

# How Silicon Valley business fared on key ballot measures

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Santa Clara County's voters across the board obviously agree with tech industry leaders and labor organizations that transportation and housing are huge concerns for the economic future of Silicon Valley.

That's why two taxes that each require two-thirds of voters to enact stand on the verge of approval Wednesday morning with almost half the votes counted.



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But on an important measure where business and labor were on opposite sides – the “opportunity to work” Measure E that limits business freedom to hire additional part-time workers – voters sided with labor 64-36.

Measure B, which would hike the sales tax a half-cent for 30 years to raise \$6.4 billion and extend BART to downtown San Jose, enjoyed nearly 71 percent approval in the post-midnight vote tally. It's the fourth time since 1984 that county voters have approved a transportation improvement sales tax increase.

“If these numbers hold, it underscores again the vision and values of Silicon Valley voters, who don't whine about traffic but find winning solutions to tackle that traffic,” said [Carl Guardino](#), the head of the tech-oriented Silicon Valley Leadership Group who led the Measure B campaign.

Measure A, which would hike property taxes \$12.66 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation to spend \$950 million addressing homelessness, is barely over the approval threshold but

nevertheless is winning 67-33.

Measure A was not endorsed by the leadership group or the **San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce**, but both business organizations remained neutral rather than oppose it.

“I’m not surprised by the margins for either A or B,” said Santa Clara County Assessor [Lawrence Stone](#). “It goes to show that the people in Santa Clara County are a lot more sensitive to our problems than nationally.”

In the City of San Jose, meanwhile, voters parted ways with the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Association to support Measure E, which needs only a simple majority to be enacted.

Business interests objected to the loss of hiring flexibility rather than being required to offer extra hours first to part-time workers already on their payrolls. But [Derecka Mehrens](#), executive director of labor think tank Working Partnerships USA, said “It rang true with people’s values that if you have a qualified, trained worker who wants to work, they should get access to hours as they become available. It was a no-brainer for people.”

On another San Jose issue, voters went for Measure G, an increase in the business tax, that was first proposed by [Scott Myers-Lipton](#), the San Jose State University sociology professor who proposed the city’s minimum wage increase four years ago that sparked a national movement.

Unlike the minimum wage, however, the Chamber of Commerce was on board with Measure G after working out changes in Myers-Lipton’s original version, which was the first change in the business tax in 30 years and will produce \$13 million a year for city coffers.

“Everybody agreed it was just so out-of-whack,” Myers-Lipton said. “We modernized the business tax. It’s going after the groups that have done very well in our community. But we have infrastructure that’s in crisis, police officers and fire and the roads – what the basic needs of the city are – so we asked the mid- to large businesses that have been doing well to pay their fair share. And the citizens of San Jose said ‘yes.’”

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