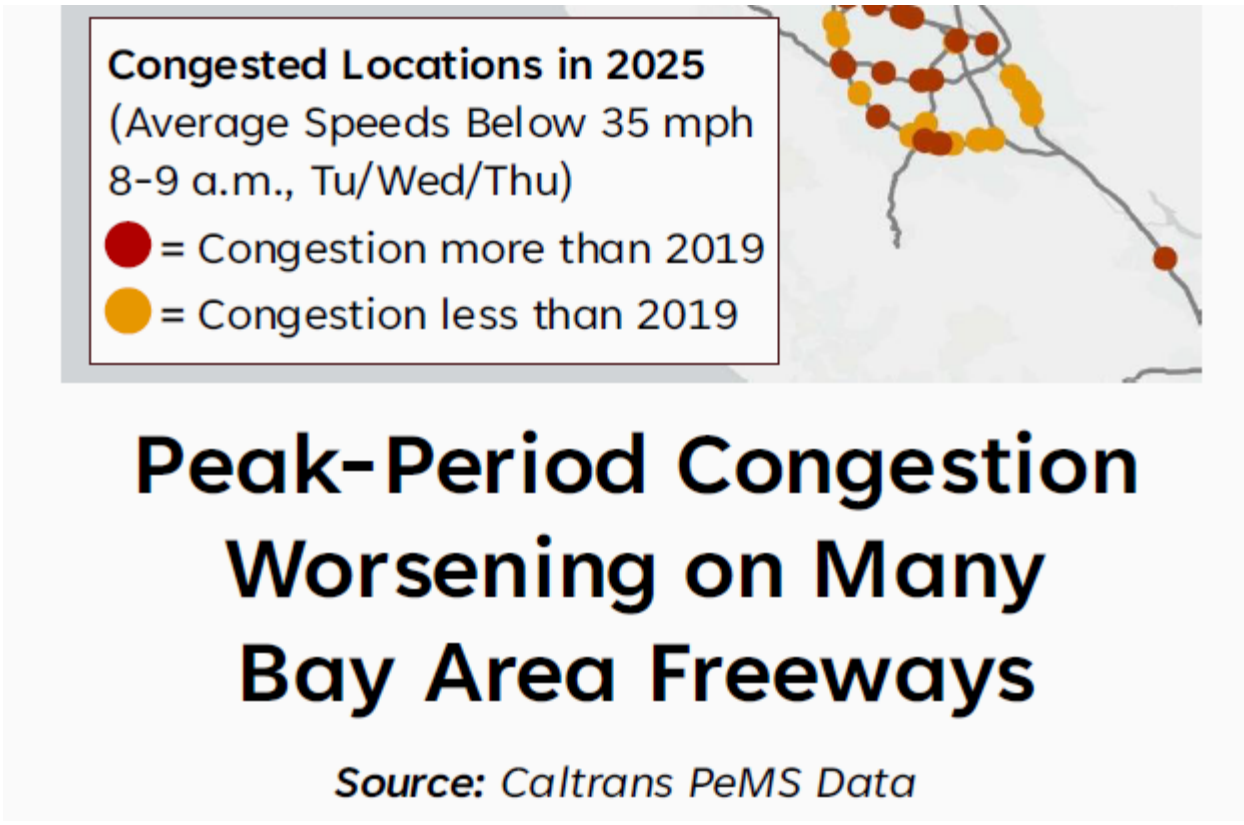

From: Roland Lebrun
Sent: Monday, October 26, 2026 5:23 PM
To: MTC-ABAG Info
Cc: VTA Board Secretary
Subject: Fw: October 28, 2026 MTC Commission Item 9a. Express Lanes Strategic Planning Introduction

External Email

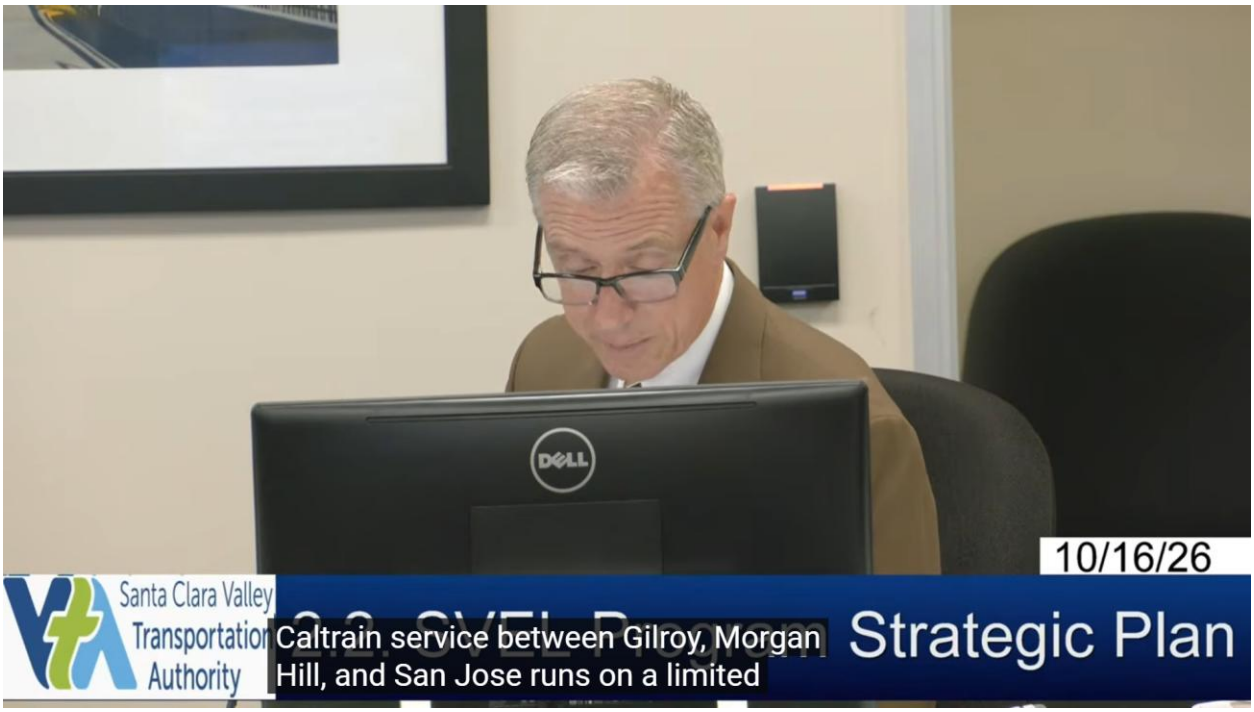
Dear Chair Noack and Commissioners,

Further to Mayors Turner and Bozzo's letter to the October 16 VTA Workshop (attached for your convenience), please consider directing staff to conduct an audit of VTA planners' current prioritization of HOV to Express Lane conversions ahead of the construction of Express Lanes in disadvantaged communities south of San Jose who have been **literally forced out of Santa Clara County because of the lack of affordable housing** .

As an example, it is unclear why VTA is **prioritizing Express Lanes in sections of freeways (slide 28) which are less congested than in 2019** over the 25-mile section of 101 between San Jose and Gilroy which has essentially ground to a halt **because there is still no viable transit alternative** after multiple (2000 and 2016) sales tax measures allegedly intended to address voter's desperate needs followed by decades of neglect.



Morgan Hill Mayor Mark Turner



https://youtu.be/UE8Zw_jCN0?t=8909

Mark Turner 2:08:32

Yes, I do, colleagues. I want to start by telling exactly what I'm going to be asking for today, and then take a few minutes to explain why. And first of all, I want to just bring to your attention the letter that you may have received from both Mayor Bozzo and myself. If you haven't had time to read that, I'd appreciate you taking the time to kind of check that out. When we set the next express lane priority, I'm asking that we put money behind the project that is ready, and that it finishes the network that we've already built. That project, of course is the U.S. 101 Express Lane at SR 85 South through Gilroy.

And let me start with readiness because I think that does matter most. A large part of this corridor is already environmentally cleared. The portion of Phase Seven from 101 at 85 South to Dunn Avenue in Morgan in Morgan Hill is cleared and ready for design, so we're not asking to start from scratch. We're really just asking to finish the job. ***South County has been asking for this for nearly two decades*** *.* ***Back in 2020, Morgan Hill told MTC plainly, our number one and highest priority is expanding Highway 101 with an express lane to Highway 25*** *. We called 101 in South County exactly what it is, and that is the bottleneck. Our ask hasn't changed in all these years, and I'm not asking alone. Morgan Hill and Gilroy are partnered on this. South County cities agree on this, and there's really a simple reason we agree, and that is because we don't have really any other options?* ***Caltrain service between Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Jose runs on a limited peak direction schedule. Union Pacific owns those tracks, and it limits how many trains we can add . And quite frankly, if the regional transit measure fails, this could end train service to South County.*** *There is no parallel freeway. There's no light rail. There are no other real options for those of us in South County. We don't have alternative routes, and we don't have light rail options.* ***South County has one road, so when 101 stops, South County stops*** *. I also want to put this in the bigger picture because this isn't a standalone project. It's the missing piece of a system that we've already paid for. Phase four is under construction right now on 85 to the 101 85 interchange, and it opens in 2028. Phase six brings express lanes on 101 down to 85 with construction from 2028 to 2031. But* ***without South County, the whole system dead ends into South San Jose, right where the worst part of the commute begins*** *.* ***We'd be building a network that stops just short of the people who need it most*** *. This is also a practical project with a modest footprint. We're talking about a single express lane in each direction from the end of the Morgan Hill carpool lanes down to 101 State Route 25 interchange, it widens pavements within the existing right of way.* ***It doesn't take anyone's home, and it ties into the 101 25 interchange that we're***

already building *, **which is one of the most congested spots in our area because of growth in South County and San Benito County** , and you'll see those figures in the letter that Mayor Bozzo and I wrote. And **that growth is coming, whether we plan for it or not** . We're all experiencing it. We're all getting to see what that's like. State housing mandates are putting 1000s of new units in South County, including roughly 2,200 builder remedy units, right on the border of Morgan Hill. 14 of the 20 builder remedy projects that Director Arenas mentioned earlier are right on the border of Morgan Hill. An additional 2,200 housing units. **We can build capacity now, or we can manage gridlock later** . Finally, this project gives back express lanes, create a new revenue stream for transportation, including public transit, and quite frankly, bus routes 68 and 568 that run to Gilroy are some of the highest ridership numbers that VTA has.*

Mark Turner 2:12:30

A heavily used corridor with no alternatives is exactly where express lanes earn the most, and that revenue supports the transit every board member here cares about *. So let me close where I started. **South County has done everything this board has asked for. We planned, we've cleared, we've partnered, and we've waited** . Prioritizing one isn't choosing one city over another. It's finishing the network, serving their residents who have no other way to get to work, and putting our money where the project is ready. So I'm asking for your support on that. Thank you.*

In closing, I would like to yield my time to Mayor Mark Turner during public comment if he is available and, if not, I am wondering if it would be possible to replay his address to the VTA Board of Directors: https://youtu.be/UE8Zw_jCN0?t=8909

Thank you for your consideration.

Roland Lebrun

PS. Going back to slide 28, please note the 4 red dots on highway 280 between highway 85 and highway 87 which beg the question **why is the BART extension going to Santa Clara instead of Cupertino?**

From: Matt Morley
Sent: Tuesday, October 13, 2026 8:51 AM
To: VTA Board Secretary
Cc: Ramanujam, Murali; doanh.nguyen; Emoto, Casey; Gonot, Carolyn; Christina Turner; Greg Bozzo; Mark Turner
Subject: [EXTERNAL] South County Express Lanes - VTA Workshop

CAUTION: This Message originated from outside VTA. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe!

VTA Board Members (bcc'd)

This Friday you have the opportunity to participate in a workshop that includes an information item on the Silicon Valley Express Lanes.

Attached you will find a letter from the Mayors of Gilroy and Morgan Hill supporting an increased focus on South County Express Lanes. Our roads are ready for it.

We encourage you to support prioritizing the South County in this program.

Matt Morley | City Administrator
7351 Rosanna Street, Gilroy, CA 95020
Direct 408.846.0250
http://www.cityofgilroy.org

Public Comment

CITY OF MORGAN HILL

CITY OF gilroy CALIFORNIA
A community with a spice for life

October 9, 2026

The Honorable Sergio Lopez, Chairperson
Members of the Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
3331 North First Street
San José, CA 95134

RE: October 16 Board Workshop — Request to Prioritize US 101 South County Express Lanes

Dear Chairperson Lopez and Members of the Board:

We write jointly, on behalf of the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill, to ask the Board to use the October 16 workshop to advance US 101 South County express lanes in the Silicon Valley Express Lanes (SVEL) delivery sequence, and to pull the segments south of Dunne Avenue out of the post-2035 horizon.

The timing matters. The Board deferred the SVEL Strategic Plan on June 4 and the item has not returned, so this workshop is the Board's opportunity to set the sequence before adoption fixes it for a decade. South County has waited through three completed phases. We are asking to be in the fourth conversation, not the eleventh.

Geographic equity: South County has never had an express lane

VTA has opened three phases of express lanes since 2012, and none are in South County. US 101's HOV lanes terminate at Cochrane Road, so there is no managed lane of any kind across the roughly 18 miles from there to the San Benito County line — on a facility carrying more than 120,000 vehicles a day. Under the current plan, everything south of Dunne Avenue waits until after 2035, more than two decades after the program's first lane opened. Gilroy and Morgan Hill pay the same countywide sales tax rate as every other city in Santa Clara County, into the same Measure A and Measure B programs.

Phase 7 is ready now. It is environmentally cleared for dual express lanes from SR 85 to Cochrane Road and a single express lane from Cochrane to Dunne Avenue, and the plan's own 2027 action is to conduct the access configuration analysis. Nothing about it is contingent, and no jurisdiction opposes it. We ask the Board to fund its design and move its construction date forward.

We also want to be precise about what Phase 7 does and does not do. As scoped, it ends at Dunne Avenue in Morgan Hill. It does not reach San Martin or Gilroy — the communities carrying the fastest growth, the failing segments, and every one of South County's equity-designated tracts. Phase 7 is the right next step. It is not the project. The project is the corridor, from SR 85 to the San Benito County line, and we ask the Board to treat it as one.

Public Comment

South County is absorbing the county's growth

Over the last fifteen years, Gilroy and Morgan Hill grew faster than any other city in Santa Clara County.

Jurisdiction	2010 Census	2025 estimate	Change
Gilroy	48,821	60,764	+24.5%
Morgan Hill	37,882	45,625	+20.4%
San José	945,942	989,814	+4.6%
Santa Clara County	1,781,642	1,914,391	+7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census and Vintage 2025 Population Estimates.

We have delivered the housing behind that growth, under Housing Elements certified by the State in both cities. Growth is not a forecast in South County; it has already occurred, and the roadway carrying it has not changed.

Our residents commute north because the jobs are north

South County is housing-rich and jobs-poor: Gilroy has roughly 18,100 jobs for 29,600 employed residents, Morgan Hill 18,600 for 23,300. Mean travel time to work is 33.3 minutes in Gilroy and 33.5 in Morgan Hill against 26.2 countywide — about 60 additional hours per worker each year — and 70.5% of Gilroy workers drive alone to do it.

VTA's own 2025 Congestion Management Program Monitoring Report shows where that time goes. Northbound US 101 operates at Level of Service F in the AM peak at SR 25, Masten Avenue, the Gilroy CHP inspection facility, and San Martin Avenue; southbound at LOS F in the PM peak at 10th Street and Monterey Road in Gilroy and at Tennant, Dunne, and Cochrane in Morgan Hill. Each of these segments is listed as *non-exempt* — they were not failing when monitoring began in 1991. This is congestion South County has acquired, not congestion it inherited.

Socio-economic equity: who drives US 101

VTA has already adopted the standard that measures socio-economic equity. Under the Equity Priority Community framework, VTA applies its own Equitable VMT Mitigation Program. Five census tracts in Gilroy qualify, representing five of the 63 Equity Priority Communities in all of Santa Clara County, in a city holding about 3% of the county's population. Three Gilroy-area tracts are also State-designated disadvantaged communities under SB 535, one in the 93rd percentile statewide. Gilroy is 58.9% Hispanic or Latino, against 24.9% countywide.

These are the residents who drive US 101 north every morning, because there is no train that runs when they work. Eight weekday trains serve Gilroy, San Martin, and Morgan Hill — four round trips, peak-direction only, with no midday, reverse-peak, or weekend service. Our local buses run hourly, and we have no light rail. State transit-oriented development law does not reach us either: SB 79 keys its upzoning tiers to service frequency, at 48 trains per day for Tier 2, and Gilroy and Morgan Hill have eight.

The Strategic Plan takes equity seriously, but every measure it proposes is a toll-affordability program, with discounts for lower-income drivers once a lane exists. Those programs are worth building. They are not the same as deciding where the lane goes. We are asking that the part of this county VTA's own equity framework identifies not be the last one in a ten-year sequence.

Public Comment

US 101 through South County is a regional gateway

The traffic our cities absorb is not all ours. US 101 carries approximately 58,000 vehicles per day at the San Benito County line and 80,000 immediately north of SR 25 — 22,000 more at a single junction. San Benito County has grown more than 20% since 2015, and roughly 54% of its residents work outside the county. SR 152 adds interregional freight: nearly 16% of its 38,000 daily vehicles at the Pacheco Creek Bridge are trucks, and it lands on US 101 in Gilroy as the principal Bay Area connector to I-5.

VTA is already investing to move more of that traffic onto US 101. The US 101/SR 25 Interchange Phase 1 project — $136 million in 2016 Measure B and SB 1 funds, in construction now and due for completion in 2028 — replaces the two-lane SR 25 overcrossing with a four-lane structure and lengthens the southbound US 101 off-ramp, and Caltrans and the Council of San Benito County Governments are separately advancing a 10.2-mile widening of SR 25 between Hollister and Gilroy. These projects will deliver more vehicles, more reliably, onto the stretch of US 101 that VTA's own monitoring shows already failing. We support the interchange. We are asking the Board to account for the additional impact this interchange will create on US 101.

The need is already on VTA's own record. When the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed this plan on May 13, your June 4 memorandum records its members raising "the need for additional lane in South County including plans through Gilroy to SR 25" and noting that "the current capacity of the US 101 is limited, leading to traffic diversion onto parallel County roads." Morgan Hill has measured that diversion: its 2019 Roadway Regional Cut-Through Analysis found that approximately 31% of AM peak northbound and 39% of PM peak southbound commute traffic on city streets had no origin or destination in Morgan Hill.

Induced demand: the plan already answers this for the cleared segment

We expect the induced-demand objection, and the Strategic Plan answers it for the segment we are asking the Board to accelerate. The plan states that the mid-term corridors "have completed CEQA/NEPA environmental processes and are exempt from induced demand analyses and VMT mitigation." US 101 is cleared from SR 85 to Dunne Avenue, so Phase 7 sits squarely within that exemption. Whatever the Board concludes about induced demand generally, it does not apply to the project we are asking the Board to advance.

The segments south of Dunne Avenue are different, and that is the problem. Because they are not cleared, the plan assigns them beyond 2035, where it acknowledges that VMT mitigation "could double a project's cost." Gilroy receives no express lane until after 2035, at a price inflated by the delay. Deferring environmental work does not avoid the mitigation obligation; it raises the cost of meeting it. And State housing law requires our cities to approve housing at volumes we cannot reduce because a highway is congested, so that growth arrives whether or not US 101 is improved. Withholding capacity does not suppress the trips. It determines only whether they occur in a managed lane or in general-purpose lanes at LOS F and on Monterey Road.

This does not require new money

We are not asking the Board to find new revenue. Section 149.6 of the Streets and Highways Code requires that excess toll revenue be reinvested in the corridor that generates it, and the Strategic Plan treats US 101 and SR 85 as a single corridor. Phases 5 and 6 — $672 million investment on that same corridor — begin tolling in 2030 and 2031, with projected gross revenues of approximately $1.7 billion and $1.3 billion over thirty years. That revenue is already dedicated by statute to the corridor South County sits on. 2016

Public Comment

Measure B's Highway Interchanges program separately lists "US 101 Improvements in Gilroy" among its candidate projects. What we ask is that the Board direct staff to identify the funding path for the South County segments now, as part of the Project Initiation Document, rather than leaving the question to 2035.

Requested Board direction on October 16

1. **Treat South County as one corridor.** Direct that the US 101 South County Project Initiation Document evaluate the corridor as a whole from SR 85 to the San Benito County line — including the additional demand the US 101/SR 25 interchange and the SR 25 widening will deliver to it — and reclassify the three segments from Dunne Avenue to SR 25, estimated in the plan at $177 million, $132 million, and $91 million, from long-term to mid-term.
2. **Advance Phase 7 now.** Accelerate the design funding milestone for US 101 Phase 7 from 2031 into the near-term period and bring its construction completion forward from 2035.
3. **Fund it from the corridor that generates it.** Direct staff to identify a funding path for the South County segments from US 101/SR 85 corridor toll revenue under Section 149.6, and to report that path to the Board with the Project Initiation Document in spring 2027.

Gilroy and Morgan Hill have grown faster than any other cities in this county, produced the housing the State required of us, and absorbed the interregional traffic of two neighboring counties and a statewide freight corridor — on eight trains a day and hourly buses. We are asking now for the one project that is already cleared, already studied, and already ours. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Mark Turner
Mayor, City of Morgan Hill
Member, VTA Board of Directors

Greg Bozzo
Mayor, City of Gilroy
Alternate, VTA Board of Directors

cc:

Carolyn Gonot, General Manager and CEO, VTA
Casey Emoto, Chief Engineering and Program Delivery Officer, VTA
Gilroy and Morgan Hill City Councils
Caltrans District 4

Public Comment

From: NextMove Metrics
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2026 1:23 PM
To: VTA Board Secretary
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - October 16 VTA Board Workshop | Highway 101 Congestion in Morgan Hill

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Dear VTA Board of Directors,

I am writing on behalf of NextMove Metrics, a local research business working with the Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce to better understand the needs of residents and businesses.

I encourage VTA to prioritize Highway 101 congestion management and travel reliability for Morgan Hill and South Santa Clara County. Reliable access along this corridor matters to commuters, local businesses, and residents traveling throughout the region. Please keep South County's needs visible in future transportation planning and investment decisions.

Through our upcoming November Ask Morgan Hill survey, we plan to gather community feedback on Highway 101 travel patterns, delays, and effects on daily trips and local business visitation. We would be glad to share the resulting insights with VTA as they become available.

Thank you for considering this comment for the October 16 Board workshop.

Sincerely,

Jack

NextMove Metrics LLC

Public Comment

Johnathan, Thank you for presenting to our September Economic Development / Government Relations Committee regarding the VTA Highway 101 preliminary project evaluation, targeted for completion in spring 2027.

On behalf of the Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce, we are extremely interested in helping address current congestion management bottlenecks along the Highway 101 corridor. We value the opportunity to continue working together by sharing information relevant to our members' concerns and identifying potential opportunities as the preliminary project evaluation team progresses through the research and discovery phase.

Sincerely, Nick Gaich

CEO-President Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce

Public Comment