

## **\$4B for 4 BART stations OR \$2B for 100 ATN stations?**

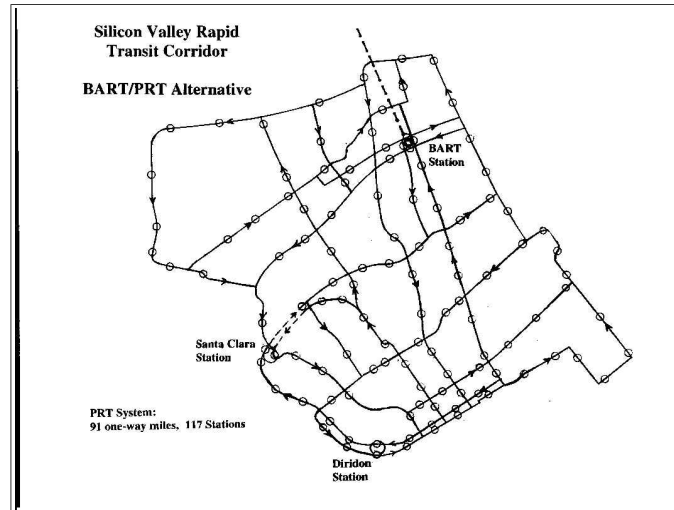
The \$4000M (million) price tag of burrowing a tunnel under San Jose for BART is too costly financially, and draws resources away from other transit options. The projected 55,000 passengers/day service level in 2045 is too small relative to the need for transit. And the construction schedule ensures that global climate disruption will overwhelm us before it's built. So, if given only two choices – build it or not – I would vote for “not” because the return on investment (ROI) is too low.

I urge you to consider another possibility for connecting the BART Berryessa station with the Caltrain station. Rather than spend roughly \$4700M for a 4-station BART extension and service yard, only spend about \$1500M for an Automated Transit Network (ATN). At \$15M/mile (which includes elevated guideway, off-line stations, cabs, and computer control), we could build a 100-station ATN that serves the public far better and provides quick, non-stop service between stations.

In 2001, during the public comment period on the BART extension, an ATN alternative to the

BART Burrow was proposed. Shown at <http://www.electric-bikes.com/prt/bart-prt.html>, it outlined 91 miles of ATN guideway with 117 stations. That proposed network covers the Golden Triangle and downtown San Jose. Now, we can plan a network that matches our current needs.

Based on the chart below, over 100 networked stations operating 24/7 with quiet, non-stop travel would benefit our sprawling area more than a 4-station BART corridor extension. Using VTA's own Project Purpose list, the two options are compared. This scoping process would be served by VTA staff creating their own comparison chart and sharing it with the VTA Board.



<b>Purpose</b>	<b>BART</b>	<b>ATN</b>
Improve public transit service	Low/Medium	High
Enhance regional connectivity	Medium	High
Increase transit ridership	Low/Medium	High
Support transportation solutions that will maintain the economic vitality and continuing development of Silicon Valley	Low	High
Improve mobility options	Medium	High
Enhance level and quality of transit service to areas of existing and planned affordable housing	Medium	High
Improve regional air quality	Low	High
Support local and regional land use plans	Medium	High

Omitted from this VTA-generated list of purposes is any reference to ROI or comparison with other transit technologies. Also missing is any reference to the present and growing danger of our global climate crisis, and the need to act quickly and boldly to avoid huge and costly problems. If Zero-Based Budgeting were applied to this BART extension, would it survive?

In 2001, BART promoters rejected the concept of bridging the gap between an eastside BART station and Caltrain using ATN. They responded that the need for a transfer “would result in longer travel times and inconveniences to the rider that would not be consistent with the project's purpose to 'maximize transit usage and ridership' nor would it facilitate regional connectivity.” I assert that 100 stations will, in fact, be consistent with VTA's purposes. And transfers are not a problem for transit users in San Francisco who enjoy frequently scheduled transit. In suburban areas, however, transferring users generally must wait for the next vehicle.

However, unlike traditional transit options, ATN cabs are waiting for you 90% of the time, and available within 5 minutes the other 10%. This service level is accomplished with computer control, and by adding enough cabs and stations to satisfy demand. If congestion occurs, add more infrastructure. ATN hardware costs less than 10% of BART hardware and is much easier to route and build as needed.



That scalability and flexibility of ATN dramatically reduces the risk of using the technology. In just 5 years we could be operating a \$200M starter network that connects BART to Caltrain. If we like that system, then we could grow the network as appropriate.

**Rapidly accelerating global climate disruption requires major responses quickly.** Waiting a decade or more to use 50-year old technology to serve a small fraction of our population is like responding to an oncoming train by freezing in its path. Reversing global warming requires new thinking and bold action. As one of the wealthiest, most technologically-advanced areas in the world, Silicon Valley can lead the effort to create transit that works for our spread-out suburban cities, and promotes transportation equity. Doing so will dramatically improve our mobility options and reduce our extremely high per-capita carbon emissions.

As I see it, the BART extension is not desirable because the ROI of ridership to capital investment is too low, the financial and climate crisis risks are too high, and the opportunity costs of saving \$2B and creating an effective transit system are too high.

Vote “no” on the BART extension and “yes” on an ATN connection.

*You can help jump-start advanced transit by supporting a pilot project in Milpitas (see <http://sunnyhillsneighborhood.org/crossing.html>). Many of the questions and concerns of elected officials and VTA staff will be answered once this \$8M project is operational.*

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