. Not only is the vinyl seating cost effective, but also it is better for the health of our customers and the environment with being able to reclaim the upholstery materials.

The OMNOVA Solutions “Take Back Vinyl Reclamation Program” is an added benefit. When will you have OMNOVA “take back” the material to replace with new vinyl seating?

Hopefully, we will not be implementing the take back program until we begin retiring the old fleet in 2020.



World Headquarters
25435 Harvard Road
Beachwood, OH 44122
United States
PHONE +1 216 682-7000
FAX +1 216 453-0104

China
No. 469 Wenjin Road
Minhang, Shanghai
China 200245
PHONE +86 21-6430-7800

Thailand
111/7 Moo 2, T. Nikompattana
King Amphur, Nikompattana
Rayong 21180, Thailand
PHONE +66 38-897116
+66 38-897117

ALL OMNOVA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE OFFERED AND SOLD SUBJECT TO THE OMNOVA STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE AGREEMENT SET FORTH AT WWW.OMNOVA.COM

PREVAILL TRANSIT is a trademark and PREFIXX is a registered trademark of OMNOVA Solutions Inc.
Designed and manufactured by OMNOVA Solutions Inc.

© 2014 OMNOVA Solutions Inc. September 2014