

2023 Youth Leadership Summit

Hosted by Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action

Summit Schedule

9:30 - 10:00AM **Registration and Networking!**

10:00 - 10:30AM **Event Begins: Welcome + Agenda of the Day**

Our Climate Story, [Cici Xu](#), Youth Leader, SVYCA

FUHSD-SVYCA Partnership, [Elisabeth Floyd](#), Youth Leader, SVYCA / FUHSD Student Trustee; [Graham Clark](#), FUHSD Superintendent

Climate Impact and Movement - [Rohan Pandit](#), Executive Director, SVYCA

Emcees: Radhika Goel, Youth Leader, SVYCA

Anjuli Mishra, Lead, San Mateo County Youth Climate Action Team

10:30 - 11:15AM **Keynote Emissions Panel + Q&A**

Speakers: [Ken Branson](#), Senior Policy Advisor, State Senator Josh Becker

[Veda Banerjee](#), Communications Director, California Environmental Voters

[Rod Diridon Sr.](#), Emeritus Executive Director, Mineta Transportation Institute

Q&A with Youth (10 mins)

Moderator: Kaushik Tota, VP of SVYCA's Board of Directors

11:15 - 11:45AM **Group Photos, Break**

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM **Climate Panels (Energy, Transportation, or Circular Economy) - separate rooms**

1. Energy

Speakers: [Vanessa Shin](#), Community Outreach Specialist, Peninsula Clean Energy

[Kathleen Hughes](#), Assistant Director, Silicon Valley Power

[Eric Rodriguez](#), Programs Lead, Silicon Valley Clean Energy

[Lina Williams](#), Deputy Director, San Jose Clean Energy

Moderator: George Hu; Lead; Saratoga/Los Gatos Youth Climate Action



2. Transportation

Speakers: [Rod Sinks](#), Former Mayor of Cupertino, Silicon Valley Clean Energy Founder
[Sam Sargent](#), Director, Strategy and Policy, Caltrain
[Monica Mallon](#), Public Transit Advocate, Turnout4Transit

Moderator: Esther Duong, Youth Leaders, SVYCA

3. Circular Economy, Nature solutions

Speaker: [Lena Eyn](#), Community Impact and Policy Specialist, Open Space Authority
[Bill Shireman](#), Executive Director, CA Against Waste
[Kat Hanrahan](#), Construction and Demolition Coordinator, SF Environment

Moderator: Gwyn Azar, Youth Leader, SVYCA

12:45 - 1:45PM **Lunch, Resource Tables, Networking**

2:00 - 2:45PM **Climate Career Panel, Q&A with youth**

Speakers: [Evan Hynes](#), CEO, Climatebase
[Antoinette West](#), Career Pathways Coordinator, Elemental Excelsior
[Dan Evans](#), Senior Director of Product Management, Smart Cities, Itron

Moderator: Diya Kandhra, Cici Xu, Youth Leader, SVYCA

2:45 - 4:00PM **Breakout for Strategy Discussions, Closing Remarks**

Youth-led discussions centered around taking action steps toward achieving advocacy and policy priorities – featuring elected officials and environmental organizations of respective regions.

Brief comment from [State Senator Dave Cortese](#)

4:00PM **Networking**



Speakers



Cici Xu, SVYCA Youth Leader

Cici, an Economics and Energy Studies student at Yale University, is the former co-lead of the Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action State Advocacy Team and Saratoga/Los Gatos Youth Climate Action Team. Cici currently takes on the role of co-main organizer for SVYCA's annual Youth Leadership Summit. Cici, being affected by severe environmental issues throughout her childhood, became extremely passionate about fighting back climate change, speaking up for environmental justice, and bringing awareness of sustainability to her community.



Elisabeth Floyd, SVYCA Youth Leader

Elisa Floyd, a Senior at Homestead High School, champions environmental sustainability wherever she goes. In the summer of 2022, she co-founded the Fremont Union High School District's (FUHSD) Climate Action Team, a partnership between FUHSD and nonprofit Silicon Valley Youth Climate Action (SVYCA), in order to help create a districtwide climate action plan with comprehensive solutions including climate literacy and waste management. She currently serves as the student board representative on the FUHSD Board of Trustees, representing over 10,000 FUHSD students. Elisa's commitment to our planet and its people began in the 4th grade, when she worked with her teacher to implement her elementary school's first Zero Waste Program. Since that young age, she has and continues to focus on using education to empower youth communities to engage in climate advocacy and become environmental stewards.



Graham Clark, FUHSD Superintendent

Graham Clark, a longtime educator and administrator within the Fremont Union High School District, was appointed as Superintendent in May 2022. During the course of his 25 years in education, all of which he has spent in FUHSD, Clark has served as a high school math teacher, assistant principal, principal and district office administrator. In his previous position as Deputy Superintendent, Clark oversaw administrative services, the bond and technology programs for the District and was a leader in its efforts to implement a 1:1 technology device program and foster positive relationships with each of the District's bargaining units. Clark earned master's degrees in Education and Business Administration, from San Jose and Santa Clara University respectively. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Finance from Santa Clara University. Clark is a long-time resident of the area and has worked in FUHSD for the past 25 years. He is also a member of Cupertino Rotary and the Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce.





Rohan Pandit, SVYCA Executive Director

Rohan Pandit is the Executive Director of SVYCA, appointed by the Board of Directors in May 2023. Prior to joining SVYCA, Rohan served as a top aide for California State Senator Josh Becker. He is a passionate advocate for innovative climate policy and empowering youth to take action in the fight against climate change by providing them with opportunities for engagement and green career pathways. Rohan has experience in political organizing, having previously worked as a Field Organizer for the Biden Campaign. Rohan previously served on the Board of SVYCA from Oct 2022 - April 2023. Additionally, Rohan has been a Public Safety Commissioner for the City of Cupertino since 2022. Rohan graduated from the University of California, San Diego with a degree in political science.



Dave Cortese, CA State Senator (District 15)

Senator Dave Cortese was elected in November of 2020 to represent State Senate District 15 which encompasses much of Santa Clara County in the heart of Silicon Valley. Along with his accomplished career as an attorney and business owner, the Senator previously served on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for over a decade, with four years as Board President, on the San Jose City Council for eight years, including two years as Vice Mayor, and as a trustee for the East Side Union High School District for eight years. He grew up in San Jose as part of a family that has been active in civic, cultural, and business activities for generations. Dave graduated from Bellarmine College Preparatory then University of California, Davis where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Political Science. He earned his Juris Doctorate at Lincoln University Law School in San Jose.



Ken Branson, State Senator Josh Becker

Ken is an experienced entrepreneur, engineer, product manager, engineering manager, and philanthropist. After a career in enterprise software and a successful IPO, he turned his attention to helping to address climate change, the defining challenge of our time. Ken first focused on applying his experience to clean tech product companies (long duration energy storage at Imergy and reducing methane leaks from oil & gas operations at Kairos), but he came to believe that we are not lacking for technology to address climate change.

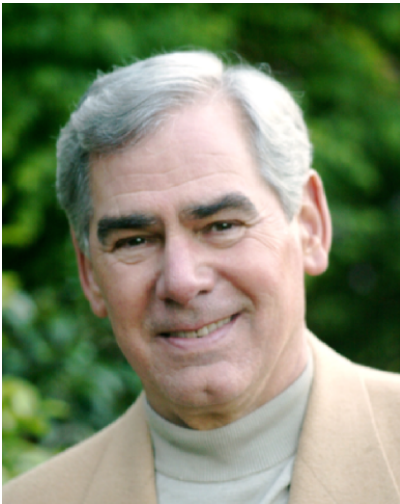
Our real problem is a lack of supportive public policy to create the rules and incentives needed for the private sector to go solve the problem. He's proud to be helping Senator Becker advance the kind of policies we need as California continues to lead the nation in mitigating and adapting to climate change while maintaining a vibrant economy.





Veda Banerjee, California Environmental Voters

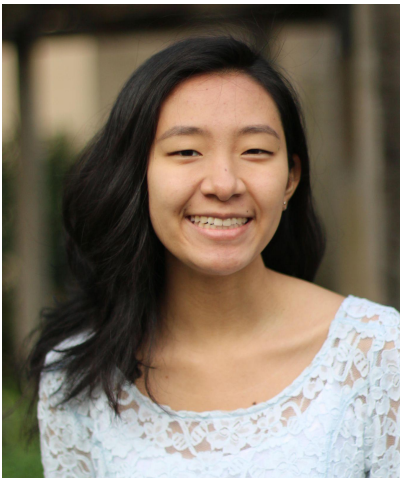
Veda is a seasoned professional in media relations, strategic communications, and digital analytics, with a passion for driving meaningful impact. With a track record of success in leading high-impact initiatives, she has consistently delivered exceptional results for organizations in the nonprofit and environmental sectors. Veda holds an MA in Journalism that is complemented by her digital marketing trainer role at General Assembly. Additionally, her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English Literature showcase her strong communication and storytelling abilities. She has expert-level knowledge in developing business solutions that are environmentally and socially sustainable. She's built strategic relationships, engaged stakeholders, and measured and communicated the impacts and achievements of digital marketing initiatives for nonprofits, social-enterprise organizations, and government agencies.



Rod Diridon Sr., Former Elected Official

Rod Diridon Sr. is an American politician known for his leadership in mass transportation. He served as chair of the California High-Speed Rail Authority from 2001-2003. He currently chairs the advisory board of the United States High Speed Rail Association, and he chairs the National Heritage Area Project for Santa Clara County, California.

The New York Times calls Diridon "a tireless advocate of public transport for the Bay Area." Diridon has also been active in Silicon Valley in leadership on environmental issues, the arts and culture, higher education, community organizations, and philanthropy. Diridon has chaired more than 100 international, national, state and local programs, most related to transit and the environment. He provides legislative testimony on sustainable transportation issues and is regarded by many as the "father" of modern transit service in Silicon Valley.



Vanessa Shin, Peninsula Clean Energy

Vanessa aspires to connect community members with the benefits of clean energy and build relationships with trusted messengers in the community. She manages Peninsula Clean Energy's Outreach Grant Program, coordinates partnerships with schools, and staffs the Community Advisory Committee. Vanessa became interested in the role of clean energy in achieving local sustainability goals through implementing the City of Cupertino's Climate Action Plan. She previously led youth engagement initiatives at Silicon Valley Clean Energy. She received a B.S. in Environmental Science from Santa Clara University.



Kathleen Hughes, Silicon Valley Power

Kathleen Hughes, a leader in Silicon Valley Power for 20+ years, serves as its current Assistant Director. Prior to this role, she oversaw customer engagement, joint powers agencies, and communication at SVP, driving California toward a more sustainable future.

Silicon Valley Power (SVP) works hard to provide its community with reliable electricity and attentive customer service. As a city-owned, not-for-profit municipal electric utility, SVP delivers quality power at rates averaging 25-57% lower than the rates in neighboring cities. SVP follow a basic set of principles that have served as its core values for over one hundred years: Service, Stability, Reliability and Quality.



Eric Rodriguez, Silicon Valley Clean Energy

Eric leads SVCE's neighborhood electrification and building decarbonization stakeholder engagement. Eric has years of experience as a community organizer, public servant, and a policy expert. Recently Eric worked for the City of San José in the City Manager's Office policy team and more recently, served as Assistant Director for the Building Electrification Institute, where he advised cities across the United States on building electrification strategy. Eric has a Master of Public Policy degree from the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, where he focused on technology and emerging mobility policy (including electrification).



Lina Williams, San Jose Clean Energy

Lina has also recently held positions with SunPower and Central Coast Community Energy, the CCA for the Central Coast of California. She has a passion for finding innovative solutions to complex challenges faced by communities impacted by energy burden. Lina Williams is the Deputy Director of Account Services, Marketing & Communications for San José Clean Energy, the Community Choice Aggregator for the City of San José. Lina has also recently held positions with SunPower and Central Coast Community Energy, the CCA for the Central Coast of California. She has a passion for finding innovative solutions to complex challenges faced by communities impacted by energy burden.





Rod Sinks, Silicon Valley Clean Energy

Rod helped lead two high tech start-ups from infancy to successful businesses in engineering management roles after earning degrees in engineering from Stanford and physics from Grinnell College. He currently serves as a trustee of the Fremont Union High School District.

Previously, he served as council member, mayor, founder of Silicon Valley Clean Energy, chair of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and Santa Clara County Cities Association, and a board member of other regional agencies. He champions good governance, strong public schools, environmental stewardship, more housing for all income levels and better public transit.



Sam Sargent, Director at Caltrain

Sam Sargent serves as Director of Strategy and Policy for Caltrain. Prior to joining the railroad's executive team, he served as Director of Strategy, Director of Government Affairs, and Deputy Chief of Staff for Capital Metro in Austin, Texas. A planner and lawyer by training, Sam holds a Bachelors and law degree from Boston University. A lifelong lover of all things transit, he is a Mass Transit 40 Under 40 and Railway Age 25 Under 40 award winner. When he is not working on the railroad, you can find Sam running, reading and exploring California.



Monica Mallon, Turnout4Transit

Monica Mallon is a Santa Clara County advocate and lifelong transit rider. She's used social media and other techniques to increase awareness and action with respect to key transit issues facing Santa Clara County, mobilizing hundreds of residents to make their voices heard at transit board meetings. She first got involved in transit advocacy when she was a student at San Jose State and transit route cuts were being proposed.

During the pandemic when severe transit cuts were being proposed, Monica started Turnout4Transit, a transit advocacy group, to mobilize people to save transit. Monica is a recent San Jose State graduate and lives in Cambrian in unincorporated Santa Clara County where she is the chair of the Cambrian Community Council.





Lena Eyan, Open Space Authority

Lena Eyan is the Community Impact and Policy Specialist for the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority. As a member of the Public Affairs team, Lena supports the agency's engagement at the local, regional, state, and federal level on policy and legislative affairs matters relevant to the Open Space Authority's mission of protecting natural and working landscapes and connecting people to nature.

She also works with staff across the agency to develop and support cross-sector partnerships and opportunities for meaningful community engagement. Lena graduated from Santa Clara University where she studied Psychology, Environmental Studies, and Studio Art, and she is currently pursuing her Masters in Urban Planning at San Jose State University.



Bill Shireman, CA Against Waste

Bill Shireman is a serial social entrepreneur, policy innovator, and conflict mediator who brings together capitalists, activists, conservatives, progressives, and other unusual bedfellows to overcome challenges that often divide them. As President of the non-profit Future 500, he invites Greenpeace, ExxonMobil, Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Mitsubishi and other corporate and environmental leaders to work together. He brokered agreements to create the world's first corporate supply chain standards for sustainable forestry, the most effective beverage container recycling program, and the 2008 agreement by both Greenpeace and Exxon-Mobil to support precisely the same federal tax on carbon, which went absolutely nowhere.



Kat Hanrahan, SF Environment

As a former member of the Bay Area Sustainable Construction Leaders, Kat has led salvage and reuse projects on commercial construction projects within the greater Bay Area, delivering high-quality materials to non-profit organizations for a second life instead of the landfill. In their current role at San Francisco Environment Department, Kat acts as the Construction and Demolition Zero Waste Assistant Coordinator, where they are working to build a reuse economy for building materials through the development of new infrastructure and policy.

Additionally, they are responsible for enforcement of San Francisco's Construction and Demolition Debris Recovery Ordinance, including oversight of 350+ debris transporters and more than 30,000 permitted construction activities that generate approximately 1.5 million tons of debris each year.





Evan Hynes, Climatebase

Evan Hynes is Co-founder & CEO of Climatebase, the world's leading platform for climate careers, having helped connect hundreds-of-thousands of jobseekers to job opportunities at more than 3,000 employers on our platform. Climatebase helps people discover opportunities at climate tech companies and environmental nonprofits — and in doing so, we help those organizations hire the mission-driven talent they need to succeed.

Evan and his team are also spearheading SF Climate Week, a week-long series of self-organized events gathering thousands of organizations and individuals working at the intersection of climate action and innovation to connect, collaborate, and accelerate solutions together.



Antoinette West, Elemental Excelerator

Antoinette West is the Senior Manager of Career Pathways at Elemental Excelerator. Her main responsibility is to amplify and develop career pathways across Clean Energy, Mobility, Agriculture, Water and Innovation sectors, and it is her mission that those who are often impacted first and worst by climate change get a say so in its solutions. She earned an MBA in Sustainable Management and an MPA in Sustainable Solutions from Presidio Graduate School, and remains a proud Howard University Alum. Her previous roles included Project Director for ACT303, a collective impact group determined to overcome transit oriented displacement in Denver, and Manager of K-8 and Virtual Career Exploration within the Office of Career and College Success at Denver Public Schools. She cares deeply about social impact and is excited to welcome more diverse talent into the climate sector.



Dan Evans, Itron

Dan Evans is Senior Director of Product Marketing at Itron, where he is responsible for the Smart Cities Line of Business. The role includes driving the product strategy and Go To Market commercial offerings and partnerships. Itron, Inc. (NASDAQ: ITRI) is a proven global leader in energy, water, smart city, industrial IoT (IIoT) and intelligent infrastructure. For utilities, cities and humanity today and in the future, Itron builds innovative solutions that create new efficiencies, enable the clean energy transition, drive down costs, improve reliability, connect communities, and increase and promote resourcefulness. Dan has a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from San Jose State University, in California.

