

Your search for truth starts here.

SUPPORT US

**CORONAVIRUS UPDATES**

SAN JOSE TRANSPORTATION

**The Latest News**

# UPDATE: San Jose advances high-tech ideas to connect transportation hubs



by Carly Wipf

August 25, 2020

August 31, 2020  
**South Bay lawyers predict surge in bankruptcies as stimulus money dries up**

August 30, 2020  
**Watch: Silicon Valley leaders say struggle for racial equity is long but next steps are**



English

The Boring Company's Hawthorne test tunnel with an underground loop design. Photo courtesy The Boring Company.

---

**Driverless vehicles zooming** through underground tunnels and electric mini trains could be in San Jose's future.

City leaders voted unanimously on Aug. 25 to advance projects connecting **Diridon Station**, Stevens Creek Corridor and the Mineta San Jose International Airport. Councilmember Maya Esparza was absent.

Many of the proposals — including one from Elon Musk's The Boring Company — feature self-driving cars or automated shuttles that will bring high-tech transportation to Silicon Valley.

The **city received 23 proposals**, which aim to embrace green technology and increase transportation access for residents, according to Ramses Madou, manager of the city's planning, policy and sustainability division.

Mayor Sam Liccardo said city leaders must be innovative when considering San Jose's future.

"Silicon Valley isn't going to fail because there's a recession," Liccardo said. "Silicon Valley is going to fail if we stop looking to the future and we stop thinking about how we'll invest in the future .... That will be our downfall. We absolutely have to do this."

Connecting Stevens Creek Corridor in Cupertino and the airport to Diridon Station in the heart of downtown San Jose would provide travelers with easier access to BART and Caltrain services, according to the city's transportation department.

"The private car system is a little bit at its max for not-in-COVID times," Madou told the San José Spotlight on Aug. 25. "All the highways are totally clogged and people with lower incomes are spending an immense amount of time in their cars to get to and from work."

---

August  
29, 2020

**Coronavirus  
LIVE  
BLOG:  
California  
releases  
revised  
reopening  
guidelines  
and  
upgraded  
COVID-19  
website**

---

August  
29, 2020

**Thousands  
protest  
racism at  
the  
March on  
Washington**

---

August  
29, 2020

**Protesters  
vandalize  
San Jose  
mayor's  
house**

---

August  
28, 2020

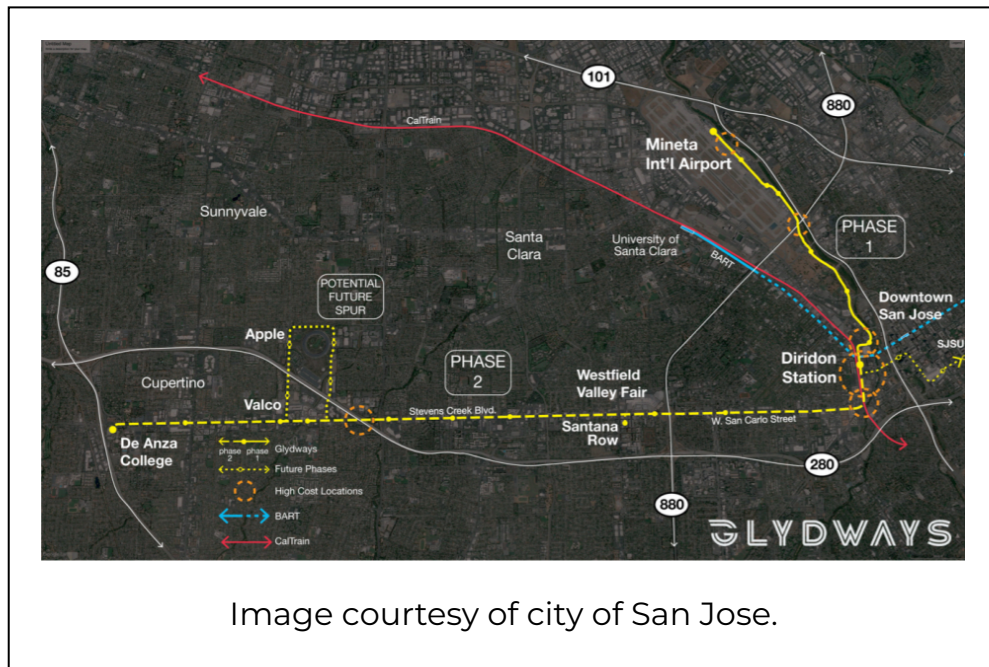
**Probation  
union  
rallies in  
San Jose  
to end  
systematic  
racism**

However, some critics said Silicon Valley needs to focus on improving its existing transit system — which has been hit hard by COVID-19 — before creating “fancy” new technologies.

“It’s pretty insulting you’re considering an airport connector — another expensive capital project — when we’re about to really suffer,” said transportation advocate Monica Mallon.

In February 2019, the City Council told staff to investigate the various technologies available for building new public transportation.

Tunnels containing self-driving Teslas, pod-shaped monorail vehicles and a **Plenary Glydways** fleet of autonomous electric vehicles operating on existing roads are among some of the ideas being considered.



The cost of creating these new systems could range from \$60 million to \$4.3 billion, according to Madou’s report to the City Council.

Liccardo and councilmembers agreed the city’s current travel lines, including light rail and bus service, are not up to par.

“We’re talking about these state of the art transportation solutions connecting an area like Cupertino into downtown

### Most Popular

1 **Coron LIVE BLOG: Califo releases revised reopening guidelines and updates COVID 19 website**

2 **Santa Clara Count health officials criticize for rollout of latest shelter in-place order**

3 **Santa Clara Count news health order took effect. Here's**

English

an outdated and not very well-functioning transit system connecting South and North San Jose,” Councilmember Raul Peralez said. “Unfortunately the connection to East San Jose is still lacking in one portion and that is actually where the (Bus Rapid Transit) is.”

Peralez also expressed concerns that access is still limited because residents in San Jose would have to take other busses and light rail to the airport connector instead of riding a direct line.

Alex Shoor, executive director of Catalyze SV, remains optimistic.

“Although VTA has some great options for bus transit along Stevens Creek, we know we can do better and we need to do better to allow that growth in District 6,” Shoor said. “We are excited that the city is considering these options.”

It’s unclear whether the projects will use private or public funds, but councilmembers recommended exploring private options.

Councilmember Lan Diep was “enthused” about the concept of a public-private partnership.

“I’m still all in on the idea,” Diep said, suggesting the city could successfully monetize the project to increase public benefits while letting a private company invest and build.

In 2000, Santa Clara County voters passed Measure A, implementing a 30-year tax to connect Diridon Station to the airport, bring BART to San Jose and make other transportation improvements.

Private funding could allow the project to move more quickly, according to Madou.

“If we can get a system like this built with private money and we can put conditions on that system that would meet most of the public needs — particularly around equity and access — that project would probably happen faster than it would, in terms of us needing to wait for 15 years or so to kind of cobble

**what’s new.**

**4**

**Comco to provide tech, training to San Jose tiny home: residents**

**5**

**Access v. Abuse: Cream Coffee in San Jose closes due to ADA lawsuit**

**Subscribe to Our Newsletter**

Email Address

I want to receive

 English

all the money together through the various public processes,” Madou said.

- Daily
- Weekly

A report exploring the legality and pricing of private options will be due by August 2021.

### SUBSCRIBE

“It’s going to be a heavy lift, but I have a lot of confidence that the team we put together and the individuals who have come together to pursue this vision are going to move forward and accomplish something,” Vice Mayor Chappie Jones said. “Right now, we’re starting out by putting all options on the table, looking at all possibilities and then narrowing in on a final solution.”

\*we hate spam as much as you do

Contact Carly Wipf at carly@sanjosespotlight.com or follow @CarlyChristineW on Twitter.

SAN JOSÉ  
 SPOTLIGHT  
 MOBILE APP

## Subscribe To Our Newsletter

Now in the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

Join our mailing list to receive the latest news and updates from our team.

I want to receive updates:  Daily  Weekly

### SUBSCRIBE

 English

Next Doct

**San Jose hotels lower rates for fire evacuees**

**UPDATE: San Jose extends ban on evictions during COVID-19**

## Comments (5)



Raymond Shepherd  
Aug 25, 2020 at 8:37AM

Let's not get hoodwinked by a gadgetbahn. Build a train.

[Reply](#)



Transparency and Accountability are Needed in San Jose  
Aug 25, 2020 at 12:39PM

Seriously? From the light-rail, which is the most useless and slow form of public transit, to futuristic underground tunnels? Give me a break. Try to be realistic.

[Reply](#)



SJ Kulak  
Aug 25, 2020 at 3:08PM

keep this private, let Musk charge for it, but dont make it public

[Reply](#)

English



Charles Merriam

Aug 27, 2020 at 1:27PM

Is this, or any other transit project, a good idea? How much?

How much does it cost per citizen?

How much per rider?

How much subsidy per rider?

These numbers are incredibly difficult to pry out of transit agencies. When the numbers are good, i.e., low cost per rider, the transit agency worries the budgets would be cut. When the numbers are bad, i.e., high cost per rider, the transit agency worries the budgets would be cut. It requires good reporting to get these numbers.

[Reply](#)



Brett

Aug 28, 2020 at 1:52PM

Many (but not all) of the proposals include cost estimates, summarized in the spreadsheet. Some of them could be privately funded at little or no taxpayer expense.

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/transportation/transit/airport-diridon-stevens-creek-connector>

[Reply](#)

---

## Leave a Reply

Connect with:

 English

Secured by [OneAll Social Login](#)

Your email address will not be published.

Comment

Your name \*

Your email \*

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

**ADD COMMENT**

---

## About Us

San José residents deserve a trusted source for unbiased, independent political news. And we're here to provide it.

San José Spotlight is the city's first nonprofit, community-supported digital news organization. We're changing the face of journalism by providing an innovative model for delivering reliable, truthful news to the nation's 10th largest city. We're partnering with you – the readers – to make it happen. This is your newsroom.

 English





408.206.5327

info@sanjosespotlight.com

## Read

Politics & Government

---

In the Spotlight

---

Housing

---

Blog

---

Business

---

Columns & Opinion

## Follow Us



[Privacy Policy](#) / San José Spotlight © 2020 / All Rights Reserved

San José Spotlight is a project of the San José News Bureau, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization | Tax ID: 82-5355128.  
All donations are tax deductible