

**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COMPLETE STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
AGENDA
JUNE 12, 2025
41 MILES AVENUE
RJ BRYANT SERVICE CENTER
7:30 AM**

*Jeff Suzuki, Chair
Erik Miller, Vice Chair
Bill Ehlers, Commissioner
Pradeep Khanal, Commissioner
Alice Miano, Commissioner
Elisabeth Tabinski, Commissioner
Rushil Sharma, Youth Commissioner*

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The Town of Los Gatos strongly encourages your active participation in the public process. If you are interested in providing oral comments during the meeting, you must attend in-person, complete a speaker's card, and return it to the staff. If you wish to speak to an item on the agenda, please list the item number on the speaker card. The time allocated to speakers may change to better facilitate the meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting in-person, you are welcome to submit written comments via email to ppwcomment@losgatosca.gov.

This meeting will be teleconferenced pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(b)(3).

Commissioner Miano will be participating from a teleconference location at 184 Kent Avenue, Apartment B-506, Brooklyn, NY 11249. The teleconference location shall be accessible to the public and the agenda will be posted at the teleconference location 72 hours before the meeting.

Public Comment During the Meeting:

When called to speak, please limit your comments to three (3) minutes, or such other time as the Chair may decide, consistent with the time limit for speakers at a Town meeting.

Speakers at public meetings may be asked to provide their name and to state whether they are a resident of the Town of Los Gatos. Providing this information is not required.

Deadlines to Submit Written Comments:

If you are unable to participate in person, you may email with the subject line "Public Comment Item #_" (insert the item number relevant to your comment). Persons wishing to submit written comments to be included in the materials provided to the Commission must provide the comments as follows:

For inclusion in the agenda packet: 11:00 a.m. the Friday before the Commission meeting.

For inclusion in the agenda packet supplemental materials: by 11:00 a.m. on the day before the Commission meeting.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

CONSENT ITEMS *(Items appearing on the Consent are considered routine Town business and may be approved by one motion. Members of the public may provide input on any Consent Item(s) when the Chair asks for public comment on the Consent Items.)*

- [1.](#) Approve Complete Streets & Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes of May 08, 2025

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS *(Members of the public are welcome to address the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission on any matter that is not listed on the agenda and is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission. To ensure all agenda items are heard, this portion of the agenda is limited to 30 minutes. In the event additional speakers were not able to be heard during the initial Verbal Communications portion of the agenda, an additional Verbal Communications will be opened prior to adjournment. Each speaker is limited to three minutes or such time as authorized by the Chair.)*

OTHER BUSINESS *(Up to three minutes may be allotted to each speaker on any of the following items.)*

2. Youth Commission Report (Verbal Report if Youth Commissioner present)
- [3.](#) Letter of Support for SSA4A Grant Application for Highway 17 Overcrossing (Attachment)
Recommended Action: *Authorize the Commission Chairperson to sign a letter of support of Town's application for federal grant funding to support construction of the Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing.*
4. Safe Routes to School Quarterly Report (Verbal Report)
- [5.](#) Senior Services Roadmap Transportation Section (Presentation by Community Health and Senior Services Commission)
- [6.](#) June 2024 - June 2025 Ad Hoc Committee Discussion
 - a. Discuss and Adopt the Final Beach Traffic Measures Report (Written Report)
Recommended Action: *Endorse the Report and Recommend that Staff Share with Town Council*
 - b. VTA Bus Passes - Chair Suzuki, Commissioner Miano and Youth Commissioner Sharma (Written Report)
Recommended Action: *Endorse the Report and Recommend that Staff Share with Town Council*
 - c. Motion to Close the Beach Traffic and VTA Bus Pass Ad Hoc Committees
 - d. Discussion of Potential New Ad Hoc Committees (Attachment - CSTC Work Plan)
- [7.](#) PPW Department Report
 - a. Project Updates (Verbal Report)
 - b. Future Agenda Items (Attachment)
8. BPAC Report (Erik Miller - Term expires June 2026)

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

ADJOURNMENT

ADA NOTICE In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Clerk's Office at (408) 354-6834. Notification at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting date will enable the Town to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. [28 CFR §35.102-35.104]



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COMPLETE STREETS AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 06/12/2025
ITEM NO: 1

**MINUTES OF THE COMPLETE STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 08, 2025**

The Complete Streets and Transportation Commission of the Town of Los Gatos conducted its Regular monthly meeting on Thursday, May 08, 2025, at 7:31 a.m.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:31 A.M.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Jeff Suzuki, Commissioners Bill Ehlers, Alice Miano, Pradeep Khanal, Elisabeth Tabinski and Alternate Youth Commissioner Asheghian. Absent: Vice Chair Erik Miller and Youth Commissioner Rushil Sharma

CONSENT ITEMS

1. Approve Complete Streets & Transportation Commission Minutes of March 27, 2025.
Motion: Motion by Chair Suzuki to adopt the meeting minutes with a change. AMENDMENT: [Referencing Agenda Item 1 - Approve Complete Streets & Transportation Commission Special Meeting Minutes of March 27, 2025, Item 3 - Blossom Hill Road Traffic Improvement Summary of Improvements] Include the sentence that the verbal presentation contains clarifications, corrections, and updates that were not included in the previously published written report.
Seconded by Commissioner Ehlers
VOTE: Motion passed: 6-1; Vice Chair Erik Miller absent

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Gregory Gentile commented on the Senior Road Map and that the item be agendaized for the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission.
- Rachel Hinojosa expressed traffic concerns regarding proposed developments on Oak Road.

Commission asked questions and provided comments.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Youth Commission Report / High School Counts (Verbal Report and Attachments)
Youth Commissioner Asheghian reported on the previous Youth Commission meeting, presented traffic count and safety data, and summarized community responses.

Commissioners thanked Youth Commissioner Asheghian and offered comments and questions.

Chair Suzuki opened public comment.

Wendy Riggs

- Provided a historical background on surveys and advised that the tasking Youth Commissioner to continue the work is beyond their scope.

Commissioners asked questions and comments.

2. AB413 Implementation Update (Verbal Report)

Town Engineer Heap provided an update on Phase 1 of the AB413 implementation and reported on Phase 2. Director Burnham provided further context on red curbing in a residential area.

Commission asked questions and discussed this item.

3. Police Department Quarterly Report (Verbal Report)

Sgt. Kauweloia provided information on AB413 related to policing, reported 47 collisions with a breakdown of incidents, announced the return of Operation Chill, and noted that May is Bicycle Safety Month.

Commissioner Ehlers thanked Sgt. Kauweloia and Chair Suzuki asked questions.

4. June 2024 – June 2025 Ad Hoc Committee Reports (Verbal Reports)

- a. Discuss Draft Beach Traffic Recommendation Report– Chair Suzuki, Vice-Chair Miller and Commissioner Khanal (Draft Written Report To Be Provided 5/5)

Chair Suzuki reported on the draft report, noting it was a preliminary view and not finalized.

Commission asked questions and provided comments.

- b. VTA Bus Passes – Chair Suzuki, Commissioner Miano and Youth Commissioner Sharma (Verbal Report)

Chair Suzuki reported a meeting scheduled today with VTA to discuss cost estimates; if verified as reasonable, the final report will include a cost projection for free bus passes for students and seniors.

5. PPW Department Report

Director Burnham reported on the draft proposed operating and capital budgets, highlighting revenue generation and cost-saving measures, including the potential elimination of the Senior Transportation Planner position. Noted that if the Town no longer pursues mobility-related projects, the position may not be needed. Reported on upcoming Finance Commission and Town Council budget meetings. Stated that the capital program has been divided into Tier 1 and Tier 2 and outlined the differences between the tiers.

a. Project Updates (Verbal Report)

Director Burnham reported that the Highway 9 Trailhead Connector Project has been awarded project of the year by American Public Works Association Silicon Valley Chapter.

Town Engineer Heap provided updates on the Shannon Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Project, Sidewalk Curb and Gutter Project, Paving Project, and Shannon Roadway Repair Project.

Commissioner Ehlers asked questions.

b. Future Agenda Items (Attachment)

Director Burnham reported on the upcoming June agenda, including the Parking Program Update, Safe Routes to School, and potential additions of the Senior Transportation Road Map and Traffic Impact for future development.

Commissioner Miano stated she will attend the June meeting remotely.

Director Burnham reminded the Commission that the July Commission meeting is cancelled due to summer recess.

6. BPAC Report (*Erik Miller - Term expires June 2026*)

Director Burnham provided an update on the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's 10-year strategic plan. The plan is in the early stages, with workshops, breakout sessions, and key discussions underway. Future opportunities for community engagement will be available.

The Commission provided a comment and asked a question.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- No new report.

ADJOURNMENT - Meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the May 08, 2025 Regular Meeting as approved by the Complete Streets & Transportation Commission.

/s/ Nicolle Burnham, PPW Director



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COMPLETE STREETS AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: 06/12/2025

ITEM NO.: 3

DATE: June 6, 2025
TO: Complete Streets and Transportation Commission
FROM: Nicolle Burnham, Parks and Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Commission Support Letter for SS4A Grant Application

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the Commission Chairperson to sign a letter of support of the Town's application for federal grant funding to support construction of the Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing.

BACKGROUND:

The Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing Project is a high priority project in the Town's adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (Plan) most recently recommended by the CSTC and adopted by Council in 2020. As identified in the Plan, the project will improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility, encourage active transportation, close a gap in the Town's bicycle network, and enhance safety for all modes of travel on Blossom Hill Road between Roberts Road West and Roberts Road East. Blossom Hill Road is a high-volume transportation corridor and route to school for the Town.

The project is being led by the Town with significant funding support for project design from the 2016 Santa Clara Countywide Measure B Program and design oversight by Caltrans for the portion of the project within Caltrans' Highway 17 right of way. The project schedule currently calls for final design to be complete by early 2026.

The Complete Streets and Transportation Commission provided a letter of support for the project's Safe Streets for All (SS4A) and Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant applications in 2024. A motion in support was passed and the Chair subsequently signed the letters of support which will be included in the grant applications. Neither application was successful in last year's round of applications.

PREPARED BY: Nicolle Burnham
Director, Parks and Public Works

DISCUSSION

Following rejection in the 2024 SS4A application round, staff conducted a debrief with the applicant review team. The review team indicated that the application was strong, but needed some additional information regarding safety of the corridor and certain technical aspects of the application needed improvements.

The 2025 round of SS4A applications is due in late June. Staff is working with a consultant team that specializes in transportation related grant applications to prepare a robust application for funding to support construction of this project. As part of that application process staff is requesting that the CSTC consider offering a letter of support for the project/

Attachments:

1. DRAFT Letter of Support



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PARKS & PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
PHONE (408) 399-5770

SERVICE CENTER
41 MILES AVENUE
LOS GATOS, CA 95030

June 12, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Support for SS4A Implementation Grant Application
Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing Project
Los Gatos, CA

Dear Secretary Duffy:

On behalf of the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission (CSTC), I want to convey our firm support for the Town of Los Gatos' Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant application. The CSTC advises Town Council on matters like enhancing travel modes, integrating transportation infrastructure with surrounding areas, reviewing grants, focusing on school transportation safety, and updating master plans. We see the SS4A grant as a key opportunity to boost the Town's safety and connectivity by upgrading infrastructure and implementing safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike.

As active residents, the Commissioners are well aware of the safety concerns of the current Blossom Hill Road bridge. Blossom Hill Road is a high-volume transportation corridor and is on a preferred route to several schools. The Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan identifies the Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing Project as a top priority project. The CSTC has been actively engaged in the feasibility study and design phases of the Project. It will improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility, close a gap in the Town's bicycle network, and enhance safety for all modes of travel on Blossom Hill Road. Aimed at constructing a separate bridge over Highway 17, this Project will provide a secure pathway for cyclists and pedestrians, improving access to community destinations and easing current congestion. It exemplifies our dedication to creating a cohesive and inclusive community.

Please consider this letter as our strong endorsement of the Town's application for the SS4A grant. We're enthusiastic about contributing to this project's success and the enduring positive impact it will have on our community.

Sincerely,

Jeff Suzuki

Chairperson of the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission (CSTC)



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COMPLETE STREETS AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: 06/12/2025

ITEM NO.: 5

DATE: June 6, 2025
TO: Complete Streets and Transportation Commission
FROM: Nicolle Burnham, Parks and Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Report from Community Health and Senior Services Commission

REMARKS:

At the May 2025 meeting for the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission (CSTC) representatives of the Community Health and Senior Services Commission (CHSSC) attended and, during public comment, requested that CSTC hear an item regarding the transportation related items of the Town's Senior Roadmap. Attachment 1 is a reiteration of the Roadmap elements. Members of the CHSSC will attend the CSTC meeting to discuss this plan.

Attachments:

1. Excerpt from Senior Roadmap

PREPARED BY: Nicolle Burnham
Director, Parks and Public Works

**Ongoing Senior Transportation Advisory Committee – Task Force 5.
Collaboration with Complete Streets Commission. Senior population growing
and to comprise 30% of Los Gatos Residents by 2030**

- Success with the VTA Educational Program (Bob Buxton)
- Transportation subsidies available for needy seniors through Live Oak Nutrition
- Engage Town Senior Coordinator Leif Christiansen
- VTA mobility guides accessible on the HUB

Expand Senior Transportation Options

- Extend the RYDE Program (65 plus, curb to curb transportation)
- Extend Hopper Program to Los Gatos
- Explore Town Shuttle Option (Cupertino has successful Program which started in 2019 and serves the general public, offers wheelchair access)
- Seek Grants for funding

Promote knowledge of Transportation Option

- Educate the public
- The HUB (Resource Publication for Older Adults) (R.Y.D.E. Go Go Grandparent, VTA et. all.
- Explore other options (Shuttle Service)

Take Actions to create a more walkable Town

- Highway 9 Project (Exemplary Project)
- Highway 17 Bike and Pedestrian Project (To be Completed)

- Enhance signage and pavement markings and accessible sidewalks and crosswalks and evaluate visibility for safety
- Increase benches and crosswalks to enhance senior mobility and safety
- Consider wheelchair access and parking needs
- Vision Zero? Reduce injuries and deaths on roadways.

Beach Traffic Ad Hoc Committee Final Report

Los Gatos Complete Streets and Transportation Commission

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Overview

Beach traffic is possibly the most common complaint among the community members of Los Gatos. Its impacts do not discriminate, exacting a substantial cost in time, gasoline, and access to locations across town. Additionally, beach traffic impedes access to buses and emergency services. The Town of Los Gatos has implemented a number of congestion mitigation strategies with mixed results. There remains much work to be done to better allow movement in town during the summer months.

Therefore, the Beach Traffic Ad Hoc Committee (BTAC) was formed and approved by the Los Gatos Complete Streets and Transportation Commission (CSTC) in 2024.

This Final Report provides a summary of the current conditions of beach traffic in the next section “Background: Beach Traffic, Causes, Resulting Impacts.” Afterwards, this report describes every beach traffic mitigation measure that BTAC has considered as of July 5, 2025. Note that this list of measures is not and cannot be exhaustive—there are numberless policies and variations that the Town could pursue. Nevertheless, BTAC has included measures that are either highly prominent in community discussions or promising. Inclusion of a measure in this report does not equate to its endorsement.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Induced Demand	A phenomenon where increasing the capacity to roadways increases traffic volume. Widening a road (adding a lane) increases its capacity, leading to additional drivers to utilize that road. In many cases, commute durations drop temporarily before rising back to its original duration. ¹
Reduced Demand	The opposite of induced demand. A phenomenon where reducing the capacity of a roadway results in reduced total traffic, as drivers decide to take alternate routes or change their destination. ²
Bicycle-sharing system	This is a transportation system where bicycles are available for short-term rental. They can either be left at certain bicycle docks or left around town in a dockless system. These are common in many communities in the US, including local cities such as San Francisco and San Jose through the Bay Wheels Bike Share Program. ³
Promenade	A promenade is a long, open public area that is designed to welcome people walking on foot (pedestrians), with little to no vehicular access. Promenades are often located in desirable areas, such as along waterfronts, and can be centers for retail and commercial activity. Los Gatos has held multiple temporary promenades on North Santa Cruz Avenue as events.
Pedestrian Mall	A pedestrian mall is a space that is designed to welcome people

¹ Weingart, Eden. 2023. “Widening Highways Doesn’t Fix Traffic. So Why Do We Keep Doing It?” *The New York Times*, January 6, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/06/us/widen-highways-traffic.html>.

² Steuteville, Robert. 2021. “Reduced Demand Is Just as Important as Induced Demand.” *Public Square*, Congress for the New Urbanism, March 19, 2021.

<https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2021/03/19/reduced-demand-just-important-induced-demand>.

³ <https://mtc.ca.gov/operations/traveler-services/bay-wheels-bike-share-program>

	walking on foot, lined with storefronts and closed off to most vehicular traffic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many downtown areas across the United States were converted into pedestrian malls in order to make space for social distancing, including in Los Gatos temporarily. A promenade is a type of pedestrian mall.
Ramp metering	Ramp metering is a traffic management mechanism where traffic lights are placed on freeway on-ramps to control the number of vehicles entering a freeway. Large groups of vehicles entering a freeway at the same time can have an outsized negative effect on the freeway’s level of congestion—ramp metering breaks these groups up over time to help maintain a higher average speed on the freeway and reduce congestion, maximizing the potential capacity of an existing freeway. ⁴ Ramp meters are typically used during peak congestion hours and are turned off outside of these hours.
Hwy 17/SR 17	Highway 17/State Route 17, also known as “Santa Cruz Highway,” is a major freeway running north and south through Los Gatos, which serves as the most direct freeway route connecting the greater Bay Area to Santa Cruz, a popular summer destination for families in the Bay Area. During congestion hours, many drivers choose to divert through local Los Gatos streets and neighborhoods, causing major issues for local residents.
Hwy 9/SR 9	Highway 9/State Route 9, also known as “Los Gatos-Saratoga Road,” is a relatively high-speed, high-capacity road that carries traffic between Saratoga, Monte Sereno, and Los Gatos. This road becomes a major source of beach traffic for Los Gatos in the summer months, serving as an alternate route for many Bay Area residents living west of Highway 17/State Route 17 to merge onto SR-17 south-bound to Santa Cruz.

⁴ Federal Highway Administration, *Ramp Metering: A Proven, Cost-Effective Operational Strategy—A Primer*, Publication No. FHWA-HOP-14-020, October 2014, <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop14020/index.htm>.

Cut-through traffic	Cut-through traffic refers to vehicles that use residential streets as shortcuts to avoid main roads or freeways, without actually having any origin or destination in the neighborhood they use as a shortcut. Cut-through traffic is, and has been, a major issue for Los Gatos residents as long as the freeway has carried families to Santa Cruz.
Bollard	A bollard is a short, thick pole or post that can be used to block and redirect vehicle traffic away from certain streets and roads while preserving access for pedestrians and bicycles. Mechanical bollards can be unlocked with a key so that emergency vehicles can access an area, while automatic bollards can be activated remotely by both emergency vehicles and public transport vehicles like buses.
Traffic volume	Traffic volume is the number of vehicles that a road is carrying at a specific point in time. For example, traffic volume is higher during “rush hour” than it is in the early hours of the morning. When traffic volume exceeds the capacity of a road, traffic congestion occurs, slowing down the flow of vehicles significantly.
Class IV Bikeways	A Class IV Bikeway (separated bikeway) is a bikeway for the exclusive use of bicycles and includes a separation required between the separated bikeway and the through vehicular traffic. The separation may include, but is not limited to, grade separation, flexible posts, inflexible physical barriers, or on-street parking. ⁵
Parklets	Parklets are public seating platforms that convert curbside parking spaces into community spaces. ⁶ Los Gatos’ Downtown has several parklets.

⁵ California Department of Transportation, Design Information Bulletin 89-01: Class IV Bikeway Guidance (Separated Bikeways / Cycle Tracks), May 3, 2018, https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/dib-89-01_kf-a11y.pdf.

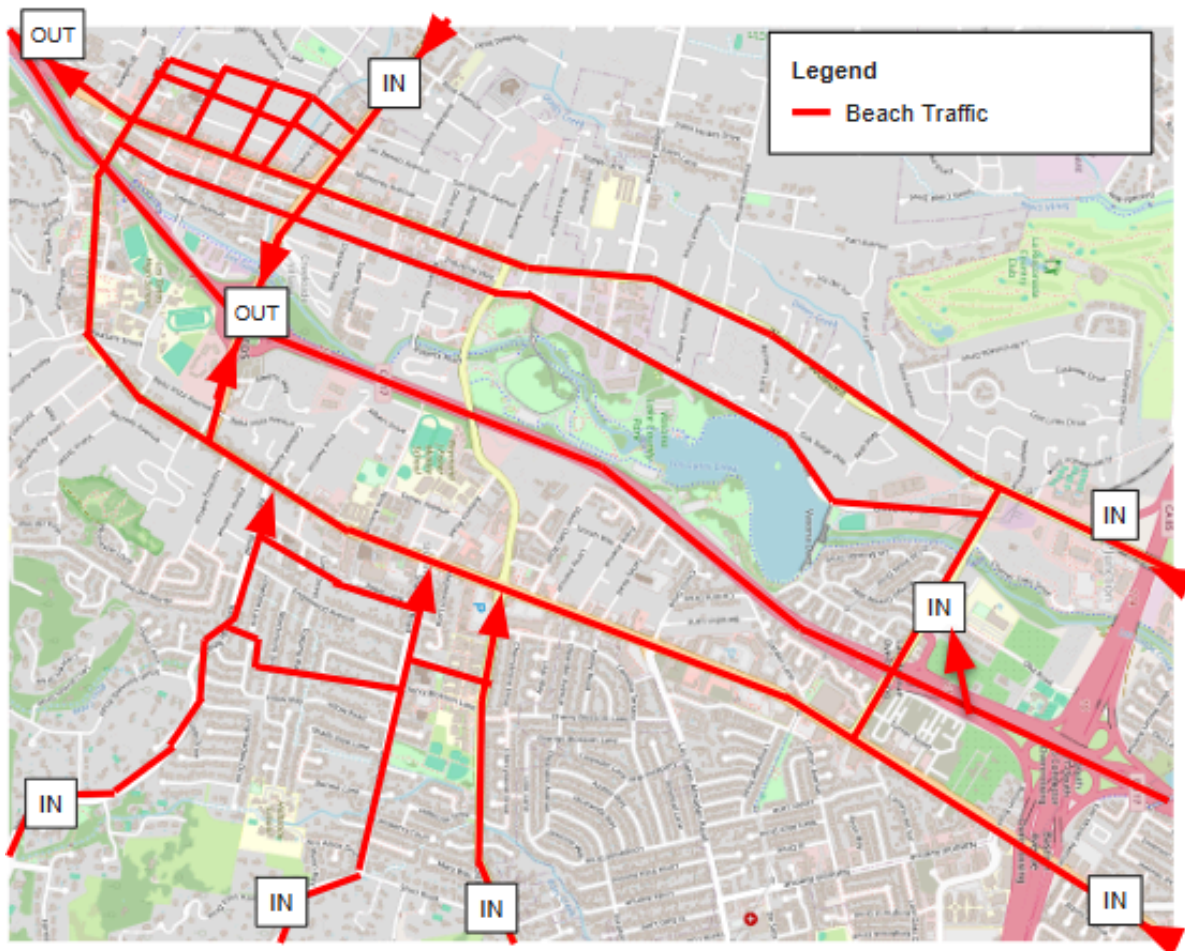
⁶ National Association of City Transportation Officials, *Urban Street Design Guide: Parklets*, accessed June 5, 2025, <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/interim-design-strategies/parklets/>.

Background: Beach Traffic, Causes, Resulting Impacts

During weekends, traffic volumes exceed the capacity of Highway 17, leading to congestion that cuts through Los Gatos roads.

Background Exhibit 1 visualizes some of the well-known current beach traffic flows through Los Gatos on three of its major thoroughfares: Winchester Boulevard, University Avenue, and Los Gatos Boulevard. Exhibit 1 also shows how the cut through traffic spills into neighborhood streets outside of the three major North-South thoroughfares.

Background Exhibit 1: Current Traffic Patterns



The entry points, labeled “IN” on the map, show the entry points of beach traffic *onto the map*, not Los Gatos in general. These entry points are:

- Highway 17 Exit onto Lark Ave, entering into all three thoroughfares.
- Winchester from south-bound traffic, originating from Highway 17, Highway 85, and Winchester in Campbell.
- Los Gatos Blvd, originating from Highway 85 and Bascom Ave in San Jose.
- Highway 9, originating from Saratoga and potentially Highway 85.

The exit points, labeled “OUT” on the map, show our expected egress of beach traffic from the town. Those exit points are:

- Highway 9 feeding Highway 17
- Wood Road, feeding Highway 17
- Lark Avenue feeding Highway 17. However, this happens with less frequency due to the fact that the traffic build-up on Highway 17 tends to start there.

Note that the exhibit above does not exhaustively show every neighborhood that has been impacted by beach traffic. The Town does not have access to continuous or exhaustive traffic data, historical traffic data from companies like Google is unavailable, and scraping such information goes against their terms of service. However, such data for major commercial corridors and higher-activity locations may be purchased via other private companies, such as Esri.⁷

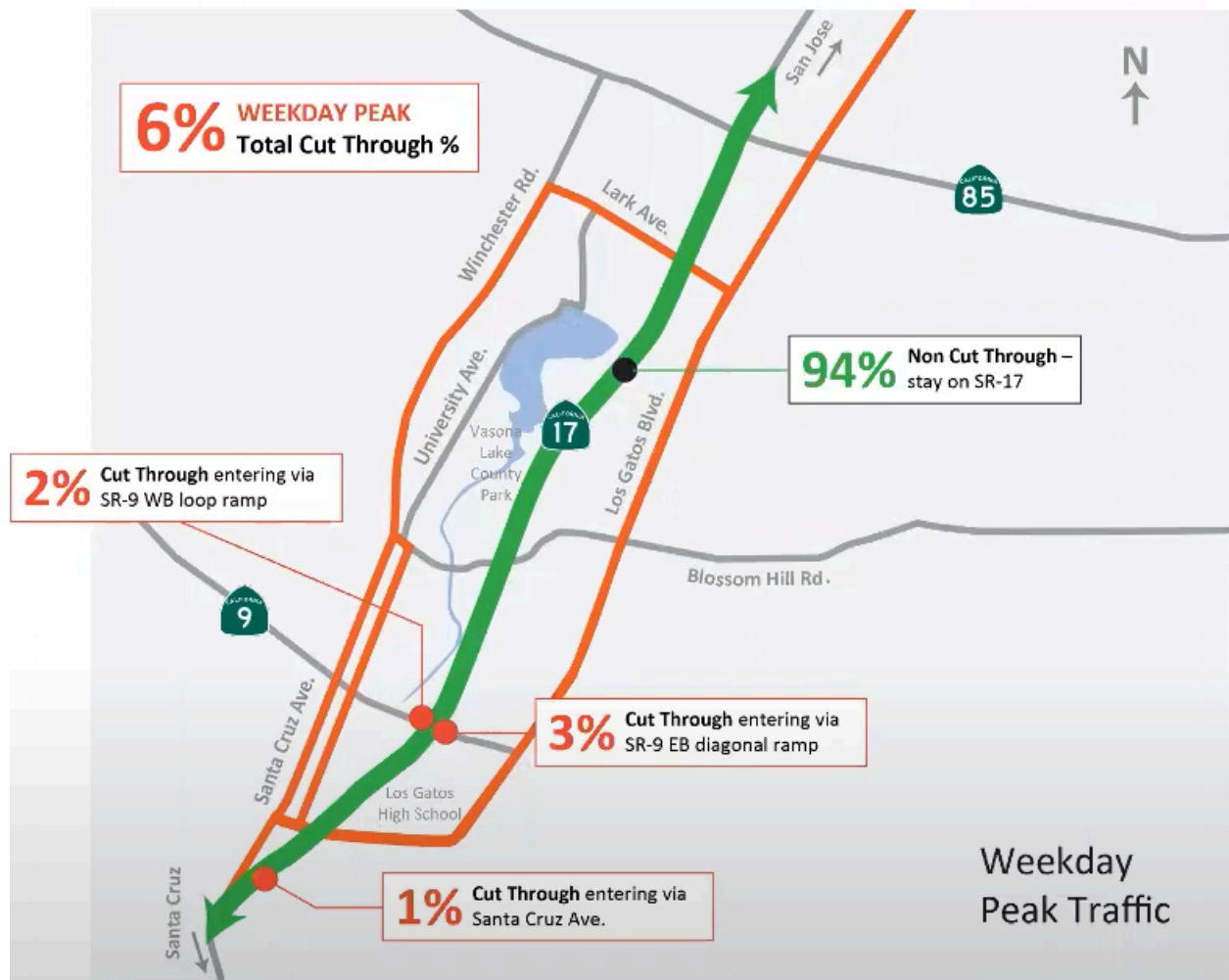
In Background Exhibit 1 above, the Almond Grove is used as an example of a neighborhood impacted by beach traffic. Beach traffic is also known to impact Union Avenue, Blossom Hill Road, Kennedy Road, and Shannon Road on especially high-intensity days.

In a Public Scoping Meeting in May 2022, VTA provided estimates of the percentage of Highway 17 traffic that cut through Los Gatos. During the peak of weekdays, **approximately 6% of Highway 17’s traffic volume** used Los Gatos to cut through Los Gatos. During the peak

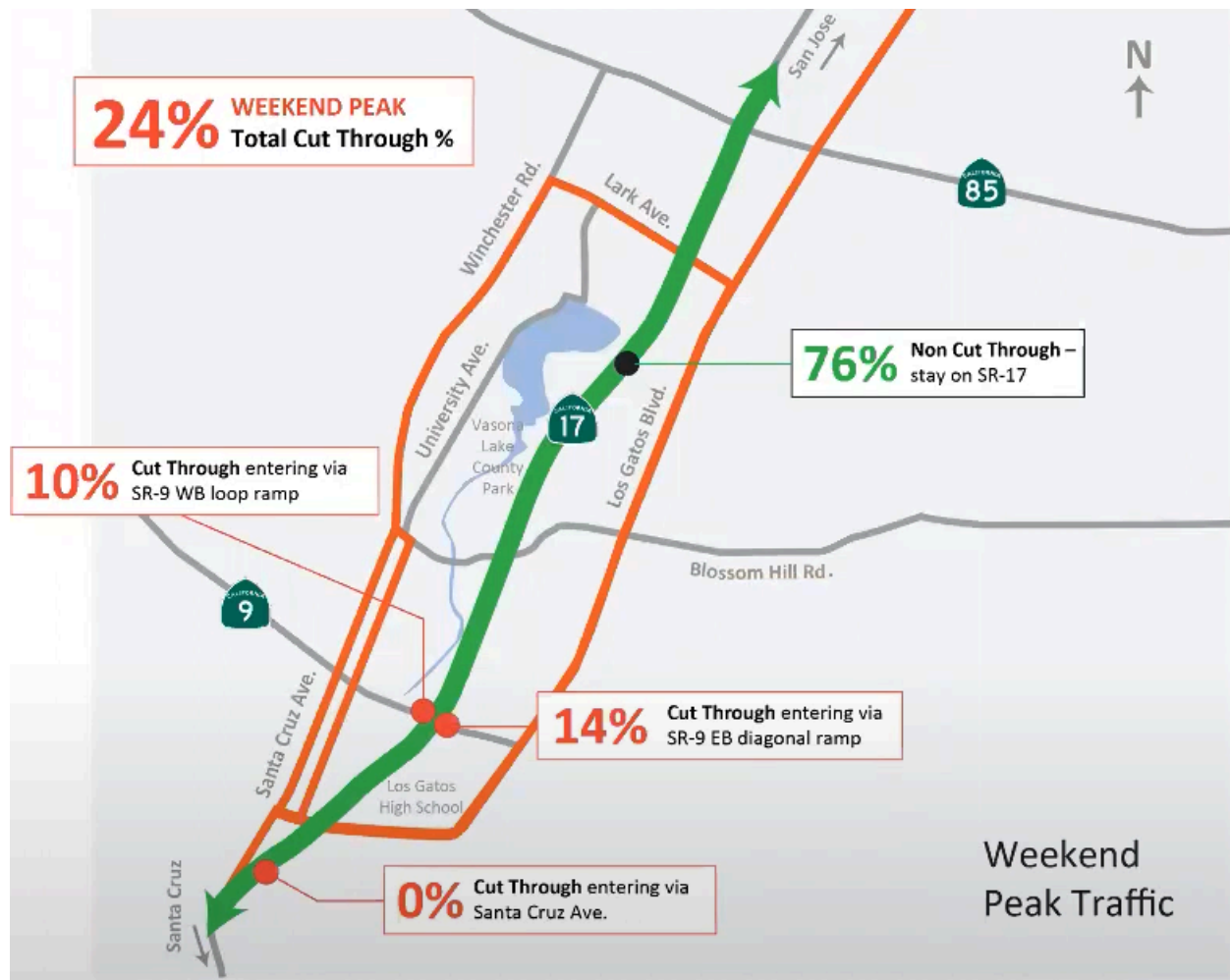
⁷ Esri. Traffic Counts. <https://doc.arcgis.com/en/esri-demographics/latest/esri-demographics/traffic-counts.htm>.

of weekends, **24% of Highway 17's traffic volume cuts through Los Gatos**, as shown in Background Exhibits 2 and 3 on the following pages.

Background Exhibit 2: Percentage of Cut-Through Traffic Highway 17 During Weekdays



Background Exhibit 3: Percentage of Cut-Through Traffic Highway 17 During Weekdays



As a result of beach traffic, BTAC has received input from residents and towngoers, who experience the following:

1. Traffic in neighborhoods so heavy that residents could not back out of their driveways.
2. Feeling “trapped” in one’s home.
3. Hour-long delays to access events in Los Gatos.

There is a single principal cause of beach traffic in Los Gatos—regional demand. Those who want to visit Santa Cruz come from several towns and cities north of Los Gatos at high traffic volumes. During the summer season, Santa Cruz is a popular destination for South Bay

residents. During the weekends, traffic volumes exceed the capacity of Highway 17, leading to congestion that incentivizes drivers to cut through using Los Gatos roads.

Beach traffic is, by its nature, a regional problem. Car traffic will flow through Los Gatos. Since Los Gatos does not control the source or the destination of beach traffic, entirely “solving” for beach traffic by addressing this principal cause is not currently within the Town’s independent authority or capacity. For that reason, some of the measures in this report would necessitate coordination and approval with substantial regional and state authorities.

Additionally, there are a number of secondary issues that magnify the negative impacts of beach traffic. These include, but are not limited to:

1. **Navigation applications**, including Google Maps, Apple Maps, and Waze. More specifically, these applications provide “optimal” routes to minimize times between the driver’s location and their desired destination. These applications will often direct drivers through Los Gatos to reduce their travel times by a few minutes. Several long-time residents have reported to BTAC members that beach traffic did occasionally cut through Los Gatos prior to the advent of navigation apps, but the apps have exacerbated traffic congestion by informing more people of alternative routes previously only known by locals.
2. **The lack of regional transportation infrastructure that is competitive with car travel times to Santa Cruz.** Public transportation options generally move more people while occupying less space. There exists the Highway 17 Express, a bus service that connects San Jose and Santa Cruz. However, because that bus is subject to the same traffic conditions as any car travelling on Highway 17, those headed to Santa Cruz almost always opt to drive their own vehicle. According to the Traffic Census Program, a daily average of 69,000 vehicles traveled south-bound past Los Gatos on Highway 17 during the peak month of 2022.⁸ From July 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022, the Highway 17

⁸ California Department of Transportation. "Traffic Census Program." Accessed May 31, 2025. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/census>. Vehicular count data does not extend past 2022.

Express generated a ridership of approximately 34,500 over the three-month period, or roughly an average of 383 passengers per day.⁹

3. **Los Gatos' car-oriented transportation infrastructure.** To live as a resident of Los Gatos, car ownership is a virtual necessity for timely transportation when traveling to areas outside of biking and walking distance. Los Gatos has one primary local public transit option: VTA Bus Route 27 ("27 Line").¹⁰ A resident can use this bus line to access the Winchester Transit Center for light rail. However, this bus is subject to the same traffic conditions as Los Gatos roads, meaning that it is also slowed by beach traffic. For this reason, service on the 27 Line has been reduced during Beach Traffic hours, leaving residents with few options to travel outside of walking and biking distance.¹¹ This report includes measures that address these secondary issues by ensuring that residents have other transportation options accessible, including measures for the development of bicycle, pedestrian, bus, and light rail infrastructure.

Nevertheless, Los Gatos has potential options in determining *where* car traffic flows. Currently, beach traffic cuts through major thoroughfares in town. As our major thoroughfares reach maximum capacity, beach traffic spills into the adjacent neighborhoods (referred to as "spillover" hereafter). Los Gatos has limited capacity and authority to entirely stop beach traffic on major thoroughfares. But it has the ability to limit congestion to those thoroughfares and prevent spillover.

BTAC is obliged to state that beach traffic may not bring purely negative effects. For example, in February 2025, there was an article published in the Mercury News titled "Tired of beach traffic cutting through residential streets, Los Gatos will consider closures."¹² The title, while incorrect,¹³ attracted a substantial response: the Town of Los Gatos received several messages

⁹ Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District. FY23 Q1 Ridership Report. November 18, 2022. https://www.scmtd.com/images/departments/planning/FY23_Q1_Ridership_Report.pdf.

¹⁰ <https://www.vta.org/go/routes/27>. We are also served by line 37.

¹¹ Penner, Drew, "VTA Moves Weekend Bus Route Further Away from Downtown," Los Gatan, February 23, 2023, <https://losgatan.com/vta-moves-weekend-bus-route-further-away-from-downtown/>.

¹² Trivedi, Isha, "Los Gatos to Consider Street Closures to Reduce Beach Traffic," Mercury News, February 16, 2025. <https://www.mercurynews.com/2025/02/16/los-gatos-to-consider-street-closures-to-reduce-beach-traffic/>.

¹³ The Town Council, the ultimate decision-making body in Los Gatos, had not formally considered any closures of streets. In actuality, the CSTC had recommended a capital project to fund traffic simulations to predict how major changes in the town's road network, including potential street closures, would impact traffic flows in Town.

from local businesses that expressed concerns over prospective road closures, sharing that they found the traffic beneficial to their businesses.¹⁴

Previous measures to close off certain points of entry into targeted neighborhoods have historically decreased spillover into those neighborhoods while increasing spillover into other neighborhoods, effectively offloading congestion from one neighborhood to another. Additionally, frustrated by congestion, many drivers simply disregard traffic laws; Los Gatos, with its limited resources, often does not have the capacity to provide traffic enforcement on beach traffic regulations. This has led some to conclude that any effort to curtail beach traffic is futile—drivers will always find a way to circumvent whatever regulation or impediment the town implements.

BTAC observes that the results of previous efforts do not prove the futility of curtailing beach traffic, but instead prove flaws in previous approaches—targeting individual neighborhoods and/or relying on the continual physical presence of police officers are infeasible in the long run.

Learning from these previous results, future approaches should therefore be:

1. **Holistic, targeting multiple neighborhoods simultaneously.**
2. **Infrastructure-oriented as opposed to enforcement-dependent.** If drivers are unable to use *any* of the neighborhoods as shortcuts because of physical barriers (e.g. bollards), then drivers will be compelled to remain in the major thoroughfares in town. For some of the measures in this report, enforcement is necessary, but they rely more so on automated systems than police officers.
3. **Expand transportation options for residents through walking, biking, and public transit infrastructural improvements** that increase safety, accessibility, capacity, and overall pleasantness. Future beach traffic efforts should aim to move people first and foremost with cars being just one of several means to travel. As the population of the

¹⁴ Town of Los Gatos, Complete Streets and Transportation Commission Agenda Packet, December 12, 2024, pp. 31–46, <https://mccmeetings.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/losgatos-pubu/MEET-Packet-2d8d89aa8d86491685cad69dfe6c725.pdf>.

greater Bay Area grows with time, our current transportation infrastructure will need to accommodate larger volumes of people. Traffic of all kinds, including beach, school, and commuter traffic, will grow. If the Town wishes to limit the increasingly harmful effects of car congestion, encouraging other forms of transportation is a long-term necessity.

- For example, during a Complete Streets and Transportation Commission meeting on May 9th, 2025, a resident voiced concerns regarding the potential addition of cars due to recent development proposals near Oka Road. Residents who live on Oka Road only have one option to exit: Lark Avenue.¹⁵ Lark Avenue is an example of a road that is both simultaneously impacted by beach traffic and future development. In the future, it will need additional infrastructure to accommodate its growing population. Measures 2 and 5.1 are examples of infrastructure improvements that could provide residents with other transportation options when car travel is unavailable during and outside of beach traffic hours.

The subsequent sections of this report are dedicated to describing and assessing a series of measures, or potential solutions, that are options in managing the negative effects of beach traffic. The inclusion of a measure does not equate to its endorsement—BTAC provides an assessment of each measure, each assessment including potential benefits, risks, and conditions for success.

¹⁵ Complete Streets and Transportation Commission, *Video/Audio*, May 9, 2025, Town of Los Gatos, <https://losgatos-ca.municodemeetings.com/bc-cstc/page/complete-streets-and-transportation-commission-2>.

Measure 1: Requesting that the Navigation Apps Stop Routing Traffic Through Los Gatos

Agencies Involved:

1. Town of Los Gatos
2. Google, Apple, and other major navigation app companies

Executive Summary:

This is one of the most frequent suggestions from Los Gatos residents. The idea is that the Town of Los Gatos should request that the companies who own the aforementioned navigation apps stop routing traffic through Los Gatos. Ideally, these applications should route drivers to remain on Highway 17.

Assessment:

The Town of Los Gatos has previously attempted this to no result. The Town of Los Gatos published a “Beach Traffic FAQ” in 2023.¹⁶ It states:

“The Town worked with Apple Maps, Google, and others to inform them of our neighborhood street designations to discourage the apps from sending traffic down those streets. Unfortunately, the business model for these apps conflict with the Town’s concerns for cutting through traffic and the companies did not want to modify their algorithms any further. Each mapping application has its own mapping model and algorithm, and the business model for each firm attracts customers by providing information on travel routes. If one application did not do it, another may attempt to gain a competitive advantage.”

¹⁶ Town of Los Gatos. *Weekend Cut-Through Traffic FAQ*. Accessed May 31, 2025. <https://www.losgatosca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19731/Weekend-Cut-Through-Traffic-FAQ>.

There are powerful economic incentives for these companies to maintain their algorithms as they are, regardless of how Los Gatos residents may be impacted.

However, some cities have implemented measures to mitigate cut through traffic caused by navigation apps. For example, Los Altos Hills experienced similar circumstances— those who wanted to avoid congestion on Interstate 280 instead cut through the roads of Los Altos Hills. In 2017, Los Altos Hills requested that Waze remove three roads from their navigation apps— Waze did not comply with this request.¹⁷

Subsequently, Los Altos Hills erected “No Thru Traffic” signs on three of its roads, after which Waze complied. However, there remained issues with enforcing this law, as tracking residency or the intent of drivers as they entered Los Altos Hills proved highly difficult. Additionally, it does not appear that Apple Maps or Google Maps were impacted by this change. The fundamental issue remained— drivers from Interstate 280 continued to use Los Altos Hills roads to cut through.¹⁸

Afterwards, in 2018, Los Altos Hills considered implementing “No Right Turn” signs at two of its intersections.¹⁹ This proposal met considerable criticism from local residents, as the turn restrictions also applied to the city's residents.²⁰ As a result, the Los Altos Hills City Council voted unanimously to *not* pursue the establishment of these “No Right Turn” signs.²¹

¹⁷

<https://slate.com/business/2017/06/suburbs-finally-figured-out-a-way-to-get-rid-of-pesky-drivers-on-waze-shortcuts.html>

¹⁸

https://www.losaltosonline.com/news/lah-tests-no-turn-signs-to-curb-cut-throughs/article_07235eaa-7ca5-5800-84c6-25f2ee4a411a.html

¹⁹ https://losaltoshills.granicus.com/MapView.php?view_id=2&clip_id=375&meta_id=59011

²⁰

https://www.losaltosonline.com/news/los-altos-hills-residents-fight-for-their-rights---and-lefts/article_941c00cf-019b-5c5a-8353-8fe9330fe364.html

²¹ https://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/_03222018-1083

The example of Los Altos Hills is instructive. It demonstrates that even after limited success in negotiating with a single company, Los Altos remained substantially impacted by cut through traffic.

Therefore, BTAC's assessment of this measure is that successful negotiation with the companies of these navigation apps is as follows:

1. There are multiple major navigation companies. Successfully negotiating with all of these companies to stop routing traffic through Los Gatos has a low probability of success.
2. Unless paired with a local change to traffic laws (e.g. no turn signs) has already been made, direct requests to these companies to modify their suggested routes will almost certainly be ignored or denied. However, requests to change suggested routes paired with a local change in traffic laws is the most realistic answer, as these companies could not continue to present illegal routes as options. One example is the series of "No Right Turn" signs across N. Santa Cruz Ave, where the neighborhood streets of Alemendra, Bachman, and Nicholson forbid drivers from turning right onto N. Santa Cruz Ave from 10 AM to 3 PM on Saturdays. These "No Right Turn" signs were designed to prevent drivers from using the roads in the Almond Grove neighborhood to cut through the congestion on N. Santa Cruz Ave. These signs initially encountered enforcement issues, as many drivers disregarded the law. However, the navigation apps eventually adjusted their routes.
3. Formal requests to these companies take substantial time and resources to execute the Town Council's will in earnest. The Town of Los Gatos employs a staff with limited time and resources. Allocating the time and resources necessary to successfully negotiate with these companies presents an opportunity cost— those staff resources may be better utilized in planning and executing other measures that could more effectively mitigate beach traffic.
4. As noted in the prior section, navigation applications are an ancillary cause to beach traffic in Los Gatos. Hypothetically, if navigation applications were to cease functioning

tomorrow, beach traffic would likely remain a significant issue, as drivers will seek any means to shorten their commute time.

Finally, there have been proposals for the Town to “deceive” traffic apps through false reports of traffic, spoofing slow traffic, or even false reports of road closures. The goal of these false reports is to prevent navigation apps from recommending drivers to use certain streets.

Indeed, users have found that false reports can work in the short run in reducing traffic. However, companies do eventually discover false reports, at which point they ignore the false reports, and recommend drivers back onto the original recommended route. The end result is that traffic resumes as normal.

Los Gatos currently has a reputable relationship with navigation app companies to report road closures; if the Town starts falsely reporting roads as closed, it runs the risk of those companies not trusting its legitimate reports, compromising its ability to coordinate with these firms in the future.

Some people have proposed legislation that bars navigation apps from routing traffic through neighborhood streets. In our opinion, that could be a feasible long-term solution, but successfully lobbying for state-level legislation to compel that is not trivial or quick. In the meantime, measures that the Town can unilaterally implement should be considered.

In the BTAC’s opinion, physically changing our streets to more intentionally reflect our desired usage of them is a better long-term solution that will be resilient to changes in algorithms and other corporate black boxes.

Measure 2: Congestion Pricing in Los Gatos during the Weekends

Potential Agencies Involved:

1. Town of Los Gatos
2. The State of California
3. The Bay Area Toll Authority
4. CalTrans

Executive Summary

Congestion Pricing charges drivers a fee to enter a location that is experiencing traffic congestion. The fee could be a flat cost, or it could scale with factors like time, vehicle type, or congestion level, and some portion of the fee is put towards improving public transit, offering a lower cost way to travel to and from the area for those who do not require a personal vehicle.

Los Gatos would likely need authorization from the State of California to implement Congestion Pricing, similar to legislation proposed (but not passed) in AB-3059.²²

To charge drivers with congestion fees, a congestion pricing program could utilize the FasTrak Transponders and/or license plate recognition infrastructure already developed for the Express Lanes on highways and overseen by BATA, the Bay Area Toll Authority.

BTAC envisions several ways Congestion Pricing could be deployed:

- **Approach 1:** place detection systems at all off-ramps from Highways 9, 17, and 85 into Los Gatos to encourage drivers to stay on the highway.
- **Approach 2:** In addition to implementing **Approach 1**, and place detection systems at the on-ramps to 17 in Los Gatos, charge a reduced fee at the off-ramps, and charge the

²² https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB3059

full fee if a driver exits the town within a certain time period to reduce the burden on residents and encourage visitors to patronize businesses in town.

- **Approach 3:** Place detection systems on Highway 17 itself to encourage drivers to make trips at times outside of peak hours. This would alleviate some of the impact of congestion on the mountain community. This would require coordination with CalTrans. **Approach 3** on its own could incentivize drivers to cut-through traffic, as drivers might believe they could avoid fees on 17 during peak hours. Therefore, **Approach 3** would likely necessitate the simultaneous implementation of **Approach 1** or **Approach 2**. With an appropriate alternative to driving (see Measure 10), **Approach 3** could be particularly effective at reducing traffic without significant economic impacts to Santa Cruz.

Assessment

In BTAC's opinion, this is perhaps the most effective measure for addressing the primary cause of beach traffic. If there was a silver bullet, it would be congestion pricing. The monetary cost will directly influence the behavior of the drivers seeking to cut through the town before they enter, rather than trying to mitigate the effects once they are already cutting through town.

Gaining the authorization and partnerships to issue a congestion fee would be a substantial undertaking. However, BTAC expects that the implementation of congestion pricing in Los Gatos is more likely than successfully persuading all of the navigation apps to not route traffic through the town. Congestion is a major concern for transportation authorities on the local, regional, and state level—the incentives of all parties necessary for a congestion tax are aligned. The same cannot be said for navigation app companies.

Congestion pricing has been implemented with positive results historically:

- Singapore pioneered the idea in 1975,²³ and the success led to other cities like London and Stockholm²⁴ implementing their own Congestion Pricing systems.
- New York City was the most recent implementation (and the first in the United States), and is now receiving a glowing reception.²⁵ TomTom, a navigation company, compared

²³ https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/6116_SingaporeTraffic_Factsheet.pdf

²⁴ https://www.sfcta.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Congestion-Pricing-Case-Studies_2020-02-13.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/05/11/upshot/congestion-pricing.html>

traffic data from January 1st through March 15th of 2024 with that same date range in 2025. Overall, they saw a roughly 5% drop in congestion from 24.7% to 16.9%, but during evening rush hour, they saw a 13% drop from 43.2% to 30.3%²⁶.

- The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) started exploring potential Congestion Pricing around Downtown in 2019; while they paused the study in 2021²⁷, they started laying groundwork that might be useful for Los Gatos to use if we choose to pursue this. The SFCTA also collected case studies of London and Stockholm²⁸, finding that:
 - London's flat £11.50 (\$15.05) fee between 2003 and 2020
 - Reduced traffic: 30%
 - Increased transit ridership: 38%
 - Raised Funds: £137 million (\$182.1 million)
 - Stockholm's flexible 135 KR (\$14.25) maximum fee between 2007 and 2020
 - Reduced traffic: 22%
 - Increased transit ridership: 5%
 - Raised: 1.3B KR (\$155 million)

BTAC views congestion pricing very favorably. The Town of Los Gatos should actively advocate for authorization to implement a congestion tax.

²⁶ <https://www.tomtom.com/newsroom/explainers-and-insights/the-data-behind-nyc-s-congestion-pricing-success/>

²⁷ <https://www.sfcta.org/downtown>

²⁸ https://www.sfcta.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Congestion-Pricing-Case-Studies_2020-02-13.pdf

Measure 3: State Route 17 Corridor Congestion Relief Project

Agencies Involved:

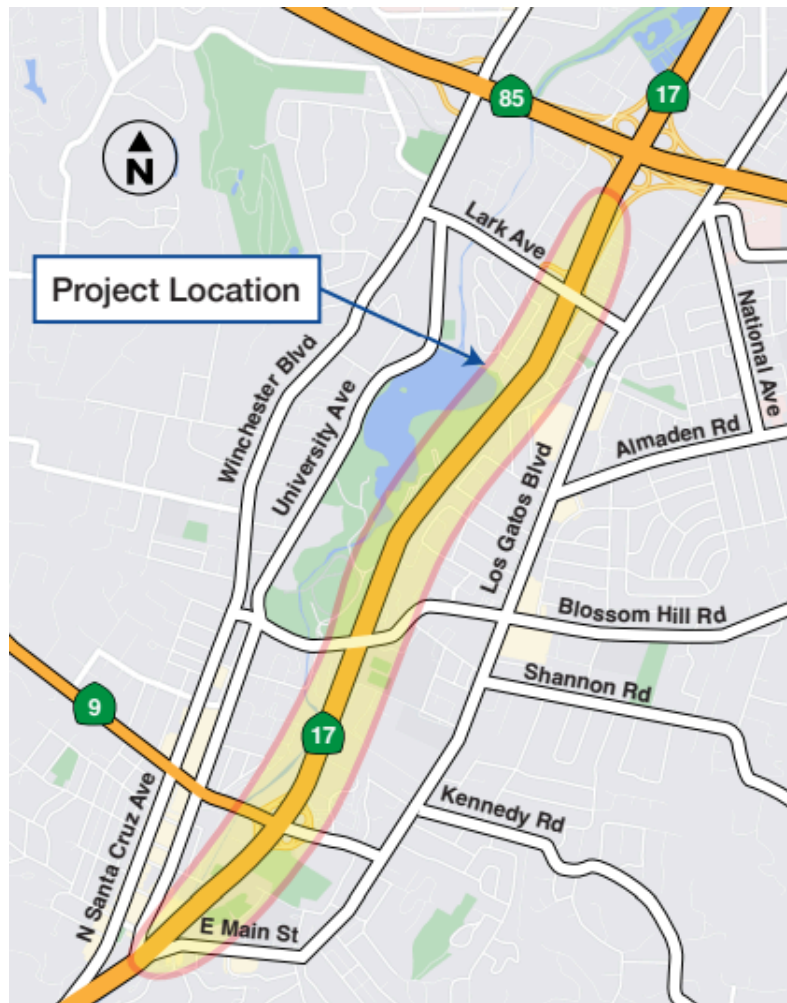
1. Town of Los Gatos
2. VTA
3. CalTrans

Executive Summary:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), in cooperation with the Town of Los Gatos and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is leading a project to replace the State Route 17 (also referred to as “SR 17” and “Highway 17”) and State Route 9 (also referred to as “SR 9”, “Highway 9”, and “Los Gatos-Saratoga Road”) interchange bridge and expand SR 17 from two lanes to three lanes from Lark Avenue to SR 9.²⁹ Construction is projected to start in 2028 and end in 2030. The highlighted area in Exhibit 3.1 below visualizes this lane expansion.

²⁹ <https://www.vta.org/sr17corridor>

Exhibit 3.1: Congestion Relief Project Location³⁰



There are four primary elements of this project, each subject to potential change during the design and engineering phase:

1. **Modification of the interchange’s on- and off-ramps.** Currently, the interchange takes the form of a cloverleaf configuration, which the VTA characterized as “functionally obsolete that were used for relatively low traffic volumes that would not need to accommodate pedestrians or bicycles.”³¹ Two potential replacement designs include the spread diamond configuration or a partial cloverleaf configuration to facilitate larger

³⁰ <https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/FS-SR17-ENG-042825.pdf>

³¹ State Route 17 Corridor Congestion Relief Project - Public Scoping Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdV-QhQ6nlc&t=681s>, 11:21)

traffic flows and compatibility with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Below in Exhibit 3.2 is a comparison between a Current Cloverleaf Configuration and a Partial Diamond Configuration.

Exhibit 3.2: Modification of the SR 17/SR 9 Interchange from the Current Cloverleaf Configuration (left image³²) to a Partial Diamond Configuration (right image³³)



2. **The widening of SR 17 from Lark Avenue to the SR 17/SR 9 Interchange.** The number of lanes will increase from two lanes to three lanes, intending to eliminate lane-drops (a location on a highway where the number of lanes provided for through-traffic decrease) and bottlenecks from Lark Avenue to the SR 17/SR 9 interchange.
3. **Installation of traffic signals control systems and ramp meters.**

³² Google Maps, accessed May 4th, 2025.

³³ State Route 17 Corridor Congestion Relief Project - Public Scoping Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdV-QhQ6nIc&t=681s>, 13:43). Note that the Los Gatos Creek Trailhead Connector to Hwy 9 project is included in this image, even though it is a project distinct from the Corridor Congestion Relief Project.

4. **The addition of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along Los Gatos-Saratoga Road.**³⁴ This would include Class IV Bikeways, additional sidewalks, and signal-controlled crosswalks.

Assessment:

BTAC generally supports the implementation of this project. More specifically, BTAC strongly supports the interchange improvements, as they install bike and pedestrian facilities to connect a pocket of town that only has a sidewalk on one side of the road with four uncontrolled crossings against traffic entering and exiting the freeway, and potentially provides another bicycle/pedestrian path to Los Gatos High School in conjunction with the development at the old Los Gatos Lodge.

Many in Los Gatos believe that this project is *the* solution to solving Beach Traffic in Los Gatos. BTAC does not share this view. While this project provides substantial improvements to Los Gatos, BTAC's assessment is that this project will offer little congestion relief from Santa Cruz-bound drivers attempting to cut through Los Gatos. Other beach traffic mitigation strategies will be necessary after the completion of this project.

During the State Route 17 Corridor Congestion Relief Project Public Scoping Meeting, one public commenter asked:

“Can you clarify your research in ensuring the widening of the portion under discussion [SR 17 from Lark Avenue to the SR 17/9 Interchange] isn't just pushing the bottleneck south on [SR] 17?”³⁵

MTA Project Manager Chris Lillie answered:

“[...] there's still going to be a bottleneck along [SR] 17 as you get to the south end of Los Gatos. Obviously, dropping down to two lanes when you

³⁴ There is currently only a narrow sidewalk on the Northside of Los Gatos-Saratoga Road over Highway 17, with uncontrolled crossings, and no marked bike lanes.

³⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdV-QhO6nlc&t=1692s> (29:16).

have vehicle demands that are more than what a two-lane segment can accommodate, that [traffic] will still be the same condition.”

In other words, the overall throughput of SR 17 may not change for drivers whose destination is Santa Cruz. Every driver who either uses SR 17 or the roads of Los Gatos will be subject to the same bottleneck south of the SR 17/SR 9 Interchange. The larger amount of traffic volume induced from three lanes would be forced through two lanes, increasing congestion after the additional lane merges back. The overall travel time to reach Santa Cruz by remaining on SR 17 is unlikely to be impacted by this additional lane. Therefore, drivers and navigation apps are likely to continue to see Los Gatos as a desirable shortcut.

Navigation apps are incentivized to direct their users to any route that will reduce average travel times. For this project to successfully deter apps from suggesting Los Gatos roads as a shortcut, this project would need to ensure that a driver who chooses to cut through Los Gatos would take, on average, longer to rejoin the highway than if they had never left it.

In BTAC’s assessment, the single mechanism that could prove decisive in reducing beach traffic is the ramp metering element of this project. For this mechanism to reduce traffic congestion in Los Gatos, ramp metering would need to fire at intervals that would add travel time to those attempting to drive south from Los Gatos. Otherwise, BTAC does not see how this project would substantially improve beach traffic flowing through Los Gatos.

Finally, BTAC is obliged to mention that there may exist potential risks of adding a third lane. The additional third lane on SR 17 has been pitched as a free-moving lane for Town residents to circumvent beach traffic congestion and enter the town unimpeded, which would reduce the load on the other North-South arterial roads in town. However, BTAC expects that drivers encountering traffic may flow into any open lane they see. On a heavy beach traffic day, Santa Cruz-bound drivers are likely to occupy this third lane, creating a new conflict point near SR 9. Alternatively, these drivers may take the path of least resistance and divert into town via the off-ramp, exacerbating current traffic congestion in the Downtown.

Measure 4: University Bus-Bike Boulevard

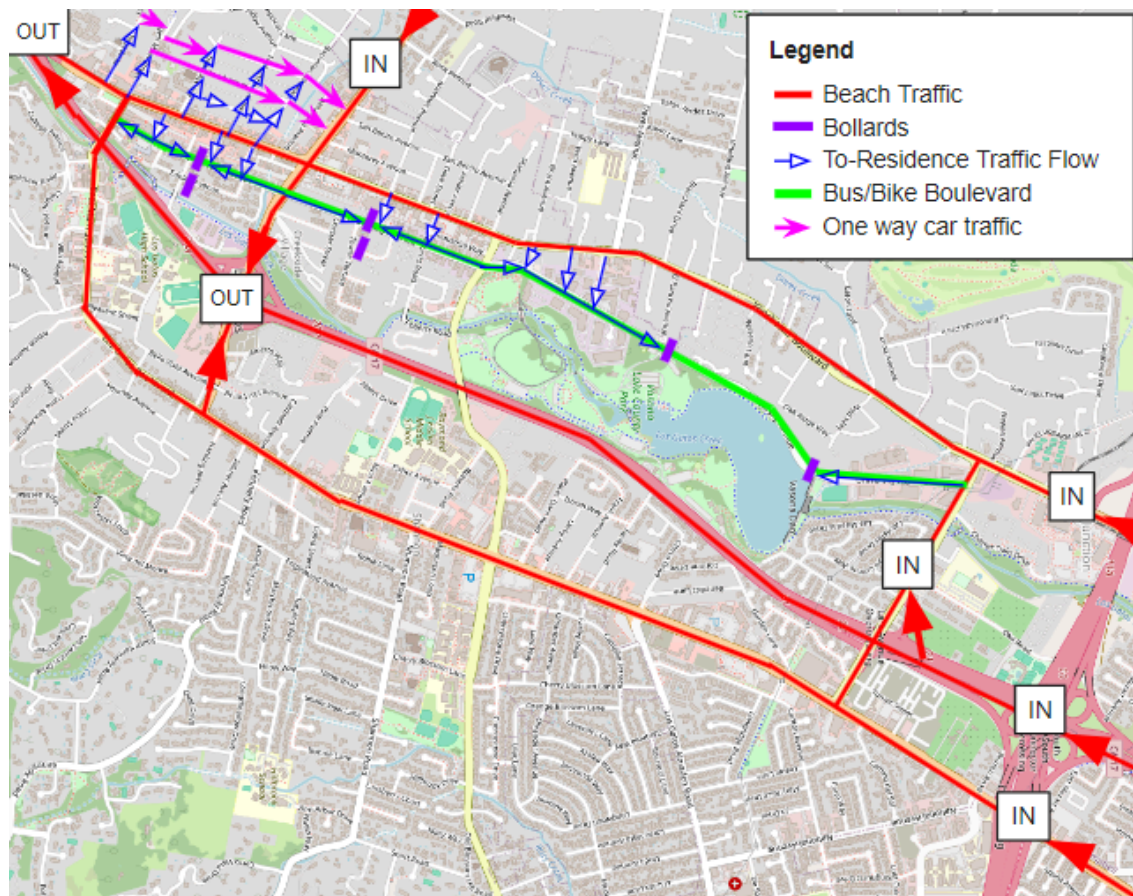
Agencies Involved:

1. Town of Los Gatos
2. VTA

Executive Summary:

The Bus-Bike Boulevard proposes transforming University Boulevard into a corridor for cyclists, buses, and pedestrians to traverse town. As shown in Exhibit 4.1, this plan employs bollards to divert cross-town car traffic from University Avenue to Winchester Blvd and N. Santa Cruz Ave.

Exhibit 4.1: University Bus-Bike Boulevard Concept Map



There are two primary goals of this measure. The first goal is to increase capacity for bicycle traffic through a major thoroughfare in town. The second goal is to establish dedicated bus lanes, increasing the speed, predictability, and, therefore, desirability of buses. With little to no car traffic, this route would also provide ample space for emergency vehicles to traverse across most of the Town's North-South length as needed.

Within the neighborhoods across University, residents would still be able to drive to and from their homes; the route may be more circuitous, but this would eliminate the multi-block line of cars idling in front of their homes during beach traffic.

If implemented correctly, the bollards along this route would be able to be raised and lowered by the town as needed. During beach traffic, a simple key-operated bollard could allow emergency services to drive up, drop the bollard, and proceed to an emergency almost unimpeded by the beach traffic, not to mention more safely than the alternative of driving in the opposing traffic lane. This is the main reason Exhibit 4.1 extends along Vasona Lake; that would give fire trucks from the Winchester Station or Ambulances from Good Samaritan Hospital and further a route straight into Downtown.

The Town could employ automatic bollards that could be lowered by an electronic signal. Sunnyvale uses these. These automatic bollards would be useful to bus services in town, especially since they have recently altered their routes not to go Downtown because beach traffic delayed them too much. After a bus lowers an automatic bollard, it would encounter little to no traffic, enabling VTA to run nearly unimpeded bus services through town during beach traffic hours.

Regardless of which bollard control system is selected, the town would also have the option to lower the bollards as needed for special events (e.g. creating bypasses during the holiday parade) or in the event of an emergency evacuation. A University Bike Boulevard ensures that residents and visitors have multiple ways to travel quickly across Los Gatos during Beach Traffic, substantially increasing its potential throughput.

Implementation of this project would necessitate communication with VTA to re-route the 27 bus through University.

Assessment:

As noted prior in the “Background” section, If the goal is to move people, not just cars, this measure is perhaps the most effective for moving the largest volumes of people across the length of most of the town.

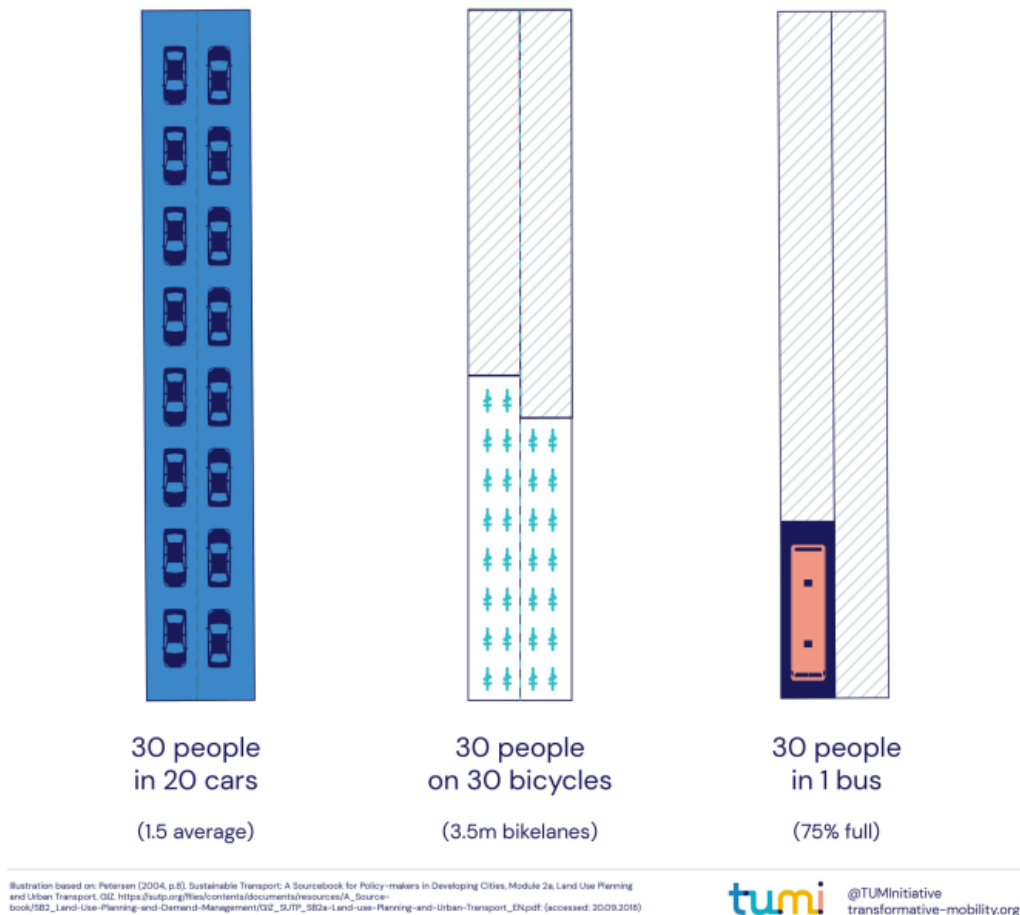
There is currently no physical infrastructure specifically dedicated to public transportation in Los Gatos, including bus lanes. Buses and their passengers are forced to sit through the same congested beach traffic as cars. Many residents and town goers have reported that it can take over an hour to travel what would normally be a 10-15 minute drive. Buses were no exception. Facing bus ridership numbers at 2-7 riders per weekend, VTA cut its services to the Los Gatos Downtown in early 2023.³⁶

This measure would directly address a secondary issue that worsens the effects of beach traffic—Los Gatos has car-oriented infrastructure. This measure provides a direct answer to that secondary issue, as the University Bus-Bike Boulevard provides Los Gatos with a practical alternative to driving by promoting the use of public transportation, which could prove highly impactful during beach traffic hours. The following graphic in Exhibit 4.2 illustrates the space occupied by buses, bicycles, and cars. Generally, buses and bicycles can move far more people with less space.

³⁶ Penner, Drew , "VTA Moves Weekend Bus Route Further Away from Downtown," Los Gatan, February 23, 2023, <https://losgatan.com/vta-moves-weekend-bus-route-further-away-from-downtown/>.

Exhibit 4.2: The Use of Space, Comparing Cars, Bicycles, and Buses

Road Space Requirements



Dedicated bus lanes can accommodate a larger volume of people with essentially no traffic. When normal road lanes are congested with beach traffic, buses would become an enormously attractive alternative, and may even warrant more frequent service during the summer season rather than less frequent service as the VTA has been compelled to implement up to now.

Additionally, this measure also opens possibilities for more efficient bus routes that could skip traffic outside of beach traffic hours, increasing the attractiveness of buses for traveling to school or the Downtown. Paired with “Measure 6: the Vasona Light Rail Station,” residents who live near Lark Avenue would have both local and regional transportation options.

BTAC expects that, as an infrastructural improvement, a University Bus-Bike Boulevard would contribute to the “small town character” of Los Gatos. There would be less air and noise pollution from car traffic, families could feel safer biking through town, and the areas that surround this route would be more tranquil and vibrant.

The success of this measure is contingent on bus, bike, and pedestrian traffic volume. In the long run, the volume of people traveling through the University Bus-Bike Boulevard needs to match or surpass the current volume of car traffic. If utilization by bus riders, cyclists, and pedestrians is low, the Town runs the risk of car traffic concentrating in another arterial roadway.

Los Gatos’ current bus ridership is not insubstantial— in 2024, the 27 and 37 lines facilitated approximately 220,000 total rides in 2024.³⁷ However, it is well-known that buses are sparsely used compared to other modes of transportation in Los Gatos. The Town faces a “chicken and egg” dilemma in this measure. If bus ridership is low, it may be difficult to justify allocating space that could otherwise be used for car transportation. On the other hand, buses are currently an unattractive option because Los Gatos does not have infrastructure to make bus ridership an attractive option.

To fully consider the risks and benefits of this measure, BTAC drafted a recommendation to launch a capital project to fund the development of a traffic simulation/model, which would project how major changes in the Town’s road network would impact traffic flows in Los Gatos for both beach traffic and non-beach traffic infrastructure projects.³⁸ This recommendation was approved by the Complete Streets and Transportation on December 12, 2024.

³⁷ This figure was provided from correspondence with VTA. The full table can be found in the VTA Bus Pass Ad Hoc Report, published in this agenda packet. Ridership is based on farebox and clipper data, not taken from on-board automated passenger count data

³⁸ Town of Los Gatos, Complete Streets and Transportation Commission Agenda Packet, December 12, 2024, pp. 31–46, <https://mccmeetings.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/losgatos-pubu/MEET-Packet-2d8d89aa8d86491685cad69dfe6c725.pdf>.

Measure 5: A Permanent Promenade in Los Gatos

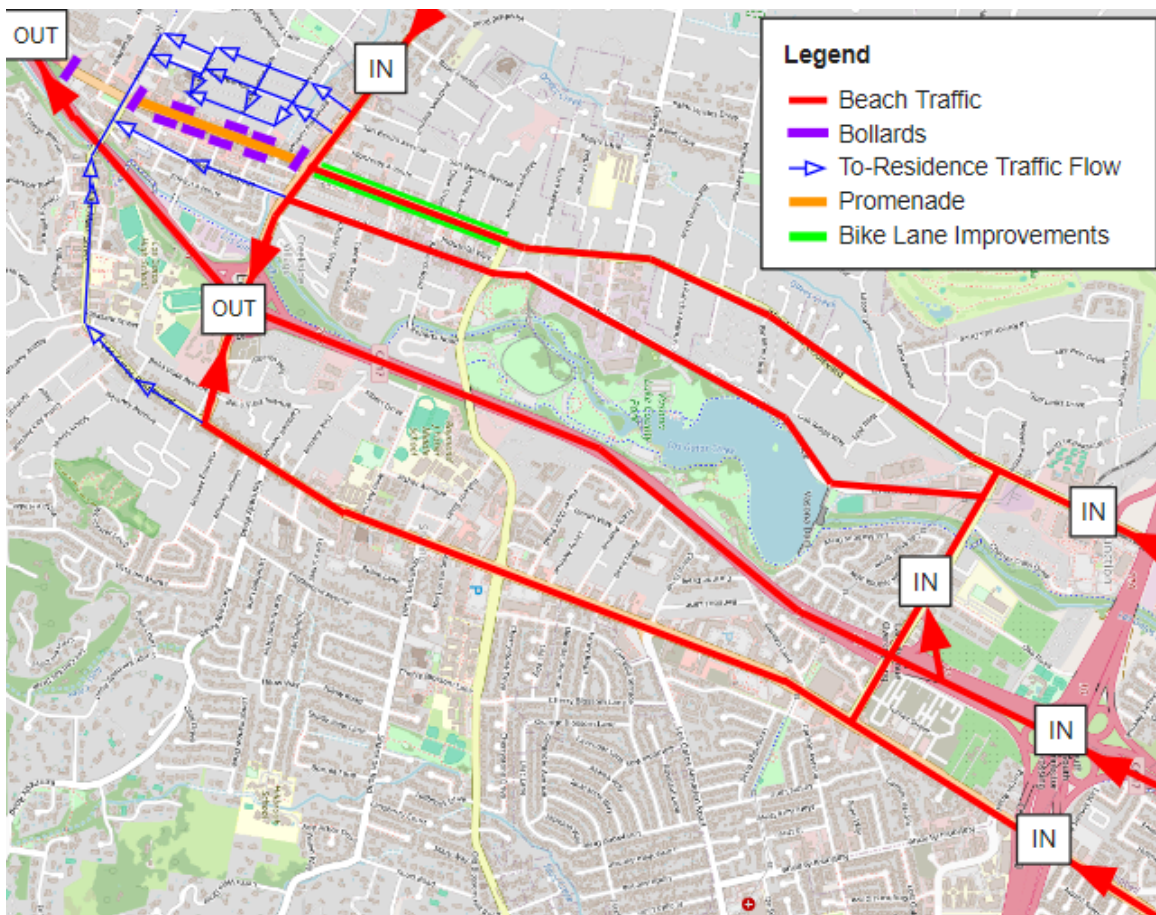
Agencies Involved:

1. Town of Los Gatos
2. Caltrans

Executive Summary:

Los Gatos hosted several Promenade Events where N Santa Cruz Ave was closed to car traffic from Highway 9 to W Main St on Thursday night, leaving the space for dining, shopping, mingling, and live music. By and large, residents of the community loved the Promenades, with many requests to bring them back, but the Town cited the expense of closing the street as the reason that more events could not be held. Much of the expense of hosting these events was having town staff set up and tear down the barriers and signage to temporarily close the street, as well as additional police presence to patrol and enforce the road closures. In effect, this measure proposes turning the promenade into a permanent installation, visualized below in Exhibit 5.1.

Exhibit 5.1: Permanent Promenade Concept Map



A Permanent Promenade would create a primarily pedestrianized Downtown with access to cyclists. Without cars taking up most of the public right of way, the Downtown could become more spacious and a more desirable location to walk, bike, shop, and experience life. The Downtown would physically be able to accommodate more people, restaurant seating, greenery, and other aesthetic and functional improvements. It would also result in increased potential capacity for commercial activity.

If implemented, a Permanent Promenade could become a defining feature of Los Gatos, enhancing our small-town character. During Farmer's Markets and the previous Promenades, families and children could be found playing in the streets, something that is only possible if there is no car traffic. A Permanent Promenade would make the Downtown a more appealing space for families and visitors.

Exhibit 5.1 illustrates how this Permanent Promenade might be implemented conceptually. Where previous attempts at curtailing car traffic in one neighborhood have led other neighborhoods to suffer from spillover, Exhibit 5.1 shows how cars can be prevented from using neighborhoods as shortcuts— cars may enter neighborhoods on one end, but are prevented from entering the southbound freeway on the other end. Residents of these neighborhoods would still be able to enter and leave their own homes freely.

By blocking every potential shortcut through neighborhoods, drivers will be compelled to remain in the major thoroughfares in town. While the Promenade would be closed to car traffic, the bollards would be collapsible, enabling emergency services to access the downtown as needed, and even allow regular car traffic for extreme circumstances like wildfire evacuation. We could also collapse the bollards during certain time periods, like the early morning, to allow business deliveries via the Promenade.

With enough support and funding, the Town could bring the whole street up to pedestrian level, making the space even more pleasant and accessible, similar to many city cores across the world.

In order to extend those benefits beyond downtown, the Town could add comfortable bike and pedestrian connections to downtown, namely North Santa Cruz Ave between Blossom Hill Rd and Hwy 9, and Los Gatos Blvd, though Hwy 9 itself could use some improvements to help people realize they can park North of Hwy 9 and walk across it to downtown.

Other South Bay cities have implemented similar ideas, often referred to as Car Free Streets or Pedestrian Malls. As we research previous cases of pedestrian malls and car-free streets, we observed that resident sentiment seems to overwhelmingly favor them.

Examples include:

- San Jose closed N San Pedro St. from W St John St. to W Santa Clara St. to create an outdoor dining zone and pedestrian area for San Pedro Square as early as 2016. That has been so successful that the City Council voted to make it permanent as of May 2024.³⁹

³⁹ <https://sjdowntown.com/next-steps-for-san-pedro-pedestrian-walkway/>

- Mountain View City Council established three sections of Pedestrian Mall on Castro Street between West Evelyn Ave and California Street (leaving the East-West cross streets open) in October of 2022. It has been quite popular, and the town is actively seeking to continue to improve it, with discussions of eventually making it permanent.⁴⁰
- After a successful pilot road closure in June 2023, Redwood City Council unanimously voted to close the 2000 block of Broadway and Redwood Creek to vehicle traffic in January 2024. During surveys to inform the vote, 93% of respondents supported the street closure, and 14 of 15 participating businesses supported it. There has been additional community interest in closing other streets too.⁴¹
- Palo Alto City Council initially closed California Avenue in June 2020 as a summer pilot. After the pilot, the Council extended it repeatedly until finally voting to permanently close it to cars in November 2024⁴². 80% of residents were in favor of keeping the street car-free, and some restaurants had seen a 40% increase over pre-pandemic business⁴³.
- San Mateo City Council voted to establish a year-round Pedestrian Mall on B Street from 1st to 3rd Ave, and staff began work on a Pedestrian Mall Improvements Project, which continues to this day⁴⁴. In 2024, City Staff reported that there were no vacancies on the Pedestrian Mall, which signals its success.⁴⁵

Los Gatos would likely need to communicate with Caltrans to ensure that this measure is permissible.

⁴⁰

<https://www.mountainview.gov/our-city/departments/public-works/roads-and-transportation/transportation-planning/castro-pedestrian-mall-feasibility-study>

⁴¹

<https://www.rwcpulse.com/recent-news/2024/01/11/redwood-city-permanently-closes-stretch-of-downtown-broadway/>

⁴²

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Transportation/Transportation-Projects/Car-Free-Streets-Cal-Ave.-Ramona-Street>

⁴³ <https://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2023/11/02/should-palo-altos-california-avenue-be-reopened-to-cars/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/4448/B-Street-Pedestrian-Mall-Improvements>

⁴⁵ https://www.reddit.com/r/SanMateo/comments/1bu7lyc/pedestrian_mall_update/

Assessment

This Permanent Promenade is in the heart of Downtown. Many of the complaints by both residents and non-residents who attend events in Los Gatos are focused specifically on access to the Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods.

This measure would result in the elimination of beach traffic on N. Santa Cruz Avenue, containing the traffic to Highway 9/Los Gatos-Saratoga Road. Freeway drivers would have no incentive to drive through neighborhood streets, eliminating spillover traffic. There is precedent for this, as Los Gatos has previously closed Wood Road. Neighborhoods connected to the Downtown would see a substantial improvement in travel times for local destinations around Los Gatos and for any road connections leading to the greater Bay Area that are not subject to southbound beach traffic, including destinations that use the west-bound lanes on Highway 9 and the north-bound lanes on Highway 17.

Pedestrianizing the Downtown also stands to make it a much more pleasant space to be, encouraging people to meet, shop, and go about their daily lives with less disruption from beach traffic. This is a popular and successful trend among Bay Area cities, as noted in the aforementioned examples in the Executive Summary.

BTAC has considered the possibility that this proposed measure may potentially worsen traffic on the major thoroughfares in other areas of town, especially those that connect directly to the southbound entrances to Highway 17 from Highway 9. However, given that those roads are already at maximum capacity during beach traffic, BTAC predicts that congestion will remain comparable to current levels of congestion if this proposed measure is implemented. Nevertheless, due to the scale of this change, a traffic model/simulation would be warranted.

Once beach traffic is limited only to the major thoroughfares, it is likely that navigation apps will recommend fewer drivers to cut through Los Gatos because they recognize that there will be less capacity for cars. Intentionally lowering the capacity helps to *reduce demand*, a known phenomenon where reducing the capacity of a roadway results in reduced total traffic, as drivers decide to take alternate routes or change their destination. Our primary concern currently is to

manage spillover traffic from major thoroughfares into neighborhood streets when the thoroughfares are at maximum capacity, which would be addressed effectively by this proposed measure.

That being said, this measure has been presented in the aforementioned recommendation to develop a traffic model; in response, some members of the community have raised the possibility that Downtown businesses could lose some customers as a result of decreased car traffic along the Promenade. BTAC believes that this measure could bring long-term economic benefits to the Town. The potential number of customers that could fit in the downtown at any given time would increase multifold with increased bikeability and walkability. There would be far more potential for on-street events and community activities that the town could hold with shops in the immediate vicinity.

BTAC recognizes that it is important to address concerns about lost customers in depth. Such customers can be categorized into two groups. The first group of potential lost customers includes those who visit shops that they notice on their way to the beach, who we will call “drive-by customers.” The second group consists of those who are only willing to access shops by parking on a nearby curb and are unwilling to use the parking lots off of University Ave and Victory Lane, who we will call “curbside customers.” A third group of customers, the “walk-by customers,” are those customers who travel through the Downtown on foot or by bicycle.

If there is a substantial increase in foot traffic through the Downtown, the “walk-by customers” would likely more than compensate for the loss in “drive-by customers.” It is much easier to browse curiously for shops while walking/biking as opposed to driving— people have more time to notice and contemplate shopping at a store they are passing by while walking/biking than if they were in a car.

For “curb-side customers,” removing curbside parking has met some success historically in Downtown. For example, the Town, at the request of businesses, decided to remove roughly a third (~34 parking spots, by BTAC’s count) of its available curbside parking on N Santa Cruz

Avenue to install parklets.⁴⁶ This decision has largely been popular among residents and merchants because it has increased the carrying capacity of businesses to serve customers, while making the Downtown feel more vibrant and social.

In implementing the Permanent Promenade, we would be trading highly convenient curbside car parking for greatly increased pedestrian space and the option for a significantly higher concentration of bike parking, as a car parking space can hold up to 12 bikes. Drivers would no longer be able to park on a curb of N Santa Cruz Avenue, walk out of their car, and take a few steps to enter a shop. This loss of parking spaces should be accounted for in their potential impact on businesses.

For that reason, BTAC conducted a manual in-person count of parking spaces and businesses along the proposed street of the Promenade in Exhibit 5.1.

On N Santa Cruz Avenue from Main Street to Highway 9, BTAC counted a total of 87 curbside parking spaces, excluding attached parking lots, 120 businesses that have a door that opens directly facing the sidewalk, and another 117 businesses clearly visible from curbside in alleyways or larger buildings. In other words, there are 87 parking spaces for 237 businesses, or roughly one parking space for every three businesses on N Santa Cruz. Assuming that there is an average of 1.5 passengers per vehicle,⁴⁷ there are approximately 130.5 customers who park curbside, or one potential patron for every two stores.

However, BTAC expects that the economic impact of losing customers who cannot park in these specific spaces would be marginal—there is ample parking available at several parking lots and facilities for cars near N. Santa Cruz Avenue.

There is also an opportunity cost in keeping our current parking spaces. As noted before, each parking space can hold approximately 12 bikes. If the Town converted all 87 curbside parking spaces to become bike parking instead, the Downtown would have a capacity to hold 1,044

⁴⁶ <https://www.mercurynews.com/2022/01/05/semi-permanent-parklets-due-in-downtown-los-gatos-this-year/>

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Oak Ridge National Lab (2022) Transportation Energy Data Book Edition 40.

bikes, or 4.4 potential customers per business. This is roughly a nine-fold increase in customer capacity compared to what currently exists for our current parking spaces. Additionally, a nine-fold increase in capacity is a highly conservative estimate, since former parking spaces are not the only places where additional bike racks can be installed. Any excess curbside space for bike parking could also be used to improve the environment around the shops, for example by adding public benches or outdoor seating for adjacent food establishments to make the Promenade a more attractive place to visit.

BTAC conducted an informal door-to-door survey of local residents along University Ave parallel to the location of this potential Permanent Promenade, which found that they were generally supportive of the Promenade. Most residents felt prior Promenades had a positive impact on their life in Town and none of the residents surveyed noticed any negative effects. A complete description of the survey and its methodology can be found in Exhibit A of the Addendum attached to this report.

In summary, BTAC expects that the Permanent Promenade would be a popular and effective solution to containing beach traffic in Los Gatos, with definitive positive impacts on the quality of life for a majority of residents in the Town, and potential positive impacts for the businesses located Downtown. This potential for positive impact is supported by evidence of successful Promenades in other towns around the Bay Area.

Measure 6: Vasona Light Rail in Los Gatos

Agencies Involved

1. Town of Los Gatos
2. VTA

Executive Summary

VTA owns the Union Pacific tracks from Winchester Station to where the tracks cross Hwy 85. They are currently investigating the feasibility of extending Light Rail to Los Gatos, and perhaps further along the Union Pacific right-of-way into and beyond Monte Sereno and Saratoga.

As it currently stands, the Winchester Station Terminus in Campbell is not well-connected to the Los Gatos Creek Trail.⁴⁸ Currently, using VTA Bus Line 27 follows a circuitous route that takes between 9 and 12 minutes to traverse from Knowles and Capri to the Station,⁴⁹ when Google Maps projects that it will take less than half that time to drive.⁵⁰

This measure would extend Light Rail into the Town with a station just before Hwy 85, integrating it into the Los Gatos Creek Trail. A Vasona Light Rail Station would better support commuters looking to connect with Diridon Station for CalTrain up north, or to BART when they reach the end of the San Jose extension. VTA also provides convenient access to Downtown San Jose without the hassle and expense of parking.

The precise location of this station is currently undetermined, as this project has not been approved.

⁴⁸ The legal paths to the Winchester station all traverse Winchester Blvd itself, which has sharrows and traffic that regularly exceeds 35 mph.

⁴⁹ https://www.vta.org/go/routes/27?direction=WB&day_of_travel=Weekday&rs_origin=1828&rs_destination=5396

⁵⁰

https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Knowles+%26+Capri,+Los+Gatos,+CA+95032/Winchester,+Winchester+Boulevard,+Campbell,+CA/@37.2703021,-121.9659497,5316m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m14!4m13!1m5!1m1!1s0x808e35099f6b17e3:0xce3a961665f4ac4a!2m2!1d-121.9630359!2d37.2617392!1m5!1m1!1s0x808e351e184ebf3f:0x7b5478b8738fd8b!2m2!1d-121.9480321!2d37.2795526!3e0?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDUyOC4wIKXMDS0ASAFOAw%3D%3D

Assessment

In July of 2024, the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission sent a letter to the Town Council advising them to "publicly endorse the acquisition by the Valley Transit Authority (VTA) of the local Union Pacific line."

BTAC supports this measure; it strongly believes that installing a Vasona Light Rail project would provide Los Gatos residents with more effective mobility options regionally that can compete with the convenience of a car. Paired with the cultivation of bus ridership under Measure 4, this measure could substantially reduce car dependency in Los Gatos and, therefore, reduce the negative impacts of beach traffic.

Measure 7: Add bike racks in Pedestrian Daylighting zone

Agencies Involved:

1. Town of Los Gatos

Executive Summary:

Assembly Bill 413 amended the California Vehicle Code to prohibit parking vehicles 15 or 20 feet in front of crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety, depending on physical conditions around the crossing. This concept is often referred to as Daylighting. As a result, Los Gatos has begun painting curbs red to inform drivers of the correct Daylighting distance and assist the Police in enforcing the law. This has led to the loss of some car parking in Town.

We propose adding bike racks to some of the Daylighting zones to make use of the empty pavement, following the [example of the San Francisco MTA Bike Corral Program](#). That would allow us to replace the lost parking with parking for many more bikes. It would also allow the Town to trade empty pavement for bike parking, particularly in places where the sidewalk is too narrow to accommodate parking for many bikes.

This still complies with the spirit of the law, as bikes are significantly smaller and typically hollow, providing minimal visual impediment to pedestrians trying to cross.

Bikes are an efficient way to move people through Town regardless of how heavy traffic is—cyclists can simply ride past the cars. However, there is often a shortage of visible bike parking in the Downtown at convenient locations. It's quite common to see stacks of bikes leaning against trees and parklets.

Bike parking in former daylighting zones is perhaps one of the most visible, convenient, and accessible locations for bike parking. If residents are aware that they can both reach and reliably park their bike at a certain location, they would be more inclined to bike to that location. If Los

Gatos wants more people to choose bikes for general transportation, we should increase the number and visibility of bike racks so that people understand that there will be space for them to securely store their bike while they go about their business.

The BTAC is not aware of explicit programs like this in other cities and town beyond San Francisco's Bike Corral program⁵¹ which allows residents and businesses to request parking spots be replaced with bike racks.

Assessment:

BTAC considers this a cheap and cost-effective way to increase bike ridership in Los Gatos. While the effect of this measure would likely have a small scale, BTAC sees no effectively no downside if this measure is in compliance with state law.

⁵¹ <https://sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/reclaiming-roadway-space/bike-corral/index.html>

Measure 8: Park-and-Ride Facility

Agencies Involved:

1. Town of Los Gatos
2. City of Campbell
3. City of San Jose
4. City of Santa Cruz
5. VTA

Executive Summary:

Park-and-Ride is a type of parking facility located on the outskirts of a city or near major transit hubs where commuters can park their personal vehicles and transfer to public transportation, such as buses, trains or carpools. This reduces the number of cars entering city centers or major highways easing congestion on urban roads. Implementing such Park-and-Ride facilities along Highway 17 for summer visitors to the Santa Cruz Boardwalk would reduce the number of vehicles in Highway 17, thereby easing congestion in Los Gatos roads. Santa Cruz beach visitors would park their vehicles in Park-and-Ride facilities, then ride the Highway 17 Express Bus to Santa Cruz boardwalk. Cities of Los Gatos, Campbell and San Jose would need to collaborate on identifying Park-and-Ride facilities near Highway 17 or transit hubs, and the city of Santa Cruz for bus stops for passenger drop-offs, and VTA for buses.

Heavy summer traffic on Highway 17 toward Santa Cruz often makes direct driving to the Boardwalk slow and stressful. Establishing a public bus service with convenient park-and-ride options in north Los Gatos, Campbell, or San Jose would help alleviate congestion and provide a smoother trip. Below are several parking lots and locations near Highway 17 that could serve as effective Park-and-Ride hubs for this purpose.

Los Gatos:

- Northside Lot (Free Limited Parking)
 - Location: Northeast corner of Highway 9 and Santa Cruz Avenue, Los Gatos.

- Notes: This lot is free but has limited spaces, making it best for early arrivals or smaller-scale operations.
- Little League Field Parking Lot (Miles Ave)
 - Location: Miles Avenue, near University Avenue in Los Gatos.
 - Notes: Suitable for overflow or additional capacity, early arrivals.

Campbell:

- While there are no large, dedicated Park-and-Ride lots directly adjacent to Highway 17 in Campbell, the VTA Light Rail Campbell Station area could serve as a hub. Riders could park in nearby public lots and transfer to a bus service.
- The VTA Light Rail Campbell Station in Campbell is suitable as a park-and-ride hub. Riders could park in nearby public lots and transfer to a bus service.

San Jose (Near Highway 17/Diridon Station):

- Diridon Station Area Parking
 - Location: Multiple large public garages near Diridon Station, including 401 Almaden Blvd, 150 W. San Carlos Street, and 45 N. Market Street.
 - Access: All are within a short drive of Highway 17 and have hundreds to over 1,000 spaces each.
 - Notes: These garages are open 24 hours, with flat rates or maximum daily caps. They are already used for event and transit parking and are close to the existing Santa Cruz Metro bus stop at Diridon Station.
 - Diridon Station is already the main hub for the Santa Cruz Metro Highway 17 Express, which runs directly to downtown Santa Cruz and the Boardwalk area. Using these garages would allow easy transfers to the bus.
 - Diridon Station area garages in San Jose could be the best option for large-scale park-and-ride service due to their high capacity, proximity to Highway 17, and direct connection to existing Santa Cruz Metro bus service.

A table describing the potential sites of this measure are provided below.

Location Summary Table:

Location	City	Capacity/Notes	Highway 17 Access	Parking Fee
Northside Lot (Hwy 9/Santa Cruz Ave)	Los Gatos	Free, limited spaces	Direct	Free
Little League Field (Miles Ave)	Los Gatos	Medium, neighborhood lot	Near Hwy 17	Free
Diridon Station Area Garages	San Jose	Very large, multiple garages	Near Hwy 17/I-280	\$7–\$25 daily
Campbell VTA Station Area	Campbell	Limited, public lots nearby	Near Hwy 17	Varies

Assessment:

These locations would provide convenient access for beachgoers to park and ride a dedicated summer bus service to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, which could help reduce congestion on Highway 17 during peak times. These locations would provide convenient access for beachgoers to park and ride a dedicated summer bus service to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, helping to reduce congestion on Highway 17 during peak times.

Potential benefits include:

- **Traffic Congestion Relief:** Park-and-Ride systems can significantly reduce the number of vehicles on Highway 17 and local streets in Los Gatos, easing congestion especially during peak summer weekends.
- **Environmental Gains:** Fewer cars traveling the full route to the Beach/Boardwalk reduces greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants, contributing to improved air quality and sustainability.
- **Cost Savings:** Commuters can save on fuel, parking fees, and vehicle maintenance by using public transit for part of their journey.
- **Enhanced Public Transit Utilization:** Increased ridership can make public transport more efficient and justify further investment in transit infrastructure.
- **Urban Space Optimization:** Reducing the need for extensive parking near Santa Cruz Beach/Boardwalk frees up valuable land for other uses, such as green spaces or commercial development.

Potential risks include:

- **Little/No Utilization of the Highway 17 Express Bus:** To specifically address Beach Traffic, the strength of this measure relies on drivers using the Highway 17 Express Bus. However, as noted before, this bus is subject to the same traffic conditions as cars. People may simply opt to drive their personal cars to Santa Cruz.
- **Insufficient Agency Participation:** This plan relies on cooperation with other agencies to be successful. While the implementation of this measure does not require every city listed in this measure to participate, creating a feasible and effective Bus-and-Ride network would require a high level of participation from multiple stakeholders.
- **Induced Demand and Urban Sprawl:** Park-and-Ride facilities can encourage more people to drive to the parking areas, potentially increasing overall car use and overcrowding at Santa Cruz Beach/Boardwalk if not carefully managed.
- **Local Traffic and Land Use:** Large parking lots may disrupt local land use, consume valuable real estate, and create localized congestion near the Park-and-Ride site.

- **Cost and Scalability:** If parking fees are set too high, users may bypass the facility and drive directly to the Beach/Boardwalk. If fees are too low, demand may exceed capacity or reduce incentives for alternative transport.

Measure 9: Bicycle-Sharing System

Agencies Involved:

1. Town of Los Gatos

Executive Summary:

Envisioned in this measure is a bicycle-sharing system through the use of rental e-bikes. A rental e-bike is an electric bicycle that can be rented for temporary use by paying a fee, typically by the hour, day or through a subscription plan.

The proposed system might utilize a service like Bay Wheels, the Bay Area's established bike-share program. Users could unlock e-bikes at docking stations via a mobile app, ride to their destination, and park at designated docking stations or public racks for a small fee. Pricing models for these rental e-bike would include single rides, day passes, and monthly memberships, making the service accessible for both occasional visitors and regular commuters. For example, Bay Wheels, operated by Lyft in the Bay Area, offers both docked and hybrid e-bikes. Users unlock bikes via the Lyft or Bay Wheels app, ride, and return them to a docking station or public rack for a small fee. Pricing ranges from \$3.99 per ride to \$150 per year, with discounts for low-income riders and frequent users. The system has expanded to meet demand, with e-bikes proving especially popular for their ease of use and ability to tackle hills.⁵²

⁵² <https://www.lyft.com/bikes/bay-wheels>

Assessment:

BTAC generally views this measure highly favorably. It is compatible with every measure in this report. It also synergizes with infrastructure-oriented measures, including Measures 4, 5, and 6.

This measure would directly address a secondary issue that worsens the effects of beach traffic—Los Gatos has car-oriented infrastructure. This measure would provide a readily available alternative to travel across Town during beach traffic hours for both Los Gatos residents and visitors. The establishment of a bicycle-sharing system in Los Gatos could provide a convenient, eco-friendly alternative to driving during the busiest months, modeled on successful systems like Bay Wheels. Careful planning around bike availability, maintenance, and parking management will be essential to maximize benefits and minimize drawbacks.

If successful, the program could be expanded or integrated with regional transit and bike-share networks for broader impact.

Potential benefits include:

- **Traffic Relief:** E-bikes offer a practical way to bypass summer traffic jams, especially for short-to-medium trips within Los Gatos or to nearby transit hubs.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Reduced car trips mean lower emissions and a smaller carbon footprint.
- **Health & Community:** Encourages physical activity and connects riders with local businesses and attractions, fostering a sense of community.
- **Flexibility & Convenience:** Riders can easily unlock bikes using an app, choose their route, and park at convenient locations, similar to Bay Wheels' model.
- **Affordability:** Rentals are often cheaper for short-term or infrequent use compared to ownership, and pricing can be structured to support low-income users.

- Proven Success: Programs like Bay Wheels demonstrate high usage, especially for e-bikes, which are used three times more often than pedal bikes in the Bay Area.^{53 54}

Potential risks include:

- Availability Issues: High demand during peak times may lead to limited bike availability, frustrating users. This may be addressed by allowing for additional docking stations.
- Maintenance Concerns: Rental bikes may suffer from wear and tear, and prior users' negligence can affect safety and reliability.
- Cumulative Costs: Frequent renters may find costs add up quickly compared to owning a personal e-bike.
- Parking & Geofencing: Free-floating models can create clutter if not managed well, and geofencing may limit where bikes can be parked or ridden.
- Operational Challenges: Ensuring enough docking stations, maintaining the fleet, and enforcing parking rules require ongoing resources and oversight.

⁵³ <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/bay-wheels-ridership-data-19846883.php>

⁵⁴

<https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/bay-wheels-bikeshare-program-to-lower-costs-add-2000-e-bikes-and-new-docking-stations/>

Measure 10: Train to Santa Cruz

Agencies Involved

1. Santa Cruz County
2. Monterey County
3. CalTrain

Executive Summary

Over a century ago, Los Gatos used to be the last water stop for trains heading through the Santa Cruz Mountains.⁵⁵ A number of residents have asked why regional transportation authorities have not revived rail service to Santa Cruz to help share the load with Hwy 17.

The old right-of-way through the mountains is infeasible because, in rough order of impediment, it was replaced with:

- The dirt section of the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Lexington Reservoir
- Parking lots and roads adjacent to University Avenue
- The back half of the Safeway on Santa Cruz Avenue
- Tunnels in various states of decay
- Tunnels that were dynamited closed⁵⁶
- Lexington Reservoir (the site of the town of Alma, before it was flooded to create the Reservoir)

There is also the Union Pacific right-of-way that runs south through Pajaro before turning North into Santa Cruz, though the tracks from Pajaro to Santa Cruz were not maintained for several decades.

Nevertheless, there are trains that are currently planned that can connect Santa Clara County to Santa Cruz.

⁵⁵ <https://www.santacruztrains.com/2017/08/stations-los-gatos.html>

⁵⁶ <https://www.kqed.org/news/11869346/the-story-behind-those-old-train-tunnels-in-the-santa-cruz-mountains>

The BTAC reached out to the City of Santa Cruz in August of 2024 to discuss the possibility of running CalTrain service to Santa Cruz via that right-of-way. A Santa Cruz Transportation Manager informed us about the ZEPRT, and suggested that the terminus in Pajaro could be connected to CalTrain, which currently terminates in Gilroy. They also informed us about the Safe on 17 Task Force⁵⁷, which was not able to find cost-effective ways to improve the throughput on Hwy 17.

At the same time, Monterey County and CalTrain are currently working to extend service to Pajaro,⁵⁸ where the ZEPRT terminates (and further south). This would extend the CalTrans line for residents of Santa Clara County, who can then transfer onto ZEPRT to reach Santa Cruz.

While transferring train services is not as seamless as a single service, the Santa Cruz Transportation Manager pointed out that there were a number of procedural hurdles bringing CalTrain service to Santa Cruz. While running new tunnels through the mountain would likely result in faster service, it would be extremely expensive and disruptive, and would compete for funding with regional projects that could potentially move a lot more people, like High Speed Rail, Bart to San Jose, and a second TransBay Tube.

Assessment

A direct train line from Los Gatos to Santa Cruz is currently unrealistic. However, there are existing projects underway— the connections of CalTrain and ZEPRT will likely happen without the Town of Los Gatos' direct involvement. It is possible that these existing projects could help relieve congestion on Highway 17.

⁵⁷ <https://www.sccrtc.org/meetings/traffic-operations-system-safe-on-17/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.tamcmonterey.org/monterey-county-rail-extension-phase-2-pajaro-watsonville>

Measure 11: Cameras for Gridlock Prevention

Agencies Involved:

1. Town of Los Gatos

Executive Summary:

During times of extreme beach traffic in Los Gatos, streets are often completely clogged, to the point where cars are forced to wait at green lights in order not to block the intersection for other drivers. Occasionally, individuals who are frustrated with traffic will illegally move into the middle of the intersection, blocking it while they wait for the traffic ahead of them to move forward. This prevents vehicles moving perpendicularly from crossing the intersection, creating completely gridlocked conditions on certain intersections in Los Gatos, such as on the intersection of N. Santa Cruz Avenue and Highway 9. With enough gridlocked intersections in a row, traffic can come to a complete standstill as no drivers have any space to move out of the trafficked area.

To prevent this worst-case scenario, BTAC recommends installing Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) over intersections that regularly deal with high amounts of beach traffic, which can be programmed to read the license plate numbers of cars that choose to move forward and block intersections illegally. This ALPR system can automatically send drivers traffic violation tickets via mail, discouraging drivers from forcing their way through clogged intersections and punishing those that create gridlocked conditions on Los Gatos streets.

Assessment: The Town does not currently use automated license plate readers for ticketing on traffic violations. There are local governments in Southern California that do implement these, where they are sometimes referred to as “gridlock cameras.” Oftentimes, these cameras can also be used to track individuals who run red lights, or to track the movements of those who are under criminal investigation. One example of a city closer to Los Gatos that utilizes such cameras is Capitola, near Santa Cruz, where they have been in place since 2005 as part of an explicit effort

to reduce accidents and keep intersections clear.⁵⁹ Whether we have the administrative capacity to mail tickets to these drivers is currently unclear.

Measure 12: Notification on Highway 17 Signs

Agencies Involved:

1. Los Gatos
2. CalTrans

Executive Summary:

This is one of the most frequent suggestions from Los Gatos residents. There are changeable message boards along Highway 17 that are part of the state's Intelligent Transportation System ("ITS"). These message boards could advise drivers to remain on the freeway, warning them that cutting through Los Gatos would not save time and to remain on the highway. Indeed, Los Gatos has previously worked with Caltrans to successfully get a message on the board.

Alternatively, the Town of Los Gatos to display its own signage along Highway 17. The acquisition and installation of these signs would require a capital project. Installing signage along Highway 17 would require a permitting process.

Both of the actions in this measure necessitate coordination with CalTrans.

Assessment:

Even though Caltrans has previously put a message for Los Gatos, it is highly unlikely to do so again. In fact, the Town attempted to do this last summer, but CalTrans denied Los Gatos' request.⁶⁰ The highways are part of the state's transportation system. Tailored messages for local

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<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2017/08/24/capitola-extends-red-light-cameras-on-41st-ave-f-or-two-more-years/amp/>

⁶⁰ Complete Streets and Transportation Commission, Video/Audio, May 9, 2025, Town of Los Gatos, <https://losgatos-ca.municodemeetings.com/bc-cstc/page/complete-streets-and-transportation-commission-2>.

municipalities on message boards along the highway do not comply with its scope of work. It is more realistic for the Town to acquire and apply to display its own signs, which would require permits.

Regardless, BTAC is generally skeptical of this measure. There is currently no data to support that the previous message to advise drivers on the road had a substantial effect on cut-through traffic. It does not address the primary cause of beach traffic, nor the secondary factors that exacerbate the negative effects of beach traffic.

Addendum

Exhibit A (Measure 5):

To get a better idea of how local residents think of the Promenade, the BTAC conducted an informal survey of local Los Gatos residents on June 9th, 2024. BTAC knocked on doors along University Avenue adjacent to the downtown and asked residents the following questions:

1. To travel within the town, how often do you walk versus bike versus drive?
2. How does beach traffic affect your transportation choice?
3. What is your opinion on the previous Promenade? Would you like to see more Promenades in the future?

BTAC knocked on dozens of doors and was able to interview 8 residents who were present in their homes at the time. Broadly speaking, all of the residents drive to varying extents and all of them stated that beach traffic reduced their tendency to drive. During beach traffic hours, residents opt to either walk to a local establishment (e.g. a restaurant) or just stay indoors, dissuaded from venturing outside. To reach a destination within the town, 7 out of 8 residents walked or cycled more than a third of the time.

All but one of the residents viewed the previously held promenade in a very favorable light; the one who did not was indifferent. BTAC told 3 of interviewees that we were contemplating making the promenade a permanent feature in town, and, for all 3 interviewees, the response to that proposal was excited and positive.

This survey indicates that previously held promenades had a positive local effect on some residents along University Ave. Residents did not complain of any negative effects. To reiterate, this survey is informal and not exhaustive. Nevertheless, the Promenades have been greeted with a largely positive reception by the residents of the Town. A substantial proportion of residents walk or bike to travel within town, and a Promenade would help further encourage this.

Our proposal suggests closing the Southbound Wood Road entrance to Highway 17; this is done to remove the pressure of traffic traveling through University Avenue to reach 17. We intend to leave the Northbound Exit from 17 into Downtown open for the convenience of our neighbors in the Mountains. CalTrans has previously opposed closing any part of Wood Road, so we may have to contemplate a variety of options for where the promenade would end.

Exhibit B (Unreleased Beach Traffic Ad Hoc Committee Survey):

BTAC designed a basic survey form for dissemination among Los Gatos residents through the Town's mailing list. However, the scheduled time of its release conflicted with the release of a quality of service survey. This survey remains unreleased.

Link to the survey is here: <https://forms.gle/arB18mi44NcHZSox9>

VTA Bus Pass Ad Hoc Committee Final Report

Los Gatos Complete Streets and Transportation Commission

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Glossary

Terms and concepts used throughout this report can be found in the table below. Note some of these terms that are particular to this report.

Term	Definition
Per-Ride Model	A category of programs where the Town of Los Gatos pays the VTA for each individual bus ride for a selected population. Every month, the Town of Los Gatos will be billed for every ride covered by the program.
Subscription Model	A category of programs where the Town of Los Gatos pays the VTA on a Per-Rider basis. Every month, the Town of Los Gatos will be billed for every ride.
Clipper	Clipper is an all-in-one touchless payment service for public transit services throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.
Pilot Program	A small-scale implementation to prove the viability of a longer term project.
Ride & Taste LG	An existing program to introduce Los Gatos' bus system to seniors in Los Gatos through complimentary bus rides and lunches.
VT A	Shorthand for "Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority," a special district that provides public transportation services throughout Santa Clara County.
Measure B	<p>2016 Measure B, a 30-year, half-cent countywide sales tax to enhance transit, highways, expressways and active transportation (bicycles, pedestrians and complete streets). Measure B is a countywide sales tax that provides a local revenue source that can be leveraged to help obtain additional funds through regional, state and federal fund sources. It has been previously used to fund the 2019 School Bus Pilot Program.</p> <p>This is a potential source of funding for a bus pilot program in Los Gatos.</p>
Ridership	The number of distinct riders using a particular form of public transportation over a defined period of time.
Fare	The cost of accessing a transportation service. Single ride fares are

	the price for one ride for a single passenger. Some fares operate on a periodic basis. For example, VTA has a monthly fare, where riders can pay a fixed cost to access unlimited transit services for a given month.
SmartPass	SmartPass is an annual subscription model where all of the members of an institution are provided access to VTA's transportation network. In this case, such a subscription model is cheaper than if each individual was charged for each pass.
Paper/Flash Pass	<p>The Paper/Flash Pass is a monthly subscription model where a chosen institution is charged with distributing passes to a defined population.</p> <p>At the start of a given period, VTA would provide a set number of Paper/Flash passes to an organization. Then, the organization would distribute these passes to its target population. The Town would be charged every month for each pass that was distributed. At the end of the month, any pass not distributed or used could be returned and, therefore, not be billed to the Town of Los Gatos.</p>
S/D/M	A category of riders who receive discounted fares from VTA. Stands for "Senior/Disabled/Medicare."
Los Gatos-Saratoga Union School District	A school district responsible for operating two schools: Los Gatos High School and Saratoga High School.
LGHS	An acronym for "Los Gatos High School"

Overview

In 2024, the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission (CSTC) established the VTA Bus Pass Ad Hoc Committee (VBPAC). The purpose of the VBPAC is to investigate and evaluate potential ways for the town to launch a bus pass pilot program for residents of Los Gatos. Such a program would enable Los Gatos residents (specifically students, school staff, and/or seniors) to ride the bus free of charge at the point of service. The VBPAC focused primarily on discerning the logistical requirements of launching and administering such a program. There are three such potential programs included in this report, one for Los Gatos High School and two for Los Gatos senior residents.

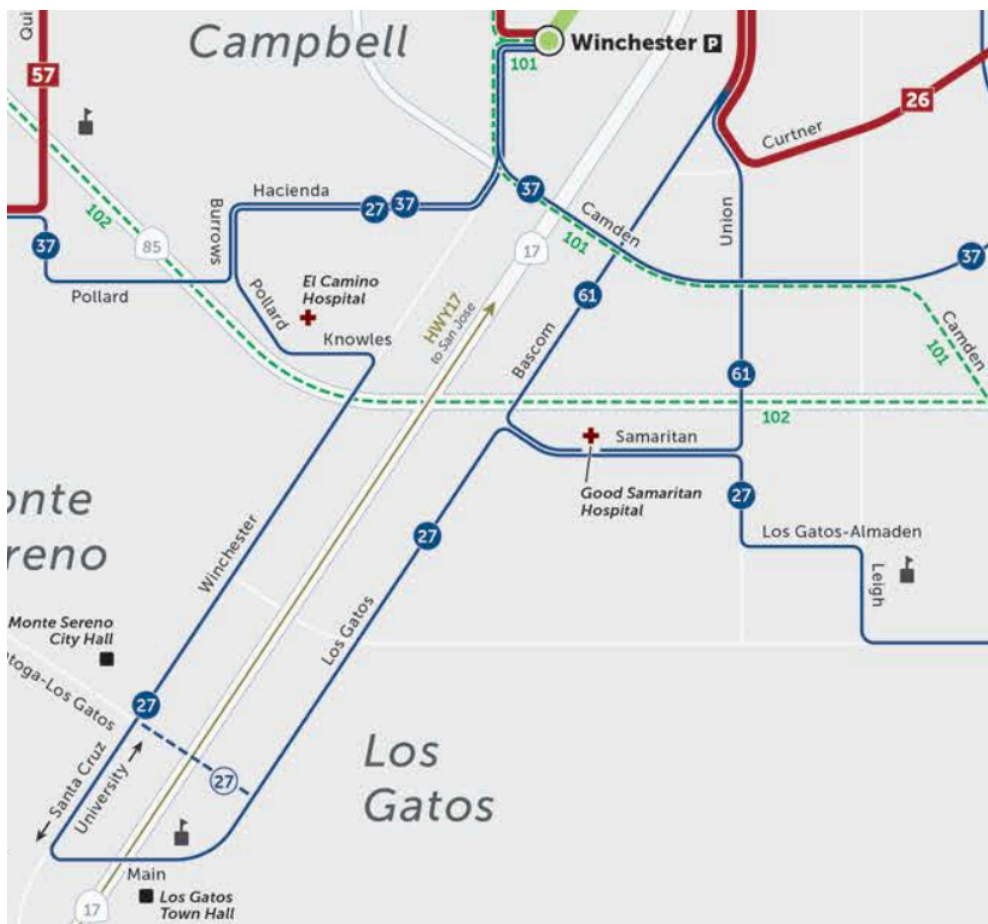
The viability of these policy initiatives has been reviewed by various members of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) leadership, including a board member, a coordinator, a manager, a director, and an executive. Since the inception of the VBPAC, its members have had five separate conversations with VTA's leadership to discuss viable policies. Ultimately, these conversations with VTA were informative in nature and contained no formal commitments from either the Town of Los Gatos or the VTA.

While this report primarily focuses on bus travel, the policies presented largely include access to bus and light rail services across all of Santa Clara County. VBPAC dedicated several months to find a viable way to subsidize and promote only bus travel within the Town limits through a centralized payment mechanism. Such a payment mechanism would entail distributing cards where expenses would be charged directly to the Town. However, in its conversations with VTA, VBPAC discovered that such a centralized payment system only exists in variations of VTA's existing programs, specifically its SmartPass and Paper/Flash Passes. These existing programs cannot be restricted to specific bus stops or specific modes of transportation. Therefore, to launch any of the pilots in this report, the Town would need to cover other forms of transportation as well.

Section 1: The Case for a VTA Bus Pass

Section 1.1: Current Conditions of Bus Ridership in Los Gatos

- Los Gatos residents use a variety of transportation methods to commute to, from, and around Los Gatos. These methods frequently include walking and biking for shorter distances. For longer distances, residents overwhelmingly drive in automobiles. Public transportation services are limited in Los Gatos. The Town's singular form of public transportation is its bus system. The primary lines that operate in Los Gatos are the 27 and 37 Bus Lines, the latter running along the Los Gatos-Campbell border.¹



¹ The 61 Line runs primarily and most frequently through San Jose. Since this report largely concerns travel within Los Gatos, discussion of the 61 is limited in this report.

- 2024 Bus ridership and fare revenues are shown in the table below. Revenue is from cash and cash-equivalent fares only; ridership based on farebox and clipper data, not taken from on-board automated passenger count data.²

Los Gatos Bus Routes								
CY2024 Clipper & Farebox - Ridership & Revenue								
CLIPPER								
Route	Youth Ridership	Adult Ridership	S/D/M Ridership	Ridership Total	Youth Revenue	Adult Revenue	S/D/M Revenue	Revenue Total
27 Total	3,503	35,100	5,520	44,123	\$ 4,378.75	\$ 87,104.25	\$ 5,520.00	\$ 97,003.00
37 Total	342	5,775	1,020	7,137	\$ 427.50	\$ 14,374.25	\$ 1,020.00	\$ 15,821.75
Total	3,845	40,875	6,540	51,260	\$ 4,806.25	\$ 101,478.50	\$ 6,540.00	\$ 112,824.75
FAREBOX								
Route	Youth Ridership	Adult Ridership	S/D/M Ridership	Ridership Total	Youth Revenue	Adult Revenue	S/D/M Revenue	Revenue Total
27 Total	21,777	60,405	65,330	147,512	\$ 14,977.13	\$ 41,317.33	\$ 44,708.06	\$ 101,002.52
37 Total	6,057	14,141	13,864	21,770	\$ 1,786.19	\$ 3,910.46	\$ 3,575.36	\$ 9,272.01
Total	27,834	74,546	79,194	169,282	\$ 16,763.33	\$ 45,227.79	\$ 48,283.42	\$ 110,274.53
TOTAL								
Route	Youth Ridership	Adult Ridership	S/D/M Ridership	Ridership Total	Youth Revenue	Adult Revenue	S/D/M Revenue	Revenue Total
27 Total	25,280	95,505	70,850	191,635	\$ 19,355.88	\$ 128,421.58	\$ 50,228.06	\$ 198,005.52
37 Total	6,691	22,841	15,344	28,907	\$ 2,213.69	\$ 18,284.71	\$ 4,595.36	\$ 25,093.76
Grand Total	31,971	118,346	86,194	220,542	\$ 21,569.58	\$ 146,706.29	\$ 54,823.42	\$ 223,099.28

- Cumulatively, the 27 and 37 lines facilitated approximately 220,000 total rides in 2024,³ or an average of 602 rides daily.⁴ Precise figures of other forms of transportation are unknown, as exhaustive data for volumes of bicycle, pedestrian, and car traffic for the entire town does not exist. However, in comparison to Los Gatos' population of 32,216, these 602 rides represent low ridership. Assuming that all daily rides originate from residents of Los Gatos and a single round trip per day, approximately 1% of residents use the bus daily, or 1 in 100 residents.⁵

² This table was provided during correspondence with VTA. These dollar amounts do not include revenue from VTA Monthly Passes or Smart Passes.

³ The calculation of total rides is derived from dividing the total revenue generated for each age group divided by their respective price per single ride. The fare for adults is \$2.50, for youth \$1.25, and for S/D/M (Senior/Disabled/Medicare) \$1.00. This figure includes both residents and non-residents of Los Gatos.

⁴ The calculation of daily rides is the calculated number of annual rides divided by 365. This calculation notably does not include days when bus service has been reduced in Los Gatos. For example, on beach traffic weekends, service on the 27 Line is typically reduced and re-directed away from the Downtown.

⁵ This is the average daily number of rides divided by 2. Note that this is, at best, an approximation. VTA does not have existing data on the number of distinct bus riders that use its services. Additionally, this estimate is likely an overestimation, since it includes non-Los Gatos residents.

- In the table above, there are also notable differences in bus utilization between different age cohorts. By far the largest demographic of bus fares are generated from adults, aged 18-64. Adults generate over 53% of all bus rides in Los Gatos. S/D/M (Seniors/Disabled/Medicare) generate approximately 39% of bus fares.⁶ By far the lowest revenue is generated from Youth riders, comprising the remaining 8% of all bus fares. In comparison, 23.6% of Los Gatos' population are youth. While a portion in the youth demographic may be too young to independently ride the bus, there does seem to exist an underrepresentation of bus utilization among the youth. For example, a recent survey conducted at Los Gatos High School shows that only 8 out of 449 surveyed students took the bus to school as their primary mode of transportation, or less than 2% of LGHS students.⁷

Section 1.2: The Benefits of Increasing Bus Ridership

- The primary purpose of distributing a publicly funded VTA Bus Pass is to bolster bus ridership in Los Gatos. There are a number of benefits associated with increasing bus ridership, listed below.
- **Benefit 1: Increasing bus utilization reduces traffic congestion.** Cars require far more space per passenger than other forms of transportation, including buses. The road space requirements for cars, bicycles, and buses are visualized in the graphic below.⁸ As Los Gatos' population grows due to recent and future expected development to meet its housing needs under state law, it will be increasingly necessary to accommodate its growing population. Additionally, the general population of neighboring municipalities is also expected to increase. A growing population necessitates a corresponding increase in services, which requires the transportation of more goods, services, and labor. To ensure that traffic conditions do not worsen in Los Gatos over time, the Town of Los Gatos will

⁶ We did not receive a dataset that distinguished between seniors, riders with disabilities, and riders with Medicare.

⁷ During a Complete Streets and Transportation Commission meeting on May 9th, 2025, Youth Commissioner Elijah Ashegian presented the results of a survey of students from Los Gatos High School, conducted by the LGHS Green Team. The school allocated 10 minutes for students to fill out a survey during one sixth period. After the Commission meeting, Complete Streets and Transportation Commissioner Jeff Suzuki reviewed the survey results to derive this figure.

⁸ Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative. *Road Space Requirements*. Infographic. September 2021. <https://transformative-mobility.org/multimedia/road-space-requirements/>.

need to increase its overall capacity to move *people*, not only cars. Finally, traffic congestion brings forth concerns of community safety, particularly from wildfires and health emergencies. There is the persistent challenge of ensuring that there are efficient and effective routes of evacuation. Finally, reducing traffic congestion reduces air and noise pollution, which would improve the quality of life for people in Downtown.

Road Space Requirements

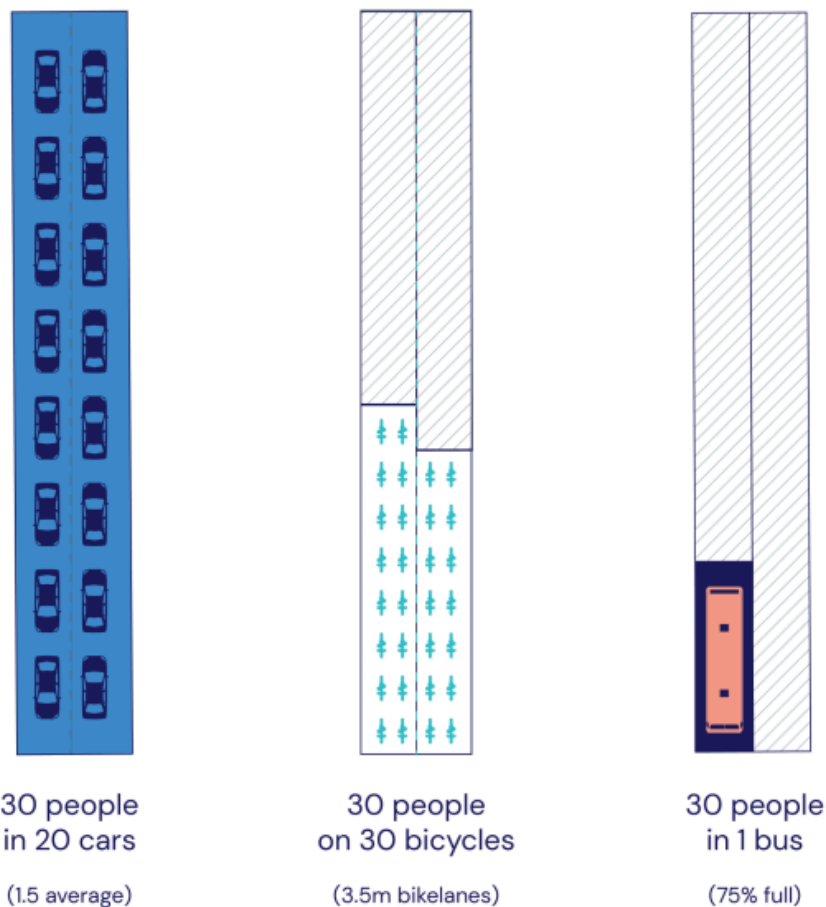


Illustration based on: Petersen (2004, p.8). Sustainable Transport: A Sourcebook for Policy-makers in Developing Cities, Module 2a, Land Use Planning and Urban Transport, GIZ. https://utp.org/files/content/documents/resources/A_Sourcebook/SB2_Land-Use-Planning-and-Demand-Management/GIZ_UTP_SB2a-Land-use-Planning-and-Urban-Transport_EN.pdf (accessed: 2009/2018)

tumi @TUMInitiative
transformative-mobility.org

- **Benefit 2: For the parents/guardians of students, buses can save time and effort in driving their children to school.** Additionally, for families that do not live near a bus

stop, the reduced congestion from increased bus utilization would reduce congestion, saving them time as well. In fact, some parents and students have publicly expressed their support for bus services in Los Gatos. Examples include:

- In January 2019, Los Gatos launched an 18-month School Bus Pilot Program. Before its discontinuation due to prohibitive costs for relatively low ridership, the Town Council received multiple comments voicing their support for preserving the program. One such written comment said, “[f]or those of us who live in the mountains, have households with either two working parents with no flexibility in our schedules, or a single parent who may work in Santa Cruz Co., having bus service has been a godsend. It has alleviated stress, saved jobs, allowed us to have consistency and stability in our schedules without having to scramble to find rides for our children, worry about sick days and the other children we’re leaving stranded when we have to stay home, or imposing on friends whose homes at which we can drop our kids off, often an hour+ early so we can get to work on time. [...] The bus service has also allowed us to earn more so we can afford to pay for this vital service. For those of us that do not have the wherewithal to hire nannies or au pairs or chauffeurs, or hire Uber-type drivers on a daily basis[,] having a community bus is affordable, vital and necessary.”⁹
- Another public comment for the 2019 School Bus Pilot Program provided the following perspective: “This service has extremely helped our quality of life. While I understand parents are responsible for transporting their child to school, I find that the traffic in Los Gatos causes extreme duress as it can take between 40 minutes to an hour to drive one way. And with fulltime work, it was nice to have our children go home after school via the bus. I worry about what my daughter will do after school, as there are no activities that she can participate in- and the after school club house doesn't exist anymore. My husband and I know at 12 she can hang out at the public library until we get off of work, or she can take three buses to get to my work. There is no doubt that her quality of life will change. She has special needs (has an IEP), and I'm concerned about her ability to be

⁹ Town of Los Gatos, Submitted Written Comments, March 2, 2020, <https://mccmeetingspublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/losgatos-meet-21e67aee9f1b472a8c5b47e7a3077393/ITEM-Attachment-009-6aae0450042c4ce9bf8fbb89496337db.pdf>.

responsible enough to be on her own for four hours in town or to ride three buses to get to San Jose where I work. I understand that this is not the town's issue, but I wanted to let you know the real-life ramifications that result in this change.”

- ¹⁰In an editorial from El Gato News, the student newspaper for Los Gatos High School, students who rode the VTA bus to school cited benefits. One senior noted that “taking public transit to and from school beginning freshman year enabled greater independence and helped lighten her parents’ load.” A junior cited buses as his “main form of transportation from school, to work, and to weekend guard rehearsals” and argued that if more people took the bus, it would help alleviate traffic and parking issues.¹¹

- **Benefit 3: A Bus Pilot Program can help meet the transportation needs of low-income residents.** Transportation costs are a major expense, especially for low-income households. Ensuring accessible transportation services for everyone in Los Gatos provides a layer of financial security that allows them to continue to live and work in Los Gatos. The costs of owning and using a personal car should not be understated. According to a paper published by the American Public Transportation Association in 2023, the costs associated with car ownership have increased substantially in recent years. Since 2020, the cost of purchasing a new car has increased by 30%, an old car by 40%, and gasoline by 25%.¹² Meanwhile, the costs associated with the use of public transit have not increased, which is of particular relevance to the Town of Los Gatos as the entity billed for this program.
- **Benefit 4: Increasing ridership in Los Gatos would increase the knowledge of transportation systems locally and regionally.** Los Gatos is known as a high-income neighborhood. For many families with students, when a minor comes of legal age to operate a car, it is common for parents to provide a car for them, often by purchasing an

¹⁰ Town of Los Gatos, Submitted Written Comments, March 2, 2020, <https://mccmeetingspublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/losgatos-meet-21e67aee9f1b472a8c5b47e7a3077393/ITEM-Attachment-009-6aae0450042c4ce9bf8fbb89496337db.pdf>.

¹¹ Complete Streets and Transportation Commission, Meeting Audio Recording, May 9, 2024, audio, Town of Los Gatos, <https://losgatos-ca.municodemeetings.com/bc-cstc/page/complete-streets-and-transportation-commission-2>.

¹² American Public Transportation Association, *Transit Savings Grow as Auto Costs and Gas Prices Increase*, policy brief, September 2023, <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/APTA-POLICY-BRIEF-Transit-Savings-09.27.2023.pdf>.

additional car. As recent survey results from Los Gatos High School students show, many high school students transition to driving during the latter two years of high school, which has a direct effect on the commuting behavior to and from school. Comparing students from 9th/10th with 11th/12th grade, rates of car ridership without carpooling increase from 56% to 64%, while other modes of transportation decrease from, seen in the table below:¹³

	9th-10th	9th-10th (%)	11th-12th	11th-12th (%)
Non-Family Car	115	44%	69	37%
Family Car	149	56%	116	63%
Total Students in Cohort	264	100%	185	100%

Many residents in Los Gatos possess little to no knowledge of the locations of bus stops and routes—such knowledge is not strictly necessary for many households. However, the general distribution of free bus passes would incentivize many households to research the bus system and see how it could benefit them. Considering that people often both “learn by doing” and “do by learning,” a pilot program would help “prime the pump” as new riders are issued a free bus pass with minimal effort in registration. In other words, people who would otherwise never attempt to spend the time to learn would be incentivized to try public transportation for the first time. Naturally, those who use the bus system often find that it connects to other transportation services that exist outside of town, including bus services and light rail in other municipalities, enabling households to commute regionally without cars. For the youth, learning how to navigate public transit systems is a valuable skill that they retain as adults, especially if traveling by car is unavailable. Finally, a more informed, aware, and invested population would be more effectively able to advocate for improvements to its public transit system.

- **Benefit 5: Facilitates the Expansion of Public Transportation Services in Los Gatos.**

A VTA Bus Pass Pilot Program would be a quick and relatively inexpensive way to

¹³ During the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission meeting on May 9th, 2025, Youth Commissioner Elijah Ashegian presented the results of a survey of students from Los Gatos High School. After the meeting, Complete Streets and Transportation Commissioner Jeff Suzuki reviewed the survey results to derive these numbers from the survey results. “Non-Family Car” transportation includes students who primarily walk, bike, scoot, skate, or bus to school. Family car transportation includes the student driving to school or the parent of a student driving to school.

incorporate hundreds, if not thousands, of Los Gatos individuals and families into the public transit system, many for the first time. If one or both of the Pilot Programs in this report prove to be successful, it would build a strong base of public transit users in Los Gatos, which would help to encourage the expansion of public transit services from VTA that Los Gatos needs to reduce traffic and meet the transportation demands of our growing population. Increasing bus ridership could also warrant improvements in our bus system, as increased ridership would warrant increasing bus frequency and installing bus-specific infrastructure, making existing lines faster and more convenient. Additionally, higher ridership could also warrant an expansion in the geographic range of bus services to other parts of Los Gatos, for example by bringing the buses back to the Town's mountain communities. Cultivating bus ridership would make larger and more ambitious projects feasible—for example, the Bus-Bike Boulevard proposal detailed in the Beach Traffic Ad-Hoc Committee's report published on June 6th, 2025 (included in the same agenda packet as this report), or the proposed Vasona Light Rail extension. Rather than entering a public transit "death spiral," as it has been referred to in one Town Council meeting,¹⁴ the Town can take proactive steps to spur demand to foster necessary and more attractive improvements to its public transit system.

- **Benefit 6: A Bus Pilot Program can help meet the transportation needs of Los Gatos' senior population.** Los Gatos seniors make up approximately 20.1% of the Town's population, many of whom would benefit greatly from the mobility that increased public transit access provides. As driving becomes more difficult as seniors age, public transit access may become an essential service for them, allowing many to maintain their independence for a longer period of time. According to the VTA Senior Mobility Guide, "[A]ll VTA buses are equipped with lifts or ramps to assist those who use mobility devices or have difficulty with steps. Full-size buses are equipped with a kneeling feature which lowers the front of the bus easing the first step when boarding. Light rail platforms are level to the train, allowing riders to easily board the light rail train. All buses and light rail trains automatically announce major transfer points, intersections and destinations;

¹⁴ Penner, Drew , "VTA Moves Weekend Bus Route Further Away from Downtown," Los Gatan, February 23, 2023, <https://losgatan.com/vta-moves-weekend-bus-route-further-away-from-downtown/>.

information is also displayed on electronic message boards inside the vehicle.”¹⁵ These measures make public transportation more accessible for many seniors. Finally, many lower-income seniors, many of whom are likely to be on fixed incomes, would benefit from the savings that come from utilizing public transit, forgoing the costs associated with car ownership.

Section 1.3: Historical and Ongoing Initiatives to Increase Bus Utilization

In the last 10 years, there have been two major initiatives to increase bus utilization in Los Gatos:

- School Bus Pilot Program (2019 - 2020)
- Ride and Taste LG Program (2023 - Present)

School Bus Pilot Program (January 2019 - February 2020):

- The Los Gatos School Bus Pilot Program was originally introduced to the Town Council as an 18-month pilot program in September 2018. The program was proposed in order to help address school-related traffic congestion on several corridors near Los Gatos schools, including Los Gatos Boulevard, East Main Street, South Santa Cruz Avenue, Blossom Hill Road, Shannon Road, Highway 9, and Highway 17.¹⁶ Additionally, the Pilot Program served the Mountain community. Ultimately, the School Bus Pilot Program was implemented in January 2019, utilizing a private contracted company called “Student Transportation of America” (STA). The School Bus Pilot Program implemented two to three custom routes over the course of its existence, each of which had one designated pick-up and drop-off time for each location on the route, before and after school.
- Funding was proposed to have come from three sources:¹⁷
 1. Firstly, from fares paid by parents of the children using the bus service. Each family could enroll their children in the program for \$350 per year.

¹⁵ Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, *Senior Mobility Guide*, July 2023, p. 4, https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/Senior_ENG_Final_2022_0.pdf.

¹⁶ Town of Los Gatos, Town Council Agenda Packet, September 18, 2018, p. 214, <https://d3n9y02raazwpg.cloudfront.net/losgatos/39976437-36cd-4870-aa5d-dbb8136d8ac9-f104c635-5485-42d8-b79c-acfdde6444e2-1537222956.pdf>. “School Bus Pilot Initial Agenda Packet” in subsequent footnotes.

¹⁷ School Bus Pilot Initial Agenda Packet, p. 229.

2. Secondly, from competitive funding sources such as from the Santa Clara County 2016 Measure B and from other grants the School Bus Pilot Program could qualify for.
 3. Thirdly, from additional Town subsidies coming directly from the Town's budget.
- In actuality, besides subscription funding from the parents (which was only ever expected to pay for ~14% of the total cost of the Pilot Program over two years¹⁸), the town was only able to secure external funding through a Transportation Fund for Clean Air grant. Measure B funding had not materialized despite the Town Staff's hopes, leaving the Town responsible for \$375,000 in ongoing costs (\$90,000 of which were staff costs and \$285,000 of which were service contract costs).¹⁹
 - In February 2020, the Town Staff recommended that the City Council let the School Bus Pilot Program expire at the end of the fiscal year 2019/20. Shortly afterwards, in March 2020, Los Gatos school districts closed down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, effectively ending the School Bus Pilot Program.
 - According to the Town Staff, the program was very well-received by the families who used the service, and many residents requested that the Town reconsider its decision to shut down the School Bus Pilot Program. However, bus ridership as a percentage of subscriptions remained low throughout the duration of the program (~50%, compared to the Year 2 target of 65%).²⁰ A survey conducted in the Spring of 2019 asked program participants to describe the primary reason why their child did not ride on the bus on a particular day—the top reason provided was that their child had before or after school activities, or other schedule conflicts such as doctor's appointments, that prevented them from taking the bus. Another major reason for low ridership described by the Staff was the longer travel time taken by the bus compared to driving; parents often drove their children to school in order to allow them to get more sleep in the morning. Anecdotal evidence noted by the Town Staff also suggested that many parents used the bus as a "back-up option" for transportation, leading to naturally lower actual ridership compared

¹⁸ School Bus Pilot Initial Agenda Packet, p. 228.

¹⁹ Town of Los Gatos, *COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT*, February 26, 2020, pp. 4-5, <https://mccmeetingspublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/losgatos-meet-21e67aee9f1b472a8c5b47e7a3077393/ITEM-Attachment-009-6aae0450042c4ce9bf8fbb89496337db.pdf>. "School Bus Pilot Termination" in subsequent footnotes.

²⁰ "School Bus Pilot Termination", p. 2.

to the number of active subscriptions.²¹ Ridership was considered one of the most important measures of the program's success, as the original goal of the program was to reduce school traffic congestion on road corridors near the schools. Ultimately, the Town Staff judged the program to be cost-ineffective for the Town as a way to reduce school traffic.

- In other words, the major reasons for the School Bus Pilot Program's ultimate failure were in its inconvenience for a majority of the ridership compared to driving and in its cost-inefficiency, which put a significant strain on the Town's budget. VBPAC's proposed VTA Bus Pass Pilot Programs, to be discussed in Section 2 of this report, address both of these problems directly, by providing a more versatile and geographically broader service for a lower cost to the Town of Los Gatos.

Ride and Taste LG Program (2023):

- The Town of Los Gatos facilitated the creation of the "Ride and Taste LG" program, which remains in operation. In response to the 2023 Senior Road Map, a community task force formed from a segment of the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission. The task force has continued to focus on orienting seniors toward VTA transportation options in and around town.
- The task force is currently in its second year of offering bimonthly "Ride & Taste LG" events involving Los Gatos' highest ridership bus line: the 27. VTA provides an orientation with Outreach Coordinator Menominee Boyd, who in turn provides each participant with a free bus token and bus schedule. Specified by VTA, the maximum allowable number of participants for each event is 10, translating to 60 people annually. The Los Gatos Recreation Department provides a venue and publicizes the event within its 55+ program. Before each orientation, volunteers assist seniors in completing a senior Clipper Card application.
- Next, the Community Coordinator provides a 20-minute orientation at the Senior Center, followed by further orientation at the bus stop. Then, participants ride together to a local restaurant, socialize, and enjoy a meal sponsored by the Los Gatos Thrives Foundation. The sponsored meals cost up to \$30 each. After the meal, any participant who's applied

²¹ "School Bus Pilot Termination", pp. 3-4.

for, or already has their own senior Clipper card is eligible to win a \$25 Clipper Card in a raffle, paid for by the Los Gatos Thrives Foundation. After the raffle, participants complete an evaluation form and are presented with the option to visit nearby stores before riding back to the Senior Center on the 27 bus line. The program is designed to be beneficial for all involved, as Los Gatos seniors learn how to navigate Los Gatos' local bus system, patronize local businesses, and meet others in the community.

Section 2: Potential Pilot Programs for Los Gatos

Contained in this report are potential pilot programs targeting two high-priority populations in Los Gatos: students and seniors.²²

For students, this report presents an **LGHS VTA Pass Pilot Program**. All students and staff are issued a card that enables them to utilize VTA's transportation network for free at the point of service. Students may use this pass as long as they are enrolled in the school.

For seniors, this report presents a **Senior VTA Pass Pilot Program**. The target population is residents 65 years or older. Seniors in Los Gatos would be able to enroll for a Flash/Paper Pass that would enable them to travel on buses for free. Unlike the student program, all eligible users are not concentrated in a single location at specific and predictable times. Therefore, the public promotion of this program will be necessary by the Town of Los Gatos and VTA.

²² There is an additional opportunity to expand this latter group to include those with disabilities and/or medicare in accordance with VTA's own categorization.

Section 2.1: LGHS VTA Pass Pilot Program

Executive Summary:

The LGHS VTA Pass Pilot Program involves enrolling the entirety of LGHS' students and staff for VTA's SmartPass. SmartPass is an annual subscription model where all of the members of an institution are provided access to VTA's transportation network.²³ In this case, such a subscription model is cheaper than if each individual was charged with each pass. In other words, the Town would purchase VTA passes in bulk for students and staff of Los Gatos High School. The SmartPass would guarantee access to VTA buses and light rail, including routes and stops from outside of town.

Under its existing fare policy, the SmartPass program has historically served collegiate, corporate, and not-for-profit institutions. This does not include high schools. However, in VBPAC's conversations with VTA, the latter expressed a willingness to expand this program under a 6-month pilot to LGHS at the California Community College rate of \$20 per member annually. For comparison, the cost of a monthly pass for a single youth rider is \$35 per month, or \$385 annually.²⁴ The cost of a monthly pass for a single adult is \$90 per month (excluding Express Buses), or \$990 annually. This 6 month period, as defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is the time limit for this initial period. If the VTA Pass Pilot Program began on August 13th, 2026, this pilot would end on February 13, 2027. Afterwards, continuation of this VTA Pass Program would necessitate a fare policy change and Title VI Fare Equity Analysis within VTA.

From the most recent estimates, the current student population at LGHS is 1,907 students.²⁵ According to LGHS' staff directory page, there are currently 148 staff members employed at

²³ Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. *SmartPass*. Accessed June 4, 2025.
<https://www.vta.org/go/fares/smartpass>.

²⁴ The cost of 12 months at the monthly rate and the annual rate are different.

²⁵ Los Gatos High School. *School Profile 2024–2025*. Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District. Accessed June 4, 2025.
https://lgsuhdsorg.finaisite.com/uploaded/Los_Gatos_HS/LGHS_School_Profile_2024-2025.pdf.

LGHS.²⁶ Therefore, the target population would include 2,054 students and staff. Assuming the California Community College rate of \$20.00 per member, the estimated cost of acquiring a VTA SmartPass for LGHS would equate to \$41,080 per year. Due to the 6-month limit under VTA's existing fare policy, the initial cost would be \$20,540 for 6 months. The ability to extend the duration of this program would be dependent on decisions from VTA.

Potential Advantages:

- **Little to No Staff Costs:** There would be no effective need for the Town to directly administrate elements of the program aside from providing funds for the program. For reference, Los Gatos' 2019 School Bus Pilot Program had a projected annual cost of \$375,000 at its termination, approximately \$90,000 of those costs associated with staff.²⁷
- **Ease of Implementation:** The target population of this program can be expected to appear at predictable times, facilitating the distribution of cards from a centralized location. For students, cards can be distributed during class (e.g. student registration or 1st period).
- **Cost Efficiency:** A VTA SmartPass program for LGHS is projected to cost \$41,080 per year. If every student were enrolled in VTA's monthly pass program instead, the collective annualized cost would be \$800,940, or \$133,490 over 6 months. If every staff member were enrolled, the annualized collective cost for staff would be \$159,840, or \$79,920 over 6 months. In other words, the Town of Los Gatos would pay \$41,080 annualized for over a million dollars' worth of coverage. This is a bargain.
- **Broad Services:** A VTA SmartPass guarantees access to VTA buses and light rail, including routes and stops from outside of town. This access to the broader transportation network would particularly benefit staff and students who live outside of the borders of Los Gatos. This would also benefit staff and students who have travel needs outside of Los Gatos, as their cards would be active outside of operational hours and the school year.

²⁶ Los Gatos High School. *Staff Directory*. Accessed June 4, 2025.
<https://www.lghs.net/about-us/staff-directory>.

²⁷ Town of Los Gatos, *COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT*, February 26, 2020, p. 5,
<https://mccmeetingspublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/losgatos-meet-21e67aee9f1b472a8c5b47e7a3077393/ITEM-Attachment-009-6aae0450042c4ce9bf8fbb89496337db.pdf>.

- **Achieves the Aforementioned Benefits stated in Section 1.2**, including reduced congestion, removed/reduced commute times for parent-student drop offs, satisfaction of transportation needs of low-income residents and staff, and incentives for program participants to learn the Town and region’s transportation network. Lastly, this pilot program can help cultivate a base of public transit users in Los Gatos, which could warrant the expansion and improvement of the Town’s public transit services in the future.

Potential Risk:

- **Low Utilization.** If utilization of public transportation services does not increase substantially at LGHS, the benefits of a SmartPass program may not justify its costs after the initial 6-month period. During its meetings with VTA, VBPAC expressed concerns of a potential risk: that the Town of Los Gatos may pay more for this subscription than for a Per-Ride Model, where the Town pays for single ride fares through this card. For example, if only 38 students (2% of the student population) rode VTA buses to and from school during this pilot program duration, the cost of their single ride bus fares would be \$10,118.64.²⁸ This Per-Ride Model would have a substantially lower cost than the \$20,540 SmartPass cost estimate. In other words, if use of public transportation does not increase sufficiently, Los Gatos may “overpay” for its rides if transit utilization is low during the pilot program duration.
 - **Alternative Potential Policy Option to Address this Potential Risk:**
 - While VTA does not have an existing product with a centralized payment mechanism that has the form of a Per-Ride Model instead of a SmartPass Model, VTA may be able to launch a fare pilot program that lasts a maximum of 6 months, as defined by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Any post-pilot efforts by VTA would require a VTA fare policy change and Title VI Fare Equity Analysis. At the end of this 6-month period, VTA would bill the Town for any rides taken during the period. If

²⁸ Hypothetical Cost = (1,902 students * 0.02) * (2 rides/day) * (185 - 52 days). There are 185 total days between August 13th, 2026 and February 13th, 2027. 52 weekend days and 14 days when school is not in session during this period. As mentioned before, 2% is the approximate bus ridership rate among Los Gatos students.

the cost of this ridership is higher than the cost of the SmartPass program for 6 months (\$20,540), then Los Gatos would instead pay the cost of the SmartPass program.

- VTA advised VBPAC that the administrative efforts to review monthly ridership, cost-benefit analysis, card administration, and flexible billing/invoice during this 6-month pilot may be too cumbersome. This would require substantial staff time and resources from both the Town and VTA to review and transition between two pilot programs. As a result, VBPAC advises against the implementation of this alternative policy.

Overall Evaluation:

- VBPAC considers this one of the most economical and potentially impactful funding opportunities possible. Its potential benefits justify its costs. It is possible that Measure B could be a funding source.
- Originally, VBPAC desired for such a pilot to be sustained for at least 3 years to ensure there is sufficient time to evaluate the program's effects. However, the aforementioned requirements for a fare policy change and Title VI Fare Equity Analysis within VTA limits this initial pilot to a duration of 6 months. VBPAC believes that VTA is willing to meet these requirements before or during the pilot duration. Multiple VTA members have dedicated a substantial amount of time to meet and communicate with VBPAC, reviewing and providing feedback to its proposals. If the Town decides to pursue this pilot program, it should actively pursue and advocate that these requirements are met.
- Therefore, VBPAC requests that the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission recommend that the Town Council pursue the LGHS VTA Pass Pilot Program from August 13, 2026 to February 13, 2027. Before and during this period, the Town should communicate with VTA to seek a change in the latter's fare policy and conduct a Title VI Fare Equity Analysis to extend this pilot program.

Section 2.2.1: Senior VTA Pass Pilot Program - Paper/Flash Passes

Executive Summary:

To address the transportation needs of the Town's senior population, the Senior VTA Pass Pilot Program entails two alternative policy options.

The first policy would be to distribute Paper/Flash Passes to seniors in Los Gatos. The Paper/Flash Pass is a type of pass that is shown directly to the bus operator, who checks the pass visually before allowing the passenger to ride the bus. The Paper/Flash Pass is a monthly subscription model. At the start of a given period, VTA would provide a set number of Paper/Flash passes to the Town of Los Gatos. The Town would then distribute these passes to seniors in Los Gatos. The Town would be charged every month for each pass that was distributed. At the end of the month, any pass not distributed or used could be returned and, therefore, not be billed to the Town of Los Gatos.

Preliminary roles in the implementation and administration of this program would include:

- An organization, agency, or department in the Town of Los Gatos that would coordinate the distribution of VTA passes. This role would also include vetting applicants to ensure that they meet age qualifications. Potential candidate organizations for promotion and distribution include, but are not limited to, the Los Gatos Library, Los Gatos Thrives Foundation, and LGS Recreation.
- VTA: provides the cards to the above distributor(s) for distribution, bills for services rendered, and provides monthly metrics on the use of the pass to the Town of Los Gatos, including ridership and ride frequency.
- The Town of Los Gatos: covers ride or subscription costs.

Unlike the LGHS VTA Pass Pilot Program, such Paper/Flash Passes are currently included under VTA's existing fare policy. In other words, from the perspective of VTA, the Senior VTA Pass Pilot Program would not be considered a pilot program. Therefore, there would *not* be a 6-month

limit that would necessitate a fare policy change and Title VI Fare Equity Analysis to maintain this pilot program longer than 6 months.

Another difference with LGHS VTA Pass Pilot Program is that SmartPass cannot be utilized, since SmartPass can only cover all of the members of an organization—Los Gatos seniors are not collectively members of a single organization. In VBPAC’s conversations with VTA, the latter stated that these paper passes would cost \$30 per pass every month. This is the same as the price of a monthly pass for an individual senior.

Therefore, the cost estimate is reliant on the number of paper passes distributed. Of the 32,952 residents in Los Gatos, approximately 20.1% of them are seniors. Therefore, there are approximately 6,623 senior residents in town. Below is a table projected cost based on the number of Paper/Flash Passes distributed (e.g. the number of seniors with free access to VTA transit systems) and the potential annual cost.²⁹

Number of Paper/Flash Passes Distributed	Annual Cost
100	\$36,000
120	\$43,200
200	\$72,000
300	\$108,000
400	\$144,000
500	\$180,000
1,000	\$360,000
6,623	\$2,384,280

As shown in the table above, the costs of covering the entire senior population would cost millions of dollars. This cost is almost certainly unmanageable for the Town unless funded through a grant.

²⁹ The calculation of the annual cost = (Number of Paper/Flash Passes Distributed) * (\$30 per pass per month) * (12 months)

Policy Selection:

The Town could consider distributing the Paper/Flash passes more selectively. In fact, a selective distribution of passes is likely a logistical necessity—unlike the student program, the eligible users are not all concentrated in a single location at specific and predictable times, rendering the distribution of such passes more difficult.

A selective program may include the following elements:

1. A substantial proportion, if not a majority, of the recipients of the Paper/Flash Pass would ideally *not* be current users of public transportation. This would help ensure that this program increases ridership, instead of paying for individuals who already ride transit.
2. Since program recipients would not be current users of public transportation, they should receive some level of background information prior to receiving the pass to maximize the chance that they use it.

There is one program that meets these two elements: the Ride & Taste LG program, described in Section 1.3. This program currently raffles off a single \$25 Clipper Card to one of the ten of its participants once every two months. In practice, this bus education and promotion program relies on the other nine participants to obtain their own Clipper Cards on their own initiative after the event. The existing program pays for approximately \$300 of meals in the hopes that all 10 participants in each event would become bus riders. It is unclear whether seniors actually do acquire a Clipper Card after the event.

To improve the Ride & Taste LG program, VBPAAC proposes two policy options for improving the Ride & Taste LG Program with the following changes:

- Instead of raffling off a single VTA card with \$25 on it, the Town would provide 10 Flash/Paper passes at the end of each event for 12 months.
- Rather than hosting this program on a bimonthly basis, Ride & Taste LG should be hosted monthly. VBPAAC expects that this program would be more attractive if participants of Ride & Taste LG could expect a guarantee to access the entire public transit network for free after the event ends.

Assuming that 10 Flash/Paper Passes are provided each month via the Ride & Taste LG Program, the estimated cost for the first year of this pilot program would be a maximum of \$23,400.³⁰ Subsequent years of this pilot would cost \$43,200 annually, assuming the town stops adding new seniors in subsequent years.

Potential Advantages:

- **Ease of Implementation:** Distribution of these Paper/Flash Passes would utilize an existing program in Los Gatos, Ride & Taste LG, where program recipients can be expected to appear at predictable times, facilitating the distribution of cards from a pre-planned location.
- **Broad Services:** Paper/Flash Passes guarantee access to VTA buses and light rail, including routes and stops from outside of town. This would benefit seniors who have travel needs in and outside of Los Gatos.
- **Pilot Program Duration at Town's Discretion:** Unlike the LGHS VTA Pass Pilot Program, the Town of Los Gatos may choose a duration for this pilot program for as long as it wishes.
- **Achieves the Aforementioned Benefits stated in Section 1.2,** including reduced congestion, satisfaction of transportation needs of low-income residents, and meeting the transportation needs of Los Gatos' senior population. Lastly, this pilot program can help cultivate a base of public transit users in Los Gatos, which could warrant the expansion and improvement of the Town's public transit services in the future.

Potential Risks:

- **Difficulty in Quantifying Program Impact:** Flash/Paper passes are not tagged like a Clipper Card, since they are manually reviewed by the operator. As a result, quantifying the exact effect of this pilot program would be difficult. Surveying recipients of these cards or calculating estimates of impact on ride frequency through statistical/econometric analyses might be feasible. But impacts of this program can only be approximated.

³⁰ If 10 Flash/Paper Passes were distributed each month for 12 months, each 10 pass "batch" would cost a different amount in the first year of the program. For example, the first 10 passes would be billed for 12 months, while the last 10 passes distributed would be billed for 1 month.

- **Scale of Effect.** The scale of this program is relatively small, impacting less than 2% of Los Gatos' senior population. Even if this program is successful at increasing utilization of public transportation services, its effects may not appear immediately obvious.
- **Low Utilization.** Each Paper/Flash Pass would cost \$30/month, or \$360 per year per pass. For this program to be cost-effective relative to existing single ride fares, pass recipients would need to consume, on average, at least \$360 of VTA services per year. For reference, the fare for a single bus ride for seniors is \$1 and the fare for light rail passes for 8 hours is \$2. Therefore, program recipients would need to take 360 bus rides (or 1 roundtrip every 2 days), ride light rail on approximately 180 days (assuming one light rail pass per day), or some combination of bus and light rail rides whose collective worth is \$360. If program recipients do not use these Paper/Flash Passes, the Town risks overpaying for this service.

Overall Evaluation:

VBPAAC's evaluation of the program is provided at the end of the next section.

Section 2.2.2: Senior VTA Pass Pilot Program - Pre-Paid Clipper Cards

Executive Summary:

To address the potential risk of overpayment for the Paper/Flash Pass service described in Section 2.2.1, a second policy option for the Town could be instead to provide pre-paid Senior Clipper Cards to all Ride & Taste LG program attendees who either have a senior clipper card or have filled out an application for one. VBPAC imagines that \$100 for each prepaid Senior Clipper Card would be an appropriate amount for the Town to fund over time.

This policy alternative would effectively cost \$1,200 per month for the Town of Los Gatos if Ride & Taste LG is hosted monthly, instead of its currently bi-monthly schedule. Each year, 120 seniors would be able to receive these cards.

VBPAC considered \$100 as potentially excessive. However, in comparison to the Paper/Flash Pass model noted in the previous section, this is a substantially cheaper program. Additionally, \$100 Clipper Cards would be more marketable and attractive to recipients.

If other distribution methods through other organizations and programs are available, this number can be scaled up accordingly.

Potential Advantages:

- **Almost No Way to Overpay:** The primary advantage of this policy option, especially as compared to the Paper/Flash Pass option detailed in Section 2.2.1, is that the funds in these cards would never expire. This option may prove to be even more cost-effective than the paper passes if the Town expects utilization of Paper/Flash Passes to be low. The risk of overpaying lies in the Clipper Card remaining unused.
- **Achieves the Aforementioned Benefits and Advantages stated in Sections 1.2 and 2.2.1, without as many risks as Section 2.2.1.** Additionally, this incentive may be sufficient to spur bus ridership on its own for the seniors involved, as \$100 of transportation services is substantial for individuals.

- **Financial Flexibility:** It should be noted that \$100 in funds for each clipper card is used only as an example—this amount is subject to discussion based on the Town’s budget, and may change from year to year with minimal disruption to those who already possess their prepaid passes.

Potential Risks:

- **Scale of Effect.** As in the first policy option detailed in Section 2.2.1, the scale of this program is relatively small, impacting less than 2% of Los Gatos’ senior population per year. Even if this program is successful at increasing utilization of public transportation services, its effects may not appear immediately obvious.

Overall Evaluation:

VBPAC requests that the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission recommend that the Town Council formally consider funding one of two programs. The first program entails distributing 120 Paper/Flash passes over the course of a year. The second policy option would provide all future Ride & Taste LG participants with a prepaid Senior Clipper Card, which would have an account value higher than the current \$25. VBPAC considers increasing the balance and the number of Senior Clipper Cards distributed to be the more practical of the two options presented.

Recommended 2025 CSTC Commission Work Plan

1. Commission to review staff's recommendations regarding improvements and modifications to the Downtown Parking Program and Residential Permit Parking Programs. (Relates to Mobility Element Implementation Program S).
2. Commission to review staff's work relating to reducing cut through traffic, building on the work completed by the Beach Traffic Ad Hoc that will sunset in June 2025. (Relates to Mobility Element Implementation Program N)
3. Commission to continue work of the Bus Pass Ad Hoc to evaluate potential subsidized public transit fares for seniors and students (Relates to Public Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Implementation Program KK).
4. Commission to receive presentations regarding proposed transportation related capital projects and provide feedback and recommendations to staff for consideration.
5. Commission to receive updates regarding staff coordination with Santa Clara County Parks Departments regarding Fantasy of Lights event and its impact on Town of Los Gatos transportation assets, including Los Gatos Creek Trail.



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COMPLETE STREETS AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: 06/12/2025

ITEM NO.: 7.b.

DATE: June 6, 2025
TO: Complete Streets and Transportation Commission
FROM: Nicolle Burnham, Parks and Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Future CSTC Agenda Items

RECOMMENDATION:

The purpose of this information is to provide the Commission and members of the public a look at anticipated future agenda items.

BACKGROUND:

Potential future agenda items are presented below. This report will be updated monthly to reflect any items going on in the Parks and Public Works Department.

ANALYSIS:

July	Meeting Cancelled
August	Parking Program Update
	Police Department Quarterly Report
September	Safe Routes to School Quarterly Report
October	

FISCAL IMPACT:

No Fiscal Impact

Attachments:

1. None

PREPARED BY: Nicolle Burnham
Director, Parks and Public Works