



Date: December 18, 2006  
 Committee Meeting Date: January 10, 2007  
 Board Meeting Date: February 1, 2007  
 ACTION X DISCUSSION        INFO       

**BOARD MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Citizens Advisory Committee  
 Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
 Board of Directors

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

**FROM:** Carolyn M. Gonot  
 Chief Development Officer *Carolyn M Gonot*

**SUBJECT:** Evaluation Criteria for Community Design and Transportation Program Capital Grants

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and recommend that the VTA Board of Directors approve the revised evaluation criteria and procedure clarification for selecting projects and awarding Community Design and Transportation Program Capital Grants.

**BACKGROUND:**

In Fall 2002, the VTA Board of Directors adopted the Community Design and Transportation (CDT) Program as its primary program for integrating transportation and land use. The CDT Program is designed to proactively influence the planning and development process by providing information and resources including planning, technical, and design assistance to VTA Member Agencies. During the development of the program, Member Agencies suggested that VTA provide financial assistance to encourage the implementation of the CDT Program concepts.

Accordingly, VTA established two new Grant Fund Programs: CDT Planning Grants and CDT Capital Grants.

- The CDT Planning Grants provide funding for preparation of projects for implementation by Member Agencies, and to compete for VTA CDT Capital Grants, as well as MTC Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) capital grants. In August 2004, VTA issued the first CDT Planning Grants call-for-projects. The VTA Board awarded planning grants

totaling \$475,000 in February 2005. Two additional cycles of \$475,000 each are currently funded. VTA anticipates issuing another CDT Planning Grants call-for-projects during 2007.

- The CDT Capital Grants program is intended to help Member Agencies design and build transit-and pedestrian-friendly projects and to include transit-and pedestrian-friendly elements in capital projects related to transit facilities, streets, and core areas such as downtowns. Funding for the CDT Capital Grant Program is identified in the 25-year long-range countywide transportation plan, Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2030, adopted by the VTA Board in February 2005.

To be eligible to apply for the CDT Grant Programs, Member Agencies must formally endorse the CDT Program. All Member Agencies have accomplished this action. These programs award grants to Member Agencies to assist them with planning, design, and construction of projects that embrace the concepts, principles, practices, and actions outlined in VTA's *Community Design and Transportation Manual of Best Practices for Integrating Transportation and Land Use*.

The VTA Board adopted the evaluation criteria for the CDT Capital Grants on April 6, 2006. On July 18, 2006, VTA issued a call for CDT Capital Grant projects. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) provided \$8.8 million in federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) and Transportation Enhancements (TE) funds for the first cycle. Fifteen projects were submitted. A Scoring Committee reviewed and evaluated the projects by using the VTA Board-approved policies and criteria. The Scoring Committee recommended funding for all projects that scored above 50 points. Five projects scored above 50 points. These five projects would receive approximately \$5.84 million in total. With the committee's and staff's recommendation, roughly \$2.9 million would remain for a second round of programming.

### **DISCUSSION:**

After the scoring process for the Capital Grants, the Scoring Committee felt that refinements to the criteria would result in a more efficient process in determining what projects should be funded. VTA staff and the Capital Improvement Program Working Group, a working group of VTA's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), has conducted reviews of the current CDT Capital Grants procedures and project evaluation criteria. Their contributions have been incorporated in the Capital Grant Program Evaluation Criteria and Procedures, which are presented in Attachment A.

Once there is Board approval of the proposed criteria, VTA staff issues a call for projects for CDT Capital Grants. This will be the second cycle of CDT Capital Grants, covering a funding period ending in fiscal year 2009 and providing a total of \$2.9 million. A maximum of \$1.5 million will be awarded per project. A 20% local match of the requested grant amount is required. The requested grant funds may be awarded in full or in part. All eligible projects must include a pedestrian and transit component, and must be located in a core, corridor or station area as defined in VTA's CDT Program (see map in Attachment B).

Eligible capital projects include, but are not limited to, pedestrian projects, streetscape/corridor enhancement projects, and pedestrian-oriented streets improvements. Projects would include elements such as well-designed streetscapes connecting pedestrian routes to transit facilities, active public spaces, improvements to the overall pedestrian environment, and innovative high-quality design. Attachment A includes further description of eligible projects.

With the adoption of these procedures and criteria, it is anticipated that VTA will issue a CDT Capital Grant Program call-for-projects in February 2007. Table 1 shows the schedule for the next round of CDT Capital Grants. Prior to the application deadline, VTA will sponsor a workshop to assist Member Agencies with their applications. Grants awards will occur in summer 2007. Council resolutions approving the Member Agency’s intent to complete the Capital project will be required with grant awards.

**Table 1.**  
Community Design & Transportation Program  
Second Round Schedule

VTA Board Approval - Evaluation Criteria	February 1, 2007
Release Call for Projects	February 6, 2007
Applications Due	April 6, 2007
Scoring Committee	April 16, 2007
Field Visits	April 24, 2007
Capital Improvement Program Working Group Review	May 22, 2007
Technical Advisory Committee Approval	June 14, 2007
VTA Board Approval - CDT Capital Project List	July 5, 2007
Council Resolutions Due	September 7, 2007
Project Obligation Date	May 31, 2009

**ALTERNATIVES:**

There are no practical alternatives to this action.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no impact to the VTA Enterprise fund.

Prepared by: Chris Augenstein, Transportation Planning Manager

## Attachment A

### **VTA Community Design & Transportation Program CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM -- EVALUATION CRITERIA & PROCEDURES**

#### **Program Description**

The VTA Capital Grant Program will fund capital projects that implement the guidelines of the Community Design for Transportation (CDT) Program, Manual of Best Practices for Integrating Transportation and Land Use. Outcomes of this process should be projects that are creative, enhance connections with transit facilities, employ innovative and high-quality design, improve the pedestrian environment, enhance economic vitality, make better use of the land, infrastructure, and resources, and/or improve community connectivity, livability, sustainability, and sense-of-place.

#### **Who can apply, and how are funds awarded?**

VTA Member Agencies may apply for these funds. VTA CDT Capital Grant funds are awarded on a competitive basis. Recipients are required to have an approved Council Resolution to carry out the project. Council Resolutions must be received by VTA within three (3) months of award approval by the VTA Board of Directors.

#### **How Much Funding is Available?**

VTA has \$2.9 million in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for the current CDT Capital Grant Program cycle of FY 08/09. Project sponsors may request a maximum of \$1,500,000 per project. A 20-percent local match is required. Local match is defined as the dollars used to match the requested grant amount. The match must consist of a minimum of 11.5% in cash contributions with staff time accounting for a maximum of 8.5%. The requested grant funds may be awarded wholly or in part.

#### **Eligible Projects**

All projects must be located in a core, corridor or station area as defined in VTA's CDT Program. Please see the CDT Handbook for eligible locations. In addition, eligible projects must pertain to a physical setting where deficiencies exist (or will exist within 3 years), and which, if remedied by the proposed project, will provide significant community benefit through walkability, place-making and/or transit access. The proposal must include an issue statement that clearly identifies the purpose and need of the Capital project along with the desired outcomes. **No projects may be *Bike Only*.** Capital projects may include but are not limited to:

- **Pedestrian Projects such as:**
  - Improved pedestrian connections with bus stops, transit centers, or train stations
  - Bus stop, transit center, or station area amenity with enhancements
  - Pedestrian grade separations (overcrossings and undercrossings)
  - Pedestrian connections between transit facilities and residential areas, employments areas, or major activity centers

- Sidewalk enhancements such as widening, special paving or provision of pedestrian amenities
  - Sidewalk Gap closure projects
- **Streetscape/Corridor enhancements including:**
    - New sidewalks
    - Sidewalk widening
    - Closing gaps in the pedestrian network
    - Street trees, landscaping, and street furniture
    - Small parks, plazas, and public areas
- **Pedestrian-oriented streets or alleys, plazas, paseos & pocket parks related to transit facilities or multimodal streets:**
    - Conversions to a pedestrian only street (or limited vehicular access street)
    - Conversions to a multimodal street (e.g. sidewalk/pedestrian enhancements, bike lanes [must be combined with other improvements], and transit stop/station enhancements, and transit priority treatments)
    - Enhancements of small urban public spaces including landscaping enhancements, and connections with surrounding land uses and activities

**Project sponsors are encouraged to contact VTA Staff if they have any questions regarding the eligibility of the project that they wish to submit.**

### **Project Evaluation**

Projects must obtain an overall minimum score of 70 points to be eligible for funding. Receipt of at least 70 points does not guarantee funding. Each project will be evaluated based on the criteria presented below:

#### ***CDT Program Goals (50 points)***

- This project implements and supports key concepts outlined in Chapter 1 of VTA's Community Design and Transportation Program (CDT) *Manual of Best Practices for Integrating Transportation and Land Use*. (Explain how the project addresses all the concepts that apply to the project.)

#### **Key Concepts**

- The project designs and constructs buildings and spaces in such a way that it is inviting to pedestrians and establishes character.
- The project locates land uses that with careful consideration of access by foot, bicycle, transit, and automobile and makes more efficient use of Santa Clara County's land, transportation infrastructure, public funds, and private investment.
- The project integrates land use, streets, pedestrian networks, transit modes, and development projects.

- The project provides the environment with a desirable range of choices.
- The project implements and supports key principles outlined in Chapter 2 of VTA’s Community Design and Transportation Program (CDT) *Manual of Best Practices for Integrating Transportation and Land Use*. (Explain how the project addresses all the principles that apply to the project.)

Principles

- The project targets growth to core, corridors, and station areas that capitalize on existing investments in infrastructure such as roads, highways, transit, and other public facilities.
- The project increases the intensity and diversity of land uses that promotes transit use and helps create more vibrant, walkable communities.
- The project provides a mix of compatible uses within close proximity of each other can reduce the need for automobile trips and enhance community livability.
- The project designs the entire built environment for human scale movement. It involves development of community-oriented transportation strategies designed to limit the extent to which it is necessary to travel long distances in order to access the basic necessities of life.
- The project is designed with attention to local context that helps the community create a unique identity and forge the connections that establish a continuous urban fabric.
- The project, through the use of vacant, underutilized and abandoned areas, the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of existing structures, and sensible density increases, urban infill projects help transform underutilized areas into centers of diversity and activity.
- The project creates a multimodal transportation system that offers the public the option to walk, bike, or take transit to reach their destinations and serves all users well.
- The project establishes streets as places that effectively balances the needs of people on the move and those at rest.
- The project enables and/or encourages the integration of streets, transit, pedestrian and bicycle ways as part of a system of routes, or provides high priority links in systems outlined by existing plans.
- The project manages parking to reduce the impact of automobiles on the urban environment.

***Project Context and Setting (10 points)***

- Project describes a purpose and a need.
- Project pertains to a physical setting where deficiencies exist (or will exist within 3 years).

- Project has demonstrated community outreach and support and describes a collaborative planning process undertaken by the local government agency that will be involved and their roles and strategy.

***Project Readiness (20 points)***

- A feasibility study has been completed and/or an environmental clearance has been certified.
- The project has secured any necessary rights-of-way or developer contributions. The project must have secured local matching funds.
- Project funding summary and timeline as well as construction timeline are required.
- Funding must be accurately identified for the project.
- How realistic is the project financing?

***Project Benefits (20 points)***

- The overall project will have identifiable and likely synergistic effects (provision of any single community benefit will likely induce additional community benefits).
- The overall outcome of the project meets the needs of the CDT Concepts and Principles.
- The project remedies a current or anticipated problem and will result in significant community benefits. Project benefits include the following categories (Select only those that apply):

• Walkability	• Streetscape Improvements	• Pedestrian Friendly Economic Development/Access to Daily Needs
• Bicycle Facilities	• Safety & Security for Pedestrians & Bicycles	• Protection of Community Cultural, Historic or Environmental Resources
• Public Transit Access	• Socio-economic Benefits	• Increase in pedestrian and bike trips and decrease in single occupant auto trips or trips lengths
• Traffic Calming	• Community Friendly Parking	• Transit facilities, such as bus stops and station area improvements

## **Application/Scoring Process**

**Step 1:** VTA will issue a “call for projects”. As part of the call, VTA staff will hold at least one workshop to help interested agencies put together a CDT Capital Project application.

**Step 2:** Applicants submit a project proposal to VTA for funding consideration. The project proposal should include the amount of Capital Funds requested, amount and source of local match, brief description of sponsor, how project fulfills evaluation criteria shown above, scope of work that describes each itemized task to be undertaken and the resulting project budget and schedule, project map area, and existing condition photos.

**Step 3:** A Scoring Committee will be formed and will be comprised of VTA staff and representatives from VTA’s capital Improvement Subcommittee. The scoring will be divided into two parts: the first phase of the scoring will cover the review of the project based upon the application submitted by the sponsoring agency; the second phase of scoring will be a site visit of the proposed project. Project sponsors should be available by phone during the initial scoring of the project application in order to answer any questions the Scoring Committee may have. The Scoring Committee will rate the application submittals during the Preliminary Scoring Process between 0 and 100 points.

Projects receiving at least 50 points during the preliminary scoring phase will move onto the Field Site Review phase.

**Step 4:** The Project Scoring Committee will perform a field site visit as part of the evaluation process for all projects that receive a preliminary score of at least 50 points during the Preliminary Scoring Phase. After the field visits, the Scoring Committee may adjust the scoring to reflect the site visit. **It is highly recommended that staff from the sponsoring agency be present at the site visit to field any questions regarding the project.**

**Step 5:** Projects must receive at least 70 points to qualify for funding from the program. Receipt of at least 70 points does not guarantee funding. Funding will be awarded based on the total points score. Projects may be awarded in full or in part. It is recommended that sponsoring agencies provide information on fundable segments of the projects, in the event full funding is not available.

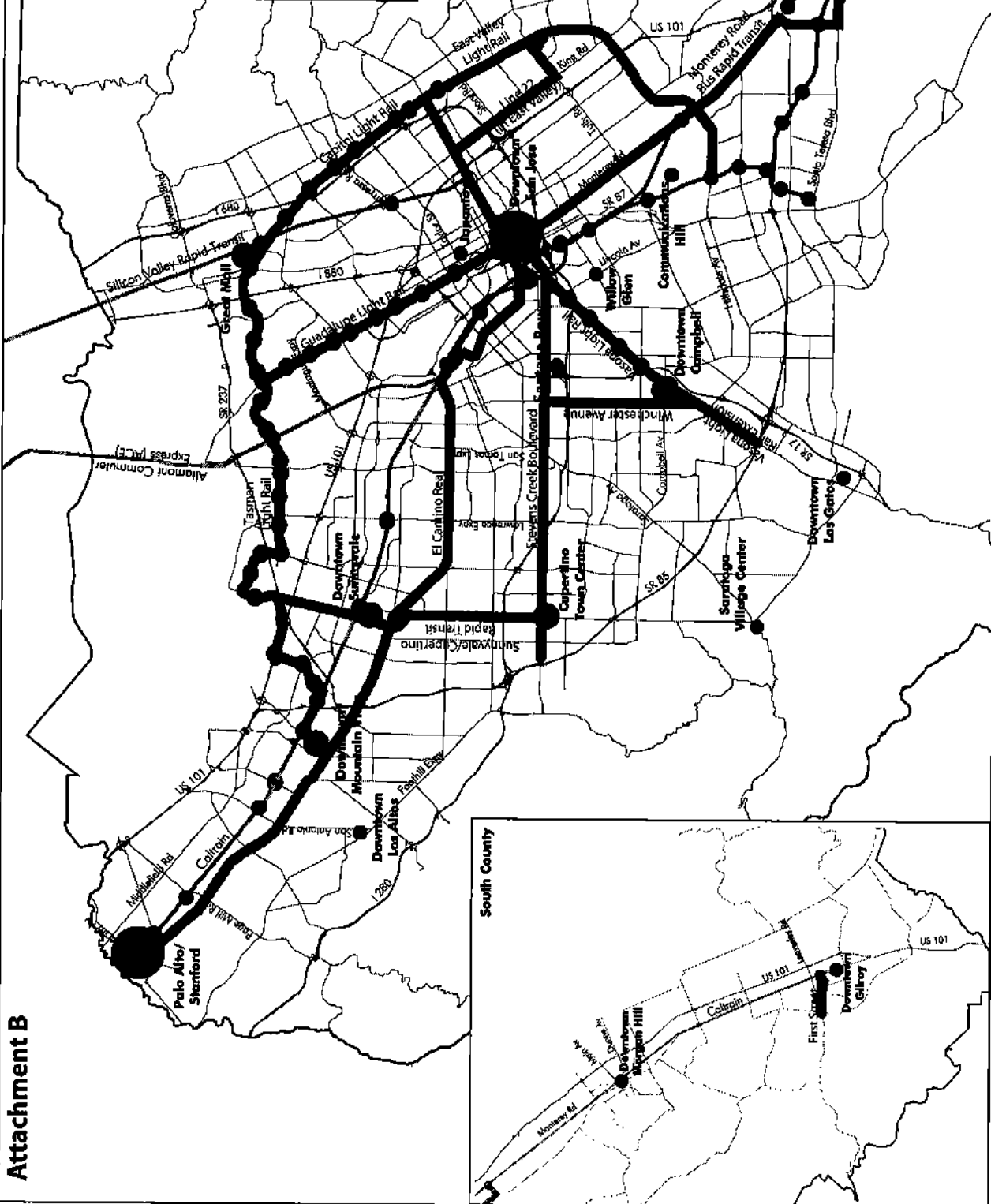
**Step 6:** The VTA Board will approve the CDT Capital Grant projects based upon recommendations provided by the Scoring Committee and available funding.

**Step 7:** Following Board approval, grant recipients will submit to VTA a Board approved Resolution demonstrating the commitment to fund and build their project. The Council Resolution must be received by VTA within three months of VTA Board approval to award. Grant recipients will be required to take the CDT capital project through, and comply with, the federal-aid process with Caltrans Local Assistance.

**Attachment B**

**VTA Cores, Corridors & Station Areas**

- Local Core
- County Core
- Regional Core
- ▬ Corridors
- Station Areas
- ▲ Potential Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Stations
- Caltrain and/or ACE Stations
- ▬ Regional Rail Transit Lines
- ▬ VTA Light Rail Lines and Stations



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