

FACT SHEET: Sustainability Program

Overview

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) Sustainability Program strengthens VTA's commitment to the environment through the conservation of natural resources, the reduction of greenhouse gases, the prevention of pollution and the use of renewable energy and materials. We have an obligation to future generations to meet our needs without compromising their ability to meet theirs. To fulfill this obligation, we must reduce our consumption of natural resources, like energy and water, and protect our air and land from pollution and degradation.

Energy

- As part of the Renewable Energy Procurement Project, a Joint Venture Silicon Valley initiative that created the nation's largest multi-agency collaborative for purchasing renewable energy, SunPower installed elevated solar carports at VTA's three bus maintenance divisions, totaling 2.1 megawatts.
- Solar-powered lighting is utilized at bus stops throughout Santa Clara County that do not have access to a power source.
- VTA has retrofitted its administration buildings and facilities with energy efficient lighting, computer and office equipment. Employees are encouraged to turn lights and other electrical equipment off when not in use.
- VTA is investigating the feasibility of using other renewable and clean energy technologies as they become available. One pilot project includes testing LED lighting at parking lots and station platforms.
- VTA operates an all electric light rail fleet. By turning off auxiliary power systems to parked light rail vehicles and reducing the number of cars per train, VTA saves an estimated five million kilowatt hours (kWh) per year.



Water

- VTA uses less water and produces less hazardous waste by utilizing recycled water in bus washers and equipping two VTA bus divisions with waste water treatment plants.
- With the support of the Santa Clara Valley Water District, VTA replaced older toilets and faucets with more efficient models and installed weather based irrigation controllers, allowing maintenance staff to monitor changes remotely through a web based interface and to respond quickly and accurately to leaks.
- VTA adopted Sustainable Landscape Guidelines and strives to use drought tolerant and water efficient landscaping whenever possible.



**Planning for
Future
Generations**

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Air

- Gas-powered paratransit and non-revenue vehicles were replaced with nearly 100 hybrids resulting in an estimated reduction of over 385 tons of greenhouse gases per year. VTA has also added 90 diesel electric hybrid buses to replace older buses that have exceeded their useful life span, reducing particulate matter by 90 percent.
- VTA implements projects, such as congestion management pricing on local highways, to manage traffic congestion, reduce emissions, and enhance public transportation systems.
- VTA works with local jurisdictions to promote bicycle and pedestrian facilities and improve infrastructure, such as adding bike lockers and racks to Park & Ride lots and transit centers, to enable more people to accomplish daily activities by foot, bike or transit in equal comfort to doing so by car.
- Goats and sheep provide a natural alternative to mowing grass and weeds around VTA's Cerone Division, which is located alongside State Route 237 and Zanker Road in north San Jose. The animals reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions from traditional gas-powered mowers.
- VTA has set goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and is a voluntary signatory to American Public Transportation Association's Sustainability Commitment.



Land

- VTA offers transit riders' options of purchasing passes for a single ride, day use, monthly use, and yearly use pass. VTA also offers the Eco Pass Program which provides employers, educational institutions, and residential communities of all sizes with a way to offer an attractive, low-cost employee benefit.
- VTA works with local jurisdictions to promote urban-friendly and Transit-Oriented Development that targets new growth in existing transit corridors and station areas.
- Keeping our streets and waterways clean and free of litter is important for our communities. VTA encourages passengers and employees to recycle and dispose of trash in the appropriate containers.
- VTA is working towards incorporating green building elements into project design and construction. Examples include using porous pavements, reclaimed water, high efficiency appliances, and materials made with recycled content.



- VTA designs highway, transit, and facility projects to avoid or minimize permanent impacts to sensitive habitats and habitats that are essential for the survival of special status animals and plants to the maximum extent possible. When impacts are unavoidable, VTA mitigates or compensates for the loss of habitats by preserving, enhancing, restoring, or creating habitats near the project site in coordination with the appropriate resource agencies.

For more information on VTA's Sustainability Program, visit our website at www.vta.org/projects/programs/sustainability_program or contact VTA at (408) 321-7575, TTY (408) 321-2330. Find us on Facebook under "SCVTA", Twitter under "SantaclaraVTA", and YouTube at www.youtube.com/scvta.



VTA Mission: *VTA provides sustainable, accessible, community-focused transportation options that are innovative, environmentally responsible, and promote the vitality of our region.*