

POLICY Station Access Policy	Document Number:	400.006
	Version Number:	
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1. Purpose:

The VTA Station Access Policy establishes VTA’s access priorities to guide planning and investment decisions regarding station access for all modes of transportation. It is a commitment to align its internal planning, design, funding and operating practices to optimize station access in a manner that maximizes the functionality of the station for all users while prioritizing investments that support sustainable options such as walking, biking and transit. When designing transit facilities and services, VTA will work with partner agencies, local jurisdictions and private entities to maximize pedestrian, bike and transit access while providing accommodations for vehicles.

The policy is designed to advance broader livability goals such as reduced congestion and vehicle miles traveled, promote safer travel, increased physical activity and improved public health. Successful achievement of this vision will ensure that access improvements are planned and delivered in an integrated, sustainable and financially efficient manner to grow ridership and enhance the riders’ experience and safety.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all relevant departments and personnel within VTA including consultants and contractors that have a role in planning, design, funding, and implementation of transportation projects and programs that affect access at the station site and/or from the surrounding station area. The policy also serves as guidance for local jurisdictions and developers that have proposed projects within VTA station areas.

3. Responsibilities:

VTA Divisions will incorporate the guiding principles and access priorities established in this policy in planning decisions related to station site planning for new stations, any existing stations where site improvements are proposed, stations where changes are proposed to the surrounding development, and where transit facilities are modified to accommodate Joint Development.

Definitions for words underlined may be found at the end of this policy.

4. Policy:

A. Guiding Principles

The policy establishes a set of foundational principles to support and guide VTA’s work in station access planning and design.

Increase ridership

Expand access choices for all riders by making it easier, safer and more comfortable to get to and from VTA transit by:



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- Ensuring safe accommodations for all riders including the elderly and people with disabilities, by following accessible, universal design standards.
- Making transit connections easy, attractive, and seamless through investments in frequent service, passenger information, waiting facilities and coordination with other service providers and local agencies.
- Promoting a wide range of first/last mile options to transit including nontraditional services such as bike sharing, “microtransit” shuttles, and scooters. Refer to the Station Access Hierarchy (Figure 1) to determine how these modes should be accommodated at the station.
- Helping riders easily navigate to and through the station area with better passenger information utilizing real-time arrival information, mobile technology, wayfinding signage, and various forms of media.
- Promoting high-quality design for access improvements utilizing industry best practices and design principles found in adopted guidelines such as VTA’s Community Design and Transportation Manual, VTA’s Bicycle Technical Guidelines, and VTA’s Pedestrian Technical Guidelines.

Prioritize Sustainable Travel Behavior

Promote high-capacity transit and active transportation as an access strategy to reduce emissions, decrease vehicle miles traveled (VMT), support Vision Zero safety goals, and improve public health.

- Prioritize the most sustainable access modes based on the Station Access Hierarchy outlined in this policy.
- Invest in strategies that shifts access from single occupancy vehicles to greater levels of walking, bicycling, and transit access.
- Work collaboratively with local jurisdictions and other agencies to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to transit, including connections between trail systems and stations.

Build Effective Partnerships

Work in partnership with local jurisdictions, advocacy groups, mobility and technology providers, private entities, and the community to develop access solutions.

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- Work with local jurisdictions to create complete, connected street networks; comfortable walking and bicycling conditions in the areas surrounding stations; and transit-supportive land uses.
- Work collaboratively within VTA to consult various departments in access planning and design efforts.
- Involve communities in station access planning and project development.
- Work with local jurisdictions to jointly plan and fund improvements.
- Coordinate with third party shuttle providers to encourage safe and responsible use of VTA facilities per VTA’s Commuter Shuttle Policy.
- Facilitate partnership opportunities between the public and private sector to test and evaluate emerging technologies and new forms of access services to transit under the Core Connectivity Program.
- Leverage resources for access improvements through cost-sharing, data sharing and information sharing with partners.

Support Sustainable Development Patterns

Promote pedestrian-friendly, compact, mixed-use development surrounding and within close proximity to station areas with cities and private developers recognizing that this urban design strategy can increase access to transit by promoting walkable, compact communities.

- Work with local jurisdictions to encourage and enable quality development opportunities around VTA transit stations.
- Engage early in the project development phase to maximize the synergy between land use projects and the transit network.
- Identify opportunities for joint development on VTA-owned property to support multimodal station access, enhance transit ridership, increase the efficiency of underutilized park-and-ride lots, support affordable housing and generate new revenues.
- Promote integration of land use development and transportation investments through the Congestion Management Program, including promoting the use of multimodal measures to analyze impacts of local development decisions on transit and non-motorized modes of transportation, e.g. transit delay analysis.
- Implement VTA Complete Streets principles.



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- Promote and support Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and other sustainable design and building practices.

Promote Productivity and Cost Effectiveness

Prioritize cost effective access strategies that generate the most riders with the least cost.


- Consider life-cycle costs, including capital and operating costs, in the design of transit facilities and investments in access infrastructure and services.
- Identify access strategies that can maximize customer benefits and increase ridership within existing resources.
- Prioritize projects that leverage other fund sources and local matches to maximize the value of VTA’s investments, including local development contributions.
- Prioritize investments in the most productive ridership corridors.

B. Station Access Hierarchy


The policy establishes a hierarchy for station access systemwide providing priority access to modes that can produce the highest ridership and revenue benefits for VTA at the least cost. This means pedestrians are given the highest priority, followed by bicycle access and personal mobility options (e.g. scooters), connecting transit services, auto pick-up and drop-off, and park-and-ride access. While improvements should be prioritized based on this hierarchy, access strategies will vary depending on the land uses and development densities around each station. Improvements will be tied to the land use environment to ensure that access solutions are context-sensitive.

Figure 1. Station Access Hierarchy

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WALK




BICYCLE

Bikeshare ▪ Scooter




TRANSIT

Connecting Rail ▪ Feeder Bus
Shuttles ▪ Paratransit



PICK-UP / DROP-OFF

Private Auto ▪ Taxi ▪ TNC



AUTO PARKING

Carpool ▪ Carshare ▪ Motorcycle
Electric / Standard Vehicles

C. Strategies

The following strategies serve as the starting point to develop specific access solutions that can improve the access experience to transit and help VTA achieve its ridership goals.

Measure and Monitor

- Collect and analyze station access data to monitor parking utilization, access mode share, and access gaps.
- Establish systemwide targets for access modes or at high-ridership transfer stations.
- Identify first/last mile barriers to transit including infrastructure needs (e.g. bike parking, sidewalks, crosswalks), connecting services (e.g. shuttles, bike share), and wayfinding and transit information gaps.
- Identify data or additional metrics needed to support VTA’s planning and implementation of access improvements.

Fund and Implement

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- Develop station access improvements at the systemwide, corridor-wide, and station-specific scales.
- Identify investment priorities through VTA’s Capital Improvement Program
- Seek grant funding, public-private partnership arrangements, and/or other funding sources to offset costs for access improvements and programs.

D. Interrelated Policies

This policy has a direct relationship with other VTA policies, including but not limited to:

- *VTA Land Use & Development Review Policy*
- *VTA Transit-Oriented Development Parking Policy*

5. *Definitions:*

Access to transit refers to the portion of a rider’s trip between their origin, such as home and work, to the station, and from the station to their final destination (often referred to as the “first/last mile”), and the experience they have during this access.

Active transportation refers to human-powered modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling.

Complete Streets refers to streets that are for the safe travel of all users, where designs are context-sensitive, and incorporate a balanced network approach, prioritize the safety and comfort, and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders (including access and operations) of all ages and abilities, while still providing safe accommodations for motorist and other roadway users.

Joint development occurs when a transit agency partners with a private developer to develop a property owned by the transit agency and is located near a transit station. Joint development enables a transit agency to encourage retail, commercial and housing opportunities around its station sites, which in turn supports ridership and generates new revenues for the transit agency.

Microtransit refers to a technology enabled, multi-passenger transit service offering some demand responsive feature such as flexible routing and/or flexible scheduling with real-time ride matching capabilities. The service is typically on a smaller, more flexible scale than traditional transit.

Vision Zero refers to a safety initiative to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries on the roadway.

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6. Summary of Changes:

None.

7. Approval Information:

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