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[Google's big plans for downtown San Jose — answers for all your questions](#) (Mercury News)

(Click link above for video report on transit village)

In the next decade, Google, BART and a new Diridon Station will transform San Jose

There's been a lot of buzz about Google gobbling up land in San Jose and big plans for an overhaul of the city's sleepy downtown train station. But when will it all start to happen?

When will we see those artist renderings of the tech giant's gleaming new campus or shovels hitting the ground and cranes crawling across the sky? When will the first BART trains roll into Silicon Valley's new futuristic station? And what has to happen along the way before any of this gets done? Read on to find out.

The area around Diridon Station looks pretty quiet right now. So what will change that?

What for years has been a largely industrial area with squat buildings and sprawling parking lots is set to transform over the next decade into a densely packed extension of downtown — with taller structures, more public transportation and a lot more people.

Perhaps best known is that Google is planning to build a major campus with offices, homes and commercial space near Diridon Station. But the station itself is also set to get an overhaul because city planners expect it to serve thousands of more travelers in the coming years.

One reason? BART is extending from the East Bay through downtown San Jose and eventually to Santa Clara. At some point, high-speed rail could also connect Silicon Valley to the Central Valley.

Another big change? San Jose's height limits. For years, the SAP Center has been the tallest building near the station because of the planes flying into nearby Mineta San Jose International Airport. But the City Council recently voted to allow buildings more than twice the height of the arena in the area — so Google and other developers will have more access to real estate in the sky than ever before.

So when does it all happen?

Caltrain is already converting from diesel- to electric-powered trains, which will mean more frequent train service down the Peninsula to San Jose. That process should be completed by 2022.

Next up will be the BART extension. New stations are scheduled to open in Milpitas and Berryessa later this year. Then, sometime in the next seven or so years, BART plans to add four more stations in Alum Rock, downtown on Santa Clara Street between Market and Third streets, at Diridon and in Santa Clara. BART and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), which is funding the construction and operating costs of the extension, are working on the design, schedule and funding. If everything goes according to plan, construction could start in 2021 and the four stations could open in 2026.

Around the same time construction begins on the BART extension, hammers and nails could start flying on the Google project, with some of the first buildings possibly being completed by around 2024-25.

Construction is expected to begin around 2025 on a new downtown transit station that by 2029 or so should allow easy access to BART, trains, buses and more. San Jose has held a series of community meetings to discuss ideas for how the station could look, but planning is still in the "big picture" phase, with big questions remaining — like where to put the station's main entrance.

Drafts of environmental documents are expected in December for the [high-speed rail project](#) that could connect San Jose to Merced, and if funding comes through, the earliest trains could be running by 2029.

How will the Google development look?

The short answer is, we don't know yet. What we do know is that the company has spent more than \$300 million purchasing a stretch of land — roughly the length of the suspension span of the Golden Gate Bridge — from north of the SAP Center south toward the old Orchard Supply Hardware near Interstate 280.

Some of the land came from the city and some from private sellers. Likely later this summer or early fall, Google is expected to outline, broadly, where it wants to locate offices, housing and other parts of the project.

In the fall, the tech giant is expected to submit an application to the city, which will trigger a formal environmental review that will provide estimates on the project's impacts on everything from traffic to wildlife. Whatever application they submit to the city could include renderings and more specifics than we've seen so far, but the final development could ultimately look very different because the project will need to go through various city departments and ultimately to the City Council for approval. By Fall 2020, the city and Google are expected to finalize a development agreement, paving the way for building permits and construction in 2021.

What's a development agreement?

It might sound boring, but this agreement will have repercussions — good or bad — for years to come. It's where San Jose's leaders and Google work out exactly what the tech company can do with the land it purchased and what the city's residents will get in return.

Some residents and city leaders are concerned that the Google development will drive up home prices and displace longtime low-income residents. This agreement, which should be worked out by late 2020, is where the city can require Google to build a certain amount of affordable housing. The city could also push for computers or programs for local schools, local hiring requirements or other community benefits.

How would the size of Google's planned San Jose transit village compare with other well-known sites in the Bay Area and U.S.? Click on to take a look. (Map images from Google Earth)

Separately, the city also is exploring new requirements for businesses in the area beyond the development agreement with Google. While Google is set to be the largest developer near Diridon Station, with about 50 acres, there are another 200 or so acres near Diridon. Some of that land is likely to be developed by other companies as office space, housing or retail. The city is considering imposing a fee that companies like Google would pay to support, for instance, more affordable housing.

Traffic and parking are already bad. How will this make it worse?

We still don't have enough specifics to know exactly what the impacts of the Google project will be. The tech giant could bring 20,000 workers downtown, and other companies that move into the area could drive that number up. When Google turns in its application this fall with more details, San Jose can begin to evaluate how the project will affect everything from housing demand to local school enrollment.

What about construction?

Residents and visitors to San Jose will certainly see the consequences of so much construction, from street and sidewalk closures to reduced parking spaces, noise and dust. But there is some good news. The [BART extension](#) will be constructed using a single, deep underground tunnel that will avoid the need to tear up big sections of Santa Clara Street rather than a more invasive approach that would involve removing large sections of road and be far more disruptive to shops, businesses, pedestrians and drivers.

How do I keep up with what the city is doing?

[Diridonsj.org](#) has details about not only the redesign of Diridon Station but the coming Google campus. It also has information about the city's efforts to update what's known as the Diridon Station Area Plan, a document that guides development near the station. San Jose adopted a plan for the area back in 2014, but circumstances were different then. The city was anticipating an A's ballpark that never materialized. Google also hadn't come to town as a major anchor for the area, and the city hadn't raised height limits yet. If the city makes major changes to the plan, they will have to go through a review process, which could kick off in the next year or so.

There's also a group of residents and local leaders who serve as members of a [Station Area Advisory Group](#), which discusses all of these projects and provides feedback to the city and developers. The

meetings are open to the public. The next meeting is expected to take place sometime in August, and future gatherings should continue every couple of months or so after that.

Anything else?

Yes, it's worth emphasizing that this timeline could — and, in some ways, will certainly — change. With so many different agencies and officials involved — and some major funding questions for things like the BART extension still unanswered — delays are likely. Other factors like a possible recession — which economists say is looming — and changing political leadership — Mayor Sam Liccardo has championed Google, but he terms out in 2022 — could also affect whether these projects are delayed or even derailed.

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[Caltrain has an ambitious plan to run BART-like service. Here's what it will mean for Bay Area traffic \(Mercury News\)](#) **But the price tag won't be small**

As more people crowd the Bay Area, jostling for jobs in Silicon Valley and San Francisco and converging on already-congested freeways, the Peninsula's commuter railroad is looking to grow, transforming a once-sleepy suburban line into a truly urban transit system.

Caltrain's vision contemplates BART-like "show-up and go" service, whisking passengers from San Francisco to Gilroy on trains that run at least every 15 minutes all day long. The agency will present its vision — and accompanying business plan — for the first time publicly in a [YouTube town hall event Monday](#), with more public meetings rolling out over the next several months before the agency's governing board officially adopts the plan.

It's a huge step for the agency, said Laura Tolkoff, a policy director with SPUR, an urban planning think-tank.

"This business plan is a big deal," Tolkoff said. "It would really move Caltrain from an infrequent, ephemeral, commuter-focused service to an outstanding transit system that serves many different people for many different kinds of trips."

Gone would be the days of passengers organizing their lives around the train's schedule, as Millbrae resident Emily Sontag does every day on her commute to and from work, she said. She often stays late at her Stanford job, not leaving until around 7 p.m., when Caltrain runs only once an hour. If her bus hits too many red lights or gets delayed for any reason, she said, she's stuck waiting at the station.

"And that sucks," Sontag said, adding that more service "would be wonderful."

"It would definitely make my commute way easier and take away the stress of timing those connections," she said. "And it might make it easier to take the train for things like going out to dinner or catching a movie when I would otherwise take Lyft."

Like Sontag, three-quarters of Caltrain's passengers are "choice riders," said Seamus Murphy, a spokesman for Caltrain, meaning they have the option of driving or taking some other form of

transportation. By increasing the number of trains from five to eight during the peak hour and running express Baby Bullet trains every 15 minutes, Caltrain expects to nearly triple the number of riders, from around 65,000 per day today to 180,000.

That's the equivalent of adding five and a half lanes to the freeway without any of the carbon-spewing side effects, Murphy said.

The Peninsula — and the Bay Area as a whole — will need the added people-moving capacity as it continues to grow, said Matt Quevedo, the director of housing, transportation and community engagement for the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, a business advocacy organization. Over the next 20 years, [regional planners estimate](#) the Bay Area's population is expected to increase by more than 40 percent, adding 2.4 million residents and 1.3 million jobs.

"We need this corridor moving to keep our local economy moving," Quevedo said. "Commuters who don't take the train will see less traffic congestion, better air quality and better commute times."

A passenger steps onto a Caltrain passenger car at the Caltrain San Francisco station in San Francisco, Calif., on Thursday, July 18, 2019. (Jose Carlos Fajardo/Bay Area News Group)

But it won't be cheap. To run more trains and add more passengers, Caltrain anticipates it will need around \$90 million per year in operating subsidies, in addition to state funds and revenue from fares, the latter of which covers about 70 percent of its operating budget.

To help raise those funds, Caltrain has floated the idea of [increasing the sales tax](#) in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties by either one-eighth or [one-quarter](#) of one cent, generating around \$100 million or \$200 million annually, respectively. If it does decide to ask for the sales tax increase, it would place the measure on the 2020 ballot, said Sebastian Petty, Caltrain's director of policy development

There's also been talk over the past several years of a [\\$100 billion or more regional transportation funding measure](#), that could include a mix of property, sales and business taxes, with the goal of better knitting the region's more than two dozen transit agencies into a cohesive, high performing and high ridership system, and Caltrain may try to seek funding through that measure, Petty said.

If Caltrain is to realize its dream of becoming a truly urban transit system, it will need to do much more than add trains and run them more often, he added; it will need to integrate its service with others planned for the region.

There's a proposal to add [train service across the Dumbarton](#) rail corridor, to the Monterey peninsula, and across the San Francisco Bay in a [new transbay tube](#). There's planning underway to [extend Caltrain's line in downtown San Francisco](#) from its terminus at 4th and King streets to the Salesforce Transit Center and to build a new [world-class train depot](#) at [Diridon Station](#) in San Jose.

"We wanted to articulate a complete or end-state vision," Petty said, "so we could really show what a fully complete system looks like."

All of those capital projects — not including a second Transbay Tube or other rail services — are estimated to cost around \$25 billion, of which roughly \$6.5 billion would be needed for improvements

solely related to increased Caltrain service, such as adding grade separations and passing tracks or lengthening station platforms.

But it won't need to do all of that work before it can start running a few more trains, said Jim Hartnett, Caltrain's general manager. More than \$2 billion in improvements to electrify Caltrain's diesel-powered line and add 19 new [electric trains](#) is [already underway](#) and expected to be complete by 2022.

The electric trains, which will replace most of Caltrain's current fleet, stop and start more quickly than the diesel trains, speeding up the trip. And the agency will be able to run one more train during the peak commute hour, Murphy said, for a total of six trains in both directions, which the agency expects will encourage around 20 percent more riders to start taking the train. More improvements to service can be added incrementally, Hartnett said.

But while increasing the number of peak hour trains from five to eight is a significant step, some transit advocates say the agency could aim even higher. Caltrain's business plan contemplates a scenario where 16 trains could run during the peak hour, nearly quadrupling the current ridership and sharing the tracks with not only high-speed rail but other train services, such as the Altamont Corridor Express or the new Dumbarton rail, as well.

The region is only going to continue to grow, said Adina Levin, the co-founder of Friends of Caltrain, a transit advocacy organization. So why not aim high, she said, even if the vision isn't ultimately achieved due to factors outside of Caltrain's control, such as the fate of high-speed rail.

"We understand Caltrain staff might be feeling a little cautious and are thinking they should under-promise," Levin said. "But what we want to see from Caltrain is to say, 'Our goal is to aim high and we will do what we can to surmount any challenges that come up.' We think that will set the direction and position people with the right mindset to do just that."

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[Caltrain maps out big growth and how to pay the \\$25 billion tab](#) (San Francisco Chronicle)

Caltrain, the Peninsula commuter rail that started chugging when Abraham Lincoln was president, may look a lot more like BART in the coming years.

Officials are putting together a long-range "service vision" for the next several decades designed to triple the number of riders, from 60,000 a day to 180,000. In the future, Caltrain would trade its [diesel-belching locomotives for electric cars](#), with 10-car trains arriving at stations every 7½ minutes.

That zippy, mass-transit-style rail system would accommodate a rapidly growing population, drawn to new housing and tech campuses along the corridor. It comes with a hefty price tag: \$25 billion.

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"By 2040 we're looking at a 40% increase of jobs and residents within 2 miles of each station," said Sebastian Petty, Caltrain's director of policy development. He said the cost includes the extension of

track to the [Transbay Transit Center in SoMa](#), a project that has long eluded political leaders in San Francisco and San Mateo counties.

Petty and other staff members will present their vision to the Board of Directors in October. They'll develop a more concrete business plan for approval next year.

The future of Caltrain is intricately bound to the rest of the region. Officials often describe the projected ridership growth as the same number of people who travel across a five-lane freeway during a peak hour — showing how better transit helps ease pressure on Interstate 280 and Highway 101. As Google builds its sprawling campus near the Diridon Station in San Jose and development sprouts on the prairie-like stretches of El Camino Real, Petty and others [tout rail as the most efficient way to deliver people](#) to their homes and jobs.

But the vision won't work if trains are standing room only early during rush hour or if commuters are stranded for an hour on the platform.

"We know there are more people who would likely ride Caltrain now if we would let them in," said Jim Hartnett, general manager and CEO of the transit system.

He blames Caltrain's financial problems on a lack of dedicated funding. Though the railway's fare revenue covers 70% of its operating costs — which is high compared with other mass transit systems — it doesn't reap sales or property tax revenue the way BART does. It relies on a \$30 million annual subsidy from the three counties it serves, which will have to triple if the system expands to its desired capacity.

Hartnett is eyeing a mega sales tax measure that may go on the ballot next year for some of the money. It's expected to generate up to \$120 billion for transportation infrastructure in the next 40 years, and proponents say Caltrain is a good candidate for funds.

"The timing of our business plan is good," Hartnett said. "It lays out a road map that's well thought out and independently validated."

Caltrain also has authority to put its own sales tax measure on the ballot in San Mateo, San Francisco and Santa Clara counties, as long as the boards of supervisors and county transportation agencies sign on.

Regardless of how the agency fills its funding gap, Caltrain is moving forward with upgrades. Engineers have installed new anchor bolts in train tunnel ceilings, for an overhead system to power electric train cars. Officials are bracing for a future in which rail would interlace the Bay Area the way freeways do now, with a second transbay crossing to parallel BART, and another one along the [resurrected Dumbarton Rail Bridge](#). Caltrain's electric cars could eventually share tracks with [bullet trains whooshing in from Southern California](#).

It's a dream based on the transportation of the past, and the urban design of the present.

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[Editorial: Pair big Bay Area transit tax with tough decisions](#) (San Francisco Chronicle)

Bay Area voters should be forgiven for feeling a sense of fatigue about the never-ending succession of transportation tax measures. Gas taxes, sales taxes, parcel taxes, vehicle license fees. They keep showing up on the ballot.

And traffic just keeps getting worse. The bottom line is that population growth — along with inadequate long-term planning to match transportation and land-use planning — is overwhelming the incremental upgrades to existing roads and transit systems.

Now some of the region's public-policy leaders are thinking big. Real big. They are proposing a regional 1-cent sales tax increase that would raise \$100 billion over the next 40 years in an effort to make serious dent in the region's transportation challenge. The plan, which would go to voters in November 2020, would create a new regional agency to oversee the expenditures.

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There is no doubt about the need for a radical new approach to transportation. The region's population, now 7.75 million, is expected to grow to nearly 10 million by 2040. Yet, as anyone trying to get from Point A to Point B can attest, our public transit systems already overflow at peak hours and quagmires can be found on roads and highways at times and places that would be unimaginable just a few years ago.

Taxes and tolls

California voters last year defeated Proposition 6 to uphold increases in taxes on gas (12 cents), diesel (20 cents) and vehicle license fees, raising about \$5 billion a year. Bay Area voters have approved these transportation funding measures over the past decade:

2018

Regional Measure 3: Toll increases on seven state-owned bridges to raise \$4.45 billion

AA (Marin County): Tax renewal to raise \$810 million

W (San Mateo County): \$80 million for roads and transit

2016

RR (Alameda, Contra Costa, S.F.): \$3.5 billion bond for BART's deferred maintenance and upgrades

C1 (Alameda, Contra Costa counties): Parcel tax for AC Transit, \$600 million

B (Santa Clara County): Sales tax for transit, roads and bike and pedestrian upgrades, \$6.3 billion

2014

BB (Alameda County): Sales tax for buses, BART, roads, bike and pedestrian projects, \$7.8 billion

A (San Francisco): \$500 million bond for Muni, BART, bike and pedestrian safety

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The regional approach to decision-making is a sound concept. All too often, county transportation tax measures are focused on localized concerns with little or no consideration of how they might help or hinder neighboring jurisdictions.

It is also clear that more money is needed. Yes, transportation systems are expensive. But a failure to sufficiently fund them takes a toll on the region's environment, its commerce — and its quality of life for residents stuck in traffic or navigating unreliable or unsynchronized public transit modes.

Voters, however, will need to be assured *before* signing on to this bold endeavor that other contributors to the transportation mess are being addressed. The Bay Area now has more than 20 public transit operators across nine counties, and they all too often are at cross-purposes as they compete for available dollars. This would be a good time to force the question: Does it really make sense to have such a disjointed network?

Also, the region's leaders need to get serious about approving new housing closer to job centers and mass transit. Measures such as Sen. Scott Wiener's SB50, which would ease zoning restrictions in such areas, are stuck in limbo in the state Legislature in large part because of provincial resistance.

Bay Area residents have shown a willingness to dig deep for transportation solutions. It is encouraging that regional planners are thinking big. This is the time to be big *and* bold.

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[Targeting Bay Area gridlock, groups floating \\$100 billion tax measure](#) (San Francisco Chronicle)

From BART trains packed to capacity during the commute to freeways that jam well before dawn, the strain on the Bay Area's transportation backbone is intensifying.

And with the region's population expected to swell from 7.75 million to nearly 10 million by 2040, big engineering fantasies like a second trans-bay rail crossing and a stretch of Caltrain tracks through downtown San Francisco have become urgent needs. But the projects won't come cheap: The Bay Area [needs hundreds of billions of dollars to build them](#).

"This isn't a problem that's going to wait for us — we really need to run at it," said Jim Wunderman, president and chief executive of the Bay Area Council, an advocacy group for major employers like Google and Kaiser Permanente.

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Sensing an opportunity to harness frustration, he and other business leaders recently collaborated with transportation agencies and nonprofits to develop a ballot measure for November 2020 dubbed Faster Bay Area. It aims to generate at least \$100 billion in 40 years.

Though in its early stages, the measure would likely be a penny sales tax to fund a wish list of infrastructure projects. Among them: the downtown extension of [Caltrain into the Transbay Transit](#)

[Center](#), a project that has long intrigued and eluded political leaders in San Francisco and San Mateo counties.

Faster Bay Area would first require state legislation to grant taxing authority to a regional agency. This initial bill would have to pass early next year so that Faster Bay Area could place the initiative on the November 2020 ballot.

The timeline is aggressive, in part due to pressure to compete with Los Angeles, which enacted a similar sales tax. Mayor Eric Garcetti hopes to complete 28 transportation infrastructure projects by 2028, the year the city hosts the summer Olympics. That goal, propelled by sales-tax revenue, puts Los Angeles in a strong position to obtain federal grants. The Bay Area would vie for the same pot of money.

While Bay Area voters don't have the singular focus of a sporting event, they're still hungry for efficient mass transit and traffic relief. Last year's [Regional Measure 3 bridge-toll increases](#) won with 55% of the vote, showing that people are willing to reach into their wallets for new BART cars and [ferryboats and a latticework of freeway express lanes](#), among other improvements.

Policymakers view Regional Measure 3 as their first stab at a deep, complicated, expensive problem.

"We've seen in focus groups that people identify traffic as one of their top quality-of-life concerns," said Alicia John-Baptiste, president and chief executive of the urban think tank SPUR, which is working on the ballot measure. "They want to see big solutions, not incremental solutions."

Big, audacious ideas tend to draw opposition, and taxpayer advocacy groups that fought Regional Measure 3 are already wary of this one.

"This whole regional approach to transportation funding is problematic to me," said Jack Weir, president of the Contra Costa Taxpayers Association.

Faster Bay Area may also clash with local governments that want to pitch their own sales tax measures for things like road repair, parks and flood control. Voters sometimes get turned off or baffled when staring down at a tax-heavy ballot, which leads people to vote "no" on everything. Some supporters of Contra Costa's ill-fated Measure X — a 2016 sales tax that would have fixed potholes and paid for other local transportation improvements — say it went down because of competition [from BART's regional Measure RR](#).

Commuters standing at the bus stop outside El Cerrito Del Norte BART Station on Thursday night said they might vote to approve a new sales tax, so long as they see the benefits. Some wanted BART to extend to Hercules and Vallejo. Others just want the Bay Area's hodge-podge transit systems to better align with one another, so they don't have to walk a distance or wait 15 minutes to make a transfer.

"Just make the schedules more compatible," said Michelle Square, a nurse at Kaiser's Richmond Medical Center who commutes from her home in Suisun City. She stood waiting for the Green Express bus, alongside other riders who trek from Solano County — where real estate is cheaper — to work in the inner Bay Area.

Among them was Cathy Jensen, an interior designer from Vallejo. She said she does not have a working car and relies on buses to travel throughout the Bay Area, often with two suitcases full of samples.

On Thursday, Jensen took three buses to get to a client's house in Novato — about 20 miles from her home — a journey that took 2½ hours. At 6 p.m., she braced for the same long trip back home.

Demand for synchronized schedules and a better bus network has grown as long-distance commutes become the new normal. At the same time, early-morning traffic is getting heavier on Bay Area freeways.

Data from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission shows a dramatic increase in vehicles crossing the Bay Bridge between 3 and 4 a.m. — from 1,500 a day during the third week of May 2015 to 2,256 a day in the same week this year.

Traffic over the Altamont Pass between Tracy and Livermore has grown by 43% in seven years, owing to people driving into the Bay Area from the more affordable Central Valley, said Stuart Cohen, a transportation policy expert who is helping steer the Faster Bay Area campaign.

Revenue from a new sales tax could provide some relief for these super-commuters. One project in the works is the Valley Link rail, which would run from Lathrop in San Joaquin County to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station.

Another solution is to build a better network of freeway express lanes, which allow buses to bypass traffic. Officials could add additional tracks to railways like the Capitol Corridor. The system's passenger trains, which run from San Jose to Placer County, currently share tracks with freight cars, which limits service.

While the ballot measure is driven largely by companies trying to get their employees to work, it will also have ramifications for working-class people in the suburbs. That population pays a greater share of its wealth to sales taxes, so the measure might include some form of low-income rebate, said Cohen.

He and John-Baptiste are cognizant of the economic injustice built into the Bay Area's transportation system, in which lower-income people generally have longer, costlier commutes. Faster Bay Area will need their buy-in if it stands a chance of success.

"Honestly, to win passage it's going to need to benefit every county," Cohen said. "We want to act and move as a region."

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[Is this supposed to make us feel better about 101-87 mess?](#)

Q: Love your statement that was meant to cheer us up, and ease our frustrations over near gridlock: "one more lane from 101 to 87 in a couple of years." Oh, goody goody!

One more lane would be obsolete now.

There is no way new road construction will ever catch up, or keep up, with the population growth and auto infestation in the Bay Area. Need to face the truth, Roadshow. Let the faithful know. There are no improvements coming, folks. Sorry.

Joe Picone, Sunnyvale

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

A: Joe is not the only skeptical soul out there. Many want to know why a second exit lane from 101 to 87 will take a couple of years to be done. This is way too long to wait for this simple improvement, they say. But it is already behind schedule, as money from the Measure B sales tax was upheld for two years because of a lawsuit. The courts approved the tax a few months ago, freeing up the needed cash.

That's the simple explanation. Now to more complicated reasons.

Q: Many drivers believe the connection from southbound Highway 101 to Highway 87 is the cause of the daily horror show on 101 from Lawrence Expressway to Oakland Road. The real problem is the nearby Trimble/De La Cruz cloverleaf where three lanes on Trimble go down to two over 101, no merge area onto 101 south, etc. Is there a plan to reconstruct the Trimble/101 cloverleaf and add a dedicated lane to 87?

Bill Adler, Mountain View

A: Oh, yes. And your observation is right on.

Several improvements will be made to the existing interchange, including the elimination of the southbound loop off-ramp to eastbound Trimble, construction of a new southbound diagonal ramp to eastbound and westbound Trimble, and reconstruction of the southbound diagonal on-ramp and southbound and northbound loop on-ramps.

The northbound diagonal ramp will be fed by a new road that will exit 101 south of 87. The existing exit from 101 is north of 87 and causes weaving problems.

Q: I'm very thankful that Gov. Gavin Newsom is trying to make the DMV a better place to do business. However, I believe so many things are wrong that it is going to take a long, long time to get things running as they should. In my mind, the biggest complaint is the long wait in line no matter what you go there to do.

I have a suggestion: Have the DMV enhance things by extending everyone's license for an extra year. For example, if one's license expires in August 2019, they would extend it until August 2020. Think about all the activity this would eliminate at the DMV for one year.

George Fletcher, Milpitas

A: Not a bad idea. DMV folks will kick it upstairs, so stay tuned.

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(Friday, July 19, 2019)

[Man On Bike Hit, Injured by VTA Train Friday Morning](#)

A Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority light rail train struck a man on a bicycle Friday morning at the San Jose Diridon Station, according to the VTA.

VTA spokesperson Brandi Childress said that as a southbound train on the Mountain View - Winchester line approached the station at 8:50 a.m., a man on a bike went through a pedestrian gate and was struck by the train.

He was taken to the hospital with injuries not considered life-threatening.

Train service was interrupted for about an hour, with a bus bridge between the Race and Paseo de San Antonio stations.

According to Childress, all warnings and signs were in order when the man went through the gate. She reminded people to heed the gates and that safety comes first.

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[Bicyclist struck and injured by VTA train in San Jose \(KTVU Ch. 2\)](#)

A bicyclist was struck by a Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority light rail train, leading to a serious but non-life threatening injury Friday morning.

There was a flurry of activity at Diridon Station this morning as first responders tried to free a bicyclist trapped below the front wheels of the VTA train.

"These very incredible people freed him from under the train. And got him on an ambulance," said Heidi Printz, a nearby resident who saw some of the activity in Downtown San Jose.

Just before 9 a.m., Santa Clara County sheriff's investigators said the male cyclist was hit by the Winchester-bound VTA train.

"Investigators believe that the bicyclist crossed the light rail track, not aware that the light rail was coming," said Jessica Gabaldon, a spokeswoman for the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office.

"He was walking the bike through the gate as the train was approaching the station," VTA spokeswoman Brandi Childress said.

The pedestrian light rail track crossings at Diridon station have gate doors that are in the closed position, and signage instructing riders to check both ways. Vigilance is needed in keeping the riding public aware of potential dangers, VTA said.

On July 10, Michelle Espinosa was hit after riding her bicycle around crossing gates and onto the light rail tracks near Southwest Expressway and Stokes Street. The 14-year-old remains in critical condition in a South Bay hospital.

“All of the safety gates. The warning, flashing signs, they are there for a reason. We need people to heed those signs, and take their time getting to a station. And not try to beat a train,” said Childress.

Light rail service along the southbound Winchester line was disrupted for about an hour, while officials investigated the accident. Neither passengers nor the train's operator were injured in the second light rail-pedestrian collision so far this year.

VTA officials say they are not looking at any additional safety upgrades, and that all of the current measures meet standards set by the California Public Utilities Commission.

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From: VTA Board Secretary <Board.Secretary@vta.org>
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2019 4:33 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors <VTABoardofDirectors@vta.org>
Subject: VTA Information: Board of Directors August 1, 2019 Agenda Packet

VTA Board of Directors:

You may now access the VTA Board of Directors Agenda Packet for the **August 1, 2019**, Regular Meeting on [our agenda portal](#).

Please note the meeting will start at 5:30 p.m. at the **VTA River Oaks Auditorium, 3331 North First St., San Jose, CA.**

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)



Conserve paper. Think before you print.

From: VTA Board Secretary <Board.Secretary@vta.org>

Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2019 4:46 PM

To: VTA Board of Directors <VTABoardofDirectors@vta.org>

Subject: UPDATED LINK: VTA Information: Board of Directors August 1, 2019 Agenda Packet

VTA Board of Directors:

You may now access the VTA Board of Directors Agenda Packet for the **August 1, 2019**, Regular Meeting on [our agenda portal](#).

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From: VTA Board Secretary <Board.Secretary@vta.org>
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2019 2:34 PM
To: VTA Board of Directors <VTABoardofDirectors@vta.org>
Subject: VTA Correspondence: Week of July 15th and 22nd

VTA Board of Directors:

We are forwarding you the following:

From	Topic
Member of the Public	Comment regarding the California High Speed Rail Project.

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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From: bob tom

Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2019 8:30 AM

To: VTA Board Secretary <Board.Secretary@vta.org>

Subject: a letter from Blair Beekman. Thursday July 18, 2019. _____ A correction. CHSR project.

Can this letter be placed into, the public record, for the June 21, 2019, Board of Directors meeting agenda - Item 7.2.

Dear VTA, Board of Directors, & board secretary,

At the Board of Directors, VTA meeting, June 21, 2019, I spoke at the public forum, about the future plans, of Diridon station.

I tried to say, the future of San Jose Diridon Station, should be built with, many options and flexibility, so the station can be prepared, for what may be, a future, of many different choices, ideas, and modes of transportation, 25-50 years, into the future.

What I wanted, to say next, was, 'a straight, direct, high speed, express rail line, from S.F.-Oakland to San Jose to Los Angeles, may not happen, at this time - but maybe, it should be planned, in a station design, for the future '

But, in the nervousness of public speaking, what I ended up saying, was only, ' there may be, a future, direct line, from San Francisco to San Jose.'

I hope, this can help clear up, the intentions of my previous wording.

There are many, patterns and combinations, people are working on, with high-speed rail, that makes a preciseness in words, sometimes needed.

I hope, simple, open, friendly words, can be of help, to ease, a high stakes, competitive tension & opacity, in Santa Clara Co., for the CHSR project.

I think we can all understand, the recent, good intentions, of Gov. Newsom.

I think the idea, is to squarely define, an understood route, for the high speed rail line, at this time.

A high speed rail line - from L.A. - through Bakersfield, Fresno, & Merced, to a final arrival, in Sacramento.

With a possible, more conventional rail line - from Merced, to the S.F. Bay Area.

Gov. Newsom's, simple, beginning, CHSR guidelines, can bring an ease, an understanding, and a better thought-process, for everyone.

It can make for, a good beginning map, and reference point, for all sides.

And, from this, different variations and ideas, of the entire community, can begin to be asked about, and developed, more safely & openly.

Much in the same way, as good, new, technology accountability guidelines, can help with ideas, of a more sustainable future, of a local community.

In now beginning, more open plans - and to respect, what may be, the future of - a slow, but frequented, CHSR line, from L.A to Sacramento, through a populated, Hwy. 99 corridor, on the east side, of the Central Valley.

I feel, a more direct, 2nd high speed rail, direct, express line, from Los Angeles to the S.F. Bay Area, can eventually be possible.

It could travel from, [L.A.to](#) Bakersfield, through the west side, of the Central valley, with a stop over, in the Tracy area, and onto Sacramento.

And, with a more, conventional railway system, or BART line, connection stop, from Tracy - to the S.F. Bay Area.

BART, should have, years of important opinions, about this 2nd express line idea.

As a more, conventional rail line, from Merced to Tracy to S.F./Oakland -

could bridge, the two high-speed rails, traveling each side, of the Central Valley, with a final arrival & beginning departure, from the S.F. Bay Area.

The ideas of expanding the uses; of the ACE line, between Stockton and San Jose; and the Capital Corridor line, from San Jose, through Richmond/Martinez, to Sacramento, are always helpful.

And, to also state, in what may be, an environmentally difficult, but very obvious option, to the people of Santa Clara Co. -

A future, 2nd high speed rail, direct, express line - from the west side, of the Central Valley, to cut through, into the Paicines area, or the Pacheco Pass area, into San Jose -

with a final arrival, as a conventional rail line, to S.F.; or to Oakland - onto Sacramento.

A future, 2nd high speed rail, direct, express line - from L.A. to the S.F. Bay Area, along the entire, 101 hwy, is another of many ideas.

I hope, I have cleared up, some of my ideas and feelings, on this matter. It is one person's, ideas and opinions, of the future of the CHSR , and Santa Clara Co.

I hope all of us, can speak with, a friendly, non-competitive, simple openness, of thoughts and ideas, more often, in the future, about the issues of Santa Clara Co.

sincerely,
blair beekman

From: Baltao, Elaine <Elaine.Baltao@vta.org>

Sent: Friday, July 26, 2019 4:45 PM

To: VTA Board of Directors <VTABoardofDirectors@vta.org>; VTA Advisory Committee Members <VTAAdvisoryCommitteeMembers@vta.org>

Subject: Pls help spread the word: VTA To Offer Free Rides to Cooling Centers on July 27, 2019

Importance: High

VTA Board of Directors and Advisory Committee Members:

Please help us spread the word. The blogpost text is below. Link to the blogpost is: <https://www.vta.org/blog/vta-offer-free-rides-cooling-centers-july-27>

Thank you.

VTA To Offer Free Rides to Cooling Centers on July 27

07/26/2019

Brandi Childress

To help beat the heat, VTA will be offering free rides to cooling centers along VTA routes on Saturday, July 27.

This offer runs from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on VTA bus and light rail and is intended to assist some of our most vulnerable populations, primarily the unsheltered and the elderly.

[Click here for a full list of cooling centers in Santa Clara County](#) and tips on how to keep you and your loved ones safe during hot weather conditions.

For trip planning assistance to any of the cooling centers, contact VTA Customer Service at 408-321-2300 or email customer.service@vta.org.

Board Secretary's Office

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

3331 North First Street, Building B

San Jose, CA 95134-1927

Phone **408-321-5680**

board.secretary@vta.org

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