



***Press Release***

*Office of Economic Development*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact

**Steven Brewster**  
**(415) 577-8851 mobile**  
**San Jose Office of Economic Development**  
**steven.brewster@sanjoseca.gov**

**SAN JOSE TO HOST INNOVATIVE PODCAR  
TECHNOLOGY FORUM AND SHOWCASE**

***International conference to attract today's leading transportation experts creating  
future solutions for tomorrow's mobility issues***

SAN JOSE, CALIF., MARCH 8, 2010—San Jose has been chosen as the site for an international conference focused on developing a new type of automated transit technology known as podcars. *Podcar City: San Jose, Innovating Sustainable Communities*, will be held on October 27-29, 2010, at San Jose City Hall, 200 E. Santa Clara St. The event is being organized by the International Institute of Sustainable Transportation, a U.S. non-profit initiated by the Swedish Institute for Sustainable Transportation and California transportation and energy research institutes.

Sponsors include the City of San Jose and the Mineta Transportation Institute, which is affiliated with San Jose State University's College of Business.

San Jose was selected to be the host for this international gathering based on the City's leadership on innovative, solutions--based mobility projects, including plans to build a podcar system, to address today's infrastructure and climate challenges.

"We look forward to welcoming the world's top transportation minds to San Jose this fall," said Mayor Chuck Reed. "With the opening of our new airport this year, the addition of high-speed rail, the extension of BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) and now the development of the first podcar system in the U.S., it's San José's goal to build one of the world's great transit-friendly cities. Being chosen as the site for this international conference underscores San José's place in transportation innovation. Podcars will help San Jose reach its Green Vision goals while becoming a model for other cities around the world."

The 2009 conference, *PODCAR CITY Transport and Climate*, was held in Malmö, Sweden, and produced in conjunction with the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, COP 15. The conference focused on deploying podcars around the globe. Projects are currently underway in England (at Heathrow Airport), Abu Dhabi, Korea, and Sweden. Participants attended the conference with representatives from several European countries, India, Kuwait, Brazil, Mexico, New York, Washington DC, Minnesota, and California.

Hans Larsen, acting director of San Jose's Department of Transportation, represented San Jose at the conference and presented the City's plans for a podcar system at Mineta San Jose International Airport connecting with the nearby Light Rail, Caltrain, and future BART stations. The City is partnering with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority to build the transit system.

"On behalf of Kompass, an organization for cities interested in promoting podcar technology and implementation in Sweden, we very much look forward to bringing this idea to the United States and especially to a forward-thinking city like San Jose," said Hans Lindqvist, Chairman of the Kompass Network and former member of the European Parliament.

Podcars, also known as Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) or an Automated Transit Network (ATN), make up a system of small, lightweight, driverless, computer-controlled vehicles operated on an elevated track. The system is similar to a horizontal elevator, allowing riders to skip stations and go directly to their destination. Stations are off the main line, so travel is non-stop.

The system costs less to build and operate than conventional transit. A podcar system has the potential to significantly reduce pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions because it expands the reach of traditional transit by linking them more closely to neighborhoods, workplaces and other key destinations.

Equally important, a podcar system requires less power to operate and consequently has the potential to be powered in part, or entirely, via renewable energy. The flexibility and convenience of a podcar system is also likely to appeal to "choice" riders, expanding the number of people who use transit.

San Jose is on track to build the first podcar system in the nation. The initial system would serve the San Jose Airport, connect to Caltrain/future BART and Light Rail stations, and to other key destinations around the airport. If it is successful, San Jose would expand the system to other areas of the city.

"This will be a truly innovative conference for San Jose, the Capital of Silicon Valley." said Christer Lindstrom, founder of the International Institute for Sustainable Transportation. "The City has a worldwide reputation for being a forward-thinking model for the rest of America. We had no doubt that this was the right time and the right place."

"Podcars fit perfectly with public transit and high-speed rail," said Rod Diridon, Executive Director of the Mineta Transportation Institute and a California High Speed Rail Authority board member. "They are a brilliant solution to the first and last mile of travel, connecting people to the primary transportation lines. They also allow many

people to have greater mobility, such as seniors, disabled people, and anyone else who cannot easily walk to transit.”

For more information about Podcar 2010 and previous Podcar conferences, please visit [www.podcar.org/sanjose](http://www.podcar.org/sanjose)

###

#### **ABOUT SAN JOSE 'S GREEN VISION**

On October 7, 2007, Mayor Chuck Reed introduced San Jose's Green Vision, which sets 10 ambitious goals for environmental protection and economic development. This 15-year plan envisions: creating 25,000 Clean Tech jobs; building or retrofitting 50 million square feet of green buildings; installing 100,000 solar roofs (1/10 of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's 1 million solar roofs for California initiative); reducing per capita electricity use by half; becoming a zero waste city; recycling and reusing 100 percent of the City's water; and moving to 100 percent renewable energy. A key part of the San Jose Green Vision is the creation of a Green Mobility system—an integrated and sustainable way to get from place to place. This system focuses on long-term land use planning, reducing emissions from vehicles, embracing clean transportation technology, building smart green streets, expanding pedestrian and bicycling opportunities, and creating a green airport.

#### **ABOUT THE CITY OF SAN JOSE**

From its founding in 1777 as California's first city, San Jose has been a leader, driven by its spirit of innovation. Today, San Jose stands as the largest city in Northern California and the Capital of Silicon Valley—the world's leading center of innovation. The City, the 10<sup>th</sup> largest in the U.S., is committed to remaining a top-ranked place to do business, to work and to live. For more information, visit, [www.sanjoseca.gov](http://www.sanjoseca.gov).

#### **ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION (INIST)**

INIST promotes new modes of sustainable transportation through gathering and disseminating high quality information and research. INIST supports automated, effective and safe modes of transportation that can add value to existing transportation systems and create attractive, effective and economical alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles that improve people's quality of life. For more information, visit [www.INIST.org](http://www.INIST.org)

#### **ABOUT THE KOMPASS NETWORK OF CITIES**

Kompass is an expanding network of municipalities and cities working to advance podcars - a climate friendly transportation system. In less than two years, 17 municipalities have joined Kompass Sweden. The organization will discuss the possibility of initiating a Kompass USA and a Kompass International at the San Jose conference this October. For more information, visit [www.podcar.org/kompass/global/index.htm](http://www.podcar.org/kompass/global/index.htm)

#### **ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE**

The [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU. The institute is funded by Congress through the US DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other public and private grants and donations, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The US DOT selected MTI as a national "Center of Excellence" following a 2002 competition. The Institute has a Board of Trustees whose internationally-respected members represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from a board assessment of the industry's unmet needs and led directly to choosing the San Jose State University College of Business as the Institute's home. MTI conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer focusing on multi-modal surface transportation policy and management issues. Visit [www.transweb.sjsu.edu](http://www.transweb.sjsu.edu)