

Date: October 5, 2010

## **BOARD MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

**THROUGH:** General Manager, Michael T. Burns

**FROM:** Chief CMA Officer, John Ristow

**SUBJECT:** Discussions on Complete Streets Program Development

## **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The 2008 Complete Streets Act calls for cities and counties to consider the needs of all users in the planning, design and construction of new transportation projects. Beginning 2011, cities and counties are required to modify the Circulation Element of their General Plans to include Complete Streets policies to ensure all users, including bicyclists and pedestrians, are able to move safely along and across our streets. A similar bill is making its way through the Federal legislature to ensure federally-funded projects adhere to complete streets principles.

While Complete Streets is just gaining momentum on the state and federal level, VTA has long promoted the Complete Streets concept in policy and in practice. VTA is responsible for ensuring all transportation projects are well planned, accessible and safe for all users thus establishing a strong planning practice in multimodal design and planning. Through VTA's funding programs and complete set of comprehensive multimodal design guidelines for bicyclists and pedestrians, VTA's existing efforts provide the countywide framework for Member Agencies to support Complete Streets principles on a local level.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The purpose of this memo is to review VTA's current and future efforts in support of Complete Streets. At the October BPAC meeting, VTA will request input from the Committee on the Complete Streets program developing.

#### **A. Policy Framework**

VTA's current efforts toward this end includes an established policy framework in VTA's longrange transportation plan Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2035, Community Design and Transportation (CDT) funding program and recent resolution approving a multimodal design approach on highway projects. One of the main objectives of VTP 2035 is to work in concert with Member Agencies to better integrate transportation and land use decisions to deliver a multimodal transportation system. This effort requires high level coordination between VTA, Member Agencies and regional, State and Federal partners to direct development in transit corridors to ensure transportation investments are supportive of alternate transportation modes. In an effort to make Complete Streets an explicit part of VTA's long-range plan, VTA will modify the existing language in the update of VTP 2040 to describe the countywide collaborative effort between VTA and its Member Agencies to deliver Complete Streets as a program and planning tool for promoting multimodal projects.

One mechanism for VTA to influence the development of smart land use and transportation investments is to fund projects through its Community Design and Transportation (CDT) program. The CDT program is supported by the Community Design & Transportation (CDT): A Manual of Best Practices for Integrating Transportation and Land Use (CDT Manual) to promote design standards that results in multimodal, pedestrian-friendly streets and transit-oriented, compact development projects. Similarly, the Local Streets and County Roads Program evaluates program eligibility for funding based on project types that includes multimodal reconstruction of streets, new or major upgrades to sidewalks and bicycle facilities, and traffic calming measures.

In January 2008, VTA's Board of Directors approved a multimodal approach for reconstructing the Tully Road/Hwy 101 interchange to follow multimodal design principles of VTA's CDT

Manual and other design guidelines. The Board action directs staff to follow the multimodal design approach used for the Tully/Hwy 101 interchange project on all future roadway improvement projects, as feasible.

#### **B. VTA Multimodal Design Guidelines**

VTA has several documents that provide technical guidance to local agencies, developers, and project sponsors on how to integrate transportation and land use, how to design for pedestrians, and how to design for bicycle use. These include the VTA Community Design & Transportation (CDT) Manual, Pedestrian Technical Guidelines (PTG), and Bicycle Technical Guidelines (BTG). Together, these three documents provide guidance on how to bring “complete streets” principles to locally initiated development projects, transportation projects, and plans.

#### **C. Complete Streets Approach to the Development Review/Proactive CMP Process**

As part of its Development Review/Proactive CMP process, VTA staff reviews and comments on development project proposals, land use plans, and plans for transportation projects to ensure that transportation considerations are adequately integrated into the plans. When reviewing local projects or plans through its Development Review/Proactive CMP process, staff evaluates the project’s relationships to the countywide Congestion Management Program (CMP) including measures to reduce single-occupant automobile use and promote alternative travel modes. In addition, staff considers how well the proposed project meets the principles in VTA’s CDT Manual, PTG and BTG. VTA staff may comment on areas that are not consistent with VTA’s technical guidelines, suggest areas that could be improved, or offer positive comments about good design features that are included.

#### **D. Project Implementation**

VTA’s Highway Program requires bicycle and pedestrian elements on surface streets and intersections, according to the Board direction as referenced in Section A. The three guidelines are regularly consulted for incorporating multimodal design standards in highway projects. VTA’s funding programs rely on the CDT Manual, BTG, PTG and other locally-adopted guidelines to evaluate project design standards for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation. VTA requires project sponsors to complete the MTC Routine Accommodation checklist.

#### **E. Five Elements of the Complete Streets System Program**

VTA is working to develop a Complete Streets Program that broadens the scope from typical design-oriented policies to a program that considers the entire life cycle of the street. Tentatively, the Program will cover five major multimodal elements including Geometrics (designing the road for all users), Continuity (consistency in street layout and capacity), Connectivity (use the roadway system to connect all modes), Technology (upgrade operations and safety of transportation network), and Maintenance (maintain the street network). At the May 2010 BPAC and TAC meetings staff introduced the preliminary scope of VTA’s Complete Streets Program and asked Committee members for input.

This memo serves to continue that discussion on developing Complete Streets.

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