



A3: VTA COMPLETE STREETS POLICY



<p>COMPLETE STREETS</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;">Exhibit A</div>	POLICY	
	Document Number:	PP-PL-001
	Version Number:	01

1. Purpose

This policy sets forth responsibilities, guiding principles, and practices that VTA will follow to ensure that Complete Streets best practices are used during the planning, design, funding, and construction of all transportation capital projects and funding programs administered by VTA.

The Complete Streets concept calls for public roads to be designed and built for the safe mobility of all roadway users. Motorists, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities must be able to move safely along and across the transportation network.

More specifically, Complete Streets are streets:

- That are planned, designed, funded, constructed, operated, and maintained for the safe travel of all users.
- Where designs are context sensitive, and incorporate a balanced network approach.
- That prioritize the safety, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders (including access and operations) of all ages and abilities, as appropriate for the local context, while still providing safe accommodations for motorists and other roadway users.
- Where completed capital projects should improve—and at a minimum must not degrade—the safety, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, or transit customers of all ages and abilities, including travel time of transit operations (recognizing that there may be situations where one of these modes may need to be prioritized over another).
- Where designs are developed with input from the community and support future conditions.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all relevant VTA Divisions and to VTA employees, contractors, and consultants performing work for VTA. It applies to transportation capital projects and capital project funding programs administered by VTA.

3. Responsibilities

Complete Streets In All Divisions – VTA Divisions will incorporate Complete Streets principles and practices into all phases of their transportation capital projects and funding programs.

Revising Policies, Procedures, and Plans – VTA Divisions will undertake updating existing policies, procedures, specifications, plans, templates, and design manuals to incorporate Complete Streets principles and practices.



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Transportation Funding – Funding programs administered by VTA, including 2016 Measure B, will support Complete Streets principles and practices.

4. Policy

A. Complete Streets Principles and Practices – VTA will apply the following Complete Streets principles and practices to all transportation capital projects and funding programs:

- **Serve All Users** – All transportation improvements must be planned, designed, constructed, operated and maintained to support safe and convenient access for all users, and increase mobility for walking, bicycling and transit use.
- **Use Context Sensitive Design** – VTA staff should design transportation projects to be appropriate for the surrounding land use, community character, and function of the transportation facility. Designs should reflect desired or anticipated future conditions.
- **Maintain or Enhance Networks** – With every transportation project, VTA staff should seek opportunities to create, maintain or enhance network connectivity for all users, and ensure that the user experience is maintained across jurisdictional boundaries. The transportation network for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders should not be severed or degraded with the completion of new or modified transportation infrastructure.
- **Incorporate Technology** – VTA staff should incorporate technology to improve safety and operations of the roadway system for all users, and to improve information dissemination.
- **Be Consistent with Adopted Plans**– VTA staff should assure consistency with regional, local and VTA planning documents, including the *Countywide Bicycle Plan*, *Pedestrian Access to Transit Plan*, *Transit Passenger Environment Plan*, VTA’s corridor studies, Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s *Regional Transportation Plan*, and Member Agency planning documents.
- **Maintain Transportation Infrastructure** –With every transportation project, VTA staff should seek opportunities to maintain, upgrade, or replace transportation infrastructure and technology, using asset management best practices.
- **Seek and Respond to Public Input**– VTA staff should seek community input on transportation projects and programs early in the planning and design stages. Input should be sought from relevant VTA Advisory Committees, local communities, and other stakeholders.
- **Build Complete Streets Infrastructure** – VTA staff should proactively seek opportunities to integrate Complete Streets infrastructure into every transportation project.



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Exhibit A

- **Design Using Latest and Best Practice Design Standards and Guides** – VTA staff should: (i) use latest and best practice multi-modal design standards and guides when developing and delivering capital projects; (ii) consult innovative pedestrian, bicycle, and transit design manuals; and (iii) seek new examples as innovations are tested. Examples of national, state, and local design standards/guidelines that support Complete Streets include:

National

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*
- AASHTO *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities*
- AASHTO *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares*
- ITE *Recommended Design Guidelines to Accommodate Pedestrians and Bicycles at Interchanges*
- National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*
- NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide*
- NACTO *Transit Street Design Guide*
- NACTO *Urban Street Stormwater Guide*

Regulatory

- United States Department of Justice *ADA Standards for Accessible Design*
- U.S. Access Board *Proposed Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way*

State

- *California Highway Design Manual* and all Deputy Directives and Design Information Bulletins
- *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* and adopted Interim Approvals
- *Main Street, California – A Guide for Improving Community and Transportation Vitality*
- Caltrans *Class IV Bikeway Guidance (Separated Bikeways/Cycle Tracks)*, DIB 89

Local

- VTA *Community Design and Transportation Manual of Best Practices for Integrating Transportation and Land Use*
- VTA *Bicycle Technical Guidelines*
- VTA *Pedestrian Technical Guidelines*
- VTA *Multi-Modal Design Practices and Principles*
- Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program *C.3 Stormwater Handbook*



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B. Exceptions to Policy Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure and information technology systems identified in local, regional, or countywide planning documents should be incorporated into transportation capital projects administered by VTA if they fall within the project limits. However, exceptions will be considered by the division head of the relevant Division where exceptional circumstances prohibit adherence to this policy. Infrastructure or technology that is identified in a local, regional, or county planning document may be excluded from a transportation project in any of the following circumstances:

- The cost of providing the Complete Streets element is disproportionate to the overall cost of the project, as set forth in the Federal Highway Administration [Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel](#), which notes an advisory threshold of 20% of overall cost of project.
- A roadway user is legally prohibited from using the transportation facility.
- There is an absence of existing and future need, based on the existing and planned transportation network and land use context of the area.
- The Complete Streets element would result in specific, documented detrimental environmental or social impacts that outweigh the need for the infrastructure or technology.

The proposed exception, as well as supporting data and documentation, must be approved in writing by the division head of the VTA Division that is overseeing the project and made publicly available.

C. Evaluation – VTA will evaluate, monitor and report on the effectiveness of its projects using appropriate and practical performance metrics that may be tracked over time. Exceptions will be documented on a case-by-case basis in situations where evaluating and monitoring projects are infeasible or impractical.

D. Capital Projects Funded by VTA – VTA expects that Member Agencies will follow their Complete Streets policies or resolutions when delivering capital projects that have received funding through VTA. If a Member Agency has not adopted a Complete Streets policy or resolution, VTA will encourage the Member Agency to follow the Complete Streets practices described in section 4A and 4B. VTA will ensure that capital projects funded through 2016 Measure B meet the measure’s Complete Streets reporting requirements adopted by the VTA Board of Directors.

E. Member Agency Complete Streets Responsibilities – This policy does not absolve any Member Agency of its responsibility to fund, design, build, operate or maintain Complete Streets elements on transportation facilities under that agency’s control.



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so without an overarching policy. The proposed Complete Streets policy formalizes the practices VTA is already following. It also strengthens the Authority's commitment to integrating Complete Streets into all phases of capital project development and delivery.

DISCUSSION:

VTA's proposed Complete Streets policy (Attachment A) defines Complete Streets and directs all VTA Divisions to formally incorporate Complete Streets within all transportation projects and funding programs. The policy also directs VTA to encourage Member Agencies to follow Complete Streets principles when delivering projects funded by VTA. Staff recommends that the Complete Streets policy be adopted via resolution, strengthening VTA's commitment to Complete Streets, and meeting requirements for 2016 Measure B.

The proposed Complete Streets policy is consistent with VTA's prior related policies, and is consistent with policies adopted by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Caltrans, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). Attachment B provides a timeline of key Complete Streets actions taken by these entities.

If adopted, the proposed Complete Streets policy will allow VTA to meet Complete Streets requirements for future One Bay Area Grant and 2016 Measure B funding programs.

Complete Streets Principles and Practices

The principles and practices outlined in the proposed policy provide a strategy to achieve a system of complete streets. The policy takes the concept of "complete" beyond routine accommodation of non-motorized users to consider the life cycle of the street - from streetscape design, to geometric design standards, to the efficiency, maintenance and operations of the street system.

The proposed policy directs VTA to adhere to the following Complete Streets principles when administering transportation projects and programs:

1. Serve all users of the roadway, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders
2. Use context-sensitive design
3. Maintain or enhance network connectivity
4. Incorporate technology to improve operations and enhance safety of all roadway users
5. Are consistent with adopted plans
6. Maintain transportation infrastructure
7. Seek and respond to public input
8. Integrate Complete Streets infrastructure into transportation projects

9. Design using best practice guides and standards

Exceptions

The expectation is that capital projects administered by VTA will incorporate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure identified in local, countywide, or regional planning documents within the project's geographic limits. However, the policy recognizes that there may be circumstances where exceptions are permitted, including but not limited to: disproportionate cost relative to the overall project, areas where roadway users are legally prohibited, absence of existing and future need, or disproportionate adverse environmental or social impacts. The policy describes exceptions to this rule and directs VTA to document exceptions in writing and make them publicly available.

Evaluation

Finally, the policy directs VTA to evaluate how effectively transportation projects meet their performance measures, including safety, use, and mobility.

ALTERNATIVES:

The VTA Board of Directors could choose to modify or not adopt the resolution and associated Complete Streets Policy. If the policy is modified to eliminate one or more of the nine Complete Streets elements outlined by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, VTA would not be eligible to receive capital funds under 2016 Measure B. Similarly, if VTA Board of Directors does not adopt the resolution establishing the policy, VTA would be ineligible to receive capital funds under 2016 Measure B.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action. While some additional staff time will be required to implement the policy, it can be provided within currently approved staffing levels.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION

The Technical Advisory Committee received this item at the November 8, 2017 meeting. Members made the following comments: 1) one member requested that the policy be modified to indicate that if local design standards and Complete Streets best practices are in conflict the local design standards take precedence; 2) one member requested that minor comments he had emailed to staff prior to the meeting be incorporated; 3) members requested clarification of section 4D. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend the Board of Directors adopt the policy.

The Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) received this item at the November 8, 2017 meeting. Members made the following comments: 1) discussed how the policy could be used to address gaps in Complete Streets; 2) one member asked if the impacts of Complete Streets projects are being evaluated. Staff responded that the policy includes a recommendation to evaluate future

projects. The CAC met as a committee of the whole; no action was taken.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) received this item at the November 8, 2017 meeting. During the discussion, members heard from the BPAC subcommittee that has been involved in reviewing the policy. The BPAC Complete Streets Subcommittee noted that they reviewed and commented on the policy the week prior, and requested that changes recommended by the subcommittee be incorporated. Subcommittee comments include: 1) noting that the Federal Highway Administration cost exception of 20% is advisory; 2) including Caltrans Class IV Bikeway guidance on the list of best practice design standards and guides; 3) tightening the exception language relating to detrimental environmental or social impacts; and 4) other minor wording changes.

BPAC members also made the following comments: 1) expressed the importance of bringing local projects to local BPACs for comment early in project development 2) requested that the policy be modified to require VTA to bring projects to local BPACs, with one member disagreeing, stating that the decision to bring a project to a local BPAC should rest with local staff; 3) one member believes that the language in 4A, “Complete Streets Principles and Practices” is inconsistent in its use of “must” and “should”; 4) requested clarification of section 4D, “Capital Projects Funded by VTA;” 5) requested that the language in section 3, “Transportation Funding” and section 4D be strengthened by changing “encourage” to “require”; 6) asked how “future need” would be determined per section 4B, “Exceptions to the Policy”; 7) recommended that the policy contribute to maintaining best practice designs across jurisdictional boundaries; 8) asked what happens if planning documents are not consistent with Complete Streets best practices; 9) asked if the policy covers future technology, such as automatic vehicles and staff replied that it does.

The BPAC voted unanimously to defer the item, requesting that staff bring a revised policy back to the committee, incorporating recommended changes to strengthen the policy, and include an explanation for changes not made.

The Committee for Transportation Mobility and Accessibility received this item at its November 9, 2017 meeting. The committee voted unanimously, without comment, to recommend Board of Directors adopt the policy.

The Policy Advisory Committee received this item at its November 9, 2017 meeting. The item was moved to the consent calendar. The committee voted unanimously, without comment, to recommend Board of Directors adopt the policy.

STANDING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION

The Congestion Management Program & Planning Committee (CMPP) received this item at its November 16, 2017 meeting. Staff summarized the policy and highlighted the changes requested by Advisory Committees. Staff also indicated they would incorporate some of the changes requested and send the revised policy to BPAC prior to the Board of Directors meeting. Members made the following comments: 1) encouraged VTA to support physically separated bicycle lanes and asked if the policy could call this out; 2) requested clarification on the relationship of the VTA policy to 2016 Measure B Funds; 3) suggested staff consider changing language in the definition of Complete Streets (section 1) to state that projects should “improve”

conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit customers, rather than only stating that projects should “not degrade” conditions; 4) did not support the BPAC recommendation to change the language in section 4D from “encourage” to “require.” The committee voted unanimously to recommend the policy to the Board for adoption.

Prepared by: Lauren Ledbetter
Memo No. 5806

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A - Reso N Policy 11-30-2017 (PDF)
- Attachment B (DOCX)

RESOLUTION NO. 2017.12.37

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
SANTA CLARA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
ADOPTING A COMPLETE STREETS POLICY**

WHEREAS, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), as the Congestion Management Agency for Santa Clara County, has the responsibility to ensure that all aspects of the transportation system are well planned, adequately funded, functioning efficiently, maintained, accessible and safe for all users; and

WHEREAS, the term “Complete Streets” describes a comprehensive, integrated transportation network that is planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide safe mobility of all users of all ages and abilities, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit vehicles, truckers, and motorists, appropriate to the function and context of the facility; and

WHEREAS, VTA acknowledges the benefits and value for the public health and welfare of reducing vehicle miles traveled and increasing transportation by walking, bicycling, and public transportation; and

WHEREAS, VTA recognizes that the planning and coordinated development of Complete Streets infrastructure provides benefits for local governments in the areas of infrastructure cost savings, public health, and environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the State of California has emphasized the importance of Complete Streets by enacting the California Complete Streets Act of 2008 (also known as AB 1358), which requires that when cities or counties revise general plans, they identify how they will provide for the mobility needs of all users of the roadways, as well as through Deputy Directive 64R-2, in which the California Department of Transportation explained that it “views all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all travelers in California and recognizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit modes as integral elements of the transportation system”; and

WHEREAS, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (known as AB 32) sets a mandate for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in California, and the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (known as SB 375) requires emissions reductions through coordinated regional planning that integrates transportation, housing, and land-use policy, and achieving the goals of these laws will require significant increases in travel by public transit, bicycling, and walking; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 743 (Steinberg, 2013) and subsequent proposed guidelines by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research revises the California Environmental Quality Act to “promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses;” and

WHEREAS, numerous California counties, cities, and agencies have adopted Complete Streets policies and legislation in order to further the health, safety, welfare, economic vitality, and environmental wellbeing of their communities; and

Complete Streets Policy Support

Complete Streets are supported by plans, guidelines, and policies from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Caltrans, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and VTA. A timeline of selected documents and policies is provided below.

- November 2002: VTA Board of Directors adopts the Community Design & Transportation (CDT) Program as its primary effort for linking transportation and land use. The CDT program outlines principles that are prescient of Complete Streets best practices that gain favor over the next several years.
- June 2006: Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) adopts *MTC's Regional Policy for Accommodation of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities during Transportation Project Planning, Design, Funding, and Construction* (Resolution 3765), which requires project sponsors to submit a Complete Streets checklist for projects funded by MTC.
- September 2008: Governor Schwarzenegger signs into law the *Complete Streets Act of 2008*, (AB 1358) which requires that circulation elements of a city or county plan for a “balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan.”
- October 2008: Caltrans Department of Transportation (Caltrans) adopts *Complete Streets- Integrating the Transportation System* (DD-64-R-1), which directs the Agency to “ensure that travelers of all ages and abilities can move safely and efficiently along and across a network of ‘complete streets.’” It specifically calls out bicyclists, pedestrians and transit modes.
- January 2009: VTA Board of Directors adopts a policy, *Multi-Modal Design Practices and Principles*, which directs staff to follow the multi-modal design approach used for the US 101/Tully Road interchange project on all future roadway improvements, as feasible.
- January 2009: VTA establishes a Complete Streets program in the *Valley Transportation Plan 2035* and aligns funding to assist Member Agencies and VTA in delivering context-sensitive Complete Streets projects.
- March 2010: U.S. Department of Transportation issues a *Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations*, which supports the development of fully integrated active transportation networks. The policy states that well-connected bicycle and pedestrian networks should be designed as part of Federal-aid projects.
- August 2010: VTA staff presents *Complete Streets Principles for Santa Clara County* (Memo No. 1543), to the VTA Board of Directors, which outlines a framework for a potential Complete Streets policy for Santa Clara County.

Attachment B

- May 2012: MTC sets a Complete Streets requirement for local agencies to be eligible to receive federal and state transportation funding through the One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program. VTA works with Member Agencies to certify that they have met the MTC requirements.
- October 2014: Caltrans updates its Complete Streets policy to direct the agency to provide for the needs of travelers of all ages and ability in planning, programming, design, construction, operations, and maintenance activities on the State highway system (DD 64-R-2). The policy is supported by Caltrans' *Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan 2.0*, adopted in 2014.
- June 2016: VTA includes a Complete Streets requirement in the policy language for 2016 Measure B, which subsequently is approved by voters in November 2016.
- June 2017: VTA Board of Directors approves the Complete Streets Reporting Requirements for 2016 Measure B. As described in the Reporting Requirements, project sponsors, including VTA, must have an adopted Complete Streets Policy in order to be eligible to receive 2016 Measure B funding.