



**Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor**  
**BART Extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara**  
***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***  
***January 2004***

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- **What is the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project?**

The Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project extends the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) system south from the city of Fremont in Alameda County through the cities of Milpitas and San Jose in Santa Clara County to a terminus near the Caltrain commuter rail station in the city of Santa Clara.

The 16.3-mile alignment would be at-grade, above ground or in a trench, with a subway through downtown San Jose. The project includes seven stations, a new BART maintenance and storage facility, and the purchase of rail cars needed to operate the extension.

- **What are VTA's federal requests for this year with regard to the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project?**

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is seeking to reauthorize the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project in the successor legislation to the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). In addition, VTA is requesting an appropriation of \$10 million from the federal Section 5309 New Starts Program in FY 2005 for preliminary engineering for the project.

- **Will the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project connect to other transportation modes?**

Yes. The project represents the last link needed to complete the connection of all of the region's rail systems around San Francisco Bay and tie together the region's three metropolitan centers: San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland. The project will provide efficient and convenient passenger connections to the BART system, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE), Caltrain commuter rail service, Capitol Corridor intercity rail service, Amtrak, and VTA buses and light rail system.

- **Will the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project connect to the Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport?**

Yes. The project will link with an automated people mover system at the Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport. Mineta San Jose International Airport served 11.1 million passengers in 2002. Currently, plans are in place to expand the airport's main concourse to serve 17.4 million passengers. The project will also link Silicon Valley with the San Francisco and Oakland International Airports via the existing BART system.

- **What are the economic benefits associated with the completion of the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project?**

The San Jose/Silicon Valley area is now home to more than 7,300 technology companies employing more than 300,000 people, the largest concentration of

technology enterprise in the world. Silicon Valley is home to numerous global companies, as well as thousands of start-ups, small businesses and emerging companies that will become tomorrow's global models.

San Jose is the third largest city in California and the 11th largest in the nation. San Jose's \$28.2 billion in exports accounts for over one-fourth of California's total exports. California is the world's fifth largest economy. With a gross state product of \$1.330 trillion, California's economy is exceeded only by the United States as a whole, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Innovative products and services that originate in Silicon Valley contribute greatly to a successful regional, state and national economy. Providing a comprehensive transportation solution for Silicon Valley is a key component in supporting our regional, state and national economic health.

The project is vital to the economic future of Silicon Valley's high technology industry. The project will support the local economy; enhance regional connectivity; alleviate traffic congestion; accommodate future travel demand; improve access to employment, education, medical, and retail centers; and maximize transit usage.

- **What are the traffic relief benefits associated with the completion of the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project?**

Currently, I-680 and I-880 are two of the most-congested corridors in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. By extending BART to Silicon Valley, the project will provide a rail transit alternative to relieve traffic congestion in these corridors.

- **What is the total estimated cost of the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project?**

The estimated total capital cost of the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project is \$4.112 billion (in 2003 dollars).

- **What funding sources are available for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project?**

80% of the funding for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project will come from local and state revenues.

The following is a funding breakdown for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project. The figures are expressed in 2003 dollars:

Funding Source	Funding Amount	Percentage of Funding
<b>Local</b> 2000 Measure A Program and other funds	\$2.629 billion	64%
<b>State</b> Traffic Congestion Relief Program	\$649 million	16 %
<b>Federal</b> Section 5309 New Starts	\$834 million	20 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4.112 billion</b>	<b>100%</b>

Both state and local funding are committed for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project. In 2000, the Governor and the California Legislature enacted a \$6.8 billion state transportation investment program called the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP). This program will provide approximately \$649 million for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project. In November 2000, by a 70.3% majority, Santa Clara County voters approved Measure A, a half-cent sales tax for transportation investments for the next 30 years. The 2000 Measure A, along with other funding sources, will provide \$2.629 billion (in 2003 dollars) for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project. VTA will seek \$834 million (in 2003 dollars) for the project through the federal Section 5309 New Starts Program.

- **How much federal Section 5309 New Starts funding is needed for the project? What is the percentage of New Starts funding as compared with the overall cost of the project?**

The project is seeking \$834 million (in 2003 dollars) from the federal Section 5309 New Starts Program. New Starts dollars would account for only 20 % of the total funding required for the project, which makes it a significant overmatch project. In fact, this is one of the lowest federal shares, as a percentage of total project costs, ever requested for a New Starts project.

- **What is the federal New Starts process and where is the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project in that process?**

Through various reforms enacted by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), New Starts projects must go through a rigorous process with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FTA rates each New Starts project according to two criteria: (a) project justification; and (b) local financial commitment. The project justification rating is obtained by evaluating a potential New Starts project according to a number of factors, including mobility improvements, environmental benefits, operating efficiencies, cost effectiveness, and transit supportive land-use patterns. The local financial commitment rating requires a project to be evaluated based upon its local and state commitment (non-New Starts share) of project costs, and the stability and reliability of its capital and operating finance plans.

Aside from these ratings, a New Starts project must pass certain FTA milestones in order to be eligible for funding. VTA has achieved key milestones in the FTA New Starts evaluation process for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project as follows:

- (a) Completion of an alternatives analysis: VTA conducted a Major Investment Study/Alternatives Analysis, selecting a BART Extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara as the Preferred Investment Strategy and securing approximately 80% of project funding through local, state and other revenues.

- (b) Inclusion of the project in the Regional Transportation Plan: The project was included in the Regional Transportation Plan adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in December 2001. MTC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area region.
- (c) Approval for the project to enter into preliminary engineering: FTA recommended that the project proceed into preliminary engineering in September 2002.
- (d) Issuance of a Record of Decision upon completion of environmental work: This work is in progress. According to the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project's schedule, a Record of Decision is anticipated to be received in November 2004.
- (e) Approval for the project to enter into final design.

If a New Starts project does not pass each of these milestones, it is not eligible to receive federal appropriations for the respective phases of work.

Once a New Starts project has been issued its Record of Decision and has been approved to enter into final design by FTA based upon its overall project rating, the project sponsor and FTA begin negotiating a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for the project. The FFGA spells out the roles and responsibilities of the project sponsor and FTA during the construction of the project. It also represents the commitment of the federal government to provide its share of construction funding for the project. A New Starts funding schedule is included in the FFGA, which articulates what amount of New Starts dollars should be appropriated in each fiscal year for the project. A project cannot receive a New Starts appropriation for construction without an FFGA.

These milestones set the stage for more federal analysis that will weigh the merits of the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project against other rail expansion projects across the country also seeking federal funds. We believe the project will be competitive because Silicon Valley is a critical national economic engine and because the project has a high local match (80% state and local funds).

- **Has the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project received approval from the Federal Transit Administration to enter into preliminary engineering?**

Yes. In September 2002, FTA issued a rating of “Recommended” for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project and approved the project for entry into preliminary engineering.

- **Has the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project received any prior New Starts appropriations?**

Yes. The federal FY 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Bill allocated \$248,375 for preliminary engineering work for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project. This was the project's first New Starts appropriation. Another \$2 million for the project was included in the FY 2004 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which was signed into law in January 2004.

- **Was the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project authorized in TEA-21?**

Yes. The Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project was authorized for federal Section 5309 New Starts funding in TEA-21 as the "Fremont-South Bay Corridor." The project is listed in Section 3030(b)(19).

- **What is the status of the state Traffic Congestion Relief Program funding for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project?**

The California Transportation Commission (CTC), which oversees the allocation of funds for projects included in the state Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP), approved \$8 million for the environmental phase in 2001 and \$37 million for conceptual engineering in 2002 for a total allocation of \$45 million to date. Additional allocation requests will be submitted to the CTC in the future according to the project's cash-flow needs.

- **What are the operating and maintenance costs related to the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project and how will those be funded?**

Total annual operating and maintenance costs for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project are estimated at \$65 million (in 2003 dollars). VTA has entered into a cooperative agreement with BART, which indicates that VTA would be financially responsible for that portion of the project's operating and maintenance costs not covered by passenger fares. VTA's long-term financial strategy for operations and maintenance of the project includes a combination of funding from local sales tax revenues and other new sources.

- **What is the status of work on the project? What is the current stage of development of the project?**

The Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project currently is under environmental review. In addition, conceptual engineering, which took the project to a 10% design level, is completed. Contracts currently are being awarded for preliminary engineering work.

- **What is the project schedule? When is construction scheduled to begin? When will the project be open for service?**
  - ✓ The **environmental document** for the project is expected to be available for public review in Spring 2004.
  - ✓ **Final approval of the environmental document** is targeted for Fall 2004.
  - ✓ **Preliminary engineering** will begin in Spring 2004 and will be completed in early 2006.
  - ✓ **Final design** is scheduled to start after preliminary engineering work is completed.
  - ✓ VTA anticipates the execution of a **Full Funding Grant Agreement** for the project with FTA in 2006.
  - ✓ **Beginning of construction** is scheduled for late 2006.
  - ✓ **Project completion and beginning of service** is targeted for late 2013.
  
- **How was the BART Extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara selected as the Preferred Investment Strategy for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor?**

The proposed BART extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara was selected following the completion of the Major Investment Study/Alternatives Analysis (MIS/AA) in November 2001. The MIS/AA evaluated 11 alternatives and modes of travel (express bus, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, diesel and electric light rail, and BART), and various alignments and stations located in the cities of Fremont, Milpitas, San Jose, and Santa Clara.

The Preferred Investment Strategy/Locally Preferred Alternative for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project was chosen after an extensive review process, including eight months of technical analysis, 12 public meetings, and more than 15 community working group meetings.

When compared with the other alternatives, the BART extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara offered the fastest travel times to passenger destinations, greatest congestion relief, best regional connectivity with no transfers to the existing BART system, and opportunities for transit-oriented development in conjunction with local land-use planning efforts. The BART extension also had the highest ridership projections.

The MIS/AA screening and evaluation process resulted in the adoption of the BART extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara as the preferred alternative by the VTA Board of Directors in November 2001.

- **Why is VTA the lead on the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project?**

VTA is the lead agency responsible for designing and constructing the project. VTA will own all the property, project facilities and equipment. When the project is completed, BART will operate and maintain the system under an agreement executed with VTA.

VTA is responsible for transit planning, construction and operations in Santa Clara County, and has an excellent record for completing major and complex roadway and transit projects on or ahead of schedule, and within budget.

- **Is the project included in the Regional Transportation Plan?**

Yes. In December 2001, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, approved its Regional Transportation Plan. This plan identifies the high priority rail expansion corridors for the near and long terms for the region, including those corridors that will be priorities for federal New Starts funding.

The MTC's Regional Transportation Plan lists the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Project and the San Francisco Muni Central Subway Project as the Bay Area's next highest priority rail expansions after the BART extension to San Francisco International Airport (which opened in Summer 2003) receives its full allotment of New Starts funds as specified in its FFGA.

- **Who is VTA? Who is on the VTA Board of Directors?**

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is an independent special district responsible for bus, light rail and paratransit operations; congestion management; specific highway improvements; transit capital improvement projects; and countywide transportation planning for the Silicon Valley area.

The VTA Board of Directors is responsible for Santa Clara County's transportation policy. It has 12 voting members and two ex-officio members. Ten directors are city council members representing the 15 cities in the county, and two directors are members of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. The two ex-officio members are Santa Clara County's representatives on MTC.