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Sept. 26 Readers Letters: Sunnyvale mayor backs Measure B

By Mercury News Readers

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As mayor of Sunnyvale and a VTA board member whose day-job is in high-tech, I'm a strong supporter of our Measure B traffic relief and road repair initiative — not only for the transportation improvements we need, but also the accountability provisions we deserve.

First, we insisted on a special tax over a general tax. A general tax is easier to pass, as it only needs 50 percent approval. A special tax is much harder, requiring 66.7 percent support, but locks in the funding for specific transportation improvements.

Second, for the 12-member VTA Board to make any changes in the allocation plan, it requires not a majority vote (seven of 12), nor a super-majority (eight of 12) but a 75 percent majority (nine of 12). If only 10 of 12 VTA board members are present, it still takes nine of those 10 to even change a sentence in Measure B.

Visit YesMeasureB.com. Let's get our Valley moving.

Glenn Hendricks

Mayor, City of Sunnyvale

Vote “no” on Cupertino’s Vallco measure

The “fanciful, futuristic” design and a “financial partner” cited by this newspaper’s Editorial Board (Editorial, Sept. 23) fail to justify Cupertino’s Measure D. The same editorial acknowledged that “ballot box zoning ... is rarely a good idea.” Measure D is not that rare exception. Nor would The Hills at Vallco be stopped by a “no” vote.

Contrary to “downtown” values that describe the project, it sits in a Cupertino panhandle edged by Sunnyvale, Santa Clara and West San Jose

neighborhoods, interconnected by Wolfe Road. While the decision sits solely with Cupertino voters, most of its residents do not use Wolfe Road as a primary access to Interstate 280. Even as Apple mitigates its project by improving ramps at Wolfe Road and Lawrence Expressway, Measure D fails to address incremental impacts on traffic, transit, utilities and more.

A no vote on Measure D does not stop the project but allows full environmental review in its sphere of impact.

Eileen McLaughlin
San Jose

Thompson's column on Kaepernick hit the mark

I commend your newspaper for placing on your front page a point of view that is too little heard or appreciated ("It's time to talk about Colin Kaepernick's why," Page 1A, Sept. 22). Particularly powerful was columnist Marcus Thompson's closing statement: "Everyone who was silent (about the most recent killing of an African American man by police) and vociferous (about Kaepernick's kneeling for the national anthem) has loudly announced how much they care about Kaepernick's reasons for protesting — not enough.

So the question now is why not?"

I heartily agree.

Dori Schack
Santa Cruz

Kudos to Luis Valdez for winning award

I would like to offer my congratulations to local boy Luis Valdez, founder and artistic director of El Teatro Campesino, for being honored with the 2015 National Medal of Arts award.

The statement from the White House reads "As a playwright, actor, writer, and director, he illuminates the human spirit in the face of social injustice through award-winning stage, film, and television productions."

I have been a fan of Mr. Valdez and his company for years, many times enjoying his annual Christmas pageantry at the beautiful old Mission San Juan Bautista. Last year my husband and I were lucky to get tickets on the

closing weekend of his new play “Valley of the Heart.” This powerful play so beautifully tells the story of the Japanese internment as it happened right here in this valley. A heartbreaking and heartwarming work, it is especially relevant in today’s world.

Thank you, Mr. Valdez, for speaking with such a personal voice in highlighting injustices we sometimes fail to recognize.

Mary Ellen Cuykendall

San Jose

Measure E gives part-timers a fighting chance

Scott Knies’ visceral letter opposing Measure E (Letters, Sept. 7), leads me to refute his arguments. First, Measure E allows part-time employees a chance to work more hours so they can pay the rent and support their families. Measure E applies to large businesses – just 1,200 out of 60,000 firms that pay the city’s business license tax.

The compliance measures are extremely fair. Any business that discovers it’s impractical to comply gets an exemption. There is no penalty for first-time violations; and the San Jose City Council can amend the implementation procedures to assure they are user-friendly.

Finally, when the minimum wage was on the ballot, opponents claimed it would lead to lawsuits. In four years, there have been zero lawsuits under the minimum wage law. Measure E uses the same enforcement mechanism.

Part-time employees, who are overwhelmingly women, deserve a fighting chance to work harder and earn more. Measure E gives them that opportunity.

Angelica Ramos

*President, National Women’s
Political Caucus, Silicon Valley chapter*