

WASHINGTON, DC –

Bringing BART to Silicon Valley is one step closer after the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) finally released funding for several key phases of the project.

Two grants totaling \$8.85 million, which had been approved by the U.S. Congress in 2005 and 2006 at the request of the Bay Area delegation, will help fund the preliminary engineering process. Combined with funding secured in 2003 and 2004, the federal government's contribution to the BART extension is \$11.25 million.

The project will build a 16.1-mile extension of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) project into Silicon Valley, linking the cities of Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara into the system. The FTA awarded the grants to the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to reimburse it for work the agency has already completed.

"I am pleased the FTA gave a vote of confidence to a project critical to our region's economic competitiveness," said Rep. Mike Honda, who was a member of the House Transportation Committee leading the fight for Congress to approve the funds. "Transportation and housing, two issues that are intimately related, are critical to our region and the reason why this project has been a priority for our entire area's congressional delegation."

Bringing BART to San Jose has been a top priority for the Bay area delegation. The appropriation and release of these funds was achieved with the decisive support of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Sen. Diane Feinstein, and representatives Zoe Lofgren and Anna G. Eshoo.

"I'm delighted to see federal grant funds helping our community move the BART project forward," said Lofgren. "I will continue working with my colleagues in the House to identify and deliver federal resources for local transportation initiatives. Silicon Valley has always had a reputation for its 'outside the box' thinking, perhaps its time we start thinking 'outside the car'."

Currently the Santa Clara Transportation is preparing the Silicon Valle Rapid Transit project, as the extension is called, for environmental impact studies, which will be reviewed by the FTA.

"The FTA's continued support for the Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Project, as demonstrated by the release of \$8.85 million, is good news for our region," said Eshoo. "The SVRT will help relieve road congestion so that residents spend less time stuck in traffic and more time driving global innovation."

The project was approved in 2000 by more than 70 percent of the region's voters.