

Vote Yes on Measure B

PETER LEROE-MUÑOZ
Guest Columnist

On November 8, South County voters will have the opportunity to support the countywide Traffic Relief and Road Repair initiative—Measure B—a regional solution that contains key local improvements for our highways, public transportation and city streets. As Gilroy's vice mayor, I am pleased to support this effort, because our city is a full partner in Measure B, which will integrate us more fully into the region.

Measure B provides the local traffic improvements we need, with the taxpayer accountability we deserve.

Every morning, thousands of residents travel to jobs north of Gilroy, and our day's journey becomes a grim march of congestion, infrequent mass transit, and jarring potholes. Measure B will bring much-needed relief to our region. The initiative will provide \$130 million to improve the interchanges at highways 101/25 and 101/152, while also building a new interchange at Highway 101 and Buena Vista Avenue to increase access to Saint Louise Regional Hospital.

Expressways throughout Santa Clara County will be improved, and those in South County are no exception. \$21.5 million will be spent to widen the Santa Teresa-Hale Corridor and build adjacent pedestrian trails along the route.

Measure B also invests heavily in public transportation. South County leaders previously met with Caltrain to express our need for more rail service, and those concerns were addressed. As a result, \$24 million from the Measure will be used to provide an additional South County train for round-trip service during commute hours. Revenue from the measure will also support improved lifeline and core transit service for senior citizens, the disabled, workers and students.

Local streets will also see improvement under Measure B. Based on a formula calculated using street miles and population size, Morgan Hill will receive nearly \$800,000 per year, and Gilroy just over \$1 million annually for repairing our crumbling roads. Further, the measure allocates money for bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout the area, with special attention to neighborhoods near schools.

It is important to note that Measure B has strong accountability provisions. A citizen's committee will oversee how money from the

measure is spent, and there will be annual independent audits accounting for all revenues and expenditures. Finally, Measure B must meet a high threshold of voter support. Two-thirds of the electorate must approve the initiative; this makes Measure B a "special tax," which guarantees revenue can only be spent on the specific transportation improvements outlined in the ballot measure language.

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Measure B provides local control to strengthen our local economy.

Transportation funds from the state and federal government have been unstable and insufficient to address Santa Clara County's immediate need for traffic relief. Measure B is a commitment from our community to improve regional transportation infrastructure with local control. Moreover, all Measure B revenue is constitutionally protected. The state and federal government may not take any of the funds for any purpose.

Fixing our transportation network also strengthens the local economy. South County serves as a hub for tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and distribution, and Measure B will improve the highways and municipal roads on which these industries rely.

South County contributes greatly to the success of Silicon Valley and the surrounding area, and our residents need safe, reliable and efficient transportation improvements in order to reach our work, conduct business, get to school or engage in recreation. Measure B recognizes the importance of South County, and invests tens of millions of dollars in our region. I'm supporting Measure B, and I hope you will too. Learn more at YesMeasureB.com. Together, we can get South County moving again.

Peter Leroe-Muñoz is the vice mayor of Gilroy.

shown to hurt local economies and downtown businesses. We have Exhibit A in San Jose. Without an urban growth boundary, suburban sprawl will solidify Gilroy as a bedroom community for the Bay Area, with 80 percent of working residents commuting to San Jose on a daily basis. Suburban sprawl creates thousands more houses, thousands more people clogging Highway 101, and it hurts our local economy as well as our public resources. We need to focus more on bringing jobs to Gilroy.

Measure H provides the City Council with some leeway should a public facilities project (like water or sewer), school, affordable housing, or large industrial proposal need to be located outside the boundary line. It's a sensible caveat should circumstances not permit one of these types of projects within the voter-approved boundary. This common-sense component of Measure H assures good job growth opportunities and community needs are met.

Urban growth boundaries have been around for decades. They are a widely used long-range planning tool. California cities such as Napa, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Vacaville, and Ventura have adopted urban growth boundaries. It can work for Gilroy also.

Please join me and other Gilroy residents in doing what's right for our community and our great city. Vote Yes on H!

ROBERT CARRERA
Gilroy

Voters not 'special interests'

Measure H will give the voter the right to decide. It is the responsibility and right of all Americans to vote in elections. Stating that we shouldn't have an initiative on the ballot because not everyone in our community exercises their right to vote does not make those of us who do "special interests." Measure H will give our citizens a voice. Yes, LAFCO makes decisions about the annexation of land; however, an urban growth boundary sets expectations for those decisions.

Measure H will maintain Gilroy's small-town character as it will promote infill development. There are vacancies in the McCarthy Business Park and surrounding area as well as vacant buildings and land along Chestnut Street that could accommodate an employer offering living-wage jobs.

Measure H will stop sprawling development that will make our traffic worse. Anytime a housing development or a business is added anywhere, traffic is increased. Portland, Oregon, was recently used as an example by an opponent of Measure H. Obviously, as the development increases with more people moving about, the traffic is going to increase. There is nowhere in Gilroy that traffic is not a major concern.

Measure H will direct development within city limits where there is existing infrastructure. Measure H will protect open space and farmland as it promotes infill development. We don't continue to destroy more farmland and open space just because we have developed it in the past.

We are now in an era where we must look toward the future in terms of protecting our natural resources as well as sustaining a community. It is time to find that balance with a Yes vote on Measure H.

DANA WOLFE
Gilroy

FROM THE WEB

First Street finally to be fixed—I will believe it when I see it. First street is worse than the dirt road at the end of Redwood Retreat Road. I will be boycotting all businesses on First Street until it gets fixed. Maybe the businesses on First Street have more pull than the actual citizens. When the businesses start losing money, maybe people will start to listen. For me this is just more smoke and mirrors from the politicians of Gilroy. Actions speak louder than words.

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via.gilroydispatch.com

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