

**From:** VTA Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Monday, May 14, 2018 12:10 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors  
**Subject:** From VTA: May 14, 2018 Media Clips



## ***VTA Daily News Coverage for Monday, May 14, 2018***

1. [Vehicle Versus VTA Light Rail Collision in San Jose \(NBC Bay Area\)](#)
2. [Multiple Outlets Broadcast coverage for light rail versus car](#)
3. [Downtown San Jose affordable apartments planned near Google village \(Mercury News\)](#)
4. [Mathilda Monster remains a monster: Roadshow \(Mercury News\)](#)
5. [Nearly 100,000 Ride On Bike To Work Day \(SF Gate.com\)](#)
6. [We can't forget about mass transit when we talk about the 'future of transportation' \(The Verge.com\)](#)

### **Vehicle Versus VTA Light Rail Collision in San Jose (NBC Bay Area)**

The San Jose Fire Department was on the scene of a vehicle versus VTA light rail train collision on 1st Street and E Brokaw Road, the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office confirms.

Some injuries were reported but the extent of them are unknown.

No injuries have been reported.

*No additional information was immediately available.*

### **Multiple Outlets Broadcast coverage for light rail versus car**

[ABC7 News](#)

[Telemundo CH. 48](#)

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### **Downtown San Jose affordable apartments planned near Google village (Mercury News)**

Developers hope to replace a long-time welding shop with a tower of hundreds of affordable apartments near Google's proposed transit village and a few blocks from the Diridon train station.

About two blocks from what at present is the south end of Google's future transit-oriented community, First Community Housing plans to construct a 319-unit residential tower that would rise 13 stories above the development site at the northeast corner of McEvoy and West San Carlos streets.

"We are in a housing crisis," said Geoffrey Morgan, executive director of San Jose-based First Community Housing, a nonprofit housing developer. "We need places for our teachers, janitors, baristas, cooks to be able to live near where they work."

Of the 319 units, 132 would be studios, 78 would be one-bedroom units, 76 would be two-bedroom apartments and 33 would be three-bedroom units, according to preliminary proposals that project designer Campbell-based Anderson Architects submitted.

The project's developers believe the apartment tower will benefit from its proximity to Diridon Station and Google's proposed village of 6 million to 8 million square feet of offices, housing, retail, restaurants, open spaces and other amenities. Google envisions integrating its village with nearby neighborhoods and eventually bringing 15,000 to 20,000 employees of the search giant to work there.

"We have a great location, so close to the Google village and Diridon," Morgan said. "Google's proposal is wonderful, almost a city within a city. Diridon Station will be a transit hub second to none. Where better a place to put housing for middle-class people?"

At present, Diridon Station is a hub for light-rail transit, Caltrain, Amtrak, the Capitol Corridor train, ACE Train and buses.

"This apartment project is the kind of high-density, transit-oriented development that we need in the Bay Area," Morgan said. "This puts affordable housing next to many transit choices."

BART is expected to someday operate a Diridon Station stop, which would provide swift connections linking downtown San Jose with San Francisco and Oakland. And an ultra-quick train could someday connect Diridon Station with stops in the Central Valley.

"The site is a three-minute walk from the Diridon train station," said Ralph Borelli, principal executive with San Jose-based Borelli Investment. "Once they bring BART down here, it's only going to get better." Borelli, a commercial realty broker, helped arrange the deal for the S&S Welding owners, the Nick D'Arpino family, to agree to sell the property to First Community Housing.

Officially proposed as a 14-story tower, the stories consist of a basement, a two-level parking garage and 11 floors of residences above the garage, according to the planning documents prepared by the Anderson firm.

The transit connections could be crucial to the viability of the proposed new residential tower. The development would likely contain 115 parking stalls, so transit availability can offset the minimal parking.

“The construction costs are pretty crazy right now,” Morgan said.

Affordable housing is defined as a percentage of the median income for the metro area where a development would be located, according to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines.

In this case, were the development to be available right now for leasing, the current median household income benchmark for a family of four in Santa Clara is roughly \$125,200 a year, according to a HUD estimate. The HUD guidelines would typically use 60 percent of that income level as the cap for those who would be eligible, or somewhere around \$75,000.

“This development will continue the legacy at that site of helping middle-income people,” Morgan said. “For decades, the D’Arpino family provided jobs for working-class families at S&S Welding. The development can provide the working class with affordable housing for decades to come.”

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### [Mathilda Monster remains a monster: Roadshow \(Mercury News\)](#)

Can anything be done with the morning madness at Mathilda Avenue and Highway 237 in Sunnyvale? Going east on 237 and trying to take the Mathilda exit, the ramp backs up onto the freeway. ... I observed the lights for about 4 months on Mathilda and concluded that during rush hour, there is an enormous bias in those lights for traffic coming off of the feeders from Yahoo and new residences in that area. The worst case is Innovation Way, where a single car pulling up to that light will turn the Mathilda light red within 15 seconds.

Mathilda traffic is held hostage every day by feeder traffic. And I believe it is deliberate, and a way for the city to grease the palms, a bit, of the new tenants who now pay them lots and lots of revenue.

#### **Vlad Feldman and many more**

**A:** The city adjusted lights on what is called the Mathilda Monster more than a year ago and says signals from Moffett Park to Ross Drive are operating as well as they can given the road is often jammed. The changes decreased delays up to 58 percent and travel times were reduced from 15.4 to 6.1 minutes and 11 to 4.4 minutes in the morning and afternoon commute times.

New wiring will soon be installed at Innovation Way and next year construction of a new interchange could occur, which will eliminate one of the four signals.

And maybe the Mathilda Monster nickname.

**Q:** If you drive from Interstate 680 going east, be careful not to fall in a pot hole. ... Any recommendations on how to retrieve my little Prius that was swallowed by a pothole on San Marcos Drive in San Jose? ... How much of the new gas tax will be used to smooth out streets in San Jose? Lord, I hope it's a lot.

**Ellen Rauh, Jay S., and others**

**A:** San Jose will spend \$7.2 million this summer to resurface 23 miles of its worst streets and \$6.8 million will be from the new gas tax. And if the tax is not repealed in November, the city expects it will provide \$17.5 million annually.

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### [Nearly 100,000 Ride On Bike To Work Day \(SF Gate.com\)](#)

Nearly 100,000 people participated in Bike to Work Day on Thursday, according to event organizers.

The 24th annual event, presented by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 511.org and Kaiser Permanente, saw thousands of commuters in the Bay Area bike to work on what was a good day for riding weather-wise, event organizers said. Many of the riders stopped at "energizer" stations to pick up treats and a tote bag of giveaways across the region on bikes instead of driving or taking public transport.

"It's very practical for people to ride their bike to work when you live within a few miles of their job, as I do," MTC Commissioner and Rohnert Park Mayor Jake Mackenize said in a statement.

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### [Does Your Transit Agency Board Look Like Its Riders? \(Streets Blog\)](#)

The politics of public transit vary a lot from city to city, but a major player in every agency is the board of directors.

These powerful boards don't tend to feature prominently in advocacy campaigns. But they're important, making key decisions about fares and service and senior staff that affect every rider.

Unfortunately, these boards often aren't very representative of the people who ride transit in the regions they serve. Julia Ehrman at [TransitCenter](#) scanned some of the boards of the biggest agencies and found they are generally much more white and male than the riding population.

Check out Boston, for example.

And Atlanta Ehrman says this is something that advocates, and those responsible for appointing transit board members, should be conscious of, because it can impact service quality:

What would change if more diverse voices were at transit decision making tables, shaping policy and investment? If more women were at the table, we might hear more about the need for service in off-peak hours to accommodate service and domestic work. We might learn that free transfers are completely essential for the multi-leg trips that work, school commuting, and errands require. We might prioritize lighting, visibility, and real-time information at bus stops to help improve safety. If more people of color were at the table, we might hear stronger challenges to expensive new rail projects that tilt the scales away from investment in bus service and amenities in communities of color where riders live. We might have a more comprehensive conversation about policing on transit, and what “safety” means in practice. If more people from the disabled community were on transit boards, their colleagues might grasp the gravity of inaccessibility and prioritize requisite changes.

Personal experience is not the only path to empathy. However, transit policy should be based on facts about rider experience and needs.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Ehrman writes, has been a leader in this regard, using his appointments to triple representation by women and people of color on the board of the state-run MTA since taking office.

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### [We can't forget about mass transit when we talk about the 'future of transportation' \(The Verge.com\)](#)

It can't just be flying cars and jetpacks.

Maybe it was the smell of oil and machined metal coming from the jetpack on stage, or maybe it was because I was listening to the 10th different speaker in under three hours. But I was a little dizzy by the end of the *Wall Street Journal's* [Future of Transportation event](#) that took place on Wednesday in Manhattan. When I got back out on the street and cleared my head, though, the first thing I thought to myself was: “wait a minute, did no one really talk about the future of *public* transportation?”

Don't get me wrong, it was an engaging morning full of bright minds with relative disciplinary diversity (gender not so much — there were just two women guest speakers to eight men), ranging from space exploration to the aforementioned jetpack to the head of General Motors' global program for electric vehicles. But for an event that was supposed to be about the “future of transportation,” and part of a broader week-long festival about the “future of everything,” it was oddly focused on personal — not public — transportation.

WHEN WE THINK ABOUT THE CAPITAL F FUTURE OF TRANSPORTATION, WE OFTEN SKIP RIGHT TO THE STUFF OF DREAMS

That's a shame, because this has [been a problem for a while now](#), and it doesn't seem to be changing much. After all, across the country at the very same time Uber was kicking off the

second day of its [second-annual “Elevate” conference](#), which is dedicated solely to the idea of air taxis capable of vertical takeoff and landing. (Or by another, more contentious name: “[flying cars](#).”) More broadly, this has been a demonstrable trend for years. When we think about the capital F future of transportation, we often skip right to the stuff of dreams.

Why is that?

Maybe it has to do with the obstacles that stand in the way of making public transportation better. Typically, public transportation involves citywide systems that are complex and require a lot of money to be operated. They’re already deeply embedded — literally, in the case of New York’s subway system — in the infrastructure of cities, which makes optimization and electrification and disruption and all of the other buzzy “-tion” words that Silicon Valley and the tech industry love more difficult. Fixing public transportation requires cooperation, planning, and the acceptance of the community. Ideas are voted on. Careers are wagered. That sometimes makes it hard to separate the ideas from the politics.

Meanwhile, flashy “future of transportation” ideas enjoy the freedom of being removed from those burdens. They’re usually proposed with the caveat that mundane problems like “regulation” or “funding” will naturally be solved along the way if the idea is good enough. But most of these companies are incentivized to frame it this way. It’s solving the technology that’s the *real* problem, the technology companies tell us. Of *course* the regulators will work with our ingenious idea, the engineers say. And if not, [we’ll just show up anyway](#) and force their hand.

Another problem, perhaps, is that the best ideas for improving public transportation are simply not flashy. “More buses,” a crass distillation of the more intricate idea of a bus rapid transit system (which is arguably [one of the better ways a city can improve the flow of its citizens](#)), is just not as scintillating an answer as “fleet of self-driving cars,” or “flying cars,” or that blasted jetpack. Neither does mobile ticketing, which seems like something that could have been widely implemented years ago, but has still not been adopted by some of the biggest transportation systems in the world. Upgrading [existing systems](#) — hell, even our roads — would go a long way in making transportation better in this country. Just good luck raising venture capital for any of these ideas.

“MORE BUSES,” ROUGHLY, IS A GREAT WAY TO IMPROVE THE FLOW OF CITIES. IT’S JUST NOT AS EXCITING A SOLUTION AS “SELF-DRIVING CARS.”

So if we’re going to have to drag our cities into the future, we need to be vigilant in remembering public transportation when we talk about the flashy stuff. We all share that burden. The people who are raising funds to create these wild ideas, the people who are trying to execute on them, the people who live in and have to move around in cities, the media that cover all of this — all of us could stand to benefit from daydreaming a little bit less. If this week proved anything, it’s that there’s obviously not a dearth of fantastic ideas already on the table.

To be fair, the *WSJ* event did feature Lime, one of the companies trying to push bike and scooter sharing as a solution. You can argue with the companies methods for expansion so far — and [many are](#) — but at least CEO Toby Sun mentioned public transportation.

But the most salient point about public transportation came from someone who was showing off a product that isn't even meant to move people: Sasha Hoffman, the COO of Piaggio Fast Forward, a robotics wing of Italian scooter giant Piaggio. "Autonomous cars are coming," she said. But, she continued, "whatever theory you've heard around how many years they are away, please feel free to double it, possibly triple it, before it's actually prolific anywhere in our society."

In the meantime, she said, there will be an increase in the number of cars on the road thanks to ride-hailing services — and, eventually (or potentially), autonomous ride hailing services. The result of all this? "It will actually be much worse before it gets better."

That sounds like a problem worth solving.

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Conserve paper. Think before you print.

**From:** VTA Board Secretary

**Sent:** Thursday, May 17, 2018 4:46 PM

**To:** VTA Board of Directors

**Subject:** VTA Information: A letter from Blair Beekman, received on Thursday, May 17, 2018, for the SSTPO

Dear VTA, SSTPO committee,

I do not think, I will not be able to attend, your monthly meeting today.

There is an important meeting, in the PSFSS committee, of the city of San Jose, about the future, of the Mayor's Gang Task Force committee.

The city of San Jose, may be starting to want to address, more progressive and positive ideas, around youth, violence, and its incarceration issues.

And, to possibly begin, to better talk about, how youth violence issues, can be of a different category, than gang violence.

I hope you have received my letter, describing what needs to be worked on, around the accountability issues, of the Big Belly.

The VTA and myself, have made some good opening beginnings.

It can be a good time, for the city of San Jose, and the SJDA, to connect a bit, at this time.

The Big Belly may be a VTA, SJDA project, and responsibility.

But I would guess, the city of San Jose, is an active recipient, and participant, of the data collection, from the downtown Big Belly. And, Tasman, as well.

Offering, the city of San Jose, should have a certain responsibility, toward public accountability.

My 5 section letter, with the goofy date, of Wednesday, May 15, 2018, should help explain this.

I want to be good natured, in my writing, at this time, and to be sure, yourselves are communicating, with each other.

And from this, varying degrees, of responsibility and accountability, can become more clear, to all of us.

And with this, it will become naturally easier, to talk about, the public policy !

To important lessons, and simpler, peaceful communication, in not as fearful terms,. at this time.

Elaine and myself, are going to need to start to discuss, the ideas of a simple logic, and narrative, in the coming weeks.

A few commonsense realizations, together, can go a long, long way.

This can begin to introduce, a simple, organized, cohesive, intelligent way, to actually talk about a public policy, with the public.

And, with yourselves as government, as well.

Some good commonsense, and place to start from, to respect the public's intelligence level, can make for something that is accessible, easier to understand, and to be able to follow along.

A better, more inclusive democratic process, for everyone !

Yet, this way of working, can still respect, a certain distance, a local government may need, for projects of this type.

sincerely,  
blair beekman

**From:** VTA Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Friday, May 18, 2018 4:44 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors  
**Subject:** From VTA: May 18, 2018 Media Clips



### ***VTA Daily News Coverage for Friday, May 18, 2018***

1. [BART clipper card contest deadline is June 1: Roadshow \(Mercury News\)](#)
2. [KPIX Poll Shows Bridge Toll Hike Measure Facing Uphill Battle \(KPIX Ch. 5\)](#)
3. [Who's backing the \\$3 toll hike? You might be surprised \(East Bay Times\)](#)
4. [Traffic or \\$9 tolls? Bay Area voters to decide which is worse \(East Bay Times\)](#)
5. [Battle over competing Evergreen senior homes ballot measures heats up \(Mercury News\)](#)
6. [How the ballotbox battle over San Jose's Measure B could decide the future of land use in the city \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)
7. [Message to the tech industry: High-speed rail is going to ask you for money \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)

#### **[BART clipper card contest deadline is June 1: Roadshow \(Mercury News\)](#)**

Do you have an updated estimated opening date for Berryessa BART?

**SJ Guy**

**A:** No, although BART should be taking over the 10-mile extension for testing next month. But there's another deadline fast approaching.

ADVERTISING

The first person to pick the date the line opens gets a Clipper Card pass worth \$100 from Roadshow. To enter, email your prediction to [mrroadshow@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:mrroadshow@bayareanewsgroup.com) before June 1.

**Q:** Any idea when BART will tunnel through downtown San Jose?

**Michael Phillips**

*Fremont*

**A:** The target date is 2026, but I'm betting it will be later. VTA got a \$730-million shot in the arm last month from California's new gas tax. This helps pave the way to a \$1.5 billion request for federal funding to be made this summer.

**Q:** You said survey work will begin to raise the bridge decks at the MacArthur Maze. What does this mean? Would they shut down the bridges to raise the deck up a few feet?

**Richard Garlow**

**A:** No. Caltrans will increase the vertical clearances in The Maze to the current standard of 16.5 feet. To do so, the state has to make some modifications to existing structures – raising some, lowering others. Survey work was recently completed.

**Q:** Does the DMV have an alternative to the written test? There must be people with limited literacy ability due lack of fluency in English, Spanish, Vietnamese or whose first language is Icelandic, Tongan, etc.

**Carl Odegaard**

**A:** The DMV does not administer many written tests these days. They have TouchScreen terminals in all offices, replacing the traditional paper exam with an automated knowledge test. The DMV started using the TouchScreen terminals in 2014, when the tests were only available in English and Spanish. Now, automated and audio tests are available in 32 languages.

The DMV also offers American Sign Language, a person-to-person examination and can provide an interpreter at no cost to the customer.

But the commercial driver license exam and motorcycle exam are only available in English and Spanish.

**Q:** I loved your reference to the baseball player Ron Santo recently. He and I attended the same high school in the '50s – Franklin High School in Seattle. He was a star athlete even then, quarterback for our football team, forward on the basketball team, and of course, baseball. Because I knew him, I followed his career with the Chicago Cubs.

**Judy Cummings**

*Los Altos Hills*

**A:** His was a Hall of Fame career. Santo was my boyhood idol and I would take his baseball card and put it in the spokes of my bicycle to make a cool noise as my buddies and I roared down the steep hills of Dubuque, Iowa. The Santo card did not fare well.

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[KPIX Poll Shows Bridge Toll Hike Measure Facing Uphill Battle \(KPIX Ch. 5\)](#)

With the ballot battle over bridge tolls looming in less than a month, an exclusive new KPIX 5 poll shows Bay Area drivers are clinging to their cars.

The numbers indicate that the up to three dollar toll hike that could eventually make it cost as much as \$9 to cross some Bay Area bridges could be a tough sell.

In exchange, voters are promised better public transit and traffic relief.

According to the exclusive KPIX 5 Survey USA Poll, 40 percent of Bay Area voters support the plan, while 34 percent are against it. Another 26 percent respondents said they weren't sure.

If you are tired of sitting in traffic, Regional Measure 3 is promising that Bay Area commuters will have more time to do what they love.

Backers say the bold \$4.5 billion plan will help fund 36 different transportation projects from Sonoma to San Jose.

Supporters promise the measure will help improve air quality, extend BART to San Jose and Silicon Valley in addition to buying 300 new BART cars and design a new second Bay crossing.

"[It will] double or triple the size of the ferry system, the Trans Bay Terminal, improve highways and bridges," said Michael Cunningham, who is working on the "Yes On Regional Measure 3" campaign.

But the plan comes at a price: a dollar toll hike at the seven state bridges in the Bay Area next year and more hikes down the line until the toll could reach \$9.

Some voters KPIX 5 talked to were surprised at that number.

"An extra buck? Wow! I had no idea," said Rodrigo Clemente.

When asked if he would support it, Wes Howell initially said no, but when asked if the funds were for other transportation, he changed his answer.

"Ah, possibly. It depends on what it is," said Howell.

"Our polling shows that when people see the projects, they like them. They want to support it and get those benefits," said Cunningham.

Another challenge is that while people who live in the cities favor the toll hike — with 49 percent voting in favor and only 28 percent voting against — voters in the suburbs who actually pay most of the tolls are split with 34 percent voting yes and 39 percent voting no.

That's why some of the Bay Area's biggest businesses are supporting the \$2 million plus campaign to help pass the measure. But opponents are buying it

“They’ve taken a user fee to maintain bridges and converted it into a special tax,” said Sue Caro, who is working on the No On Measure 3 campaign. “It’s what we call a ‘Christmas tree program.’ They are going to make it look good for all of the different nine counties.”

Cunningham disagrees.

“The majority of the money goes to public transit, so that drivers will have the option of getting out of their cars,” said Cunningham.

An interesting pitch, considering the poll shows that after all of the billions of dollars invested in mass transit in the Bay Area, eight out of ten people still regularly drive their cars

Conversely, only about one out of ten use BART or bus regularly.

Some local commuters weighed in on why they preferred driving to public transit.

“Convenience; its more convenient,” said Bernie Solis

“BART has too many homeless people for me. I don’t really like it,” said Caroline Ko.

Regional Measure 3 will have to pass Bay Area-wide by a simple majority vote in the June election.

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### [Who’s backing the \\$3 toll hike? You might be surprised \(East Bay Times\)](#)

Some of Silicon Valley’s tech behemoths and other large employers are putting their money behind Regional Measure 3, the [proposed \\$3 toll increase on the June 5 ballot](#).

If approved by voters, the toll would rise by \$1 next year on every bridge but the Golden Gate, followed by subsequent \$1 increases in 2022 and 2025, raising an estimated \$4.45 billion over the next decade to pay for traffic-busting highway and transit projects.

Several groups have lined up in opposition to the measure, including transit advocacy groups TransDef and the Bay Area Transportation Working Group, as well as the taxpayer associations in several counties. But none of the opposition efforts appear to have filed the paperwork to form a campaign to defeat the measure with the secretary of state’s office.

The Yes on Regional Measure 3 campaign has, as of Monday, raised over \$2.4 million. That includes the two largest contributions, \$350,000 from Facebook, which has a [history of supporting transit](#) in the Bay Area, and \$250,000 from Kaiser Permanente, the region’s largest employer. BART Board Director Nick Josefowitz, who is [running for a seat](#) on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, also kicked in \$150,000 of his own cash.

See who else made the top ten:

Dignity Health: **\$125,000** Salesforce.com, Inc.: **\$125,000** HNTB Corporation: **\$100,000** John Doerr (of Kleiner, Perkins, Caulfield & Byers): **\$100,000** Silicon Valley Community Foundation: **\$70,000** Google LLC: **\$50,000** John Edward (Jed) York & Affiliated Entities, Including the Forty Niners Football Company LLC: **\$50,000**

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## [Traffic or \\$9 tolls? Bay Area voters to decide which is worse \(East Bay Times\)](#)

Voters in all nine Bay Area counties next month will face a difficult choice: endure bridge tolls reaching as high as \$9 by 2025 or continue to suffer through seemingly constant traffic gridlock with few viable alternatives.

Regional Measure 3, which will be on the June 5 primary ballot, would [raise tolls](#) by \$3 over six years on every Bay Area bridge, except the Golden Gate, bringing in \$4.45 billion over the next decade.

Those extra funds will help pay for nearly [three dozen transportation projects](#), including more frequent ferry service, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, new BART cars to help the agency run longer trains, a Caltrain extension into downtown San Francisco, the four-station BART extension to San Jose, new toll lanes on major freeways, and interchange improvements, [among others](#).

[Supporters](#) say the money is needed to address traffic congestion that regularly turns Bay Area highways into parking lots. But opponents claim the proposed fixes won't make a dent in gridlock and that the toll unfairly burdens drivers with the cost of projects along bridge corridors they don't travel or transit services they don't take.

Traffic backs up on westbound Interstate 580 during the morning commute as seen from the El Charro Road overpass in Livermore, Calif., on Tuesday, April 24, 2018. (Jane Tyska/Bay Area News Group)

Suisun City resident Armando Rodriguez wakes up at 3:45 a.m. to make it to his job in Oakland by 6. Every five minutes he spends in bed is another 30 stuck in traffic, he said. So, he wakes up an hour earlier than he needs, just so he's not battling the crowds.

"If you don't do that, it's horrible," he said.

Despite the way traffic controls his schedule, Rodriguez is weary of promises that the approximately \$250 extra he'll be paying at the toll plaza the first year the measure takes effect — rising to \$750 by 2025 — will unclog the bottlenecks choking the region's major transportation arteries.

"They said that the last time they raised the tolls," he lamented.

It's a point not lost on Carl Guardino, the president and CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, a business advocacy organization that led the charge, along with another influential business group, the Bay Area Council, and urban planning think-tank, SPUR, to get the toll increase on the ballot. He's keenly aware the Bay Area's traffic problems are partly due to its success as an economic powerhouse and magnet for jobs.

The average Bay Area commuter now spends an average of 32 minutes commuting to work each way, up from 28 minutes in 2011, a 14 percent increase, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the region's transportation planning agency. People taking transit spend even more time on their commute, about 51 minutes.

"Only a recession," Guardino said, "will reduce traffic."

A pedestrian eyes SF Bay Ferry's new \$15 million addition to their fleet, the Hydrus, docked at Pier 9 in San Francisco, Calif., Monday, March 20, 2017. The 400-seat ferry, able to accommodate 50 bicycles, will begin service this week between the East Bay and San Francisco. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

But that doesn't mean Bay Area drivers and public transit riders didn't get some relief from Regional Measure 2, the last \$1 toll increase voters approved in 2004 to help pay for traffic solutions, said Randy Rentschler, a spokesman for the MTC, which was instrumental in crafting the projects that could be funded by the new toll hike.

Regional Measure 2 helped create the Caldecott Tunnel's fourth bore, pay for BART's extensions to Warm Springs and Antioch, widen State Route 4, build San Francisco's central subway, increase ferry service and subsidize buses. The first regional measure, approved in 1988, built the northbound Benicia-Martinez and westbound Carquinez bridges, replaced the Interstate 880 and State Route 92 interchange, rehabbed the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge and helped pay for the Dublin/Pleasanton and Pittsburg/Bay Point BART extensions, among other projects.

"Just imagine a Bay Area where voters hadn't approved those toll (increases) in the past," he said. "You wouldn't have Warm Springs, you wouldn't have a ferry program at all, you wouldn't have a widened San Mateo Bridge or I-880/SR 92 interchange. Just imagine what that would be like."

If voters approve Regional Measure 3, the first \$1 increase would take effect Jan. 1, 2019, followed by subsequent increases every three years. That would bring the fee to \$8 to cross every bridge spanning the bay — with the exception of the Golden Gate, which is not owned by the state, and the Bay Bridge, where tolls would rise to \$9 during commute times. The measure needs a simple majority to pass.

Joyce Mason and husband Jake Mason, of Pleasant Hill, from left, try out the seats on one of BART's new train cars at the Pleasant Hill station in Walnut Creek, Calif., on Saturday, Oct. 15,

2016. The agency is planning to replace its 669 train cars with 775 new ones and rolled out the first two, new 10-car trains earlier this year. (File photo by Anda Chu/Bay Area News Group)

That's a lot for opponents to stomach, even though they agree some solution to the traffic crisis is desperately needed. But they question whether the proposed projects will make a difference in the lives of commuters. Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, D-Walnut Creek, an outspoken critic, went so far as to call the toll increase "extortion" for politicians' pet projects.

"Our commuters have such tough commutes, they will pay for anything and trust it will somehow improve," he said.

Rather than trust in their hearts, voters should hold data in their hands, DeSaulnier said, pointing to Seattle and Los Angeles, two cities with lots of congestion and a traffic management plan based on commuters' travel patterns. The MTC supplied the legislature with an initial mix of projects, [largely based on Plan Bay Area 2040](#), a regional planning roadmap updated every five years. But, Rentschler said, in some cases, state senators and representatives added projects or changed the funding amounts of others.

Those projects should be focused on getting solo drivers out of their cars, said Gerald Cauthen, an Oakland resident and former project manager for Parsons Brinckerhoff, the transportation engineering firm responsible for building the original BART system. He blasted the inclusion of toll lanes, which allow solo drivers to use the carpool lane for a fee.

"I'm fully sympathetic to the fact that not everyone can use transit," Cauthen said, "and that's what makes Regional Measure 3 so disappointing."

Oakland resident Phillip Weaver sees both sides of the debate. He wishes he spent less time in traffic and that the alternative — sitting on a BART train — wasn't so uncomfortably crowded. But, it's also getting hard to afford living in the Bay Area, he said.

"It's good and it's bad," Weaver said. "Yeah, transportation is awesome and traffic is frustrating, so it's helping (solve that problem). But, inwardly, it's causing more anxiety and stress and pressure to make more money to be here."

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## [Battle over competing Evergreen senior homes ballot measures heats up](#) (Mercury News)

San Jose voters will get the final say on whether to allow developers to build housing on a vacant parcel of land.

Along the foothills east of downtown sits a quiet 200-acre plot that's become one of the most hotly contested pieces of land in San Jose and the center of a bitter high-stakes political battle set to culminate at the ballot box in June.

Measure B asks voters to let developers build a 910-home senior community on vacant land off Aborn Road currently zoned for industrial use, with a promised focus on veterans. But a dueling Measure C, if passed, would override that and make it harder for other developers to do the same in the future.

Ultimately, the competing ballot questions may just end up leaving San Jose voters confused.

Known as the Evergreen Senior Homes initiative, Measure B is bankrolled largely by Ponderosa Homes II, a Pleasanton-based company that wants to turn the South San Jose property currently owned by local billionaire Carl Berg into homes for seniors. The company says about 20 percent of the homes would be affordable and that the development would provide badly needed housing for aging veterans.

But Mayor Sam Liccardo, the San Jose City Council, both the local Democratic and Republican parties, and a bevy of environmental and veterans groups strongly oppose the idea, calling it a misleading attempt to circumvent the system.

The Measure B camp, however, has launched an expensive campaign to push the development, spending significantly more than its opponents. According to campaign financial disclosures, the Yes on B, No on C campaign raised \$1.6 million during the first four months of 2018. By contrast, the No on B, Yes on C campaign raised less than \$80,000 during that same period.

The Evergreen Senior Homes campaign pushed to put Measure B on the ballot, said Jeff Schroeder, a senior vice president with Ponderosa, because the city is failing to meet its housing goals and the city's current policy makes it difficult for developers to build homes. Even if the measure passes, he continued, the plans would still have to wind through what could be a two-year process with the city before construction.

"We still have a ton of risk and process with the city," said Schroeder, who is listed as head of the group San Jose Residents for Evergreen Senior Homes but actually lives in Danville.

According to the city attorney's impartial analysis, [Measure B](#) would create a "senior housing overlay" that would allow housing for people 55 or older on so-called underutilized employment land in the city, meaning land set aside for non-residential uses such as office space or retail. City attorney Rick Doyle's analysis found the measure could ultimately affect some 3,247 acres of vacant employment land currently expected to support nearly 130,000 jobs.

The measure, Liccardo said recently, amounts to "billionaires building houses for millionaires" on land that could be used to hold a business that could help bring badly needed jobs to San

Jose. Right now, San Jose has more housing than jobs and the mayor has said he wants to reduce that imbalance.

Houses in the Evergreen area, a quiet neighborhood lined with manicured streets and well-kept homes, regularly sell for well over a million dollars, pricing most veterans out of the market, said Tito Cortez, a Vietnam War veteran. Cortez, who founded the San Jose-based Veterans Supportive Services Agency and opposes Measure B, said the average annual income of his 1,600 or so clients is about \$59,000.

Besides, Liccardo said, the fine print shows that the measure doesn't actually require that a single house go to a veteran.

In other words, opponents argue, the glossy Measure B brochures featuring solemnly saluting veterans and the phrase "honoring their service" look nice, but aren't realistic.

"We are being confused by this measure," Cortez said. "Measure B is deceptive. It's using me. How dare you!"

Liccardo is pushing a counter proposal, [Measure C](#). According to the city attorney, it would limit the authority of the council to allow housing on land in a handful of areas, including Evergreen and Coyote, currently slated for business. To approve such a shift, Measure C would require that the city put together a study that looks at the fiscal, employment and housing impacts of potential development in those neighborhoods. It also would require that half of the units for sale go to low- and moderate-income families.

But some veterans think that would stymie efforts to increase housing in a city where rents and mortgages have skyrocketed to astronomical figures in recent years.

Ernest Kirk, who served in the U.S. Army for three and a half years from 1959-1962, supports the proposed development and opposes the mayor's idea. Even if he can't swing it, Kirk said, maybe people moving into the new houses would vacate more affordable housing, opening the door to homeownership for others.

"A lot of people are being forced right out of this area," said Kirk, who has lived in a rent-controlled studio in west San Jose for the last decade. "The average person just can't afford to live here anymore."

Megan Medeiros, executive director of the Palo Alto-based Committee for Green Foothills, is also nervous that if Measure B is successful, it will allow developers to skirt environmental review and contribute to the suburban sprawl that has characterized much of San Jose's history that she and others would like to halt. If the measure passes, the developers behind Measure B would be exempt from paying traffic impact fees that are required under the current system.

"These developers should play by the rules everybody else has to follow," Medeiros said.

Yet, Schroeder pointed out, the current zoning doesn't call for the land to remain open in perpetuity. If it were used for industrial or commercial purposes, he said, there would likely be construction and traffic and sprawl in an already largely residential area. Seniors on the other hand, he said, typically drive less than their younger peers.

The Evergreen senior homes development, he said, "completes and nestles in and fills out a neighborhood."

There's no reliable polling on which way voters will swing in June. Ultimately, San Jose residents will have to decide whether, as Kirk believes, making it easier for developers to build on previously off-limits land in San Jose is a good thing, or, as the mayor believes, it sets the city up to be taken advantage of.

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### [How the ballotbox battle over San Jose's Measure B could decide the future of land use in the city \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)

You can't mention living in Silicon Valley without somebody bringing up the housing crisis — the [million-dollar burned-down shack](#), down payments that would buy a nice 3 BR, 2 BA on a quarter acre in most parts of the country, adult roommates huddling together to pay the rent or mortgage, and hundreds of thousands of paper millionaires who can't afford the price of homes they've owned for 15 or 20 years.

Demand is enormous; supply is negligible. And nowhere in the Valley are the crisis and possible solutions fretted over more frequently than by San Jose's City Council, which [has tinkered with the local rental ordinance three times](#) in the last 13 months, and by its mayor, who [wants to build 25,000 new housing units](#) by 2022.

Which is why a senior executive at one of the region's largest housing developers says he's bumfuzzled that Mayor [Sam Liccardo](#) and the council are unanimously opposed to his company's proposal on the June 5 ballot to build more than 900 single-family homes for seniors on vacant land in the city's Evergreen area.

**GROUND ZERO OF THE DISPUTE:** The 200 acres ostensibly at the focus of the Evergreen Senior Homes Initiative — Measure B on the ballot — lies off the eastern edge of residentially developed San Jose. It is zoned for light industrial uses such as an office park. Before you, in this view, the... [more](#)

"We're in a housing crisis," said [Jeffrey Schroeder](#), senior vice president of Pleasanton-based Ponderosa Homes. "God forbid you propose to build any."

Yet the response from politicians blue and red, nonprofit housing organizations and advocacy groups that normally support housing proposals is that Measure B, the Evergreen Senior Homes

Initiative, isn't really about housing. They say it's an end run around San Jose's general plan, adopted in 2011 after hundreds of hours of meetings and hearings over three years involving 5,000 participants.

"We shouldn't empower those who have resources to create their own set of rules while the rest of us follow the set of rules that have been approved by our democratically elected representatives," Liccardo said.

The general plan, which is 508 pages long, doesn't favor the suburban sprawl that's profitable for developers but which the city claims is a drag on its fiscal health.

The ballot initiative would enact a 361-page ordinance, written by its proponents that would amend the general plan in 60 places, according to a city analysis. But overall, it would do two things:

1. Prioritize senior housing over other types of housing by creating an "overlay" in city zoning. The overlay would allow some land set aside for future employment uses to also be used for housing for those 55 and older with a caveat: A specific plan for such a development would have to win City Council approval.
2. Create and enact such a specific plan — without City Council approval — just for the Evergreen development on a 200-acre industrial-zoned site in East San Jose. Billionaire Carl Berg, frustrated by city councils for years in his attempts to develop the tract, wants to sell it to Ponderosa and partner [Brookfield Bay Area Holdings](#). Their specific plan could only be amended by public vote, not City Council, for 10 years from the date of enactment. If any part of the development were challenged in court, the 10-year time clock would be halted until the legal process is concluded.



The overlay would potentially apply to 3,427 acres in the city. If it were all used for senior housing — a big "if" — the city estimates it would displace 129,500 jobs the general plan forecasts would be created on those properties by 2040. That would turn what is supposed to be \$89.5 million in net annual revenue to the city into a \$17.1 million annual deficit.

The fact the initiative only creates a specific plan for a fraction of the total industrial land theoretically available for housing means Evergreen spokesman [Adam Alberti](#) can truthfully say,

“Nothing in the overlay impacts traffic mitigations, sewer mitigations, anything else.” But the specific plan for Evergreen does contain those kinds of exemptions.

Unable to block an initiative placed on the ballot by a petition drive, Liccardo hurriedly drafted a counter — Measure C — unanimously passed by the City Council. It's designed to blunt the impact of the Evergreen specific plan by restoring many of the fees waived by the developer proposal, raises the percentage of affordable homes to 50 percent and requires senior developments to provide access to senior-oriented services such as health and transportation.

<b>MEASURE B</b> (developer-sponsored initiative)	<b>VS.</b>	<b>MEASURE C</b> (city-sponsored initiative)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20% of senior housing developments must be affordable</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 50% of senior housing must be affordable</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Waives \$14,800 / unit mitigation fee for Evergreen Sr. Homes</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preserves traffic mitigation fees for residential development</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No analysis of fiscal impact to city services necessary</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires analysis of fiscal impact to city</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No special services for seniors required</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires senior developments to provide certain special services or transportation to them</li></ul>

The League of Women Voters came out against Measure B after a six-month study because it overturns a tediouslycrafted city policy in one quick vote after what it considers a campaign of “deceptive advertising.” San Jose/Santa Clara chapter president [Mary Collins](#) said land-use advocates are increasingly turning to ballot initiatives to skirt city rules they don’t like.

Santa Clara County Republican chairman [Bob Nuñez](#), a Milpitas city councilmember, compared Measure B to State Sen. [Scott Wiener](#)’s recently defeated SB 827 in the California Legislature for how it takes local land-use authority away from local elected officials.

“What I’ve heard is that there is someone looking at properties in Milpitas that very well could go that same way,” he said.

But why shouldn’t developers turn to initiatives to get what they want if they feel they can’t win in City Hall?

Liccardo said he wouldn’t support the Evergreen plan if Ponderosa and Brookfield filed for a zoning change, and he believes few voters have the time to consider all the ramifications of a 300-page ordinance.



Usually pro-developer Councilmember [Johnny Khamis](#) estimated a rezoning request would have a 50-50 chance, but said Evergreen has serious flaws: "If they had said that they would've paid the traffic mitigation fee, for example, and included low-income housing on the site (Evergreen's specific plan calls for below-market rate housing, but doesn't guarantee it will be built), I probably would have voted in favor of it," Khamis said.

In the end, though, it's not clear that Evergreen would help solve the city's housing crisis, which is what voters say they're worried about.

San Jose's annual housing report, released in March, said 3,100 housing units came online last year, just 78 percent of what the city needs on an annual basis. One Evergreen-sized development is nearly a third of that total.

Broken down by income, however, the new housing more than [met the housing need for those who can afford market-rate homes](#) at 162 percent. The new housing met only 11.4 percent of the need in extremely low, very low and low-income groups.

Seniors able to afford Evergreen's \$1 million-plus market-rate homes already have housing here: "Ninety percent — I would venture to say 100 percent — of the people that move into this project would be San Jose residents or from very close by," Ponderosa's Schroeder said.

"Sure, luxury housing," said Collins, local head of the League of Women Voters. "If people can afford it, they want it. I understand that. But that isn't our problem. Our problem is homes for teachers, homes for the guy who washes my car at the car wash."

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### [Message to the tech industry: High-speed rail is going to ask you for money](#) (Silicon Valley Business Journal)

Minutes after the California High-Speed Rail Authority's new business plan was unanimously adopted Tuesday, the chair of the board that approved the project made it clear that he will be coming to Silicon Valley's tech community for money.

The valley's transportation and housing problems depend partly on fast trains for solutions, board chair Dan Richard said, and high-speed rail needs more money to get from here to Los Angeles.

"You've got business leaders, you've got civic leaders like [San Jose Mayor [Sam Liccardo](#)] and others, like us, who are all saying there needs to be a broader conversation," Richard said. "We need to collaborate on this to see how we can move this forward."

He said the collaboration is about more than just asking for checks, but when pressed: "I have a fiduciary duty to the citizens to do that."

Voters first approved \$9.985 billion in bonds for the project in 2008. But Prop 1A also made clear that building the railroad would require the board to find more money at the local, state and federal levels for the full system. The state ponied up additional money with a 25 percent revenue cut from its cap-and-trade law that forces industry to pay to emit greenhouse gases.

But Richard said that since two federal grants worth \$3.5 billion early in the Obama Administration, Washington has failed to "continue its historic role in investing in the nation's infrastructure. That promise has not been realized, and it needs to be."

Meanwhile, the project's costs have escalated, most recently with revelations in January that Central Valley construction is [running 36 percent over budget because construction risks](#) — including delays in land acquisition, intrusion barriers to separate it from freight railroads and utility relocation — were underestimated in the previous business plan adopted in 2016.

Costs could also rise in the plan adopted Tuesday, which proposes construction of two segments — the one being built in the Central Valley and the other from San Francisco to Gilroy — which are to be linked after more money is found. Linking those segments is important to widen Silicon Valley's commuting reach and for economic revitalization of the Central Valley, according to Richard.

One cost driver likely will be the alignment through San Jose, which Liccardo told the board Tuesday needs to be more in conformity with what the business community and residents want.

"We are deserving of special and unique attention," Liccardo told the board, citing Diridon Station's future as the point on the high-speed rail system with the highest mass transit connectivity.

That status has already caused the project to back off its preference for a viaduct to elevate its trains above ground level through the station and, depending on the findings of city-hired consultants, possibly revisiting the idea of an underground station.

Richard said he favors a formal agreement with the city, [Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority](#) and Caltrain to hash out station issues but that "you guys need to be considerate of our federal grant deadlines and our environmental process."

High-speed rail has said previously that it's nearing an agreement with the Federal Railroad Administration to speed up environmental approvals, reducing costs, by letting the state do the work, which is already done on highway projects.

New high-speed rail CEO Brian Kelly, who was hired the same day the cost overruns were announced, said money on hand is sufficient to build those segments. But whether high-speed train service can be launched on either segment won't be known for another year when further analysis is completed to determine if they can meet Prop 1A's legal standard for operating without subsidy.

The business plan says the cap-and-trade market needs to be extended through 2050 with other guarantees so that the revenue can be borrowed against rather than spent on a pay-as-you-go basis.

But Kelly said that legislative ask won't be made for two more years, after the next required business plan in 2020.

"Here's how I see the world," he said. "We, as an organization, have to show delivery — prove that we can perform. We are going through an organizational realignment right now. We are focusing our efforts on getting all of our agreements with the federal government done on time. I think as we start to do that, show some momentum and show that we can perform, then let's have a conversation with folks about stabilizing or getting more money."

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