



August 17, 2015

City of Gilroy
Department of Community Development
7351 Rosanna Street
Gilroy, CA 95020

Attention: Kristi Abrams, PE, Community Development Director

Subject: **VTA Comments on Draft Mobility Element for Gilroy General Plan 2040**

Dear Ms. Abrams:

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has reviewed the Public Review Draft of the Mobility Element for Gilroy General Plan 2040. We have a number of comments on the Draft Mobility Element, which are included in the attached memorandum. However, I would like to highlight here the key themes from our review.

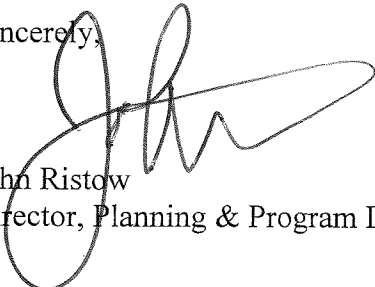
- First, we support the proposed new policies (such as M 4.7 and M 7.1) that call for coordination with VTA, regional and state agencies on transit and transportation systems.
- Second, we encourage the City to take a comprehensive look at needs and opportunities for transit service in Gilroy, in cooperation with VTA. We suggest adding to the Mobility Implementation Programs a joint VTA/City study of transit needs and opportunities in Gilroy that would update work conducted during VTA's last Comprehensive Operations Analysis in 2006-2007. This study could look at regional transit services, local fixed-route bus service, private shuttles, and opportunities for new service models (e.g., dynamic, flexible public transit services) to serve emerging developments or areas that are difficult to serve with fixed-route bus service.
- VTA would also like to point out that decisions about land uses and densities in the General Plan Update will have implications for the feasibility of providing transit service in the future. Transit-supportive land uses, development densities and street patterns are necessary for transit to be able to operate in an effective manner. VTA's approach to providing transit service is guided by the *Transit Sustainability Policy/Service Design Guidelines (TSP/SDG)*, adopted by the VTA Board in 2007. The TSP/SDG includes criteria to evaluate, design, implement and monitor VTA transit services, including land use density targets for new transit service based on recommendations in the VTA Community Design and Transportation (CDT) Manual. The TSP/SDG is available at <http://www.vta.org/projects-and-programs/programs/transit-sustainability-policy-tsp>. We suggest referencing VTA's Board-adopted TSP/SDG in the Mobility element section on Transit.
- In the Mobility Element policies on Caltrain and regional transit service (M 4.3, M 7.5, and M 7.6), we suggest including a reference to working with the Peninsula Corridor Joint

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Powers Board and VTA to identify opportunities and alternatives for Caltrain service once the electrification project from San Francisco to Tamien is completed.

- VTA supports the intent of the new Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority policy (M 3.7), but suggests that the wording be clarified to identify situations where bicycle and pedestrian priority will apply, and give better guidance to City staff and elected officials. VTA also suggests that the City consider establishing a Transit Priority policy to prioritize transit vehicle movement on key transit-served roadways, to improve the time-competitiveness of transit and manage travel times and operating costs.
- VTA supports the new policy (M 5.4) and Mobility Implementation Programs (7 and 8) relating to identifying new Transportation Performance Metrics and Vehicle Miles Traveled Standards, to broaden the City's set of measures for the performance of the transportation system.
- VTA commends the City for including several policies relating to roadway connectivity in the Draft Mobility Element (such as M 1.4, M 1.8, and M 7.3) and we encourage the City to identify opportunities to add crossings of US 101, both for motor vehicles and for bicycles and pedestrians.

VTA would like to continue to provide assistance to the City of Gilroy in its General Plan Update process, as well as on accompanying implementation actions. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (408) 321-5713 or Robert Swierk at (408) 321-5949 if you have any questions or would like to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,


John Ristow
Director, Planning & Program Development

cc: Stan Ketchum, Henry Servin, Lee Butler, City of Gilroy
Chris Augenstein, Scott Haywood, Robert Swierk, VTA

MEMORANDUM

TO: Stan Ketchum, Special Project Planner
City of Gilroy, Department of Community Development

FROM: Robert Swierk, AICP
VTA Planning & Program Development Division

DATE: August 17, 2015

SUBJECT: Detailed VTA Comments on Draft Mobility Element for Gilroy General Plan 2040

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has reviewed the Public Review Draft of the Mobility Element for Gilroy General Plan 2040. In addition to the key themes raised in our cover letter from John Ristow dated August 17, 2015, we have the following specific comments based on our review.

General Mobility:

- Policy M 1.2 – Street Network Hierarchy: VTA encourages the City to consider the application of a more current, context-sensitive roadway classification system in the Mobility element, such as the classification system used by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) in its design guidelines.
- Policy M 1.7 – Street Landscaping: We suggest clarifying that street trees should be placed between the sidewalk and the curb, to provide a buffer between pedestrians and motor vehicles. Resources on pedestrian quality of service, such as the Highway Capacity Manual 2010 Pedestrian Level of Service methodology, indicate that such accommodations improve pedestrian perceptions of comfort and safety on a roadway.

Complete Streets:

- Policy M 2.7 – Safe Street Crossings: We support the inclusion of this policy, but suggest that the sentence about bridge crossings being designed to include bike lanes or paths should be modified to include sidewalks as well.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists:

- Policy M 3.4 – Sidewalk Network Gaps: We commend the City for including this proposed new policy, but we suggest that the language be expanded to note that new development may also contribute to such projects as a community benefit, or as an off-setting measure for a transportation impact identified in the transportation analysis or environmental review process.
- Policy M 3.8 – Bicycle Facility Design Guidelines: We are pleased to see this new policy, and encourage the City to consider adding a parallel policy to develop Pedestrian Facility Design Guidelines based on NACTO design guidelines and the VTA Community Design & Transportation Program Manual of Best Practices.

Vehicular Traffic and Parking:

- Goal M 5: We suggest replacing the phrase “adequate supply of vehicle parking” with “appropriate supply of vehicle parking” to better match the language of Policies M 5.11 and M 5.12 regarding right-sizing parking standards and the amount of vehicle parking in the City.

Regional Cooperation:

- Policy M 7.4 – Intercity Rail and Policy M 7.5 – New Transit: We suggest adding a reference to coordinating with the Capital Corridor Joint Powers Authority to consider the potential for Capitol Corridor service to play a role.

Table 3-1 – Mobility Implementation Programs:

- Program 7 – Transportation Performance Metrics, and Program 8 – Vehicle Miles Traveled Standards: As noted in our cover letter, VTA supports the intent of these implementation actions. However, we suggest that the language be left less prescriptive, particularly in Program 8 regarding VMT standards “jointly with level of service (LOS) standards.” While the adoption of VMT standards jointly with LOS standards is one possibility for updating the City’s performance metrics, there are other possible outcomes as well. We suggest keeping the language broader, so as not to preclude options. We also suggest that Program 8 – Vehicle Miles Traveled Standards – be shifted to the 2016-2018 time frame, rather than 2019-2023, to reflect the timing of changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) transportation guidelines.
- Program 10 – Signal Preemption for Buses: VTA commends the City for including this policy, and suggests adding a note that this would be done in coordination with VTA and other transit operators.