

Date: January 28, 2008

Committee Meeting Date: January 17, 2008

Board Meeting Date: February 7, 2008

**BOARD MEMORANDUM**

**ACTION ITEM**

**TO:** Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
Board of Directors

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

**FROM:** John H. Ristow  
Chief CMA Officer

**SUBJECT:** Grant Application for U.S. Department of Transportation - Congestion Relief  
Demonstration Initiative

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**Policy-Related Action: Yes**

**Government Code Section 84308 Applies: No**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Authorize staff to submit an application to the U.S. Department of Transportation under the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative for the Route 237/I-880 HOV Direct Connector; and authorize the General Manager to enter into all necessary agreements with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Caltrans and MTC to accept and use these funds, if awarded.

**BACKGROUND:**

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has requested proposals from metropolitan areas around the nation that agree to implement a comprehensive policy response to urban congestion. This comprehensive response to urban congestion is to include; (a) a congestion pricing demonstration, (b) elements aimed at enhancing transit services, and (c) use of advanced technologies to accomplish the mobility enhancements. USDOT plans to select urban areas to implement the above strategies for addressing traffic congestion, and support these partners with available financial resources, regulatory flexibility, and USDOT expertise.

This is the second major initiative at congestion relief undertaken by the USDOT within the last twelve months. In August 2007, USDOT announced the recipients of the first Urban Partnership Program, which aimed to combine roadway pricing, transit and technology into a comprehensive transportation solution for improved mobility. Five urban areas received significant grant funding in this solicitation, with San Francisco receiving \$158 million to implement pricing on the Doyle Drive approach to the Golden Gate Bridge.

In response to the latest request for proposals, VTA has teamed with Caltrans and the University of California at Berkeley's Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways (PATH) Program, to prepare the Silicon Valley Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative (Silicon Valley CRDI) as described in the remainder of this memorandum. The Silicon Valley funding proposal is seeking funds from the Federal Transit Administration 5309-Bus and Bus Facilities Program and if available, Federal Highway Administration Value Pricing Pilot Program (VPPP) and Intelligent Transportation Systems – Operational Testing to Mitigate Congestion (ITS-OTMC) Program.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The VTA proposal developed in response to the USDOT call for projects is called the Silicon Valley Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative (Silicon Valley CRDI). The intent of this proposal is to focus on a specific travel corridor and congestion point for implementing congestion pricing with supportive transit services to demonstrate their effectiveness at congestion relief. The proposal includes elements intended to provide immediate congestion relief to a specific focused location at the Route 237/I-880 Interchange as well as to provide opportunity to encourage commuters to switch to travel modes to transit serving the same commute corridor.

The Silicon Valley Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative has the following elements:

**SR-237/I-880 HOV Direct Connector Priced Lane** – The proposal targets a bottleneck that occurs each morning at the SR-237/I-880 interchange for commuters headed from southbound I-880 to west on SR-237 to job centers in North San Jose to Mountain View and beyond. The proposed project would allow commuters to use available capacity in the existing carpool lane-to-carpool lane connector ramp between the two freeways for a fee. The fee would be collected using the same FASTRAK electronic toll transponders used on the bridges crossing the San Francisco Bay. The electronic toll reader would be located at only one location on the HOV Direct Connect Structure and provide an option for single occupant vehicles to bypass the congestion spot. The system would include providing information to motorist on transit options such as light rail and bus to travel to job destinations in the City of Mountain View or areas along the SR-237 corridor.

**Transit and Alternative Mode Enhancements** – The implementation of managed lanes could cause a shift in travel modes for commuters and also provide additional revenue for transit services operating in these “priced” corridors. In order to further accommodate shifting of commuters to other travel modes, the following transit-related demonstrations are proposed:

VTA Express Buses: VTA currently operates four express routes that originate at Fremont BART and make intermediate stops in Fremont before accessing I-880 at the SR-262 (Mission Boulevard) interchange. As part of VTA's recent comprehensive overhaul of bus service, all of these lines will benefit from improvements in frequency and travel time. The destinations and a sample of major employers served by these lines are as follows:

- Line 120 Fremont BART to Moffett Park Transit Center. Employers: Yahoo, Lockheed Martin, Juniper Networks, Nortel
- Line 140 Fremont BART to Santa Clara. Employers: Cisco, Cypress Semiconductor

- Line 180 Fremont BART to Milpitas & Downtown San Jose. Employers: Seagate, Cisco, San Jose State University
- Line 181 Fremont BART to Downtown San Jose. Employers: Adobe Systems, BEA Systems, San Jose State University

VTA is seeking \$2.35 million in grant funding from the §5309 Bus and Bus Facilities Program to update and replace six of the buses serving these lines. If successful, VTA will provide \$583,000 in non-federal funds as match.

First and Last Mile Innovative Transportation Program: Historically, a major issue with providing transit service to a low/moderate density campus style environment, as is common in Silicon Valley, is the last mile connection from transit to the work site. This proposed program would allow for the investigation of car sharing, vanpool programs, and complementary solutions to help address this issue. Examples of the types of programs that would be offered include the following: organized employee vanpools between predetermined transit stations and work sites, car sharing programs that include park & ride lots at key transit centers, parking management systems for the park & ride lots, and real-time transit traveler information systems for the included transit center locations. This proposal would include working with the three commercial car sharing companies in the Bay Area and area business advocacy groups such as the Silicon Valley Leadership Group and Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network to develop these commute options. Although this proposal will be focused along the SR-237 Corridor, other areas of the Silicon Valley area will be considered as the opportunity arises in the future.

The USDOT requires that the proposal demonstrate that the roadway pricing and First and Last Mile elements be operational by the end of 2009. The supporting transit services described in the proposal will be operational on January 14, 2008 as part of the Comprehensive Operational Analysis – Revised Bus Service Operating Plan approved by the VTA Board of Directors in August 2007. Because the grant application was due to USDOT by December 31, 2007, it has already been submitted. It is anticipated that selected projects will be announced by April 2008.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

The Board can elect not to pursue these funding opportunities. If the Board chooses not to pursue federal funding, staff will withdraw the application.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The proposal describes that VTA will apply for \$2.35 million in Sec. 5309 Bus and Bus Facility grant funds. If successful, VTA will be responsible for providing up to \$583,000 in non-federal matching funds. The proposed local match for bus vehicle procurement is already included and scheduled in the Short Range Transportation Plan for Fiscal Year 2009/10. The non-federal funding match would need to be included in the next VTA Transit Capital Budget scheduled for FY 2010 and 2011.

The proposal estimates the roadway pricing component at \$2.6 million. The capital funding for implementation of the roadway tolling facility would come from federal earmark grants and non-transit, Local Program Reserve funds.

The First and Last Mile component, including car sharing services, is estimated at \$1.7 million and is proposed to be provided through a combination of private resources and public grant funding, yet to be determined.

If successful in obtaining the federal grants, staff will return to the Board specifically identifying the source and final amount of all matching funds and requesting the appropriate programming actions and budget amendments, if necessary.

**STANDING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION:**

The Congestion Management Program & Planning Committee acting as Committee of the Whole, with Members Kniss and Kishimoto in attendance, considered this item on January 17, 2008 and made the following comments:

- Expressed strong support for advancing this request as a potential initial effort towards congestion pricing in the County.
- Recommended that the item be moved to the February 7, 2008, Consent Agenda.

Prepared By: David Kobayashi, Senior Transportation Planner, CMA Engineering