

# **BART TO SILICON VALLEY**

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## **TOP TEN QUESTIONS**

### **How does the recent defeat of Santa Clara County's proposed 1/2-cent sales tax increase impact the *BART to Silicon Valley* project?**

Measure A was one of many options considered to fund transportation improvements; VTA will continue to pursue other possibilities in the coming months. The BART project remains a top priority, and VTA's responsibility is to deliver, as best we can, all the projects specified in 2000 Measure A. VTA will continue to be aggressive in seeking ways to meet our obligations.

### **Why is BART the best solution for this corridor?**

A full evaluation of eleven different modes of travel (express bus, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, diesel and electric light rail, and BART) and various alignments and stations was completed. When compared with the other alternatives, the BART Alternative offered the fastest travel times to passenger destinations; the greatest congestion relief; the best access to jobs, education, medical, retail and entertainment centers throughout the Bay Area; regional connectivity with no transfers to the BART system; high community support and opportunities for transit-oriented development in conjunction with local land use planning efforts. The alternative also had the highest ridership projections.

### **Why not upgrade the existing commuter rail lines such as the Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) to the Caltrain line?**

In addition to the technical data in support of BART, the community continues to favor BART over commuter rail. In 2000, over 70% of Santa Clara County voters approved a local sales tax measure for BART and survey results by the Silicon Valley Leadership Group in 2005 show that 69% of County voters would continue to support a local tax measure to fund the BART Extension. BART is a high-quality regional system, supporting a regional economy; the BART system currently carries over 310,000 daily trips. The BART extension would add 111,500 daily trips by 2030, more than today's Caltrain, light-rail, express bus and ACE ridership combined. With six-minute headways, BART would provide more frequent service and greater capacity than Caltrain or ACE.

In addition, in 2000, City of Fremont residents and council strongly rejected the Fremont/South Bay Commuter Rail project, which proposed extending commuter rail from the proposed Warm Springs BART Station south through the cities of Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara.

### **Is *BART to Silicon Valley* really going to happen?**

Yes, long-term thinking is going to pay off by providing the necessary transportation improvements for current and future Bay Area transit riders. The project is generally progressing on schedule through mandatory phases, which is typical for all capital projects of this magnitude. As of Spring 2006, preliminary engineering (PE) had reached over 80% completion, and is estimated to continue through 2006. Final design, which moves the project to the 100% engineering design level, will begin in 2007. Construction will follow with service targeted to begin in 2016.

### **Why did VTA temporarily withdraw the project from preliminary engineering in the federal New Starts process?**

VTA elected to temporarily withdraw from the Preliminary Engineering phase of the New Starts funding

process with the intention of re-entering the formal review process in Final Design/Construction, when federal funding is needed. During this time, VTA will work with FTA outside the formal process to improve the project's competitiveness against other New Starts projects. The project schedule should not be affected by this action. VTA will continue to move forward with preliminary engineering, environmental and planning work.

### **How many people will ride *BART to Silicon Valley*?**

VTA is projecting that more than 111,500 weekday riders will use the 16.1-mile extension of BART to Silicon Valley in 2030. The project will attract more riders because it will save them time and money. These numbers are based on modeling data required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FTA requires that VTA use the region's official population and employment forecasts produced by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). VTA used ABAG's 2003 Smart Growth projections.

### **The projected ridership numbers are great, but how can you be sure that people will ride BART?**

BART provides a reliable, comfortable and fast way to travel. More people choose to ride BART than other modes. A recent University of California-Berkeley study commissioned by Caltrans found that 40 percent of people living near a BART station take BART.

### **Will the project solve our traffic problems?**

No single approach can solve the problem. The only way to address the region's transportation challenge now and in the future is to provide an integrated solution that maximizes the choices people have to make their trips including investments in BART, buses, carpools, telecommuting and roadways. BART, which provides more capacity than any other transportation alternative in the corridor, is essential to that solution.

### **How much will the project cost and who's paying for it?**

The total project cost in 2005 dollars is estimated at \$4.7 billion. The State of California will contribute 14% through the Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) and 2% through Proposition 42. Local sales tax through 2000 Measure A will contribute 56%, and federal grant funds (through the Federal Transit Administration) are expected to provide the remaining 16%. Another 12% will come from other sources.

### **How does funding for the BART Extension relate to other VTA transit services and projects?**

In March 2006, the VTA Board established the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to work towards a consensus 2000 Measure A plan. The PAC held six meetings throughout Santa Clara County between March and June 2006 to gather input from community members, stakeholders, and policy makers. Following the meetings, the PAC developed a plan that preserves all the 2000 Measure A projects, as well as some additional transportation projects. The VTA Board approved the PAC's recommended plan in June 2006.

## ***BART to Silicon Valley***

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