

Date: August 17, 2007

Committee Meeting Date: August 16, 2007

Board Meeting Date: August 30, 2007

BOARD MEMORANDUM

ACTION X DISCUSSION INFO

TO: Administration and Finance Committee
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

THROUGH: Michael T. Burns
General Manager

FROM: John H. Ristow
Acting Chief CMA Officer

SUBJECT: Section 5339 Grant Application for Funding Santa Clara Valley
Transportation Authority Bus Rapid Transit Strategic Plan

Policy-Related Action: Yes

Government Code Section 84308: No

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize staff to submit an application for \$480,000 in §5339 funds (SAFETEA-LU) for the preparation of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Bus Rapid Transit Strategic Plan; and if successful in obtaining funds, authorize the General Manager to enter into all necessary agreements with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to accept the grant.

BACKGROUND:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) will be developing an integrated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network linking activity centers throughout the county and offering high quality transit services to areas not served by the Light Rail System. The proposed Strategic Plan will study candidate BRT corridors identified in VTA's long-range plan, Valley Transportation 2030 Plan and the upcoming Comprehensive Operations Analysis. The goal of the Strategic Plan will be to 1) establish a brand identity for VTA's future network of BRT services; 2) evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of developing BRT facilities in the candidate corridors, and; 3) develop an action plan for implementation in each corridor.

The Strategic Plan will make use of several efforts currently underway or recently completed including: results of a Comprehensive Operations Analysis, market research provided by a survey of passengers in 2006 and a market segmentation study of the countywide travel market, the Transit Sustainability Policy and Service Design Guidelines and project development studies for the Monterey Highway and Santa Clara/Alum Rock, and Rapid 522 corridors.

DISCUSSION:

The Strategic Plan will focus on potential BRT corridors identified in VTP 2030 and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Operations Analysis. The VTA Service Design Guidelines define BRT service as two different service levels. BRT 1 service is characterized by elements such as signal priority treatments, distinctive vehicles and stops and wide stop spacing. BRT 2 service level incorporates capital-intensive elements such as running ways, rail-like stations, specialized vehicles and queue-jump facilities.

Below is a brief summary of each corridor and its development status.

EL CAMINO REAL – LINE 522

The 522 El Camino Corridor extends from the Eastridge Transit Center in San Jose to the Palo Alto Transit Center. Line 522 operates as an initial BRT service level, defined as BRT 1 in VTA's Service Design Guidelines. Line 522 will be studied to determine the feasibility of upgrading facilities to the BRT 2 level, particularly on the western end of the line. Specific treatments such as bus-only lanes, queue jump lanes, and investment in higher capacity stations will be investigated.

SANTA CLARA/ALUM ROCK CORRIDOR

The Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor extends from the Eastridge Transit Center in San Jose to downtown San Jose and Line 522 operates in the corridor. VTA is currently studying this corridor as a subject for increased transit investment, either Single Car Light Rail or Bus Rapid Transit services. If BRT is the chosen mode, the corridor will interline both the 522 and future Stevens Creek service to form a BRT "Trunk Route". Dedicated busways and rail-like stations are being considered for the BRT alternative in the corridor.

WEST SAN CARLOS/STEVENS CREEK CORRIDOR

The West San Carlos/Stevens Creek Corridor extends from downtown San Jose to the De Anza College Transit Center in Cupertino. VTA operates a local bus route in the corridor and will study the effectiveness of introducing BRT 1 or BRT 2 service. Improving travel times and establishing effective street-level station facilities at the major trip generators will be a focus of BRT development on the Stevens Creek corridor.

SUNNYVALE/CUPERTINO CORRIDOR

The Sunnyvale/Cupertino Corridor extends from employment sites in northern Sunnyvale to the De Anza College Transit Center in Cupertino, where it will meet the future Stevens Creek BRT service. VTA currently operates local bus service in the corridor and will

study the implementation of either BRT service levels. Traffic management measures such as queue jump lanes and signal priority will be a focus of the study.

MONTEREY HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

The Monterey Highway Corridor extends from the Santa Teresa LRT Station in South San Jose to downtown San Jose. The existing local service (Line 68) sees very loyal ridership according to VTA's passenger survey with 60 percent of patrons identifying themselves as riding VTA for three years or longer. Travel speeds in the corridor are above average for the county. Upgraded station facilities will likely be a focus for BRT development in the corridor.

KING ROAD CORRIDOR

The King Road corridor is a north-south route serving the transit dependent residential neighborhoods of east San Jose. VTA operates three to five local bus routes in the corridor. Connectivity to the BRT corridor on Santa Clara/Alum Rock, attractive station facilities and improvement to bus travel times will be the focus.

Other corridors identified by the COA may also be analyzed.

The Strategic Plan will take one year from commencement of the study.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board can elect not to pursue this funding opportunity and utilize other as yet unidentified funds to proceed with preparing the Bus Rapid Transit Strategic Plan. The Board may also choose not to fund this activity. Both of these actions will result in delays in preparing a Bus Rapid Transit Strategic Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

VTA will apply for \$480,000 in §5339 grant funds. If successful, VTA will be responsible for providing \$120,000 in non-Federal matching funds. The matching funds would come from Measure A funds identified for the Bus Rapid Transit Program in the FY 2008 and 2009 Measure A Capital Budget.

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Programming & Grants Manager