

SFCTA April 14 2026, Board Meeting

Item 8 Approve a Two-Year Professional Services Contract with HNTB Corporation in an Amount Not to Exceed \$1,050,000 for Consulting Services for the Pennsylvania Avenue Extension Bridging Study

Dear Chair Melgar,

The intent of this letter is to substantiate and elaborate on the comments I made at the March 25 CAC Meeting (<https://www.sfcta.org/sites/default/files/2026-04/SFCTA Board Item3 CommunityAdvisoryCommitteeReport 2026-04-14.pdf> page 7 which read as follows:

“HNTB, the selected contractor, previously contributed to significant project issues, including cost increases, challenges with Union Pacific, and inflated estimates on multiple rail projects. He explained that in his upcoming letter to the Board of Supervisors, he would describe potential construction methods, which he asserted could include a trench from Cesar Chavez Street to 22nd Street and over \$2 billion in cost to extend to 7th Street and connect to The Portal.”

Background

In January 2015, I alerted the VTA to a ground freezing failure that had resulted in a sinkhole on 4th Street during the construction of one of the five emergency evacuation cross-passages between the Central Subway twin-bore tunnels (<https://abc7news.com/post/sf-crews-work-to-repair-sinkhole-above-central-subway/457610/>)

This incident led VTA to award a **\$1M study contract to HNTB** to evaluate the feasibility of a 45-ft diameter single bore design to replace **the previous twin-bore design which had a cost estimate of \$4.7B at the time.**

https://www.vta.org/sites/default/files/documents/VTA_BSV_PII_SBS_Single_Bore_Tunnel_Technical_Studies.pdf

Please note that this study is nearly identical to what the SFCTA Board is being asked to approve today.

In October 2017, VTA awarded the contract for Program Management Team (PMT) services for the BART Silicon Valley Phase II Extension (BSVII) project to an **HNTB/WSP Joint Venture**

- **May 2021:** The FTA released a risk analysis calculating a potential "upper bound" cost of **\$9.148 billion**.
- **Late 2022/Early 2023:** VTA submitted a funding plan based on a cost of **\$9.318 billion** for the FTA "New Starts" program, including updated financing costs and inflation.
- **October 2023:** The projected cost was updated to **\$12.2 billion**.
- **2024–2025:** The project cost further increased to an estimated **\$12.7 billion** to **\$12.8 billion**.

VTA will terminate the HNTB/WSP Joint Venture at the May 14 BSVII Oversight Committee

Upcoming Board & Committee Updates



- April 9 BSVII Oversight Committee
 - Cost Reporting
 - Early Work & Pre-Tunneling Construction Overview
 - Funding Update
- May 7 VTA Board Meeting
 - Project Update
- May 14 BSVII Oversight Committee
 - Program Management Services Contract Award
 - Tunneling Options Update



19

<https://santaclaravta.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=4&ID=14554&MeetingID=4553> (slide 19)

Respectfully presented for your consideration

Roland Lebrun

