

Date: December 21, 2021
Current Meeting: January 6, 2022
Board Meeting: January 6, 2022

BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

THROUGH: General Manager/CEO, Carolyn M. Gonot

FROM: Chief Planning and Programming Officer, Deborah Dagang

SUBJECT: Fall 2021 Better Bus Stops Update

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- This is a status update of the Better Bus Stops program.
- VTA is installing amenities under the first cycle of the program now, and the second cycle is in the Planning and Engineering phase.
- This is an information item; no action is required by the Board.

STRATEGIC PLAN/GOALS:

The Better Bus Stops Program satisfies VTA's Business Line of "Delivering Projects and Programs", as this program improves bus stop amenities for transit riders.

BACKGROUND:

The Better Bus Stops program, launched in spring 2020, aims to improve the rider experience by identifying, designing, and installing new and replacement amenities at bus stops. The program is funded through a mix of state, regional, and local funding sources, including the 2016 Measure B Bus Stop Amenities funding category. Improvements and amenities include:

- **Shelters:** Replacing VTA's older shelters with VTA's latest shelter design
- **Lighting:** Upgrading to brighter and energy-efficient LED lighting
- **Seating:** Installing and replacing older wooden benches with new metal benches
- **Sidewalk Improvements:** Widening sidewalks for wheelchair boarding and expanding the pedestrian space
- **Bus Pads:** Protecting the road with concrete pads at stops where buses frequently stop,

dwell, and lay over

- **ADA Enhancements:** Installing braille placards and improving wheelchair accessibility at all stops
- **Bike Racks:** Incorporating bike facilities at high ridership stops

VTA's Transit Passenger Environment Plan (TPEP) provides our approach to designing and prioritizing improvements to bus stops. The TPEP identified that the top 20% highest ridership stops accounted for 80% of weekday boardings. Per the TPEP, the Better Bus Stops program started with the highest ridership stops and continues to work down the list of bus stops. In addition to including the highest ridership stops at the start of every cycle of the Better Bus Stops Program, staff consider community requests for bus stop improvements. Staff also consider bus stops located in equity priority areas to ensure an equitable distribution of amenities and improvements.

DISCUSSION:

The first cycle (2020-2021) of Better Bus Stop improvements is nearly complete and the second cycle (2022-2023) is in the Planning and Engineering phase.

2020 - 2021 Cycle:

Amenities and improvements installed during this cycle will fulfill specific community needs identified in previous projects. These efforts include the Fast Transit program's Bus Stop Balancing effort, VTA's first/last-mile service partnership with the County of Santa Clara, and Community-Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs) including Morgan Hill's CBTP.

The following amenities have already been installed:

- 2 custom shelters at the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC)
- 5 Simme Seats
- 50 metal benches
- 30 solar lights
- 1,676 Braille placards

The last outstanding item in the 2020-2021 cycle is to complete the installation of Braille placards at the remaining bus stops to achieve 100% coverage. This work is ongoing and expected to be complete by early 2022.

2022 - 2023 Cycle:

Planning and Engineering activities are underway for the second cycle of Better Bus Stops improvements at other bus stops. Construction is planned for summer 2022. Many of these stops are located within or near MTC Communities of Concern. Anticipated improvements include:

- 33 shelters with lighting
- Seven benches
- 23 bike racks
- 33 trash receptacles

- 12 concrete bus pads
- 17 sidewalk improvements

In addition to the amenities above, the 2022-2023 cycle's improvement list will likely be expanded following a forthcoming bus stop evaluation of Frequent routes 23, 25, and 73.

The Better Bus Stops program has two surveys on the project page (www.vta.org/betterbusstops) for transit riders to submit feedback on specific stops and prioritize which amenities are more important to them. The surveys are reviewed before each cycle of Better Bus Stops.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information item, there are no alternatives provided for this item.

CLIMATE IMPACT:

The Better Bus Stops Program does not directly contribute to or reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. However, providing amenities and improving conditions at bus stops improves the transit rider experience and may influence an individual's decision to ride transit. GHG emissions are likely to decrease as more individuals choose transit over driving alone.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION:

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met at their December 8, 2021 meeting and received this informational item. Member of the public, Roland Lebrun, commented about safety of passengers waiting at bus stops and the placement of city streetlights could be placed before the shelter as a protection from cars. Committee member Kamhi inquired if real-time signage will be included in this program and mentioned seeing e-ink displays. Staff replied that we are continuing to brainstorm a new real-time display product and have piloted the e-ink technology. Real-time displays will be a part of a future Better Bus Stops cycle.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) met at their December 8, 2021 meeting and received this informational item. Member Globus discussed tracking bike bumps on bus and light rail and including bike lockers at bus stops. Staff responded we currently partner with the City of San Jose in the placement of bike lockers at high ridership stops given there is space to put lockers on the sidewalk. The most recent bike locker installations are on King & Story and Keyes & 1st. Member Cacciotti encouraged the next custom shelter design consider glass at the front of the shelter, similar to examples in Europe to provide pedestrian protection. Chairperson Swaminathan likes the solar lights with the push buttons and uses this style in his own practice. Also, that solar lights help riders taking transit in South County where there is less lighting at night and sidewalk gaps. Chairperson Swaminathan and Vice Chair Miller discussed the pros and cons of center armrest design.

The Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) met at their December 8, 2021 meeting and received this informational item. Members of the committee discussed (1) trash collection; (2) if braille placards should say more than "bus" and if there was input from the vision-impaired communities; (3) Wi-Fi at bus stops; (4) coordination with cities and new developments to fund

bus stop improvements adjacent and near the project site; (5) future bus improvements near the Valley Fair Transit Center since its closure. Staff responded with (1) VTA's trash collection procedures, with a follow-up by the staff liaison on trash separation; (2) VTA's standards for braille; (3) Wi-Fi is provided on our bus and light rail; (4) described the coordination between cities and VTA's land use team to recommend bus stop improvements; (5) a future cycle of Better Bus Stops will improve the stops at Winchester and Stevens Creek.

STANDING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION:

The Safety, Security, and Transit Planning and Operations Committee (SSTPO) met at their December 16, 2021 meeting and received this informational item.

Prepared By: Nikki Diaz
Memo No. 8022

Fall 2021

Better Bus Stops Update

December 2021



Better Bus Stops Program Overview

Launched in Spring 2020, the bi-annual program aims to improve the rider experience by improving amenities at bus stops.



Bus Stop Amenities



VTA policies guide placement of stop amenities



Higher ridership stops get more amenities

The top 20% highest ridership stops accounted for 80% of weekday boardings.

Equitable distribution of amenities

Stops in equity priority areas are given higher consideration.

Project identified community needs

- Fast Transit's Bus Stop Balancing Program
- VTA's first/last-mile partnership with County of Santa Clara
- Community-Based Transportation Plans (CBTPs)

2020 - 2021 Cycle *Installed*



2 custom shelters at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC)



1,676 Braille placards



50 metal benches



5 Simme Seats



30 solar lights with push buttons

2022 - 2023 Cycle

Coming Soon



**33 shelters
with lighting**



**12
concrete
bus pads**

**17
sidewalk
improvements**

23 bike racks



7 benches

**33 trash
receptacles**



