



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
February 9, 2016**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Agenda Item # 8

SUBJECT: Support the North County and West Valley Cities Position Advocacy for Envision Silicon Valley County Sales Tax Measure

BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is actively discussing the possibility of placing a County-wide transportation sales tax measure on the November 2016 ballot. This tax measure would focus on enhancing public transportation systems such as BART and Caltrain, improving pavement maintenance, highways, and expressways, and improving active transportation alternatives for bicyclists and pedestrians. It would provide a County-level source of transportation funds to supplement regional, state, and federal funds along with direct funding from local agencies.

Historically, County-wide transportation sales tax measures in California have employed a strategy of combining a list of specific, major regional projects to be funded with separate program categories within which smaller-scale projects (such as street re-paving or pedestrian and bicycle improvements) would be subsequently identified and funded. Projects of significant local importance (such as expressway improvements) could also come from a cross-over category in which the tax measure designates a funding level and specific projects are subsequently selected based on certain criteria.

VTA has undertaken “Envision Silicon Valley,” a campaign aimed at engaging community leaders in discussion of current and future transportation needs, identifying solutions and developing funding priorities. Projects identified would be carried forward into the Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2040 and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Plan Bay Area documents.

In August 2015, the County of Santa Clara, local cities, and transit agencies submitted projects to VTA for consideration as part of the “Envision Silicon Valley” and VTP 2040 updating process. An estimated \$40 billion in projects and programs were submitted for an estimated \$20 billion in potential funding (including future grant funds as well as the proposed sales tax funding).

The City submitted the following projects to VTA which were approved by the City Council at its June 23, 2015 meeting:

- Miramonte Avenue Bikeway Improvements
- Stevens Creek Link Trail along Fremont Avenue and Grant Road
- Foothill Expressway – Widening of Foothill Expressway from 4 to 6 lanes between El Monte Road and San Antonio Road by providing auxiliary lanes in both directions. Intersection improvements at El Monte include squaring off the northeast and southwest corners and signal/geometry modifications.
- El Monte Avenue Street Resurfacing Project - Providing 2-inch mill and overlay for the entire 2 miles of El Monte Road within the City limits (O’Keefe Lane at the border of Los Altos Hills to Hollingsworth Drive at the border of Mountain View).

- Fremont Avenue Street Resurfacing – Providing 2-inch mill and overlay on Fremont Avenue between Stevens Creek and Miramonte Avenue.
- Advanced Traffic Management System - Developing an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) throughout the City.
- Projects identified in both the Bicycle Transportation Plan and Pedestrian Master Plan

These projects, along with project lists submitted by other agencies provide the basis for discussion of a 2016 County-wide transportation sales tax.

EXISTING POLICY

None

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

June 23, 2015 (Proposed Projects for VTP)

DISCUSSION

VTA staff is currently discussing funding concepts, and it is expected that an initial proposal for the tax measure will be developed by VTA in early 2016. Based on discussions among stakeholders, it appears at this time that the following projects and programs are likely to be considered for the tax measure (likely a 30-year, 1/2 cent sales tax that would generate about \$6 billion over the life of the tax measure):

1. The BART Phase 2 extension to San Jose (and possibly to Santa Clara);
2. Increased capacity for Caltrain including longer trains, station and platform enhancements, and money for grade separations;
3. Expressway improvements based on the current County Expressway Plan with priorities including upgrades to the Foothill Expressway Widening between San Antonio Road/El Monte Avenue and El Monte/Foothill Intersection improvements;
4. Key freeway improvement projects including express lanes and interchange upgrades;
5. Local street and road pavement maintenance allocations with a possible provision to unencumber local funds if an adequate pavement maintenance level is achieved;
6. Transportation improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians; and
7. Transit service improvements for seniors and people with disabilities.

Public and agency review regarding the proposed sales tax measure is expected to begin in February, with final adoption of the measure content by August. The Envision Silicon Valley process will include formal review of the proposed measure by the following VTA boards and committees:

- The VTA Board and Envision Silicon Valley Ad Hoc Committee (Mayor Jeannie Bruins represents the North County cities and Campbell Mayor Jason Baker represents West Valley cities);
- The VTA Policy Advisory Committee (Mayor Pro Tem Mary Prochnow represents Los Altos);
- The VTA Technical Advisory Committee (Public Works Director and Transportation Services Manager represent Los Altos);

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Additionally, potential advocacy for the composition of the measure could come from key employers (individually or through the Silicon Valley Leadership Group), community and environmental groups, and/or a possible coalition of North County cities.

On January 8, 2016, Mayor Bruins and City staff attended a meeting of representatives from several North County and West Valley cities. At this meeting, a conceptual allocation of county sales tax funding levels and expenditure categories was discussed. This concept was developed from various discussions among agency representatives, elected officials, actions taken by governing bodies, and VTA meetings.

After discussion and some edits to the working draft, consensus was reached that each city representative should return to his or her City Council and request support to advocate for this conceptual funding allocation. The intent is to solidify the collective cities' position and more effectively advocate for specific funding levels and uses as the sales tax measure moves forward. VTA is expected to begin to finalize the County sales tax funding levels, expenditure categories and projects in February 2016.

The recommended advocacy position is as follows:

Expenditure Category	Allocation (\$ millions)	Allocation (Percent)
BART (Phase II of BART Silicon Valley Extension)	\$1,200	20.0
Caltrain (Santa Clara County portion of costs to expand capacity, improve reliability, and major station upgrades and improvements)	400	6.7
Congestion Relief/Transit/Mode shift	500	8.3
Rail/Road Grade Separations (Caltrain and VTA light rail/road separations-similar to Measure A program in San Mateo County)	900	15.0
Expressways (Funding for projects identified in the County Expressway 2040 Plan)	1,000	16.7
State and Highways (Key interchanges and operational projects)	500	8.3
Local Streets and Roads (Agencies would have flexibility to focus on maintenance or other local needs)	1,000	16.7
Bicycle/Pedestrian (Bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects)	500	8.3
Total	\$6,000	100.0

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The category of Congestion Relief/Transit/Mode shift includes expanded transit and other innovative strategies focused on congested commute corridors based on the results of a comprehensive, system-wide study and plan. Potential projects include express commuter bus service, new transit options, last mile strategies (e.g., bike share), and other commute alternatives. These strategies would be aimed at supporting the continued economic vitality and employment growth in Silicon Valley, further reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicle use for commuting, and providing new options to get people from where they live to where they work.

It should be noted that the categories above are conceptual, in that specific definitions and funding criteria have not been proposed. Solidifying advocacy around this concept would nonetheless establish a stronger position when supported by multiple cities.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION

Support the North County and West Valley Cities Position Advocacy for Envision Silicon Valley County Sales Tax Measure

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not support the North County and West Valley Cities Position Advocacy and direct staff accordingly

Prepared by: Cedric Novenario, Transportation Services Manager

Reviewed by: Susanna Chan, Public Works Director

Approved by: Marcia Somers, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS: None