



## **Santa Clara Community Working Group (CWG) Meeting Summary**

**Date of Meeting:** June 11, 2026 (4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.)

**Location:** VTA's BSVII Project Office – Component Conference Room, Zoom

### **Attendees:**

Members in Attendance: Alden Smith, Jack Morash, John Urban, Jonathon Evans, Sean Collins, Sheldon Ah Sing, Todd Trezell

Members not in Attendance: Ana Vargas-Smith, Bella Burleigh, Flavio Olivieri Villalvazo, Jeanette Coran, Michael Liw, Rob Mayer, Ron Miller, Ryan Morfin, Scott Smith

Speaker Attendees: Frank Ponciano (VTA Facilitator), Erica Roecks (VTA), Greg Thiebaut (VTA), Chris Metzger (VTA), Brian Curran (VTA)

### **Meeting Agenda:**

- Welcome & Report Outs
- Phase II Program Update
- Station Design Progress Update
- Muck Update
- Construction Update
- Next Steps, Discussion & Feedback

### **Follow-Up Items:**

- VTA will send CWG Members the link to the Oversight Committee meeting where we went through the cost curve and cost control in greater detail.

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
<b>Welcome &amp; Report Outs</b>	
<p>We're very glad the pile driving is done. The concern has now turned to noise that impacts us and the next phases—how loud it will be and how the quality of life will be impacted for members of our neighborhood.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Where is the actual tunnel hole opposed to where the railroad tracks come out of the tunnel to at-grade? I want to clarify the difference between when they're at grade level versus the actual location of the dirt and the hole where the boring machine will start.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<b>Phase II Program Update</b>	
<p>If we stay with Kiewit Shea Traylor (KST), will the tunnel and boring start during the second quarter of 2027?</p>	<p>No, Q1 2028.</p>
<p>When is the decision made?</p>	<p>Friday, June 26th. There's no Board meeting in July, so we have a second Board meeting at the end of June. That's when the action will occur.</p>
<b>Muck Disposal Alternatives Update</b>	
<p>How many trucks per day and what hours will they be running before the rail is available to do that transfer at night?</p>	<p>There will be hundreds of trucks per day, though we are still working out the details of what the production will turn out to be. As we further develop plans, we will have a Construction Transportation Management Plan (CTMP) for all this work, similar to what we did a couple of years ago for the work that is occurring now at West Portal. We will be bringing you many proactive updates as that advances further, so you will receive further clarity.</p>
<p>Once the rail is done, will that be moving at night? What hours would that be? There are people who live nearby, so I'm curious what they should expect as far as train noise.</p>	<p>We have not finalized the timing with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR). It will take a while to do that. Initial conversations were requesting that VTA material would go north sometime in the late evening, 8:00-10:00 p.m., and then</p>

	<p>from 4:00-6:00 a.m. empty rail cars would come back south before commuter trains start running.</p>
<p>As you mentioned, there are beneficial uses for the muck as part of the Baylands restoration. I know budgeting was a problem. Are you looking at conducting restoration projects? If there's value in the muck, do they have a way to pay in some way to help do this distribution so that we're not worrying about the cost? Could we get reimbursement through a bay restoration fund or something to help cover some of the costs?</p>	<p>VTA has a staff member specifically tasked with looking into any funding available through the environmental elements of the project.</p>
<p>You mentioned earlier that the contract has an as-you-go element. How are you managing that, given you knew the whole budget up front? It seems it will hopefully reduce some risk, but the risk is still exposed. How do we account for if it ends up costing more than expected and we do not have all the funding?</p>	<p>VTA has a target price that we are working toward. There are cost curves, and we are in constant coordination with them. The cost curves guide the activities that must occur underneath those targets. There will be more oversight and engagement with the contractor as we move forward to ensure we are looped in on what is going on to prevent that from occurring.</p> <p>They have an incentive to finish earlier from a cost and schedule perspective, as they have some of their earned fee or profit at risk based on the agreed-upon target price and schedule. They have an incentive to beat their schedule to get that additional fee, which they will not receive if they do not.</p>
<p>A lot of things contribute to construction cost. If the worst case were to occur, what happens? If something goes wrong, the cost of steel and cement goes up 1000%, what happens?</p>	<p>For now, VTA has a lot of oversight, and we are tracking the cost and escalation. As it goes up gradually, we will be able to see that. We are working on getting additional funds available. Moving forward, we are only authorizing this first year of work to keep up the momentum while we figure out all the other elements at play that you mentioned — the federal landscape and how we are able to</p>

	<p>release additional funds from our local and state regional resources.</p> <p>We can send you the link to the Oversight Committee meeting where we went through the cost curve and cost control in greater detail. It has more information, and we will follow up and send you that to provide better understanding.</p>
<p>Does the muck smell? There's wind that comes up at noon everyday and it wafts our way. Is this conditioner going to smell?</p>	<p>No, the conditioners do not smell. The conditioners are mixed with the excavated material, which has been deep underground a very long time without being reached by much from the surface. The additives are basically soap; it clings and helps formulate the material to work with it better.</p>
<p>It sounds like there's an opportunity to reduce our costs with some kind of bidding war between the quarries and salt ponds for all our muck?</p>	<p>There is a lot of talk out there about our material. Our material happens to be mixed with conditioners, which makes it a bit different than other materials available.</p> <p>If this material was taken to a dump or similar, there would have to be payment every time the truck dumps. At a minimum, those fees are eliminated. Eliminating dumping fees is one source of savings. A second source of savings is that we are 6 miles away from the salt ponds instead of many miles away from potential dump locations. That's a savings in fuel and staff time.</p> <p>With the quarry, we would not have to build the second set of rail spurs [as must be constructed to use the salt ponds locations] because they already have rail up at the quarry and have used that area to load and offload this volume of material over the decades. If we work with the quarry, that would also be savings.</p>

<p>Are they environmentally required to fill it back in? They have an economical incentive?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Noise is a big problem for us. It sounds like tunnel excavation starts at Q1 2028, and then this rail muck removal. Rail will start somewhere in Q3. So, there will be two quarters – or 6 months – where hundreds of trucks will travel per day and will travel to one of these destinations that are yet to be determined. For the trucks, will this be a 24-hour operation?</p>	<p>That is something we are still working through and have to figure out. This will be part of that update as we get closer and develop the CTMP.</p> <p>There is already significant truck movement right now through the excavation at West Portal. For reference, there are about 130,000 cubic yards to be excavated, and we are over 57% complete on that. There is a lot of truck movement happening already.</p>
<p>What about the sound of the muck being excavated?</p>	<p>It's actually an excavator that we're using to directly load the trucks. During the tunneling phase, there will be a muck bin. The conveyor will carry the muck directly into the muck bin. The muck bin will be the repository for loading either to trucks or rails from that point there.</p>
<p>I thought I heard something about the drying process?</p>	<p>It's under the water table right now, so it will come out wet. Then it will dry. They won't put it directly into a truck because it just wouldn't work. That's what the muck bin is for.</p>
<p>In Q3, the rail will be used to go up to the salt ponds, and a 10-car train will depart?</p> <p>Empty rail cars are the loudest because they bounce around. Going between 4:00-6:00 a.m. is going to be pretty loud. Is it going to be regulated? What speed are we going at?</p>	<p>Right now, the plan calls for roughly 50 rail cars. We have a lot of work to do with UPRR to figure out what the rules are. It has to be a system, so we can load every day and so on. We're trying to figure out the right balance and working with KST on what production rates are going to be. We don't want empty rail cars sitting, so we want to get the right number. We have to work with UPRR with scheduling so it's consistent.</p>
<p>You're trying to depart between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. Caltrain comes by; they're going to need track time too. Then you'll have a process to unload all 50 at the</p>	<p>That is our current process, but that is subject to change because demands on the rail might change in the two years between now and then.</p>

marsh, salt ponds, and then depart between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m.?	
Empty rail cars coming back. The trucks that come by at 880 – the empty ones are the loudest because they bounce around. So going between 4:00-6:00 a.m. is going to be pretty loud. Is it going to be regulated? What speed are we going at?	We are only 6 miles, so they are not going to be travelling at the speed of the commuter. It's going to be fairly low speed.
Does the noise fall under the requirements under the site noise limits, or is it exempt because it's rail?	There will be an environmental assessment completed for the use of the rail spur for hauling, which will evaluate if noise mitigations are needed, so it will have its own evaluation done. There will be an addendum to the current project environmental document, which is typical for additional activities like this.
I'm excited to see we're studying this rail spur alternative or just rail alternative. I think it's a great solution – one that is using heavy rail – and it's going to potentially limit the impact on our South Bay roads, so I applaud the team for exploring that. I hope it works out.	Comment noted.
Seconding that. It sounds promising. Glad it's being studied.	Comment noted.
<b>Construction Update</b>	
VTA estimated 4,000,000 tons for the muck?	4,000,000 cubic yards.
Are the two substations permanent, or are they just for construction?	Just for the tunnel boring during the construction phase. The permanent facilities will also be on the same site. We are working with PG&E on all the power set up for the TBM. The same site will then be refurbished to power the trains.
Any noise related to that?	There might be a hum potentially, but it might not be different than the PG&E Substation that's out there right now.

Are you going to drop the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) through the Caterpillar Shaft?	A lot of major components will get lifted through the Caterpillar Shaft. Throughout operations, there will be sufficient headroom to drive down through the ramp for segments and to service tunnel operations as well as the muck. The muck will come out all the way up the ramp on the conveyor. That conveyor system will extend with the TBM as it's advancing.
Can I talk to you both after about BART and where the BART will come out of the ground? It's quite loud.	Comment noted.
<b>Next Steps</b>	No comments.
<b>Discussion &amp; Feedback</b>	No comments.
Thank you for sending the meeting notes [draft presentation] a couple days ago. I appreciate that.	Comment noted.
The dates you have for the future CWGs, I have a conflict at those times. Will you have a poll for members for alternative dates?	VTA will consider sending out a poll to CWG Members.

**Upcoming CWG Meetings:**

- Santa Clara CWG – Regular Meetings:
  - Thursday, September 17 | 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
  - Thursday, November 19 | 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

**Prepared by:** Vivienne Vo, Laura Nguyen

**Concurred by:** Greg Thiebaut, Chris Metzger, Brian Curran

**Distribution:** Website, Email