

**From:** VTA Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Monday, February 05, 2018 5:11 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors  
**Subject:** From VTA: February 5, 2018 Media Clips



## ***VTA Daily News Coverage for Monday, February 5, 2018***

1. [VTA facing chronic deficits, declining ridership and service cuts \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)
2. [Caltrain Board Welcomes New Member Cindy Chavez \(Mass Transit\)](#)

### **VTA facing chronic deficits, declining ridership and service cuts (Silicon Valley Business Journal)**

Facing increasing budget deficits and declining ridership, the [Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority](#) board has approved the creation of two groups to work on the problem that chair [Sam Liccardo](#), mayor of San Jose, has said will result in future transit service cuts in the county.

The VTA says it has a structural budget deficit amounting to \$20 million this fiscal year. That's forecast to rise to \$26 million in FY 2019 as labor and system maintenance costs rise.

In his first speech in January as new VTA board chair, Liccardo said "we managed to cover up [the deficits], more or less, with one-time solutions in the last year."

But he stated unequivocally that "we are going to have to cut service, and that is a painful reality for all of us who aim to provide more service."

VTA's board created a stakeholder group including representatives of employee unions, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, the Santa Clara Coalition of Chambers of Commerce, the Transit Justice Alliance, SPUR, the county city managers' association and VTA advisory committees that will advise a new financial stability committee.

Immediate past VTA board chair [Jeannie Bruins](#), Santa Clara County Supervisor [Cindy Chavez](#) and San Jose City Councilmember Johnny Khamis comprise that committee, which will meet monthly at least through June.

Liccardo said that the long-term solutions to the deficits also will include the VTA taking a more active role in land-use and planning decisions that will affect the way business is done in Santa Clara County.

“We know we are stuck where we are precisely because of decades of myopic thinking and parochial planning,” Liccardo said. “We cannot continue to allow — whether it’s employers or individual cities — just to make locational decisions and then to depend on VTA and the public to pay billions of dollars in transit systems to catch up with those bad decisions.”

VTA’s financial problems are not new. The agency is attempting to implement a massive restructuring of bus and light rail systems, called the Next Network project, that was approved last May and designed to boost ridership and fare box recovery. The service restructuring addressed scheduling and route issues that have plagued VTA for at least the last three years.

For example, the highest ridership month for buses in 2017 was October, when about 2.6 million riders boarded compared to about 3.1 million in October 2015. October’s light rail ridership was down from 2015’s 1.1 million to barely more than 750,000 last year.

Next Network’s implementation has been partly delayed because it is tied to the inauguration of BART’s service to its first two Santa Clara County stations, Milpitas and Berryessa. VTA originally touted that service to begin last fall, but it’s actually BART that will run the trains and it has always projected service to begin sometime this year after the completion of its own testing.

BART now stops in Warm Springs and this year is on track to open stations in Milpitas and Berryessa. It will take nearly a decade for the system to finish its extension into downtown San Jose.

Declining ridership, coupled with what seems to be a contradiction — increased public support for transit as evidenced by super-majority approval of ballot measures to fund it — is not simply a VTA dilemma.

In November 2016, Santa County voters approved Measure B by greater than a 7-3 margin, raising sales taxes for 30 years to pay for transit improvements worth more than \$10 billion.

In the same election, Los Angeles raised sales taxes for the third time in a decade to pay for transportation improvements. The 2016 measure was worth \$120 billion, most of it for new bus and rail transit.

Yet transit use in Los Angeles and across the state has been in a steep decline since 2009, according to a [study released Wednesday by the UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies](#). The reasons for Southern California’s decline was partly attributed to a steep increase in car ownership from 1.7 vehicles to 2.4 vehicles per household between 2000 and 2015.

VTA attributes some of its decline to “low gas prices, competition with shared ride services and the fact that many of our buses are caught in the same traffic congestion with other cars on Bay Area roads,” spokeswoman Holly Perez wrote in an email.

The Silicon Valley Auto Dealers Association’s fourth quarter report for 2017 said total sales increase about 1 percent from 2016 to 2017.

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### [Caltrain Board Welcomes New Member Cindy Chavez \(Mass Transit\)](#)

The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board welcomed new member Cindy Chavez at the rail agency’s meeting.

Chavez was sworn in and will represent the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority on the JPB. She is taking over for Ken Yeager who stepped down in January after 17 years on the board.

Chavez also serves on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

The JPB is the governing body of Caltrain, the commuter rail service that operates in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

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Conserve paper. Think before you print.

**From:** VTA Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 07, 2018 12:34 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors  
**Subject:** From VTA: February 7, 2018 Media Clips



## ***VTA Daily News Coverage for Wednesday, February 7, 2018***

1. [Roadshow: South Bay projects could aid East Bay commuters \(Mercury News\)](#)
2. [Are traffic-clogged US cities ready for congestion pricing? \(TheConversation.com\)](#)
3. [SF has the worst commute in the U.S., and it may have cost the city \\$10.6 billion last year \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

### **[Roadshow: South Bay projects could aid East Bay commuters \(Mercury News\)](#)**

Mr. Roadshow, in a recent column you said of the possible increase in bridge tolls:

“I know that it’s not balanced — 63 percent of current tolls are paid by residents of Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano counties. But only 2 percent of tolls are paid by Santa Clara County folks. Yet 15 percent of the money would go to projects in the South Bay.”

While many projects are in the South Bay, they don’t benefit only South Bay residents. Residents of Alameda/Contra Costa/Solano counties who work in the South Bay also benefit. Improvements on major commute routes in Santa Clara County also benefit East Bay residents. It’s not nearly as unfair as you make it seem.

**Yu Ping Hu**

*San Jose*

***Like Mr. Roadshow’s [Facebook page](#) for more questions and answers about Bay Area roads, freeways and commuting.***

**A:** A good point. Some of the possible projects are (my favorite) a freeway link between Interstate 680 and I-880, extending express lanes on Highway 237, 680 and 880 and the BART extension from Berryessa to downtown San Jose.

Now more on impacts of higher tolls that could reach \$8 to \$9 over the next several years if the hike is approved by voters in June.

**Q:** I go out of my way to avoid paying tolls on bridges. If you plan your routes carefully, and cross bridges only in the free direction, you can avoid paying tolls easily. I wonder how many others will begin this as tolls increase?

**Randy D.**

*Mountain View*

**A:** Maybe a lot. One option is to skip the Dumbarton Bridge and use Highway 237.

**Q:** Other tricks: To go to Marin County, I take the normal Interstate 280-Golden Gate Bridge route.

To return, I take the Richmond/San Rafael bridge.

**Randy D.**

**A:** Any other tricks?

**Q:** I don't like more traffic coming through N. Abel Street in Milpitas just because they want to raise bridge tolls. Do they ever think about the people that live near Highway 237 where traffic is already bad? It's going to get worse if they raise the tolls.

**Renee Wilson**

*Milpitas*

**A:** But a 680-880 connector plus more express lanes on 880 and 237 could ease your fears.

**Q:** I am pleased the repeal of the gas tax failed. The petition offered no solution to solving our transportation problems. It was like shooting yourself in the foot.

And it would have made any future gas tax subject to a public vote which likely would have handcuffed the state from meeting future obligations.

**Mark Grzan**

*Morgan Hill*

**A:** A second attempt to get enough signatures for a recall vote will be known in late May. It has 450,000 registered voters' signatures and 584,407 are needed.

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[Are traffic-clogged US cities ready for congestion pricing? \(TheConversation.com\)](#)

New York is the latest city to contemplate [congestion pricing](#) as a way to deal with traffic problems. This strategy, which requires motorists to pay fees for driving into city centers during busy periods, is a rarity in urban public policy: a measure that works and is cost-effective.

Properly used, congestion pricing can ease traffic, speed up travel times, reduce pollution and provide funds for public transport and infrastructure investments. The details matter, including

the size and timing of charges and the area that they cover. Congestion charges also raises equity issues, since rich people are best able to move closer to work or change their schedules to avoid the steepest costs.

But the key point is that this approach has succeeded in cities including London, Singapore and Stockholm. For scholars like me who focus on urban issues, serious discussion of congestion pricing in New York City is welcome news.

Commuters crowd a Grand Central subway station platform in New York, May 4, 2016. Proposed congestion charges in New York would generate money to improve public transit. [AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews, File](#)

### **The down side of density**

Cities concentrate people close together for good economic reasons. Clustering activities allows transfers of information, knowledge and skills. At their best, cities create deep pools of labor, large markets of consumers and savings in the provision of public goods such as mass transit and trash collection. Planners should be encouraging cities to [become bigger and more dense](#) if we want to improve economic performance.

But growing concentration also imposes costs, and one of the largest is traffic congestion. Costs multiply when we factor in use of motor vehicles on public roads. Drivers spend valuable time sitting idly in traffic jams, while noise, accidents and pollution impose heavy burdens on city residents.

### **Should road use be free?**

The idea of charging for use of public roads is not new. Economist Arthur Pigou discussed the issue [as early as 1920](#) as part of his attempt to remedy the suboptimal workings of the market system. In 1963 Canadian-born economist William Vickrey argued that roads were scarce resources that should be valued by [imposing costs on users](#).

Consumers intuitively understand differential pricing. We expect to pay more for airline tickets at peak travel times and for hotel rooms at popular times of the year. Congestion pricing operates in the same way. By increasing prices, it forces users to think about the cost of making a trip. A congestion tax is what behavioral economists call a [“nudge”](#) that makes people evaluate their travel patterns.

And it can be effective. A 2008 [study](#) gave drivers in Seattle a hypothetical cash sum to spend on trips, charged them tolls linked to traffic congestion levels, and let them keep money they did not spend. Their cars were fitted with equipment to monitor driving patterns.

The results showed that pricing affected behavior: Travelers altered their schedules, took different routes or collapsed multiple trips into single journeys. Collectively, these changes reduced congestion at peak time, lessened wait times and increased average travel speeds in the study's regional traffic model.

Travel speeds across Manhattan and citywide have consistently fallen since 2012. [New York City DOT](#)

### **Congestion pricing in practice**

[Singapore](#) was one of the first major cities to introduce congestion pricing in 1975, charging US\$1.30 for a vehicle to enter the central business district between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. The policy had political support because most residents used public transport, with only the wealthiest driving private cars. The tax was viewed as a more equitable distribution of costs.

The net result was that congestion was reduced and travel times improved. Between 1975 and 1988, the project generated revenues 11 times larger than its costs. Pollution decreased and pedestrian safety improved. In 1998 Singapore shifted to [variable charges](#) that target congested road stretches and vary by time of day and travel direction.

[London](#) introduced congestion pricing in 2003, charging motorists, entering central London between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays, 5 British pounds (about \$7) per day. The scheme generated 2.6 billion pounds (about \$3.63 billion) in its first decade, almost half of which was invested in public transport and infrastructure improvements.

The Congestion Charge, as it is known, reduced the number of automobiles entering the city by [44 percent](#) from the pre-charge level and slightly reduced traffic accidents. Air quality in central London also improved.

The charge did produce some [unintended consequences](#). House prices within the Congestion Charge zone increased – bid upward by consumers who appear willing to pay to avoid traffic and enjoy improved environmental conditions. Over the long term, the congestion tax lubricated the gentrification of central London.

London's Congestion Charge zone. [Transport for London](#)

But this process is common to many other big cities, with or without congestion pricing: The rich preempt central city locations and [displace the less wealthy to the suburbs](#).

[Stockholm](#) introduced a congestion tax in 2007, after a seven-month trial and bitter political fights. Vehicles entering the central city were charged different rates over the course of the day, reaching 35 Swedish kronor (about \$4.40) during morning and evening rush hours.

The tax gradually gained public support and decreased congestion as commuters [shifted to public transport](#). Other Swedish municipalities have since copied the scheme.

### **Congestion pricing in the US**

While the United States has [over 5,000 miles of toll roads](#), congestion pricing is uncommon. One exception is Interstate Route 66 in the Washington, D.C., metro region, where [fluctuating tolls](#) were introduced on Dec. 4, 2017. Pricing for these express lanes changes every six minutes

during rush hour eastbound in the morning and westbound in the afternoon. The toll hit \$40 for a 10-mile stretch the day after it was introduced.

But this is just one well-used road, and there are many other routes into central Washington. The I-66 tolls are more about generating revenue on one road than reducing congestion citywide.

Currently, the [proposed plan](#) for New York City would charge cars \$11.52 to enter Manhattan below 60th Street on weekdays during business hours. Trucks would be charged \$25.34, and taxis and app-based rides such as Uber and Lyft would be charged \$2 to \$5. The tax would generate \$1.5 billion yearly.

Proposed zone pricing for Manhattan Central Business District. [Fix NYC Advisory Panel Report](#)

What about equity? Only 4 percent of people who commute into New York City travel by car, and of those, only 5,000 could be classified as [working poor](#). Increased funding from congestion fees would allow more investment in mass transit, making life easier for the majority of New Yorkers who commute by public transit.

Unlike other taxes that can be easily dismissed as imposing costs and killing jobs, congestion pricing improves market efficiencies because it forces people to think about their travel and leads to a more rational use of our public roads. In my view, it is a powerful policy whose time has definitely come.

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## [SF has the worst commute in the U.S., and it may have cost the city \\$10.6 billion last year \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)

San Francisco has one of the nastiest commutes in the country, a fact Bay Area residents know well and new data confirms.

Transportation analytics firm [INRIX published its annual Global Traffic Scorecard](#) on Monday, and San Francisco snagged a top spot.

The city placed fifth globally for worst traffic behind Los Angeles, Moscow, New York City and Sao Paulo. *See the rankings in the above slideshow.*

Though Los Angeles has traffic at nearly all waking hours, San Francisco beats L.A. in commuting congestion. S.F. ties with Boston for worst congestion on all roads during peak travel hours. Most Bay Area drivers have seen this firsthand — one can zoom from San Francisco to Oakland in 15 minutes in the late evening, but the same movement could take six times as long at 6 p.m.

San Francisco drivers spent an average of 79 hours in congestion during peak hours last year, and 12 percent of their total commute idling in gridlock.

INRIX estimates the traffic jams cost individual drivers \$2,250 and the city \$10.6 billion in 2017. INRIX calculated direct and indirect costs from the traffic jams: "Direct costs relate to the value of fuel and time wasted, and indirect costs refer to freight and business fees from company vehicles idling in traffic, which are passed on to households through higher prices."

The city's unique geography — perched on a seven-square-mile peninsula — coupled with an explosion of jobs at its core and a housing shortage creates the perfect cocktail for commuting congestion, according to Graham Cookson, Chief Economist at Washington-based INRIX and lead author on the report. These factors mean people who work in the city must increasingly live farther from it.

"This is the kind of place where people are commuting significant distances to get to work," Cookson said, "and it's causing terrible traffic." More people on the road is one thing, Cookson said, but more people on the road driving farther distances is another. The longer one must travel, the more volume on the network he consumes.

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Conserve paper. Think before you print.

**From:** VTA Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 08, 2018 2:55 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors  
**Subject:** From VTA: February 8, 2018 Media Clips



## ***VTA Daily News Coverage for Thursday, February 8, 2018***

1. [San Jose Mayor to Address Housing, Crime in State of the City Address \(NBC Bay Area\)](#)
2. [San Jose State of the City Address \(KPIX Ch. 5\)](#)
3. [Silicon Valley's spectacular job growth creates 'harsh environment' for many residents, report says \(Mercury News\)](#)
4. [Roadshow: Fix for 101-to-87 fiasco is held up by lawsuit \(Mercury News\)](#)
5. [Gordon Clark and Mark Ramsey move into new tunnel leadership roles \(San Francisco Chronicle/PR Web\)](#)
6. [Editorial: Take a look at using Highway 101 shoulders for buses \(Marin Independent Journal\)](#)
7. [Joint Venture provides latest Silicon Valley 'Rorschach test' \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)
8. [Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian Urges Colleagues to Oppose Trump Administration \(San Jose Inside\)](#)
9. [Caltrain to launch mobile ticketing app \(Progressive Railroading\)](#)
10. [Trump's Infrastructure Plan Would Take New York's Transit Nightmare National \(Bloomberg.com\)](#)

### **San Jose Mayor to Address Housing, Crime in State of the City Address (NBC Bay Area)**

The mayor of the Bay Area's largest city on Thursday will unveil his plans for the year ahead.

During his annual state of the city address, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo plans to acknowledge progress such as rebuilding the city's police department, opening BART stations in the city later this year and increasing growth at Mineta San Jose International Airport, but he will also call attention to the region's housing affordability crisis.

Liccardo is slated to focus on his plan to build more than 25,000 housing units over the next five years. Roughly 10,000 of those units will be priced for lower income households.

Liccardo's address is scheduled to take place at San Jose City College. Doors open at 6 p.m., and Liccardo will speak for roughly 30 minutes starting at 7:20 p.m.

## [San Jose State of the City Address \(KPIX Ch. 5\)](#)

**(Link to Video)**

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## [Silicon Valley's spectacular job growth creates 'harsh environment' for many residents, report says \(Mercury News\)](#)

Silicon Valley's robust economy has added jobs for the last eight years in a row, but the region's rising wages have failed to keep pace with skyrocketing home prices, a new economic study revealed Wednesday.

A population surge is underway in Silicon Valley, with a net gain of one person every 46 minutes — 32 people a day — but the huge housing and living costs are making life difficult for many, according to the Silicon Valley Index, released by Joint Venture Silicon Valley's Institute for Regional Studies.

In 2017, Silicon Valley's per capita personal income was \$93,707, far higher than the California median of \$56,374. But the 4.4 percent increase in the region's incomes last year failed to keep pace with home prices, which soared 7.4 percent during 2017, the report stated.

Home prices have continued to rise even though multiple economic reports document that employment growth is slowing in Silicon Valley.

"Our spectacular success has somehow created a harsh environment," Russell Hancock, president of Joint Venture Silicon Valley. "Housing is out of reach for all but a very few. Those who can't afford it are living challenging lives, or commuting in from far-flung places. Most people don't find transit options compelling, so we spend ghastly amounts of time in traffic."

The Valley's median sale prices for homes are 2.1 times higher than they are statewide; apartment and home rental rates are 1.3 times higher; and child-care costs are 1.2 times higher, the report stated.

"Fewer than 34 percent of first-time homebuyers can afford a median-priced home in Silicon Valley, compared to 49 percent statewide," the report stated.

Combined, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties added about 47,000 jobs in 2017. But that employment boom occurred as those two regions together launched 12,000 residential units, the report stated.

"We are falling further behind," Hancock said in an interview. "Wages are not keeping pace with the growth in home prices. We are not building enough homes to keep pace with the jobs we are creating."

Still, the pace of housing construction is picking up. The 12,000 residential units initiated in 2017 doubled the 6,000 that were launched in 2016, Hancock said.

“We are at the beginning of addressing the housing challenge,” said Stephen Levy, director of the Palo Alto-based Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy. “A year ago, you couldn’t have said we were making this much progress. When you see all of the plans for more housing in downtown San Jose and north Mountain View and Santa Clara, I’m optimistic we are starting to get serious about the housing problems.”

As for commutes, Bay Area voters this year will determine the fate of a variety of transportation funding measures, which could help address the area’s traffic woes.

Meanwhile, the cost of doing business in the Bay Area hasn’t chased away the vast majority of tech companies in the region, including the industry’s leaders such as Google, Apple and Facebook, the report noted.

“Our well-established, iconic companies are choosing to stay, adding armies of talented people, investing in impressive facilities and remaking our landscape,” Hancock stated. “Unemployment is at a historic low. Median household income continues to grow, and it is outpacing inflation. Without question, Silicon Valley is still a hotbed.”

The Institute for Regional Studies defines Silicon Valley as Santa Clara County; San Mateo County; the Alameda County cities of Fremont, Newark and Union City; and the Santa Cruz County city of Scotts Valley.

Venture capital spending soared in Silicon Valley, but shrank in San Francisco, the report determined.

VC financing totaled \$14 billion in Silicon Valley during 2017, up 50.5 percent from 2016.

In San Francisco, VC funding in 2017 totaled \$10.9 billion, down 21 percent from 2016.

Unemployment levels in Silicon Valley improved to an average level of 2 percent, the lowest since 2000, according to the index report.

“Silicon Valley continues to grow jobs at a rate anybody would envy,” Hancock wrote in an introduction to the report. “The tech sector is fueling our growth, and venture capitalists continue to invest in local innovators who in turn are generating patents at a dizzying pace.”

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[Roadshow: Fix for 101-to-87 fiasco is held up by lawsuit \(Mercury News\)](#)

I had a dream the other night, and I am hoping it wasn’t just a reoccurring nightmare. In my dream I recalled you mentioning that there are plans to add a second exit lane from Highway 101 south to 87 south at the airport. When is that going to happen? The back up is outrageous.

Good grief! It'll be even worse when Google builds that mega campus near the SAP Center. I'm so frustrated. It takes easily 20 minutes to traverse this half mile every evening.

**A:** Some readers ask why I'll list several names on a single issue. It's to acknowledge how big of a concern it is. And, boy, is the 101-to-87 fiasco near the top of the list.

Adding a second exit lane will almost certainly be among the many projects to be funded by the Measure B sales tax approved by 72 percent of Santa Clara County voters in 2016. But a lawsuit has delayed that effort and until the legality of the tax is determined, everything is on hold. This could take until the end of the year.

**Q:** You mentioned turning into the direction of the skid still applies to today's various vehicle drive configurations. Except that doesn't work in the No. 1 lane on Highway 17. Doing that will cause a vehicle to crash into the cement lane divider since there isn't any shoulder.

That's just what my vehicle started to do recently on a wet 4 a.m. commute at the last right turn north before Glenwood Drive where there is now a reverse camber in the apex of the turn that wasn't there before. I notice several days later that a contractor was working in that area. Did they cause this by removing the soil below the road?

**Terry Swinggi**

**A:** Not sure, but Caltrans will check it out. For now, heed the 50-mph speed limit and go slower if the pavement is wet.

**Q:** I have to renew my driver's license by March 16. I got an appointment for March 14.

I have to take an eye test (no problem) and a written test. Is there is a publication available about the laws that pertain to driving without having to go to a DMV office? I don't want to screw up the written test.

**Sue Kemp**

*Palo Alto*

**A:** Yes, go to the DMV website and look for the California Driver Handbook. All questions that might be on the written test come from here.

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[Gordon Clark and Mark Ramsey move into new tunnel leadership roles \(San Francisco Chronicle/PR Web\)](#)

HNTB Corporation announced two new leadership roles on its national tunnel and underground team. Gordon Clark, PE, vice president, was named West Division tunnel practice leader, and

Mark Ramsey was named West Division tunnel practice construction management and delivery leader and vice president. Ramsey is based in Los Angeles and Clark in Bellevue, Washington.

“These new roles reflect the depth of project delivery and technical excellence Gordon and Mark bring to HNTB’s tunnel and underground engineering practice group and our clients,” said Sanja Zlatanic, PE, HNTB’s national tunnel services practice chair and senior vice president. “They continue to build HNTB’s in-depth experience in providing innovative solutions through managing risks inherent to major complex tunneling projects primarily in the transit, rail, highway, aviation and water resources markets.”

Previously, Clark served as HNTB’s technical director-tunnels and complex underground structures, and Ramsey was the firm’s West Division tunnel practice leader.

Clark has more than 30 years of experience directing the planning, design and construction of large, multidisciplinary civil infrastructure projects. He will continue leading complex designs, technical investigations, innovations, analyses, and construction of tunnels and underground facilities. He also will continue to lead a multidisciplinary group of technical staff in developing criteria, determining alternative alignments, providing innovative technical concepts and detailed designs for quality delivery.

Clark is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Society of Mining Engineers and American Underground Construction Association. He earned a Master of Science in structural engineering from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Oregon State University.

Ramsey has 25 years of experience that includes tunnel engineering, construction engineering and management, planning, scheduling, cost control and cost projections. He will maintain his role as implementation manager for the program management team on the Bay Area Rapid Transit Silicon Valley Phase II project. This project is a 6-mile extension of BART to Santa Clara through downtown San Jose, California. The extension includes 5 miles of tunneling, three underground stations, one at-grade station, a storage yard and a maintenance facility.

Ramsey graduated from Purdue University with his bachelor’s degree in construction engineering and management. He is a member of Underground Construction Association of SME and the Transportation Research Board Tunnel and Underground Construction standing committee.

The firm’s tunnel projects range from small-diameter excavations to the largest machine-bored tunnel in the world. Some of the nation’s most complex underground projects have benefited from HNTB’s award-winning planning, design and support services, including the Crenshaw/LAX transit corridor in Los Angeles; Presidio Parkway in San Francisco; Devil’s Slide Tunnel in San Mateo, California, the Washington Dulles International Airport tunnels, and the SR 99 Alaskan Way Tunnel project in Seattle.

## About HNTB

HNTB Corporation is an employee-owned infrastructure firm serving public and private owners and contractors. With more than a century of service in the United States, HNTB understands the life cycle of infrastructure and addresses clients' most complex technical, financial and operational challenges. Professionals nationwide deliver a full range of infrastructure-related services, including award-winning planning, design, program management and construction management. For more information, visit <http://www.hntb.com>.

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### [Editorial: Take a look at using Highway 101 shoulders for buses \(Marin Independent Journal\)](#)

Marin has pretty much run out of room for widening Highway 101. But local officials are thinking that turning wider stretches of the roadsides into express bus lanes might help.

The idea has been kicked around for awhile. Neither the California Highway Patrol, which uses the shoulders for enforcement, nor Golden Gate Transit, among the advocates for lengthening HOV-lane hours, were thrilled with the idea.

But Golden Gate says it's now willing to take a look at it and is supportive of the Transportation Authority of Marin's application for a \$350,000 study grant.

The grant would also take a hard look at turning on metering lights at Marin freeway onramps.

That still seems like a pretty expensive study. TAM, Caltrans and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission have stables of traffic engineers whom the tax- and toll-paying public are already paying. Keeping the job in-house in order to save money should be considered. If it is not going to save the public money, officials should explain why.

Making the best use of the available space along the freeway is certainly desirable as TAM and Caltrans look for ways to get traffic moving.

MTC's controversial proposal last year to extend carpool-lane hours appears to have been shelved due to TAM's recognition that the problem with Marin's HOV lanes is that they are often jammed, as well. Extending the hours wouldn't solve that problem; it would just add 15-20 minutes to hundreds of other motorists' commutes.

The goal of turning shoulders into bus express lanes is to allow public transit to escape the daily bumper-to-bumper grind — and possibly entice more commuters to take the bus.

Most of the focus would be in North Marin, where there are more stretches with room on the freeway shoulders than south of Marinwood.

There may be stretches where it could help speed up transit service during the commute. It would be part of a patchwork of ideas that could help.

Officials also need to be cognizant that the shoulders are an important safety measure, a place where disabled cars can pull off the freeway. They also are important for the CHP's enforcement jobs.

The likelihood of widening long stretches of Highway 101 through Marin is slim, at best. There's no more room, without taking out neighborhoods.

Helping public transit, enabling buses to roll past clogged freeway lanes, is a viable option — and taking a harder look at turning some shoulders into bus express lanes could be an effective solution.

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### [Joint Venture provides latest Silicon Valley 'Rorschach test' \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)

The latest edition of the Silicon Valley Index offers up a good news-bad news picture of business and life throughout the region. Incomes are high, poverty rates are low, job growth is healthy, but housing is limited and commuting times are dreadful.

"It's the same story we've been telling for a long time. The world's most dynamic, innovative economy continues to create opportunity. The opportunity is at the very high end for people with tremendous skill, talent and ability ... Silicon Valley is an amazing economy. That statement is true," said [Russell Hancock](#), the president and CEO of Joint Venture Silicon Valley and its Institute for Regional Studies.

"It's also true that this continues to be a harder and harder pace to live," Hancock said in an interview Wednesday, as Joint Venture released its 92-page Index for 2018. "There are perils associated with our success. They're becoming more pronounced with each passing year."

At the top of those "perils" are housing and transportation. The former because of "our inability to create enough housing that is affordable to people who are working here" and the latter because "people who live here are spending enormous amounts of time delayed in traffic and that erodes our quality of life."

In chart after chart, Joint Venture breaks down just about every facet of Silicon Valley's economy and society, from education levels and immigration patterns to real estate development and venture capital investments.

[Download a copy of the report by clicking here.](#)

"The Index is a Rorschach test, and that's fun for us. Everybody picks it up and they see different things and they can draw different conclusions," Hancock said. "In Silicon Valley, we've

got to start figuring things out. And what that really means is we have to figure out governance issues, how to invest in infrastructure — not in an incremental way, but in a game-changing way."

This Friday, Hancock will preside over [Joint Venture's annual State of the Valley Conference](#) at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center. There, he'll offer highlights from the Index and will bring to the stage a collection of speakers, including U.S. Sen. Kamala D. Harris, Stanford University futurist Paul Saffo and [Pinterest](#) chief scientist Jure Leskovec.

Advance registration is full, but organizers expect to allow some walk-ins to be admitted and they encourage those without advance tickets to arrive by 7:30 a.m.

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### [Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian Urges Colleagues to Oppose Trump Administration \(San Jose Inside\)](#)

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors President [Joe Simitian](#) turned the annual State of the County address on Tuesday into a rallying cry against President Trump's harmful agenda and divisive rhetoric.

In keeping with the theme of the speech, "Partnership and Progress," Simitian called on the county to "stand up, speak up and push back" on a number of Trump's initiatives.

The newly appointed board president stressed the importance of supporting Dreamers—that is, recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, an Obama-era policy that protects undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children from deportation. Simitian reminded the audience that the county sued the Trump administration last fall over its attempt to reverse those protections.

"It gives me no pleasure to use the resources of one level of government to bring suit against another," Simitian said. "But in the current circumstances, the courts are often our last best hope."

Simitian offered little in the way of specifics about how the county will continue its efforts to protect undocumented immigrants, but repeatedly acknowledged their struggle and their importance to the community.

"Here in the center of Silicon Valley, our county boasts an economy that is the envy of the nation" Simitian said.

He noted that almost 40 percent of the region is foreign born, a point he believes is "not a matter of coincidence."

Simitian followed his message of resistance with a call for progress, outlining a long list of priorities that elicited applause from the audience. He said the county needs to boost the

number of jobs with livable wages, combat homelessness, provide “healthcare for all” and improve public transportation.

“[The county needs] transit that takes us from where we are to where we want to go, and back again—quickly, safely, affordably and reliably,” he said.

Simitian touted his affordable housing credentials, too, noting that the county prevented the displacement of 400 low-income residents by stepping in to preserve the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park in Palo Alto last year.

“I highlight the Buena Vista today not as a history lesson,” he said, “but as a lesson for the future—that partnerships are key to the progress we must make.”

A more recent board action to allocate \$8 million for all-inclusive playgrounds made it into Simitian’s speech as well. He thanked his colleague, Supervisor Cindy Chavez, for her help securing that funding for six parks throughout the region.

While politics remain polarizing on the national level, Simitian said, local governments can continue to foster productive partnerships.

“Such partnerships ... require all of us ... to reject the divisiveness of what currently passes for political dialogue in the nation,” he said.

“A week ago the President of the United States firmly declared that, ‘The state of our union is strong because our people are strong.’ I agree,” Simitian said. “And at the local level, the state of our county is strong because our people are strong. All of our people.”

***Below is a copy of the State of the County address in its entirety.***

A year ago, when my colleague Supervisor Cortese stood at this podium to deliver his State of the County, we really couldn’t know what the future would look like. We had a new congress, a new administration. We couldn’t help but wonder.

Whatever our hopes or our fears. Our aspirations or our anxieties. We could only wonder; but we really couldn’t know.

Well, now we know.

We know that the 1.9 million people who call this county home, and the County government that is here to serve them, are too often at odds with the current administration and Congress.

The question now, the question we must all ask and answer is, how do we respond?

How do we respond when confronted with views and values we find abhorrent?

How do we respond when we are asked to acquiesce or feign agreement?

How do we respond when national “leaders” countenance conduct and comments that deserve our condemnation?

To use the language of the day, we have to resist. We have to stand up, speak out and push back.

As we have; and as we will.

We’ve spoken up with no false hope that decision makers in D.C. are waiting with baited breath to hear what we have to say.

Nevertheless, we’ve spoken up in the absolute conviction that if we add our voice to a chorus of others, then eventually we will be heard.

And we have done so, not just as individual elected officials, but as a County organization — united more often than not by a unanimous view that we are obliged to act on behalf of our residents when what we hear

from our nation’s capital either impedes our ability to serve the public, or presents a direct threat to the well-being of our residents — or both. This is as it should be.

Now, if you say our first obligation is to effectively manage the \$6.5 billion dollar enterprise that is County government, well, I would agree.

If you argue that rhetoric and resolutions alone will not make a better nation, or even a better county, I’d say I think you’re right.

And if you suggest that we have to get past the partisanship and personality politics that are hobbling us at the national level, I’d say “I’m with you.”

But we find ourselves at a time unlike any other —and so, necessarily, we are obliged to respond in ways unlike other times.

Our County is determined to stand up, speak up and push back because we believe that it is in the interest of the 1.9 million people who call Santa Clara County home for us to do so.

That’s why we push back.

That’s why we push back on the Muslim ban.

We push back on efforts to gut the Clean Power Plan.

We push back on efforts to abandon our Dreamers.

We push back on efforts to undermine Net Neutrality.

We push back on partisan gerrymandering.

We push back on punitive efforts to withhold federal funding rightfully belonging to our county and its residents.

We push back on efforts to limit family planning and access to contraception.

We push back on these and a host of other actions — not to “make a statement,” but to serve a purpose.

We’ve pushed back and spoken up, fully realizing that neither the current administration nor the Congress is likely to provide much relief. And so, we’ve turned to the courts. Not as a matter of choice, but as a matter of necessity.

If regulatory comment is the proper course, we comment.

If litigation is required, we’re on it.

If a friend of the court filing is called for, well, no one is friendlier than Santa Clara County.

Now let me be clear on this. It gives me no pleasure to use the resources of one level of government to bring suit against another. But in the current circumstances, the courts are often our last best hope.

We should be thankful for an independent judiciary; and, by the way, for a County Counsel’s office that represents us so ably in that arena.

But resistance alone is not enough. Holding the line is not enough. Manning the barricades is not enough. Our work is too important. The need is too great. And our potential too vast to squander.

So yes, we will resist, because we are obliged to. But our constituents demand more than resistance. They want progress, and they deserve it. All of us do. We want progress on a dozen and one fronts.

We want progress on creating and sustaining economic opportunity — not just for some, but for all. Decent jobs, a livable wage, a middle class life, and a shot at something more.

We want progress on criminal justice — we want a system that deters crime, keeps us safe, delivers just punishment, and rehabilitates rather than recycles those who are incarcerated. And we expect that system of justice to respect the community it serves — with due process, privacy protections and use of force only as needed.

We want progress on the challenge of homelessness — and we rightfully wonder why, in one of the richest places on the planet, we still have 7,000 people on the streets every night.

We want progress on the environment— on every possible front. Development that is wise and well managed — complemented by parks and open spaces that provide opportunities for

contemplation, recreation and inspiration. Places of solitude, and places of joyous laughter. Places that serve as habitat, that offer elbow room for all.

And energy sources that look to the future — clean and green and renewable — mindful of the obligation each and all of us have to address the issue of climate change here on our own little piece of the planet.

We want progress for our families, however defined, whatever their makeup. For the children who are this Valley's future, and the seniors who represent the accumulated work and wisdom of prior generations.

We want progress on health care, healthcare for all — a notion so basic we are constantly surprised to hear it described as anything other than a fundamental right — and constantly alarmed by the roller coaster ride we're on nationally with respect to health care.

We want progress on mental health — to push away the stigma — to confront mental health issues for what they are: health care issues — and to respond accordingly. Across all ages, all incomes and all populations — with a particular commitment to address the tragedy of young lives lost.

We want progress on traffic. Roads that work. Highways that move. Transit that takes us from where we are to where we want to go, and back again. Quickly, safely, affordably and reliably. It's hard to enjoy our great quality of life in the parking lot we call 101.

We want progress on housing. In part to create more diverse and inclusive communities — but also because an adequate supply of affordable housing is indispensable to our economy, essential to solving our traffic woes, and, by the way, integral to our safety and security — because if the folks who actually make this Valley work on a daily basis aren't here for us in the event of a crisis or calamity — well then, the rest of us will quite literally have to fend for ourselves.

And because we cannot truly call ourselves a place of opportunity if there is no place, no space, for those who would be our neighbors.

We want a County government that gets the job done while making careful use of taxpayer dollars — with efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. A County government that's ahead of the curve, preparing and planning for a changing future.

And as ambitious as it may sound, we want progress in creating communities where 'unity in diversity' is real— where none of us — none of us — is disrespected, discriminated against, or marginalized by virtue of race or religion, age or ethnicity; gender, class, or sexual orientation. Where each of us is valued for the good we bring to our common endeavor, and the whole really is more than the sum of its parts.

Because we create community from the ground up. Because here in Santa Clara County we pull together, even as others would pull us apart.

Because we can forge a sense of shared purpose, a common understanding, even as we respect and reflect the diversity of this county's residents.

We want all this, and it is within our reach; but it will take work. Lots and lots of work.

So resistance alone will not be enough. We can't accept a year—or two—or four—or more—without progress on all these fronts. We have work to be done, and notwithstanding the unprecedented political and institutional challenges we face, we must do it. Even as we resist, we must make progress.

And if we work together in partnership with one another—there really is no limit to the progress we can make. While there are certainly limits to the progress any one organization can achieve — even one as large as our County — when we partner, then the potential for progress is truly without limit.

Which is why I am so glad that Erika Escalante could be here today. To remind us of the power of partnerships.

As Erika noted a few minutes ago, there was a time — just a few years ago — when 400 residents at the Buena Vista thought there was no hope—when any objective observer would correctly conclude that none of us had it within our power to make progress on a seemingly intractable issue.

And then we here at the County began to work in partnership with others. Our role in the partnership to “Save the Buena Vista” began right here when Supervisor Cortese and I partnered in drafting a memo to our Board, and our colleagues expressed their immediate willingness to take the lead in an effort to acquire and improve the Buena Vista.

And then, there were so many others who saw that in partnership we could do together what none of us could do alone:

- The City of Palo Alto, whose City Council unanimously agreed to match the County's funding commitment;
- Our indispensable third partner in the effort to acquire and improve the Buena Vista, the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Clara;
- Caritas, the California-based nonprofit, experienced and skilled at preserving affordable mobile home communities, who reached out to us in the early days of our effort, and who is now under contract to actively manage the new Buena Vista;
- Our Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, State Senator Jerry Hill and former State Assemblyman Rich Gordon, all of whom lent their support, and helped with the search for funding;
- Two dozen former Mayors and City Council members from Palo Alto who spoke out in support of the effort to save the Buena Vista;

- Eighteen local school board members (past and present) who likewise expressed their support;
- More than 500 community members who rallied at Palo Alto City Hall to show their support for their Buena Vista neighbors;
- Our local news media, including the Mercury News, the Palo Alto Weekly, and the Daily Post, all of which lent their editorial support;
- The Palo Alto Council of PTAs, and the 6th District PTA — representing PTA councils throughout our county and beyond;
- The many non-profits who stepped forward to offer support, including the Asian Law Alliance, Neighborhood Housing Services, the Housing Trust Silicon Valley, Working Partnerships, TransForm, the League of Women Voters Palo Alto and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, among others;
- The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, who represented the residents throughout their ordeal;
- The aptly named Friends of Buena Vista; and, of course,
- The residents themselves, represented by the Buena Vista Residents Association.

So many good folks who came together and partnered with our County:

- Partnered to prevent the loss of 117 units of desperately needed affordable housing;
- Partnered to prevent the eviction of more than 400 of our neighbors; and,
- Partnered to make sure that the park's previous owner received full and fair market value upon sale of the property.

What happened at the Buena Vista happened only because of a remarkable and wide-ranging partnership.

Now, I highlight the Buena Vista today not as a history lesson — but as a lesson for the future — that partnerships are key to the progress we must make.

When Supervisor Chavez and I brought forward a proposal to provide partial funding for all-inclusive playgrounds throughout the County, serving children and families with and without disabilities, we were hoping to build — literally and figuratively — we were hoping to build on partnerships already begun by the Rotary PlayGarden in San Jose and the Magical Bridge in Palo Alto.

And now we have.

With the grants approved just two weeks ago, our County will be partnering in a half dozen neighborhoods, up and down the County, partnering with four cities, a school district, a non-

profit, generous donors (including our local businesses), and community volunteers—all to the benefit of kids and their families—in numbers beyond count, for decades to come.

And we'll be pursuing these initial partnerships in the hope that the number of such partnerships will grow—not just here in our County, but across the region, the state and the nation.

Similarly, when Supervisor Wasserman and I approached our colleagues about the challenges of senior transportation in the West Valley—we knew that partnerships were the essential ingredient.

Funding from five different cities — cutting across three supervisorial districts — along with financial support from our County and the Valley Transportation Authority was the necessary precondition for RYDE (Reach Your Destination Easily).

A senior mobility program serving older adults in Campbell, Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno and Saratoga. With two established and well regarded non-profits — the Saratoga Senior Center and West Valley Community Services — providing the local know-how, leadership and volunteers necessary to actually deliver the service.

And when Supervisor Yeager and I pushed for funding for a public health nurse assigned to oversee the provision of psychotropic medication for our foster youth, we were partnering with a separate and independent branch of government—our local judiciary—because we knew that we needed to partner if we were going to stop the over reliance on drugs for “managing” the kids in our system.

The press reported the problem. Supervisor Yeager scheduled the hearing. The Courts expressed their need. And our Board stepped in to do its part. That's how partnerships are formed.

Such partnerships, of course, require all of us, each of us, to reject the divisiveness of what currently passes for political dialogue in the nation—and to work in partnership with any and all who share our commitment to find common ground in the name of progress. And so we will.

Our County will partner with business and labor, who too often forget that they need each other.

We'll partner with other levels of government — including the 15 cities and towns in this county whose residents are our own.

We'll partner with this county's rich panoply of non-profits—too often overlooked and underappreciated.

They're our secret weapon. Close to the ground, and often more nimble than government in seeing and responding to changed conditions.

We'll partner with our schools and our colleges and our universities.

We'll partner with all the good people of this county, whoever they are, whatever they look like, and wherever they came from. All will be included in the partnerships we forge and the progress we make.

We will include them as a matter of fundamental fairness.

We will include them because our decision making will be better when we have the benefit of their diverse views, values, backgrounds and experience.

And we will include them, quite frankly, as a matter of self-interest. Because given the challenges we face, we can't afford to waste the talent that our more recent arrivals represent.

While the divisiveness over immigration rages on in D.C., let me offer a pair of observations:

My first observation is economic. Ours is a region rightly renowned as a center of innovation and entrepreneurship. Here in the center of Silicon Valley our County boasts an economy that is the envy of the nation.

The second observation is demographic: Almost 40 percent of the population in Santa Clara County is foreign born. They're immigrants.

Now, let me connect the dots. Santa Clara County is a county of immigrants and a county of prosperity. This is not a matter of coincidence.

And yet, on a daily basis we are subjected to the suggestion that a foreign born friend or neighbor, a classmate or a colleague, is somehow not one of us. They're different. They're scary. They're "the other."

I have to tell you, I look out in our chambers today and I see no "other." I see only partners — past, present, and most importantly, partners for the future, partners in progress for the coming year, and in all the years ahead.

A week ago the President of the United States firmly declared that, "... the state of our union is strong because our people are strong." I agree.

And at the local level, the state of our county is strong because our people are strong. All of our people.

Now, I have purposefully eschewed the opportunity today to offer a personal agenda for the coming year.

It's not because I don't have individual plans or ambitions for the year ahead. Of course I do.

I have a "to do list" as long as your arm—longer, in fact. So do my colleagues. So do the community leaders and advocates who have joined us here today. So do we all.

But I want the conversation we begin today to be about something more than any individual Supervisor's individual ambitions.

I want it to be about the work we can do together as partners.

The work any one of us does on our Board can only be done in partnership with our colleagues — and with our staff. To actually deliver results we rely on the very capable people seated behind me, our Board appointed officials; and another 20,000 or so capable and caring County employees who do the hard work that is county government.

We'll need their help to foster these partnerships — within our own organization and out in the community. In a large organization partnership doesn't always come naturally.

And of course, I want to partner with all of you.

As the year unfolds you'll hear me return again and again to these two themes: partnership and progress. Because I'm confident that however tumultuous the scene may be at the state or national level, progress can be made — will be made — by good people partnering with one another to make progress for us all.

So let's make 2018 a year of partnership and progress. In fact, let's make partnership and progress the hallmark of all the years to come.

We have so much to do. So let's get to it.

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## [Caltrain to launch mobile ticketing app](#) (Progressive Railroading)

[Caltrain](#) on Feb. 10 will launch Caltrain Mobile, a ticketing app that enables riders to purchase and activate tickets from smartphones.

Caltrain Mobile will offer one-way and day pass tickets, as well as zone-upgrade tickets for adults and passengers who qualify for discounted fares.

The app runs on iOS and Android systems. It also will feature a tool to link with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA) MuniMobile ticketing app and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) EZFare app.

Digital tickets purchased through the app include several security and authenticity features, such as changing background colors and animation, Caltrain officials said in a press release.

Caltrain Mobile was designed by moovel North America LLC, which also developed the mobile

ticketing apps for SFMTA and VTA. [In January 2017](#), Caltrain's board selected moovel North to develop the app.

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## [SF has the worst commute in the U.S., and it may have cost the city \\$10.6 billion last year \(SFGate.com\)](#)

San Francisco has one of the nastiest commutes in the country, a fact Bay Area residents know well and new data confirms.

Transportation analytics firm [INRIX published its annual Global Traffic Scorecard](#) on Monday, and San Francisco snagged a top spot.

The city placed fifth globally for worst traffic behind Los Angeles, Moscow, New York City and Sao Paulo. *See the rankings in the above slideshow.*

Though Los Angeles has traffic at nearly all waking hours, San Francisco beats L.A. in commuting congestion. S.F. ties with Boston for worst congestion on all roads during peak travel hours. Most Bay Area drivers have seen this firsthand — one can zoom from San Francisco to Oakland in 15 minutes in the late evening, but the same movement could take six times as long at 6 p.m.

San Francisco drivers spent an average of 79 hours in congestion during peak hours last year, and 12 percent of their total commute idling in gridlock.

INRIX estimates the traffic jams cost individual drivers \$2,250 and the city \$10.6 billion in 2017. INRIX calculated direct and indirect costs from the traffic jams: "Direct costs relate to the value of fuel and time wasted, and indirect costs refer to freight and business fees from company vehicles idling in traffic, which are passed on to households through higher prices."

The city's unique geography — perched on a seven-square-mile peninsula — coupled with an explosion of jobs at its core and a housing shortage creates the perfect cocktail for commuting congestion, according to Graham Cookson, Chief Economist at Washington-based INRIX and lead author on the report. These factors mean people who work in the city must increasingly live farther from it.

"This is the kind of place where people are commuting significant distances to get to work," Cookson said, "and it's causing terrible traffic." More people on the road is one thing, Cookson said, but more people on the road driving farther distances is another. The longer one must travel, the more volume on the network he consumes.

The five worst commutes in the Bay Area (in reverse order) as derived from Caltrans traffic data and estimates of the number of hours annually that drivers spend creeping along at speeds below 35 mph.

On a global traffic scale San Francisco actually showed slight improvement, moving from fourth worst congestion in the world in 2016 to fifth last year.

Cookson attributes the improvement to the completion of a series of city roadway projects in 2017 and a slight decrease in congestion on Interstate 280 and U.S. Highway 101.

"A mixture of things," he said, contributes to lessened traffic on Bay Area highways — city-funded projects, an increase in telecommuters and tech bus shuttles — but transit trends in cities tend to ebb and flow in the short-term.

The long-term projections for Bay Area traffic are dismal, Cookson said. Technology sector jobs act like magnets to workers, he said, but when they get here, a lack of housing means they'll continue to move farther away from their offices.

Road building, though a Band-Aid in the short-term, will only exacerbate traffic in the future. "Constructing more roads encourages more people to drive," said Cookson.

The construction of public transit infrastructure is a more long-lasting salve to a city's congestion woes, he noted, and San Francisco is "spending a huge amount of money on it."

In January the [Bay Area Toll Authority approved the addition of Regional Measure 3 \(RM3\) to the June ballot](#). The initiative would raise tolls on the region's seven bridges to pay for billions in Bay Area transportation improvements, including new BART and Muni railcars, a BART extension to downtown San Jose, an expansion of the San Francisco Bay ferry system, regional express buses and bus rapid transit in the East Bay.

RM3 would complement California Governor Jerry Brown's recently passed \$52 billion road plan that will increase gasoline taxes and other transportation-related fees to fund improvements to the state's infrastructure.

Even so, Bay Area residents should not expect to see immediate improvements on their daily drives. In January [Rufus Jeffris, vice president of communications for the Bay Area Council, a public policy advocacy group, told SFGATE](#) that it will take several years to see meaningful changes.

Jeffris said a change in commuter behavior is the most effective way to take cars off the road. This means carpooling, using rideshare technology, biking and walking to work.

"If [people are] really seriously asking, what can we do? That's the cheapest, fastest way to get traffic relief," he said.

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[Trump's Infrastructure Plan Would Take New York's Transit Nightmare National \(Bloomberg.com\)](#)

President [Donald Trump](#)'s war with his hometown over one of the nation's priciest transportation projects shows the challenges ahead for his plan to upgrade crumbling public works by having locals pay more of the bill.

The \$30 billion Gateway proposal, which includes a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River between New York City and New Jersey, has bogged down in an acrimonious fight with the states as Trump prepares to roll out his infrastructure plan on Monday.

Democratic senators from New Jersey and New York are blocking Trump's transportation nominees until he commits federal funds to Gateway. The administration rejected an earlier deal to split the cost, saying it's a local project -- even though the tunnel would help bind the entire Northeast corridor to the New York area.

The president's infrastructure plan is expected to propose spending at least \$200 billion over the next decade, largely to spur states, localities and the private sector to provide the balance of at least \$1.5 trillion.

State and local officials -- loath to raise taxes or levy tolls -- want more help. While Gateway is unique for its scope and gritty politics, standoffs with Washington could play out across the nation if Trump's plan to shift the burden of financing improvement projects to states and local governments succeeds.

"What they're going to be hearing from governors and mayors and people all over the country is, 'We don't have the money,' particularly for projects of national significance, which the Gateway project is," said Ray LaHood, a Republican and former transportation secretary under President Barack Obama.

### **Weakest Link**

The administration expects [to release](#) the president's plan on Monday, the same day he submits his fiscal 2019 budget blueprint to Congress. Half of the new federal money would go toward incentives to spur non-federal entities that own most U.S. infrastructure to raise and spend their own funds, rather than for specific projects.

The needs are great, with the American Society of Civil Engineers [estimating](#) an additional \$2 trillion is required by 2025 just to restore public works to a "B" grade level. But the Hudson tunnel dispute shows how hard it might be to conjure money for even the most crucial and high-profile projects.

### **Hurricane Damage**

The Gateway project includes a new \$13 billion tunnel with two tracks that would supplement a decaying, century-old tunnel that's failing because of its age and saltwater flooding from Hurricane Sandy in 2012. That tunnel provides the only direct train link between New Jersey and Manhattan for New Jersey Transit and Amtrak.

The Obama administration described the tunnel as the nation's most urgent rail infrastructure need. It is critical to the Northeast corridor, which carries more than 750,000 passengers daily and serves a region that produces about 20 percent of the gross domestic product, according to Amtrak. A 2016 Amtrak report found that implementation of the full Gateway project could generate \$3.87 worth of economic benefits for every \$1 spent.

### **Mixed Signals**

After New Jersey Governor Chris Christie killed an earlier tunnel plan in 2010, saying taxpayers would be on the hook, the project appeared to revive. The cost-sharing agreement with the Obama administration was [announced](#) in November 2015 by Christie, New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and New York Senator Charles Schumer.

The Trump administration has sent mixed signals about Gateway since the president took office. After Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao called Gateway "an absolute priority" in [testimony](#) before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee last May, the department withdrew from the board overseeing the project, Democrats said. The department said in a letter to the board it isn't standard practice to serve in such a capacity on other local transportation projects and it had to abstain from several board actions.

Schumer and Senate colleagues from New York and New Jersey then began holding up the confirmation of Transportation Department nominees. Schumer cited "the lack of focus on infrastructure investment by the current administration, and the continued roadblocks the administration has erected in front of the Gateway project" in a Nov. 13 statement opposing Derek Kan as undersecretary of transportation.

### **'No Such Agreement'**

On Dec. 29, the Federal Transit Administration sent a letter to New York state's budget director saying "there is no such agreement" to finance half the cost of Gateway. Deputy Administrator K. Jane Williams also questioned "the responsibility for funding a local project where nine out of 10 passengers are local transit riders."

"You get the feeling the feds just don't have any real funds for infrastructure, so they want to knock down this expensive project," said Tom Wright, president of the Regional Plan Association, a New York urban policy group.

The nominations and the Gateway project should be considered on their own merits, said Jeffrey Rosen, deputy Transportation secretary. He said it was particularly important to seat Ronald Batory to lead the Federal Railroad Administration after recent fatal derailments.

"From our vantage point, the nominations and those New York and New Jersey transit projects are totally separate issues, and we think they should have been kept separate," Rosen said in a telephone interview.

### **Democratic Support**

Wright said the administration needs Democratic support to pass an infrastructure bill, and Gateway could be a major negotiating chip. Williams's letter to New York pointed out that "Congress is poised to begin discussing infrastructure legislation in the coming weeks."

Democratic Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York raised Gateway funding in "a pretty heated discussion" during a Jan. 9 meeting with Trump administration officials about their infrastructure proposal, according to Senator Tom Carper of Delaware, the top Democrat on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Gillibrand became angry when Chao said there would be no funding because Democrats are holding up nominations, according to a source familiar with the meeting who requested anonymity to discuss a private gathering. Chao made no correlation between Gateway funding and nominees and merely said it was important to have Trump's nominee to run the Federal Railroad Administration confirmed, a spokeswoman said.

### **Striking Example**

LaHood said that the Gateway battle could be seen as both a political struggle between two New Yorkers, Trump and Schumer, and a striking example of the philosophical change the administration is trying to establish over the role of the federal government.

There are many large projects across the U.S. for which states and cities just don't have the resources to build without federal help, LaHood said. It will be up to Congress, which will write and pass any infrastructure legislation, to decide whether Washington continues to play the role it has.

"The \$64 billion question is, is Congress willing to change the philosophy on that?" he said.

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Conserve paper. Think before you print.

**From:** VTA Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Friday, February 09, 2018 9:50 AM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors  
**Subject:** VTA Standing Committee Agenda Packets - February 2018 Meetings

**VTA Board of Directors:**

You may access your VTA Standing Committee Agenda Packets for the **February 2018 Regular Meetings** via the links below.

- **Congestion Management Program and Planning (CMPP) Committee** – Meeting date: 2/15/18, Thursday, at 10:00 a.m. – [CMPP Agenda Packet](#)
- **Administration and Finance (A&F) Committee** – Meeting date: 2/15/18, Thursday, at 12:00 p.m. – [A&F Agenda Packet](#)
- **Safety, Security and Transit Planning & Operations (SSTPO) Committee** – Meeting date: 2/16/18, Friday, at 2:00 p.m. – [SSTPO Agenda Packet](#)

Thank you.

Office of the Board Secretary  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
3331 North First Street, Building B  
San Jose, CA 95134-1927  
Phone **408-321-5680**



Conserve paper. Think before you print.

**From:** VTA Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Friday, February 09, 2018 5:16 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors; VTA Advisory Committee Members  
**Subject:** VTA Connections Newsletter - February 2018

**VTA Board of Directors and VTA Advisory Committee Members:**

Below is VTA's newsletter for February 2018. It can also be accessed using this link:

<http://content.govdelivery.com/bulletins/gd/CAVTA-1d91ea3>

Please share with your constituents.

Thank you.

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February 2018

# VTA Connections

Stay in the know about  
transportation in Silicon Valley

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## Meet the Board



### VTA Board Member Bob Nuñez

Councilmember Nuñez represents the city of Milpitas, where VTA's BART Extension to Silicon Valley will begin passenger service in 2018 and will bring this perspective to the Safety, Security, and Transit Planning and Operations and Capital Projects Oversight committees this year.

A career educator, Councilmember Nuñez was elected to the Milpitas City Council in 2016 after having previously served on

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- [BART Phase I: Safe and Reliable is Our Unwavering Mission](#)

the Milpitas Unified Board of Education and following a 40-year career dedicated to education.

Councilmember Nuñez brought a wide range of experience in public service on county-wide commissions, non-profit boards and social justice organizations to VTA's Policy Advisory Committee in 2017, and to his role as a Board Alternate last year.

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## VTA Board Member John McAlister

As a long-time resident of Mountain View, Councilmember McAlister has dedicated his years in public service to addressing the challenges that face a growing Silicon Valley while preserving the character of our diverse community.



Councilmember McAlister joined the Mountain View City Council in 2012, and served as the city's Vice Mayor in 2014 and Mayor in 2015. In that time, Councilmember McAlister has brought the same work ethic that made him a successful entrepreneur to tackling issues like traffic congestion, promoting diverse housing options and environmental sustainability.

Councilmember McAlister began his service at VTA in 2014 when he joined the Policy Advisory Board as an alternate, and then a full member of the committee starting in 2015. He also served as an alternate to the VTA Board in 2017.

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## Special VTA Committee to Seek Resolutions for Financial Stability

- [FTA Extends BART Phase II Development Timeline](#)
- [Your Vision for Transit on State Route 85](#)
- [VTA Re-Opens De Anza College – Stelling Road Bus Stop](#)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, Feb. 15**

South Bascom Urban Village Community Open House  
6:30 p.m.  
Sherman Oaks Community Center, 1800A Fruitdale Ave., San Jose

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## BOARD UPDATE

**February 1, 2018 Board Mtg.**

Approved the appointment of the following Board Members to the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) **Ad Hoc Financial Stability Committee**:

Jeannie Bruins - Chair  
Cindy Chavez



For the next four months, three members of VTA’s Board of Directors will work together with more than a dozen other community groups to seek out ways to improve the Valley Transportation Authority’s financial stability.

The agency is facing a \$20 million structural deficit in fiscal year 2018 and \$26 million in 2019. The VTA Board of Directors approved the formation of an Ad Hoc Financial Stability Committee at its February 1 meeting.

[Read more.](#)

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## **BART Phase I: Safe and Reliable is Our Unwavering Mission**



Johnny Khamis

Approved the following Stakeholder Group representatives to the VTA Ad Hoc Financial Stability Committee:

VTA Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

VTA Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

VTA Committee for Transportation Mobility and Accessibility (CTMA)

Santa Clara County City Managers Association

Santa Clara Coalition of Chambers of Commerce

Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG)

Transit Justice Alliance

SPUR

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 265(ATU)

Service Employees International Union Local 521 (SEIU)

Transportation Authority Engineers & Architects Association Local 21 (TAEA)

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 101 (AFSCME)

South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council

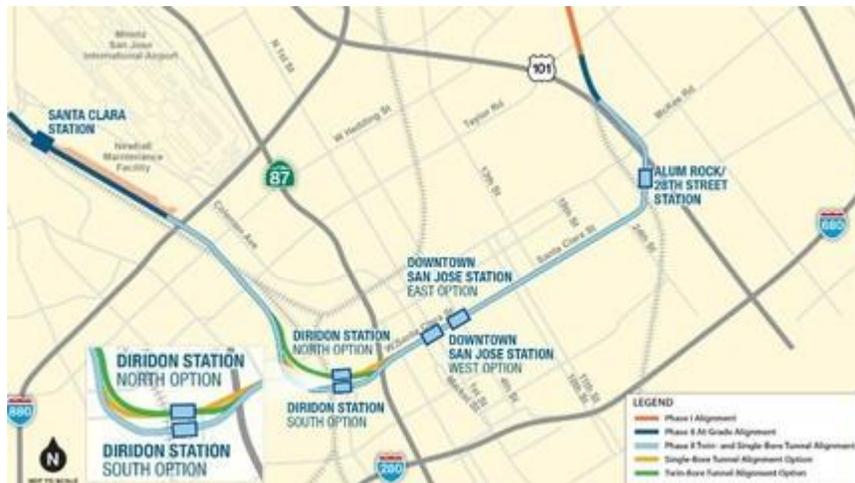
The VTA BART Silicon Valley Project is reforecasting a passenger service date for Phase I of the project, which will run from Warm Springs in Fremont, to Berryessa in North San Jose. The newly estimated opening date for the service will be in fall 2018.

The VTA team expects to complete a series of required milestones on the project this March, after which time BART takes control of the completed facilities and performs pre-revenue testing and training to fully integrate the system. BART has indicated it prefers to have six months to complete its system testing and training, which puts the likely service opening in fall 2018.

[Read more.](#)

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## FTA Extends BART Phase II Development Timeline



The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has granted VTA a three-month extension to complete the project development phase of the Federal New Starts funding program for the six-mile BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension. The new deadline is June 2018.

VTA requested extra time to refine design considerations for

(Each Stakeholder Group to have one representative and one alternate.)

For questions or more information about VTA please contact  
**Customer Service**  
**408.321.2300** or  
**Community Outreach**  
**408.321.7575**

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the two different tunneling methods (single and twin-bore) being considered for the 5-mile subway construction into downtown San Jose.

[Read more.](#)

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## Your Vision for Transit on State Route 85



In an online survey that ran from mid-October through the end of November, we asked you to share with us how you use State Route 85 and what you feel could make the experience better. We received almost 2,500 responses expressing frustrations, hopes, and visions for an improved roadway.

[Click here to read some of the more interesting things you told us and how that informs the potential for transit on State Route 85.](#)

[Read more.](#)

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## VTA Re-Opens De Anza College – Stelling Road Bus Stop



VTA passengers making their way to De Anza College have a new and improved bus stop to make their travels more pleasant.

The Stelling Road bus stop at the college is now open after undergoing months of construction for the improvements. The Stelling Road stop services four VTA bus routes: 25, 53, 55 and 323.

**[Read more.](#)**

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