

**Panel – Mobility and Access  
Panelist:**

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Thank you.

I had put together a pretty robust presentation, but I have been asked to cut it way down, so forgive me. I am going to race through some of these slides and try to just hit the salient points.

I think in the opening slide here, I wanted to point out here is that integrated land planning absolutely has to be done. Typically, in the planning field, those two things are done separately. They are beginning to be merged more together, but still there's a lot of work to do on that.

So I just want to give you a little bit of background about what VTA does. We are truly a multimodal agency. We are in Santa Clara County, which is in the Bay area. I will show you a slide of that in a second. We do everything. We build transit. We operate transit. We design highways. We build highways. We plan for bikes and pedestrians. We are the funding agency. We have a joint development program. So we really are a multimodal agency. But we don't have any land use authority.

So this is where we are. This is the Bay Area region. We are down in the southern part of the region. But we are the largest area in that region.

We have 25 percent of the population in the nine Bay Area counties, 30 percent of the jobs. We have Silicon Valley, which has over 70 percent of the jobs, the high-tech jobs in the area. And we are really growing. So we are growing at about 20,000 people a year. And there will be 500,000 new residents by 2030, and most of the job growth. Also, San Jose, which is the third largest city in California.

So we have a number of issues. And essentially we are sprawling. We have an extreme jobs/housing imbalance.

And this is pretty much what we look like. This is San Jose kind of off there in the center. Really not a robust downtown. We are pretty much a giant suburb. And this is kind of what our business parks are like, very low density, tons of parking, way overparked. And that's our environment. And that's what we are trying to operate transit in.

You can see in this slide right here, this is our light rail line and this is our station. You can see it's really separated from all the surrounding communities. Now I will talk a little bit more about why that's bad as I go through this.

So what do we do as a transportation agency? Well, first of all, we have to come to the realization we just can't build our way out of this problem. We can only expand our freeway system by 5 percent, but we are going to have 30 percent more trips in the coming 25 years. So we developed a program called the community design and transportation program, and this is our program for integrating land use. So the agency has adopted this program. And then we went out

and we shopped it.

So I am going to just cut right to the chase and show you what we did. We went out to all the cities in the county and the government, we worked with them individually, went to council meetings, planning commission meetings, and we essentially got them all to endorse the program formally. And the biggest benefit that came out of this was they adopted this framework, this map. This is a corridor and station areas map. It has all of our station areas. Light rail, commuter rail, future BART stations are listed in there. All of our major transit corridors including future BRT corridors.

And just to give you a regional framework, the blue line is all the way to San Francisco. We have a line coming in from Stockton, also a commuter rail line which we're both partners in, and then we are building BART, we are designing BART right now to come in and connect with the Bay Area electrified heavy rail system.

So I am not going to spend too much time on this. I am going to kind of cut right to the chase and wow you with some graphics at the end here. This is our manual of best practices. We also developed pedestrian technical guidelines. This is a very robust manual. And all of the cities have been given these manuals. This is essentially what they have all adopted to do. It has a pretty robust framework. I have a copy if anybody wants to see it, and I can even send you copies. But these are the key concepts. And Ed, in his opening remarks, touched on all of these things. This is what our program is essentially based on.

And the last line is building synergy based on long-range vision and incremental change. Incrementalism has gotten us where we are. Incrementalism will essentially get us to where we need to go. But you have to have a vision. If you don't have a vision, you are just treading water. And building synergy is also important as projects begin to change with time and begin to usher in a new paradigm.

So I am not going to go through the principles of this. I will kind of cut to the chase here. One of the appendices we have is development density recommendations. And this is the thing that has gotten the most attention in the last four or five years. A lot of the city planners are actually shopping these density recommendations to their cities. And in the photo, I will show you one really great success story regarding this, but this is something the city planners are actually using.

We have a grant fund program. We give money to cities for planning projects that are enhancing the environment around transit, and we give money for capital projects. And it's a pretty good amount of money, \$500,000 a year for planning. And our first cycle of capital grants is nearly \$9,000,000. And we compare that to the nine Bay-area counties, theirs is only \$1,000,000 and ours is roughly \$9,000,000. So we are giving a lot of money now to incentivize this kind of activity.

So before moving on, this is really the question we are all here to ask and answer. So can we sustain this development? Probably. You know, we can probably build our way out of this. But I guess a

better question is, should we? And I would answer no. I think there's a better way to go. And a lot of the speakers today have touched on this issue.

So these are some things about what a sustainable suburb means. I am just going to focus on one of these -- well, actually two. First of all, it has to be pedestrian oriented. You have to have the pedestrian being sort of the design metric to evolve really sustainable suburbs.

Then you have to really re-think street design.

And I guess lastly, but not any less important, is integrate transit. And that's, as Ed said, not relegated to periphery outside of, you know, walled-off sound walls and that sort of thing, but really integrated in.

This is a nice development. I am not going to talk about this. I don't have the time. I will cut to the chase. I had one comment about this development, though. This is a great mixed-use development that basically brings back a Main Street, but the city -- actually, the City of San Jose actually approved this way outside of downtown. This is Santana Rose for those who have been to the Santa Clara area. It's a very nice development. And I will have to go back and show you this one. This is a classic Main Street environment, but it's not really anywhere near downtown.

So this is an example. I showed you this photograph before. And when I talk about, you know, what needs to make a sustainable suburb, one is to

bring activities into suburbs so that people don't have to go outside of the suburb, so they can do a lot of trips within the suburb, shorten trips. It's not just about the commuter trip, as has been mentioned before.

So right about here is this. And this is an anomaly in the Santa Clara area. This is in the middle of a low-density suburban sprawling area. It was done by a visionary councilperson who's no longer in office, but it's actually been built. Half of it's built. And this is what it looks like. It's got all the classic elements of a new town center, a village, very walkable environment, mixed use, active storefront and street front with sidewalks.

Real quickly, just some of the policy issues: First of all, I think we need to get cities back into the business of planning and designing cities, not just planning them. We need to have more flexible policies. And frankly, my view is the Euclidian zoning practices are outdated and need to be revised or abandoned completely for something better.

And then the last bullet is implement the plans that we actually have out there. A lot of our cities have great plans, they have this re-zoned land around our transit stations to 40, 50, 60 acres, and then projects come in that are 15 or 18 and they approve them. And I think that's just wrong.

So these are the key concepts to suburban development and based on our VDT concepts. I am not going to go through in much detail and I will cut to the chase about what these look like. And this is something that we often go around to the cities and

communities and do presentations to help people better understand what's possible. This is kind of an arterial that could be anywhere in America, really. Just ubiquitous in our environment. Very wide streets. No activity related to the streets. Very sparse environment. And parking fronts everything. So with the right kind of policies in place, this is what might begin to evolve on the corridor. Not too dense, but appropriate, contact sensitive design. As more things, the synergies are created in the system, we begin to evolve the corridor into something that can actually sustain a BRT.

This is just a sister view of that. It shows how it relates to an existing residential area. The density is not too overwhelming. It's nice that the density of the surrounding developments is preserved. And they actually get assets from it. Now they can actually walk to the corridor and have many activities and access local and regional transit systems.

Just another evolution of a corridor. This was at the request of the City of Cupertino. This is one of the planning projects that they want to implement. This is where we actually have our first BRT line in Santa Clara County. This is El Camino Real or the Kings Highway. And we are showing how we hope to evolve this corridor over time with extremely nice station areas. And Ed mentioned that. It's about making transit have a real sense of place in the community.

This is a very simple design treatment to change a residential suburban area. Transformation of a shopping center. This is sort of on the Santana Row line where you basically create a faux Main Street and

get rid of the sea of parking. Parking is still there. It's just behind those buildings.

And I will just run through this. Another shopping center transportation. This is one of our light rail stations. This is actually one of our joint development sites, and we are showing how this could evolve over time. Another evolution.

And this is the one I really wanted to show you. This is the City of San Jose. This is what the city planners have actually used their development density guidelines for. This little yellow strip there is about a mile area, mile and a half area, and within that area they have just approved a plan to put in 29,000,000 square feet of commercial office space and 35,000 residential units. And it's on the light rail line. Yeah. Finally.

We are getting development on the light rail line. And it's an amazing project. One of the things they tried to do is reduce the parking requirements. And the financiers of these, the developers, basically said, "No way." So we are working. We still got work to do on that.

But this is what it would look like. This is our light rail line, which, by the way, when we built this was all low-density, industrial buildings. Probably half the area was orchards. So first thing is this gets approved, and then the buildings begin to come in, and over time you end up with a very robust corridor, many activities going on. Origins and destinations. People living in the area. And they liked it so much they have promoted it in their information material.

So I will just conclude my presentation with a couple things we are doing and leave you with that thought. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. NORBECK: Any questions?

MR. GUERA: Hello. Antonio Guera, University of Southern California, master of public administration student and San Jose resident.

I have two questions for you. One, the North San Jose development plans, they kind of got beat up in the media, from what I remember, about the density of them. And I remember talking to my family when they were first revealed. They're like, "They're going to do what? Where? And why?" And I remember the newspapers talking about reducing the parking there.

So my question is does VTA ever get involved in public relations in trying to sell these plans? Because I know a lot of people were against it just upon hearing it.

And my second question involves BART. Do you really have the money? Do you imagine having the money coming to -- for VTA to do all these great plans?

MR. AUGENSTEIN: Well, that is the million dollar question. I am not sure I am going to answer that question.

But the former questions, we will support these projects. We will go and speak, we will write letters, we will do whatever we can. We, as a congestion management agency, actually review these

projects from a congestion management standpoint. So we worked very closely with them and, as a result, the agency is giving tens of millions of dollars put into bike programs, pedestrian programs, and transit. And we are getting all kinds of benefits on the street environment there. We are getting cascading greens, which will mean you can run the light rail line with no stops all the way from downtown up. You will probably decrease the travel time by about four or five minutes. So we do support that.

It was challenged in court. Their plan was challenged in court. It wasn't challenged on an environmental standpoint. It was challenged by the surrounding cities who felt that they weren't mitigating the impacts enough. And that suit was settled last month. And so they are moving forward with that.

The BART project, that remains to be seen. The mantra is we are looking for money.

MS. ALLISON: Thank you.  
(Applause.)