



## CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

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November 16, 2020

Board of Directors  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
3331 North First Street  
San Jose, CA 95134-1906

### 2016 MEASURE B 10-YEAR OUTLOOK BASE SCENARIO

Dear VTA Board of Directors:

The City of Mountain View has reviewed the 2016 Measure B 10-Year Outlook Base Scenario presented to the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) advisory committees on November 10 and November 12, 2020. While this base-case scenario was presented “to begin a conversation” for Fiscal Year 2022 to Fiscal Year 2032 Measure B Program allocations, there are built-in assumptions that are unacceptable to Mountain View as a starting place for the 10-Year Outlook. Namely, that the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Phase II project is the highest priority for the next 10 years, giving it first call on the Measure B funding, and that minimal bonding will be used to fund BART Phase II, which results in little to no Measure B funding being available for the other Measure B programs during this 10-year period. It is imperative that the Measure B 10-Year Outlook serve the needs of the entire County to the greatest extent possible and not be focused on a single project to the exclusion of the other Measure B programs.

In 2016, the voters of Santa Clara County were presented with a sales tax measure that would fund nine program categories, with the primary goals being to improve road pavement conditions and provide meaningful congestion relief Countywide. BART Phase II was just one of these programs and was limited to 25 percent of the total Measure B funds. It is understood that Measure B is a 30-year program and not all projects can be delivered in the first 10 to 15 years, but part of maintaining taxpayers’ trust is to make meaningful progress for all nine programs over the first 15 years of the tax (2017 to 2032), not deferring progress on most programs until the second half of the Measure B time period.

Prioritizing BART Phase II funding over the next 10 years in a way that eliminates and/or significantly reduces investments in the other programs creates the following challenges and risks.

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### **Worsening Road Pavement Conditions in the County**

During the first four years of Measure B funding allocations (2017 to 2021), the Local Streets and Roads program was set up for an annual allocation of \$40 million (2017 dollars) for the 30-year Measure B period. Many cities, including Mountain View, have been counting on this annual allocation to restore the deteriorating conditions of our roads. Pavement in good repair is not only essential for automobiles—transit buses, bicycles, pedestrians, and goods delivery all rely on a well-maintained street system. Every \$1 spent on pavement maintenance and repair now saves \$5 to \$10 in more expensive reconstruction costs later.

### **Increased Costs Due to Project Delays**

Several Measure B programs include capital projects that are funded through design and/or environmental clearance. These include the Caltrain Grade Separation, Highway Interchanges, and Expressway programs. Discontinuing work for 10 years on capital projects that are fully or partially designed will require additional investment in updating designs to current conditions and revisiting environmental clearances, wasting the Measure B and local dollars already spent on these projects.

For example, Mountain View has spent \$2.3 million on preliminary engineering and environmental clearance for the Caltrain Grade Separation at Castro Street. The project is scheduled to begin Final Design in 2021, with \$10 million in Measure B funds and \$1.2 million from the City, and will be ready to start construction in 2023. Likewise, the City has invested nearly \$4 million to complete the preliminary engineering and environmental phase of the Caltrain Grade Separation at Rengstorff Avenue by early 2021 and is counting on Measure B funding to continue this project into Final Design. A delay of 10 years for further funding will substantially increase the costs of projects due to escalation and the need to revisit work previously completed.

In addition, while the passage of Caltrain's Measure RR is news to celebrate, it also creates more urgency to complete the grade separation projects in Mountain View and our neighboring cities of Palo Alto and Sunnyvale. Caltrain has plans to increase service levels substantially over the next 10 to 15 years. The introduction of High-Speed Rail by early 2030 will further increase the gate down times. Without the grade separations, there will be local road gridlock at the crossing gates and increased bicycle and pedestrian rail crossing safety issues.

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### **Increased Delays for Long Lead-Time Projects**

There are many large-scale capital projects in Measure B that take years to move through the concept planning, preliminary engineering, and final design phases. These are projects that are essential for Countywide congestion relief. An example of this is the State Route (SR) 85 Measure B project. This is a highly congested corridor that primarily serves residents of Santa Clara County accessing jobs within Santa Clara County. This corridor needs transit infrastructure investment. The Alternatives Analysis for a transit lane on SR 85 is currently funded, but additional Measure B funding will be required during the 10-Year Outlook to continue with the engineering work. The next phases for major capital projects, such as SR 85, should be considered for funding to ensure these projects are ready for construction in the mid- to late 2030s.

### **Alternate Measure B 10-Year Outlook Scenarios**

VTA's Technical Advisory Committee has formed an ad hoc subcommittee to develop recommendations for alternate scenarios to balance the needs for BART Phase II with the needs of the other Measure B programs. The goal is to provide for Countywide benefits from the Measure B program in the 10-Year Outlook. These scenarios will strive to avoid or minimize reductions in the annual formula programs (Local Streets and Roads, Bicycle/Pedestrian, and Transit Operations) and maintain progress for the capital projects in the other programs which are already under way during this 10-year period.

To provide for a more balanced 10-year funding outlook, VTA must be open to options for the BART Phase II project so other Measure B programs may also receive funding during this 10-year period. These include more aggressive bonding, borrowing other funds, and/or using other funding sources for BART Phase II as well as the possibility of further phasing or slowing the BART Phase II project.

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The City of Mountain View urges the VTA Board of Directors to support a Measure B 10-Year Outlook that balances the investments among the nine Measure B programs and ensures Countywide benefits.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
*Margaret Abe-Koga*  
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Margaret Abe-Koga  
Mayor

MAK/TS/6/PWK  
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cc: Nuria Fernandez, General Manager, VTA

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

VTA Policy Advisory Committee

VTA Technical Advisory Committee

Palo Alto City Council

Sunnyvale City Council

CC, CM, CA, PWD, ATCM – Gilmore