

**From:** Board Secretary  
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#### [Roadshow: Lane-splitting motorcyclist says he's sorry](#)

**Gary Richards**

**San Jose Mercury News**

**Q:** I know many car drivers hate many "lane splitting" motorcyclists as do I when they do it at 60 mph or faster. For the most part, they get bashed in your column.

So, I thought I would share an incident that occurred to me and my wife in our SUV one day. We were in the carpool lane on the on-ramp to Highway 101 at Trimble Road when I saw a motorcycle in my side view mirror coming up the ramp lane splitting. I had just installed new wider tow mirrors on my vehicle. When I saw him, I started to say to my wife, "Uh oh, better not hit my new mirrors" but before I could finish saying it, "bam!" he hit the mirror and continued on with more lane splitting and onto the freeway.

I gave him a blast of my horn as I felt I had no other recourse.

He had pulled off to the side of the freeway. Thinking he wanted a piece of me for honking or maybe his bike was damaged, I also pulled over. He walked up to our passenger side window and asked us if it was our mirror he had hit. We told him yes, it was.

He then asked if it was damaged and apologized for hitting it. We told him there was no damage and asked if his bike was damaged or if he was injured. He said there was no damage and he was not injured and apologized again. At that, we both continued on our way.

We know not all motorcyclists are of the bad ilk. It was nice to “run into” one that was good. I felt he should be acknowledged.

Dan Hendrix, San Jose

A: I’m glad you have done so, but I would not have honked at him or stopped on the shoulder. Too risky. Pulling off at the next exit would have been better.

**Q:** Any idea when Lawrence Expressway will be repaved? Lawrence was repaved from Homestead Road to Highway 101 over a year ago. Work was southbound from Homestead Road to Quito Road was supposed to be done this summer.

It’s now August and there’s no evidence it will be happening anytime soon. What gives?

Geralyn Lindh, San Jose

A: Work will resume in earnest in another few days and should be done by Christmas.

**Q:** When is the projected completion of the San Tomas Expressway widening between El Camino Real and Homestead Road?

Gary Amstutz

A: Southbound should be done late this year; northbound in April.

**Q:** I’m waiting to see how driverless cars will handle a Costco parking lot during the weekend.  
R.O., San Jose

A: Boy, that will be the test of all tests.

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## [Roadshow: Summer traffic takes no break](#)

**Gary Richards**

**San Jose Mercury News**

**Q:** I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Grumpy, who said that summer traffic does not seem even the slightest bit lighter this year. Interstate 280 is a mess, as always — even at 10 a.m. during the summer months.

Debbie Rice, Campbell

A: I-280 now ranks as the third most congested freeway in the Bay Area.

**Q:** Do I agree with Mr. Grumpy that summer traffic isn’t any lighter? You bet. I’ve been writing you about that at least since 2014.

Gary Brainin, San Jose

**A:** That's a long time. Highway traffic counts are coming in a few months, but I checked traffic data on the six state-run bridges in the Bay Area. In 2014, 23.7 million passed through the toll plazas in June and July. This year, more nearly 25 million.

So yes, summer traffic is getting worse.

**Q:** In the past few years, I've noticed that we no longer get a traffic break during summer. I have a theory that it is due to summer internships at Silicon Valley companies like Google, Apple, and the local law firms, especially since the population of "clueless" drivers not knowing traffic patterns and routes appears to increase at the same time.

Sharon Barbour, San Jose

**A:** Sorry, I don't buy that. But ...

**Q:** Traffic has not eased up this summer like it usually does. Two years ago my commute was about 15 minutes less each way. I figured traffic would not lighten up until late June until schools were out and people truly started vacationing.

But here it is August and it's still as bad as it was in March, April and May.

R.M.

**A:** And here is another warm weather issue.

**Q:** As I bicycle about on these warm days of summer I notice a fair number of front-seat passengers semi-reclined with their legs propped up on the dash. If the vehicle was in an accident and the front airbag deployed the force would likely shatter the passenger's pelvis and perhaps even be fatal.

Automobiles have become increasingly safer but riding with your feet up on the dash is not safe in any way, shape or form. You're in a vehicle, moving forward with a great deal of kinetic energy. Be careful.

James Thurber, Mountain View

**A:** Yes, don't do this or ...

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**Q:** What do you do when you're driving along Highway 101 at 60 miles an hour and you see this guy in the passenger seat, one leg out the window, intently texting on his cell? I did get his license but not sure if I should just get out of his way or report. What do you think?

Laurie Val, Santa Clara

A: Call 911, then get out of his way.

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## [Bike-share program resented as sign of gentrification](#)

**Otis R. Taylor Jr.**

**San Francisco Chronicle**

Not everyone likes the expanded Bay Area bike-share program.

The bikes are designed for short trips within a city. Users can unlock a bike from one docking station and return it to another — a single trip of up to 30 minutes costs \$3 and a one-day pass is \$15. Or, they can pay \$149 for a year's worth of rides.

“What we're really trying to do is we're trying to provide an affordable transportation to people that runs 24 hours a day, that's reliable and safe,” said Dani Simons, a spokeswoman for Motivate, the company operating the Bay Area bike share.

But, at a time when the communities are rapidly changing, some people see the bike docks as a symbol of what's stripping the cultural fabric of neighborhoods: gentrification. They resent the shiny new urban cruisers known as Ford GoBikes — branded after the primary sponsor, Ford Motor Co. — as something meant for the new residents.

Since the bikes were introduced two months ago, vandals have made their mark.

In Oakland, a Ford GoBike was tossed into Lake Merritt. In another incident, the tires of bikes docked at Telegraph Avenue and 58th Street were slashed.

At Dolores Park in San Francisco, tires were gashed. Elsewhere in the Mission, a bike was hung in a tree, a symbolic lynching.

Slitting tires and disfiguring bikes won't accomplish anything. For starters, Ford GoBikes are replaced almost as fast as NASCAR pit crews change tires. Destroying more property won't stop anyone from pedaling away with the Bay Area's future.

If you want to change the course of what's happening, go to the voting booth and pick new leaders.

Most of the vandalism has occurred in San Francisco, according to Simons.

Get this: The vandalism was anticipated.

“Bike share becomes something that people can point at,” Simons told me. “You can't point at a rent check that's rising.”

What is happening in the Bay Area happened when New York and Portland, Ore., rolled out their bike share programs. In both cities, the frequent vandalism eventually stopped.

“For the first couple of weeks, we definitely saw a lot of people doing mischievous things with the bikes and the stations,” Simons said.

But this is the Bay Area, where gentrification is vehemently opposed. Because here the movement of middle-class people into low-income neighborhoods has displaced longtime residents, leaving many with nowhere to move to but the sidewalks and streets.

Just know, more bikes are coming.

There are currently 175 total Ford GoBike stations in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, Emeryville and San Jose, and there are about 2,000 bikes in circulation.

There are more than 700 bikes available at 64 stations in Oakland, Berkeley and Emeryville. By the fall, the numbers will rise to 1,500 bikes at 128 stations.

For Joel Espino, the environmental equity legal counsel of Greenlining Institute, a social justice organization that fights discriminatory redlining practices and advocates equal opportunity, the issue to debate isn't whether bike-share programs should be introduced to communities.

What should be questioned is who are the winners and losers when investments roll through our cities.

If history is an indicator, the low-income residents in the Bay Area aren't going to be on the winning side on this one.

“A lot of times when we see these flash points between community and public and private sector actions, there are greater legacy problems at play,” Espino told me. “Often what's at the core of community dissent is a desire for justice and accountability for those long histories of structural racism and segregation.”

Some people have pointed out that there are no bike pods in deep East Oakland, an economically depressed part of the city that's in need of attention.

Katie Styer, a cyclist who hosts “Oakland Bikes!,” a radio program about topics relevant to the Bay Area cycling community on KGPC (96.9 FM), said that area cyclists don't see bike share as accounting for everyone.

“It meets a need, and it's really fantastic, but there are so many other people who can't even access that,” she said.

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## [Proposed Dumbarton rail bridge could be first transbay railroad crossing since BART tube](#)

**Erin Baldassari**

**San Jose Mercury News**

SAN CARLOS — For roughly two decades, transportation planners and local leaders have advocated for a rail crossing along the Dumbarton Bridge corridor that would connect Caltrain in the South Bay to the Altamont Corridor Express and Capitol Corridor in the East Bay.

And for roughly two decades, the idea has gathered dust.

But a Facebook-funded and SamTrans-led study set to be released Tuesday is again floating the idea of a southern rail crossing, and local leaders are hopeful that this time, the project's fate will be different.

That's because over the past decade or so jobs have become increasingly concentrated in the mid-Peninsula with housing increasingly moving further east from the Tri-Valley into places like Tracy, Stockton and Modesto, said Michael Cunningham, a public policy expert for the Bay Area Council.

“So, the result is, we have more and more people coming from further and further away, but we don't have the transportation infrastructure and services to support that,” he said.

And, traffic along that corridor, says San Mateo County Supervisor Warren Slocum, “is a nightmare.”

SamTrans, the bus service operator in San Mateo County, owns the Dumbarton rail bridge, which runs parallel to and lies just south of Highway 84. Built in 1910, the single-track rail bridge was actually the first to span the San Francisco Bay and was used mostly for freight, with limited passenger service, said Melissa Reggiardo, a principal planner for SamTrans. It fell out of service and was then damaged in a fire in the 1990s, she said.

But interest in rehabbing the bridge persisted, and an environmental analysis looking at restoring rail service was partially completed in 2011, she said. But, with the economy still reeling from the Great Recession, the idea was shelved.

Then, Facebook expanded its campus abutting the bridge, and a conversation in 2015 ultimately led to the company contributing \$1.2 million to fund the new study, said Dan Lieberman, a spokesman for SamTrans. Representatives from Facebook declined to comment on recommendations from the study.

Ultimately, Reggiardo said the transit agency envisions a multimodal corridor for the Dumbarton that includes not only a new railroad crossing but also improvements to the highway bridge. If approved, interchange improvement and expanded express bus service, along with two new express routes would come first, she said, with the latter connecting Union City with Menlo Park, Redwood City, Mountain View and Sunnyvale by 2020. HOV lanes could follow as an intermediary step to speed up bus service, she said.

Ultimately, the agency would embark on rebuilding the railroad connection along the Dumbarton rail bridge that would be phased in over time, first connecting Newark to Redwood City with diesel trains, followed by an extension to Union City by around 2030, with a combined estimated cost of nearly \$1.3 billion.

The rail bridge would be electrified to allow Caltrain's new electric trains to cross the bridge and connect to the Altamont Corridor Express and Capitol Corridor by 2035, for an additional \$327 million.

More details will be available when the study is published on Tuesday, but both Cunningham and Slocum said the project is an ideal one to serve as a test case for a private investment, making it one of roughly a dozen transportation projects in the state to take that approach.

Even without private investment, Slocum said funds from the recently-approved gas tax hike and transportation funding bill, SB 1, and the proposed \$3 bridge toll hike, along with a proposed transportation sales tax ballot initiative in San Mateo County, could be combined to fund the project.

"The Dumbarton rail bridge is the missing link in our mega-regional transportation network," Slocum said. "And this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity."

Learn more

SamTrans is soliciting comments from the public about the proposed new services before the transit agency's governing board accepts the final report and its recommendations later this year. The meeting times and locations are as follows:

Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., Union City Library, 34007 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City.

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., East Palo Alto Library/City Hall Community Room, 2415 University Avenue, East Palo Alto.

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## [SamTrans to Unveil New Recommendations to Ease Traffic Congestion](#)

**Kris Sanchez**

**NBC**

SamTrans on Tuesday is expected to reveal its year-long study looking into the possibility of bringing back the Dumbarton rail line.

The rail system shuttered in the 1990s, but surges in population, public funding and private investment have reignited discussions.

The rail line could run parallel to the Dumbarton Bridge, linking Alameda County to San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

When it comes to funding the project, private investment could supplement funding from gas taxes and proposed bridge toll hikes.

The public can take a peek at the study beginning Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Union City Library. The study will also be on display Wednesday at the same time at East Palo Alto City Hall. On Thursday, folks can check out the study at San Mateo City Hall beginning at 7 p.m.

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## [Mission advocates resist bikeshare push, point to existing community programs](#)

**Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez**

**SF Examiner**

The bike backlash was fierce and unexpected.

On the surface, Ford GoBike is seemingly everything the staunchly liberal Mission District would value: an affordable bikeshare program targeted at reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion by offering cheap, rentable bikes.

After the company's most recent expansion, however, groups representing Latino neighbors in the Mission quickly pushed back, citing gentrification fears.

"The way we shop, the way we travel, it's a very different culture," Erick Arguello, co-chair of the Calle 24 Historical District on 24th Street in the Mission, previously told the San Francisco Examiner. "We did say, 'No, we don't want bikeshare on 24th Street in the Latino Cultural District.'"

In June, Ford GoBike launched its newest expansion: 3,500 blue bikes arrived to be rented, or "shared," by smartphone app. New stations popped up throughout the Mission. After Arguello asked them to stay off 24th Street, other Mission advocates asked Ford GoBike for a moratorium on Mission stations altogether.

In July, Ford GoBike's bicycles in the Mission saw their tires punctured, and the kiosks were vandalized as recently as Friday.

Now, perhaps controversially, Arguello's claim that the bikes were not for the Mission has sparked a soul-searching question for the community: Do brown people ride bikes?

Well, yes, of course they do, community members answered.

But it's the nuance of how Ford GoBike connects with the Mission's Latino community — who it talks to and how — that may have sparked such sharp rebuke, community members told the San Francisco Examiner. For them, the message that Ford GoBike sends amid The City's ever-changing, tech-friendly times overshadows the possible utility of bikesharing.

"People are weary," said Oscar Grande, lead community organizer with local advocacy group PODER. "We've been clamoring for infrastructure for decades."

Grande, a San Francisco native who went to Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory High School, said it was not lost on the community that only after waves of gentrification drummed thousands of Latinos out of their neighborhoods, and white affluent groups flooded in, were major transportation infrastructure changes finally introduced.

In that context, Grande said, it's understandable why some groups would sharply say, "No, no, no. I don't want none of it."

"It feels very top-down, like we're being planned on," Grande said.

### WHY THE BACKLASH?

Though there is outcry from Mission advocates, critics have pointed out they do not speak for the entire Mission.

Jefferson McCarley, owner of Mission Bikes, respects those groups but said bikeshare would help the entire neighborhood.

"Maybe the view is this only benefits the affluent, white, male-dominated tech community, and they're the only ones who would use the bikes," McCarley said. But if that's the case, that means fewer "affluent, white, males" would be driving cars on the road.

Jason Henderson, a San Francisco State University professor who studies urban mobility, said he wasn't surprised that Ford GoBike's rollout prompted backlash.

"There's a couple of different layers going on here," Henderson said. "I can see how it would look like corporate privatization arrogance," and perhaps reopen old wounds from the 'Google Bus' battle, referring to raging protests against corporate commuter shuttles for tech companies in the Mission around 2013.

The Ford logo emblazoned across the bikes and fears that Ford is tracking data of bike users — who, in the Mission, may be undocumented immigrants — all coalesced to draw critique in the neighborhood, he said.

Henderson feels bikeshare platforms should be government-run, perhaps by Muni.

"At face value, it's a great concept," Henderson said. "But I think the way The City is deploying it — we're seeing with the pushback — is clumsy."

Dani Simons, a spokesperson for Motivate, which administers Ford GoBike, said the company's aim was to provide affordable transportation to people in the Mission.

"We respect Calle 24 very much, even though we don't agree on everything," Simons said. "We want to work with them to make sure we're aligned fighting displacement and gentrification."

Though Ford GoBike and Motivate have experienced growing pains in the Mission, there's already a road map for community-inclusive bike programs.

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Through PODER, Grande runs Bicis Del Pueblo, or “Bikes for the People,” which answers bicycle-related needs the community asked for itself.

On a recent foggy Saturday morning in the Excelsior, Evelyn Ruiz, 32, walked into San Francisco Community School’s yard with her son Pablo, 4, who confidently rode a Spider-Man-themed bike, training wheels and all.

Ruiz emigrated from Guatemala when she was a teenager and attended Newcomer High School. She quickly joined PODER. But contrary to the popular saying, Ruiz had, indeed, forgotten how to ride.

“I had heard about [Bicis Del Pueblo] a long time ago actually, when it started,” she said, noting her initial reaction to the program. “That’s for kids, that’s for teenagers.”

Flash-forward to this summer: Ruiz brought her 17-year-old brother, Kevin, to Bicis Del Pueblo to learn to ride — and Oscar Grande finally roped her in, too.

Ruiz said her young son would stand by watching and shout, “Yeah, Mama, you’ve got it!” And Ruiz is not alone.

National studies, including one by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, found most cyclists aren’t the “white urban hipster” many assume ride bikes, but are often people of color and also low-income.

Though it’s only existed for three years, Bicis Del Pueblo has attracted youth and families from the Excelsior, Mission and Bayview districts and primarily from communities of color. The program’s seeds were planted by PODER youth, who visited the Dakota Access Pipeline to meet Native American communities. The Latino members immediately felt kinship, but also guilt because their use of fossil fuels exacerbated the native community’s woes.

Grande said that sparked them to think, “We’ve gotta start riding bikes.” Bicis was born. Community members can attend workshops held every second and fourth Saturday of the month and learn how to fix bikes and ride. During any given workshop, at least a dozen kids, teens and adults can be seen riding up and down the concrete at the school.

Ruiz’s family attending the program together is not necessarily unique, Grande said. “It’s multi-generational,” he said. “There’s many, mainly women-led households who come into our space.”

The program also gives away bikes, a big lure for its members.

Between the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition’s Bike Builds program and Bicis Del Pueblo, the two partners distributed 460 bikes to low-income San Franciscans in 2016. Those bikes are donated from the lost-and-found of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and bikes recovered by the San Francisco Police Department, the result of a 2014 ordinance by former Supervisor John Avalos to give back lost bikes to the community.

Bikes are given out once someone has completed four workshops — that’s how Kevin Ruiz landed his new white bike. The program also taught Kevin to ride on San Francisco’s treacherous streets.

Ford GoBike acknowledges low-income communities, too, with its \$5 annual cash payment membership called Bikeshare for All. Advocates are concerned that after the first year, that price balloons to \$60 annually.

For Kevin, however, Bicis Del Pueblo wasn't just about obtaining a free bike. He prized the people he met there. The program links with PODER's Common Roots program, where teenagers learn about environmental and social justice.

"It taught me to be more open with people," the soon-to-be high school senior said, taking a moment to look at the ground. "I tend to be shy."

Though the program has given many bikes to the community, Grande said, Bicis Del Pueblo members may benefit from bikeshare in the Mission.

When he tries to give bikes to teenagers like Kevin, they sometimes refuse. "They say they can't fit a bike in their apartment," Grande said, and claim someone would likely steal it. "How many kids at this school could benefit from a Ford GoBike?" he said, sweeping his hands outward toward the school building.

Whether the community will benefit from those bikes depends on negotiations taking place even now, between representatives from Ford GoBike and Mission advocates at City Hall. That outcome may depend on each side's ability to reach across a wide cultural gap. Perhaps they'll breach that gap by bike.

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## [BART: \\$20 million for expanded parking at Dublin station hinges on Assemblywoman Catharine Baker](#)

**Erin Baldassari**

**San Jose Mercury News**

DUBLIN — Assemblywoman Catharine Baker unexpectedly secured a \$20 million commitment from the governor's office to pay for expanded parking at BART's Dublin/Pleasanton station, which would fulfill a long-held promise by the transit agency to build a second garage there.

The only problem? BART's governing board doesn't want the garage. And that has the \$20 million in limbo while Baker decides how to spend it.

Two people with knowledge of the deal claimed the money came in exchange for her vote on Gov. Jerry Brown's cap-and-trade bill, but Baker, R-San Ramon, said it was just "an informal" verbal agreement with his administration because the garage would encourage people to take transit.

BART promised to build the 655-space parking garage back in 2002, when Dublin's City Council approved a massive mixed-use development adjacent to the station. It was to be one of two garages there, with the first — a 1,528-space structure — completed in 2007. BART

operates a total of 2,927 parking spots at Dublin/Pleasanton, all of which routinely fill up by 7:45 a.m., BART staff said in a report.

But the second project has long been delayed, mostly because of a lack of funds, said BART Director John McPartland, who represents the Dublin/Pleasanton district.

So, when staff came to the board in February with a \$37.1 million proposal for a garage at the Dublin/Pleasanton station, many in the community rejoiced. But BART's board balked at the price tag and unanimously sent staff back to the drawing board to come up with a cheaper scheme.

A revised plan presented in July cost roughly half as much — about \$17.2 million — and would be faster to implement. It also would deliver the same amount of spaces through a combination of re-striping an existing surface parking lot, leasing spaces from nearby businesses with surplus parking and installing automated parking structures.

BART's board was split on the new plan, voting 5-4 to adopt the so-called "hybrid" model, which also includes proposals to enhance the station's connections to the Iron Horse Trail, install new bike parking and work with the local bus operator to improve transit to and from the station. The plan is more flexible, and would use attendant-assisted parking with automated parking structure modules added over time to test their effectiveness, staff said.

But Baker isn't buying it. She doesn't trust the automated parking structures, which are used worldwide but she said have yet to be tested at a transit station, where hundreds of people get off the train at the same time during rush-hour commutes.

"Look at how unreliable BART's escalators and elevators are," Baker said. "BART wants to promise that not only will that technology be reliable, but it will get them their car in 90 seconds. ... I just don't believe that plays out in reality."

So where does that leave the \$20 million? Baker says the money will be used to build some parking structure near the BART station, whether it's on BART property or not.

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## [Roadshow: \\$541 for a right on red? How can I see the video?](#)

**Gary Richards**

**San Jose Mercury News**

Q: We feel forgotten. When the Mercury News took over the San Mateo Times many of us who still subscribe feel excluded. We enjoy your column but it is always about issues in Santa Clara County. Any chance of including us? Denise Klick, San Bruno

A: You betcha, but hey I'm the guy who discovered the Father Serra rest stop savior, the likely toll lanes on Highway 101 south of San Francisco International Airport, the peeling paint on the Golden Gate Bridge and filled the potholes on 101 near South San Francisco. Stick with me, please.

Q: When we stopped at the Interstate 280 rest stop above Crystal Springs Reservoir the other day, we were shocked to find that the path leading up to the giant Father Serra statue was blocked with a locked gate. When did that happen? Is the closure going to be permanent?

Chuck Flagg, Morgan Hill

A: The gate is open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., then closed after those hours in order to discourage illegal activity.

Q: I received a notice in the mail that I had been caught on camera running a red light about 2 miles from my house in San Mateo. The amount of the ticket is a staggering \$541.

I was making a right-hand turn at the light and I guess I didn't fully stop which they caught on camera. This seems less serious than running a red light at a large intersection, but nevertheless I rolled through the right turn knowing that there wasn't any traffic coming my way.

Is there anything I can do to contest this, or get it reduced. Seems very expensive.

Mike Norwood, San Mateo

A: Indeed it is. Call 650-363-4300 to see the video and learn what your options are. Some courts will allow drivers to do volunteer work to reduce the fine.

Q: The 19th Avenue to Golden Gate Bridge route in San Francisco is all sand dunes. Why can't they tunnel under 19th to create a freeway? It would take a ton of traffic off of 19th and tunneling through sand using today's equipment would be really straight forward.

Patrick Lamey, Los Gatos

A: This idea and others were debated in the 1940s-1960s when the state and city were more interested in building out a freeway network through the city. When the freeway revolt (remember the Embarcadero) happened all these plans were abandoned, including some of the Highway 1 connections.

The assumption that any tunneling is easy in a built up area overestimates the funds available to do this (billions). Right now San Francisco is looking at tunneling only as part of the transit improvements in the Park Merced area, and even these are challenging even though they cover a much shorter stretch.

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## [Anyone need a Clipper card? BART has thousands after Warriors parade blunder](#)

**Michael Cabanatuan**

**SF Gate**

When it became clear to anyone but the most clueless Cleveland Cavaliers fan that the Warriors would capture this year's NBA title, BART prepared to help Oakland throw a big victory parade and bash that would draw fans from all over.

But those good intentions, and some Draymond Green-size miscalculations, have left BART officials in a quandary.

Since the June 15 parade and rally, they've been sitting on boxes and boxes of Clipper transit cards preloaded with cash value — nearly 38,000 in all, worth more than a half-million dollars. And they're trying to figure out how to sell them to recoup their investment.

The unusual dilemma came about as the Warriors closed in on the team's second championship in three years, prompting BART officials to work with the Warriors and event planners on the party to come.

With estimates that up to 1.5 million parade-goers would stream into Oakland, BART geared up to carry as many as 600,000 riders downtown, about 40 percent more than the usual daily load. The transit agency knew as well that many people would be BART newcomers or occasional riders whose need to buy paper tickets or Clipper cards might create frustrating jams.

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## **America's Buses Lose Riders, Imperiling Their Future**

**David Harrison**

**Wall Street Journal**

A staple of American urban life—the city bus—is in a state of steady decline.

Ridership on city buses around the country was down 13% in the second quarter of 2017 compared with the same quarter in 2007, according to Transportation Department data, a drop that has left transit agencies scrambling to make up for lost fare revenue and contemplating additional service cuts on top of ones they have already made.

After the 2007-09 recession, financially strapped city bus agencies pared back service nationwide, slashing routes and frequency to save money. That drove riders away and starved bus agencies of cash needed to recover lost services. Fares account for about a third of agencies' operating budgets, with the rest coming from state, local and federal sources. The agencies responded by cutting service even more.

### Longer Commutes

Bus commute times have grown more than other modes of transportation nationwide since 2007.

"I call it the transit death spiral," said Darrell Johnson, chief executive officer at California's Orange County Transportation Authority. "It's a never-ending pattern, and pretty soon you're at a bare-bones service."

The downturn is squeezing low-income workers, drawing out their commutes, and could alter the shape of city life if it persists.

Bus service in America's cities and towns was about 10% lower in the second quarter of this year than it was a decade ago as measured by miles of transit service provided. Research from San Jose State University's Mineta Transportation Institute found that bus ridership is sensitive to service levels; When service is cut, ridership drops as people look for alternatives, said Hilary Nixon, a professor at San Jose State who co-authored the study.

Cities such as Miami and Cincinnati are facing new rounds of cuts. Other places, such as Orange County, are trying to run fewer bus routes while looking for new ways to help people get around.

The lumbering bus, trudging over street puddles as passengers jostle for seats, is a fixture of American city life. Despite the recent declines, almost 3.8 million people, many of them low-income workers, took the bus to the job in 2015, more than any other form of public transit, according to the Census Bureau.

### Declining Bus Service

Change since the second quarter of 2007 in the number of miles of transit service provided by bus and subway nationwide

The nagging ridership decline is unusual in a period of economic recovery. While ridership often sags during recessions, it usually recovers as unemployment rates drop and the economy expands. Other factors are amplifying the trend, including the rise of Uber and Lyft, cheap gas enabling more people to drive, and the determination of hip millennials to live in city centers within walking or biking distance of work.

At the same time, rising urban rents may be pushing poorer residents into distant areas with little or no bus service, forcing them to find alternatives to get to work. California also recently started granting drivers' licenses to undocumented immigrants, which could deprive the state's bus systems of some of its most reliable patrons, according to Michael Manville, a professor of urban planning at the University of California Los Angeles.

Bus commutes are getting longer, possibly because of service cuts. The average bus rider now spends 47 minutes getting to work, more than two minutes longer than in 2007. Commute times for those who drive or take a subway haven't risen as much. That hits low-income workers especially hard. Bus riders tend to be poorer than the population at large, according to a survey by the American Public Transportation Association. They also tend to be poorer than those who commute by subway.

Subway service is faring much better. The country's subway systems, which tend to be more expensive and less widespread than buses, have boosted service 10% over the past decade and ridership is up 12%. Intercity bus companies such as Greyhound and Megabus are also doing well, posting a 22% increase in trips between 2010 and 2015, according to the Transportation Department.

A study by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, and Rutgers University found that increased city transit service makes it easier for companies to cluster together and attract workers, making cities more productive and raising worker wages. Reduced service, however, could hold back such growth.

"Our service is at minimum levels right now," said Gary Rosenfeld, interim CEO at the Memphis Area Transit Authority. Memphis ridership is down 22% since the system began cutting service in 2010, according to federal data. More cuts and longer commutes would make it impossible for some people to work, Mr. Rosenfeld said.

“When you add on child-care costs and sunk-time costs and all the things that make life difficult, it’s not difficult to come to the conclusion that I’m not going to be able to go out and find another job,” Mr. Rosenfeld said.

Already, getting to work is a challenge for many in the area who rely on the bus.

Sammie Hunter, 53 years old, spends three hours a day taking two buses to his \$12-an-hour job in the kitchen of a local hospital. Much of that time is spent waiting outside for the buses to arrive.

“I deal with it, you know? I don’t have a choice,” said Mr. Hunter, who co-chairs the Memphis Bus Riders Union, an advocacy group in his hometown.

Priscilla Jeffries, 41, spends more than an hour each way to get to her janitorial job at a school where she earns \$8 an hour.

“I do it because I have to take care of my kids—I have three children and a grandson,” she said. “I know it gets to me sometimes, especially when it’s bad weather, raining and all of that.”

Reliable public transportation is also a challenge for Ms. Jeffries’s employer, Stacy McCall, CEO of ServiceMaster by Stratos, a contract janitorial service in Memphis.

“Retention is a tremendous struggle for us,” she said. “We have great people but their barrier to employment most of the time is their ability to get to work.”

Some agencies, such as in Houston or Seattle, have responded by completely redrawing bus routes.

Others, such as the agency serving Pinellas County, Fla., are forming partnerships with Uber and Lyft to offer subsidized rides in areas with few transit options. Elsewhere, such as in Austin, Texas, transit agencies are developing their own on-demand services that will allow them to move riders around town without offering regular fixed-stop service.

In Orange County, Mr. Johnson and his staff are contracting out for more service. They have eliminated routes with less traffic and increased frequency on the busiest ones while also helping some of their local towns finance a seasonal service to ferry summer beachgoers around coastal areas.

Instead of running regular bus service through the more residential parts of the country, the transit agency offers a \$400 monthly subsidy to help commuters who live near each other set up a vanpool.

“Not every community in your service area needs 40-foot buses every 10 minutes,” Mr. Johnson said. “Some do, but not all of them.”

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**From:** Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 16, 2017 12:00 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors  
**Subject:** From VTA: August 16, 2017 Media Clips

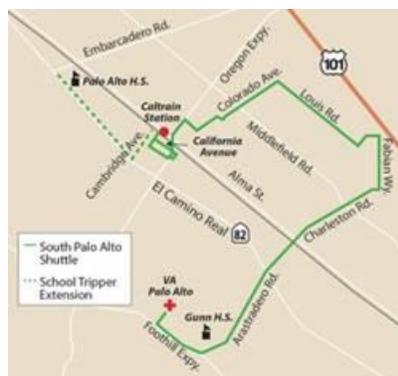


### VTA Daily News Coverage for Wednesday, August 16, 2017

1. [City Council OKs new South Palo Alto shuttle route \(Palo Alto Weekly\)](#)
2. [BART considers a later daily start during systemwide rebuild \(San Francisco Chronicle\)](#)
3. [Roadshow: Changes to ease traffic coming on Highway 237 \(Mercury News\)](#)
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### [City Council OKs new South Palo Alto shuttle route \(Palo Alto Weekly\)](#)

City staff to research dynamic 'fixed-flex' model for Embarcadero and Crosstown routes



A South Palo Alto route will run between California Avenue and VA Palo Alto Health Care System. The City Council called on staff to pursue funding for the transit line. Map by the Weekly.

Palo Alto's efforts to revitalize its free shuttle program got a major boost late Monday night when the City Council approved the Palo Alto Transit Vision Plan.

The shuttle plan [recommended by city staff](#) includes three routes: a new South Palo Alto route that will replicate Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's Route 88, which is being eliminated, and add some new stops; an expanded Crosstown route that will extend to Stanford and San Antonio shopping centers; and an expanded Embarcadero route that will service East and West Bayshore roads and Fabian Way.

The projected cost to operate the three routes is \$1.8 million, including \$625,000 per year for the South Palo Alto shuttle.

Currently, the Embarcadero and Crosstown routes cost \$553,000 annually to run, according to a city staff report.

The South Palo Alto shuttle could give 156,000 rides, known as "passenger trips," a year, the report states; the extended Crosstown and Embarcadero routes could offer an additional 266,000 and 55,214 passenger trips, respectively.

By an 8-0 vote, with Vice Mayor Liz Kniss absent for the vote, the council's motion on Monday amended the staff's recommendation, directing staff to pursue funding for implementation of the South Palo Alto route and return to extending the Embarcadero and Crosstown routes at a later date.

The council also directed staff to look into a more dynamic "fixed-flex" model for the shuttle system. This model uses technology to modify shuttle routes on the fly; if someone is two blocks away from the standard route, the vehicle would be able to detour off the route, pick the person up and return to the fixed route. The VTA has implemented a pilot program of this model in north San Jose, though results are not yet available. Staff will also update the branding and marketing of the shuttle system in order to increase visibility and encourage ridership.

The plan comes on the heels of the [VTA's recently approved transit plan](#), which calls for increasing the frequency of buses along its primary routes and reducing service to the county's more peripheral areas. [In Palo Alto](#), this would result in the 522 Express bus on El Camino Real running more often and the elimination of the 88 bus, which would be replaced by the 288 and primarily operate during the start and end of Gunn High School's daily schedule.

Mayor Greg Scharff raised concerns about serving the entire Palo Alto population as opposed to the two groups — seniors and students -- who currently compose the shuttle's primary ridership. The staff's recommendation, he said, seemed only to increase serving seniors and students without including other community members.

Councilman Greg Tanaka, however, said the city *should* focus on improving current services to those particular sectors.

"Maybe instead of having a general shuttle run, you ... have a more focused strategy, a more focused audience and actually excel rather than trying to serve all people," he said.

Vice Mayor Liz Kniss, on the other hand, called the entire plan an "overreach." Though she said she admires the goals of the vision, she doesn't believe it is realistic.

"If your plan is to end up with something that's almost \$2 million a year — great idea, but frankly, I don't see where that funding would come from," she said.

The transit vision, the city's Chief Transportation Official Joshua Mello said in response, serves more as a line of guidance and asked council members for direct input on how the staff should proceed with revamping the city's shuttle system. The specifics of the plan, he said, are still open to change.

Councilman Cory Wolbach brought up the potential benefits of a dynamic fixed-flex shuttle service, particularly for the seniors in Palo Alto.

"The idea of on-demand or flexible service ... where you either call up a shuttle or ask a shuttle to detour either because of a long-term or short-term disability — I don't see that as something we're necessarily going to do right now, but I want to make sure we're still thinking of how we can really modernize the system," he said.

"I think the goals are the right ones, and that's why I support this," he added. "It gets us going in the right direction."

For an "aging city" like Palo Alto, dynamic routes are key, Councilman Tom DuBois said. He suggested that charging for age-friendly services could be a possible source of funding.

The motion was amended to prioritize funding for the South Palo Alto route and developing a dynamic fixed-flex model.

Community members Immanuel Cherkas, Myra Cohen and Judy Lerner — all residents of senior community Moldaw Residences on East Charleston Road — spoke at the meeting and asked the council and staff to add bus stops at the intersection of [Fabian and East Charleston](#) as well as at the corner of [San Antonio and East Charleston roads](#).

"We are very fortunate in Moldaw that we're provided transportation to doctors' offices, to dentists, but we can't have transportation for example to a bank, to a cleaner, to an alteration place," said 91-year-old Cohen, who has macular degeneration and vision loss. "Having a bus would alleviate so many of our concerns."

The transportation manager of Avenidas, a nonprofit that provides resources and programs for the aging, also encouraged the city to add a stop outside of Cubberley Community Center. Jyllian Halliburton said that the stop at the intersection of [Charleston and Middlefield roads](#) -- a block away from Cubberley and adjacent to a shopping center -- feels unsafe to people in their 80s "because people usually drive pretty fast."

Mello said in an interview later that staff will be considering the public comments made at the meeting as well as input from the council. The staff will try to secure funding from outside

sources such as regional grants and Measure B, a Santa Clara County sales tax approved by voters last year that invests in projects enhancing transportation.

"I was glad to see we were able to get direction on where to move," he said of the council meeting. "The goal would be to bring that program to its full potential."

The development of a dynamic fixed-flex shuttle model, will incorporate the needs of seniors who are not technology-savvy or lack access to technology, Mello said.

"We may ultimately need to develop our own innovative solutions that's a mix of a high-tech dynamic-type service and a more traditional fixed-type service," he said.

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### [BART considers a later daily start during systemwide rebuild](#) (San Francisco Chronicle)

Hundreds of early-morning BART riders will have to begin their commutes an hour later on weekdays — or resort to buses or their cars — as the transit agency struggles to keep up its aging infrastructure while undergoing a massive modernization.

With voters having approved Measure RR, a \$3.5 billion bond, in November, BART has the money as well as the plans to rejuvenate the 45-year-old system. But it needs the time to do the double job of keeping the trains running while simultaneously working to rebuild the system.

The sooner BART can switch from its current 4 a.m. daily start time to a 5 a.m. opening, the better, a committee of BART directors said Tuesday.

"We don't want to abandon riders, but there is no way we can inch our way" to a rebuilt system, said Director Lateefah Simon, explaining the need for additional maintenance time. "There are going to have to be sacrifices on the part of riders, on the part of employers," she said.

BART officials were already working on plans to push back its systemwide opening hour from 4 a.m. to 5 a.m. starting in fall 2018 to accommodate the seismic retrofitting of the Transbay Tube. Now they're toying with the idea of doing it sooner — perhaps late this year — to buy additional time for maintenance crews to do their work.

To take care of the estimated 2,400 commuters who ride BART during its first hour Monday through Friday, BART is discussing several plans to shuttle them in buses.

A systemwide late start would almost certainly make those predawn commuters cranky by forcing them to board buses or get behind the wheel and take to the highways, which are already getting increasingly crowded at 4 a.m. Recent Metropolitan Transportation Commission

reports showed that traffic on the Bay Bridge during that hour was up 36 percent over the past two years with steep increases on the Richmond-San Rafael and San Mateo bridges as well.

On Tuesday, BART Director Joel Keller asked the transit agency's staff to consider adopting the schedule change this year, but said it should be dependent on a plan to take care of displaced riders.

"We're going to do it anyway for the Transbay Tube," he said of the delayed opening. "So if we accelerate that by a year, how much more can we accomplish?"

BART's Operations, Safety & Workforce Committee agreed that it was worth investigating. A transportation consultant, hired to study BART's maintenance efforts, had told the committee that the transit system needed to make tough decisions and carve out more time for work crews to rebuild the aging infrastructure.

"BART needs to accept that it needs more time to maintain its system," said Chris Wallgren, vice president of Transportation Resource Associates.

Unless it steps up its maintenance efforts, Wallgren told the committee, BART runs the risk of falling into a downward cycle of disrepair, decreasing reliability and declining ridership, he said.

The amount of time work crews currently have to perform system maintenance is restricted by BART's two-track configuration, the limited number of places available for workers to get on and off the tracks and its 4 a.m.-to-midnight weekday operating hours, with the last train ending service after 1:30 a.m. Those factors leave crews just 45 to 90 minutes each weeknight for maintenance work, he said, and that's not enough.

Weekend shutdowns, which BART has been using for the past two years, allow time for more substantial work such as replacing rails and crossover tracks, even though the shutdowns are also inconvenient for riders.

Paul Oversier, BART's assistant general manager for operations, said it's important for the board to continue to allow weekend closures and to look for other opportunities to find more of what he called "wrench time."

"We are at a fork in the road, where we either get ahead of the curve or we fall behind the eight-ball," Oversier said.

Other U.S. transit systems, including in New York and Washington, are in worse shape. Breakdowns on the New York subway in the past several months have riled riders and prompted Gov. Andrew Cuomo to declare a state of emergency. Transit officials, in response, accelerated maintenance efforts, even planning an 18-month shutdown of one line.

Fires, derailments and a variety of breakdowns on the system that serves the nation's capital has forced extended shutdowns of parts of the Metro system and led to a sharp drop in ridership in the past couple of years.

Because of Measure RR, BART is on track to avoid such problems, said Wallgren, but more time has to be made for maintenance. However, it also means that riders wanting trains that run later into the early morning hours, at least on weekends, will have to wait.

“There is always pressure on us to stay open later and the answer has always been that to do that would compromise maintenance and the safety of the system. That’s still true,” Oversier said. “Late-night service is something that can be in BART’s future, but not until we get caught up with the (maintenance) needs we have now. And that’s going to take a while.”

How long? The rehabilitation plan outlined by Measure RR lasts 10 years.

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### [Roadshow: Changes to ease traffic coming on Highway 237 \(Mercury News\)](#)

If I need to run an errand in the morning by 9 or 10 a.m., it boggles the mind how bad Highway 237 can be. ... You’ve been quiet about the traffic on 237. Is there anything on the horizon to help?

**Bruce Whittaker, Frank Torre, and others**

**A:** There sure is. Caltrans plans to extend the metering lights westbound during the morning commute from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. Not sure when this will happen but it’s coming, maybe by the end of the year. Only Interstate 80 metering lights operate longer in the day in the Bay Area.

But there’s more. Next year work to extend the carpool/express lanes on Highway 237 to Highway 101 and Interstate 880 could begin.

And soon the express lanes on I-880 will run from Oakland to Highway 237 in Milpitas.

**Q:** The traffic signal at Highway 237 and McCarthy Boulevard is causing backups in the morning.

The initial green interval isn’t long enough to get traffic moving and extend the green for southbound traffic. The green terminates after 10-15 seconds. The problem is aggravated when westbound left turn traffic blocks the intersection.

**Martin Boyle**

**A:** Check back after the metering light hours are extended. They may help.

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

**Q:** Any there plans to add a carpool lane on Interstate 580 through the Maze in Oakland?

**George Ferris**

**A:** No. Caltrans says there has not been enough congestion along that segment of I-580 to warrant a carpool lane. Since the available right of way is essentially nonexistent where it's needed the most, widening the road to add a carpool lane would likely mean replacing several substantial and costly structures. In Caltrans' opinion, the price tag would be too expensive and the time savings too meager.

In addition, Caltrans believes converting a lane for solo drivers into a carpool lane would result in longer backups and delays because all lanes are needed to get through there and ease the weaving chaos, particularly around Highway 13.

**Q:** I know that a driver needs to have a transponder to cross the Golden Gate Bridge since there are no longer toll takers. I heard that this experiment had been a success and that the toll-taker-less bridge program is going to be expanding to other Bay Area bridges. Is this true, and, if so, when will this be happening?

My husband and I share a transponder between our two cars, but that will become more cumbersome if every bridge requires that transponders be used.

**Joan King-Angell**

*Berkeley*

**A:** No timetable yet. New state requirements for toll system interoperability takes effect in 2018, so expansion of all-electronic tolling on the state-owned bridges is unlikely to begin until 2019 at the earliest.

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### [Santa Clara University partners with local AI startup to ease parking, commuting woes \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)

Santa Clara University has partnered with Silicon Valley artificial intelligence companies to tackle a problem that's been vexing students, faculty and teachers alike: Parking and transportation.

The "smart campus" initiative will start in the university's parking garage and use Internet of Things and AI technology.

Santa Clara University is implementing new parking technology to help its commuter... [more](#)

SCU.EDU

After conducting a small beta test on one floor of its parking garage with tech from Vimoc Technologies, a Mountain View-based startup that provides AI-based applications and sensors, the university is increasing the number of sensors and cameras throughout the facility.

It is also placing an LED parking screen with indicators in the garage and implementing crosswalk technology. It will eventually add license plate recognition technology as well.

“For people who come to this area or work or live in this area, it’s become much more difficult for them to try to get here,” said [Millie Kenney](#), director of parking and transportation at Santa Clara University. “The transportation issue in this area is so impacted that anything that we can do to alleviate that we will do.”

In a crosswalk system at the facility, sensors can read when a pedestrian is approaching the crosswalk and signals lights to oncoming vehicles.

“I was looking for a system that would be passive but would alert drivers to see folks in that crosswalk,” Kenney said.

The university, which had 9,000 students enrolled last year, will also track and display spaces for handicap drivers and electric vehicle spaces. It is exploring ways to suggest carpooling apps to students.

As Bay Area traffic has increased 84 percent in the last decade — the San Jose metro is now the ranked [the fifth most-congested area in the nation](#)— so has the impact on students and staff.

“We live in a very impacted location — housing is expensive, traffic is crazy, and people move out further, so if we can find solutions to get people here in a better and more relaxed way, then that’s helpful,” Kenney said. “That’s going to be attractive and valuable to a student and likely with talent.”

She wouldn’t disclose how much money the new tech is costing the private Jesuit university.

Vimoc’s president and CMO, Ali Sebt, said the company’s services range from \$15,000 for the simplest system to \$100,000 for a variety of technologies.

“It affects higher-end universities because they want to provide the ultimate user experience or educational experience,” he said.

Vimoc is also being used in smart parking structures in Redwood City as a part of its “smart cities” initiatives.

The school and company are also partnering to implement license plate recognition technology, which will use sensors and data for “virtual permitting.”

It will immediately be able to notify attendants whether the driver is permitted to park in a certain area. “Right now, we issue thousands of plastic hang tags and we want to do away with that,” Kenney said. “It will make it easier for the patrons because they won’t have to keep track of that and its less waste.”

She said the university's efforts will be able to integrate with any potential smart city efforts by the city of Santa Clara. "That has to be part of the infrastructure of what we're doing so that, if that does happen, we're ready."

It's not the first time the university has explored transportation alternatives.

Last year, the [Mission campus became testing grounds](#) for an autonomous shuttle system in the form of unmanned golf carts created by Sunnyvale startup Auro Robotics.

Many of Santa Clara University's students also work or have other commitments and about half are in graduate programs. That can further complicate parking issues as students come and go, Kenney said. "That student who is already short on time is driving around in circles and that impacts them a great deal," she said.

Earlier this year, Silicon Valley philanthropists John and Susan Sobrato made a [\\$100 million donation to the university](#)— the largest gift ever to the school — to build a 300,000-square-foot STEM facility. In June, the school received an additional [\\$30 million grant](#) for the facility from The Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation of Los Angeles.

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## [Opinion: Innovative rideshare systems like Lyft help solve traffic problems](#) (Mercury News)

The Bay Area is admired, copied and celebrated around the world for its embrace of innovation in solving problems. It's in our DNA. And if there's any problem in the Bay Area begging for innovative solutions, it's traffic.

Fortunately, our region has become a magnet for companies and others working to revolutionize transportation and how we get around. There are apps and services that promote carsharing, bikesharing and ridesharing. Commuter shuttles have blossomed into one of the region's largest transportation systems. Autonomous vehicles are coming fast. New fleets of water taxis are also emerging.

We should be encouraging this new wave of transportation solutions, not looking for ways to stifle it.

As our economy grows, the demands on our transportation system have also grown. Our roads and highways are so congested that Bay Area drivers spend an average of 83 hours a year stuck in traffic. A recent study by Dutch firm TomTom ranked San Francisco #3 and San Jose #7 for worst traffic congestion in the nation.

Our investment in expanding and maintaining our mass transit systems has also lagged, creating overcrowding and increasing service delays and interruptions.

Ridesharing, in particular, has the power to dramatically increase carpooling and make a meaningful dent in the 80 percent of commuters who drive alone. For all of the billions spent on diamond lanes and academic studies showing 95 percent of trips could be shared, the percentage of commuters choosing to carpool declined for decades.

The sheer hassle of identifying similarly situated co-workers, aligning schedules, and organizing vanpools was too hard. Ridesharing services offered by companies like Lyft, Chariot and others are changing that by making carpooling more accessible and convenient than it has ever been.

Unfortunately, some critics of these new solutions would rather focus on vilifying the agents of change than seeing the potential of the solutions they offer. That was especially true in a recent op-ed by Ann Friedman (“Lyft Shuttle eliminates those pesky poor people,” June 27) in which she offered a cursory attack on any idea originating from Silicon Valley rather than contributing to a discussion about innovations to address congestion.

Lyft Shuttle groups people in cars between two set destinations with predictable stops during morning and evening commutes. It is designed to get cars off the road by offering a convenient and affordable option for people who are currently driving by themselves.

Those who are committed to reducing congestion must be open to new ideas that can help achieve shared goals. New services like Lyft Shuttle reduce single occupancy trips by putting more people in the same car and making it affordable at \$3 per ride. Far from replacing public transportation, ridesharing services have allowed people in less accessible areas to connect to and take advantage of public transportation.

This is an affordable option that can improve the quality of life for residents who are either driving on their own or struggling to find reliable transportation. These services also reduce unhealthy and harmful tailpipe emissions.

There is no magic bullet that will solve the Bay Area’s transportation challenges. We need to invest in public transportation as well as encourage carpooling, carsharing, bikesharing and other new alternatives that can work where old models failed to meet the needs and demands.

Any smart option that can get more people out of their individual cars should be welcomed. Those who want to reduce gridlock and pollution should work to help ridesharing reach its full potential, not undermine its success.

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Conserve paper. Think before you print.

**From:** Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Friday, August 18, 2017 4:39 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors  
**Subject:** From VTA: August 17-18, 2017 Media Clips



### *VTA Daily News Coverage for August 17-18, 2017*

1. [Palo Alto approves new shuttle line, but worries about price](#) San Jose Mercury News
2. [Roadshow: Much-needed bike lanes coming to El Camino Real](#) San Jose Mercury News
3. [Bad behavior on BART rarely leads to fine, with 1 exception](#) SF Gate
4. [Roadshow: I-80 Smart Highway remains work in progress](#) San Jose Mercury News
5. [Muni: Construction boom gobbles up technicians, delays elevator rebuilds](#) SF Examiner
6. [Repair and resurfacing set for Alameda's streets](#) East Bay Times
7. [With California's New Gas Tax Approved, Caltrans Is on a Hiring Spree as Construction Work Ramps Up](#) Transport Topics
8. [SMART trains to begin North Bay service Aug. 25](#) SF Gate
9. [Protected bike lanes not considered for Golden Gate Park for beauty reasons](#) SF Examiner
10. [California's new motor voter law coming in April, state lawyer says](#) SF Gate

#### [Palo Alto approves new shuttle line, but worries about price](#)

Jacqueline Lee  
San Jose Mercury News

Palo Alto City Council members on Monday approved a new South Palo Alto shuttle route they hope will fill some gaps in bus service left by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's proposed service cutbacks.

But council members acknowledged that funding the new route — provided at no cost to riders — could be a challenge.

The council declared the South Palo Alto route a priority but hesitated to commit to the full \$1.8 million expansion of the shuttle system proposed by transportation staff, in part for financial reasons.

Ultimately the council voted to approve a Transit Vision Plan after hearing from Joshua Mello, Palo Alto's chief transportation official, that "having this plan on the books is an important tool to help us secure some funding."

The estimated cost of adding the South Palo Alto route is about \$625,000 per year, Mello said. Expanding the existing Crosstown and Embarcadero routes would cost about \$1.2 million per year.

Currently, the Crosstown and Embarcadero routes cost the city \$531,776 per year.

Council members expressed a desire to provide a new line from the California Avenue Caltrain station to the VA Palo Alto Health Care System to replicate in part the VTA's Route 88 being eliminated, which is heavily used by seniors and students.

The majority of council members, however, questioned how the city would pay for it all. Vice Mayor Liz Kniss categorized the overhaul as an "overreach."

Councilman Tom DuBois said the shuttle system overhaul "feels very expensive," especially since the price tag doesn't include Mello's request for a campaign to re-brand and market it.

"I am really struggling with the idea of tripling our shuttle expenditures," DuBois said. "We're an aging city and the focus on age friendly service is important... but I'm definitely hesitant to just ramp up the shuttle with no proof it's going to work."

In a discussion earlier this year, council members insisted that the VTA pick up the tab for any expenses Palo Alto incurs to compensate for eliminated bus lines.

Mello told council members he was disappointed to learn that the VTA only plans to allocate \$1.6 million per year to innovative local projects, such as Palo Alto's shuttle system, from Measure B, a transportation improvement measure voters approved in November.

The measure is expected to generate \$6 billion through a countywide half-cent sales tax increase for 30 years. Of that, \$500 million is to go to transit operations for vulnerable and underserved populations, but VTA plans to take the bulk of that amount for its own service, Mello said.

Palo Alto would have to compete with other Santa Clara County cities for the \$1.6 million, Mello added.

On the bright side, Mello said, only two cities in the county currently operate shuttles — Mountain View and Palo Alto — and only two other cities are interested in such systems: Morgan Hill and Gilroy.

Councilman Eric Filseth underscored that he wants Palo Alto to use “all possible avenues” to get money back from the VTA.

The agency does not get to say, “We’ll keep the money, but we’re still going to cut service,” Filseth said.

“It sort of feels like we’re getting sold the same horse twice or maybe more than twice,” Filseth said. “The fact is: The VTA sees Palo Alto as a cash box, an ATM to bail out their insufficient service to the rest of the county... This is outrageous. We are paying VTA for transportation that we don’t get.”

Mello said there’s still time for the city to petition the VTA board to increase the amount allocated for local programs such as shuttles. The board is expected to adopt guidelines for Measure B allocations on Sept. 7.

In May, the VTA board adopted the Final Transit Service Plan, which cuts services in Palo Alto. The plan was expected to be implemented by the end of 2017, coinciding with the start of BART service to Santa Clara County. Delays to the start of service at the new Milpitas and Berryessa Stations means changes to bus lines would not occur until 2018.

Under VTA’s new service plan, Route 88 in Palo Alto would be replaced by routes 288, 288A and 288B. Buses in those three routes would run once in the morning bringing students to Gunn, and twice in the afternoon — once from Gunn after classes let out and later to pick up students who stayed for extracurricular activities.

VTA officials have contended that although Route 88 serves Gunn High School students and others traveling along the Charleston-Arastradero corridor, the buses only fill up when students come and go but are otherwise empty in the middle of the day.

Palo Alto’s new South Palo Alto route would run every 30 minutes from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and serve Gunn High School and the Veterans Administration campus as well as the Midtown and

Palo Verde neighborhoods, Mitchell Park, Truman Middle School, the Moldaw Senior Residences and more.

The City Council also held off on committing to expanding the Crosstown shuttle, which runs along Middlefield Road, because of a request from VTA.

Carolyn Gonot, VTA's interim director of planning and program development, explained in a June letter to the city that the agency generally supports strategies that consolidate services on major corridors in order to provide more frequent service to riders.

"We are concerned that the Crosstown Shuttle's free fare would negatively impact ridership on Route 21, which may cause Route 21's productivity to fall below our minimum standard and therefore be a candidate for discontinuation," Gonot said.

Council members, spearheaded by motions from DuBois and Councilman Cory Wolbach, asked city staff to return with more information on how the shuttle system could explore models that are more flexible and incorporate "more modern approaches."

Such modern approaches could include an on-demand system where shuttles take detours to pick up a rider who can't get to a stop or a "dynamic, fixed-flex" system where a shuttle has a fixed route during the day but flexible routes at other times.

"We shouldn't pass on an essential service for one of the biggest needs in Palo Alto, which is getting around town, reducing congestion and improving mobility for people who either don't drive, can't drive, don't want to drive and add to congestion, especially when we start charging for parking downtown," Wolbach said.

Mayor Greg Scharff said he'd like to see a shuttle plan that addresses the city's goal of helping residents and visitors be more mobile. The plan also should work to improve ridership by all Palo Alto residents and not just the students and seniors, Scharff said.

City staff will return with analysis on these models for extending the Embarcadero and Crosstown routes at a later date.

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## **Roadshow: Much-needed bike lanes coming to El Camino Real**

**Gary Richards**

**San Jose Mercury News**

**Q:** I know you've answered a bazillion questions about bikes and cars and right turns, but I thought what the heck, what's one more.

Diana Ingle

**A:** OK, it's now a bazillion plus one.

**Q:** I bike down El Camino Real in Mountain View/Palo Alto pretty often. It's often a dicey adventure. There is one particular intersection at which I've come a bit too close to getting hit by drivers turning right.

Sometimes, I can shake it off and tell myself that there are just some people who don't know to look out for bikes, but the last two times I had someone hook in front of me. This is what happened:

As I biked toward Showers Drive from Jordan Avenue, a car saw me and slowed down, following pretty far back for about a half block. But as we approached Showers, the car revved its engine and sped in front of me to make the turn. It's not like the light was turning yellow or anything like that.

The driver just suddenly got impatient and nearly slammed into me.

Can bike lanes be painted in that area?

Diana Ingle

**A:** Bike lanes are planned from San Jose to Palo Alto as part of the bus rapid transit project that remains under consideration for El Camino Real. But these drivers should know better. They took part in one of the most dangerous stunts on the road — the right hook.

It occurs when a motorist makes a right turn directly in front of the bicyclist. Drivers need to treat the biker as a car. Move behind him and wait to pass through the intersection.

**Q:** What's the reason for adding red lights to crosswalks between intersections like San Tomas Expressway and Kiely Boulevard on El Camino Real?

Ian Clements

**A:** I've written about this before, but it needs repeating. Santa Clara has activated four HAWK beacons along El Camino Real at the intersections of Alpine Avenue, Buchanan Drive, Morse Lane and Harrison Street. The reason: safety.

HAWK beacons improve safety for pedestrians attempting to cross high-speed multilane roads such as El Camino as they provide a red light to stop motorists along with a walk interval for pedestrians. When the flashing "Don't Walk" interval starts, the lights go to flashing then solid red which requires vehicles to stop and permits pedestrians to cross.

While the HAWK traffic signal is inactive or dark, drivers should proceed with caution.

**Q:** Which is safer for bicyclists — flashing or solid lights?

Dale Talcott, Sunnyvale

**A:** California law doesn't dictate whether or not the front white light may be flashing, but is clear that the rear red light may flash. Other than that, bicyclists are on their own to determine what makes them feel safest.

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### [Bad behavior on BART rarely leads to fine, with 1 exception](#)

**Mike Moffitt**

**SF Gate**

Most riders know that eating and drinking are not allowed on BART trains or in "paid areas" of stations. Same goes for smoking.

The penalties can be stiff. Violators might have to fork up \$250 or work off 48 hours of community service.

But a penalty is only a deterrence if it is enforced. And BART does not enforce all its rules equally.

Nobody cares if you sip on a water bottle while riding BART. If, however, you bite into sloppy tuna salad sandwich, or open a pungent carton of kimchee or splash a milkshake over a seat, you might get some angry stares or harsh words. But a citation is highly unlikely.

In 2016, BART users took 128.5 million rides on the system. Only 11 eating/drinking citations were issued between April and December. We don't know how many were handed out in the first three months of the year because BART did not record that data due to a computer upgrade. But extrapolating for January through March at the same rate of citations would result in an additional three or four.

Of course, only a fraction of BART's overall ridership eat or drink on trains or in prohibited areas of stations. There are no data on what percentage of the total ridership these light-rail snackers constitute.

But comparing the total number of rides to citations provides a yardstick to gauge enforcement of various rules across the BART system.

Last year, an eating or drinking citation was issued about once every 8,062,500 rides.

Asked how high a priority enforcement of the no eating/no drinking rule is for BART, agency media relations manager Jim Allison said it was necessary to look at the big picture.

"It's important to view enforcement of any infraction within the larger context of daily activities on BART and not just in isolation," Allison said in an email. "As calls come in about possible violations, BART police prioritize them on the basis of the relative threat to public safety and the resources available. I think you would find this form of 'triage' a common practice among law enforcement agencies."

Fare cheats cost BART a lot more than spilled food — up to \$25 million annually — and the agency beefed up enforcement in 2016, ramping up citations and warnings for gate jumpers and other fare evaders in the second half of the year. That trend continued until late February of this year when it suddenly reversed itself, kicking off nearly five months of declines. In recent weeks, the numbers are again on the rise.

In 2016, a fare cheat was cited, warned or arrested only once for every 30,299 rides on the system. It's little wonder new BART police Chief Carlos Rojas has made curbing fare evasion a priority.

BART is retrofitting some stations with higher barriers and other physical barriers to discourage gate hopping. A video-surveillance pilot program is also planned.

BART says fare evaders cheat system out of millions of dollars a year  
BART has come up with several proposals to catch fare evaders they say are costing the rail system millions of dollars a year.

BART has come up with several proposals to catch fare evaders they say are costing the rail system millions of dollars a year.

What about other BART rule breakers? How often were they cited in 2016? Check out the slideshow.

Note "citations" includes citations, citation/arrests and warning citations. The latter is a citation that is not processed through the courts. BART officers also give verbal warnings, of course, but they are not documented.

The easiest way to get cited by BART is to not pay for parking or to park in an illegal space. Most of the 12 million cars left at BART stations in 2016 were legally parked, but of those that weren't, nearly 90,000 were ticketed. In January the fine for parking in daily spots without paying increased to \$55 from last year's \$35 penalty.

Drivers parking in spaces that require parking permits faced \$75 fines, up from \$40 last year.

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## [Roadshow: I-80 Smart Highway remains work in progress](#)

**Gary Richards**

**San Jose Mercury News**

**Q:** I am curious about the \$79 million project on west Interstate 80. So far, the only changes I have seen are the metering lights on the on-ramps and the gantry signs that estimates how much time it would take to drive to Highway 101 and the airports. When will the many overhead signs begin to function?

Melanie Andersen, Crockett

**A:** Brianna-the-Caltrans-Lady says you “may not realize it, but the I-80 SMART Corridor activated last fall. The overhead gantry signs are designed to remain dark unless a lane-blocking incident occurs, at which time they illuminate with the appropriate motorist directives.

“The reasons for them to remain dark during normal operations is two-fold: it conserves energy use, and reduces maintenance costs/disturbances which might result from more frequent bulb changing (due to increased use).”

The state is doing a study and should have the results by the end of the year.

**Q:** I guess I expected more frequent use of the speed limit warning signs on I-80. Although I typically am going in the less-congested directions, it would seem that posting a reduced speed limit would calm the flow. Are there plans for further deployment of the tools of this SMART corridor?

John Winters, Oakland

**A:** We'll know in a few months.

Traffic at the most congested area of I-80 near Berkeley was about 10 percent higher in early September 2016 compared to 2015.

**Q:** There's road construction on Highway 12 east of Rio Vista that has been going on forever. What is going on and when will it be finished? I'm hoping the highway is being widened. Traffic in that area is pretty bad.

Scott Wheeler, Pleasant Hill

**A:** The Bouldin Island Project in San Joaquin County from east of the Sacramento River to the Potato Slough Bridge near Tower Park Resort & Marina is estimated to be complete in mid-2018.

Caltrans is realigning 4.3 miles of Highway 12, adding a concrete divider, widening existing lanes to 12 feet and installing shoulders.

**Q:** While thousands of people attended the Lady Gaga show at AT&T Park Sunday night, as we approached the Bay Bridge to go home we could tell that the big show was over because there was much more traffic than usual on a Sunday at 11 p.m.

What we didn't expect was the usual lane closures going down from five to two lanes. There was no evidence of any work being done; only one lone police car in the closed lanes.

A 25-minute trip to Alameda took 90 minutes. What were they thinking?

Susan Krauss, Alameda

**A:** There was work going on under the top deck, but this is a common complaint and the contractor is supposed to wait a half-hour after the end of the event or until traffic is moving smoothly enough to start the closures.

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[Muni: Construction boom gobbles up technicians, delays elevator rebuilds](#)

**Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez**

**SF Examiner**

The thousands of Muni riders who depend on the system's elevators will need to jab the "up" button a little longer, it seems.

Though the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency has identified repair and rehabilitation needs totalling \$71 million for its escalators and elevators in its newest 20-year Capital Plan, elevator and escalator technicians are nearly impossible to find, officials said.

The culprit for this dearth of elevator-experts? The City's construction boom.

On Tuesday, the SFMTA Board of Directors approved its \$21 billion 20-Year Capital Plan, a wish-list of projects identified by the agency for construction, enhancement or repair.

About \$71 million of that multibillion dollar budget was identified as needed to repair and expand Muni's elevators and escalators at stations including Powell, Van Ness and Forest Hill. But contractors are tough to find, said John Haley, the SFMTA's director of transit.

That's harsh news for the disability community, advocates said. The elevators are out so frequently they are undependable, especially at Van Ness Station, leading wheelchair users to travel on sidewalks to other Muni stations to use the subway.

"The real problem," Haley added, "is not the cost, It's the availability of skilled technicians." The SFMTA identified a lack of technicians a year ago, but since then, Haley said, the problem hasn't gotten better — it's "exacerbated."

"Right now, it has not shifted," he said, regarding availability of technicians. "It's a big problem."

In 2015, Haley went before the SFMTA board to tell them The City's construction boom had driven up cost of elevator technicians. "The competition is huge with all the building taking place in The City," Haley said at the time.

The SFMTA operates some 52 elevators and escalators, with 44 of them in stations, according to an SFMTA staff report. Elevators and escalators at some stations used by Muni are under the purview of BART. Muni has exclusive responsibility over elevators and escalators at Van Ness, Church, Castro and Forest Hill stations.

At least one Muni elevator in the system has been out of service at least 50 days since mid-June, according to SFMTA's elevator alerts on Twitter. That means at least one elevator was inoperative on Muni's system for 50 days out of the last 61 days, the entire span such data was available.

Many of those out-of-service notices were for the Van Ness Muni station elevator, which was unusable 31 separate days.

That's especially troubling for the disability community, said Jessica Lehman, executive director of Senior and Disability Action. And Lehman knows that firsthand, as she uses a wheelchair and relies on Muni.

"Just yesterday I was leaving at 7:30 [p.m.], looking forward to going home, and [Civic Center's elevator] had just gone out," she said. "I had to go down to Powell [Station], which is frustrating. I've certainly been late to many, many meetings because elevators are out."

That worry was echoed on Tuesday by Cristina Rubke, an SFMTA board director who also uses a wheelchair.

“It seems like such a pressing need, especially at this point,” she told SFMTA staffers at Tuesday’s meeting.

Some progress has been made on escalator repair, Ed Reiskin, director of transportation at the SFMTA, noted in reply to Rubke. Some 17 escalators will soon be repaired, and financial planning to replace and repair Muni’s most problematic elevators may move forward in the next five years.

But some elevator installations may not be funded until 2038, according to the 20-Year Capital Plan.

“We’re a little bit lagging on the elevators,” Reiskin said, but added, “You will see at your next board meeting the next round of elevator contracts.”

Seeing as elevator repair rates have nearly hit bottom, they may have nowhere to go but up.

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## [Repair and resurfacing set for Alameda’s streets](#)

**Peter Hegarty**

**East Bay Times**

ALAMEDA — The annual repair and resurfacing of streets across Alameda will begin later this month and should be completed by late October, according to city officials.

Work will take place on more three dozen streets and cover a total of about seven miles, including on Blanding, Encinal and Buena Vista avenues, as well as Robert Davey Jr. Drive.

Construction hours will 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

During the work motorists might experience minor traffic delays, loss of parking spaces and restricted street access, according to the city. Bus stop access will be maintained throughout the project.

For a complete list of the streets, visit [alamedaca.gov/business/news/2017/08/17/annual-street-repair-resurfacing-project-commences](http://alamedaca.gov/business/news/2017/08/17/annual-street-repair-resurfacing-project-commences)

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## [With California’s New Gas Tax Approved, Caltrans Is on a Hiring Spree as Construction Work Ramps Up](#)

**Erin Baldassari**

**Transport Topics, East BayTimes**

Vallejo native Chris Haynes had just finished high school when he signed up to work for the California Conservation Corps, a job that took him down back roads across the state. But wherever he went, he saw Caltrans workers too.

Something about that stuck with him, so when he saw Caltrans representatives at a job fair for military service members and veterans at San Francisco's AT&T Park on Aug. 17, he was eager to see what the transportation agency had to offer.

"Caltrans just stayed with me," Haynes said, as he mingled with hundreds of other hopeful job seekers talking to dozens of employers at the fair. "I've just always wanted to work for them."

Since lawmakers approved SB 1, a gas tax and transportation funding bill, earlier this year, Caltrans has been ramping up its efforts to put shovels in the ground across the state. That means more workers — a whopping 1,100 more — in nearly every division, said Christina Hisamoto, a staff services manager for Caltrans. In the Bay Area, where Caltrans is headquartered, that also means more human resource workers and administrative employees, she said.

"We're hiring for engineers, maintenance workers, equipment operators," she said. "We have a lot of different opportunities. It's just about everything across the board you can think of."

That is good news for vets such as 26-year-old Air Force reservist Shawn Klein, who are looking to put skills they acquired during their military service to work. Klein is studying finance, he said, but works as an engineer in the reserves. And, if applying to Caltrans gets him out of his job working at the Air Force base's commissary in Fairfield, so much the better, he added.

Some of the work from the landmark gas tax bill has already begun, even though the state won't begin collecting the money until later this year. Caltrans released a list of 13 projects that began construction this summer, and on Aug. 17, the agency released a list of 32 more projects to resurface portions of highways across the state, fix and replace deficient bridges, and install electronic traffic management systems to reduce congestion.

The new revenue stream is expected to generate \$5.4 billion annually, which is on top of the roughly \$5 billion the state already doles out to transportation projects each year. Caltrans must also act quickly, because it committed to fixing more than 17,000 miles of pavement, 500 bridges, 55,000 culverts and 7,700 traffic control lights and message boards in 10 years, said Spokesman Mark Dinger.

But first, Dinger said the agency is looking to clear a backlog of shovel-ready projects that have been shelved due to lack of funding.

"These were projects that were already scheduled to begin in later years, but now, thanks to SB 1, we'll be able to expedite these and start them nearly a year ahead of schedule," he said.

At the same time, the California Transportation Commission, which oversees the allocation of SB 1 money and programming for state transportation projects, is right now in the process of finalizing guidelines for the various categories of funds available to local transit agencies, cities and counties, said Carl Guardino, the President and CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group and a member of the commission. Municipalities could apply for sustainability grants, for example, to make infrastructure improvements that adapt to climate change. Or, a transit agency

could ask for help with a project that demonstrably reduces congestion along a certain highway or bridge corridor.

“This can be transformational for transportation improvements across California, if we all do our jobs well,” Guardino said. “That’s why (the commission) staff and commissioners are working with Caltrans as quickly, but as transparently, as possible to develop all the guidelines in SB 1, so we can move forward with a competitive selection of projects.”

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## [SMART trains to begin North Bay service Aug. 25](#)

**Michael Cabanatuan and Lizzie Johnson**

**SF Gate**

A nearly decadelong wait for the SMART train, a rail service for North Bay commuters, is almost over. Starting next Friday, trains will carry passengers between Sonoma County and San Rafael.

Federal railroad officials gave their stamp of approval to the Bay Area’s newest transit system late Wednesday, and Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit officials are eager to start rolling.

“We’ve been ready to go for a few weeks now,” said Farhad Mansourian, SMART’s general manager. “We’re going to start right after we hold a ceremony to celebrate. It’s going to be the best party ever in the North Bay.”

The train will mark the return of commuter rail service to the North Bay after nearly 60 years. For now, it will carry passengers between the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport in Santa Rosa and downtown San Rafael, stopping at eight stations. But plans call for the line to eventually stretch from Cloverdale to Larkspur.

Full service will begin at 12:49 p.m. next Friday, after a 9 a.m. opening ceremony at the Santa Rosa Downtown Station. Fares will be free the first day, and 50 percent off through Sept. 4. One-way fares, payable by Clipper card or a smartphone app, range from \$3.50 to \$11.50.

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## [Protected bike lanes not considered for Golden Gate Park for beauty reasons](#)

**Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez**

**SF Examiner**

New protected bike lanes won’t grace Golden Gate Park anytime soon because the barriers may detract from the park’s beauty and interfere with marathons.

That’s according to San Francisco Recreation and Park Department Director Phil Ginsburg and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency staff, who revealed the news during an informational presentation on traffic safety improvements in Golden Gate Park at a Rec and Park Commission meeting on Thursday.

At the meeting, SFMTA planner Mark Dreger discussed a suite of traffic safety improvements set to begin construction in Golden Gate Park this fall. They include new stop signs, painted crosswalks, raised crosswalks (which resemble speed humps), speed humps, turn guidance markings for drivers, “safe hit” posts bordering bike lanes and new dedicated turn lanes.

Dreger also described substantial success in slowing drivers with speed humps on John F. Kennedy Drive in the park.

The improvements come after the deaths of two bicycle riders on the same day, June 22, 2016. Heather Miller, 41, was killed on John F. Kennedy Drive near 30th Avenue in Golden Gate Park by a speeding driver. Katherine Slattery, 26, was killed at the intersection of Seventh and Howard streets by a driver running a red light.

Soon after, Mayor Ed Lee issued an executive directive to speed up bike safety with specific asks, including a study of traffic calming in Golden Gate Park.

Though protected bike lanes may not twist through Golden Gate Park anytime soon, speed humps installed on John F. Kennedy Drive have reduced drivers' speeds in the park from 32 mph to 26 mph, according to public health data. Slower speeds, even by as much as 5 mph, can save lives, according to public health officials.

"This was our immediate response, addressing near-term improvements where Heather Miller passed," Dreger said.

Though SFMTA and Rec and Park saw success with traffic calming measures, there won't be physical barriers for cyclists in the park, at least not yet.

Rec and Park Commissioner Kat Anderson asked Dreger to explain why no physical bike lane barriers were proposed.

"We're dealing with some particular circumstances in the park," Dreger said. "We do have some concerns for aesthetics, and various events like foot races on the streets, and concerns not to constrict the roadway width."

Protected bike lanes haven't been ruled out altogether.

"We discussed [protected bike lanes] with MTA," Ginsburg said. "This is a longer term endeavor."

Approvals for the projects already in the pipeline will come before various commission and boards in August, including Rec and Park and the SFMTA, with input from the San Francisco Fire Department.

New traffic signals will aim to improve crossing on Fulton Street, as well as at 28th, 33rd and 37th avenues. New "bus bulbs," where the sidewalk juts out so buses don't have to swerve to the curb, will also be installed along Fulton Street.

"In my view, there are too many cars in the park," Ginsburg told commissioners.

"It's primarily and fundamentally a park," Ginsburg added. "The primary commute road is Crossover Drive. The other roads in the park are for park circulation and park access, not to get from someplace to someplace else."

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## [California's new motor voter law coming in April, state lawyer says](#)

**Bob Egelko**

**SF Gate**

Californians who apply for driver's licenses or state ID cards will be automatically registered to vote starting in April unless they opt out, a state lawyer said in court Thursday.

Deputy Attorney General Paul Stein told a federal magistrate that the long-awaited implementation of the state's "new motor voter law" was grounds for dismissing a suit by voting-rights advocates who objected to California's requirement that drivers who renew their licenses by mail each year must fill out a separate form to register to vote.

The automatic registration procedure, which was approved by state lawmakers in 2015, "goes above and beyond what (federal law) requires" and will take effect before the June 2018 primary election, Stein said. "There's no need for a court order."

But the plaintiffs' lawyer, Michael Risher of the American Civil Liberties Union, said they weren't prepared to drop their case, at least without "some sort of enforcement mechanism" for the April implementation. U.S. Magistrate Laurel Beeler of San Francisco asked the two sides to try to work out an agreement and said she would rule next week on whether the suit could continue.

Secretary of State Alex Padilla's office, which sponsored the 2015 legislation, confirmed Wednesday that the law will take effect in April.

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