

## *Transportation Planning and Programming*

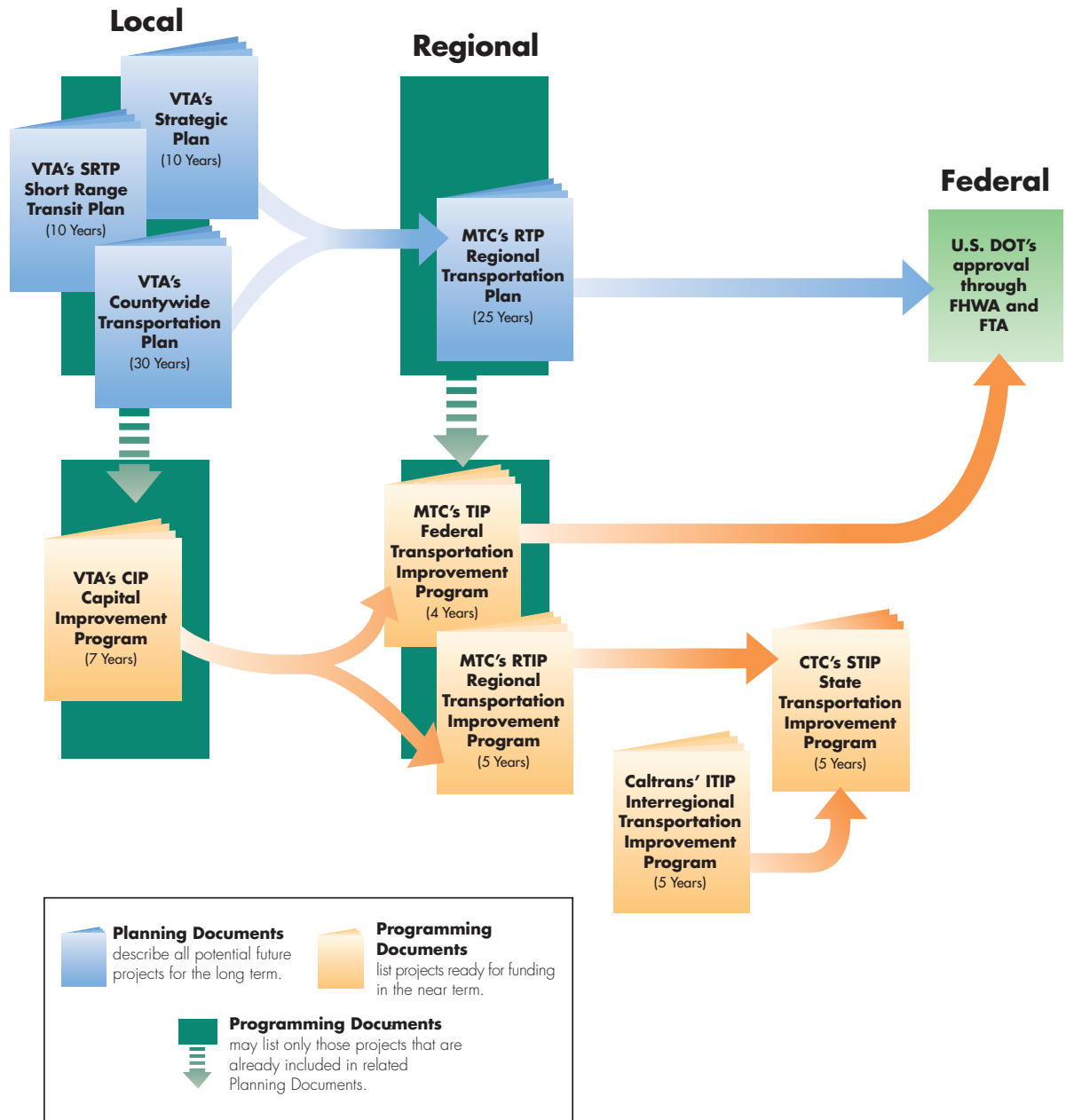


# Transportation Planning and Programming

## Chapter

# 6

VTA prepares a variety of transportation planning and programming documents that impact Santa Clara County's future mobility. Planning documents are typically long-term in nature and incorporate a vision for the future. Programming documents identify which planned projects will be funded through a particular revenue source in the near term. Most transportation capital improvement projects must be listed in a long-range plan before they can be included in a programming document for federal or state transportation funding.



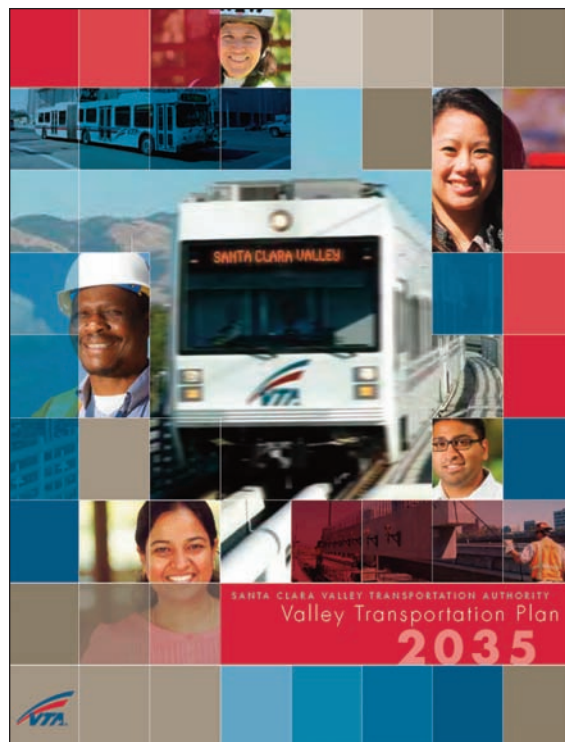
### Transportation Planning Documents

VTA produces the long-range, multimodal, **Countywide Transportation Plan** for Santa Clara County, called Valley Transportation Plan (VTP). The current version of this document is VTP 2035. This 25-year plan puts forth a comprehensive and balanced blueprint of actions designed to improve the multimodal transportation system and the quality of life in Santa Clara County.

In general, a Countywide Transportation Plan consists of the following three elements: (1) a policy element, which articulates a vision and a series of policy principles that guide the evolution of the multimodal transportation system in the county over the timeframe of the plan; (2) a financial element, which consists of estimates of how much funding should be available for transportation purposes from all federal, state and local sources over the life of the plan; and (3) an action element, which presents the multimodal transportation capital improvement projects that would be funded during the plan's time period based on the estimates of available revenues. The Countywide Transportation Plan is updated every four years, and provides the basis for many other important planning and programming documents.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) prepares the **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)** for the nine-county San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area. It is a multimodal blueprint that guides the development of the region's transportation system over a 25-year period. The RTP is structured similar to a Countywide Transportation Plan except that pursuant to SB 375 (Steinberg), which was enacted into law in 2008, it must contain a "sustainable communities strategy" in addition to a policy, financial and action element. Under SB 375, the sustainable communities strategy must consist of development patterns and transportation measures that are designed to achieve regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that are provided by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The RTP is updated every four years as required by federal and state law. The RTP must be fiscally constrained, meaning the total cost of the transportation capital improvement projects listed in the document cannot exceed the amount of funds projected to be available to the region over the 25-year time period. VTA's Countywide Transportation Plan serves as the basis for Santa Clara County's element of the Bay Area's RTP.

VTA's **Strategic Plan** serves as the umbrella policy document for the organization and provides a foundation for the development of its budget, plans and programs. It articulates VTA's vision and mission, outlines a series of goals and policy principles that support the vision and mission statements, and establishes specific strategies and performance measures for assessing progress toward achieving the goals and policy principles. VTP 2035 includes an update to VTA's Strategic Plan. For more detailed information about VTA's Strategic Plan, please see *Chapter 1, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority*.



As a public transit operator, VTA is required to prepare a **Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP)** every two years. However, as a result of a new MTC requirement, public transit operators in the Bay Area must prepare a “mini SRTP” during the years in between the full SRTPs. In general, the SRTP describes VTA’s ongoing public transit planning and development activities over a 10-year period.



The Bay Area SRTPs, including VTA’s, support the projects included in both the RTP prepared by MTC and the Countywide Transportation Plan. In addition, MTC uses them to develop regional transit capital programming documents that form the basis for federal and state funding decisions. Furthermore, both MTC and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) use SRTPs as the detailed justification required for awarding operating and capital grants to VTA and the other Bay Area public transit operators.



In general, VTA’s SRTP contains information regarding: (1) VTA’s history and governance structure; (2) VTA’s organizational structure; (3) the elements of VTA’s existing public transit system; and (4) VTA’s 10-year transit operating plan, capital program and accompanying financial plans.

As the designated congestion management agency (CMA) for Santa Clara County, VTA is responsible for preparing the county’s **Congestion Management Program (CMP)**. The CMP is a comprehensive and multifaceted program spelled out in state law that is designed to enhance the linkage between transportation and land-use planning. Updated every two years, the CMP establishes performance standards for public transit and roadway facilities, and sets up a process for determining whether local jurisdictions are meeting those standards. It also analyzes the impact of local land-use decisions on the countywide transportation system. For more information about the various elements of the CMP, please see *Chapter 5, Congestion Management Program*.

In its role as the designated CMA for Santa Clara County, VTA may also prepare a **Countywide Deficiency Plan (CDP)**. The CDP addresses level-of-service deficiencies on the county’s roadway system. Under the CDP, VTA may develop a set of programs and actions to improve the level of service on Santa Clara County’s roadway system, and/or provide multimodal improvements to mitigate impacts to the transportation systems resulting from new development. In addition, local jurisdictions may prepare citywide, areawide or local (intersection level) Deficiency Plans. In its role as the CMA, VTA has established Guidelines for Preparing Deficiency Plans, and must approve any Deficiency Plans prepared by local jurisdictions within Santa Clara County.



### Transportation Programming Document

VTA prepares a **Capital Improvement Program (CIP)** as part of the CMP. The CIP is a seven-year program of projects designed to improve mobility within Santa Clara County and to mitigate the impacts of local land-use decisions on the transportation system. The CIP must conform to federal and state air quality requirements. It may include projects that will increase the capacity of the multimodal transportation system. It also may include safety, maintenance and rehabilitation projects that do not enhance system capacity, but are necessary to preserve the investment in existing facilities. Before a project can be included in the CIP, it must be listed in the Countywide Transportation Plan. The CIP is updated every two years as part of the CMP. For more information on the CIP, please see *Chapter 5, Congestion Management Program*.

The **Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)**, which is prepared by MTC for the Bay Area, is a list of transportation capital improvement projects designed to improve mobility and air quality within a particular region. In general, projects that are candidates for inclusion in an RTIP are first proposed by the cities, the county and local public transit operators. These projects are evaluated and prioritized by the county CMA, and then transmitted to the regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) for submission to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) as requests for state funding. The RTIP has a five-year programming horizon and is updated every two years.



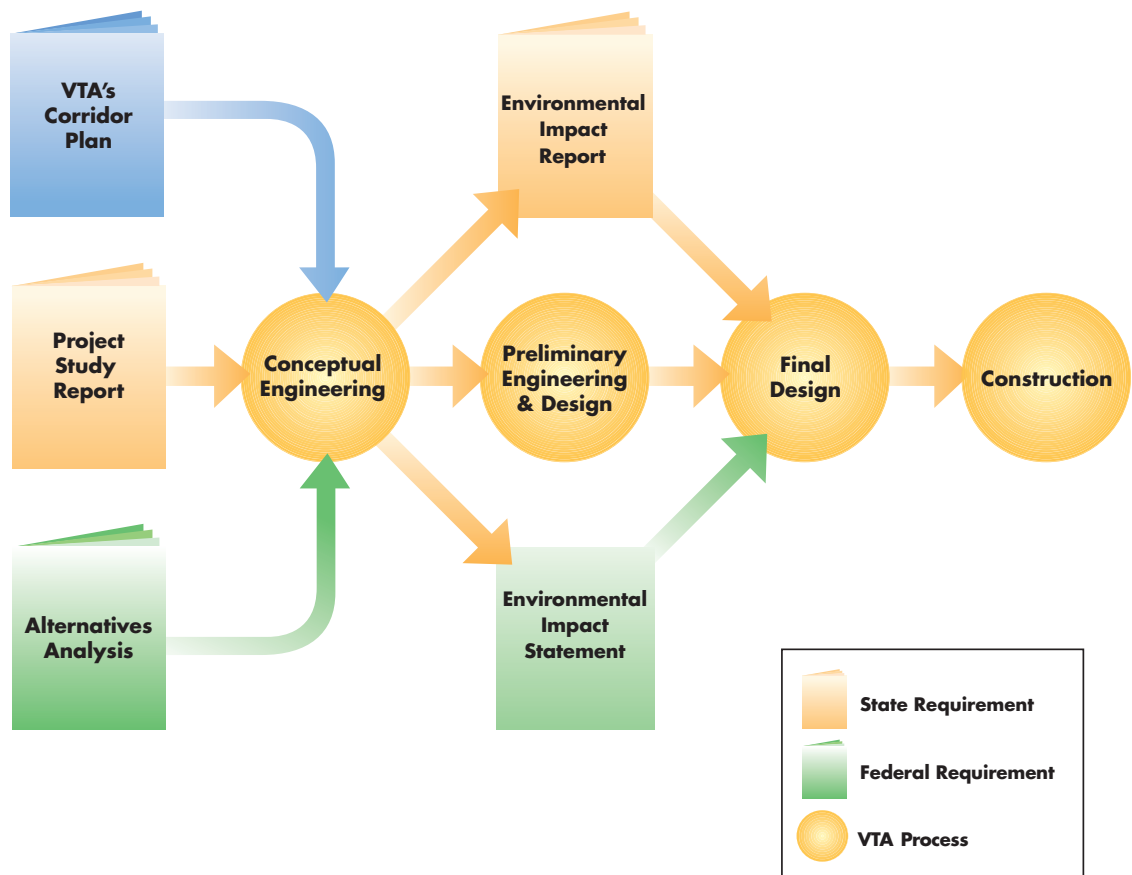
The **Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP)** is a five-year expenditure program consisting of transportation capital improvement projects for: (1) highways in rural areas that are part of the state-designated interregional roadway system; and (2) the state's intercity rail system. It also includes projects that have been determined to be of statewide significance. Caltrans, with some input from the RTPAs, is responsible for nominating projects for inclusion in the ITIP. The CTC then selects the projects that will actually be funded from the list provided by Caltrans.

The **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)** is a five-year expenditure program adopted by the CTC in even-numbered years. The STIP consists of the RTIPs submitted to the CTC by the RTPAs and the ITIP developed by Caltrans. Under current state law, 75 percent of available STIP dollars is allocated for the RTIPs and 25 percent for the ITIP.

The **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** is a federally required document produced by the RTPAs. MTC prepares this document for the Bay Area. The TIP lists public transit, general aviation and highway projects that are proposed to be funded with federal dollars.

### Project Development Process and Documents

There are numerous steps involved in the project development process for a transportation capital improvement project before it proceeds to construction. Each project must be defined through a complex process that evaluates its purpose, need, location, impacts, and costs.



A **Corridor Plan** is used to develop a consensus on a strategy for improving a particular transit corridor or major highway. A technical and public process defines a project for future funding and implementation.

A **Project Study Report (PSR)** is required by state law for a transportation capital improvement project prior to its programming in the STIP. The PSR must include a detailed description of the project's scope and estimated costs.

An **Alternatives Analysis** is prepared for any federally funded transportation capital improvement project. In this case, it takes the place of a PSR. An Alternatives Analysis defines the proposed project, and analyzes its need, impacts and alternatives. It must be completed in conjunction with, or prior to, a project's environmental document.

An environmental document must be completed before a project can be constructed. Under federal law, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**. Under state law, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires an **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**. If a project is using both federal and state funds, then these two documents can be merged. The EIS/EIR analyzes the various environmental impacts of a proposed project, identifies possible measures to address these impacts, and provides legally mandated federal and state environmental clearance for a chosen preferred alternative for the project.

### Subject-Specific Planning Documents

Federal clean air laws require areas with unhealthy levels of ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, or inhalable particulate matter to develop a **State Implementation Plan (SIP)**, which describes how national ambient air quality standards will be attained. A SIP is not a single document, but rather a compilation of new and previously submitted plans, programs, air district rules, state regulations, and federal controls. In the San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and MTC prepare a SIP to articulate the steps that the region will take to meet air quality standards in accordance with the federal Clean Air Act. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) combines the SIPs from the various regions throughout California, including the Bay Area, to create a statewide air quality improvement plan, also called a SIP. CARB submits the statewide SIP to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval.



The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was enacted in 1990, required all public transit agencies to develop a **Paratransit Plan** by January 1992. Under this plan, public transit agencies were required to detail the actions that they would implement in order to comply with ADA requirements pertaining to paratransit service, which is a specialized service for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed-route transit service for some or all of their trips. In compliance with federal law, VTA developed and submitted this plan, which was approved by the U.S. Department of

Transportation (DOT). Once approved by DOT, public transit agencies are not required to continue to submit annual plans. Agencies were required to come into full ADA compliance by January 1997. For more information about VTA's paratransit service, please see *Chapter 3, Public Transit Services*.

VTA prepares the **Countywide Bicycle Plan** for Santa Clara County. This document incorporates the bicycle plans developed by the county and the various cities within the county in accordance with the eligibility requirements for Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 funds. The Countywide Bicycle Plan: (1) identifies existing bike lanes, routes and paths within Santa Clara County; and (2) proposes bicycle capital improvement projects designed to enhance the countywide bicycle network.



