

Santa Clara
County property
values up while
growth slows
SEE PAGE 6



New tool provides
gallery of ADU plans
for 10 communities
in Santa Clara county
SEE PAGE 7



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JULY 11 - JULY 24, 2025 ■ VOL. 42, NO. 15

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Coyote season brings safety advisory

As coyote sightings are expected to rise in the Bay Area during warmer months, the East Bay Regional Park District has issued safety tips for visitors, including staying in groups, keeping pets leashed and children close, remaining alert, sticking to trails, and never feeding coyotes.

Encounters among local wildlife become more common in summer as more people visit parks and young coyotes become more active.

The advisory, created with help from park biologists, urges reporting any sick, injured, or aggressive coyotes to park dispatch at (510) 881-1833.

Experts urge maintaining proper distance and walking calmly, away if approached.

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East San Jose cultural district nets \$50K grant

By Vicente Vera
San José Spotlight

The School of Arts and Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza is gearing up to launch San Jose's first distinct cultural district.

Housing Trust Silicon Valley, a nonprofit community development group, recently announced it will award a \$50,000 grant to the School of Arts and Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza. As the plaza celebrated 25 years in San Jose, school leaders said they want to bring health care, affordable housing and economic development to the Mayfair neighborhood through "La Avenida," a cultural district meant to attract development.

"We recognize that the strength of our region's affordable housing ecosystem is rooted in the capacity of community-based developers who are deeply connected to the neighborhoods they serve," Housing Trust Silicon Valley CEO Noni Ramos said in a statement.

School of Arts and Culture representatives said they have raised more than 90% of La Avenida's \$30 million goal — but need community help filling the gap. The \$50,000 grant



A colorful mural brightens up the Mexican Heritage Plaza along King Road in East San Jose. File photo.

will be used to purchase a mostly vacant property on 1747-1785 Alum Rock Ave., directly across from Mexican Heritage Plaza.

The district is envisioned as a 6-acre mixed-use development with affordable housing, local businesses and social service providers. The projects aim to address threats of displacement in the Mayfair neighborhood and greater East San Jose.

"A fully developed La Avenida would be a major win for East San Jose and for the city's broader economy. With major events coming in 2026, we need to invest in our cultural, busi-

ness and entertainment districts beyond downtown," San Jose

Chamber of Commerce CEO Leah Toeniskoetter told San José Spotlight, referring to Super-Bowl 60 and the FIFA World Cup. "This project brings investment, local ownership and jobs to a historically underserved corridor — and helps to position San Jose as a city that grows inclusively."

SV Creates CEO Alexandra Urbanowski, also a School of Arts and Culture board member and San José Spotlight columnist, said the \$50,000

See GRANT, page 3

Fiesta del Mariachi brings the sound of Mexico to San José with grammy-winning headliner Mariachi Los Camperos band

Headliner Mariachi Los Camperos will serenade the audience with their signature sound, performing melodies from their Grammy-winning albums.

The Mexican Heritage Plaza (La Plaza) will celebrate Mexican music at its fourth annual Fiesta del Mariachi (FDM) concert on Saturday, July 26 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Mariachi Los Camperos will serenade the Mayfair neighborhood with their signature sound, performing melodies from their Grammy-winning albums Amor, Dolor y



Lágrimas and De Ayer Para Siempre.

In a new wave of excitement, Mariachi Bonitas, Mariachi Internacional Tapatio, and Mariachi San José will make their FDM debut, bringing the sound of local talent to the forefront.

FDM invites families to step into La Plaza, where the heart of its

See FIESTA, page 3



City of San José saves 4th of July Celebration at Lake Cunningham

By William Bellou
Publisher

Drones display a bright and vibrant USA at the July 4th Festival at Lake Cunningham after a switch from fireworks that

were destroyed at a Fireworks warehouse in Yolo County.

After a fireworks vendor was impacted by the Yolo fireworks warehouse blast and fire, San Jose

See FOURTH, page 3

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Please note: I have not and will not be verifying or investigating any information supplied by others.

Times Community

Fourth

Continued from page 1

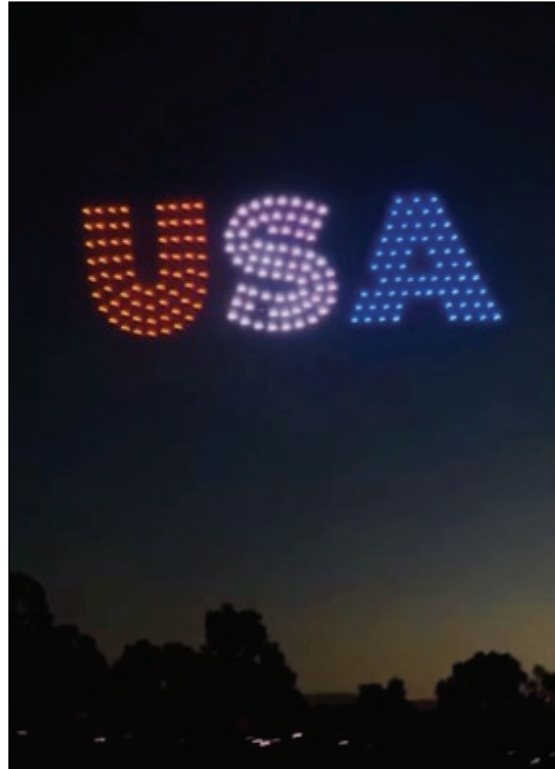
Mayor Mahan, Councilmember Candelas and City Administration moved quickly to keep the Lake Cunningham show on track with drones.

The free celebration at Lake Cunningham featured live music, dancers, food vendors, and the first ever drone show.

On Wednesday, July 2, the City of San José was informed that the fireworks reserved for the second annual display at Lake Cunningham were destroyed in a tragic warehouse explosion in Yolo County. City leaders acted swiftly, securing an alternative vendor to produce the drone show. As a result, attendees at Lake Cunningham enjoyed the first-ever drone show in San José, while safely celebrating the Fourth of July.

"The show must go on," said San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan. "I want to thank Councilmember Candelas and City staff for finding a solution in less than twenty-four hours that ensured families in San Jose can celebrate American independence and the innovation that keeps us on the cutting edge with a drone show at Lake Cunningham."

Candelas issued this statement the day prior to the event: "The tragedy in Yolo County has affected multiple fireworks displays across the state," said Councilmember Domingo Candelas. "While we had to cancel the fireworks, the celebration is still on. Families are welcome to come to Lake Cunningham to enjoy everything we have planned: food trucks, performances, and activities. Our hope is to still unite our community in



celebration but also deter the use of illegal fireworks in our neighborhoods."

"I am grateful to the City team responsible for finding a safe and fun alternative on short notice so our families can enjoy a new form of entertainment this Fourth of July," said Assistant City Manager Lee Wilcox.

At a press event on July 3, Fire Chief Sapien and Deputy Police Chief Sanchez reminded residents about the dangers of illegal fireworks. The police department will use drones to monitor activity and will issue fines of up to \$50,000 for selling illegal explosives.

The Mayor and Councilmember Candelas acknowledged the tragedy in Yolo County and expressed their hopes for the swift and safe recovery of the missing workers.

Fiesta

Continued from page 1

community shines. When the spotlight turns to the stage, Los Lupeños de San José will share Mexico's stories through regional dances that celebrate heritage and pride. Attendees can discover hand-crafted goods from local artisans, savor mouthwatering food sizzling on the grill by small-business chefs, and sip on refreshing drinks – all while the sounds of mariachi music bring the atmosphere to life.

"Fiesta del Mariachi (FDM) is such a special celebration for East San José — it brings our community together to honor the beau-

ty of our shared culture and traditions. As a lifelong East San José resident, there is something so powerful about seeing how mariachi music unites so many people from all over the Bay Area," shares Melissa Canela, Director of Strategic Partnerships. "FDM is a reminder of where we come from, who we are, and the joy we create when we come together en comunidad. Our team is proud to provide a platform where traditions flourish and new generations are inspired."

Prices: Premium Adult (3+) \$60 | GA (3+) \$40 | Early Bird Premium Adult (3+) \$45 | Early Bird GA; (3+) \$25. Event Location: Mexican Heritage Plaza | 1700 Alum Rock Avenue, San Jose, CA 95116

Grant

Continued from page 1

grant is an important recognition of the leadership role the school plays in the local arts community, as well as in the Alum Rock and East San Jose neighborhoods and business districts.

Alum Rock Santa Clara Street Business Association leaders said a recent \$100,000 grant will go toward building a gateway structure for the upcoming cultural district.

"The school is well positioned to lead the further development of an important cultural district in our city, which will demonstrate how the arts can be pivotal in building com-

munity health, social cohesion and economic vitality," Urbanowski told San José Spotlight.

City officials voted last month to add La Avenida to the list of entertainment zones with reduced alcohol consumption restrictions ahead of the 2026 Super Bowl and World Cup events.

"The grant will help the school build its infrastructure and capacity to provide equitable access to arts programming for residents, pay to local artists and resources for all the smaller arts organizations that call the Mexican Heritage Plaza home," Urbanowski said. "What a nice message today to counter recent federal funding cuts to the arts."



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Times Editorial

Celebrate summertime in San Jose

By Matt Mahan

Happy 4th! I hope you had a holiday to remember.

This is one I'll certainly never forget. By now, I'm sure most of you have heard about the tragedy in Yolo County. My thoughts and prayers are with the families of those still missing.

When our City team heard that the explosion meant our 2nd annual Lake Cunningham fireworks would be canceled, they jumped into action. And in less than 24 hours, San Jose's first ever drone show was organized.

I want to thank Councilmember Candelas, Assistant City Manager Lee Wilcox, Events Director Tommy O'Hare and many others for coming together to find a solution that meant families in San Jose could celebrate Independence Day and the innovation that keeps us on the cutting edge.

Speaking of celebration, we have a lot going on here in the sunny Capital of Silicon Valley this summer. City Council is in recess, the sun is out, and it's time to get out of the house and enjoy everything happening in our city.

Below are some of the many events I'll be attending – I hope to see you there!

Beloved San José Summer Traditions

- Music in the Park — The beloved downtown concert series featuring live performances all summer.

- San José Jazz Fest — The city's premier summer music festival, bringing top jazz, R&B, Latin, and more.

- Gilroy Garlic Festival — Food and fun just south of San José, July 25–27 at Gilroy Gardens.

- Santa Clara County Fair — Classic summer fair, July 30–Aug 3 at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds.

- Silicon Valley Pride — Parade and festival, Aug 30–31 at Plaza de César Chávez.

Ongoing Festivals & Series

- Viva CalleSJ — Open streets festival where miles of city streets are closed to cars and open for biking,



walking, and community fun.

- CityDance San José — The City-sponsored dance series continues with monthly events through September.

- Levitt Pavilion Summer Music Series — Free live music at St. James Park through September.

- Viva Parks — Family-friendly park activations Monday–Thursday from 6–8 p.m. (movie nights on Thursdays from 6–10:30 p.m.) until August 28.

- Paint the CitySJ — Free painting classes in the park starting July 10 through September 26. Registration opens one week prior to each event at 8 p.m. Check-in at 5:45 p.m., events begin at 6 p.m.

- Dine Downtown — A celebration of San José's vibrant food scene with special menus and events.

Special Events

- GalaxyCon San José — Pop culture convention returns to Downtown San José in August.

- Chicano Soul Fest — Featuring soul legend Joe Bataan at History

Park, possibly his first-ever show in San José.

- Alebrijes: en San José — New public art installation launching around Summer Fest, expected to draw 100,000+ visitors downtown.

- Momentum AI San José — AI and tech innovation conference, July 15–16 at San José Convention Center.

- San José Bike Party — Monthly social rides every third Friday (July–September).

New Eats Across San José

- The Pressroom — Elevated California-American in a beautifully restored historic downtown building. The former headquarters of the Mercury News!

- Sumi Sushi — New favorite sushi spot on Paseo de San Antonio.

- Tostadas Downtown — The long-awaited return of this local favorite.

- Tsujita Artisan Noodle — Famous ramen and tsukemen at Moorpark Ave.

- Augustine (Santana Row) — Upscale Mediterranean-inspired dishes with speakeasy vibes.

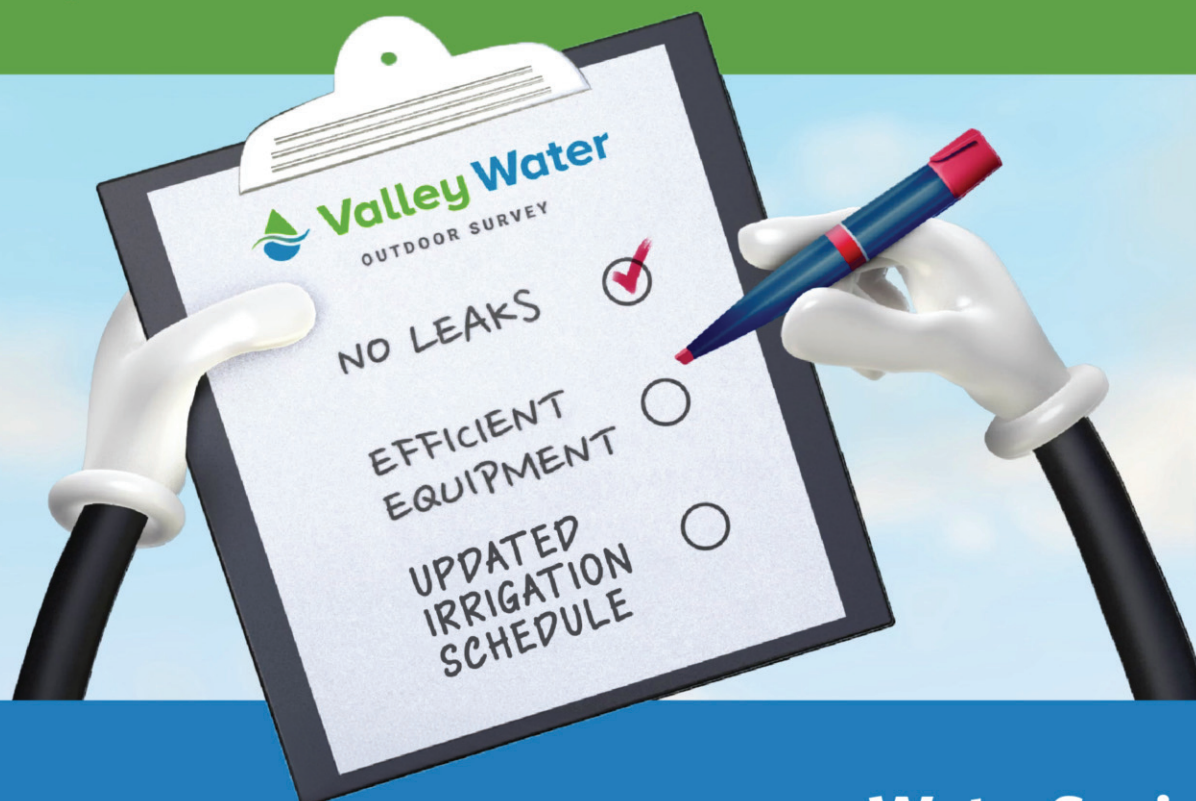
- Raising Cane's — Newly opened and first location in San José.

Whatever you're doing this summer, I hope you take some time to be with family, support our small businesses and create lasting memories.



From the Mayor
Matt Mahan
Mayor, San Jose

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Times **Local News**

Santa Clara County property values up while growth slows

By Brandon Pho
San José Spotlight

Santa Clara County property values are seeing their lowest growth in more than a decade due to economic uncertainty and stalled development.

Yet the total net assessed value of all real estate and personal property – known as the assessment roll – reached a new height of nearly \$726 billion, County Assessor Larry Stone announced Wednesday. Home sales increased by 3% and accounted for 86% of roll growth.

This year marks Stone's final assessment roll before he steps down on July 7 – marking an end to one of the county's longest serving public officials.

"Just a few years ago, office buildings were the darling of commercial real estate investment. That's not the case anymore," Stone told San José Spotlight.

"Foreclosures are almost weekly — hotels, office, some industrial. They're just throwing the keys and giving them back to lenders."

Stone said several significant commercial development projects have stalled due to high interest rates, surging construction cost and sinking demand for office space. Google's "Downtown West" project in San Jose was



The total net assessed value of all real estate and personal property in Santa Clara County reached a new height of nearly \$726 billion. File photo.

slated to begin in 2023, but remains in limbo. Stone also pointed to "The Rise" development at the former Vallco Mall in Cupertino, a planned mixed-use development that required a redesign and cutbacks before it could move forward. The 240-acre mixed-use development, known as "Related Santa Clara," is another significant project facing construction delays.

Surging vacancies, dropping rental rates, a shortage of big leasing deals, and the continuation of hybrid and remote work have kept the office vacancy rate in Silicon Valley at roughly 20% for the past two years, according to the assessor's office.

Stone said office buildings are being sold at major discounts. He points to VTA's purchase of Sobrato Office Tower at 488 Almaden Blvd this year. Stone said VTA paid 61% of the assessed value. He said he doesn't expect

the commercial market to turn around for another few years.

Elsewhere, Stone said Silicon Valley is experiencing different trends compared to the rest of the nation.

"Job growth throughout the country is pretty good. Around here it's not. The high tech companies have jettisoned about 11,000 jobs this year," Stone said. "Silicon Valley and Santa Clara County are experiencing a different level of trends related to property values than you're finding in other parts of the state or country."

The assessment shows that while home sales are slow, the residential market is still strong.

Brett Caviness, a local realtor and former president of the Silicon Valley Association of Realtors, said the current market has opened new opportunities for potential buyers who

felt priced out due to more aggressive competition in prior years.

"We're seeing more people able to access homeownership than they were to before. That's a bright point," Caviness told San José Spotlight. "The takeaways for me are it's still a good time to be selling and an even better time to be buying."

Changes in ownership and new construction added \$16.1 billion and \$3.8 billion to the total increase, respectively. Business and personal property values added \$1.8 billion. Nearly 8,700 properties remain in declining value due to Prop. 8, which allowed temporary reductions in assessed value in cases where real property suffered a decline in value.

Prop. 13, which restricts property taxes, added \$14.4 billion to the assessment roll. But Stone said it continues to come at a cost to schools and local governments who depend on property tax revenue to support essential services.

Slow home sales and stalled construction will likely continue to lag assessment roll growth in the years ahead, Stone said. But he's optimistic about the region's long-term outlook, as some of the world's largest tech companies – Apple, Microsoft and NVIDIA – are still concentrated in Silicon Valley.

"We still lead the country in the amount of venture capital investment and a lot of it is based on Artificial Intelligence," Stone said.

"It doesn't mean we aren't facing trends that are pretty discouraging right now. But I think the future is bright."

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Times **Local News**



New tool provides gallery of ADU plans for 10 communities in Santa Clara county

Residents can browse the galleries for a variety of ADU plans, connect with designers and save time and money on their projects

Santa Clara County ADU, created by the Santa Clara County Planning Collaborative to support the creation of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) across the county, has announced the launch of ADU Plans Galleries for 10 of its participating communities.

The ADU Plans Gallery tool, developed by national housing policy leader Community Planning Collaborative, enables residents to browse a variety of ADU plans (either pre-designed or locally pre-approved), connect with designers, and save time and money on their projects.

The ADU Plans Gallery tool was designed specifically to respond to a new California ADU law requiring all local jurisdictions to have a process for pre-approving ADU plans and posting those plans online.

The ADU Plans Gallery helps local governments meet and exceed the state's requirements by offering:

● **Easy customization:** It's simple to add pre-approved plans to a gallery, and jurisdictions can also select prefabricated and site-built plans from CPC's growing database, at no extra cost.

● **Local choice:** Jurisdictions can encourage local designers to add their plans to CPC's database and grow their local ADU marketplace.

● **High-quality website for the public:** Homeowners can easily filter the gallery to find and compare designs, then explore images, floorplans, estimated costs, and more for each plan.

● **Cost and time savings for homeowners:** The ADU Plans gallery offers a variety of styles, sizes, and budgets, empowering homeowners to find the right ADU solution for their property – saving months of time and thousands of dollars as compared to a custom design process.

"The launch of these ADU Plans Galleries showcases the commitment of Mountain View and other cities across Santa Clara County to innovative housing solutions," said Christian Murdock, Community Development Director for the City of Mountain View. "By providing homeowners with easy access to pre-approved designs and clear information about the process to get the units built, we're removing barriers to production of this important housing type, which is needed to create more housing options in our communities. This tool will help us meet our overall housing goals as a region."

The new ADU Plans Galleries include:

- Campbell
- Gilroy
- Los Altos Hills
- Los Gatos
- Monte Sereno
- Morgan Hill
- Mountain View
- Palo Alto
- Saratoga
- Sunnyvale

"The ADU Plans Gallery is a helpful resource for Campbell residents to find pre-approved ADU plans that can be quickly reviewed and permitted by our Building staff," said Campbell Mayor Sergio Lopez. "The gallery complements our ADU Express Plan Check program that allows customers to obtain permits to build an ADU within one week. Campbell currently has 19 pre-approved plans in the gallery, and our staff is working with architects and designers to upload additional plans. Altogether, these efforts reflect Campbell's commitment to creating housing that meets the needs of our community while providing value through excellent customer service to our residents."

More ADU Resources for Residents

Modeled on the Napa Sonoma ADU Center, Santa Clara County ADU is part of a growing network of collaborative, multi-jurisdictional initiatives working to increase ADU production by providing broader public education about the process of ADU development. While larger cities, such as San José, have robust ADU programs, Santa Clara County ADU pools resources to provide a comprehensive suite of ADU tools to smaller cities throughout the county.

In addition to the ADU Plans Gallery, Santa Clara County ADU offers a suite of specialized ADU tools to help homeowners in their journey to build an ADU. These resources include a free ADU guidebook, step-by-step process instructions, and information about local rules and regulations. Also, the site's popular ADU calculator helps residents create ADU project budgets with real-world cost assumptions. The calculator was viewed more than 5,600 times in the last year.

Santa Clara County ADU provides tools and educational resources to help jurisdictions and homeowners build more ADUs – especially affordable ADUs. This collaborative effort of all Santa Clara cities and Santa Clara County is led by the Santa Clara County Planning Collaborative in partnership with the Cities Association of Santa Clara County. The resources support all residents of Santa Clara County through the process of building an ADU.

For more information, visit aduscc.org.

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OSC has opened a new program for women based upon equine interaction and equine-assisted-learning, designed to develop self-awareness and self-acceptance, confidence and resilience, and safe boundaries.

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Symphony San Jose
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Masquerade Oct. 4 - 5

Symphony San Jose’s 24th season-opening program invites the public into a world of fantasy and wild imagination. Don your mask and immerse yourself in the music and beauty of these iconic masterpieces.

Symphony San Jose will present the 2025-26 Season-Opening Program Masquerade



Saturday, October 4 at 7:30pm and Sunday October 5, at 2:30 p.m. at the California Theatre, 345 South First St. in downtown San Jose.

Anna Clyne’s dazzling and dynamic **Masquerade** captures the spirit of celebration and revelry. Commissioned by the British Broadcasting Corporation, Masquerade is a single-movement 5-minute orchestral composition by the British-born composer, first performed September 7, 2013

San Jose-born, world-renown pianist Jon Nakamatsu appears in Sergei Rachmaninoff’s ravishing **Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini** with a tour-de-force performance of the composer’s final and perhaps most significant work for piano and orchestra. (1934)



**Central Bikeway
secures \$14 million
in state funding**

By William Bellou
Publisher

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority’s (VTA) ambitious project to provide a fully-separated east-west protected bikeway across Santa Clara County is one step closer to existence.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved \$14 million in STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program) funds on June 27, 2025, to advance VTA’s Central Bikeway project.

The funding will allow VTA to complete environmental clearance for the planned

ten-mile bikeway, a major step forward for one of Santa Clara County’s most ambitious active transportation projects.

The Central Bikeway aims to create a 10-mile, fully separated, low-stress, high-quality, east-west bikeway, connecting Berryessa BART in North San José to the Santa Clara/Sunnyvale border. The alignment will follow El Camino Real in the City of Santa Clara and Hedding Street, The Alameda, Taylor Street, and Mabury Road in San Jose.

The project builds on the 2022 Central Bikeway Feasibility Study, which engaged thousands of community members and identified a preferred alignment based on feasibility, safety, and connectivity.

Environmental clearance is expected to begin in early 2026, with additional phases of design and construction pending future funding. If total funding of \$213 million is secured, the project could open in 2033.



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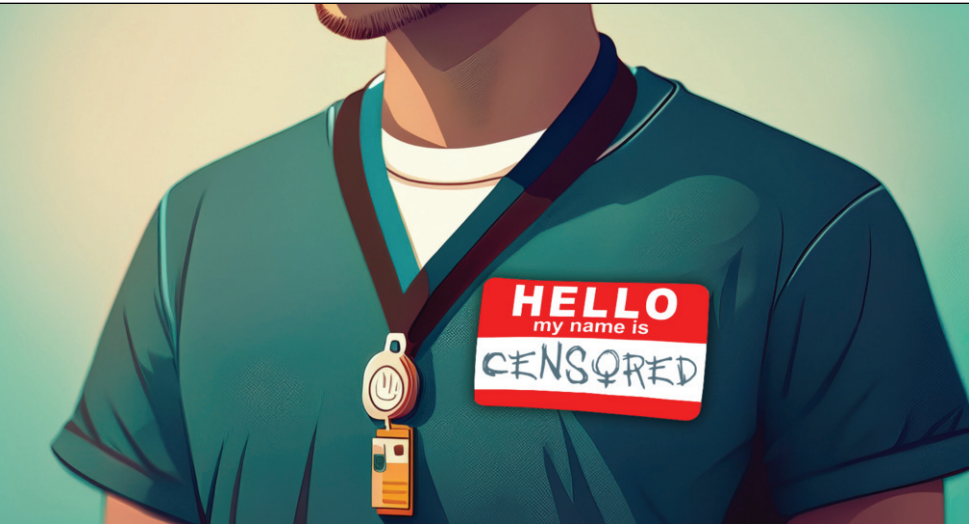
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Bill addresses exploitation of individual’s name, voice or likeness for commercial purposes

By William Bellou
Publisher

State Senator Dave Cortese’s bill, which provides swift legal remedies for individuals who have had their privacy rights violated by the unauthorized use, has unanimously passed by the state Assembly Judiciary Committee.

Senate Bill 683, which now goes to the state

Assembly floor for a vote, is written to protect a person’s name, voice, signature, photograph or likeness for commercial purposes. The bill is intended to address and prevent exploitation, particularly in situations where individuals’ personal information or images are used without their consent.

SB 683 is designed to expedite the removal of the unauthorized materials while legal proceedings are ongoing. Specifically, it allows individuals to seek the immediate removal of the materials within two business days.

“SB 683 strengthens existing privacy protections by encouraging individuals to seek a temporary restraining order for the removal of their name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness if it’s being used without their consent,” said Cortese.



Sunnyvale’s Baylands Park uniquely blends naturally preserved wetland areas with a traditional community park’s picnic and playground features. Baylands Park provides over 70 acres of developed parkland, offering active recreation, pathways, and picnic areas for families and large groups.

Report: Unwind in 2024’s Most Relaxed U.S. Cities

In a world full of stress, which U.S. cities offer the ideal environment for some R&R?

To mark National Relaxation Day on Aug. 15, LawnStarter ranked 2024’s Most Relaxed Cities.

We compared the 500 biggest U.S. cities based on 8 categories. More specifically, we factored in housing affordability, the average length of a workday, depression

rates, and access to mental health providers, among 43 total stress-related metrics.

Here are the top 10 (chill) cities in the ranking below.

Rank	City/State	Score
1	Newton, MA	67.64
2	Sunnyvale, CA	67.18
3	Santa Clara, CA	65.31
4	Milpitas, CA	65.10
5	Naperville, IL	64.89
6	Cambridge, MA	64.45
7	San Ramon, CA	64.33
8	Carmel, IN	64.16
9	Redwood City, CA	63.99
10	San Mateo, CA	63.95

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Times Local News

Cortese's legislation to quickly increase State's housing supply passes Housing Committee

By William Bellou
Publisher

California State Senator Dave Cortese's housing legislation that would change the structure of housing finance in California by using the state's credit to increase the housing supply faster passed the Assembly Housing Committee and was sent to the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

Senate Bill 750 (The California Finance and Credit Act) is part of a two-bill package that includes a 2026 constitutional amendment, which will apply the "full faith and credit of the State of California" to loans and municipal bonds for housing construction.

The bill essentially allows credit strapped private investors to unlock hundreds of thousands of shovel-ready homes now stuck in limbo by using the full faith and credit of the state to back the financing for the housing projects.

"Cities throughout California cannot solve this housing and homeless crisis alone. So we are going to the voters asking them to change the constitution to empower the state to use its good credit to help solve this problem for the first time in the state's history," said Senator Dave Cortese.

Developers and housing advocates throughout California support Senator Cortese's bill.

San Jose Mayor **Matt Mahan** (right) speaks with a homeless person in downtown for the point-in-time count on Jan. 22, 2025. Photo by Joyce Chu.

Santa Clara County homelessness hits a new high

Homelessness has increased in Santa Clara County which now has 10,711 homeless residents, up 8.2% from two years ago, according to preliminary results from this year's point in time count.

Despite funding through Measure A, a \$950 million affordable housing bond approved by voters in 2016, housing investments and the construction of more than 1,300 affordable apartments, the number of homeless has increased.

The county has assisted in moving more than 8,000 people from homelessness to housing between 2023 and 2025.

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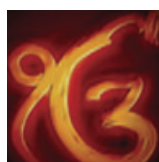


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