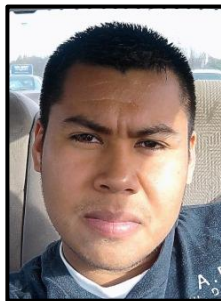




They're Telling Our Story!

Dr. Jeanne Linsdell, Director of Technical Communications, College of Engineering at San Jose State, CA coordinates a speaker's forum called "Engineering Reports on the Earth and Environment". As part of the curriculum, industry engineers are welcomed to the class to discuss current projects and programs with students and the impacts they have on the environment. Students received a presentation on the BART Silicon Valley Project and were asked to write an essay about the importance of this regional transportation improvement project. Here is what a few of them had to say:



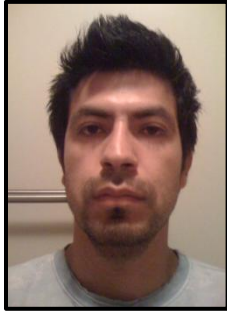
Everardo Ochoa: As a San Jose State University student living away from home without a vehicle, I turned to alternate forms of transportation. VTA has met my transportation needs diligently. However, I always found it a hassle to take bus 180 from downtown San Jose to Fremont to take BART to Berkeley or San Francisco to visit friends. Extending BART to Silicon Valley brings a smile to my face as it will help connect our transportation system and enhance the community. BART will merge with VTA transportation system allowing the community to take any form of transportation needed from light rail to

Amtrak. By offering improved mobility, this new project will help remove cars off the road in an effort to reduce emissions released by vehicles and reduce the usage of fossil fuels. BART will also stimulate the economy locally in an effort to stimulate California out of the slump that we are in. As California goes through hard times and with an election around the corner, it is crucial that California gets its economy up and running. This project is a step in the right direction and there is no doubt in my mind that it will do nothing less than have a positive impact on our state.



Esther Foo: In general, I think the BART system will really be a great improvement to the current available public transportation. The public can benefit from the BART system, especially those who commute daily all the way from further north to downtown San Jose. This is because the extension is expected to close a 20 mile gap in the current regional rail network. I think it is crucial for our government to encourage and support any kind of public transportation because it will improve the quality of life of our residents.

There is more to good transportation systems other than just convenience and comfort. If there is a good public transportation system, I believe most people would choose to ride on these transportations rather than drive. This would in turn reduce the emission of harmful gases to the environment significantly. As a result, we will be reducing pollution which will lead to better health for residents.



Vilney Ochoa: I strongly believe that the government must encourage and support public transportation because it is good for the environment, is energy efficient, and is convenient for commuters. Public transportation always benefits all commuters. In my case, I take the train from Redwood City to San Jose. In San Jose I take the bus to San Jose State University; the bus stops right in front of campus. I know many students use public transportation, and there are many other persons who commute to work and other destinations. The development and improvement of public transportation is always good for the environment, for the country, and for the people. I hope the Federal Transit Administration is aware of this and make the right decision of funding the BART Silicon Valley Project.



Robert Cheng: Today, as an engineering student concerned with the environment, I believe public transportation is necessary in the Bay Area because it is one of the factors that can substantially help promote a sustainable environment. We need all the help we can get in the over populated Bay Area. Using public transportation is a huge way for the general public to help preserve the environment for the present and future generations. With the encouragement and support of the government, I think that BART can be ‘the best’ way to get around. The government can quickly and easily raise awareness of the problem of pollution and suggest BART as one of the many things the general population can do to help lower pollution.



Hieu Pham: Since the number of companies and manufacturers has been increasing in the Silicon Valley, a lot of people have been moving to the Bay Area to find opportunities. Thus, the amount of vehicles running on the roads has been increasing steadily. This causes traffic problems every morning and leads to wasted time and money. For example, the distance from Fremont to San Jose is only around 20 miles, but it takes around 60 minutes to travel throughout this distance either on the 880 or 680 freeways in the morning. If the BART is extended, I am sure that a lot of people will ride on it instead of driving their own vehicles because they would be able to conveniently save time and money. Every year, our government has to spend a lot of money to maintain the existing roads and construct many new roads. By building BART, the government can avoid building many new roads in the same area.



Caleb Russom: As an engineering student concerned with a sustainable environment, public transportation is important because it simply helps the environment in many ways. I would one day like my kids to see the planet the same way I see it now. Growing up, most of my family lived in the Oakland and Berkeley area. If it was not for the BART system, I do not think that I would have seen my family as often. Every single one of them had a positive influence on me and kept me on the right track, and if it was not for their motivation I do not know where I would have ended up.