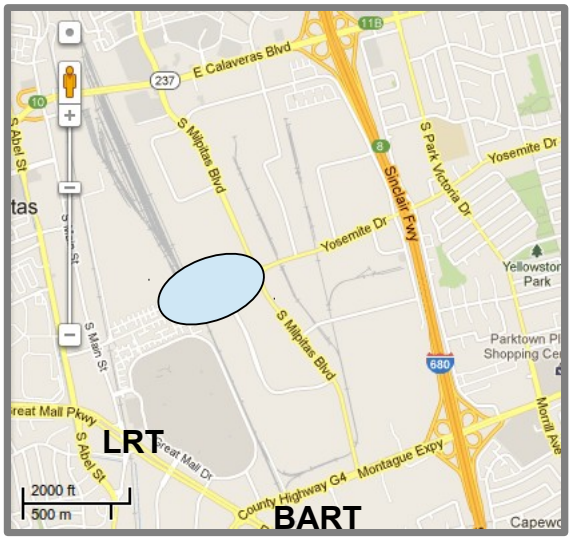
Sunnyhills Neighborhood Association
First-Step Funding for Feeder to BART

The Sunnyhills Neighborhood Association (SNA) is working to create an automated transit feeder from their neighborhood at the north end of Milpitas to the Great Mall Transit Center (LRT, buses, and BART in 2017) at the south end - over three miles away. Using small, light-weight cab-like Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) vehicles (left) on elevated guideways (below) will provide affordable and convenient 24/7 non-stop service to regional transit while increasing property values.

PRT is a new technology, so it makes sense to “learn as we go” by starting small. A minimal system of two stations with a loop connecting them can ferry people and their stuff safely and conveniently over one of the many barriers in Milpitas. Such a “smart ferry” will allow us to evaluate PRT technology before extending service. Recently, City Council added a crossing of the railroad tracks to the General Plan (oval area below). A PRT pilot project connecting Yosemite and Curtis near the Great Mall will cost $3 million, only 60% the cost of a standard steel-and-concrete pedestrian bridge. For details, visit http://www.electric-bikes.com/prt/ferry.html



As the next step toward such a PRT “ferry”, SNA is seeking to kick-start the project by financing the City's portion of the $50,000 Environmental Impact Report (EIR). We only need $10,000 (20%) due to progressive transportation funding rules. After gathering $10,000, SNA will work with the City to secure the remaining funding and generate an EIR. Engineering and construction could follow the EIR.

You Can Help

Funding is expected from contributions (individual, business, and cities), grants from foundations, and maybe from U.S. transportation agencies. SNA will act as escrow agent until the full $10,000 is secured. Questions can be answered by SNA Secretary, Rob Means (408-262-8975, rob.means@electric-bikes.com). Make checks (minimum $20) payable to:

Sunnyhills Neighborhood Association, P. O. Box 360581, Milpitas, CA 95036-0581
(Please indicate whether you want to remain anonymous or have your name/organization listed online.)
SNA is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation (Taxpayer ID = 77-0493926), and contributions are tax deductable.

Citywide Transit Feeder: Outstanding Return On Investment

A cost-conscious and effective government considers financial benefits (revenue and savings) that accrue to City coffers and to the local economy. The following assumes a 10-mile long, community-owned, citywide PRT system would capture 10% of automobile trips. Potential savings of such a $120M PRT feeder linking Sunnyhills and the Montague BART station include:

1) $9M - eliminate the need for a bike/ped crossing of Montague Expressway (BART/Piper Drive)
2) $9M - eliminate a bike/ped crossing of Montague Expressway (BART/new school)
3) $5M - eliminate a bike/ped crossing of the railroad tracks at Yosemite/Curtis
4) $5M - eliminate a bike/ped crossing of railroad tracks from Piper housing developments to the Great Mall
5) $3M - delay for 10 years expansion of Calaveras crossing of the railroad tracks (5% of project cost)
6) $2M - delay for 10 years the Montague/Great Mall urban interchange (5% of project cost)
7) **$66M** - resident fuel savings of $13.3M/year for 5 years if 10% of VMT (vehicle miles traveled) by Milpitas residents were captured by ATN.
   According to Table A-3: BAU Forecast Indicators (page A-5 in Appendix A) of the 2013 Climate Action Plan, annual VMT by Milpitas residents in 2005 was 697,265,000. Using a fleet average mileage for passenger vehicles of 21 miles per gallon (Page 3 of Climate Change Draft Scoping Plan: Measure Documentation Supplement) yields an annual consumption of 33,203,095 gallons of gasoline. 10% of that at $4/gallon = $13,281,238.
8) $1M - 1% increase in property values due to improved transit generates 1% increased annual property tax revenues (for 5 years) (2011/2012 total Milpitas property tax revenue = $16M)
9) $1M - 10% reduction in street maintenance costs ($200K/year for 5 years) (137 miles of street)
10) $1M - increased tourism at PRT "attraction" ($200K/year for 5 years)
11) $xM - reduce the amount of VTA Outreach service in the area (for 5 years)
12) $xM - reduce amount of structured parking required in Midtown and Transit Areas ($30,000/space x 100 parking spaces = $3M)
13) $xM - rental for utility space (e.g. telecommunications) within guideways
14) $xM - value of public health/safety benefits (see below)
15) $xM - value of jobs created
16) **up to $51M** - reduce bus service in Milpitas for 5 years (3.8% of annual $270M VTA budget)

Total of expected community savings = $50M to $120M City's 20% cost of $120M ATN = $24M

[If a minimal system with small stations and few cabs is built, the overall cost could be only $60M.]

Additional benefits that are difficult to quantify and/or assign a monetary value include:

- more economic security due to less dependence on foreign oil imports;
- better public health due to cleaner air and fewer pedestrian injuries;
- more effective use of public transportation dollars (Dr. Lowson says that fuel costs per passenger are lower for autos than for trains or buses when you take the costs of wasted capacity into account.)
- calmer, quieter neighborhoods due to less automobile traffic noise;
- less fuel consumption and time wasted by freeway/roadway congestion;
- better individual health and time efficiency by avoiding nerve-wracking tailgating and congestion while gaining time to knap, cell-phone, even laptop compute. (The Texas Transportation Institute uses $12.00 per hour as the cost of time wasted in traffic.)
- more efficient use of highly valuable weekday noon-time travel; (For a $60K/year worker, lunchtime is valued at $60/hr.)*
- Strong transportation infrastructure attracts businesses.