

**From:** VTA Board Secretary

**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 1:37 PM

**To:** VTA Board of Directors

**Cc:** VTA Board Secretary

**Subject:** From VTA: Correspondence - Support Letters Pertaining to the BART Silicon Valley Phase II Tunneling Project

**VTA Board of Directors:**

VTA has received three letters (attached) addressed to the VTA Board of Directors in support of the reuse of the BSVII tunnel excavated material at the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. VTA, BSVII consultants (KST), resource agency regulators, and South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project staff have been working collaboratively over the last few months to develop a plan to move forward. Here is a brief project description:

The Beneficial Reuse of BART Silicon Valley Phase II Tunnel Excavated Material in Marsh Restoration at Former Salt Ponds (Reuse Project/Project) would place excavated material from the BART Silicon Valley Phase II Project (BSVII Project) tunneling operations into various former salt production ponds around the edge of South San Francisco Bay to raise the pond bottoms for the purpose of accelerating tidal marsh habitat development. The Reuse Project would be implemented at Ponds A5, A7, A8 Complex (consisting of A8, A8s, A5, and A7), A12, and A13 at the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Santa Clara County, California. These ponds are owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Project would also be implemented at Pond A4 owned by Valley Water. See **attached** Project Location map.

VTA is pursuing an Envision Platinum Certification from the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure for the BSVII Project (<https://sustainableinfrastructure.org/>). Reuse of the tunnel excavated material at the former salt production ponds will result in multiple benefits and “points” in the Envision Framework rating system in order to meet this goal. By far, using the material to facilitate restoration of the salt ponds to tidal marsh habitat is the most sustainable use of the material, which will be of a consistency not suitable for traditional uses.

Recent project activities include:

- The Reuse Project is on the Priority Project list for Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team involved with permitting any work at the salt ponds. This will facilitate expedited permitting.
- VTA submitted a \$1.5 million grant application to the California Coastal Conservancy for the Reuse Project. This item will be heard by the California Coastal Conservancy Board of Directors on April 6, 2023. VTA and BSVII consultant staff will participate virtually to answer any questions the Board may have.
- VTA is working on a cost share agreement with Valley Water to obtain additional funding for the Reuse Project.

- VTA is working on an MOA with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, as they are the primary landowner of the salt ponds.
- VTA is working with multiple partners to develop the methodology to place the materials into the ponds.

If you have any questions, please contact Ann Calnan, Manager, Environmental Programs, at (408) 321-5976 or via e-mail at [ann.calnan@vta.org](mailto:ann.calnan@vta.org)

Thank you.

VTA Office of the Board Secretary  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
3331 North First Street, Building B-1  
San Jose, CA 95134-1927  
Phone: 408-321-5680





March 15, 2023

Valley Transportation Authority Board of Directors  
3331 North First Street  
San Jose, CA, 95134

Dear VTA Board of Directors,

I am writing to voice strong support from the South Bay Salt Pond (SBSP) Restoration Project for the beneficial reuse of excavated tunnel material from the BART Silicon Valley Phase II tunneling project in wetland restoration.

As you may know, at over 15,000 acres, over half of which is in Santa Clara County, the SBSP Restoration Project is the largest tidal wetland restoration effort on the west coast of the United States. Our project management team and key project partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California State Coastal Conservancy, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water).

For several years now – and much more intensively in the last six months – my colleagues and I have been engaged in an active collaboration with VTA and its contractors to arrange for the transport and beneficial reuse of excavated material from the stations and the tunnel at the former salt-production ponds that now form most of the Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge in which the SBSP Restoration Project takes place.

We have met multiple times with the environmental regulatory agencies and gotten their general support for the project. The Coastal Conservancy and Valley Water are each nearing approval of substantial amounts of funding to support the initial environmental clearance and permitting. Agreements with the landowners (USFWS and Valley Water) are being drafted. And we are actively working with VTA's contractors and consultants on the approaches to design and permitting. It's been a remarkably efficient start from many layers of government and other regional entities.

This is happening because a beneficial reuse project of this size would be monumental in terms of its environmental and financial benefits.

The BART tunnel material would be placed in the bottoms of subsided ponds to allow them to more rapidly reach the elevation necessary to form tidal salt marsh. This rapid marsh development is a critical outcome in the face of sea level rise, which will make marsh establishment much more difficult in the coming decades than it is now. Marshes buffer shorelines from coastal flooding; protect levees and other public infrastructure; help communities adapt to sea level rise; improve local water quality; and provide habitat for endangered birds, fish, and other wildlife.

All of these are benefits that would be realized locally in Santa Clara County. So too would the benefits from reduced traffic impacts and air quality and greenhouse gas emissions from haul trucks that might otherwise have to travel tens of miles to landfills.

Importantly, the material coming out of the BART tunnel shaft would be wet and soft from the conditioners and additives used in the tunneling processes. That makes the material difficult-to-infeasible to build with in most types of construction projects. However, in our case, it is well suited to be reused to "fill holes" in our subsided wet ponds – a perfect example of a waste product becoming an environmental benefit.

Of course, while there would be some costs associated with the placement and spreading of the material into the ponds, VTA would not have to pay the landowners for disposal of the material itself. The “no charge” nature of this beneficial reuse arrangement would offset large costs VTA would otherwise have to bear in tipping fees and longer hauling distances.

This beneficial reuse project would be a multi-faceted win for the Bay Area’s wetlands and wildlife, for reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, for the residents and businesses of Santa Clara County, and for VTA and its client base.

My colleagues and I urge VTA to continue supporting and advancing this beneficial reuse project.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or if follow-up information would be helpful. I can be reached at [dave.halsing@scc.ca.gov](mailto:dave.halsing@scc.ca.gov) or 650-814-0588.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Halsing". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "H".

Dave Halsing  
Executive Project Manager  
South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

California State Coastal Conservancy 1515  
Clay St., 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA, 94612



Valley Transportation Authority  
Board of Directors  
3331 North First Street  
San Jose, CA, 95134

March 13, 2023

Dear VTA Board of Directors,

On behalf of the California State Coastal Conservancy, I am writing to express our support for the VTA to beneficially use the excavated tunnel material coming from the BART Silicon Valley Phase II tunneling project in Santa Clara County at wetland restoration projects in the South San Francisco Bay. There is broad recognition across San Francisco Bay that sediment is a highly valuable and needed resource for tidal wetland restoration in the face of climate change. Without a large source of sediment to fill deeply subsided sites across the South SF Bay, many restoration projects currently in the planning phase would take decades to reach marsh plain elevations—time we do not have in the face of sea level rise.

Beneficially using the BART tunnel material at nearby wetland restoration projects will provide many benefits to the VTA, the environment, and the community. Some of those benefits include sea level rise resilience, habitat for special status species, water quality improvement, flood risk management, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and cost savings. First, placing the tunnel material on these sites will allow wetland restoration habitat to be restored before sea level rise forces the sites to remain as open water or mudflat habitat. Second, by increasing site heights, the project will provide sea level rise resilience to the wetlands as well as further flood protection to adjacent communities. For greenhouse gas reduction benefits, the restoration sites are a much closer distance to the BART Project tunneling activities compared to the previously identified disposal sites. Last, once the sites are successfully restored with vegetation established, the wetlands will provide carbon sequestration and water quality benefits.

The Coastal Conservancy has been working with VTA staff to analyze potential wetland restoration sites for the tunnel material and it has been a strong state and local partnership. VTA staff are effective and efficient partners, and we hope to continue this important work. **Coastal Conservancy staff will be presenting this tunnel material re-use project to its Board on April 6, 2023 to recommend a \$1,500,000 grant to VTA to cover costs to complete the environmental review and permitting.**

With the impacts of climate change already flooding underserved communities today, I urge the Board of Directors to recognize the great value of beneficially using the tunnel excavated material at wetland restoration project sites across the South Bay.

1515 Clay Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612-1401  
510-286-1015



Sincerely,

*Evyan Sloane*

**Evyan Borgnis Sloane**  
Deputy Regional Manager  
San Francisco Bay Program

1515 Clay Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612-1401  
510-286-1015



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
1 Marshlands Road  
Fremont, California 94555



March 17, 2023

Valley Transportation Authority Board of Directors  
3331 North First Street  
San Jose, CA, 95134

VTA Board of Directors,

On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I am writing to express our support for the import and beneficial use of excavated tunnel material from the BART Silicon Valley Phase II tunneling project at Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

There is broad recognition across San Francisco Bay that sediment is a highly valuable and needed resource for tidal wetland restoration in the face of climate change. Without a large source of sediment to fill deeply subsided sites across the South SF Bay, many restoration projects currently in the planning phase would take decades to reach marsh plain elevations—time we do not have in the face of sea level rise. Beneficially using the BART Silicon Valley Phase II tunneling project material at Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge will provide many benefits to the VTA, the environment, and the National Wildlife Refuge. Some of those benefits include sea level rise resilience, the creation of habitat for threatened and endangered species, water quality improvements, flood risk management and greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is partnering with VTA to ensure the timely completion of all environmental review and permitting requirements and will serve as the Federal lead on the required National Environmental Policy Act process.

This partnership and project will benefit not only the citizens of Santa Clara County and greater Bay Area, but will also benefit the American people as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge on their behalf.

We look forward to moving this project forward and appreciate the continued support of the VTA Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

Matthew Brown  
Complex Manager

**From:** VTA Board Secretary

**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 2:55 PM

**To:** VTA Board of Directors; VTA Advisory Committee Members

**Subject:** VTA Information: March/April 2023 Community Outreach and Public Engagement Activities

**VTA Board of Directors and Advisory Committee Members:**

On behalf of our Community Outreach and Public Engagement team, we are forwarding the following "VTA Out in the Community" events and activities for March and April 2023 (also attached). We encourage you to share the information with your network or constituents.

**VTA Out in the Community**

**March – April 2023**

**Ask VTA Series**

Ask VTA has been developed to provide an opportunity for the public to have a deeper discussion about the projects and programs that VTA delivers for the residents of Santa Clara County. This facilitated virtual question-and-answer session between VTA subject matter experts, and the public will provide a space for conversation about transit, transportation, and other VTA programs. For program information and planned future events, visit:

[www.vta.org/ask-vta](http://www.vta.org/ask-vta)

**Ask VTA: Future of Light Rail**

**Wednesday, March 22, 6-7 PM**

In March, Ask VTA will focus on topics related to light rail, including the Future of Light Rail planning efforts as well as operations and scheduling. To register, visit: <https://AskVTAlightrail.eventbrite.com>

**Ask VTA: Climate, Sustainability, and Innovation**

**Thursday, April 13, 6 -7 PM**

Are you curious about how rising sea levels or extreme heat may impact public transportation? Want to know more about the range of electric buses? VTA has assembled a team of subject matter experts to answer your questions! To register, visit: <https://AskVTAclimate.eventbrite.com>

**Keep Santa Clara Valley Beautiful Litter Clean-up Events**

Keep Santa Clara Valley Beautiful is a countywide, multi-agency initiative to clean and prevent littering on the highways in Santa Clara County. Trash on the highways is hazardous to drivers, the environment, and residents.

VTA is working together with several partners to change people's attitudes and behaviors towards throwing litter on the highways instead of in garbage cans or recycling containers. For more information, visit: [Keep Santa Clara Valley Beautiful | VTA](#)

#### **Events:**

##### **Saturday, March 25, 2023**

San Jose

7th Street & I-280 (southbound on-ramp)

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

##### **Saturday, April 15, 2023**

San Jose

I-680 & E. Capitol Expressway (northbound on-ramp)

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

*In case of rain, these clean up events may be canceled.*

#### **Community Based Organization Roundtable**

VTA's Community Based Organization Roundtable provides opportunity for discussion, feedback and information sharing between VTA and the community organizations that serve as critical support for the community. To keep the discussion focused, *participation is limited to representatives of community-based organizations.*

**Tue, Apr 11, 3:00 PM**

In April, the Community Based Organization Roundtable will focus on ACCESS Paratransit eligibility as well as resources provided by the Senior Outreach Program. Interested organizations can register here: [https://VTA\\_roundtable.eventbrite.com](https://VTA_roundtable.eventbrite.com)

#### **Join us to Improve Transportation Along Monterey Road**

Here's what we heard! Later this spring, VTA and City of San Jose staff will share a draft Community Based Transportation Plan, developed for the stretch of Monterey Road between Alma Avenue and Blossom Hill Road which is about 5.8 miles. The plan incorporates comments and suggestions gathered during the first round of community meetings that were held last fall.

The final Community-Based Transportation Plan will be an essential tool for supporting VTA, and the city of San Jose community, addressing bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, public transportation amenities, local roads and street improvements and integration of technology with transportation.

For more information, visit [https://www.vta.org/monterey\\_cbtp](https://www.vta.org/monterey_cbtp)

**Come see VTA at Viva Calle!**

Ride, roll or walk on over to see VTA at Viva Calle on Sunday, April 23 and learn about our bike and pedestrian programs, get a map of Santa Clara County Bikeways, and practice loading your bike on a VTA bus! Join us between 10 am – 3 pm.

For more information about this event, visit <https://www.vivacallesj.org/>

Thank you.

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
Office of the Board Secretary  
Phone **408-321-5680**



## VTA Out in the Community

March – April 2023

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**From:** VTA Board Secretary  
**Sent:** Friday, March 24, 2023 12:12 PM  
**To:** VTA Board of Directors; VTA Advisory Committee Members  
**Subject:** VTA Information: Auditor General Public Meeting

**Board of Directors and Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Members:**

Please share the information below and attached with your constituents.

**WHAT:** VTA Auditor General (AG) Public Meeting  
**WHEN:** March 30, 2023, 6 PM  
**WHERE:** In-person location:  
Video/Teleconference link:

**PURPOSE:** Learn about the AG and provide feedback on the AG projects

Thank you,

Office of the Board Secretary  
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
3331 North First Street, Building B  
San Jose, CA 95134-1927  
Phone [408-321-5680](tel:408-321-5680)



# Ever Wonder

*who's watching  
over your*

# Tax Dollars?



VTA's independent Auditor General (AG) invites the community to participate in an informal, relaxed conversation to learn about the AG, internal audit, and fiduciary risk management processes at VTA, and to provide input on future AG projects. There will be: (1) brief presentation on VTA risks and AG projects, and (2) discussion and opportunity for the public to ask questions and provide input on potential future AG projects or areas of concern.

**March 30, 2023 6:00 p.m.**

- The in-person location is: Conference Room B-106,  
VTA Administrative Offices, 3331 N. First Street, San Jose, CA  
*This location is served by VTA Light Rail and Bus Line 20.*
- This meeting will be streamed through Zoom, and video  
and teleconference can be accessed at:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83556713253>

Zoom Link



VTA's AG assists the Board of Directors in overseeing risks and controls in financial reporting and integrity, program activities, reputation, and public perception of the organization. The AG is selected by and reports directly to the VTA Board.

For further information, visit [www.vta.org](http://www.vta.org)  
or contact the VTA Auditor General at  
(408) 321-7045 or [auditor.general@vta.org](mailto:auditor.general@vta.org).

