

From: VTA Board Secretary
Sent: Wednesday, September 18, 2019 11:03 AM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: From VTA: Sept 17-18 Media Clips

VTA Daily News Coverage for Tuesday, Sept. 17 and Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2019

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County Supervisor Candidates Square Off Over Housing, Transportation at Dem Forum (San Jose Inside)

With [campaign](#) season kicking into full-gear, contenders for Santa Clara County Supervisor Dave Cortese's seat explored some of the region's most pressing issues at a candidate Monday night forum hosted by the Silicon Valley Democratic Club.

Of seven candidates in the running for the District 3 post, only four got an invite: San Jose Councilwoman Magdalena Carrasco, Assemblyman Kansen Chu, former Councilwoman Rose Herrera and former Sunnyvale Mayor Otto Lee. Of those four, just Carrasco and Chu showed up; Lee, who was out of town on a work trip, sent his campaign consultant Eric Stroker to speak on his behalf.

One reportedly dropped out from not only the event, but the race itself. Herrera's no-show [prompted chatter](#) about her setting her sights on her old City Council seat in District 8, where Sylvia Arenas is running for a second term. (Herrera's campaign team did not immediately return San Jose Inside's calls for comment).

The other contenders who missed the event were El Camino Healthcare District Director Peter Fung and recently resigned San Jose Planning Commissioner John Leyba. Anthony Phan pulled out of the race to pursue re-election on the Milpitas City Council.

Despite the small panel Monday, the conversation moderated by Silicon Valley Organization Executive Vice President Madison Nguyen proved lively

enough. The Dem club made sure to press the candidates who did attend to talk about how they plan to address the housing crisis, the region's over-trafficked roads and climate change.

Carrasco said she wants to make sure that cities throughout the county are building its "fair share" of housing. For ages, San Jose has been relegated as the region's bedroom community because neighboring cities prioritize commercial development over housing, which has created a stubborn imbalance in the city she represents.

"The housing crisis is one of the biggest crises we've seen, at least in my lifetime," the District 5 councilor said. "It's going to take a regional effort to make sure we build quickly, we build throughout the county, we build for those who are living on the streets [and] that we build on all income levels." Chiming in for Lee, Stroker said that affordable housing is one of "Otto's top issues."

"We're trying to go denser," he told the audience gathered at the Campbell Community Center. "We need to find the right spots to get this stuff done." Chu cited his experience in the California Legislature, where, in the past week alone, a number of housing bills he supported made its to the governor's desk.

"I think what we really need to do is get all the smart people together to develop a long term plan of how we're going to address this issue," the state lawmaker said. "Planning is the key to any government success."

While rents rise in denser parts of Silicon Valley and the Bay Area, people are being pushed to live in the reaches of Fresno, Tracy and Modesto and commute great lengths to where the jobs are. The impact has put a strain on traffic and has made already hours-long commutes even worse. With that in mind, Nguyen asked how each candidate planned to solve the region's worsening traffic issues.

Chu said he believed that both transportation and housing are "two faces of the same problem." While Stroker said that "sometimes innovative ideas are old ideas," and that Lee would look at expanding VTA routes to give people more public transit options.

Carrasco said the biggest issue, in her mind, is that California wasn't built for mass transit and that lawmakers have prioritized the kind of transportation infrastructure that induces more vehicle traffic. "We need to get people out of their cars," she said. "Transportation needs to be efficient and effective." Candidates also discussed ways to make the county cleaner by limiting carbon pollution.

"I know the thing Otto would want me to tell you was that he was the green mayor of Sunnyvale," Stroker declared. He added that "2029 is the goal for the VTA-zero emission buses. Let's speed that up and get that going."

Carrasco said a key component of decreasing the county's carbon footprint involves infrastructure. "I recently bought a used hybrid van, but one of my

biggest frustrations has been I can't find anywhere to plug in my van," she said. "I think that is one of the easiest, cheapest ways."

Chu said that the first thing he would do is make sure the county, "electrifies their fleet" of vehicles. He also drew upon his prior experience on the San Jose City Council, where he served on the commission of waste reduction.

"[We need to] concentrate on reducing the waste and recycling," he said.

"We need to also encourage other cities to follow the lead."

The club ended the night by voting to back Lee's in the race—even though he didn't attend the event. Unsurprisingly, that didn't sit well with some of the other candidates.

However, in a phone call the following morning, Chu criticized the endorsement process, saying the club allowed Lee to pack the room with new members who swayed the outcome. Normally, Chu said, a club would limit endorsement decisions to dues-paying members, or people with enough history in the organization to have earned the privilege of that kind of participation.

"I felt that the fairest way of voting is that you have to be a member and not to bring people in at the last minute, which makes it more of a popularity contest," Chu said. "I could have brought people there, maybe 20 or 30 of them, but I didn't do that."

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[California Governor signs into law bill focused on expediting transportation projects](#)

The bill, AB 1475, provides options for Regional Transportation Agencies to streamline projects, allowing for a proven cost saving delivery method for transportation projects.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer-Kahan's AB 1475 bill into law, which allows Regional Transportation Authorities (RTA) to utilize an innovative method for transportation projects.

"AB 1475 began as a bill specifically for a project in San Ramon which would allow the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to utilize a cost saving project model that would connect the Iron Horse Trail to regional transportation hubs," Bauer-Kahan said. "The model created was so sought after that we were happy to extend this option to other RTAs in California to help deliver projects on time and under budget – saving valuable tax dollars. I'm thrilled to see the governor's support of this important bill"

Existing law does not authorize RTAs to utilize the "Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC)" project delivery method to expeditiously design and build projects that are not on the state highway system. CM/GC essentially allows for the collaboration of the project designers/engineers and general contractors early in the project process to ensure that the

project is carried out in the most streamlined and cost-effective method. AB 1475 authorizes RTAs to employ CM/GC.

The Caltrans 2017-18 Efficiency Report cited a \$44.5 million dollar savings by using the CM/GC delivery process.

"We're very grateful to Assembly[woman] Bauer-Kahan for her leadership in ensuring that our agency – and local agencies across the state – can now utilize this innovative project delivery method to deliver the best projects at the best price to the taxpayers who fund our work," said Contra Costa Transportation Authority Executive Director Randy Iwasaki.

AB 1475 passed the Senate and the Assembly with broad bipartisan support and will take effect in January 2020.

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[Santa Clara votes to strip 49ers' power to sign contracts at Levi's Stadium](#) (San Jose Spotlight)

Santa Clara officials Tuesday night voted to remove the San Francisco 49ers as managers of Levi's Stadium and to effectively strip the NFL team of its ability to sign contracts or buy items for the stadium.

The 49ers are currently the manager and operator of the stadium and have the ability to sign contracts or buy goods valued at less than \$250,000. But that could soon change as city leaders look to get a tighter grasp on the management and spending for contracts or supplies at the \$1 billion stadium. Elected officials voted unanimously in two votes to terminate the NFL team as manager of the facility and also to ensure all purchases of any value go through the Stadium Authority board, made up of city councilmembers.

"This is not about stripping and the ability for the 49ers or the management company to sign contracts," City Manager Deanna Santana told councilmembers. "This is about compliance and accountability and transparency."

Vice Mayor Patricia Mahan was not present for the votes Tuesday.

It's unclear what comes next in terms of the city's decision to terminate the agreement for the 49ers to manage Levi's Stadium. Officials have promised more information on Wednesday. Meanwhile, city officials clarified that the vote to terminate the NFL team as manager of Levi's Stadium would apply only to events that are not NFL events or home games for the football team. That vote happened during closed session but was announced when elected officials convened its public meeting.

A spokesperson for the team said the decision to remove the 49ers as the stadium manager was "purely retaliatory," following [a report that the Rolling Stones](#) blamed the city for dysfunction at its recent concert at the stadium.

"We are not surprised that (Santana) has commenced yet another legal battle," team spokesman Rahul Chandhok said in a statement to San José

Spotlight. "She is abdicating her fiduciary duty by destroying a city asset for petty, political vendettas."

The second vote effectively disallowed the team to sign contracts or purchase items for the stadium, instead mandating the organization to get permission from the Stadium Authority. It's a complex maneuver: Santana has been delegating her authority to sign for such contracts to the football team. The vote Tuesday was a step toward taking away her power to sign those contracts, meaning she would no longer have the authority to delegate to the 49ers.

The votes come after city officials raised concerns that the 49ers have not been transparent in its procurement procedures and the team did not pay the appropriate hourly rates — known as prevailing wages — to employees of contractors at the stadium, resulting in \$85,000 in unpaid wages on a recent contract. The 49ers have since paid those wages to the contractor in question, who is in the process of distributing the money to employees, according to a team spokesperson.

Meanwhile, the NFL team is crying foul, saying the city doesn't have the authority to take away its power to sign such contracts, even if elected officials change Santana's authority.

"Undermining (the) Stadium Manager's ability to obtain goods and services timely and efficiently would constitute a contractual breach, and would seriously destabilize Stadium operations," states a letter sent from the 49ers to the city on Tuesday.

City Attorney Brian Doyle pushed back on that assertion Tuesday night.

"You're not saying you can't spend any money, you're just saying 'show me the contract first,'" he said. "You're not in any way depriving them of their right to sign contracts, they simply have to get your approval ahead of time."

Santana told councilmembers the change is necessary for transparency purposes.

"In order to restore the public's trust that public funds are being spent properly, it is recommended that all contracts be presented to the Stadium Authority Board before execution by the Stadium Manager," the city's report states. "The Stadium Manager will have to present credible evidence that the proposed procurement meets all legal requirements before contracting with third parties."

49ers officials on Tuesday urged lawmakers not to pass the new ordinance, telling policymakers the change wouldn't have the intended outcome and instead would make the stadium less safe and more expensive to maintain.

"Being required to prepare requests for approval, months in advance, for even the most insignificant purchases on SCSA's behalf, those staff expenses will be charged to SCSA," Chandhok said. "One could easily imagine that a purchase of \$100 of goods from the local retail outlet could cost hundreds,

or thousands, of dollars of staff time seeking the Board's approval for that purchase."

That argument was somewhat convincing to Councilmember Raj Chahal, who asked if it would be better to allow the 49ers a smaller dollar amount, such as \$50,000, for emergencies or other unexpected items the team may need to run events at the stadium.

"I'm just trying to manage it to an extent that this does not become another hindrance," Chahal told Santana. "I'm not asking to give (the 49ers) the authority, they would come to you to get that amount."

But Santana and Doyle said they wouldn't be comfortable with that scenario. "With proper planning, there's no reason they couldn't maintain operations," Doyle pushed back. "I certainly would not feel comfortable allowing them any authority until they've shown a track record that they can procure contracts correctly."

The meeting Tuesday was a "first reading" of the new ordinance to redistribute power over the stadium contracts. The second reading will happen Oct. 8 and if councilmembers approve the new ordinance, it will become law on Nov. 8.

The 49ers play 10 games at the stadium annually and more than 100 other events happened at Levi's Stadium during the last fiscal year, from major concerts to smaller affairs, according to a recent financial report. That report, presented Tuesday, outlined profits from non-NFL events at the stadium, which Doyle said fell far short of promises made by the 49ers. The city and team have had an embattled history that includes lawsuits and counter suits, fights over curfews, rent and transparency.

Meanwhile, the news comes as an independent [San José Spotlight investigation](#) found that Santa Clara officials violated some rules and best practices while soliciting and executing contracts for public relations services early last year. Officials are also set to respond to San Jose Spotlight's findings in an informational report to councilmembers Tuesday night.

San José Spotlight's reporting was spurred by a [Santa Clara Civil Grand Jury investigation that was left incomplete](#) regarding a set of wide-ranging communications contracts for both the city and the Stadium Authority. Officials have denied any wrongdoing in the matter.

But this news organization's investigation found officials posted a bid for proposal online and left it open for 19 fewer days than typical for contracts of its size in the city. Officials also doubled the value of the contracts between asking for bids and signing the agreements with the lone bidder, public relations firm Singer Associates.

Doubling the size of the contracts is not against the city's written code, but is not a best-practice when it comes to transparency or soliciting the most competitive bids, industry experts told San José Spotlight.

The city also allowed public relations work to start without all signatures in place, despite that being a violation of the city's code. City leaders said the

work posed little risk to the city because the contracts had already been signed by Singer Associates representatives.

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[Bay Area Cities Grill Bullet Train Managers on At-Grade Crossings](#) (Courthouse News Service)

As California's bullet train chugs toward its destination of realizing a connection between California's largest metropolitan areas in the north and south, one impediment continues to loom – grade separations.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority continues to struggle with its budget and time schedule as it narrows its focus to the 119-mile segment in the Central Valley between Merced and Bakersfield.

But the ambition to connect the more populous areas of the state remains, and the authority met in San Jose on Tuesday to discuss how the network will align as it connects Merced to San Jose.

Connecting the Central Valley – where the housing and the general cost of living are relatively affordable – to the mind-blowingly expensive Silicon Valley via rapid and reliable rail transportation is an enticing prospect, according to leaders in both communities.

But one of the most prominent sticking points in the endeavor continues to be whether to build the train tracks at or above grade.

At grade means trains run at the same level as cars, slower trains and other means of transit. Boris Lipkin of the authority noted building the high-speed rail alongside existing rail infrastructure, whether maintained by commuter or freight rail operations, carries many advantages – including keeping costs down with a lighter ecological footprint.

But many San Jose residents and the mayor of San Jose say grade separations – viaducts built above roadways and slower rail – are necessary to prevent traffic jams trains traveling at grade would cause.

Furthermore, the city says at grade construction could hamper public safety due to people or cars wandering on the tracks or cutting off emergency vehicles and preventing them from transporting patients while trains cross arterial roadways.

“Our residents deserve the safety that can be granted only through grade separations,” said San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo. Liccardo said the city is eager to support high-speed rail, but its full-throated support is contingent on getting the alignment that will alleviate the concerns of residents.

San Jose wants to see five grade separations at five major intersections in the southern part of the city.

Morgan Hill and Gilroy, also on the proposed route from Merced to San Jose, could also feature grade separations to prevent the bisection of the downtown areas and the type of traffic waits that residents fear will befall

them due to the proposed frequency of trains ripping through their towns at speeds of 220 miles per hour.

Lipkin told the board a project underway in San Mateo has the city, other rail providers such as Caltrain and the high-speed rail authority collaborating in terms of both funding and design to build an above-grade viaduct to address resident concerns.

"Cities up and down the peninsula have been taking a hard look at grade separations," he said.

Liccardo said San Jose looks forward to working with the authority to render Diridon station and the surrounding area amenable to high-speed rail, but the city might have to come up with funding for at least part of its desired grade separations if they are to come to fruition: The rail authority board voted unanimously to endorse the preferred alternative of using existing rail infrastructure that does not require the construction of expensive viaducts. The board made clear, however, the alternative is not final and it remains eager to collaborate with cities looking for solutions to resident concerns. In the Central Valley, 55 above-grade infrastructure points are being built, amounting to miles of viaducts.

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[Is fetii the New Uber?](#) (Yahoo News)

IRVINE, CA / ACCESSWIRE / September 18, 2019 / [fetii](#) is now being called the "Uber" of group transportation. From being a small start-up to becoming the leading provider of on demand group rides in California, fetii has changed the way large groups of people can get from one destination to the other.

[fetii](#) began as a small start-up in the Silicon Valley area and then became a popular on-demand group transportation app. It is set to expand outside of California, and begin its Texas launch in College Station in a few months. Setting itself apart from Uber, fetii has met the need for larger vehicles to provide transportation to people with large parties. fetii has eliminated the need to book several Ubers in order to get a large party to their desired destination.

Currently, Uber's largest vehicle, the Uber XL, fits only up to 6 people, whereas the fetii vehicles can hold up to 30 people. On the fetii app, users are able to select a vehicle of their preference based on the number of people they have in their party. The fetii van can hold up to 14 passengers. The fetii bus can hold up to 30 passengers.

Being able to provide users with the option of bringing more people along for the ride to their destination has turned the heads of many. There are many advantages to having your whole group ride together as opposed to having to book several vehicles to get to the same destination. Some of those advantages include that it's more cost efficient than booking several Ubers

and the group can stay together and not have to worry about locating the other members when they arrive at their destination.

After its Texas launch, fetii is sure to expand to other states in the U.S. and continue to build its brand recognition.

For more information regarding pricing and locations be sure to check out the fetii app or the fetii website. The fetii app is available to download on Android and iOS devices through the app store. [fetii](#) can also be found on different social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram as well as YouTube.

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From: VTA Board Secretary <Board.Secretary@vta.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2019 5:15 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors <VTABoardofDirectors@vta.org>
Subject: From the Desk of Nuria Fernandez, VTA's General Manager/CEO



September 2019

Zero Emission Bus Fleet by 2040



The California Air Resources Board is mandating that transit operators operate a zero emission fleet (ZEB) by 2040. That means that the last non-ZEB bus VTA can buy is in 2028 (assuming a 12-year lifespan.) VTA is making progress toward an all-ZEB fleet on multiple fronts.

We currently have five battery-electric Proterra buses on select routes in Santa Clara County, testing their abilities and range. VTA will receive five more buses in the next several months.

Charging infrastructure, known as “vehicle to grid integration” (VGI) has been installed at the Cerone Yard for the initial battery electric fleet acquisition and VTA is exploring ways to expand charging capacity in the near future. The VGI project is a collaboration among VTA, Prospect Silicon Valley, the California Energy Commission, the National Renewable Energy Lab and more than a dozen other entities. This project is leading the way to develop the technological tools for VTA and the industry, to manage the complexities of charging, deploying, and monitoring electric buses on our transit networks that balance service needs with electrical costs and rate structures.

One of the bigger challenges in reaching our goals is staffing. We are pursuing ways to fill vacancies in bus maintenance engineering, while continuing to onboard new buses, manage service changes, and manage the procurement of new buses.

We are also continuing to work closely with Proterra on their production process to educate them on our needs. While we currently are testing battery-electric buses, hydrogen fuel cell buses are also an allowable technology to meet the future goal.

Keeping Our AAA+ Rating

STANDARD

& POOR'S

S&P Global Ratings Services (S&P) recently affirmed its 'AAA' long-term rating to VTA's bonds secured by the 1976 sales tax.

AAA is the highest possible rating that may be assigned to an issuer's bonds by any of the major credit rating agencies. AAA-rated bonds boast a high degree of creditworthiness, because their issuers are generally easily able meet their financial commitments and they consequently run lower risks of defaulting.

VTA's strong "credit themes" and S&P's rationale for assigning the 'AAA' ratings include:

- Robust Demographics: large population base, economic diversity, higher than average income levels and a strong economy underpinning sales tax growth.
- Long History of Public Support: 2000 Measure A, 2016 Measure B among other measures

- Debt Service Coverage: VTA's very strong annual debt service coverage (i.e. low debt level) based on historical and projected performance
- Strong Management: experienced senior staff, conservative board fiscal policies, and healthy levels of reserves.

S&P's AAA rating reflects their expectation that VTA will not issue additional bonds more aggressively than anticipated for its capital needs, and the other credit themes above will remain substantially unchanged. If any of the credit themes above change considerably and the debt levels differ materially from projections, they could lower the rating.



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From: Baltao, Elaine
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2019 5:28 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors
Subject: REQUEST: Please help share VTA's Rail Safety Campaign

VTA Board of Directors:

Please help us spread the word. Please share VTA's public awareness campaign for Rail Safety with your constituents. Here are the links:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B2peB6JAOke/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/VTA/status/1175160628975218693>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/scvta/videos/vb.120395924642018/483397008880962/?type=2&theater>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6580926293745905664>

Here's some background information from Brandi Childress, Media & Public Affairs Manager. If you have any questions, please feel free to respond to this email or call Brandi. Her contact information is noted below. Thank you.

Every September, VTA plans and implements a highly-focused campaign in conjunction with National Rail Safety Month. We engage in multiple outreach and awareness initiatives with safety and law enforcement partners, including Operations Lifesaver, Inc – the national rail safety education nonprofit who works in partnership with the US Department of Transportation, and other organizations to observe rail safety week each year.

This year's campaign takes on a decidedly urgent tenor because of two tragic incidents which occurred this summer involving bicyclists hit by VTA light rail trains as they crossed the tracks. One of those incidents occurred at the light rail crossing near Del Mar High School and involved a summer school student. In both cases, warning lights and bells were activated and crossing gates were down to keep people from crossing the tracks as trains approached. In both cases, those protections were ignored and serious injuries occurred. Operators continue to notice students looking at their smart phones, wearing ears buds, and not paying attention OR, even more disturbing, deliberately ignoring safety measures as they approach and cross VTA tracks.

We are taking a more assertive approach this year to trying to get the message across to the public to obey the safety equipment and signs and signals near our light rail tracks. The visuals we have been using for this campaign are supposed to make an impression and impact on dangerous human behavior (one example attached). With that said, we will be placing "ghost bikes" around the light rail system starting this weekend. As some of you may know, the ghost bike is a symbol or memorial that represents someone who has died in a bicycling accident (image also attached). Maybe you will see them out and about – if you do, post and tag us!

Last but certainly not least, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Transit Patrol Deputies will carry out a morning commute crackdown on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 at the Stokes Avenue light rail crossing near Del

Mar High School in San Jose. The operation will target motor vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians who are breaking the law by ignoring traffic lights and safety warnings, signals and gates at the light rail crossing.

Brandi Childress

Media and Public Affairs Manager

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