

From: Board.Secretary
Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2017 1:10 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: From VTA: February 15 Media Clips



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[VTA considers changing fares to combat projected deficit](#)

Jasmine Leyva, Bay Area News Group

San Jose Mercury News

Just a few days remain for residents to give Valley Transportation Authority their thoughts on potential changes to its fare structure.

The public transit agency is projecting a deficit for fiscal year 2017-18 of \$20-\$25 million.

The public can give input until Feb. 20 by way of an online survey.

The VTA is looking to collect comments and data from the survey as part of its fare policy review to see what changes could be made. The policy, part of a larger transit route redesign plan, could increase some fares and decrease others, from 12.5 to 25 percent.

“It’s a complex effort that we’re doing,” said VTA spokesperson Linh Hoang.

According to Hoang, the last time fares were changed was in 2009, when the adult fare rose from \$1.75 to \$2.

In the last eight years VTA has added one hour of bus and light rail service, but declining ridership—thanks in part to ride sharing options such as Lyft and Uber—has meant that fares don’t cover the same share of the agency’s operating expenses that they once did.

“We’re competing with other ride services, so we want to make sure we offer the best services we can,” Hoang said. “We have to maintain a viable service.”

The VTA is considering an increase in single-ride adult fares, along with day and monthly passes. The cost of a single ride could go up by 25 to 50 cents.

Free VTA-to-VTA transfers and discounted or free youth fares are also being considered. Currently, VTA does not provide free transfers between its buses and light rail trains, requiring riders to pay an additional fare if they are taking another bus or transferring to light rail.

The Eco Pass program will also be under review. Passes are purchased by employers, universities and colleges and given to employees and students, allowing for unlimited rides on VTA buses and light rail routes.

VTA staff will consider splitting the program to give colleges and nonprofits annual passes, while switching employers to the regional Clipper Direct program.

The program has not been modified since the 1990s. Hoang said the agency works with six education institutions, including San Jose State University and DeAnza, Foothill, Mission, Evergreen and San Jose City colleges. The program also serves 90 businesses and organizations.

Hoang said VTA staff will look at continuing or expanding programs that provide passes to low-income individuals. The agency will also look at possible changes to community bus fare, which is \$1.25. Community buses serve specific neighborhoods.

In April, VTA staff will take a list of proposed changes to its board of directors, Hoang said.

To take the online survey, visit bit.ly/VTAFAres

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[Love Letter on VTA](#)

Local Broadcast News

KGO Channel 7 and KOFY-San Francisco

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[Highway 17: Hillside repairs resume, but real relief still far off](#)

Robert Salonga Bay Area News Group

San Jose Mercury News

SCOTTS VALLEY — Five days after a worker was killed in a tragic industrial accident, work to shore up a fallen Highway 17 hillside resumed Tuesday, authorities said.

Crews on Wednesday will focus their efforts on preparing for a series of storms set to arrive later this week. The work will involve removing trees and building a berm to contain the mudslide to the northbound lanes, said Caltrans spokeswoman Susana Cruz.

In addition, crews are expected to begin trucking away material from the roadway and carve into the slope in an effort to make it less vertical, and therefore less dangerous.

“If it falls straight down, it has a chance to bounce like a ball into the southbound lanes,” Cruz said.

Although work is resuming at the site, there’s no estimate for when normal traffic will be allowed to get through.

So, the roughly 50,000 daily motorists who rely on the artery to shuttle between Santa Cruz County and Silicon Valley are left fending for themselves through either painfully slow passage past the mudslide site or an equally dicey array of alternative and mountain routes.

One of those alternatives, Soquel-San Jose Road, is no longer available. Santa Cruz County indefinitely closed the popular bypass near Amaya Ridge Road because of “structural issues” on Monday.

The narrowing of Highway 17 from four lanes to just one lane in each direction has pushed travel times between the Fishhook — where Highway 17, Ocean Street and Highway 1 meet — and Los Gatos to 2½ to 3 hours, said California Highway Patrol Officer Trista Drake.

Work to remove the mudslide that spilled across the northbound lanes was halted Thursday after two workers were backed over by a dump truck at the repair site. One of the men, 54-year-old Bobby Gill of Los Banos, died at the scene.

His co-worker, a 34-year-old San Jose man, was injured and taken to a hospital in San Jose. Both were employed by Graniterock, a Watsonville-based subcontractor specializing in work with gravel, sand, concrete and asphalt. The truck that hit them was driven by a 39-year-old Salinas man working for Watsonville-based Hildebrand & Sons Trucking.

The collision remains under investigation by both the California Highway Patrol and Cal/OSHA, the state watchdog agency for workplace safety. Part of the delay in work resuming was waiting for Cal/OSHA to finish its examination of the work site.

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[Highway 17: Commuters find therapy as work resumes at slide](#)

Michael Todd

Santa Cruz Sentinel, San Jose Mercury News

SCOTTS VALLEY – In about a month, Facebook startup Highway 17 Commuters amassed more than 8,500 members frustrated about the hazardous highway mudslide that has been the site of death, injury and unhappiness near Vine Hill Road.

The founder, Linus Tremaine, said the group welcomes discussion about how best to cope with congestion after weeks of rain triggered road hazards, such as the closure of Soquel San Jose Road as an alternate link to Silicon Valley. That road is sinking south of Amaya Ridge, and north of Olsen Road and no date has been provided for its reopening, according to sccroadclosure.org/.

Hundreds of comments – some are scrapped so the most relevant posts top the group’s news feed – recount personal woes and strategies for minimizing the wait until the roads are fixed or cleared.

As to the need for such a resource, Tremaine underscored the group’s rapid growth, which includes the addition of roughly 400 new followers from Monday to Tuesday.

“People need information and they need a place to vent,” Tremaine said. “There is a large sense of dread surrounding the upcoming rains as we have few open roads and those are all damaged.”

The group started with purely informational comments, but that wasn’t enough. “People need a place to express themselves and reassure each other,” Tremaine said. “It was very quick that we realized we were not going to be able to have a tight control over what is discussed.”

The site also tapped the frustrations of residents living in communities where many motorists have sought alternative routes with Scotts Valley among them.

Tremaine said drivers have flooded these side roads, leaving mountain communities “frustrated not being able to drive down their own streets because highway traffic is filling up the towns.”

Caltrans and Graniterock Construction resumed excavation at the Highway 17 mudslide near Vine Hill Road on Tuesday afternoon after major work ceased through the weekend. Work was postponed during a fatality investigation at the unstable hillside, according to Caltrans. Robert Gill, 54, of Los Banos was working for Graniterock Construction when he was struck and killed by a dump truck that hit him and pinned another worker about noon Feb. 9.

Tuesday afternoon, the hill-climbing excavator known as the Spider returned to the site, as did workers from lead contractor Graniterock, Caltrans spokesman Jim Shivers said. Now, workers are excavating the hillside during the day, when shadows aren’t a concern on the slopes, Shivers said. The project also will pause during rain, which is forecast Wednesday and Thursday, according to the National Weather Service.

“We are watching the weather,” Shivers said. “The duration: That we don’t know yet. It depends on the weather.”

The state’s Division of Occupational Safety and Health, or Cal/OSHA, investigated workplace safety at the excavation site and that inquiry is expected to take up to four months, Cal/OSHA spokeswoman Erika Monterroza said. Statute gives up to six months for such investigations, she said.

The California Highway Patrol also is investigating Gill’s death.

Traffic continues to flow one lane each direction near the Highway 17 slide, said officer Trista Drake of the CHP.

Vehicles backed up from the construction zone beyond Scotts Valley, leaving northbound motorists with three-hour delays.

“It took me two hours to get up there,” Drake said.

For information on traffic updates, visit sigalert.com.

CLOSURES, DELAYS

Highway 9: Hard closure Glengarry Road to Paradise Park for slide removal.

Soquel San Jose Road: Hard closure south of Amaya Ridge, and north of Olsen Road.

Highway 1 to Highway 129: This road has been opened as a detour, according to Caltrans.

Highway 1 to Highway 152: Closures at Hecker Pass in Santa Clara County; Casserly Road to Pole Line Road. Expected to reopen Friday, weather permitting.

Scotts Valley closures 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. Wednesday to Friday and Feb. 21-24:

- . Offramp of southbound Highway 17 at Scotts Valley Drive.
- . Onramp of northbound Highway 17 at Granite Creek Road.
- . All traffic will be directed to northbound Highway 17 at Santa’s Village Road during the closures.

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[Look, Mountain View, no hands! Startup tests self-driving on a rainy night](#) **Cromwell Schubarth**

Silicon Valley Business Journal

Driving at night in the rain, which can be challenging for humans, doesn't appear to be a problem for one of Silicon Valley's autonomous vehicle startups, Drive.ai.

The Mountain View company posted a video Tuesday that shows a hands-free night ride through the downtown of its home city. Among the challenges it appears to handle are a broken red light at an intersection and a driver cutting in front (possibly illegally) in front of the car at a four-way stop.

It makes you wonder how many of the drivers of the cars sloshing past were aware that the car next to them was operating in hands-free mode. That is an increasing possibility on California roads, where there are now 22 automakers, suppliers, and tech companies with autonomous vehicle testing permits.

"Any successful self-driving technology will need to address countless unpredictable situations and a wide range of driving conditions, yet few are able to today," Drive.ai wrote in a blog.

Drive.ai is the same company that last fall showed off an LED panel that sits on a car's roof, announcing in words and pictures what it plans to do. That is aimed at solving the problem of communicating what a robot-driver is going to do to other drivers and pedestrians.

The startup was co-founded by Stanford artificial intelligence experts Carol Reiley and Sameep Tandon. It has raised about \$12 million in funding from Oriza Ventures, Northern Light Venture Capital and InnoSpring Seed Fund.

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[NARP: Delaying Caltrain electrification funding could increase cost](#)

Rail News: Passenger Rail

Attempts to delay grant approval for Caltrain's electrification project could lead to cost overruns, National Association of Railroad Passengers President and Chief Executive Officer Jim Mathews said yesterday.

In a letter to U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, Mathews asked the Federal Transit Administration to move forward with a \$647 million full funding grant agreement for the project, which he said was long overdue.

"Caltrain has warned that if the agency is unable to issue a notice to proceed to contractors by March 1, 2017, this vital project will see cost overruns, eroding the project's viability," Mathews wrote.

The letter was in response to calls from Republican members of California's congressional delegation to block the grant for the electrification program, which would help lay the foundation for eventual high-speed rail service between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The legislators asked for a hold on the Caltrain funds until a full audit is done on the state's overall high-speed rail program.

"Over 65,000 commuters depend on the Peninsula Corridor every day, and the service provides a critical alternative to the heavily congested U.S. 101 freeway," Mathews said in his letter to Chao. "Modernizing the current diesel-based service is a cost-effective way to deliver more efficient, faster, and more frequent rail service to the region."

He added that the Caltrain project would create nearly 10,000 direct and indirect jobs.

The project calls for electrifying Caltrain's corridor from San Francisco to San Jose, Calif.

Meanwhile, a Silicon Valley trade association yesterday expressed similar concerns about plans to delay the electrification project.

In an editorial in the San Francisco Chronicle, Silicon Valley Leadership Group CEO Carl Guardino said the calls to delay the grant stemmed from lawmakers' plans to end the high-speed rail project.

"As determined in court, and codified by the [California] Legislature, the electrification of Caltrain is a separate and distinct project from high-speed rail," Guardino added. "Our plea to California's Republican congressional delegation is clear: Don't allow your concerns about high-speed rail to overshadow your support for California's innovation economy."

Guardino's group represents more than 400 San Francisco Bay Area employers.

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[GOP must not defund Caltrain electrification grant](#)

[Carl Guardino](#)

[San Francisco Chronicle](#)

It was 1863, Abraham Lincoln was president, and our nation was enduring the most divisive time in history. In that same year, what we now call Caltrain Commuter Rail Service began continuous Peninsula corridor service between San Jose and San Francisco. Our nation is once again enduring a divisive chapter, and much to our surprise, Caltrain's strong and stable service is suddenly at stake.

On Jan. 26, all 14 members of California's Republican congressional delegation signed a letter to President Trump's secretary of transportation to act against the recommendation of the Federal Transit Administration. The federal government should, they wrote, deny a federal match of \$647 million to electrify our Caltrain system.

For nearly two decades, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Bay Area Council, SPUR and other regional business organizations have championed the modernization of Caltrain, which has served our region for 154 years, running 79 miles between Gilroy and San Francisco. With nearly 60 months of consecutive ridership increases, Caltrain is running at 125 percent of ridership capacity. Ridership has grown from 25,000 weekday passenger trips a decade ago to nearly 65,000 daily trips today. In short, it is standing room only in both the morning and evening commutes.

Modernizing Caltrain includes safety improvements such as grade separations, longer station platforms to accommodate more train cars and elevated platforms for quicker boardings. A key component is doing away with diesel engines and turning the switch to electric. All together, this \$1.98 billion upgrade allows us to almost double Caltrain ridership to 110,000 daily trips. Because 3 of every 5 Caltrain passengers are "choice riders," i.e., they own cars but choose rail instead — the benefits are enjoyed broadly:

- Each day, electrification would eliminate 619,000 car miles traveled.
- Each year, the reduction in polluting greenhouse gases would be the equivalent of removing 40,000 cars from our roads.

The economic importance of electrifying Caltrain cannot be overstated. Innovation economy employers calling the Peninsula corridor home contribute 14 percent of our entire state's gross domestic product, 52 percent of all patents filed in California and 43 percent of all venture capital investment.

Caltrain electrification puts Americans to work, building a system that helps Bay Area residents get to work. Electrifying and modernizing Caltrain creates 9,600 jobs: from power converters and transformers built in Richmond, Va.; the assembly of electric trains in Salt Lake City; the transportation of electric train shells in Humble, Texas; or engineering services in San Mateo. American workers win.

So why the last-minute attempt to derail two decades of work? A belief by 14 well-meaning Republican members of Congress that defunding Caltrain will kill high-speed rail, which they view as a boondoggle. As determined in court, and codified by the Legislature, the electrification of Caltrain is a separate and distinct project from high-speed rail.

Our plea to California's Republican congressional delegation is clear — don't allow your concerns about high-speed rail to overshadow your support for California's innovation economy. It's in your power to keep Caltrain, and Silicon Valley, on track.

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[Muni riders to see reroutes, longer trips amid reconstruction of 100-year-old Twin Peaks Tunnel](#)

Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez

San Francisco Examiner

Long-delayed Twin Peaks Tunnel repair work is finally on track again, and that means reroutes affecting some 81,000 daily transit riders.

For the thousands who rely on Muni's K-Ingleside, L-Taraval and M-Oceanview light-rail lines, shuttles will replace normal service during the planned Twin Peaks Tunnel construction, with transfers to other buses needed to arrive at some regular destinations.

The work was originally slated to start last fall, then again in January, and now finally the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency quietly announced last week that track-work on the 100-year-old tunnel will begin in April.

"The delay was due to additional outreach to the West Portal neighborhood and merchants regarding construction impacts around the West Portal station," said SFMTA spokesperson Paul Rose.

That work is to "extensively rehabilitate" tunnel infrastructure that's more than 40 years old, some of which dates back to the original Twin Peaks Tunnel construction in 1917. SFMTA plans to replace the tunnel's tracks and track switch systems, repair concrete walls and seismically retrofit the tunnel.

The Twin Peaks Tunnel is a vital connector between the west side of The City and downtown, serving some 81,000 daily riders on the K, L and M lines each day, all of whom will need to adjust to a new, temporarily altered commute.

There will be five scheduled shutdowns to complete the tunnel rehabilitation, each lasting 11 to 15 days long. The construction schedule is not yet finalized, according to the SFMTA, and "will be published shortly."

Preliminarily, at least, the SFMTA wrote on the tunnel construction website some advisories for the reroutes: L-Taraval shuttle buses will run between Castro Station and the San Francisco Zoo, and serve all regular L line stops between the zoo and 14th Avenue. Buses will then operate express between 14th Avenue and Castro Station with a stop at Forest Hill Station.

M-Oceanview shuttle buses run between Castro and Balboa Park stations, but won't stop at Forest Hill Station, as the trains do, and will require transfers.

The K-Ingleside will operate as trains between St. Francis Circle and Balboa Park, according to the SFMTA, but those traveling downtown are advised to transfer at Balboa Park Station to BART instead.

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[BART wants to ask voters for bridge toll hike](#)

Phillip Matier & Andrew Ross

San Francisco Chronicle

Fresh from winning voter approval of a \$3.5 billion bond measure, BART is looking at asking for another \$1.5 billion as part of a bridge-toll increase that could go on Bay Area ballots as early as next year.

The idea being pushed by BART and other transit agencies is to raise tolls on the Bay Area's seven state-owned toll bridges — that's every one of them except the Golden Gate — by \$1 to \$3. Officials are still haggling over the exact amount, but the upper range would boost the top cost of crossing the bay in a car to \$9.

The full list of transit projects that would get the money isn't finalized. But BART is already planning to push its way to the front of the line and ask for as much as a third of the toll dollars that the measure would generate.

It was just three months ago that BART won a high-stakes campaign to persuade voters in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco counties to approve Measure RR, a bond issue that will pay for a host of nuts-and-bolts improvements to the nearly five-decade-old system. This next ballot bid would be called Regional Measure 3 and would go before voters in all nine Bay Area counties, probably in 2018.

"Rebuilding our transportation system is similar to maintaining a house — it's really never done," said Randy Rentschler of the Bay Area Toll Authority, which would have a major say over how the money raised by the new measure would be divvied up.

BART says what it needs most is 306 additional railcars. There's no money in Measure RR to pay for them, and they'll cost a lot of cash — \$1.6 billion, to be exact.

BART hopes \$1 billion of that will come from the envisioned toll-increase measure, which would still leave it \$600 million short of what it needs for all the cars. That money would have come from sales-tax hikes on the November ballot in San Francisco and Contra Costa counties, but voters there fouled up BART's plans by rejecting the increases.

The 306 new railcars BART hopes to purchase are on top of the 775 already on order as part of the replacement of its aging fleet.

Other BART priorities for the toll money include \$250 million to modernize train control and traction power systems and \$90 million to design a seismic retrofit of the 3.6-mile Berkeley hills tunnel.

Also on the list is \$120 million to pay for "capacity enhancements" at the heavily used Embarcadero and Montgomery Street stations in San Francisco. BART would use half the money to install automated sliding glass doors on the platform that would keep riders safely separated from the tracks, and the other half to add elevators, escalators and stairs.

None of this can happen until the Legislature gives the OK for Bay Area voters to decide on a bridge-toll increase. State Sen. Jim Beall, D-Santa Clara, is expected to introduce legislation that would do that, according to those following the process. Beall's office declined to comment Tuesday.

Bay Area voters last approved a \$1 increase on local toll bridges in 2004, to pay for congestion-relief measures. Transit officials have since imposed two \$1 toll hikes on their own, for bridge seismic retrofits.

Measure RR in November was no easy sell, because BART had to persuade two-thirds of voters to give the thumbs-up to pass it. A toll hike wouldn't be as big a challenge — it would require only a cumulative simple majority in the nine Bay Area counties.

BART wouldn't be the only transit agency benefiting from the toll hikes. Money probably would also be spent on ferries, express buses, high-occupancy-vehicle lanes and even the new Transbay Transit Center in San Francisco, which has already received \$300 million in toll revenue.

As for justifying BART's grab of toll dollars, transportation officials argue that the rail system carries an average of 28,000 people each weekday rush hour — nearly twice the number that move in cars over the bay.

“This is very real congestion relief, which is capacity improvement,” said Nick Josefowitz, a BART Board of Directors member from San Francisco who helped lead the campaign for Measure RR.

According to BART spokesman Jim Allison, the bond measure that voters approved in November covers a bit less than half the cost of a new, \$915 million train control system that will allow 30 trains an hour to travel under the bay, six more than now.

But a bit less than half isn't enough — which is why BART is extending its hand to voters, again.

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[Oroville Dam drags California's \\$65 billion infrastructure annual price tag into the open](#)

Katy Murphy, Bay Area News Group

San Jose Mercury News

SACRAMENTO — Shock over the emergency evacuation downriver from the Oroville Dam has given way to serious questions about how California is coping with its aging infrastructure — which the American Society of Civil Engineers says would cost the state a staggering \$65 billion per year to fix and maintain after years of neglect.

“The idea that we have to evacuate 200,000 residents in this day and age is just a shame,” said Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, pointing to a Bay Area News Group story this week that revealed how state and federal officials in 2005 ignored warnings about the dam's emergency spillway.

Fixing old roads, bridges and dams is a costly proposition that is often the first to be put on hold during times of fiscal crisis, experts say. They note that the physical underpinnings of our society tend to be invisible until they fail and there's a mad scramble to repair the damage.

But now, amid deep concern over the safety of the state's second largest dam and with a Republican White House eager to spend as much as \$1 trillion over 10 years on infrastructure, California finds itself in an awkward position politically.

“The state of California can't write checks to cover its infrastructure needs — plain and simple,” said Bill Whalen, a research fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution who was a strategist for former Republican Gov. Pete Wilson. “If the state of California wants to address its myriad infrastructure needs, it needs Washington's cooperation.”

Sacramento and Washington are now butting heads on issues ranging from health to illegal immigration. But many political moderates hoping they will find common ground in potholes and bridges took heart

Tuesday when President Donald Trump's chief spokesman called the Oroville crisis a "textbook case" of why investing in infrastructure is so critical.

"Dams, bridges, roads and all ports around the country have fallen into disrepair," Press Secretary Sean Spicer said. "In order to prevent the next disaster, we will pursue the president's vision for an overhaul of our nation's crumbling infrastructure."

But Trump has yet to identify the funding source for such a sweeping proposal, said Rep John Garamendi, D-Elk Grove, who worries that Congress will adhere to its strict "A-B-C" policy even if it does appropriate the money: "Anything But California."

While the state might turn to House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Bakersfield, for help, its bargaining power was diminished after President Barack Obama's departure, Whalen said. What's more, Garamendi said, "the California delegation is not unified. Republicans don't often work with the Democrats — and vice-versa."

Gov. Jerry Brown has proposed investing \$43 billion in infrastructure over the next five years, with the vast majority of the money going to transportation. California voters approved a \$7.5 billion water bond in 2014 for a range of needs from flood control to water storage, but that falls far short of needs for flood control and increasing the water supply.

With its extraordinarily complex system of levees, dams and pipelines, the state needs to spend \$2.8 billion per year for a decade to protect its citizens from floods, according to the 2013 report card from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Failing to do so, the report warns, could lead to dire consequences: "A catastrophic failure of any one of the levee systems in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta carries with it the very real potential to be a megadisaster greater than Hurricane Katrina caused in New Orleans."

The group releases a report card every four years, with the latest due out next month.

Dodd said he hopes the dangerous situation at the Oroville Dam leads to smarter decisions by everyone in state government, including the Legislature. He said that until he read this news organization's report concerning ignored warnings about the Oroville emergency spillway, he didn't know the need existed.

"While I'm pleased with how they dealt with this in this emergency situation," he said, "I'm just kind of lamenting the fact that we had an opportunity to learn something 12 years ago."

Brown made a similar acknowledgment to reporters on Monday, saying, "I'm glad we found out about that."

The warnings sounded years ago about Oroville Dam's emergency spillway fit a common pattern, said the Hoover Institution's Whalen.

When the next disaster strikes, he said, "you will find the same thing: Somebody warned about it five to 10 years ago and California didn't have the money and Washington didn't want to spend the money."

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[High-speed rail CEO says slower environmental reviews won't delay your first train trip](#)

Jody Meacham

Silicon Valley Business Journal

The schedule has slipped for environmentally clearing the remainder of the construction segments of California's high-speed rail system, including the three segments most directly affecting San Jose.

But Jeff Morales, CEO of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, told the authority's board Tuesday that the delays — the longest affecting San Jose is nine months on the San Jose-Merced segment — will not slow construction or change key completion dates, which call for San Jose service to begin in 2025.

"We do not see an impact on the overall program schedule, in particular the valley-to-valley section (San Jose to near Bakersfield), because we can offset any potential increases in time for the environmental reviews through other steps in the process," Morales said. Among those steps are beginning some right-of-way activities such as preliminary surveying and mapping before environmental clearance is received, which he said would "cut months off of what would be the schedule otherwise (in the San Jose-Merced segment)."

Previous timelines had called for the full San Francisco-Los Angeles-Anaheim Phase I of the system to be environmentally cleared for construction by the end of this year. Construction is under way between Madera and Shafter, just north of Bakersfield, on segments that each received its final environmental Record of Decision (ROD) by 2014.

Morales said, however, that the lengthened target dates should be considered "not later than dates" because he thinks those times can be shortened by working with the Federal Railroad Administration. "We are allowing additional time for federal review in the schedules beyond what we had previously accommodated as well as some additional time to get from draft to final that will have the effect of pushing out the dates for the ROD (record of decision). But we will continue to work with the FRA to look for improvements as we go along."

The practical effect for most people, since service dates remain the same as those in the current business plan revealed a year ago, is that there will be more time for their input on decisions regarding alignments, tunnels, viaducts, station locations, etc.

The delays push back the target date for full environmental clearance of the San Francisco-San Jose segment by eight months to July 2018, San Jose-Merced to August 2018 and the Central Valley Wye — a huge railroad interchange to be built near Chowchilla — by 14 months until February 2018.

The wye will permit separate lines to and from the Bay Area and Sacramento (which is part of Phase II) to merge or diverge with the spine of the system in the San Joaquin Valley. The wye's environmental clearance was already behind schedule and now is expected to be completed by next February. The wye ties together the San Jose-Merced segment and the Merced-Fresno segment so that the first high-speed trains can run between San Jose and near Bakersfield.

The last segment scheduled to be environmentally cleared is Palmdale to Burbank, which is September 2018.

Morales also said the high-speed rail authority is working with the governor's office to take advantage of President Trump's Jan. 24 executive order "to expedite environmental reviews and approvals for high-priority infrastructure projects."

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[Trump approves California's request for emergency aid](#)

Melody Gutierrez

San Francisco Chronicle

SACRAMENTO — President Trump issued major disaster declarations to enable federal funding for California on two fronts — to aid with the Oroville Dam spillway damage and mass evacuations and to help the state deal with the widespread effects of January's storms.

Gov. Jerry Brown had requested the declaration from the president and aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and his requests were being closely watched since he has been openly critical toward Trump, and Trump has criticized the Democrat-controlled state as being "out of control."

"I want to thank FEMA for moving quickly to approve our requests," Brown said in a statement. "This federal aid will get money and resources where it's needed most."

Brown first made a request for assistance for damage caused in the state by storms between Jan. 3 and Jan. 12 that caused flooding and mudslides in 34 counties. On Monday night, he made a second request to ask for federal assistance for 10,000 of the most affected evacuated residents of Butte, Sutter and Yuba counties.

Brown said the assistance for the Oroville Dam spillway is needed because more storms are on their way, which could force the state to use the damaged emergency spillway again. Displaced residents were told Tuesday that they could return home, but to remain on alert.

Brown wrote in his letter that the state might ask for further assistance for the Oroville spillway situation once investigators determine the extent of the damage to the dam's two spillways.

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Conserve paper. Think

From: Board.Secretary

Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2017 6:46 PM

To: VTA Board of Directors; VTA Advisory Committee Members

Subject: Public Comment Period for VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension SEIS/SEIR extended to Monday March 6, 2017.

VTA Board of Directors and VTA Advisory Committee Members:

The public comment period for VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension SEIS/SEIR has been extended to March 6, 2017. Please see attached notice and share with your constituents. Thank you.

Notice of Extension of Public Comment Period to Monday, March 6, 2017 For VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension Project Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report and Draft 4(f) Evaluation

Project Overview

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) previously released the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIS/SEIR) for public review and comment for the proposed construction of VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension Project, an approximately 6-mile extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system from the Berryessa BART Station (under construction) in San Jose to the City of Santa Clara. The Project would include four stations: the Alum Rock/28th Street, Downtown San Jose, Diridon, and Santa Clara Stations. **The comment period has been extended from February 20, 2017 to March 6, 2017.** The Draft SEIS/SEIR and supporting documentation are available on the project website: <http://www.vta.org/bart/environmentaldocumentsphaseII>.

How To Submit Comments:

Written comments will be accepted until **March 6, 2017** and may be submitted via mail or email:

Mail: Tom Fitzwater, BART Silicon Valley Environmental Planning Manager

VTA Environmental Programs & Resources Management, Building B-2
3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134

Email: BARTPhase2EIS-EIR@vta.org

Contact VTA Community Outreach at (408) 321-7575, TTY (408) 321-2330, for additional information.

From: Board.Secretary
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 4:51 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: From VTA: February 16 Media Clips



VTA Daily News Coverage for Thursday, February 16, 2017

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[Work continues on Highway 17 mudslide](#)

Jason Green of Bay Area News Group

San Jose Mercury News

SCOTTS VALLEY — Crews were set to work into the night to clear and shore up a mudslide-socked stretch of Highway 17.

Much of the work Wednesday focused on preparations for the first of four storms expected to arrive Thursday. It included removing trees and building an 8-foot-tall berm to catch additional material that might come down, said Caltrans spokesman Jim Shivers.

Crews also took down half of the vertical slope adjacent to the highway, which could collapse and make things worse if left alone, and hauled away loose material, Shivers said.

“We have made progress,” he said.

In addition to a 24-hour shift that started Wednesday, crews will work 8- to 12-hour shifts through the weekend when it isn't raining, Shivers said. Four storms are set to roll through the region between Thursday and Tuesday.

Shivers said there is still no timetable to reopen the northbound lanes near Vine Hill Road. The southbound lanes will continue to carry traffic in each direction for the foreseeable future.

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[Roadshow: Santa Cruz Mountains residents beg sightseers to stay home](#)

Gary Richards

San Jose Mercury News

Q Some of us have been driving Highway 17 for years and this year is worse than any in memory. When all alternate routes are also closed, it is almost unbearable not being able to get home.

Heather Hedstrom

A It's been more than two weeks of hell and more rain is rolling in this weekend.

Q Can you help get the word out to stop people who are driving up into the mountains to "sightsee" the Skyline Boulevard washout and others? Our roads are extremely fragile and with more storms coming we are worried that the last remaining route out for hundreds of families (Black Road) will be lost as well. Unnecessary extra traffic right now is not what the roads, or any of us, need.

Missy Norquist

A You aren't the only one begging sightseers to stay away.

Q As you know, roads in the Santa Cruz Mountains are a total mess. Highway 17 is barely open, State Route 9 has been closed for weeks, Highway 35 collapsed south of Castle Rock State Park, and county roads on both sides of the ridge are failing at a record rate.

Unfortunately for those of us who live in the communities near the top of Black Road, that is now our only way in and out. And Black is hanging by a thread, with county workers there almost every day clearing new slides and removing fallen trees. If we get another serious amount of rain in the next week or two, Black is likely to close and we'll be cut off.

Already Black is heavy with extra traffic, some curious to see the crater on Skyline, others headed to Castle Rock and oblivious to the road closure ahead. Some are parking by the roadsides and walking past the barricades to the gap in the highway, returning to their cars later to find they've been ticketed. One-lane controls are back and now causing delays in both directions. What used to be a 15-minute drive from Highway 17 to Skyline could now be 30 minutes or more.

I would ask you to remind your readers that Black Road no longer provides through access to Castle Rock, Los Altos Rod and Gun Club, or to Highway 9. Mountain bikers cannot park at Sanborn-Skyline Park, and roadside parking on Skyline may get them ticketed.

Robert Easo

A And one more warning ...

Q Black Road has two areas where the earth is sliding, causing one lane to be closed and putting the entire road at risk of falling down the hillside. Yet dozens of valley residents are coming up Black each day to attempt to access Castle Rock, Sanborn Park or the Los Altos Rod and Gun Club; all of which are inaccessible due to slides.

Locals have made signs and are turning people away at the bottom of Black, before visitors attempt the futile trek up the mountain and further weaken the road.

Maria Daane

A OK, you got the last word. Folks, stay away.

Q With all the landslides on the highways this year, what does Caltrans do with all the mud they are scraping off the roads?

Karen Casner, Sunnyvale

A The state has contracts with local landfills.

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[Geary BRT lawsuit is frivolous at best](#)

Opinion by Lee Heidhues, San Francisco

San Francisco Examiner

It's an outrage that after 10-plus years of hearings and public input that a small cadre of disgruntled neighbors have gone to court to delay the Geary Bus Rapid Transit project.

The only project that would satisfy this crew, who insist their lives depend on automobiles, is to have Geary Boulevard as a car-only thoroughfare.

The issue here has zilch to do with disabled access, fewer Muni stops, street center boarding and the fact the newly minted District 1 supervisor was not involved in the debate.

It is solely about a vocal minority that feels threatened that cars are, thankfully, no longer priority one in San Francisco. The court should treat this frivolous litigation in the only manner it deserves: Dismiss it immediately.

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[BART says all cars will have working security cameras by July 1](#)

Michael Cabanatuan

San Francisco Chronicle

A little more than a year after BART officials agreed to outfit every railcar with working security cameras, nearly a third of the transit system's cars are still without them.

But not for long, said Alicia Trost, a BART spokeswoman. By July 1, she said, all of BART's 669 railcars will be equipped with working cameras, "as promised to the public."

BART officials made that promise to calm angry riders after The Chronicle revealed in January 2016 that less than one-third of BART's cars were equipped with real and functioning cameras. The system's remaining 470 cars were mounted with decoys.

The disclosure came during the investigation of a fatal shooting on a BART train after police admitted they had no video of the crime even though it occurred in clear view of what appeared to be a functioning camera.

Officials defended the decoy program at first, then pledged to phase out the dummy program by equipping all cars with operating cameras by an unspecified date. In July, they said the installations would not be completed by the end of this year. The work, Trost said then, involved more complicated wiring than anticipated.

BART maintenance crews have been making consistent progress, installing cameras nightly, she said last week.

"More than half of the new cameras have been installed," Trost said, "and the number changes every day."

That's welcome news, said BART riders interviewed aboard trains recently.

"I'd like to see them done," said Sue Mulvihill, 71, of Point Richmond. "There have been a lot of odd people on trains lately. I would feel a lot safer if I knew the cameras worked."

Nestoras Karathanasis, 33, a bioinformatics engineer, lives in Oakland and rides BART to and from San Francisco daily. He knows that surveillance cameras are no guarantee against crime but said, "I think they're good for protection in general. The sooner the better."

BART purchased cameras and recording devices sufficient to outfit all 470 cars with four cameras each in August at a cost of \$463,749, according to BART records. The project is on budget, Trost said.

Decoy cameras, which were merely empty housings with blinking lights, were intended to give riders a sense of security and trick criminals into believing they were being watched. The killing of 19-year-old Carlos Misael Funez-Romero on Jan. 9, 2016, put an end to that.

Passengers as well as some public officials were outraged to learn most cameras were fakes. Chagrined BART officials, who were about to start a campaign to pass a bond measure to rebuild BART, quickly abandoned the decoy program.

Funez-Romero's killing remains unsolved despite the release of images of the suspected shooter, captured by station surveillance cameras, and a \$10,000 reward.

The outfitting of BART's existing fleet should be completed several months before the system's new railcars start arriving by the dozens. The new cars will come with security cameras capable of providing live feeds to a monitoring center, though BART would need to install new communications infrastructure along its tracks for that to happen. Cameras in BART's existing cars record footage that can be downloaded and reviewed by police.

As technology becomes more sophisticated and cheaper, BART is contemplating other devices, including license-plate readers, which could be used for parking enforcement in BART garages and lots. Use of such a device, however, would probably raise concerns about how else it might be used.

BART has had a difficult relationship with technology, law enforcement and civil liberties in the past. The shutdown of the cell phone system in its subways during a 2011 demonstration caused an uproar and led to a law that requires public agencies to get a court order before shutting down a public communications network.

BART is considering a policy that would balance security interests and privacy rights. The BART Surveillance & Community Safety Act would require its Board of Directors to grant specific approval for each new surveillance device after listening to public comment and conduct yearly reviews of their use. Misuse, or ineffectiveness, would require the board to alter or stop the use of the technology.

San Francisco's Electronic Frontier Foundation, a nonprofit civil rights organization that focuses on the digital world, is working with BART to develop the proposed policy.

"Public safety requires trust between government and the communities served," Adam Schwartz, the foundation's senior staff attorney, said in a letter to BART directors. "To ensure that trust, we need a participatory process for deciding whether to adopt new government surveillance technologies and ongoing transparency and oversight of any adopted technologies."

As for on-train surveillance cameras, most BART riders seem to have become comfortable with them.

"I'm a civil libertarian, but it doesn't really bother me," said Michael Gallo, 53, an El Cerrito attorney. "I don't think people riding a BART train have a reasonable expectation of privacy."

Benjamin Mertz, 29, an El Cerrito resident who teaches music at a Tenderloin school, agreed.

"We live in a society where we're all being watched all the time now," he said. "There are always going to be concerns about government and how it uses the footage. But that's the world we live in."

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[BART Pauses Planning for Dublin Parking Garage](#)

The Independent

The BART Board of Directors voted to delay a decision on a proposed parking garage at the East Dublin Station. If it were to move forward, the garage would provide an additional 540 parking spaces adjacent to the current parking garage.

The vote was unanimous. Staff has 90 days to return with a report.

Directors decided they wanted to look at other options, such as finding nearby surface lots.

There were also questions about whether or not funding was in place to pay for the garage estimated to cost \$37.1 million. Of that total, \$8.6 million would be needed to pay to design the structure. Directors suggested that before spending the design money, they would like more information on where the \$28.5 million to build the garage would come from.

The proposed six-story garage would replace a current surface parking lot of 118 spots, netting 540 more spaces.

John McPartland, who represents the Tri-Valley on the board, stated, "I really want to build this thing today. Arguments to look at other options are reasonable. I don't think surface parking is there."

He stated, that if the motion to delay the process passes, that doesn't mean the parking structure is dead; it's on pause for 90 days.

Director Nick Josefowitz, who made the motion to pause the process, suggested that more work needs to be done. He said that the agency should reach out to nearby neighbors, such as Oracle, who have parking available, to see if BART could lease some of the available spaces. He said he visited the area during a weekday and found over 1000 spaces that were not occupied.

He and other directors also wanted to look at multi-modal access for cars, buses, and bikes, not just cars. Josefowitz said, "There are real access needs in the Tri-Valley that we are not meeting. We need to strive to do so."

Director Joel Keller said that if BART could achieve the parking goals using less taxpayer money, it has an obligation to do so. Among the options would be surface parking away from the station with a shuttle to take passengers to the station.

Funding for the design portion is expected to come from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Alameda County Transportation Commission.

BART General Manager Grace Crunican said it was her understanding that the MTC and ACTC would put in a "substantial amount" of money toward the project, but also want to make sure BART is contributing.

During the public hearing, Dublin Councilmember Don Biddle stated there is an immediate demand for parking in Dublin. He noted that statistics show a wait list for parking permits of 3,000 for the eastside station and 3700 for the station on the westside of the city. "If people don't arrive at the stations by 7:30 or 8 a.m. they are out of luck."

Cindy Chin from Assemblywoman Catharine Baker's office read a letter from Baker supporting the project. It echoed comments made by Biddle and others in support of the garage. The letter concluded, "The need is not going away."

BART TO LIVERMORE

The BART board also received an update on the BART extension to Livermore. It was noted that completion of the I-580 express lanes had eliminated the median.

There is \$533 million in funding committed to the Livermore extension. While it would be cheaper to build in the median, there is no median. It will be necessary to widen the freeway 40 to 45 feet to make room for the extension.

It is anticipated that the draft EIR would be released in this spring and a project adopted in late 2017. If the board were to choose a capital intensive project, a federal environmental impact statement would be required. The final impact statement would be expected in 2020. Construction could be completed in 2026.

Capital intensive options include regular BART, a diesel multiple unit or electric multiple unit (similar to eBART), or enhanced bus service. The enhanced bus service would include direct access to the trains, necessitating construction of new infrastructure.

In looking at ridership, the board was told that extending to Isabel means that those from the Central Valley would park there, rather than at Dublin. This would provide slots in Dublin and Pleasanton for those who have been unable to park there.

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[California's congressional Democrats begin push for federal high-speed rail support](#)

Jody Meacham

Silicon Valley Business Journal

Even as the political tussle over Caltrain's electrification nears its critical decision point in two weeks, 26 Democratic members of California's House delegation in Washington are pressing for more federal support for the state's high-speed rail system.

The members of Congress — including Zoe Lofgren, Jackie Speier, Anna Eshoo and Ro Khanna from Silicon Valley districts — sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao on Tuesday that avoided an explicit request for high-speed rail funding. Instead it portrayed the system now being built as broadly meeting the job creation and infrastructure investment goals championed by President Trump during his campaign and in his Jan. 20 inauguration speech.

Among the points in the letter:

The letter replies to an earlier letter signed by all 14 California Republicans in Congress claiming high-speed rail costs are spiraling out of control by saying the costs of high-speed rail have declined to \$64.2 billion from the \$68 billion cited in the GOP letter.

Last week, Brian Kelly, secretary of California's State Transportation Agency, released a list of the 25 transportation projects submitted through the National Governor's Association for inclusion in the Trump administration's infrastructure package that included high-speed rail.

He called it "the most transformative project in my 23 years of working in transportation policy in California" and promised to promote it and Caltrain electrification "as high, high priority."

The state's high-speed rail authority says it has enough funding on hand or in the pipeline to open its \$20.7 billion initial operating segment from San Jose to Shafter, near Bakersfield, by 2025. Its most urgent funding need is \$2.9 billion to include San Francisco and Bakersfield in that segment, which its forecasts say would increase ridership and revenues each by more than 50 percent.

Chao must decide whether to award a \$647 million Caltrain electrification grant by March 1 so that the Peninsula commuter rail system can give the order to contractors to begin work under deal terms already negotiated. The 14 GOP signatories to the letter opposing electrification say their position is because they want to block high-speed rail from reaching San Francisco over Caltrain's right-of-way, which is the current plan.

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[‘Complacency’ sends traffic deaths soaring in California and US](#)

Michael Cabanatuan

San Francisco Chronicle

Risky driving — and a fatalistic complacency that accidents will happen — is taking a deadly toll on California roadways and across the rest of the nation, safety experts said Wednesday after the release of a report that shows record increases in traffic deaths.

“Our complacency is killing us,” said Deborah A.P. Hersman, president and CEO of the National Safety Council, which authored the report. “Americans believe there is nothing we can do to stop crashes from happening, but that isn’t true. The U.S. lags the rest of the developed world in addressing highway fatalities. We know what needs to be done; we just haven’t done it.”

The study shows that in California, traffic deaths rose 14 percent in 2016 over the previous year, and 19 percent over the past two years. The national death toll rose 6 percent during the past year and 14 percent over the past two, marking the largest two-year jump in the U.S. since 1964.

The report, based on preliminary estimates of traffic fatalities involving motor vehicles on public roads, highways and private property, surprised state traffic safety officials.

“We’re discouraged to see the numbers go up,” said Chris Cochran, spokesman for the state Office of Traffic Safety. “We did not think they would go down, but they’ve gone up more than anyone would have projected.”

While they have not yet analyzed the numbers, traffic experts pointed to distracted driving and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol and speeding as leading causes in the spike in deaths.

“We’re trying to figure it out and combat it as we go along,” Cochran said.

In terms of percentage increases, California did not lead the pack, but it did in sheer numbers. The report said 3,680 people died in traffic collisions in 2016 compared with 3,249 a year earlier and to 3,084 two years prior. Nationally, an estimated 40,000 people were killed in car crashes in 2016, 37,757 in 2015 and 35,398 in 2014.

One exception to the increasingly deadly trend was in San Francisco, where figures collected by the Department of Public Health show that the city’s Vision Zero efforts to eliminate traffic deaths by 2024 could be making progress. The number of traffic deaths in 2016 was 30, a slight decline from 2015 and 2014 when 31 people were killed in each of those years in motor vehicle collisions. The figures also showed a one-year decrease in pedestrian deaths with 16 in 2016 compared with 20 in 2015.

“It goes to show that our Vision Zero efforts are working, but not fast enough or aggressively enough,” said Nicole Ferrara, executive director of Walk San Francisco, a pedestrian advocacy group.

The National Safety Council study was based on monthly reports from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

A survey of drivers, done in connection with the report, found that 83 percent are concerned with road safety, but 64 percent said they felt comfortable speeding and 47 percent said they believe they can text either manually or through voice controls behind the wheel. Additionally, 13 percent said they could drive safely while impaired by marijuana and 10 percent said they could drive after drinking too much alcohol.

Cochran said California officials have seen spikes in recent years in the number of drivers impaired by drugs, including legally prescribed medications like opioids. Arrests for driving under the influence of marijuana are also up, he said, but it's too early to determine if that's connected to more fatal or injury-related crashes.

Nationally, said Ken Kolosh, the council's manager of statistics, more drivers are distracted, particularly by their smartphones. People talking on their phones behind the wheel used to be the biggest concern, he said. But texting and using apps, including social media, have become far more common — and deadly — he said. Deaths blamed on distracted driving rose 9 percent in 2015.

Driving under the influence of alcohol also continues to be a problem, he said, showing a 3 percent nationwide increase.

The council proposes aggressive steps to combat the causes of deadly driving, including mandatory use of ignition interlock devices that keep impaired drivers from starting their cars, using automated cameras to catch speeders, a ban on all cell phone use while driving, comprehensive pedestrian safety programs and accelerated use of automated driving devices, including emergency braking, lane-departure warnings and blind-spot monitoring.

“That technology could save 10,000 lives a year,” Kolosh said.

San Francisco is already using — or trying to employ — some of those tactics. The Vision Zero program, which uses data to determine the most dangerous driver behaviors and locations, has focused on building safer intersections, and the city last week announced efforts to seek state legislation allowing it to use automated cameras to issue speeding citations.

Tom Maguire, director of Sustainable Streets for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, said speeding, red-light running and failing to yield the right of way are the leading causes of traffic deaths in San Francisco.

Vision Zero leaders have been working with national traffic safety officials, he said, to shape traffic-safety strategies.

“Our voice is at the table in this national conversation about traffic safety,” he said. “Cities like San Francisco are helping lead the conversation.”

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[SF to consider charging money to drive on ‘crookedest street’](#)

Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez

San Francisco Examiner

A black-and-white photo depicting construction of San Francisco's "crookedest street" in 1922 shows two autos at the bottom of Lombard Street, and, conspicuously, only two people are visible. One of the men gestures his arm wide at the empty, curvaceous road.

Fast forward nearly a century, and Lombard Street has become a neighborhood nightmare, residents say. Floods of vehicles line up to visit and grind traffic to a standstill, blowing constant exhaust into nearby homes. The bottom of the crooked street resembles a miniature Woodstock Festival.

Now, in perhaps an unexpected turn, San Francisco will study charging vehicles to access the 95-year-old icon, oft-called "the crookedest street in the world."

The street "has zero infrastructure in place," said Supervisor Mark Farrell, whose district includes Lombard Street and who is initiating the effort to consider a toll there. "The time has come for The City to step in and step up."

Pricing has yet to be determined, Farrell said, but would likely be higher for unscheduled visitors to encourage people to reserve ahead of time.

"The pricing will be based on demand management and nothing else," he said.

Farrell is prompting the San Francisco County Transportation Authority to study the possible toll, which may take up to two years, said Senior Transportation Planner Andrew Heidel. He and Farrell both emphasized that creating a toll and reserving a time to drive down Lombard Street is not about raising revenue, but is a proven means of better regulating traffic.

The study would further refine how a Lombard Street toll might work. Heidel said a reservation system might involve reserving visiting times by registering a license plate or a FasTrak account online.

Cameras and other technology similar to that used on the Golden Gate Bridge — to snapshot license plates for toll-payment — would be installed at the top of the crooked street, Heidel said.

Time to visit Lombard Street between Hyde and Leavenworth streets would be offered in 30- to 60-minute increments. The street can handle about 220 vehicles per hour, according to a draft report on the proposal written by the transportation authority.

Once Lombard Street's vehicle limit has been reached, Heidel said, drivers may be directed to come at a different time.

"Much like going to Alcatraz, the boat is full," he said.

The study also will look at a bevy of solutions to the pedestrian swarming problems and other traffic issues.

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency parking control officers may be boosted, more San Francisco Police Department officers may be hired in their off-duty time as security and harsher enforcement may come to tour bus companies that violate parking laws in the neighborhood.

That congestion even damages the nearby cable cars. When cable cars are stalled in traffic too long, the grips that hold onto the cables create higher-than-normal friction, which causes the steel cords running underneath The City to fray — and potentially, melt into knots.

Easing the flood of pedestrians at Leavenworth Street is good news to the ears of Jim Hickman, a retired airline pilot who's lived on the crooked street for 20 years.

“Sometimes if I turn right on Leavenworth, there’s 100 people standing in the middle of the street,” he said. When he tries to slowly drive through the crowd, “someone will get angry, they’ll flip you off, they’ll hit the car, they’ll get intimidating toward my wife, particularly.”

Farrell and Heidel said charging a toll on a public street will also require legislation at the state level, which state Sen. Scott Wiener said he would explore on San Francisco’s behalf.

“What has amazed me is the level of frustration and anger” from neighbors due to tourist crowding, Farrell said — that is, until he saw how drastically the number of visitors changed.

In 1999, transportation authority data shows the average daily traffic at 1,560 vehicles. But by 2015, that number ballooned to more than 2,700 vehicles a day. More than 2 million visitors now flock to Lombard Street’s crooked portion each year, twice the yearly visitors of Muir Woods, according to the transportation authority.

At the busiest times, this queue can stretch past the intersection of Lombard Street and Van Ness Avenue and can take more than 20 minutes to traverse by car.

“We’re not asking to not let tourists come here,” said Hickman, the Lombard Street neighbor.

“We just want some law and order, that’s all we’re asking.”

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[Visitors driving famed Lombard Street may wind up paying](#)

Emily Green

SF Gate

Driving down the crooked stretch of Lombard Street, a destination for tourists from around the world, is one of the most thrilling free attractions anywhere. But maybe not for long.

Visitors could be required to make a reservation and pay a fee to drive the 500 feet of red brick road renowned for its curvy switchbacks and sweeping views of the city and bay.

Supervisor Mark Farrell wants to impose the first toll on a city street in California. He didn’t specify how much that toll might be. It might seem like a drastic step, but Farrell said the city has run out of solutions for reducing the massive gridlock of cars, sometimes extending for blocks, lined up to drive down what is actually a residential street — a street that gets 2 million visitors a year.

“The bottom line is that the quality of life for residents, not only on the crooked street itself but the vast surrounding neighborhoods, has deteriorated to the point where the city has to step in and make a difference,” said Farrell, whose district includes Lombard Street.

“It is difficult to underestimate the frustration and anger in the neighborhood over the status quo,” he said. “It is simply unlivable.”

Farrell’s proposal to charge drivers is based on a recommendation by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority in a report released Thursday. He estimated it would take two years to implement, at the earliest. Residents of the block would be exempt from the toll.

Previous efforts at reducing traffic, like preventing vehicles altogether, were considered a failure because they turned the road into even more of a party zone. And other ideas, like rerouting traffic or creating loading zones on nearby streets, were rejected by residents.

Vehicles twist their way down Lombard Street, where cars line up for blocks, cloggin surrounding streets. San Francisco Supervisor Mark Farrell wants to charge a toll to drive down the famed roadway.

Residents of the renowned street have long objected to the impact of living on a renowned tourist attraction.

Proposals for a fee to drive the twisty street involve some kind of prepaid FasTrak toll, but details are under discussion.

The idea is to mount FasTrak readers and cameras on existing light poles at the top of the curvy stretch at the Hyde Street intersection. Visitors with reservations would prepay or pay a fee through FasTrak or a similar system to drive down the street.

Those without reservations would still be able to drive through but would be charged more. The bill would be sent to the address corresponding to their license plate, similar to the way the toll at the Golden Gate Bridge operates. Farrell declined to give an estimate on how much more those drivers might be charged, but the idea is to make it high enough that most drivers would turn back. Residents of the portion of the street would be exempt from the toll.

Many residents in the neighborhood appear to support the idea — but not all.

Steve Taber, chairman of the Russian Hill Neighbors Traffic & Transportation Committee, said a \$100 fee for people driving through without reservations seemed reasonable.

“I would really think twice whether it’s worth a two-minute ride down a crooked street to pay \$100,” he said. “It’s a balancing thing. We are certainly welcoming tourists. We are just saying if the tourists are beginning to pretty much destroy the fabric of the place they are visiting, there may be a need to put some reasonable restraints in place.”

But one longtime resident whose house sits on the crooked block disagreed.

“It’s tacky. I don’t approve at all,” said the resident, who didn’t want to give her name because she said her neighbors would get mad at her for opposing the proposal.

“It is pleasant to be able to see how many people come from around the world. They come just to look at the beauty of a wonderful part of the world,” she said. And, she added, the city already “makes a lot of money off this block” because of visitors taking cable cars and going to nearby restaurants.

Andrew Heidel, a Transportation Authority planner, emphasized that the motivation behind the proposal is to reduce the number of cars — not to make money, although that could be an added benefit.

The Transportation Authority will conduct a study this year to determine how many reservations to offer and how many vehicles could pass through in a given period of time and how much to charge.

It will also study whether to have the toll in place year-round or only during certain seasons and hours. One of the potential problems it has already flagged is that making drivers pay a toll could simply add to the thousands of pedestrians clogging the street. A pedestrian toll is not being considered.

In the meantime, Farrell is working with state Sen. Scott Wiener to introduce a bill in the state Legislature that would give San Francisco the authority to put a toll on a publicly maintained street. After that, it would be up to the Transportation Authority — whose board is made up of the city’s supervisors — to approve implementation of the system.

Many motorists driving down the crooked street this week said they enjoyed the experience — but it wasn’t worth paying more than \$10, if that.

“When you have visitors, they usually come here. I will not pay \$10 for each visit,” said San Francisco resident Raphael Derbier, who was driving two friends from out of town down the street.

“I wouldn’t do it for more than \$5,” said Esmeralda Cruz of Long Beach, who had just driven down the street for the first time. “It was OK. But I don’t think it’s cool enough to charge. It’s just a little thing people can do when you visit San Francisco.”

“I am from Wisconsin, so I have passed on all of those little things like that that cost money,” Evan Stanek said. “I would walk up and down and take pictures, but I wouldn’t drive it. And maybe that’s part of the point.”

Stanek said he was “shocked” he was even allowed to drive down the street, given that people lived there.

“A lot of the well-known tourist stuff you can’t do anymore,” he said. “It’s just the memory of those things.”

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[San Jose International Airport first to offer citizenship services to immigrant employees](#)

Tatiana Sanchez of Bay Area News Group

San Jose Mercury News

SAN JOSE — Gustavo Rodriguez immigrated to the U.S from Mexico a decade ago in search of new adventures and opportunities. Today, the legal permanent resident oversees custodial services at Mineta San José International Airport and is raising his 1-year-old daughter in San Jose with his wife.

But when Rodriguez walked into work Wednesday, he found an even bigger opportunity at his fingertips: a path toward gaining U.S. citizenship.

San José International has become the first airport in the country to make it easier for its employees and their families to become citizens as part of a pioneering project with New American Workforce.

About 800 airport employees are potentially eligible to participate in the program, according to airport officials.

“It’s really important for me to become a citizen and to contribute not only to my job but with everything else, especially with my vote,” said Rodriguez. “I believe we all have opportunities, but not if we sit there and wait for them. We have to look for them. It’s hard, but it’s not impossible.”

More than half of the visa holders and legal residents that go through the naturalization process as part of the New American Workforce program have been eligible for citizenship for more than five years,

according to Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, which created the program. The city of San Jose joined the program last year, which means city employees also have access to the same resources. Seven other U.S. cities have joined the initiative so far: Los Angeles; New York City; Miami; Washington, D.C.; Houston; San Diego; and Detroit.

“It brings the dream of United States citizenship much closer to reality for people who are working hard every day, whether they are surveying passengers from around the world who are coming to San Jose or they are working every day to make their families and their businesses better,” he said.

The program makes citizenship assistance available at work sites — often during breaks or before and after work hours — by leading informational workshops and one-on-one sessions to help with the naturalization process. Accredited staff with the International Rescue Committee will lead the sessions. City officials and program leaders said they’re also looking for ways to ease the \$725 citizenship application, which can be a significant barrier for many legal residents looking to naturalize.

The program comes at a time of great fear for visa-holders and other non-U.S. citizens in the country who fear deportation under the Trump Administration. Officials with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested about 700 individuals last week in a series of raids across the country.

San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo said the program is the greatest weapon the city has “against any political arrows that may be slung from Washington, D.C., in this era in which some attempt to use political means to divide new Americans from the rest of us.”

About 10 people attended a citizenship workshop at the airport Wednesday morning. Among them was Lualhati Marmito, a legal U.S. resident from the Philippines who screens passengers at airport security.

“This is the right time for me to process my citizenship in order for me to have a better future,” said the 36-year-old. “It’s time for me to move up.”

[Back to Top](#)

Conserve paper. Think before you print

From: Board.Secretary
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 4:49 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: From VTA: February 17 Media Clips



VTA Daily News Coverage for Friday, February 17, 2017

1. [Feds delay Caltrain electrification funding, endanger project's future](#)
2. [Roadshow: Hitting a Bay Area pothole cost us \\$900 in repairs](#)

[Feds delay Caltrain electrification funding, endanger project's future](#)

Jody Meacham

Silicon Valley Business Journal

A crucial grant for Caltrain's electrification has been delayed by the Federal Transit Administration, possibly endangering the full \$1.98 billion project for Silicon Valley's most important commuter railroad.

Without the \$647 million grant, Caltrain cannot give its contractors permission to begin work by the March 1 deadline in their contracts. The rail system had also ordered 16 electric trainsets from a Swiss manufacturer.

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"We know there are consequences if we don't meet that March 1 deadline and the consequences might be severe enough to jeopardize the viability of the project going forward," Caltrain spokesman Seamus Murphy said.

"Caltrain is a poster child for smart investments in transportation improvements that benefit the economy," Silicon Valley Leadership Group CEO Carl Guardino said. "Any administration should fight to fund this project. The 45-mile Caltrain corridor between downtown San Jose and downtown San Francisco produces 14 percent of California's gross domestic product, 53 percent of all California patent filings and 43 percent of all the venture capital investment in the United States. This type of step doesn't just stall Caltrain electrification, it stalls the heart of America's innovation economy."

In a letter to the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board obtained by the Silicon Valley Business Journal, FTA Executive Director Matthew J. Welbes did not refer to the 14-member California Republican congressional delegation that objected to the grant in a January letter because they want to stop California's high-speed rail project. He said it was being delayed so the project could be considered in President Trump's upcoming budget.

Nevertheless, for a federal transportation grant to go through two years of favorable review and then be held up or denied is almost unprecedented.

"I never imagined that the electrification of a train would be subjected to such brutal, partisan politics," Rep. Anna Eshoo (D) said in a statement. "This is not a Democratic project nor is it a Republican project. It is about the modernization of an outdated commuter system that is the spine of the transportation system of the Peninsula and the Silicon Valley region. This project has met every requirement of the Department of Transportation including planning, environmental approval, broad community support and strong local funding, including citizens taxing themselves. The only requirement it didn't meet was a political one."

Murphy said "every other project that has met all those requirements and reached the stage where ours is now has received an FFGA (full funding grant agreement). If for some reason we were not to receive an FFGA, we would be the first project that has met all the requirements to do so."

The GOP congressional letter opposed a grant to the California High-Speed Rail Authority, which the signers wish to shut down. High-speed rail is to eventually share Caltrain's tracks between San Jose and San Francisco.

However, it was Caltrain that applied for the grant — high-speed rail is not funded by the Federal Transit Administration — and the grant would complete the funding package for a project that was originally conceived before the state's high-speed rail authority was created. It would boost speed and capacity along the Caltrain corridor for a system that is already overcrowded with commuters.

"For well-meaning people to believe they can stop high-speed rail through this action, if they were aiming for high-speed rail they barely grazed it, but they may have delivered a mortal blow to a project that is critical to the economic well-being of Silicon Valley," Guardino said.

[Roadshow: Hitting a Bay Area pothole cost us \\$900 in repairs](#)

Gary Richards

Mercury News

You should warn readers about the dangers of potholes this time of the year. Last week we were entering Interstate 280 from Sand Hill Road when we hit a major pothole that shredded both tires on the right side of our car and cracked the right rear rim. At night we couldn't see the hole, and now we have a bill for over \$900.

A.K. Lund

San Mateo

A Geez, some weeks I feel I do nothing but write about potholes. While \$900 is steep, it's far down the list. The highest occurred a couple of years ago on Interstate 580 when Sherie Blake of San Jose totaled her Acura after slamming into a giant pothole, and it was declared a loss of \$14,600. The second-most expensive job reported to Roadshow came from Eduardo Bernardo — \$5,400 for pothole damage on Highway 101. Can anyone top those?

More important, who has been successful in getting Caltrans to reimburse them for pothole-caused or other road hazard repairs? Let me know. By the way, that link for filing a claim is

www.dot.ca.gov/damageclaims.html.

Q There is a major asphalt separation at Interstate 80 southbound from under the San Pablo Dam Road overpass to San Pablo off-ramp. Why wasn't this repaired last summer, as it was bad then? And a major accident will happen as cars swerve to straddle Interstates 80/880 from Hercules to San Leandro, which is riddled potholes and rough roads. There is faded white striping or none at all, and reflector markers are missing.

I asked Caltrans why they are not proactive and they said they do not have the manpower or the funds to make the repairs. I was advised to send my suggestion to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission or the state Assembly.

For now, let's bombard Caltrans with Maintenance Service Requests at www.dot.ca.gov/hq/maint/msrsubmit/ to make our freeways safe until Caltrans management becomes proactive.

Shelly Marie

El Cerrito

A Caltrans has been filling potholes on I-80, especially around San Pablo Avenue. In the coming days, that will include grinding and repaving work.

Coming up in the East Bay: Soon, the westbound lanes on I-580 from Grant Line Road to the Greenville Overpass will get some paving and grinding work. The Oakland and San Leandro stretches of 880 will get their turn this summer. Also, there is a large I-80 construction paving project scheduled for the summer of 2018, with a chance that work will start early.

Pothole-riddled roads take an expensive toll on California cars. In the Bay Area, the average cost is \$760 a driver and in Los Angeles, it is \$950.

Q Is there is a limit on the amount that FasTrak can charge for the I-580 corridor toll? It's been hovering at \$9 eastbound for the last few days. Worse, traffic bunches up in Livermore and was actually SLOWER than the adjacent lanes of traffic. I assume they can charge whatever they want.

Pat Hamilton

Tracy

A At the time of opening last February, the maximum westbound toll was set at \$13 and the maximum eastbound toll at \$9.

From: Board.Secretary

Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 5:39 PM

To: VTA Board of Directors

Subject: VTA Correspondence: Support Letters for AB 28 and SB 1; Comments on Measure B Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Program; Next Network Comments; Caltrain Downtown Draft SEIR/SEIS

VTA Board of Directors:

We are forwarding you the following:

| From | Topic |
|---|---|
| VTA | Letters of Support for AB 28 (Frazier) and SB 1 (Beall) |
| Safe Routes to School Regional Network Northern California Region | Comments on the proposal for Measure B Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Program |
| Mayor Greg Scharff, City of Palo Alto; Members of the Public | Next Network comments and petitions |
| Member of the Public | Comments regarding Caltrain Downtown Extension Draft SEIR/SEIS |

Thank you.

Office of the Board Secretary
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 N. First Street
San Jose, CA 95134
408.321.5680
board.secretary@vta.org



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the California State Assembly

FROM: Jeannie Bruins, Chairperson
Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority



DATE: February 9, 2017

RE: Support for AB 28 (Frazier)

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) respectfully requests your support for AB 28 (Frazier) when this bill comes before the Assembly for a vote. This measure re-enacts statutory provisions that would permit Caltrans to continue to participate in a federal program that allows states to assume the responsibilities of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As you may know, these provisions expired on January 1, 2017.

In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) established the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program as a way to expedite the delivery of transportation projects without a lessening of environmental protection. Under this program, which was renamed the NEPA Assignment Program in a subsequent federal surface transportation authorization bill, California was designated as one of five states that were eligible to apply to the U.S. Department of Transportation to assume the responsibilities of FHWA under NEPA. To participate in this program, the eligible states were required to accept the financial costs associated with the delegated authority, as well as assume full liability for lawsuits filed under NEPA in federal court by waiving, on a limited basis, their sovereign immunity under the Eleventh Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

In 2006, AB 1039 (Nunez) was enacted into law to provide the necessary statutory authority for Caltrans to participate in the NEPA Assignment Program. Among other things, this bill granted Caltrans a limited waiver of its Eleventh Amendment protection in order to allow the department to be sued in federal court, as well as to defend legal challenges brought against a NEPA document. AB 1039 was scheduled to sunset on January 1, 2009. However, subsequent bills extended its provisions until January 1, 2017.

With the limited waiver in place, Caltrans entered into a memorandum of understanding with FHWA and began participating in the NEPA Assignment Program effective July 1, 2007. As a

Members of the California State Assembly
Support for AB 28 (Frazier)
February 9, 2017
Page Two

result, Caltrans assumed the role of lead agency for federal environmental reviews for transportation projects that previously would have gone through FHWA. Since 2007, Caltrans has provided a series of reports to the Legislature showing that the department has been able to realize significant time and cost savings for transportation projects as a result of its participation in the NEPA Assignment Program.

Unfortunately, with Caltrans' limited waiver of sovereign immunity coming to an end on January 1, the department is no longer able to participate in the NEPA Assignment Program, a situation that almost certainly will increase environmental document processing times for California transportation projects. AB 28 would solve this problem by permanently authorizing Caltrans to consent to the jurisdiction of the federal courts with regard to NEPA lawsuits, which would allow the department to continue to participate in the NEPA Assignment Program indefinitely.

We respectfully seek your support for AB 28. Thank you for your consideration of our request.



February 17, 2017

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski, Chairperson
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
State Capitol, Room 4085
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairperson Wieckowski:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) respectfully requests your support for SB 1 (Beall) when this bill comes before the Senate Environmental Quality Committee for a vote. This comprehensive and well-thought-out measure would raise new revenues to address various transportation funding needs, as well as put in place a number of important transportation policy reforms.

As you know, there has been considerable discussion about transportation funding ever since the Governor highlighted in his FY 2016 budget that California has a shortfall of \$59 billion for maintenance and rehabilitation work on the state highway system over the next 10 years. For local streets and roads, the gap over the same period has been estimated at \$78 billion. Without immediate legislative action to address these funding shortfalls, pavement conditions will deteriorate at a faster rate, resulting in increased costs to the state and cities/counties, as well as impacts to public safety and California's economic competitiveness.

Similarly, public transit is facing significant funding shortfalls. According to a needs assessment commissioned by the California Transit Association, the state's public transit systems face a \$72 billion funding gap over the next 10 years, \$39 billion of which relates to deferred maintenance and vehicle/facility rehabilitation. Left unaddressed, these shortfalls will degrade the quality, frequency and reliability of public transit service, depressing ridership and limiting access for people who rely on our bus and rail systems for their mobility needs.

VTA believes SB 1 is an important piece of legislation for the following reasons. First, it would generate new revenues through a variety of sources to:

- Begin closing the funding gaps for state highway and local roadway maintenance and rehabilitation.
- Improve mobility in key goods movement corridors.
- Provide additional investments in public transit.
- Supplement existing resources for active transportation.

Second, SB 1 tackles a number of lingering challenges that have been plaguing transportation funding for years. Specifically, the bill would:

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski
Support for SB 1 (Beall)
February 17, 2017
Page Two

- Fix the volatility of the variable gasoline excise tax, which, in recent years, has resulted in large decreases in funding for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP), and local streets/roads.
- End the erosion of purchasing power of both the gasoline and diesel excise taxes by indexing them to the Consumer Price Index.
- Ensure the repayment of all outstanding loans owed by the General Fund to various transportation accounts over the next two years.
- Gradually end the diversion of 50 percent of annual vehicle weight fee revenues to the General Fund, thereby recapturing these dollars for transportation purposes.

Finally, SB 1 includes several key policy reforms, such as:

- Creating an Office of the Transportation Inspector General to ensure that state agencies are expending transportation funds efficiently, effectively and in compliance with the law.
- Re-establishing the California Transportation Commission (CTC) as an independent entity within state government.
- Extending and broadening a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption in current law for certain types of roadway projects occurring within existing rights-of-way.
- Establishing an Advance Mitigation Program to improve the success and effectiveness of actions implemented to mitigate the environmental impacts of future transportation projects.

SB 1 is an extremely important bill for California's transportation infrastructure, as well as for the state's future. Therefore, we respectfully seek your support for this legislation. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Bruins, Chairperson
Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority



February 13, 2017

The Honorable Jeannie Bruins
Chair, Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Via: board.secretary@vta.org
Members of the VTA TAC

Re: Comments on the Measure B Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Program

Dear Mayor Bruins and members of the VTA TAC:

The Safe Routes to School Regional Network Northern California Region would like to offer comments on the proposal for the Measure B - funded Bicycle and Pedestrian Education Program presented at the VTA TAC meeting on Wednesday, February 8.

We are pleased that Measure B funds are now available to support Safe Routes to School - related infrastructure and non-infrastructure (NI). We hope that at the end of this process there is a significant expansion of both.

The proposal presented at the TAC meeting appears to call for transferring NI and education programming from VERBS to Measure B funding. This is promising if fewer restrictions are placed on the funding, such as allowing safety to be a factor in program funding, and allowing for applicants to apply for continuation of previously funded programs. It is hard to find funding to sustain NI programs, and yet they are so vital for our children and families. Ideally funding for NI should MORE than double, though the proposal calls for a doubling. It is not clear that it is necessary to stop funding NI through VERBS entirely, and perhaps both funding streams could be used to even more significantly increase NI. But either way, it is important to ensure continuity of funding if there is a transition, ensure MTC's Regional Safe Routes to School requirements are met and that linkages with MTC's work are retained, and that funding is ideally more than doubled for both infrastructure and NI.

The mission of the National Partnership is to advance safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, to improve the health and well-being of kids of all races, income levels and abilities, and to foster the creation of healthy communities for everyone. The goal of the Northern California Regional Network and its local technical assistance efforts is to build partnerships and leverage resources in the region to improve policies as well as the built environment to support and encourage physical activity through walking and bicycling to school and in daily life.

Contact: Marty Martinez, MPP, Northern California Policy Manager, (415) 637-6488, Marty@saferoutespartnership.org

We also support exploring ways of making it easier for NI programs to apply for funds, perhaps using a separate application, less burdensome applications, longer grant cycles, etc. We would not like to see a population-based formula that results in smaller programs throughout the county getting de-funded. Greater centralization, including empowering an entity such as a task force or the county public health dept, to do more coordination over a longer period of time, establish guidelines for data and evaluation, and other matters etc, would have value as well. Developing a countywide SRTS plan might be something VTA could take on, or direct as part of this process.

On scoring applications, it is important for the persons who evaluate applications to have an understanding of public health, NI education programs, equity issues, and community need. Public health considerations should be added to the factors to be considered in deciding successful applicants. It is also not clear to us whether the local match applies to NI projects and needs to be adjusted to make that easier for applicants.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marty Martinez, MPP
Northern California Policy Manager

February 15, 2017

Chairperson Jeannie Bruins
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street
San Jose, California 95134-1906

Dear Chairperson Bruins:

I am writing to express serious concerns with regards to the VTA's Next Network Next Draft Plan. These areas of concern were discussed at a City Council study session on January 23, and are shared by many residents of Palo Alto.

Opposition to the Elimination of Route 88

The proposed replacement of Route 88 with the "school tripper" Routes 288A and 288B running only during school arrival and dismissal times will not serve Gunn High School students sufficiently, especially those who participate in extracurricular activities or are required to leave school early. We believe that this will lead to a spiraling decline in ridership and jeopardize the funding of the school tripper routes in the future. Route 88 should instead be redesigned to serve both the school trips and general commute trips and VTA should partner with the City of Palo Alto and other organizations to design and better market this new route. If VTA is unwilling to preserve a restructured Route 88, the proposed service changes should, at least, continue to provide bus service during after school hours to serve students leaving later in the day. VTA staff should continue to coordinate with City of Palo Alto staff and school liaisons to help determine adequate hours of operation for students.

Support for Retaining Current Paratransit Service Area

Under no circumstances should any reduction in fixed-route transit service within Palo Alto lead to a reduction in the paratransit service area. All streets, neighborhoods and destinations currently served by VTA paratransit should remain within the paratransit area after the implementation of the Next Network service changes. A large portion of Palo Alto consists of an aging population and paratransit is becoming increasingly important. The City of Palo Alto seeks to maintain the existing paratransit areas, with no increases in cost for current riders.

Support for Additional Route 522 Stops

In addition to the frequency changes proposed for Route 22 and Route 522, VTA should add at least two additional stops along El Camino Real within Palo Alto for Route 522. Transit best practices dictate that customers should not be expected to walk more than ¼ mile to reach a standard bus stop. Therefore, maximum stop spacing should be about ½ mile. Some of the Route 522 stops with Palo Alto are more than 1.5 miles apart. Some suggested additions include Embarcadero Rd/Galvez St (Palo Alto High School/Town & Country Shopping Center) and Matadero Ave/Margarita Ave or Ventura Ave. These locations link to our growing bicycle and pedestrian network and the City would be a willing partner in the installation of bicycle parking and additional active transportation access improvements.

P.O. Box 10250
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650.329.2477
650.328.3631 fax

Suggested Changes to Proposed Route 21

A suggestion was made at the January 19 public meeting held at Palo Alto City Hall to better coordinate the schedules and routes for the proposed Route 21 and the Palo Alto Free Shuttle Crosstown Route. We have begun to analyze how this can be achieved and suggest that VTA consider moving the proposed Route 21 from Homer Avenue/Channing Avenue, Waverly Street and Hamilton Avenue to instead run on Homer Avenue/Channing Avenue, Webster Street and Lytton Avenue. This would overlap our revised Crosstown Route and, with schedule coordination, allow us to provide 15-minute headways during weekdays along the Middlefield Road corridor between Stanford Shopping Center, Downtown Palo Alto and the San Antonio Shopping Center area.

Suggested Extension of Proposed Route 22

VTA should consider modifying the proposed Route 22 to serve more of Downtown Palo Alto via Hamilton Avenue, Webster Street and Lytton Avenue. This would be very similar in nature to the deviation of Route 23 from Route 523 in East San José and at De Anza College. A direct frequent bus connection to one of the county's primary activity centers certainly satisfies the "ridership" focus of VTA.

Suggested Extension of Proposed Route 522

VTA should consider modifying the proposed Route 522 to serve Stanford Medical Center via El Camino Real and Quarry Road (and future transit enter access driveway at Quarry Road). A direct frequent bus connection to a regional medical center certainly satisfies the "ridership" focus of VTA.

Measure B Transit Operations Program Design

The recently-passed Measure B expenditure plan includes \$500 million for "Transit Operations." This new funding stream offers the opportunity to provide enhanced mobility options to many of the areas where the Next Network Draft Plan proposes the reduction or elimination of fixed-route service, including Palo Alto. A substantial portion of this funding should be made available to local agencies to provide local shuttle service and other innovative last-mile first-mile transportation options. The VTA should continue to work coordinate with City of Palo Alto staff and work to develop a Transit Operations program that supports local transit service and enables municipal shuttles to operate as part of the larger VTA fixed-route transit system.

Thank you for your consideration of the City of Palo Alto's views and concerns.

Sincerely,



Greg Scharff
Mayor

CC: Palo Alto City Council
Jim Keene, City Manager, City of Palo Alto
Hillary Gitelman, Planning and Community Environment Director, City of Palo Alto
Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official, City of Palo Alto
Nuria Fernandez, General Manager, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

-----Original Message-----

From: Rosa

Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2017 8:09 PM

To: Board.Secretary; General Manager; General Manager

Subject: VTA Transit Service Redesign Plan

Dear Chair and Board Members of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority,

Please find attached my letter regarding the VTA's proposal to redesign the transit service, and how it will negatively impact my elderly parents, and the lives of many other seniors that live in Almaden Valley who rely on the VTA to access basic essential services and to be part of the larger community. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

Sincerely,

Rosa Tsongtaatarii

BY E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Rosa Tsongtaatarii
For Fen Chu Tsong, Customer and Resident
Almaden Expressway/O'Grady
San Jose, CA 95120

February 15, 2017

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency Board of Directors
c/o Nuria Fernandez, General Manager
3331 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95134-1927

RE: VTA TRANSIT SERVICE REDESIGN PLAN

Dear Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency Board of Directors:

I am writing on behalf of my elderly mother and father, 74 and 79, respectively. They live in their own home at the end of Almaden Valley in District 10 of San Jose. My parents have limited English speaking skills, are low income, and due to their age – are of limited mobility. When my mother stopped driving in 2014, my parents were initially scared of using the bus but have come to rely on the VTA.

VTA Route 13 is the only bus stop within 1/2 mile of their home. The VTA is proposing to eliminate Route 13 by the end of this year under the VTA Transit Service Redesign Plan. Under the proposed plan, the first bus stop from their home will be more than 5 miles away. VTA Route 13 is their lifeline to connect to other bus lines that take them to the local supermarket for grocery, to pick up medication, visit the doctors, or to simply be a part of the larger community. My mother, in particular, relies on the bus system to visit Kaiser for management of her chronic kidney failure which requires frequent lab work and visits. When I am unable to take time off from work, VTA Route 13 enables my parents to prolong their vitality and independence.

I support the VTA's mission to provide sustainable, accessible, community focused transportation options that are innovative, environmentally responsible, and promote the vitality of our region. The elderly population particularly those that live away from senior residential facilities or Downtown are invisible and isolated geographically. In my mother's experience, many non-English speaking seniors ride VTA Route 13 to connect to other bus lines, and to join events in Downtown. They may not come out to speak against the redesign of the transit service because the outreach meetings to vet the proposed redesign are held in the evenings and it would take them hours to attend and then return home in the dark assuming the buses are still running.

Removing VTA Route 13 without first putting in place a viable option for the many elderly that use this route is antithetical to VTA's mission. Such a proposal would

completely cut off an entire population's access to supermarkets, medical facilities, and the larger community. The Outreach Paratransit Service is not available to many seniors because it only serves individuals that cannot otherwise physically take the bus. **I urge the VTA Board of Directors and Administration to consider the concerns of all its constituency and implement a viable alternative before eliminating VTA Route 13.** Alternatives could include a shuttle van like Downtown DASH instead of a bus; or expansion of the Outreach Service to include seniors that do not drive and do not have access to a bus line within ¼ mile of their home.

Thank you for seeking input on the proposed redesign, and for trying to find an alternative essential to the lives of many residents that rely on your service. I can be reached at (408) 334-6624, and would be happy to speak with the VTA if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Rosa Tsongtaarii

Cc:

Sam Liccardo, Honorable Mayor – City of San Jose
Johnny Khamis, Councilmember District 10 – City of San Jose
Secretary, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Board of Directors

-----Original Message-----

From: stuf
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 11:12 AM
To: Board.Secretary
Subject:
Scanned Petition for Routes 64 and combo 63/13

Hello Board of Directors
Secretary,

I was able to scan the petition, and am including as an attachment. Here is the the Petition (includes nine pages and 446 signatures) as of today. I am sending this to you, because this week I found out the comments about changes has a Feb 20 deadline, a holiday, which does not have mail service. I want to comply with deadline so 446 signatures/voices are seen and heard.

This petition is about the 2017 Proposed Changes. Please forward them to all the VTA Board Members, VTA Manager, VTA Management and employees involved in making decisions about changes to hopefully extending the 64 and possibly combining the 63 with the 13 bus routes.

Thank you so much and hopefully you will be able to get them into the 'right hands'!

Please confirm you received this email.

Well Wishes,
Joyce

To VTA Board and Management:

P.9

The current 2017 Proposed Changes include cutting all service into and out of the Almaden Valley. Please review and consider this petition to include service in the Almaden Valley for all its riders. By combining and extending some of the current routes, VTA will be providing service to the Almaden Valley, and support VTA's mission to facilitate commuters and increasing ridership to utilize public transportation verses driving their cars either to work or to VTA parking lots then accessing public transportation. Please consider the following two route possibilities to service the Almaden Valley Community's students, employees, retirees and all others intending to use public transportation, most especially if VTA plans to discontinue Route 13.

1. Please consider extending Route 64SB from Almaden Expressway at Coleman to Almaden Expressway at Camden Ave (the layover will be here or at Almaden LRT), then 64NB will turn right at Crown, right at Trinidad, left at Almaden Expressway and into Almaden LRT then continue its 64NB route.

2. Please consider combining part of Route 13 with 63 thus extending the current Route 63 from Almaden Expressway at Camden Ave (the layover will be here), then adding peak commute times (about 6am-10am and 2pm-7p) to Via Valiente, Camden Rd, Harry Rd, McKean Rd, Almaden Rd and the most convenient streets back to Camden then to Meridian toward San Jose and SJSU.

| | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | NATHAN KUTARIDES | 26 | Annal Ceaster |
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| 5 | Jane Law | 30 | Trung Bui |
| 6 | Mary Moore | 31 | Ricardo Marquez |
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| 22 | Chavez Patel | 47 | |
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| 24 | Jerry Cobman | 49 | |
| 25 | EDY GEER | 50 | |

To VTA Board and Management:

The current 2017 Proposed Changes include cutting all service into and out of the Almaden Valley. Please review and consider this petition to include service in the Almaden Valley for all its riders. By combining and extending some of the current routes, VTA will be providing service to the Almaden Valley, and support VTA's mission to facilitate commuters and increasing ridership to utilize public transportation versus driving their cars either to work or to VTA parking lots then accessing public transportation. Please consider the following two route possibilities to service the Almaden Valley Community's students, employees, retirees and all others intending to use public transportation, most especially if VTA plans to discontinue Route 13.

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| | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | [Signature] | 26 | YUNGOY MING |
| 2 | Gene Luty malina | 27 | Don [Signature] |
| 3 | [Signature] | 28 | Georgia Mendoza |
| 4 | Murtlo Rye | 29 | CHRIS WEITSMAN |
| 5 | Gracie Dorrough | 30 | MA P3 EASER |
| 6 | John Taylor | 31 | Kippen Bannour |
| 7 | [Signature] | 32 | [Signature] |
| 8 | [Signature] | 33 | [Signature] |
| 9 | SIMONE Brauchet | 34 | [Signature] |
| 10 | MINH HUYNH | 35 | [Signature] |
| 11 | Kaumudi Bhamidepaty | 36 | Kalen [Signature] |
| 12 | EMMA ABIYO | 37 | [Signature] |
| 13 | Kathie Gutierrez | 38 | [Signature] |
| 14 | Ci Lin Lee | 39 | [Signature] |
| 15 | [Signature] | 40 | Shannon Richardson |
| 16 | Kari Rennie | 41 | [Signature] |
| 17 | Kaumudi Bhamidepaty | 42 | Justin Walters |
| 18 | Paul Miller | 43 | [Signature] |
| 19 | [Signature] | 44 | [Signature] |
| 20 | Juan Gutierrez | 45 | [Signature] |
| 21 | Barbara Ledwell | 46 | [Signature] |
| 22 | Sylvia Muiello | 47 | Simon S. Em [Signature] |
| 23 | Ron Yang | 48 | [Signature] |
| 24 | Aiqing Zeng | 49 | [Signature] |
| 25 | [Signature] | 50 | [Signature] |

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| | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | Gay Gideoni | 26 | Jane Pleno |
| 2 | Angelina Lopez | 27 | Paul M |
| 3 | Jorge Sanchez | 28 | Lisanna Mabbat |
| 4 | Daniel Ruggles | 29 | Christina Hopkins |
| 5 | Brett Jennings | 30 | Zhai Xiangjie |
| 6 | | 31 | David |
| 7 | Matt Regan | 32 | JAMONAL JONES |
| 8 | John Silvera | 33 | Israel Jara |
| 9 | Fengbin Zhao | 34 | Shivam Kumar Gupta |
| 10 | Guo Minyan | 35 | Chadwick |
| 11 | Cesar Bana | 36 | Brendan Lee |
| 12 | Ngomi C | 37 | Shenina Darraji |
| 13 | Conrad Masterson | 38 | Francis Appiah |
| 14 | John | 39 | Gregory Wankhoff |
| 15 | MATILDE BARRON | 40 | Sauri Perera |
| 16 | Steven | 41 | Imelda Taylor |
| 17 | John Meeke | 42 | Thant Kevin |
| 18 | TARAN MEEK | 43 | Irene BARTISTA |
| 19 | Elizabeth Fuentes | 44 | Jeffrey |
| 20 | Feng Guizhen | 45 | |
| 21 | Ma Wen | 46 | Est. PRIYANKH BHIMANI |
| 22 | Zhou Ming | 47 | Linnet M. Strain |
| 23 | Han Shan Xing | 48 | Paul Sanchez |
| 24 | Cheng Jia Men | 49 | Erich DeVonne |
| 25 | John Williams | 50 | Metha |

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| | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Handwritten signature | 26 | Carmen Zahiralis |
| 2 | 江晓敏 | 27 | Yung Sheng Lee |
| 3 | 杨国英 | 28 | Handwritten signature |
| 4 | Handwritten signature | 29 | Handwritten signature |
| 5 | Handwritten signature | 30 | |
| 6 | Handwritten signature | 31 | Handwritten signature |
| 7 | Handwritten signature | 32 | Handwritten signature |
| 8 | Iran | 33 | Liaou Cheng Ching |
| 9 | J. J. M. | 34 | Brian C. D... |
| 10 | Handwritten signature | 35 | Billy Gutter |
| 11 | ying-men. Luo | 36 | Handwritten signature |
| 12 | MICHELLE DANDAZ | 37 | Aurora Fernandes |
| 13 | Samuel Dekker | 38 | Handwritten signature |
| 14 | Dreg Tokarczyk | 39 | Handwritten signature |
| 15 | Biana Alaniz | 40 | Handwritten signature |
| 16 | Van Hayenga | 41 | Handwritten signature |
| 17 | Shewhat Haile | 42 | Handwritten signature |
| 18 | Caibas Ma | 43 | Ashley Carcamante |
| 19 | Christina Arzen | 44 | Handwritten signature |
| 20 | Handwritten signature | 45 | Handwritten signature |
| 21 | Maryann Campos | 46 | Handwritten signature |
| 22 | Julissa Campos | 47 | Handwritten signature |
| 23 | Michelle Boyd | 48 | Handwritten signature |
| 24 | Valente Carrillo | 49 | Handwritten signature |
| 25 | Andrew Feuerstein | 50 | Maggie Zi |

ps

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| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Ryan Sharon | 26 Kim Lilje Brun |
| 2 Anne Burr | 27 Jacquelinne Herbardez |
| 3 Andrey Marsavin | 28 Zhong James |
| 4 Tikuo Chen | 29 Mary Grace Halili |
| 5 Urs Chen | 30 Ben Larson |
| 6 Parisa Kikbad | 31 Gilmore Amador |
| 7 Jason Spence | 32 Robert Panhaja |
| 8 Florida Rondina | 33 Anbar Kuter |
| 9 Jonathan Ullmark | 34 Emily E. Lyng |
| 10 Honney Fields | 35 Emma Bayne |
| 11 Tom Burns | 36 Oscar Resendiz |
| 12 Almidia Camp | 37 Jose Gonzalez |
| 13 EUSTO TORRES | 38 Alison J Daniel |
| 14 Dhawal Kanani | 39 M. J. J. |
| 15 Re | 40 Kris Peterson |
| 16 Ashley Butkisan | 41 Joel Swetow |
| 17 Mr | 42 Lanorena Santiago |
| 18 Eabe Lamo | 43 Greg Hill |
| 19 M. J. | 44 Gerald C. Edwards |
| 20 O Chen | 45 Angela DeLaCueva |
| 21 Alice | 46 Brenda Charles |
| 22 Elizabeth Adams | 47 Buhl |
| 23 Elizabeth Adams | 48 Juying Kan |
| 24 Shaoxiang Han | 49 SIMON MANRIQUEZ M |
| 25 A Boss | 50 Robert Ramos |

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| | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 1 | Hollie Limbocker | 26 | William chen |
| 2 | Brenda Mathew | 27 | Jan chen |
| 3 | Yongliu zhou | 28 | Elina chen |
| 4 | Cory Troxell | 29 | McLynn U |
| 5 | Estelle Breaux | 30 | Shihyung (George) Chang |
| 6 | Hampit Guerrero | 31 | J. Burk |
| 7 | Sarthak | 32 | Francis H. Johnson |
| 8 | Sarthak | 33 | Meer |
| 9 | Sarthak | 34 | Myra |
| 10 | Varsh | 35 | Douma Filder |
| 11 | Pavani | 36 | Morris Baya |
| 12 | Nitish | 37 | Lulou E. Hernandez |
| 13 | Chin | 38 | Margaret Mackey |
| 14 | Yiggi | 39 | Mary Esther Ogoff |
| 15 | Georgie | 40 | K. B. Meles |
| 16 | Rajesh V | 41 | Shelagh Reming |
| 17 | Kathikayadao | 42 | Ginger yeh |
| 18 | Jasmine Mirzamani | 43 | John A. Deming |
| 19 | Tony Cugnetti | 44 | Yung Kiro |
| 20 | Chen John | 45 | John |
| 21 | John F. Fiedler | 46 | Cara Benetti |
| 22 | Zhidun Jiang | 47 | Bernard K. Benetti |
| 23 | Bo | 48 | Carol Kausch |
| 24 | Zhu Bo Xiong | 49 | Richard Jones |
| 25 | Yan Yan zha | 50 | Elizabeth Jones |

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| | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|---------------------|
| 1 | Diloro Shaknazarova | 26 | g |
| 2 | PRANAD PAT | 27 | Jennifer Alesman |
| 3 | JAMES HILL | 28 | Jimmy Bellard |
| 4 | MELKO OWAN-ROBSON | 29 | John Chin Luk |
| 5 | THANG BOI | 30 | Rolt Simi |
| 6 | Glairk Caudillo | 31 | John Doubovner |
| 7 | Sathish Meenan | 32 | Ed R. B. Hayes |
| 8 | Shile Hu | 33 | Shile Hu |
| 9 | Shikao Ye | 34 | JANET HILSON |
| 10 | RAMIL BIRAP | 35 | W. J. J. |
| 11 | FRANCOIS BELLEVA | 36 | Juan De Arco |
| 12 | Rudy Pan | 37 | Cherise |
| 13 | Carmen Lopez | 38 | Andrea |
| 14 | Fergie Fern. | 39 | Jul Bergson |
| 15 | Mark A. Burgie Jr. | 40 | Alan Huk |
| 16 | Pastor R. Lopez | 41 | Peggy Bergott |
| 17 | Fernando G12 | 42 | Linda Memary |
| 18 | Thene Lopez | 43 | ANA DE SIENA |
| 19 | Edmond Dai | 44 | Margaret Hinkley |
| 20 | Rehman Sheikh | 45 | Chloe |
| 21 | KROOPIO TANI | 46 | Araceli Esmel |
| 22 | LY-THU-LI | 47 | Chad Dordman |
| 23 | Rafael B. Zenas | 48 | Katherine Salazar |
| 24 | Noly Fernando | 49 | Andrew Rangel |
| 25 | Evelyn Godar | 50 | Mario Ruelas |

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| | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | R. P. [Signature] | 26 | Re Young |
| 2 | ALONDRA FLORE | 27 | Swarod Grady Mc |
| 3 | Taylor Lips | 28 | Miguel Marena |
| 4 | Henrietta Luis | 29 | JAWA FASH |
| 5 | Kathleen Pereira | 30 | Chan Chiu Luk |
| 6 | Eulio Martinez | 31 | Gaby Heron |
| 7 | Maria Ramos | 32 | Lindsay Stender |
| 8 | Omar Ojeda | 33 | Joan Murphy |
| 9 | N. Vithubayya | 34 | Joan Murphy |
| 10 | Phanita Parrish | 35 | Ed Watson |
| 11 | [Signature] | 36 | Marissa Webb |
| 12 | [Signature] | 37 | Jonathan Smith |
| 13 | [Signature] | 38 | [Signature] |
| 14 | Tina Suarez | 39 | Jimmy Chan |
| 15 | Zedd Ekher | 40 | Chris Kravica |
| 16 | Meghala Akeley | 41 | Joshua Smith |
| 17 | William Wilson | 42 | Dee |
| 18 | Habib [Signature] | 43 | Rosalee Knowl |
| 19 | Silvia Nocky | 44 | Robert to [Signature] |
| 20 | David Bunker | 45 | Kate [Signature] |
| 21 | Xufei Zhang | 46 | [Signature] |
| 22 | Yen Huang | 47 | Iyke Okamoto |
| 23 | Cray [Signature] | 48 | [Signature] |
| 24 | Wjo Santiago | 49 | [Signature] |
| 25 | Georgette Soto | 50 | Ryan Chung Chan |

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| | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Pishant Kalyani | 26 | Sueen Swain |
| 2 | Palmeo Liang | 27 | Wanda Wilson |
| 3 | R.J. Penny | 28 | Shirley Cook |
| 4 | Brenda Garne | 29 | Mark Huynh |
| 5 | Samuel R. Zedke | 30 | Ram Bhat |
| 6 | Jane Buchanan | 31 | J |
| 7 | Brijat Gaemmagham | 32 | Jimmy King Lila |
| 8 | Ja | 33 | Laura Machado |
| 9 | Seymour Bloom | 34 | Ji-Manuel-teca |
| 10 | Med Grant | 35 | John Gumbert |
| 11 | Robert Grover | 36 | Paula King |
| 12 | Renee Van | 37 | Phyllis Fattus |
| 13 | Jim Buller | 38 | Vicki S. Bryant |
| 14 | John Hall | 39 | Tangela Lemus |
| 15 | Deby Stallman | 40 | Suneet Shandhal |
| 16 | Michelle | 41 | Maria Asuffa |
| 17 | Ernie Owen | 42 | Bob |
| 18 | Christy Lee | 43 | Bob |
| 19 | Timothy Anthony | 44 | George Cox |
| 20 | S. VANDER | 45 | Eric Danell |
| 21 | Joe Sults | 46 | Bill |
| 22 | Keith Crawford | 47 | Paula King |
| 23 | Faragis Nabb | 48 | Paula King |
| 24 | Paula King | 49 | Paula King |
| 25 | May Ann Kobold | 50 | Olympia Tavares |

From: Roland Lebrun
Sent: Saturday, February 11, 2017 2:57 AM
To: Mohammed Nuru
Cc: Ed Reiskin; Greg Harper; Supervisor Jane Kim; jgee@redwoodcity.org; Nila Gonzales; MTC Commission; SFCTA Board Secretary; Caltrain Board; Board.Secretary; CHSRA Board; SFCTA CAC; Caltrain CAC Secretary; cac@transbaycenter.org; Caltrain BAC
Subject: Fw: Caltrain Downtown extension draft SEIR/SEIS

Dear Chair Nuru,

Further to Director Reiskin's question with regards to additional comments submitted for the DTX supplemental SEIS/SEIR, I am attaching my February 29th 2016 scoping comment letter addressed to Mr. Scott Boule.

Please note for the record that the SEIR/SEIS scoping report including the 116 comment letters has yet to be completed by the TJPA.

Thank you in advance for following up on this matter.

Sincerely,

Roland Lebrun

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Board of Directors
SFCTA Board of Directors
Caltrain Board of Directors
VTA Board
California High Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors
SFCTA Citizens Advisory Committee
TJPA Citizens Advisory Committee
Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee
Caltrain Bicycle Advisory Committee

From: Roland Lebrun
Sent: Monday, February 29, 2016 3:27 AM
To: brenda.perez; SEIS.EIR@transbaycenter.org
Cc: Steve Heminger; MTC Commission; SFCTA Board Secretary; Caltrain Board; CHSRA Board; SFCTA CAC; Caltrain CAC Secretary
Subject: Caltrain Downtown extension draft SEIR

Dear Mr. Boule,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2015 Caltrain Downtown Extension draft SEIR.

The attached comments pertain to the following aspects of the project:

- Train box extension design conflict with SB916 (no Transbay connection to the East Bay)
- Widened throat structure impacts and costs
- Lengthy, risky and prohibitively expensive sequential mining tunnel construction
- Fourth and Townsend underground station location
- Unnecessary 7th Street tunnel stub box proposal
- Turnback track impacts on 16th Street grade crossing gate down time
- Alignment conflict with AB3034 (Diridon to Transbay in 30 minutes)

Each comment is followed by a recommendation for an alternative to be studied in the final SEIR.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Roland Lebrun

CC

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Board of Directors

SFCTA Board of Directors

Caltrain Board of Directors

California High Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors

SFCTA Citizens Advisory Committee

Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee

Roland Lebrun
ccss@msn.com
February 29, 2016

2015 DTX draft SEIR

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Caltrain Board of Directors
California High Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors
SFCTA Citizens Advisory Committee
Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee

1) Train Box Extension

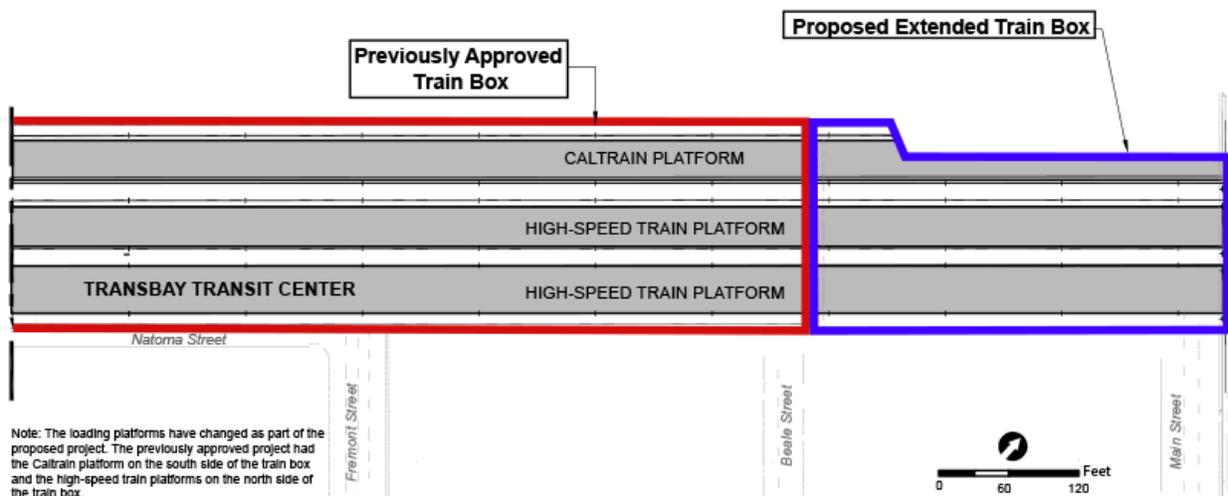
- The train box extension design violates SB916 (2003) codified in Streets & Highways Codes section 30914(22) (<http://law.justia.com/codes/california/2011/shc/division-17/30910-30922/30914>) by failing to provide any kind of engineering solution for a future East Bay extension



TJPA Mandates

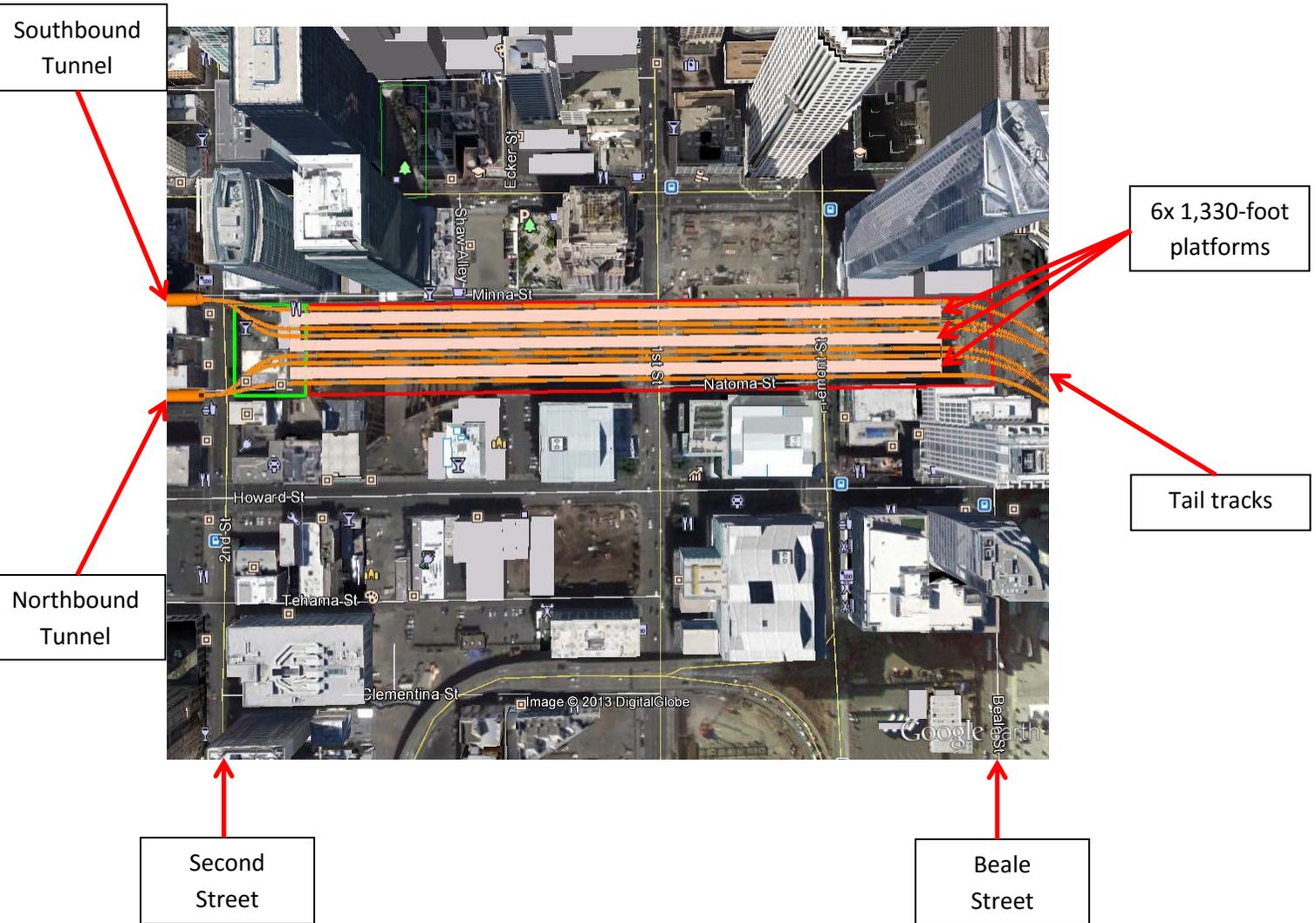
- Regional Measure 2 - Senate Bill 916 : Oct. 03
 - Regional, Local & Intercity Bus
 - Caltrain Downtown Extension
 - Accommodate Future HSR
 - Accommodate Eventual East Bay Extension
- Assembly Bill 812: July 03
(Public Resources Code – Addresses National Register of Historic Places)
 - Allows Demolition of Transbay Terminal for construction of TTC to serve Caltrain & HSR

- The proposed Caltrain storage is insufficient to enable Caltrain to vacate the 4th & King railyard until after relocation to Oakland.

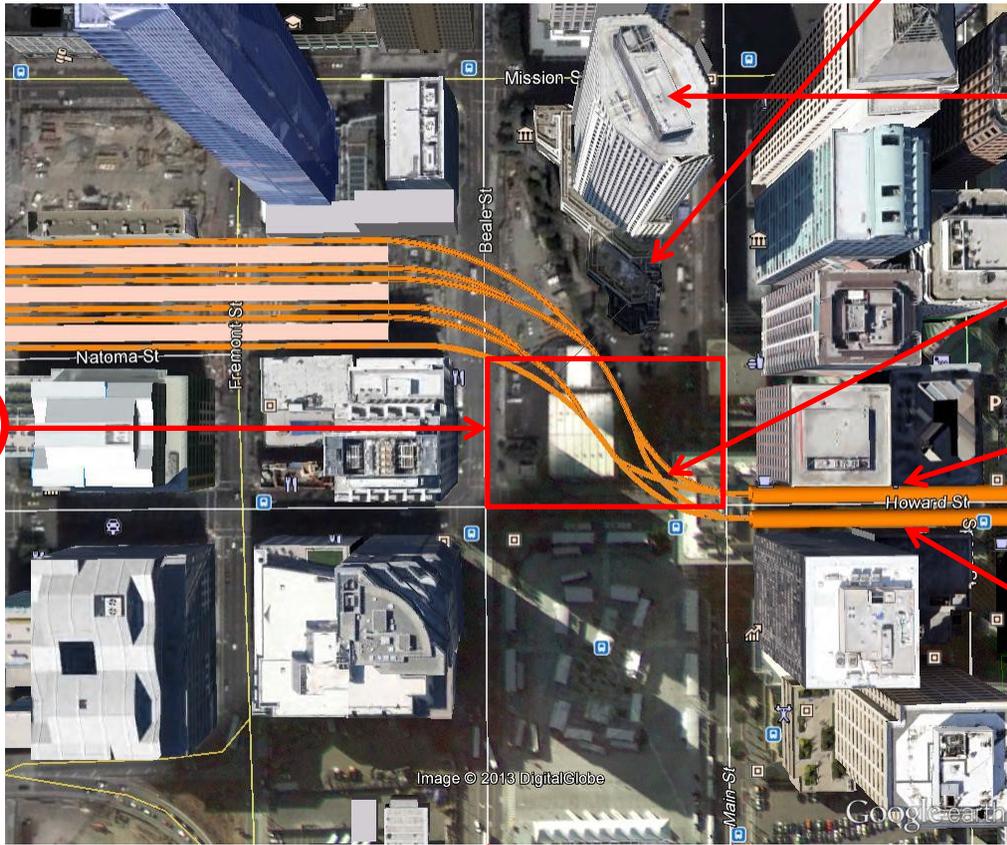


Recommendation #1

The SEIR should consider an alternate DTX alignment which would enable platform lengthening by extending the train box one block west (towards 2nd Street) while simultaneously providing a viable connection to a Transbay tunnel. This alignment would also eliminate conflicts with the 201 Mission building and enable a 6th full-length through platform (total 3 eastbound and 3 westbound platforms).



This alignment would eliminate the need to demolish the 201 Mission podium structure.



201 Mission

Crossover

Interim Train storage

Future Transbay tunnel

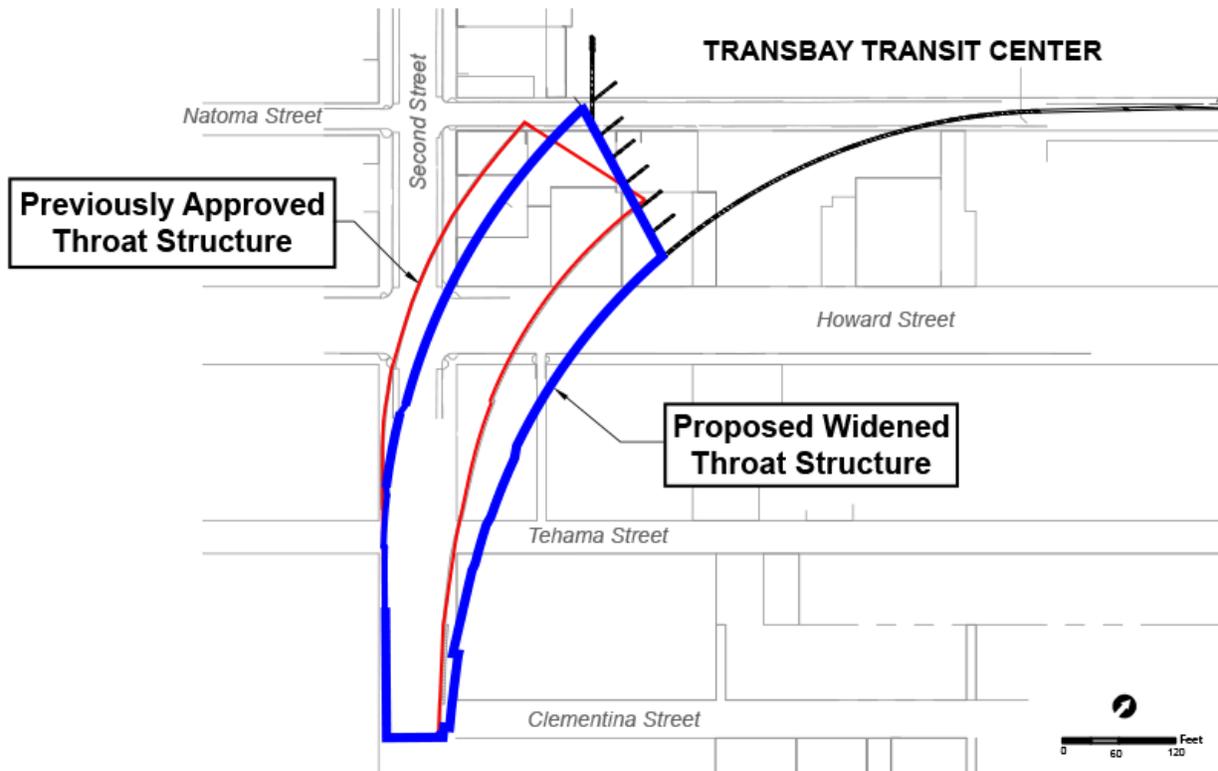
Potential Block 5 conflict

Beale Street

Main Street

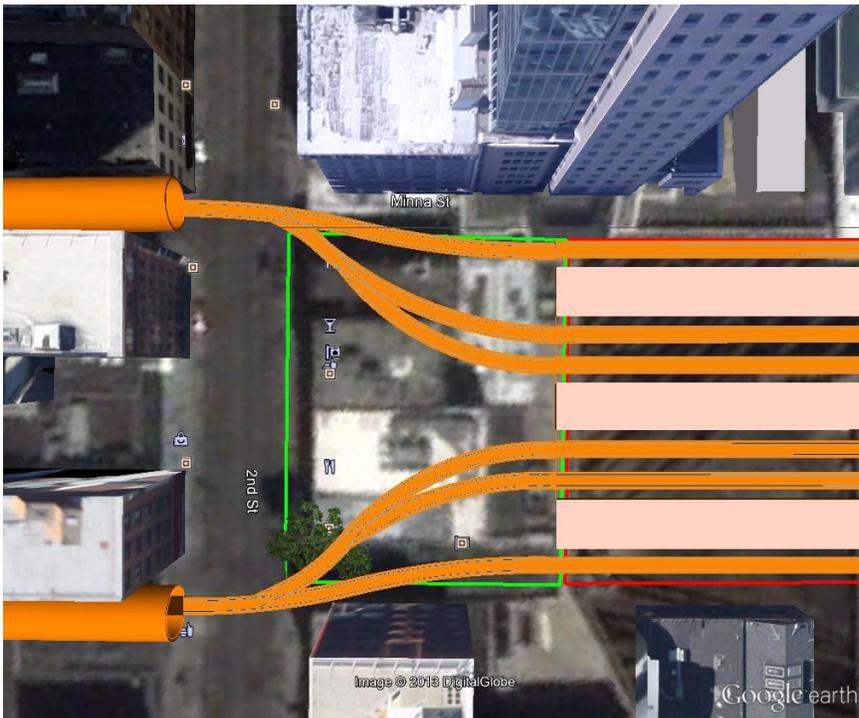
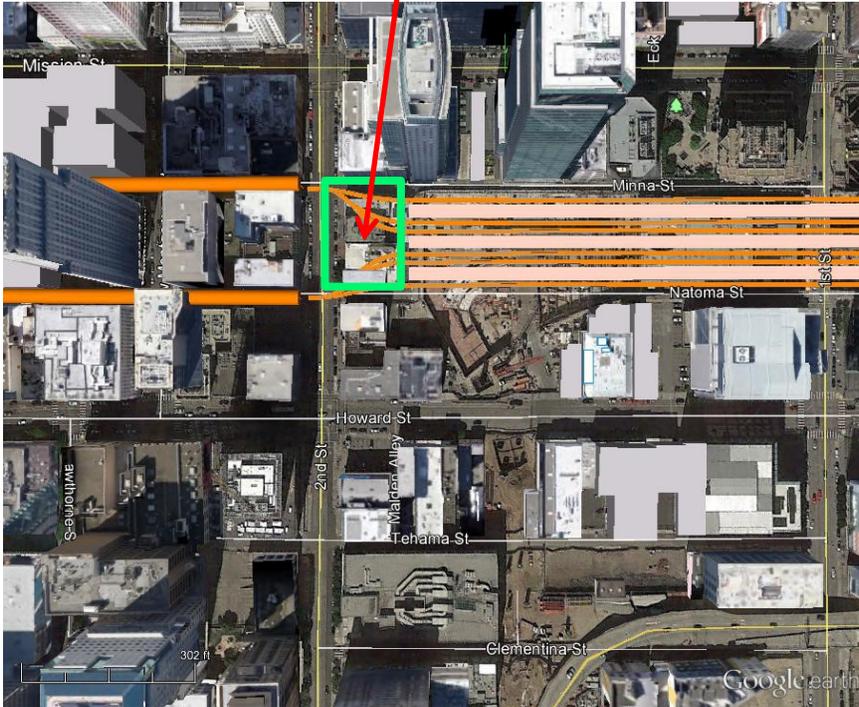
2) Widened throat structure

The SEIR proposes a widened approach to the Transbay Center train box via a massive cut & cover structure that will impact numerous properties as far south as Clementina Street. Construction costs are expected to run into the hundreds of millions and will result in massive circulation and noise impacts on the adjacent neighborhoods for many years.



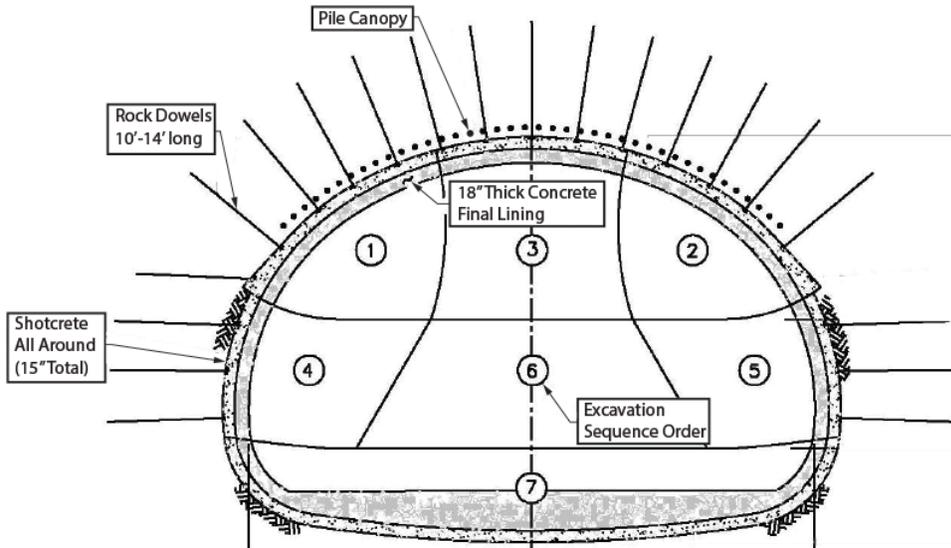
Recommendation #2

The SEIR should consider an alternate DTX alignment and construction technique that would limit impacts to a small number of buildings on 2nd Street between Minna and Natoma. There would be no additional surface impacts in SOMA north of Townsend.



3) Tunnel design

The current DTX design contemplates the construction of a 3-track sequentially excavated tunnel without any apparent plans for the evacuation of a train travelling on the middle track. This is of particular concern with High Speed trains which have a single door per carriage.

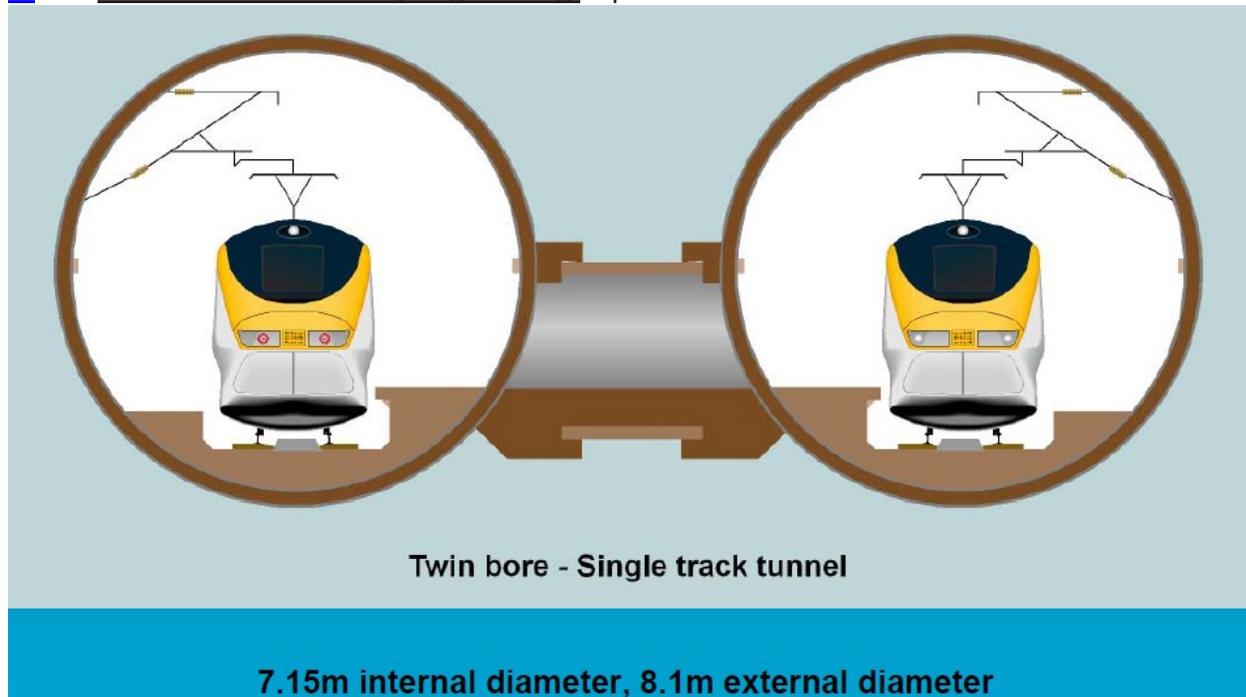


Recommendation #3

The SEIR should consider a twin-bore tunnel design with cross-passages for emergency evacuation (similar to the Central Subway) and a ventilation system designed to eliminate any requirement for vent/evacuation structures north of Townsend.

Please refer to Appendix A (Tunneling Studies) in the HS2 Final Report

http://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/documents/HS2_RouteEngineeringStudyAppendices_2010.pdf and **Section A1.4 Fire Safety Engineering** in particular for additional information.



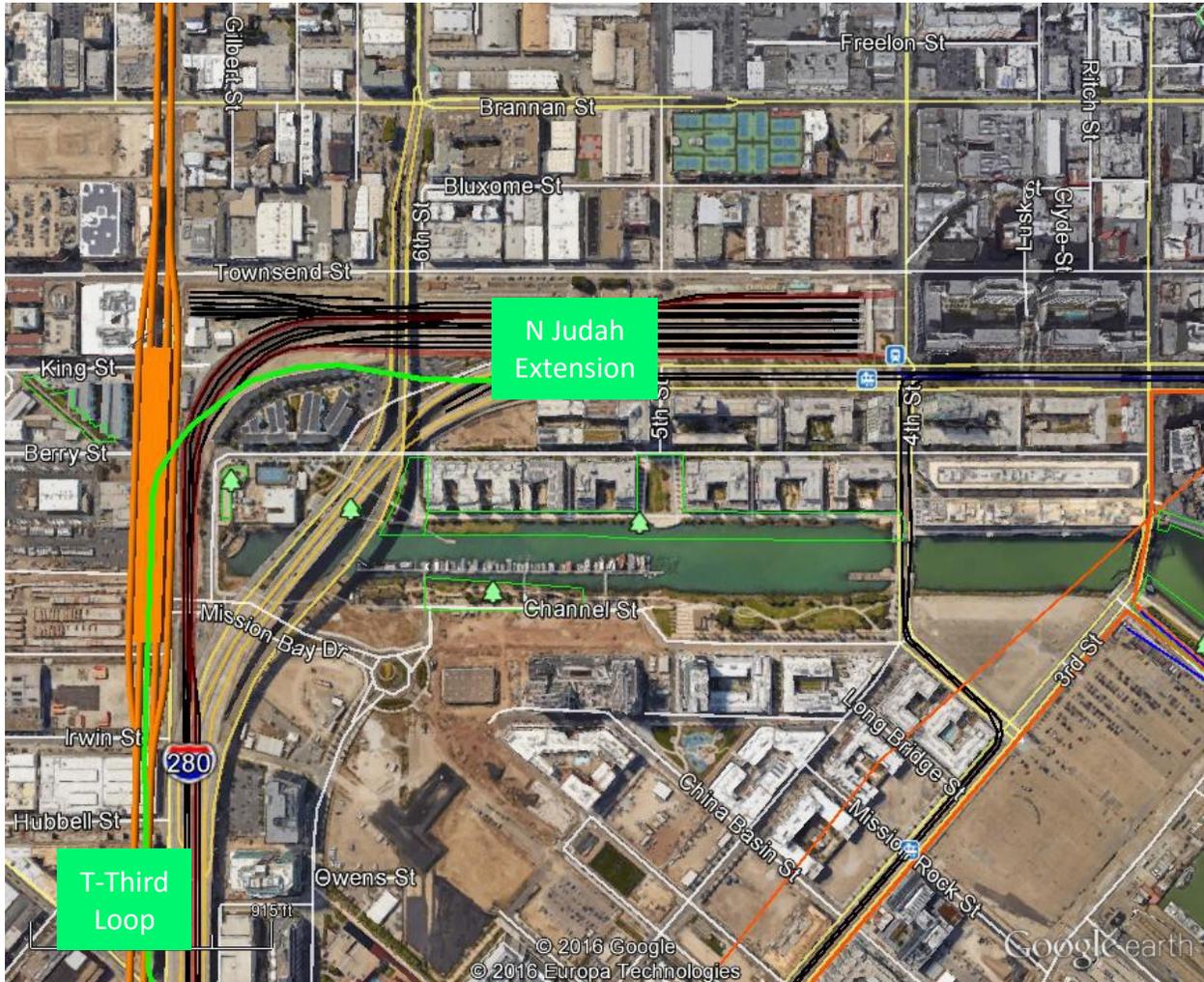
4) Fourth and Townsend Underground Station location

It is unclear how a relocated Caltrain station on Townsend could possibly accommodate the ridership demand from Mission Bay including UCSF, AT&T Park and the proposed Warriors Arena.



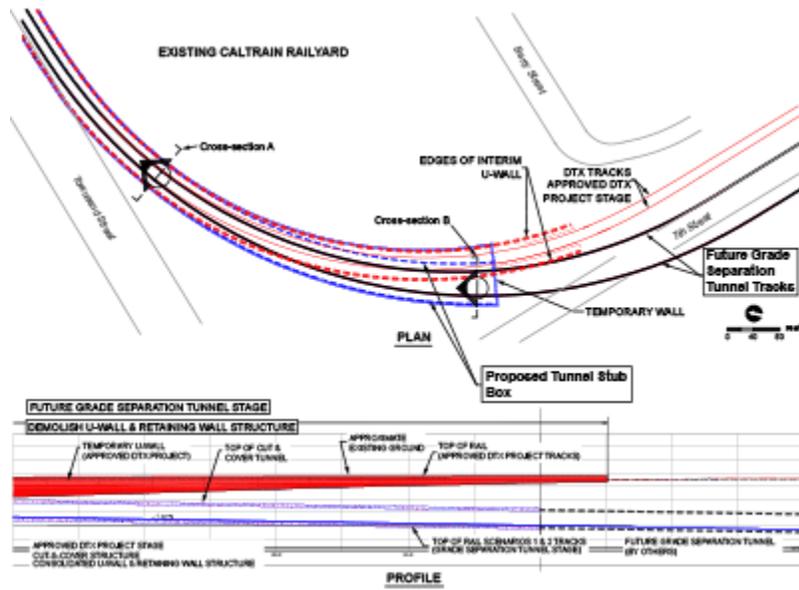
Recommendation #4

The SEIR should consider relocating the Townsend station to 7th Street and providing connectivity to the Central Subway via an extension of the N line connecting to the Mission Bay loop via 16th Street. This station should be designed to accommodate the Grand Boulevard at a later date.

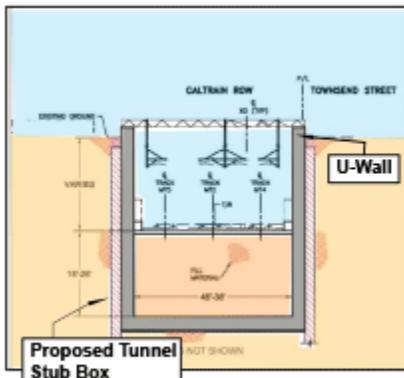


5) 7th Street Tunnel Stub Box

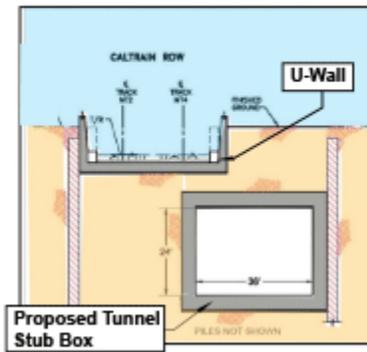
The SEIR proposes to terminate the DTX on 7th Street with a “tunnel stub box” designed to accommodate a future 16th Street grade separation.



Cross-Section A

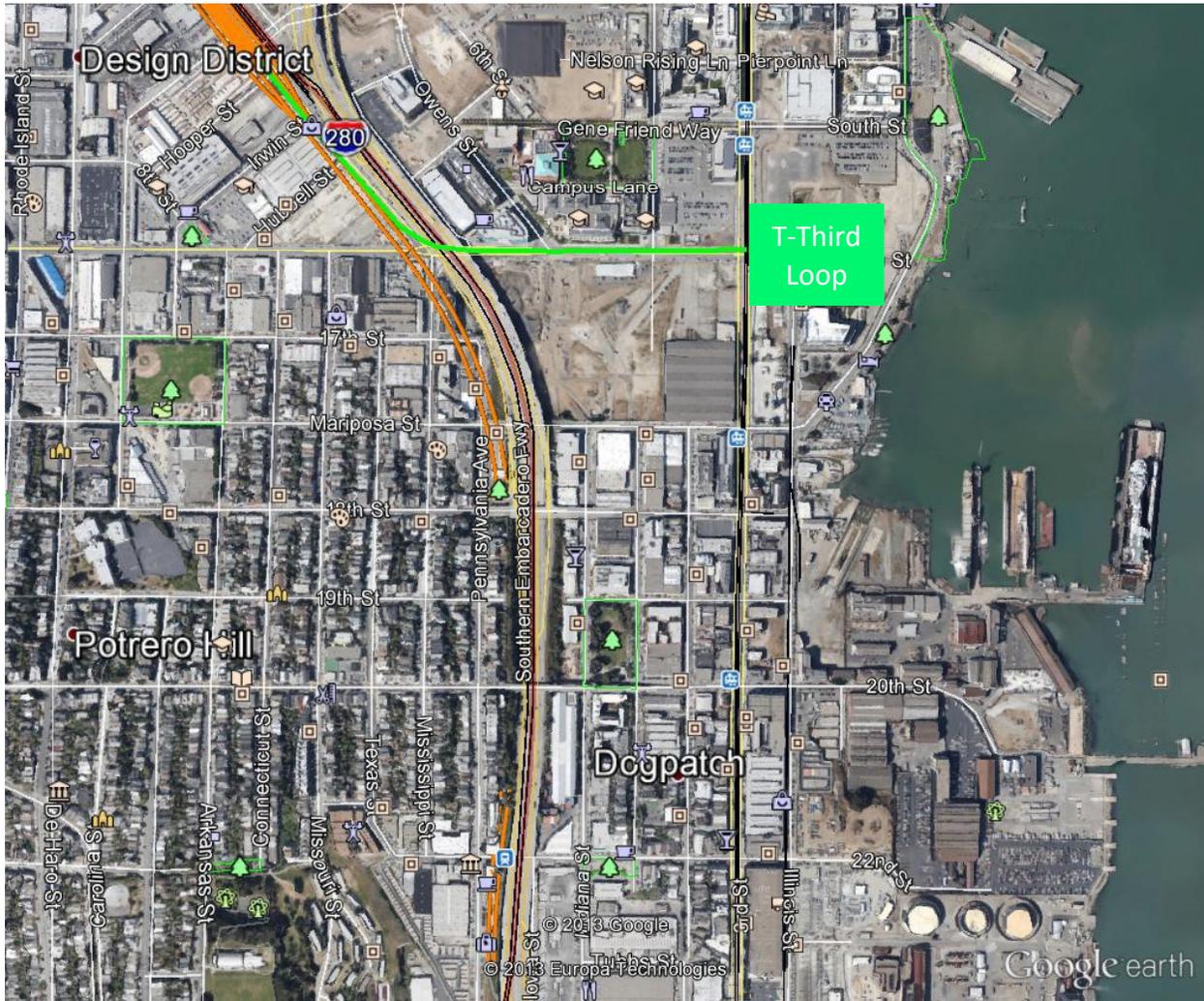


Cross-Section B



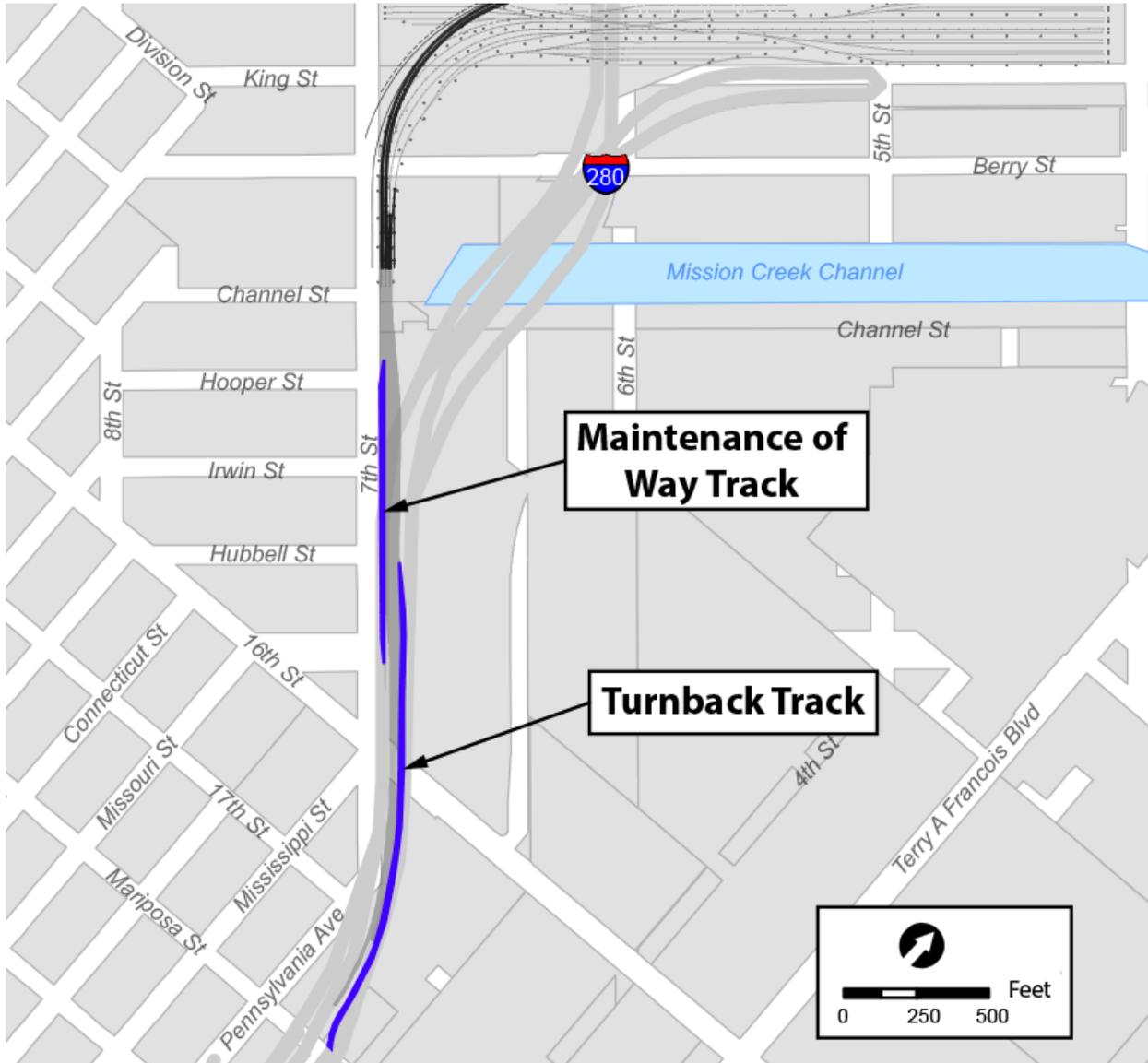
Recommendation #5

The SEIR should consider a direct connection to the Planning Department's Pennsylvania Avenue RAB study alternative. This would achieve 16th Street Grade separation as soon as Caltrain operations are relocated to the Transbay terminal and would save hundreds of millions by eliminating cut & cover structures @ 7th & Townsend



6) Turnback Track impacts on 16th Street grade crossing

The SEIR proposes the addition of two additional tracks on 7th Street, including a turnback track across 16th Street, thereby increasing gate downtime for each train crossing by an additional 10 seconds (10 minutes per day).



Recommendation #6

The SEIR should consider a direct connection to the planning department's Pennsylvania Avenue alternative (see recommendation #5 above) and turn trains around further south. The SEIR should also consider the abandoned tunnel #1 for storage.

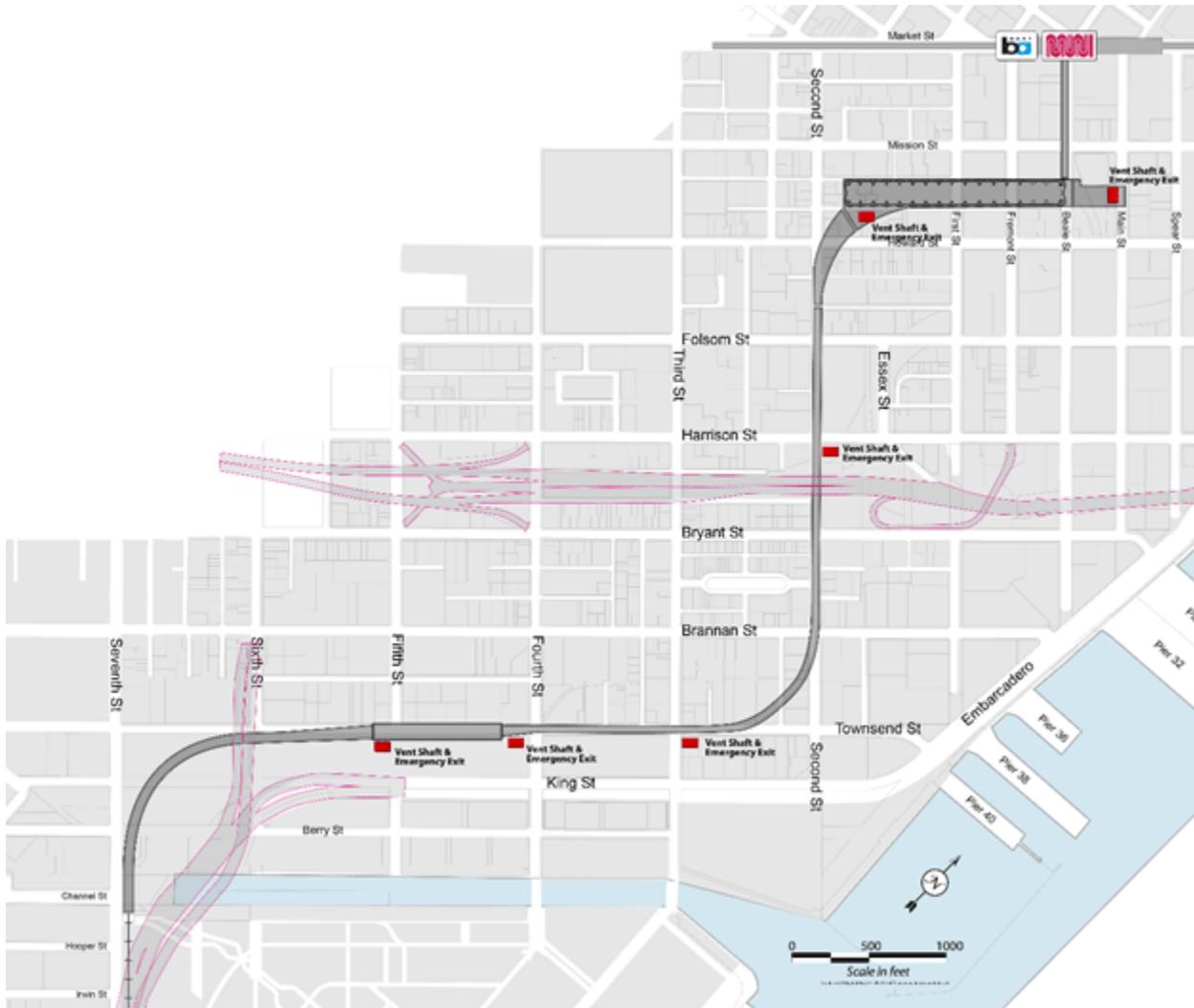
7) Alignment conflict with AB3034 (San Jose to Transbay in 30 minutes)

The current DTX alignment consists of 3 sharp curves each with a maximum speed of 25 MPH which extend the travel time between 7th Street and the Transbay Terminal by an additional 3 minutes.

This alignment conflicts with AB3034 (2007) codified in Streets & Highways code section 2704.09(b) <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=shc&group=02001-03000&file=2704.04-2704.095>

“Maximum nonstop service travel times for each corridor that shall not exceed the following:

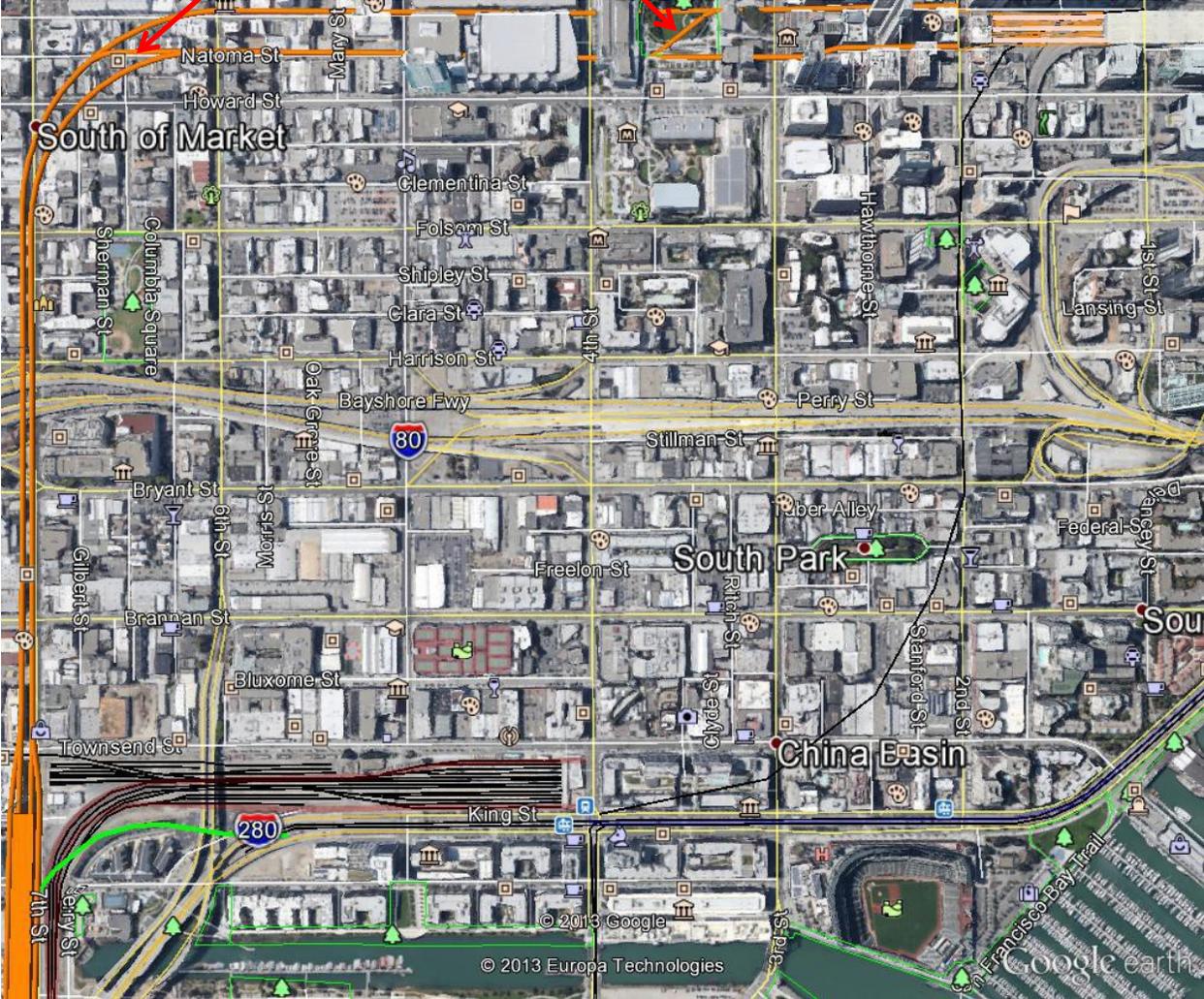
(3) San Francisco-San Jose: 30 minutes.”



Mined
crossovers

Recommendation #7

The SEIR should consider an alternate alignment designed to enable an 80 MPH approach to the Transbay Transit Center.



Respectfully submitted for your consideration

Sincerely,

Roland Lebrun

From: Board.Secretary
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 5:55 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: From VTA: Caltrain Electrification Grant Deferred

VTA Board of Directors:

We are forwarding you the email below for your information.

Thank you.

Office of the Board Secretary
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 N. First Street
San Jose, CA 95134
408.321.5680
board.secretary@vta.org



From: Bartholomew, Tasha [<mailto:bartholomewt@samtrans.com>]
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 2:46 PM
To: Bartholomew, Tasha
Subject: NEWS: Caltrain Electrification Grant Deferred



February 17, 2017

Media Contact: Seamus Murphy, 650.508.6388, murphys@samtrans.com

Caltrain Electrification Grant Deferred

Today, Caltrain received word from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that a decision on whether to execute the pending \$647 million Full Funding Grant

Agreement (FFGA) for the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project (PCEP) will be deferred until the Administration develops the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Budget.

The contracts that have been awarded to complete the PCEP require that a Notice to Proceed be issued prior to March 1. Deferral of the decision to execute the FFGA will prevent Caltrain from issuing the notice by this date and may jeopardize the viability of the project itself.

Electrification will be the most transformative effort ever undertaken on the Caltrain Corridor. The project offers unique economic, environmental and mobility benefits that will have an impact across the country. Federal investment in this project will help create over 9,600 jobs in the Bay Area and spread throughout the nation in places like Salt Lake City, UT, Jacksonville, FL; Richmond, VA; Hudson, WI; Littleton, CO and more. It will create over \$2.5 billion in economic value and address one of the region's principal barriers to economic growth by eliminating over 619,000 daily vehicle miles from the region's roadways.

Caltrain is evaluating options for maintaining a viable project in the face of uncertainty about the timing of FFGA approval and the question about whether it will be approved at all.

In September, Caltrain issued a Limited Notice to Proceed to its contractors to advance design and pre-construction efforts. This work is nearly complete and approval of this Federal funding would match nearly \$1.3 billion in secured local, state and regional investment, and allow construction to begin.

For two years, Caltrain worked closely with Federal officials to complete a thorough evaluation of the project including intensive engineering assessments and financial vetting. Following this evaluation, the project was rated very positively and recommended for approval by career professional staff still employed with that agency. Today, that 30-day period is complete, and the project has met all of the statutory requirements needed to qualify for an FFGA.

"Clearly, the FTA's evaluation demonstrates that this Federal investment should be made based on the merits of the project, and we expect that the USDOT will continue with a fair process." said Caltrain Chief Communications Officer Seamus Murphy. "We are poised to deliver mobility benefits that the region has been anticipating for over two decades, and across the country, workers are anticipating the thousands of jobs that this project will create. Caltrain is thankful for the hundreds of riders, employers and communities that have expressed support for the project. We will continue to work with our Congressional delegation,

stakeholders and funding partners to support whatever actions are needed to provide our communities with the transit system they deserve.”

The Electrification Project is an opportunity to increase the capacity of the system and transform the way Bay Area experiences transit. Caltrain is already the mobility option of choice for over 65,000 daily riders. By connecting communities with more service to more stations and reducing travel times, electrification will make Caltrain even more attractive, equipping the system to accommodate more riders and providing significant relief to drivers on busy local streets and roads and increasingly congested freeways.

Background

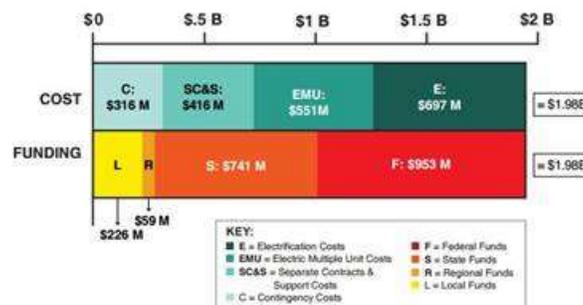
Caltrain has been planning for the electrification project since the 1990s and the PCEP has received broad support from the business community, labor and environmental groups, regional transportation advocacy groups, local, state, and federal elected officials.

In September 2016, Caltrain awarded two contracts:

- 1) to a contractor to install the infrastructure to electrify the corridor
- 2) to a contractor to build and deliver high-performance electric commuter rail trains.

A Limited Notice to Proceed (LNTF) has been issued to those contractors to advance design of the project. A Full Notice to Proceed (NTP) must be issued by March 1, 2017, in order to maintain the terms of the contracts and avoid costly penalties and project delays. Before an NTP can be issued, PCEP must receive the \$647 million Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) from the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Core Capacity grant program.

Caltrain has secured all local, regional, state, and Federal non-Core Capacity funds for the project. The only funding that is needed is \$647m from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Core Capacity program.



NOTE: 2016 Bids with 20% contingency

Over the last two years, Caltrain and the other PCEP funding partners have worked with FTA to meet all of the Core Capacity FFGA requirements to secure the \$647m grant. The project has already received \$73m in previous appropriated Core Capacity funds and the FFGA would allow Caltrain to access those funds in addition to future Core Capacity funds.

The Project's path forward is contingent on the FTA FFGA. In order to maintain the terms of the contracts and avoid costly penalties and project delays, the FFGA must be signed by March 1, 2017.

Link to FAQs about the project:

<http://www.caltrain.com/Assets/Caltrain+Modernization+Program/Electrification+Documents/PCEP+FAQ.pdf>

Link to the jobs that will be created by this project:

<http://www.caltrain.com/Assets/Caltrain+Modernization+Program/PCEPJobAcrossUSA.pdf>

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