

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is BART Silicon Valley? It is a 16-mile, six-station extension of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system beginning at the future Warm Springs Station in Fremont and proceeding alongside the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), extending south into Santa Clara County, with stations in Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara. The 16-mile alignment will travel at-grade, above-grade, below-grade (in trenched segments and in a subway through downtown San Jose). The project includes six stations, a new BART maintenance and storage facility in the city of Santa Clara, and the purchase of rail cars needed to operate the extension once it is built.

Why is VTA building a BART Extension? When the BART District was originally formed in the 1960s, Santa Clara County opted out. Recent studies showed that an extension of the BART system was the best transit solution on the east side of the bay to provide an alternative to the congested I-880 and I-680 commute corridors. As the Congestion Management Agency for Santa Clara County, VTA is responsible for transit planning, construction and operations in Santa Clara County, thus VTA is responsible for designing and constructing the BART Silicon Valley Project. VTA will own all of the property, facilities and equipment related to the project. When the project is completed, BART will operate and maintain the system under an agreement executed with VTA.

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

What is the Berryessa Extension? The BART Silicon Valley project will be constructed in phases, with the first phase defined as the northernmost 10-mile, two-station Berryessa Extension from Fremont, through Milpitas, into the Berryessa district of north San Jose. Two new BART stations will be constructed as part of the Berryessa Extension; the Milpitas BART Station located between Montague Expressway and Capitol Avenue in the City of Milpitas and the Berryessa BART Station located between Berryessa Road and Mabury Road in the City of San Jose.

What are the benefits of BART Silicon Valley? During the five most active years of construction, BART Silicon Valley is anticipated to support approximately 2500 jobs annually. Over 18,000 direct and indirect jobs are attributed to completing the project.

In addition to creating jobs, the project will help the local economy, enhance regional connectivity, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve access to employment, education, medical, and retail centers. Opening day ridership for the Berryessa Extension is estimated at 23,000 and that number is projected to double after 15 years.

When will the Berryessa Extension open? The Berryessa Extension is projected to open in 2018. Groundbreaking for BART Silicon Valley was April 12, 2012, and the majority of construction will be complete by 2016, with system testing in 2017 and passenger service by 2018. Current construction proposals include accelerated schedules and passenger service may begin sooner than 2018.

How much will the Berryessa Extension cost and how is it funded? The Berryessa Extension is estimated to cost \$2.3 billion. Berryessa Extension received a federal New Starts grant for \$900 million. The rest of the funding is made up of State Traffic Congestion Relief funds and local 2000 Measure A sales tax revenues.

The Berryessa Extension has a dedicated operating and maintenance source funding. In November 2008, a countywide 1/8 cent sales tax measure passed by over two thirds majority, to provide for annual operating and maintenance expenses for the extension.

Will BART be above ground or in a subway? BART tracks are always separated from streets. The Berryessa Extension will be built at-grade (ground level), except where the project alignment crosses existing streets. BART will either go over streets on a bridge or under streets in what is referred to as a retained cut or trench.

How often will BART trains run? The Berryessa Extension will include two BART lines, one operating between Berryessa to Daly City and the other operating between Berryessa to Richmond. On opening day, each new BART line will have trains arriving every 15 minutes.

How can my group or organization get project information? The project has a number of tools available to stay informed about the BART Silicon Valley Project on the project website. Members of the BART Silicon Valley Community Outreach Team are available to answer inquiries, provide detailed information about the project, and schedule on-site presentations or project tours, depending on the respective need of the request.

My property/business is near construction activities. How do I get construction activity notices? Please contact BART Silicon Valley Community Outreach at (408) 934-2662 or send an email to ytabart@vta.org to make your request and provide your preferred contact information. You can also sign-up for GovDelivery, a subscription service that allows VTA to communicate with you via e-mail or text message when new project information is available.