



Public Transit

My story: When I was little, I loved to sit on my mom’s lap and ride the bus all through Campbell and the West Valley. We only had one car, and since my dad used it to work multiple jobs, days and nights, our main connection to the community was the VTA bus line. One time we missed our stop, but a family friend driving along the same street saw us, picked us up, and dropped us off at our destination. I wailed and cried the whole time, disappointed at missing the chance to ride the bus.

Today, as I run for Campbell City Council, many of the same bus lines that served my community when I was growing up have now been cut. Over the past two decades, the West Valley and North County have suffered the most in terms of VTA service, even as those areas see continued growth in employment and population. That’s why it’s time for a bold, new vision for public transit in Campbell.

A vision for Campbell: Public transit agencies are in a state of crisis. Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), the regional agency in charge, [faces unprecedented budget cuts](#), which [risk returning us to levels of service not seen since the 1970s](#).^{1 2} This comes on top of a longtime

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<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/04/07/for-struggling-vta-an-existential-crisis-how-to-woo-riders-amid-budget-cuts/>

² <https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Biennial%20Budget%20FY2020%20and%20FY2021.pdf>



cycle of service cuts which lead to a downward spiral of decreased ridership, thereby resulting in more cuts.

If we're to save our public transit agencies, all options must be on the table. We'll need federal transit dollars above all, but also assistance from Sacramento, including the flexibility to shift transit funding formulas and reform of our local transit agencies.

People want to use public transit as long as it is convenient and affordable. As commuters, we use common sense when deciding how to get from place to place: if public transit is cheaper and faster than driving, it becomes the most attractive option, taking more cars off the road and resulting in a greener environment and a more livable community.

Additionally, anyone who understands that climate change is the defining crisis of our time has a stake in getting as many people as possible to take more environmentally sensible means of transportation. Increasing public transit usage is one of the single most effective actions we can take to combat climate change. But if public transit requires too many transfers, doesn't have enough stops that are close enough to our destination, or is more expensive than driving, few commuters will want to use it no matter how environmentally minded they may be. On the other hand, [local agencies have the power to curb climate change by making it as easy and convenient to use as possible.](#)³

Moreover, the Bay Area has a unique opportunity to plan for expansion of transit as we are unique among other major metropolitan regions in terms of our growth. We're lucky enough

³ <https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Biennial%20Budget%20FY2020%20and%20FY2021.pdf>



to live in a region that is, by many measures thriving economically and continues to be attractive for people moving here for work. That growth means that there continues to be a market for new housing — demand far outpaces supply.

It's a good bet that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future, which gives us the ability to plan ahead for how best to service our community through public transit. Planning urban villages and utilizing transit-oriented development also means being intentional about how public transit will serve those locations, or else we risk locking us into communities that require residents to require a car to get around.

Too often, we look at public transit as being for other people. But I invite anyone doubting the merits of such a proposal to take the bus or ride the light rail with me. You'll see working mothers, elderly couples, tech workers and everyone in between. Moreover, transit encourages walking and biking to and from stops, and brings foot traffic to bustling business districts. In short, [public transit encourages the activity that makes up healthy, vibrant, livable communities](#)⁴ — the kind of communities we'd all like to live in.

Policy proposals:

- **Implement signal preemption citywide**
 - Arguably both the most important and cost-effective way cities in our region can strengthen public transit and reduce traffic is through the implementation of citywide traffic signal preemption. Currently, we have a regional, trans-city public

⁴ <https://www.apta.com/news-publications/public-transportation-facts/>



transit system, making coordination across cities more difficult. A signal preemption policy would grant buses and light rail priority in traffic signals in Campbell, cutting time off public transit trips and making the overall system most efficient. The ultimate goal would be moving toward signal preemption across the region. Better service results in more people using the lines, and can eventually cycle towards expansion of our public transit system through increased funds. This would limit the number of car trips taken in the region and take more cars off the road, reducing traffic for everyone.

- **Implement transit-oriented solutions instead of highway expansion**

- Generally, previous City policy has been limited to a focus on expanding freeways. For example, Hamilton Avenue, with Highway 17 North and South ramps on both sides of the street, has some of the worst traffic in the entire South Bay region. Yet current City policy to mitigate this traffic is simply to add an extra lane to one of the on-ramps, which will cost us millions of dollars we don't have and take nearly a decade to implement. Freeway expansion is an inadequate solution to the problem of increasing traffic because of induced demand; public policy experts have shown the more we continue to expand the highway, the greater the number of cars that end up on the highway, thus cancelling out any alleviation of congestion. That's why highway expansion is an inadequate solution, and only strengthening public transit, coupled with smart City planning, will help us decrease traffic in our community.

- **Mandate that new housing developments include a public transit integration report**

- Previously, proposals for new housing developments in the City of Campbell have not maximized their potential to plan for public transit. This is partly because



public transportation is a regional responsibility, while housing and planning is a municipal one. Currently, proposals must include a “traffic impact report” — often leading to tense disagreements between the City and local residents about the true impact of developments on traffic. Proposals often include mention of nearby public transit, but do not account for the potential growth of new transit lines or potential cuts. I will mandate that new housing proposals include a “public transit integration report,” requiring our City to communicate with Valley Transportation Authority to coordinate housing and transit needs.

- **Support high-quality mixed use developments that maximizes use of transit**
 - Studies have shown that high-quality, well-planned mixed use developments — combining retail with housing — bring important community benefits: [lower infrastructure costs](#),⁵ [higher tax revenue](#),⁶ [improved public health](#),⁷ [lower traffic and sprawl](#),⁸ and, in the long-term, [reduced costs going forward for police, fire, and trash services](#).⁹ Moreover, [they improve the walkability and small town feel that is so important for the character of our community](#),¹⁰ and are a smart way to couple housing goals with economic development and promotion of transit and biking.
- **Advocate for increased federal transit funding**
 - Transit agencies everywhere face the prospect of drastic service cuts from reduced revenues from the COVID-19 pandemic. Valley Transportation Authority is in a stronger position than others due to its relatively lower reliance on farebox

⁵ <https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/building-better-budgets.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/building-better-budgets.pdf>

⁷ http://www.destatehousing.com/AffordableHousingResourceCenter/toolbox_compact.pdf

⁸ http://www.destatehousing.com/AffordableHousingResourceCenter/toolbox_compact.pdf

⁹ <https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/building-better-budgets.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780865477728>



recovery,¹¹ but still needs greater federal support. Through our Congressional delegation, I will advocate for increased federal public transit funding to bolster our local system.

- **Represent Campbell and the West Valley on public transit issues and fight to strengthen our service levels**

- Currently, Campbell lacks any representation on the board of the Valley Transportation Authority, our regional transit agency, made up of elected representatives from South Bay cities. This lack of leadership helps account for the fact that in the past decade, the West Valley region has faced some of the worst service cuts in VTA service, meaning that public transportation is currently not an option for many of our residents. I will be a voice for Campbell on public transit issues and am proud to have already spoken out for our City through VTA Board Meetings [and on public transit issues through op eds](#).¹²

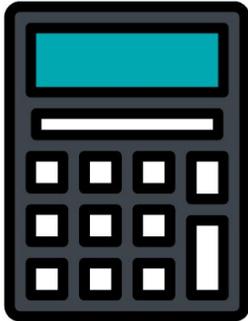
- **Advocate for regional transit agency reform**

- As mentioned above, Campbell has long lacked representation on the VTA board. Additionally, [a scathing 2019 Grand Jury report blasted VTA for mismanagement](#).¹³ The fact that the Board is made up of many elected officials from various cities who work full-time jobs in addition to their elected duties, leaves many with little time to adequately a full-time transit agency. I will advocate for adoption of many of the reforms suggested as a blueprint by the Grand Jury report to increase accountability, efficiency, and transparency on our VTA board.

¹¹ Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Chapter 8.0: Financial Considerations (2007).

¹² <https://sanjosespotlight.com/lopez-make-transit-free-in-silicon-valley/>

¹³ <http://www.sccourt.org/documents/CGJ%20VTA%20Final%20Report%20-%2006.18.19.pdf>



COST CALCULATOR:

Revenue Positive

Millions in transportation funding
and average \$30,000 in tax
revenue from new businesses