



Endorsement: 'Yes' on Measure B

By Silicon Valley Newsroom

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Autonomous vehicles, high-speed rail and perhaps even Elon Musk's vaunted Hyperloop reside on the transportation horizon. But we aren't there yet, and anyone who wants to sit in traffic for the next 20 years can take a hike.

The best way to bridge the gap between the promise of tomorrow's innovation and today's commuter crunch is to vote "yes" on Measure B. The 30-year, \$6.5 billion countywide ballot measure, spearheaded by the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and Silicon Valley Leadership Group CEO Carl Guardino, would benefit the region's 15 cities and 1.9 million residents in the immediate—one in every \$5 goes to fixing potholes—while also laying down a track for the near future. BART plays a significant role in Measure B's plans, as it will extend tracks from Berryessa in North San Jose through the core of downtown to Diridon Station. In just several years, the estimated time to get from San Jose to San Francisco on a BART train will take all of 61 minutes.

BART currently provides 440,000 weekday passenger trips, and Measure B would add a projected 90,000 trips to this number. More than two out of three of these riders will reportedly eschew driving their cars, significantly reducing the number of cars on the road (and, by extension, potholes). Electrification of Caltrain would also start in 2020, taking a weekday ridership of roughly 65,000 to an estimated 110,000. Combined, these efforts could transform Diridon into the region's premier transportation hub, greatly benefitting residents and South Bay businesses.

San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo argues that there is "no more certain way of getting cranes in the air and getting feet on the sidewalk without getting BART here." He adds, "When people know BART is funded and under construction, they're going to see a second boom of development in downtown, and it will be much larger than what we see today."

San Jose certainly has much to gain, but areas like South County, Santa Clara and corridors up and down the peninsula are likely to see the most benefits from Measure B's passage. The measure intends to fix 24 key interchanges on all seven highways running through the county.

Best of all, and consequently the greatest challenge for Measure B, is that it is a specific-use tax, so the threshold for passage requires more than two-thirds approval. Guardino says this was done intentionally. "We would rather have the harder threshold," he says, "because it's the only way you have accountability and assuredness on how tax dollars are spent." Opponents will cite shortcomings but lack alternatives. Voters should take comfort in the fact that VTA would oversee the appointment of a citizen watchdog committee.