

Date: April 22, 2008

Committee Meeting Date: April 17, 2008

Board Meeting Date: May 1, 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:** Regional Transportation Plan - Policy Position

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**Policy-Related Action: Yes**

**Government Code Section 84308 Applies: No**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Vision Policy Strategies with the staff recommended modifications and additions as shown in the memorandum to serve as the basis for the development of VTP 2035 Policies and to establish the VTA position on the RTP Policy development.

**BACKGROUND:**

MTC is in the process of updating of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Bay Area. Concurrently, VTA is updating its long-range transportation plan, Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2035. The RTP outlines a planning framework for transportation in the nine-county Bay Area by establishing a regional "vision" for transportation policy issues as well as transportation program development and project funding. Countywide long-range transportation plans, such as VTP 2035, provide county-level preference and input into the RTP.

**DISCUSSION:**

As part of developing the RTP, MTC has developed a set of Vision Policy Strategies to guide development of the plan. These strategies support MTC's proposed core plan elements – the 3E's – of *Economy, Equity and Environment*. The strategies are intended to provide a framework for MTC in discussing tradeoffs between various program investment areas in the RTP, including the projects and programs submitted by the nine county Congestion Management Agencies and regional programs submitted by MTC. VTA supports the development of a regional vision that is primarily implemented at the county/local level.

VTA staff first presented the MTC Vision Policy Strategies at the March 6, 2008 Board of Directors meeting as an informational discussion item to gain policy feedback in order to develop

a VTA response. The VTA staff recommendations include several modified and additional policy strategies to add emphasis and strengthen areas of MTC's policies and provide a Santa Clara perspective to the RTP discussion scheduled to occur in May through July 2008. Below are the MTC strategies followed by VTA staff recommended modifications and additions.

### **Strategies**

An important overarching issue of the policy recommendation is to ensure that the MTC Vision Policy Strategies include a financial equity consideration. Consideration must be given to self-help counties, such as Santa Clara, where residents and businesses have chosen to proactively tax themselves to pay for regional transportation improvements thereby freeing up truly discretionary funds for other regional projects. These counties, that have provided significant regional benefit to the transportation system through local funding, should be rewarded for their efforts during funding investment decisions. Additionally, the counties destined to accommodate the bulk of the Bay Area growth should also receive increased consideration of region funding. For example, over the next 25 years, growth forecasts prepared by the Association of Bay Area Governments indicate that Santa Clara County will shoulder roughly one-third of all growth in the entire nine-county Bay Area in terms of population, households and jobs. VTA staff has estimated that Santa Clara County has a \$29 Billion need for capital expansion and on-going maintenance of the county transportation system and current MTC estimates identify less than \$10 billion in available, identified funding. MTC policies should take this growth and need into consideration when making funding investment decisions in the RTP.

In addition, a number of emerging issues are facing all jurisdictions, such as climate change and efficient energy use, which will take creativity and collaborative efforts to effectively address. The most productive and ultimately most effective way to proceed with this process is to build diverse coalitions from the local level up to the regional level. VTA supports development and implementation of effective policy and initiatives to address these challenges.

Finally, VTA has shown leadership in a number of areas where the region and MTC are following suit. These include programs such as High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane development and focusing growth in urban cores, major transportation corridors and transit station areas through the Community Design and Transportation (CDT) program. Again, these local initiatives and investments need to be considered during the funding trade-off discussions.

### **VTA Proposed Additions to MTC Vision Policy Strategies:**

Six core concepts frame VTA's response to the proposed MTC Vision Policy Strategies:

- Place a Priority on Funding to Fix and Maintain the Existing System
- Stay the Course on Previous Commitments to Resolution 3434
- Regional Vision / Local Control
- New Regional Programs Should Rely on New Regional Funding
- Support Effective Environmental and Equity Initiatives
- Regional Planning Policy Should Support Local Programs
- Reward Self-Help Counties

## INVESTMENTS

<b>MTC Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Keep Foundation Strong</li><li>– Make Transportation Accessible</li><li>– Support System Strategic Expansion</li><li>– Promote More Public/Private Partnerships in Freight Corridors</li></ul>	<b><u>VTA Additions</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Prioritize Fix and Maintain</i></li><li>– <i>Pursue New Fund Sources</i></li><li>– <i>New Regional Programs use New Regional Funds</i></li><li>– <i>Equitable Distribution / Support Local Programs</i></li><li>– <i>Regional Vision / Local Implementation</i></li><li>– <i>Remove “in Freight Corridors” to Promote Public/Private Partnerships in All Areas</i></li></ul>
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## PRICING

<b>MTC Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Implement Full Road Pricing</li><li>– Promote Area Pricing</li><li>– Support Local Parking Policies</li><li>– Provide Affordable Choices</li></ul>	<b><u>VTA Additions</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Support Existing HOT Lane Programs</i></li><li>– <i>Funds Generated through Pricing Should Remain in the Corridor Generated</i></li></ul>
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## FOCUSED GROWTH

<b>MTC Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Focus Future Growth</li><li>– Adequate Funding to Make Focused Growth Work</li><li>– Consider Freight Needs</li></ul>	<b><u>VTA Additions</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Focus Regional Funds to Growing Counties / Support Local Programs</i></li><li>– <i>Support the VTA Community Design and Transportation (CDT) Program (VTA’s focused growth program)</i></li><li>– <i>Partner with Local Agencies to Develop Supportive Policies</i></li><li>– <i>Pursue Joint Development Opportunities on VTA-owned Land</i></li></ul>
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## TECHNOLOGY

<b>MTC Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Deploy System Management Strategies</li><li>– Reduce Emissions</li></ul>	<b><u>VTA Additions</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Improve Systems Efficiency through Technology and Innovation</i></li><li>– <i>Use Technology to Address First/Last Mile Connections</i></li></ul>
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## INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS

<b>MTC Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Increase Public Education</li><li>– Pursue Enhanced Enforcement to Improve Safety</li><li>– Build Incentive/Pricing Programs</li><li>– Enable Land Use Changes</li></ul>	<b><u>VTA Additions</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– <i>Create a Range of Attractive High Quality Multi-modal Alternatives</i></li><li>– <i>Support Implementation of VTA's CDT Program</i></li></ul>
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In conclusion, while VTA believes that the spirit of MTC's policy vision work provides a logical structure for the initial dialog regarding RTP funding issues, we feel that a few additions are needed to better frame and address those issues that face Santa Clara County, as well as the region. Over the next few months, these Policy Vision Strategies – along with VTA's additions – will play an important role in funding discussions, and ultimately in determining transportation funding over the next 25-years.

VTA will use the Board approved policies as a platform for framing discussion about regional funding issues. These discussions will be occurring with MTC over the next several months. Additionally, these will provide the framework for development of VTA's Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2035 policies.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

The Board of Directors may propose changes or choose to not adopt the recommendations.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There are no immediate fiscal impacts. However, decisions made by MTC based on these strategies may significantly affect VTA's ability to implement future programs and projects in Santa Clara County.

Prepared by: Chris Augenstein, Deputy Director, Planning  
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