

From: Board Secretary
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2017 8:36 AM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: From VTA: October 23, 2017 Media Clips



VTA Daily News Coverage for Monday, October 23, 2017

1. [Here's when Google's downtown San Jose campus could come online \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)
2. [Why the #MeToo movement is a public transportation issue \(Washington Post\)](#)

[Here's when Google's downtown San Jose campus could come online \(Silicon Valley Business Journal\)](#)

A deal has yet to be finalized in San Jose for [Google's](#) mixed-use downtown campus, but new details have emerged about the potential 8 million-square-foot project's tentative timeline, should it move forward.

City officials expect that [Google](#) construction and the “ultimate transformation of the Diridon Area Central Zone,” is likely to happen eight to 10 years from now, after [BART](#) and local high-speed rail projects wrap up, according to a recently released city memo on the matter.

That means that for all the excitement about 20,000 well-paying tech jobs locating to downtown San Jose, the search giant's campus wouldn't come fully online until 2025 to 2027.

The “central zone” is the area immediately around the Diridon Caltrain station and transit hub, which will see the bulk of the work as a new [BART](#) line is extended through downtown and Diridon is outfitted for high-speed rail line.

Development could start sooner in the other parts of the 240-acre Diridon Station area, Nanci Klein, deputy director for the Office of Economic Development and director of real estate at the city, told the Silicon Valley Business Journal on Monday.

But the “central zone” is likely the prime location for new offices, she added.

“Construction for a project that is this complicated is going to be very significant,” she said. “So that is why in that core area you won't likely have development of office buildings until you reach completion or close to completion of transit infrastructure.”

The city estimates that transit work will wrap up sometime between 2025 and 2027, paving the way for [Googlers](#) to board fast trains from the East Bay, San Francisco or along the Peninsula into the heart of downtown San Jose.

But before construction can start on [Google's](#) highly anticipated urban village, San Jose officials and the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency, known more simply as SARA, have to come to an agreement over the price of 16 key publicly owned parcels totaling 21.4 acres that sit in the midst of the 240-acre Diridon Station area.

Price has been the primary pause point in negotiations so far, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo told the Silicon Valley Business Journal last month.

Some in the negotiations have differing views on what the fair market value for the land is, Liccardo said, pointing primarily at the five-person SARA board.

"If this was just the city and [Google](#), I think we'd be moving on at this point," Liccardo said, "but there are a lot of cats to herd."

And though the city from the start set a deadline of March 31, 2018 to reach an agreement with the tech giant regarding the parcels — a date still more than five months in the future — officials are already acknowledging the impasse and asking for an extension.

In the memo, dated Oct. 19, San Jose Deputy City Manager Kim Welsh notes that officials will need "at least 60 days," more to come to an agreement.

Before the land can be sold, the city will need to move through a five-step process, but the city hasn't made much headway on those steps, noted Welsh, who also serves as San Jose's economic development director.

"Given the complexities of determining the sale price with multiple agency owners and appraisers, the multi-year Land Sale and Development Approval process is still in the first task box on the attached schedule," she said.

Those steps include: negotiating with [Google](#) to sell the land, transferring SARA-owned land to the city, rescinding an existing option with another group to acquire a portion of the land that was once slated to be the Oakland A's baseball stadium before that plan fizzled, and defining the "guiding terms and principals" of the agreement, and finally, creating the formal sale agreement.

"Since we are behind on the timeframe for the negotiation for price, and community meetings and community input hasn't begun yet, we don't want to rush the other side," Klein said. "We want to make sure there is a goodly amount of time for community input."

The project could span up to 8 million square feet in downtown San Jose, including Texas developer Trammell Crow's Diridon Station project.

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[Why the #MeToo movement is a public transportation issue](#) (Washington Post)

A man pressing his body too close on a crowded train. A stranger sitting across the center aisle of a bus, whispering obscenities. A group of men standing at a bus stop, freely sharing their thoughts about a woman waiting a few feet away.

As women around the United States and across the world share their experiences with sexual harassment and assault as part of [the “#MeToo” hashtag campaign](#), a theme is emerging. Many of these experiences take place on public transit.

In fact, for many, it's a depressing but foregone conclusion: If you're a woman who rides public transportation, you're almost guaranteed to experience the kinds of demeaning or threatening encounters that fit squarely within the bounds of the #MeToo conversation.

Every day I consider what I'm wearing & the time of night to decide whether to take the train



home alone, hoping it won't be [#MeToo](#)

The prevalence of these stories does not surprise Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, professor of urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Loukaitou-Sideris has spent time researching how perceptions of crime and harassment affect women's use of public transportation — and what urban planners and transit agencies can do to help protect people who are fearful because of their previous experiences with violence or harassment on transit.

One thing is clear from her research, she said: Trains and buses are ground zero for the kinds of incidents highlighted by #MeToo.

[\[#MeToo: Harvey Weinstein case moves thousands to tell their own stories of abuse, break silence\]](#)

Why? It's inherent to the nature of transit. Buses, trains and stations involve public spaces that feel both vast and intimate, where strangers are plentiful, but the usual expectations for personal space can vanish. Transit infrastructure can be desolate — think a dimly lit bus stop on a sparsely populated street — or treacherously crowded. Opportunities are plentiful for would-be harassers and perpetrators of sexual assault.

According to a 2007 survey of New York City subway users, 63 percent of respondents said they had been sexually harassed on the subway, and 51 percent said they were sometimes or frequently threatened with sexual assault or harassment.

[#MeToo](#) I was groped at a bus stop by a man. Ten people in the queue, nobody said anything. I got away but it was years before I told anyone.

Those incidents can have a real impact on public transit ridership, Loukaitou-Sideris said. For people who are “choice” riders and have the means to drive or use taxis instead of public transit, a negative experience with harassment on a train or bus can lead them to make permanent changes in their preferred mode of commuting.

And even for those who are considered “captive” riders — with no flexibility to use alternate modes of transportation — an incident of harassment or assault can have a long-term impact on mobility. Women and men who experience this type of threatening behavior may make changes in their lives to avoid public transit during certain times of day, or to avoid certain lines, routes, stations or stops.

What’s clear from #MeToo is that interactions with fellow riders on public transit often serve as one of women’s (and, sometimes, men’s) initial experiences with sexual harassment or assault.

And that interconnection can have a long-term effect on their comfort with using transit.

“These experiences that happen very early on — because they’re so dramatic and they make you so scared — they have quite a lot of impact. They may taint your use of public transportation and public settings for a very, very long time,” Loukaitou-Sideris said.

On the red line [#DC #metro](#) train in front of my sister in broad daylight and he ran off the train after he assaulted me [#metoo](#)

I was 14, two 50 something punk dudes sat next me on the train so I was cornered, they took turns stroking my leg up to my thigh. [#metoo](#)

Some transit agencies have taken steps to address sexual harassment by launching awareness campaigns aimed at sending the message to riders that groping, intimidation, and lurid or threatening remarks are not tolerated on public transit. Metro debuted its latest anti-harassment awareness campaign [last year](#).

Still, problems continue. [According to statistics released last month](#), there were 61 incidents of harassment reported to Metro in the first half of 2017 — a significant increase from the 37 incidents reported during the same period in 2016. Collective Action for Safe Spaces, a D.C.-based advocacy organization that works to fight harassment, says that this rapid growth is a good thing.

“We view this increase as an indication that people feel more comfortable reporting incidents on D.C.’s public transit system — and that the ad campaign is working,” said Claire Gould, spokeswoman for the organization.

But riders’ willingness to report such incidents doesn’t change the fact that they happen in the first place.

And the incidents are often committed by repeat offenders. A 29-year-old man was arrested by Metro Transit Police last month after authorities say he committed sexual battery and masturbated on a train. The woman who reported the man to police was able to identify him,

Metro says, because she had been targeted by the same man on public transit 18 months earlier.

That man, Nathaniel Tyrone Ford of Southeast D.C., had been arrested at least two dozen times before on charges related to indecent exposure, both on and off public transit. But he continued to use the system because Metro officials don't have the ability to permanently suspend or ban a rider from the entire transit system.

[\[After more than 20 indecent-exposure arrests, Metro still can't ban this man from the trains\]](#)

Despite the prevalence of public awareness campaigns, Loukaitou-Sideris said transit agencies and transportation planners don't take the problem of harassment seriously enough.

After all, she said, it's not just a "women's issue." It's a civil rights issue, and an issue of equal access to urban mobility and public services. And more can be done to help discourage harassment and assault, and to ensure that riders feel safe, she said.

For example, bus stops should not be placed in desolate areas or on quiet stretches of urban sidewalk; instead, putting a bus stop near a restaurant, grocery store or other gathering place can help people feel that there are others around to keep an eye on them. Improved lighting in train stations can help dissuade people from thinking it's okay to inappropriately touch or make comments to other riders.

Countdown clocks, she said, serve as a means to help concerned riders avoid situations that they may assess as dicey. Someone waiting for a bus at night can choose to wait inside a nearby shop or office building, only standing at the stop once the bus is a couple minutes away.

The presence of police can also deter men from believing that they have license to touch, grope or make unwanted remarks to women, Loukaitou-Sideris said. And while surveillance cameras help catch people who commit acts of assault or indecent exposure, they rarely make vulnerable train or bus passengers feel safer. There's little confidence that someone is watching the video closely enough to stop an attack as it's occurring.

I banged on a random neighbor's door to escape a group of men who had grabbed me at a Tube station and tried to follow me home. [#MeToo](#)

Most of all, Loukaitou-Sideris said, it's important to create systems where women are encouraged to report harassment or assault that they experience on public transit — and to feel confident that their accounts won't be belittled or ignored.

Though many riders, particularly women, may think it's a waste of time to report a relatively minor incident such as a verbal harassment from a fellow rider, Loukaitou-Sideris contends that documenting such episodes is the only way to get transit operators to pay attention to the problem.

She compared the need for increased reporting on transit to the accusations made against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein — the same allegations that [helped prompt](#) the #MeToo Internet phenomenon.

“There were so many women that had been victimized and they were not saying anything. And then these articles came out, and everybody realized it’s okay to say something,” Loukaitou-Sideris said. “That’s the best reason to be vocal. It prompts other people to share their experiences and be counted. It doesn’t give an excuse to the rest of society to do anything about it.”

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From: Board Secretary

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2017 2:22 PM

To: VTA Board of Directors

Cc: Childress, Brandi

Subject: Testing update on VTA's BART Silicon Valley Berryessa Extension (Phase I)

VTA Board of Directors:

The VTA's BART Silicon Valley Berryessa Extension (Phase I) is making yet another stride towards passenger service. Starting today, dynamic testing will commence along the 10-mile extension, where train movements will be tested from Fremont to San Jose. This marks the successful completion of static testing which included all track, communications and signal test along the trackway.

Dynamic testing will be visible to the public as multi-car trains travel along the 10-mile extension. Train movements will be slow going at first but, over time, the goal will be to simulate BART service at up to 80 miles per hour. Testing will occur in two shifts: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m., six days a week (no testing on Sundays).

Attached is the updated timeline and talking points in case there are questions from the public about what to expect during this testing phase. You can also direct them to [Brandi Childress](#), VTA's Media and Public Affairs Manager at (408) 952-4297.

Board Secretary's Office
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street, Building B
San Jose, CA 95134-1927
Phone [408-321-5680](tel:408-321-5680)
board.secretary@vta.org





BART Silicon Valley

Sequence of Events to Complete Phase 1



Station Construction



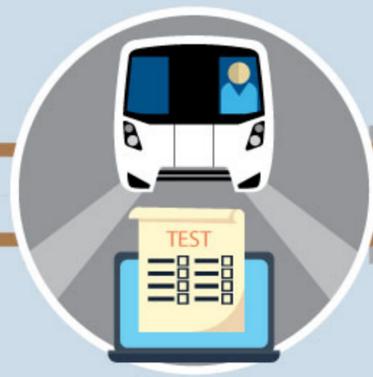
Complete landscaping, station interiors and exteriors

Static Testing



Perform all communications, track and signal tests

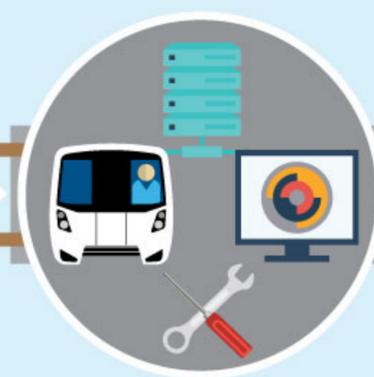
Dynamic Testing



Test train movements along 10-mile extension

OCT 24 2017

Integration Testing



Integrate 10-mile extension **with** existing BART system

Safety Certification



Certify the safety and reliability of the integrated 10-mile extension

Passenger Service



VTA Board Talking Points – Dynamic Testing Begins on BART SV Phase I

- VTA is getting one step closer towards passenger service on the BART Silicon Valley Berryessa Extension (Phase I).
- Dynamic testing has commenced along the 10-mile extension, where train movements will be tested from Fremont to San Jose.
- This marks the successful completion of static testing which included all track, communications and signal test along the trackway.
- Dynamic testing will be visible to the public as multi-car trains will travel along the 10-mile extension. Train movements will be slow going at first but, over time, the goal will be to simulate BART service at up to 80 miles per hour.
- With construction activities wrapping up on the Phase I project by the end of this year, noise and vibrations from construction activities have significantly decreased.
- However, now that trains are actively running on the new tracks as system testing takes place, nearby residents will begin to hear a different tune.
 - Transit noise and vibration are generated by BART trains in motion. The noise comes from the electric motors that propel the train and the rolling noise of the steel wheels on the tracks. Vibrations result from the weight of the train rolling over the tracks.
 - After extensive sound testing, VTA utilized multiple construction techniques to minimize noise impacts to nearby residences and other nearby facilities, all meeting federal noise standards. They include construction of new soundwalls, insulation of existing structures, equipment enclosures, floating concrete slabs underneath tracks and the use of Tire Derived Aggregate (ground up tires used as a vibration absorbing material) - a construction technique successfully used by VTA on the Vasona Light Rail Extension.

- The schedule for passenger service established with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is June 2018. For most of the five years of construction, VTA has tracked six months ahead of schedule and under budget. VTA is now tracking on time and still under budget.
- Once VTA's project began the process of tying into BART's Warm Springs Extension and system testing started, progress became more dependent on the completion of thousands of tests that must be performed by VTA, VTA's contractor and BART.
- This is the third milestone in the sequence of events that VTA has identified in order to successfully provide fully-integrated, safe and reliable BART service to Silicon Valley. These milestones consist of three testing phases (dynamic testing being the second of the three) and safety certification to ensure the extension has been correctly designed, constructed, installed and operating as intended.
- Even after VTA completes all construction work by the end of this year, only BART and government oversight agencies can determine when the new extension will be ready for passenger service.
- VTA is working hand-in-hand with BART and the Joint Venture team, Skanska Shimmick Herzog, to achieve passenger service consistent with the FTA schedule in June 2018.
- While we understand that residents are excited about riding the new BART extension into Milpitas and San Jose, it is VTA's top and unwavering priority to deliver safe and reliable service.
- We greatly appreciate the investment the public has made to see this project reach passenger service, and we are committed to delivering a transit system worthy of that investment.

From: Board Secretary
Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2017 3:24 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: From VTA: October 25, 2017 Media Clips



VTA Daily News Coverage for Wednesday, October 25, 2017

1. [Python Up for Adoption \(ABC\)](#)
2. [Pet Snake Found on Bus \(FOX\)](#)
3. [Nobody knows how 2-foot-long python got on a Palo Alto bus](#)
4. [Roadshow: Toll hike could pay for I-680-I-880 connector](#)
5. [Dumbarton plan gains support](#)
6. [De Young Museum tries to slam brakes on making Golden Gate Park car-free Saturdays year-round](#)
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[Python Up for Adoption](#)

ABC Channel 7 KGO

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[Pet Snake Found on Bus](#)

KTVU Channel 2 FOX

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[Nobody knows how 2-foot-long python got on a Palo Alto bus](#)

Michelle Robertson

SFGATE

Passengers were in for a slithery surprise when they encountered a snake curled on a seat of a Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus in Palo Alto last month, and how it ended up there remains a mystery.

The 2-foot-long ball python evidently had somewhere to be on the afternoon of September 27, according to a press release from the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA (PHS/SPCA), when he gave his bus companions quite a fright.

After the scaled creature was spotted, the driver pulled over at the Encinal and El Camino Real stop in Palo Alto and asked passengers to disembark. An animal control officer escorted the snake off the bus and transported him, by private vehicle rather than public transportation, to PHS/SPCA.

"No one is quite certain how the snake ended up on the bus, but we are grateful someone spotted him and he was safely removed from the bus," said Buffy Martin Tarbox, PHS/SPCA's Communications Manager.

Peninsula Humane dubbed the young python "Rumplesnakeskin" and says he is a "very friendly snake" who "likes to be held."

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[Roadshow: Toll hike could pay for I-680-I-880 connector](#)

Gary Richards

San Jose Mercury News

Q: A problem I continually encounter is at the southbound Interstate 680 exit onto South Mission Boulevard in Fremont. During the commute, I-680 traffic becomes backed up a quarter of a mile or more because of the two traffic lights shortly after the off-ramp.

If the geniuses who placed two interstate highways so close together — I-680 and I-880 — without an adequate interchange had recognized the inevitable problem they were creating, this problem would never have arisen.

Richard Keller, Fremont

A: Oh, I so agree and for the first time in decades there is hope of a 680-880 freeway link. Really.

When Bay Area voters go to the polls next year to consider a toll hike of \$1 to \$3 on our state-owned bridges, this is one of the projects under consideration in the \$4.45 billion plan known as Regional Measure 3.

The vote needs a simple majority and a survey showed 56 percent support.

Other major projects include expansion of BART's railcar fleet, the BART-to-Santa Clara extension, extending Caltrain to downtown San Francisco; expanding transbay bus services and AC Transit's bus rapid transit lines; upgrading the Highway 4-Interstate 680 interchange in Contra Costa County, plus the Interstate 680-Highway 84 interchange in Alameda County and Dumbarton Bridge improvements, and the 101-92 highway interchange in San Mateo.

And, brace yourself, there's even talk of a second transbay tube.

Whew, voters and bridge users, what do you say?

Q: Could you better explain this toll structure? Does it also apply to single axle trailers? I pull a 1,400-pound tiny teardrop RV and am very confused. Does my transponder work when towing and what lane do I need to be in?

Wesley Van Osdol, San Jose

A: Yes it does and toll tags work in every lane.

Like Mr. Roadshow's Facebook page for more questions and answers about Bay Area roads, freeways and commuting.

Q: To those patronizing the Fremont BART station off Civic Center Drive, while I appreciate you doing your part to lessen traffic congestion by using public transportation I am absolutely livid at individuals that think they can park in private lots of businesses because they cannot find a spot at the BART station.

Those using Kaiser and surrounding private business lots to park because you don't want to find alternate ways to get to the BART station are totally despicable and selfish. You obviously have no clue as to how you are impacting patients, employees, and visitors to Kaiser. Or maybe you do but you don't give a damn.

I would like to think people would have common courtesy for others but more and more I am seeing less of this in Fremont. Totally shameful.

Caren Menter, Fremont

A: Whoa. BART users, what do say?

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[Dumbarton plan gains support](#)

**Samantha Weigel Daily Journal staff
The Daily Journal**

With competition for transportation funding steepening as Bay Area gridlock tightens, a coalition of leaders from multiple counties is forming to lift up Dumbarton Corridor as a priority.

State lawmakers, mayors, supervisors, transit leaders, business representatives and environmental advocates joined to urge the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to focus attention on the South Bay crossing.

About 20 officials signed a letter sent Tuesday to the MTC advocating for the unique opportunity to create a new transbay crossing along the defunct rail bridge and urge funding be steered its way. While officials have spent decades considering how to improve the South Bay connection, a recently released multi-modal study by the San Mateo County Transit District proposes a variety of tangible projects and plans.

“It’s the missing link in this mega-regional transportation network,” said Warren Slocum, a San Mateo County supervisor who sits on the 21-member MTC.

The century-old rail bridge sits immediately south of the car bridge that carries tens of thousands of commuters with the vast majority heading from their East Bay homes to jobs on the Peninsula.

But while San Mateo County legislators, supervisors and transit officials have been holding the torch for improvements to Dumbarton in recent months, it’s now becoming clear there’s a broader set of Bay Area representatives also in support.

East Bay leaders and five MTC commissioners signed on to the letter advocating for a corridor that stretches from Alameda to San Mateo counties, and has the potential to link rail from the Peninsula to Sacramento.

Union City Mayor Carol Dutra-Vernaci, who also sits on MTC, said it’s critical for lawmakers to think beyond their jurisdictional boundaries and recognize the power of a regional approach.

“I am very excited to work with the elected officials in San Mateo County because we do have a common purpose — to improve transportation for the residents in both of our counties. And I think that’s the message going forward, that there are elected officials that understand the importance of this project,” Dutra-Vernaci said.

The timing is poignant as a confluence of resources could align to offer critical funding sources for Bay Area transit in the coming years, Slocum said.

In 2018, Bay Area voters are expected to consider Regional Measure 3, an MTC-proposed bridge toll hike that could generate billions for transit projects in the nine counties. Senate Bill 1, the statewide overhaul that included a gas tax increase and vehicle registration fees, will soon be allocating transit funding to local and regional governments. And, various counties — including San Mateo — have either secured or are in the process of asking voters for sales tax measures dedicated toward transportation.

Regional and state sources are in extremely high demand and MTC plays a significant role in allocating funding. Bay Area lawmakers in Sacramento spent months negotiating over an expenditure plan for RM3 in a high-stakes pull for limited funding.

RM3 could increase tolls by up to \$3, which would generate \$4.45 billion for transit projects. Legislators settled on an expenditure plan that roughly outlines \$1.96 billion for regional projects such as BART, installing express lanes, improving trails, enhancing ferries and toward

existing rail lines. It also has corridor-specific lists that include \$780 million for San Francisco and the Bay Bridge; \$610 million for the San Mateo-Hayward and Dumbarton region; and nearly \$1.1 billion for the North Bay including Richmond-San Rafael, Benicia-Martinez, Carquinez and Antioch.

The Dumbarton Corridor is slated to receive \$130 million — which is a drop in the bucket considering the SamTrans study outlined a nearly \$2.6 billion wish list that touches on rail, express lanes, bicyclists, shuttles and bus.

It will likely take a rallying cry to ensure regional funding makes its way toward Dumbarton. In years past, Dumbarton has gotten shortchanged with funding it was awarded from the last bridge toll increase Regional Measure 2, siphoned away toward other projects like BART.

“Last time this came around, the money that was there for the corridor was diverted to other projects for a lot of different reasons. This letter says ‘hey, we’ve been working on this to build support and built this coalition,’” Slocum said, acknowledging it’s the first step in a long process. “We just want to get this in the conversation. ... It’s investing time and energy to set the table.”

Slocum and Dutra-Vernaci agreed they hope more will recognize how Dumbarton fits in to a truly regional approach. The bridge itself spans from East Palo Alto to Newark and the goal is to have a new rail crossing line up with other transit systems on both ends. It could create a more contiguous system connecting Caltrain along the Peninsula to the East Bay’s BART, Capital Corridor and Altamont Corridor Express. Capitol Corridor would offer a reach beyond the Bay Area as its rail connects to Sacramento. Dutra-Vernaci noted Union City is working toward an intermodal station to connect these lines in the East Bay and wants Dumbarton to offer a route onto the Peninsula.

By providing enhanced transit options along the bridge, it could reduce the number of solo drivers and ease congestion on both ends. It also offers a required nexus between those paying tolls and who experiences the benefits, she explained.

“It’s very important to me to make sure that the people that are using the bridge and paying those tolls are able to see the improvements in their daily commutes,” Dutra-Vernaci said. “And the fact that Dumbarton rail bridge is an asset for us to capitalize on is a unique opportunity.”

The century-old bridge is owned by SamTrans, which conducted the study with the help of a \$1 million donation from Facebook. Officials recognize improving the corridor that so many residents, employers and people rely upon is going to take a regional effort and multiple funding sources.

While still early, the coalition of support building behind Dumbarton is worth noting. Slocum’s letter was signed by state senators, assemblymen, supervisors in San Mateo and Alameda counties, and leaders of numerous business groups. The mayors of Redwood City, Newark, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Hayward and Union City also offered their support.

“If it’s going to end up being a regional system, the region has to support it. And we’re not finished gathering support,” Slocum said. “This is going to take a large pool of resources from a variety of entities. ... But we have this once in a generational opportunity with all these transportation measures that will be on the ballot, to try to put the pieces together. Like any huge project, it’s always about funding.”

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[De Young Museum tries to slam brakes on making Golden Gate Park car-free Saturdays year-round](#)

Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez
San Francisco Examiner

For half a century, John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park has been car-free on Sundays to the enjoyment of walkers, cyclists, disco-dancing roller-skaters and more — but similar Saturday closures, enacted a decade ago, only span the summer.

Now, an effort is underway to make the popular thoroughfare car-free on Saturdays year-round, the San Francisco Examiner has learned.

Opposition, however, may kill that effort before it’s even officially proposed to the public.

Mark Hollein, director of the de Young Museum that’s located near John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park, laid out the museum’s opposition in a Sept. 7 email to San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department General Manager Phil Ginsburg, which was obtained by the Examiner.

“I received your message regarding exploring the potential of extending the current six-month closure of JFK to a year-round closure,” Hollein wrote. “I cannot lend my support to additional road closures in the immediate vicinity of the de Young.”

Hollein cited the loss of 25 percent of the parking spots when cycle tracks were laid down on John F. Kennedy Drive in 2012 and a fear of losing out-of-town visitors as reasons to oppose the street closure, as well as concern for people with disabilities and families who may travel by car.

Sources speaking to the Examiner on background were concerned the political weight of the de Young Museum could defeat the plan before it is publicly proposed, perhaps bolstered by Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco President Dede Wilsey, a philanthropist and major financial backer of San Francisco politicians.

The California Academy of Sciences, also located in Golden Gate Park, is listed as opposed to expanding the Saturday closures, according to Rec and Park documents obtained by the Examiner.

Ike Kwon, chief operating officer of the Academy of Sciences, said the academy is “not opposing it,” but asking for dialogue.

“We’ve been asking, very vocally, for more discussion,” he said.

Kwon said the academy is surveying its members and volunteers now to see how they get to the museum, and added that “we’re always big supporters of not driving fossil fuel machines, but unfortunately people do so to get here.”

In 2007, along with car-free Sundays, Saturday car-free closures from April through September were instated and dubbed “Healthy Saturdays,” partially in an effort to encourage more exercise.

But making Golden Gate Park streets car-free became more imperative in the minds of advocates and city planners after the death of bicyclist Heather Miller, 41, who was struck and killed on John F. Kennedy Drive in June 2016.

Following her death and the death on the same day of another cyclist, 26-year-old Kate Slattery, Mayor Ed Lee issued an executive directive aimed at cyclist safety — with some directives legally binding Rec and Park to slow down vehicle speeds in Golden Gate Park.

“We should be doing everything we can to open up more accessible space [so] people are safe to enjoy without worry,” said Brian Wiedenmeier, executive director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. “Making Healthy Saturdays in Golden Gate Park year-round would be one easy, low-impact way to achieve that goal.”

Rec and Park officials told the Examiner they’ve been working with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency to make Golden Gate Park’s streets safer since December 2016, and included expanding car-free Saturdays during their recent outreach efforts.

In online surveys Rec and Park conducted with Golden Gate Park goers, 311 said they got there by walking, 327 by bicycling, 155 by driving, 48 by transit or park shuttle, 18 by taxi and ride-hails and 20 in “other” ways.

Supervisors Sandra Fewer and Katy Tang both told the Examiner they were concerned for families, people with disabilities and seniors who may lose access to museums without the ability to park.

“I used to ride my bike on Crossover Drive,” said Tang, who is a native San Franciscan. But, she added, not everyone is able-bodied enough to ride a bike.

Fewer said she’d like to see data specifically on how people arrive at the museums of Golden Gate Park.

Still, advocates noted that without a major upswell from the public in support of expanding Healthy Saturdays, museum opposition may knock it out before it’s even proposed.

Editor's note: The photo caption of this story has been corrected to reflect that car-free Saturdays began in Golden Gate Park from April through September in 2007.

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[LA Looks to Rideshare to Build the Future of Public Transit](#)

Aarian Marshall

Wired

BACK IN YE olden times, beckoning a ride with a phone tap was for the 1-ish percent. Former Uber CEO Travis Kalanick says he launched his world-shaking app back in 2009 so he could look über-rich and powerful. "We just wanted to push a button and get a ride, and we wanted to get a classy ride," he later told Business Insider. "We wanted to be baller in San Francisco."

Now, the sort of on-demand transit Uber, Lyft, and other ride-hailing companies have made so popular might finally make it to the masses—maybe even to those without smartphones or bank accounts. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority just announced it's looking for a friend to help it build an on-demand transit program, which would supplement the services the agency already runs.

LA Metro calls it "microtransit," something in between a big bus that follows a rigid route and a personal ride that takes you door to door. And by "friend", of course, we mean a private company. Uber, maybe, or Lyft, or van services such as Ford-owned Chariot or New York-based Via. On Monday, the agency that serves 1.3 million daily riders issued a request for proposals, asking anyone interested to plan, design, implement, and eventually evaluate a microtransit pilot project.

Metro kept its demands vague in the interest of sparking creative solutions, but it does have a sense of the sort of experimental service it would like to roll out in 2018: You'd use a smartphone app or phone call to beckon a ride from a smaller vehicle, something between a sedan and a full-size bus, which you would share with other riders. That vehicle would run on the same kind of platform you'll find on UberPOOL, or Lyft Line, dynamically creating routes based on where customers are and where they want to go. You might have to walk a block or two to an assigned pickup and drop-off point (a "virtual bus stop"), but the ride should come with a free transfer if your next move is a bus or train ride. You'd pay a subsidized, fixed-rate fee that's competitive with today's ride-sharing services, and would be able to take these vehicles wherever you want within the pilot's service area.

Yes, on-demand service is finally coming to public transit, and it could reshape the way Americans get around. Just in time too. American cities are growing, traffic is getting worse, emissions are surging, and public transit systems are suffering from years of underfunding and neglect. (LA has poured money into improving its system but has seen a 16 percent drop in bus

ridership in the past three years.) On-demand, shared microtransit might gift entire cities with faster, cost effective service and move drivers out of personal cars.

Or it could be the latest shiny object (oh hey, hyperloop) distracting from the time- and work-intensive solutions needed to fix city travel ills, such as better payment systems, upgraded trains and vehicles, more frequent service, and road pricing schemes.

LA thinks it's worth a shot. “We can’t sit idly by and see new technologies come and go without trying to figure out how they fit into the public transit landscape,” says Joshua Schank, the chief innovation officer at LA Metro’s extraordinarily named Office of Extraordinary Innovation.

And yes, so many details are up in the air. The agency can’t say where the pilot will happen, though it will probably be confined to one part of the county. It doesn’t know how much an on-demand trip will cost or how much the agency will spend on the service. It wants unionized drivers to be behind the wheels of the vehicles, but it's not committed to the idea. The pilot could run up to four years, or maybe fewer. LA Metro will say that if the experiment is a success—if it proves a cost-effective way to move many people around the city—it will think about making the service permanent all over the county.

Proponents see this type of public-private partnership as the key to a new kind of public transit service, where agencies are more like travel agents (remember those?) than airlines. “We want to see transit agencies become mobility conveners and brokers,” says Sharon Feigon, the executive director of the Shared-Use Mobility Center, which promotes relationships between agencies and private mobility companies. “They should run the trains and buses as they always have and continue to improve and accelerate those by being a mobility convener. The idea is that they become the organizer of all that and ensure they’re all connected to each other.” For example: use your bus fare card to access the bikeshare docks near your stop; take a publicly subsidized Lyft ride to the closest carshare lot and climb inside.

But there are pitfalls, and we know about them because Los Angeles is not the first city to experiment with microtransit. In Kansas City, a one-year pilot program sent agency-owned vans driven by agency-employed drivers to pick up passengers along routes calculated on the fly. It canned the experiment in March, after just one year, since just 1,480 people tried it out of a city of 2 million. Public officials concluded they hadn't advertised enough. In San Francisco, the private, Ford-owned van service Chariot has gotten into scrapes with local transit authorities because drivers idle in bus stops and in the middle of the street. If you’re going to have microtransit, you gotta find safe places for vehicles to park.

You have to teach your residents to use the services too. St. Petersburg, Florida’s Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority is still running a pilot program that connects residents with Uber and taxi rides for bus-equivalent fares, but it discovered soon after it launched the program in February 2016 that it needed to do more than set up a few billboards. “Our ridership is transit-dependent, with minimum wage incomes, so they’re not familiar with Uber because they haven’t used it before,” Christopher Cochran, the senior planner who oversaw the project, told

WIRED in April. (He has since left the agency.) “You need to educate the people on how to use Uber and why that’s the best choice.” His agency ended up creating leaflets that taught residents how to use the app.

Then there's the money question. "Transit’s real strength is economies of scale, carrying large numbers of people in a very straight line from place to place," says David Bragdon, the executive director of the think tank TransitCenter. “I think the caution of this proposal is, how could it possibly be economical?” On-demand paratransit, transit services that agencies must legally provide to disabled and senior riders, accounted for a whopping 12 percent of all American transit spending in 2013.

If ambitious private transportation companies believe they can get all sorts of people around traffic-choked LA County quickly and cheaply—well, this is the time to step up. LA Metro starts accepting proposals October 25.

TRANSIT TROUBLES

Aarian Marshall breaks down what went wrong during the microtransit experiment in Kansas City—and why it might have been a success anyway

Hosting the Olympics could be a golden opportunity for Los Angeles to fix its public transportation system

Alex Davies outlines what New York City will need to repair its struggling subway—and it's more than a \$1 billion check.

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From: Board Secretary

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2017 8:05 PM

To: VTA Board of Directors

Cc: Ratcliffe, Dennis; Gonot, Carolyn

Subject: VTA's BART Phase II Extension to Santa Clara Underground Stations Considerations

VTA Board of Directors:

As you may recall, a member of the public requested the Board to consider using the mined construction methods used to construct London's new Farringdon Station for VTA's BART Silicon Valley Phase II.

Per the Board's request, VTA staff prepared a response to assist the Board in considering these assertions and related concerns. The attached memorandum will demonstrate the following:

- The mining techniques used at Farringdon Station are not suitable for constructing underground stations in San Jose.
- Farringdon Station demonstrates the operational viability of the single-bore option proposed by VTA.

Please open the attached document to view the staff analysis, copies of the correspondence from the member of the public, and technical papers. If you have any questions, please reply to this email or contact Dennis Ratcliffe, Deputy Director, Engineering and Program Delivery, at (408) 952-4233.

Thank you.

Board Secretary's Office
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street, Building B
San Jose, CA 95134-1927
Phone [408-321-5680](tel:408-321-5680)
board.secretary@vta.org



From: Board Secretary
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2017 12:07 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: From VTA: October 26, 2017 Media Clips



VTA Daily News Coverage for Thursday, October 26, 2017

1. [BART Test Trains \(KPIX Ch. 5\)](#)
2. [BART Test Trains \(KPIX Ch. 5\)](#)
3. [BART Test Trains \(ABC 7 News\)](#)
4. [Snake found on VTA bus now up for adoption \(Palo Alto Weekly\)](#)
5. [Former planner claims retaliation, discrimination in claim against city \(Palo Alto Daily Post\)](#)

[BART Test Trains \(KPIX Ch. 5\)](#)

(Link to reporter's story)

[BART Test Trains \(KPIX Ch. 5\)](#)

(Link to video)

[BART Test Trains \(ABC 7 News\)](#)

(Link to video)

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[Snake found on VTA bus now up for adoption \(Palo Alto Weekly\)](#)

A young ball python found curled up on a Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority bus last month in Palo Alto is now up for adoption, the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA said in a press release Tuesday.

The 1- to 2-foot-long snake was found on a VTA bus traveling west through Palo Alto on Sept. 27 at around 7 a.m., VTA spokeswoman Linh Hoang said. The bus pulled over at the [Encina Avenue and El Camino Real](#) stop near Town & Country Village shopping center and cleared of passengers. The slithery creature was removed from the bus by a Palo Alto Animal Services animal control officer.

The snake, named Rumplesnakeskin, spent nine days cooling his scales at the Palo Alto animal shelter, waiting for someone to claim him. He was transferred to the Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA Center for Compassion in Burlingame, according to its communications manager Buffy Tarbox.

"No one is quite certain how the snake ended up on the bus, but we are grateful someone spotted him and he was safely removed from the bus," Tarbox said.

Hoang said that the VTA does allow service animals and small pets in carriers on its buses.

"This is the first time a pet has ever been left behind on one of our vehicles, according to operations," she said.

Peninsula Humane Society officials said that ball pythons make ideal pets, but like all reptiles, they need specialized care. They are friendly and tend to be smaller in size, on average about 2 to 3 feet long once fully grown.

Staff will help potential adopters understand the equipment and husbandry required to help Rumplesnakeskin thrive. Ball pythons can live for 30 years with proper care.

"Rumplesnakeskin is a very friendly snake and likes to be held. It is clear he was someone's pet, but no one came forward to claim him so he's now looking for a new permanent home," Tarbox said.

Potential adopters interested in meeting Rumplesnakeskin can visit the Center for Compassion at 1450 Rollins Road in Burlingame. The center is open Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on weekends from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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[Former planner claims retaliation, discrimination in claim against city \(Palo Alto Daily Post\)](#)

A former senior transportation planner has filed a claim against the city of Palo Alto, alleging sex discrimination and whistle-blower retaliation.

Sarah Syed, 37, filed the claim on Aug. 4, 2016, six months after she says she was wrongfully fired with “malice, corruption and fraud” on the part of the city. She was hired in April 2015.

City Council discussed the claim during an hour-long [closed session](#) on Monday.

Syed claims that the city’s Director of Planning and Community Environment, Hillary Gitelman, “maliciously induced (Syed) to accept employment at the city under false pretenses.”

The claim also contends that the city’s hiring of Jessica Sullivan as Parking Manager in October 2013, and Sullivan’s promotion to the position of Planning Manager of the Transportation Division in February 2015, constituted “negligent and reckless hiring, and injured Ms. Syed in the course of these events.”

Retaliation claimed

Sullivan’s promotion, Syed says, violated the city’s Equal Employment Opportunity policies. Syed says she faced retaliation for reporting the violation. Sullivan was hired and promoted before Syed’s hiring.

Sullivan, whose LinkedIn profile says she developed the city’s Downtown Residential Preferential Parking District, left the city in April 2016 for a job as a Real Estate Project Executive with Google.

The city’s Chief Transportation Official, Josh Mello, is also named in the claim as having “made false representations to Ms. Syed following her six-month performance appraisal.”

Disparaging information

Syed also claims that on March 17, 2016, Mello wrongfully disclosed confidential and other disparaging information about Syed’s employment, injuring her professional reputation.

According to Syed’s website, while with the city, she oversaw bike and pedestrian implementation and advanced community outreach, leading public workshops and serving as the Transportation Department lead on the development of a community mobile app.

Syed, Gitelman and Mello all declined to comment on the claim. Pursuant to a tolling agreement signed by both sides to extend the statute of limitations, Syed has until Nov. 3 to file a lawsuit. She had not done so as of yesterday.

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From: Board Secretary
Sent: Friday, October 27, 2017 3:27 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: VTA Information: Ridership Memo for September 2017

VTA Board of Directors:

Attached is a memorandum from Chief Operating Officer Inez Evans regarding VTA ridership for September 2017.

Thank you.

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



Conserve paper. Think before you print.

TO: VTA Board of Directors

THROUGH: Nuria I. Fernandez
General Manager/CEO

FROM: Inez Evans
Chief Operating Officer

DATE: October 26, 2017

SUBJECT: VTA Ridership for September 2017

September 2017 total monthly system ridership for bus and light rail was 3,171,610, a decrease of 6.8% over September 2016. September 2017 had 20 weekdays, one less than September 2016. Core bus routes recorded a 2.7% decrease in average weekday ridership. Community bus routes recorded a 1.6% decrease in average weekday ridership.

There were two 49ers football games at Levi's® Stadium recording a total of 26,622 riders, or an average of 13,311 riders per event. September 2016 had one football game and two concerts (Beyoncé and Coldplay) totaling 34,460 riders, or an average of 11,487 riders per event.

September 2017 total monthly ridership recorded a 0.5% decrease compared to August 2017. Ridership change from August to September typically averages +2.0%. The unusually lower ridership in September compared to August was due primarily to the one less weekday in September 2017 compared to September 2016. However, average weekday for September was 9.4% more than August. Average weekday ridership is typically +10.0% from August to September.

Ridership	Sept-2017	Sept-2016	Percent Change	Aug. 2017	Percent Change
Bus	2,456,495	2,570,007	-4.4%	2,432,025	1.0%
Light Rail	715,115	831,760	-14.0%	753,926	-5.1%
System	3,171,610	3,401,767	-6.8%	3,185,951	-0.5%

Five key core routes, Lines 23, 25, 72, 73 and 522 recorded an overall average weekday ridership improvement of 5.4% over September 2016. Line 522 recorded a 15.6% improvement over September 2016 as shown in the table below:

Route	Sept-2017	Sept-2016	Difference	Percent change
522	6,941	6,006	935	15.6%
25	6,617	6,462	155	2.4%
23	7,203	7,088	115	1.6%
73	2,677	2,571	106	4.1%
72	2,776	2,739	37	1.4%
Totals	26,214	24,866	1,348	5.4%

Forty-seven of the 69 bus routes, or 68%, did not meet the weekday standards as defined in the Service Design Guidelines. The top five core routes and light rail stations that had the most average weekday ridership declines are shown in the table below:

Route	Sept-2017	Sept-2016	Difference	Percent change
22	10,760	12,435	-1,675	-13.5%
26	3,016	3,415	-399	-11.7%
66	5,957	6,239	-282	-4.5%
323	1,703	1,902	-199	-10.5%
68	4,969	5,144	-175	-3.4%
Totals	26,405	29,135	-2,730	-9.4%

Station	Sept-2017	Sept-2016	Difference	Percent change
SANTA CLARA	1,543	2,023	-480	-23.7%
SAN ANTONIO	2,031	2,494	-463	-18.6%
OHLONE-CHYNOWETH	1,242	1,585	-343	-21.6%
CIVIC CENTER	940	1,215	-275	-22.6%
CONVENTION CENTER	831	1,090	-259	-23.8%
Totals	6,587	8,407	-1,820	-21.6%

The fiscal year-to-date total system ridership for bus and light rail recorded a 6.7% decrease.

Ridership	(Current) Jul'17-Sep'17	(Prior) Jul'15-Sep'16	Percent Change
Bus	7,085,148	7,456,445	-5.0%
Light Rail	2,192,785	2,489,295	-11.9%
System	9,277,933	9,945,740	-6.7%

From: Board Secretary

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2017 4:37 PM

To: Board Secretary

Subject: VTA Information: November 2, 2017, VTA Board of Directors Regular Meeting Agenda

VTA Board of Directors:

You may now access the **VTA Board of Directors Regular Meeting Agenda Packet** scheduled for **November 2, 2017**, on our website [here](#).

Thank you.

Office of the Board Secretary
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street, Building B
San Jose, CA 95134-1927
Phone [408-321-5680](tel:408-321-5680)



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