

Houston Poll Shows Big Support For Livermore BART

By Ron McNicoll

A Livermore BART extension is favored overwhelmingly by the more than 1500 people who responded to a poll conducted by Assemblyman Guy Houston.

Aaron Bone, Houston's chief of staff, said that almost 94 percent of respondents said that BART owes Livermore a station because of "residents' longtime financial investment in BART."

When the question is flipped around, some 84 percent disagreed with the statement that "building Livermore connection to BART is a bad idea," said Bone.

Two other questions were asked. Some 91 percent agreed that sending BART to Livermore will reduce traffic congestion. Ninety percent agreed with the statement that bringing BART to Livermore would improve local air quality.

Bone said the most of the respondents who were identifiable by place were living in Livermore and Tracy. Respondents replied via e-mail from Houston's web site, and also mailed in letters and phoned in replies.

Houston started the informal, unscientific poll a few months ago because it's an issue that his constituents care about, said Bone. "We aired a TV show on cable TV 30 early in the year about BART to Livermore. (BART director) Zoyd Luce and Linda Jeffery Sailors were on the show. Guy said we should check and see where people are on this," said Bone.

Sailors has launched a web site to agitate for a Livermore BART station. Most recently, the site has been upgraded, and can now take people's comments.

In an interview, Sailors said that she "knew that's what would happen," when asked about the high level of support for Livermore BART in Houston's poll. "We need to change the political will, and ask for it (BART). That's how we got the first station."

"BART told us that we didn't have enough people to fill the trains. But when the Dublin/Pleasanton line came in, it reached the 10-year projected ridership in the first week. The number never went lower," said Sailors.

Sailors was mayor and city councilmember in Dublin during part of the campaigning time to get BART.

Livermore paid property taxes to BART on the original bond over the past 40 years, ending a few years ago. Although that has been paid off, Livermore residents are paying through Measure B, which funds county transportation projects, including BART.

It's a matter of simple justice that BART should come to Livermore, said Sailors.

Sailors' web site is www.livermoreBART.org. It has a link to Houston's poll.

Bone said that his office will be removing the poll from Houston's web site soon.