

May 14, 2015

Honorable Members of the VTA Board of Directors Ad Hoc Committee
3331 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95134-1927
Sent Via Email

RE: Proposed Edits to the Envision Silicon Valley Draft Goals, Principles, and Processes

Dear Chairperson Woodward, Honorable Members of the VTA Envision Silicon Valley Ad Hoc Committee, and General Manager Fernandez:

This is a follow-up communication to the letter we sent to the VTA Ad Hoc Committee, dated April 27, 2015. We write on behalf of the Transit Justice Alliance (TJA), a broad network of the community – including environmentalists, working families, transit, land use and housing advocates, legal experts, and neighborhood associations – all working together to advocate for equitable transit-oriented development and the transportation needs of low-income residents of Santa Clara County. TJA is led by Working Partnerships USA, and its active participants include Urban Habitat, TransForm, Public Advocates, Friends of Caltrain, Sacred Heart Community Service, PACT, Amalgamated Transit Union, California Walks, Teamsters, and several others.

We appreciate VTA's commitment to an ongoing and constructive dialogue with the TJA. In particular, we appreciate VTA's willingness to consider our proposed enhancements to the Envision Silicon Valley draft Goals and Principles, as well as to consider conducting equity-based project and program scenarios.

In our correspondence dated April 27th, we proposed the following action items below:

- 1) *incorporate equity-based goals and priorities into the latest draft goals,*
- 2) *identify clear objectives and targets that accompany the goals and priorities,*
- 3) *develop scenarios that could later be assessed against goals and evaluation criteria, as well as equity goals,*
- 4) *host workshops in which low-income riders would have the opportunity to be heard on the relative benefits of various scenarios and to achieve consensus on a scenario that best meets their needs,*
- 5) *analyze several scenarios against adopted equity-based and other performance measures,*
and
- 6) *review output from analysis and solicit input on analysis outcomes from community stakeholders and organizations.*

As follow-up regarding the proposed action items, the TJA has since executed the following items:

- *drafted an equity-based list of Goals, Principles, and relevant objectives under each goal (attached),*

- generated a diagram representing how equity-informed scenarios may be conducted (attached), and
- extended an invitation to VTA to cohost community meetings that will facilitate meaningful input from low-income residents and other vulnerable populations about their transit needs.

TJA was encouraged by VTA's willingness to co-present community meetings that will be held in August 2015. The purpose of the meetings is to ensure that as VTA reviews and considers potential projects and preferred scenarios related to the sales tax, its final decisions will be community- and equity-informed.

Please review the attached proposed goals, principles, and objectives as well as scenarios diagram. We respectfully request the following:

- 1. incorporate TJA's proposed goals, principles, and objectives into the version of the draft goals and principles that will be reviewed by the VTA Ad Hoc Committee on May 22nd,**
- 2. direct staff to submit written confirmation that VTA will execute the aforementioned action items identified on April 27th (e.g., develop scenarios), and**
- 3. direct staff to meet with TJA representatives no later than June 2015 to provide clarity about how and when the April 27th Action Items will be executed.**

We look forward to working directly with VTA's board and staff to help achieve our shared goals for a sustainable and robust transportation system that allows us to improve environmental quality, increase ridership, and deliver state-of-the-art transit to all community members, especially our most vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

Derecka Mehrens, Executive Director
Charisse Ma Lebron, Director of Community Development & Health Policy
Working Partnerships USA

Ellen Wu, Executive Director
Urban Habitat

Christopher Lepe, Senior Community Planner, Silicon Valley
TransForm

David Zisser, Staff Attorney, Metropolitan Equity Team
Public Advocates, Inc.

Adina Levin, Executive Director
Friends of Caltrain

Diana Hermone, President and Business Agent
ATU Local 265

Poncho Guevara, Executive Director
Sacred Heart Community Service

Jaime Fearer, Planning & Policy Manager
California Walks

Goals & Strategies

Envision Silicon Valley

Guiding Principles:

1. **Access:** Transportation investments should improve the standard of living of low-income residents, people of color, seniors, and individuals with disabilities by providing improved access to employment, services, and other important amenities.
2. **Meaningful Benefits Without Doing Harm:** Investments should deliver significant benefits to low-income residents and workers, and avoid harms to disadvantaged residents and other vulnerable communities, such as increased risks of displacement.
3. **Parity:** A fair share of the sales tax investments should be allocated to make great transportation options available for underserved communities and low-wage workers.
4. **Affordability:** Investments should seek to make transportation more affordable for a larger segment of the population, particularly for low-income residents and workers.
5. **Collaboration:** Investments should be informed by and built on collaborations with jurisdictions, stakeholder organizations, and institutions, including schools, service providers, and employers in order to ensure beneficial impacts to those in greatest need.
6. **Community-informed:** Decisions should be community-informed and solicit meaningful input from low-income communities, people of color, seniors, students, individuals with disabilities, transit riders, and those who do not yet have access to transit.

Goal: Focus on the Needs of Transit-dependent/Underserved/Disadvantaged Communities

- Tailor investments to meet the diverse geographical and demographic needs of the County.
- Prioritize funding for projects and programs that increase access to employment, services, and other needs for low-income, disadvantaged, transit-dependent communities, and populations for which transit remains inaccessible.
- Prioritize transit funding in areas with affordable housing and renter protections to ensure investment without displacement and to increase ridership.
- Invest in and support the preservation and increase of affordable housing along transit corridors in order to deliver accessible transit to low-income and disadvantaged communities, which advance VTA's ridership, environmental, and joint development policy goals.

Goal: Revitalize Transportation Infrastructure

- Maintain and improve the existing system before expansion (fix-it-first policy).
- Foster public-private partnerships and work with city planning departments to focus infrastructure investments in areas of anticipated job and housing growth, such as in and around Priority Development Areas (PDAs).

Goal: Provide Congestion Relief

- Improve transit service travel times and frequency during peak travel periods.

- Focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled, as opposed to level of service, to reduce auto-dependency and provide improved traffic-free transportation options.

Goal: Improve Health and Safety

- Promote healthy communities by reducing criteria pollutants and toxic air contaminants in communities with high lung disease and asthma rates and by encouraging active forms of transportation (walking and biking) in areas with high rates of obesity and heart disease.
 - For example, coordinate with city/county existing land use plans to encourage active transportation in high-ridership PDAs.
- Ensure all projects result in a safe, reliable and comfortable transportation system, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists, transit-users and transit workers in areas of greatest need. For example:
 - Prioritize road and traffic safety projects in low-income communities with high pedestrian and bicycle injury/fatality rates.
 - Minimize speeding in residential neighborhoods by investing in traffic calming projects and multi-modal options that improve safety while minimizing cut-through traffic.

Goal: Enhance Trip Experience

- Provide a comprehensively intuitive, user-friendly, and culturally competent transit system.
- Adopt new strategies and technologies that improve the trip experience for all users, particularly for people that walk, bike, take transit, and carpool.
- Provide better amenities to retain and attract transit users, such as wifi service, shelter improvements, real time service updates, secure-bicycle parking, and bikes-on-board.

Goal: Improve Access to Essential Destinations

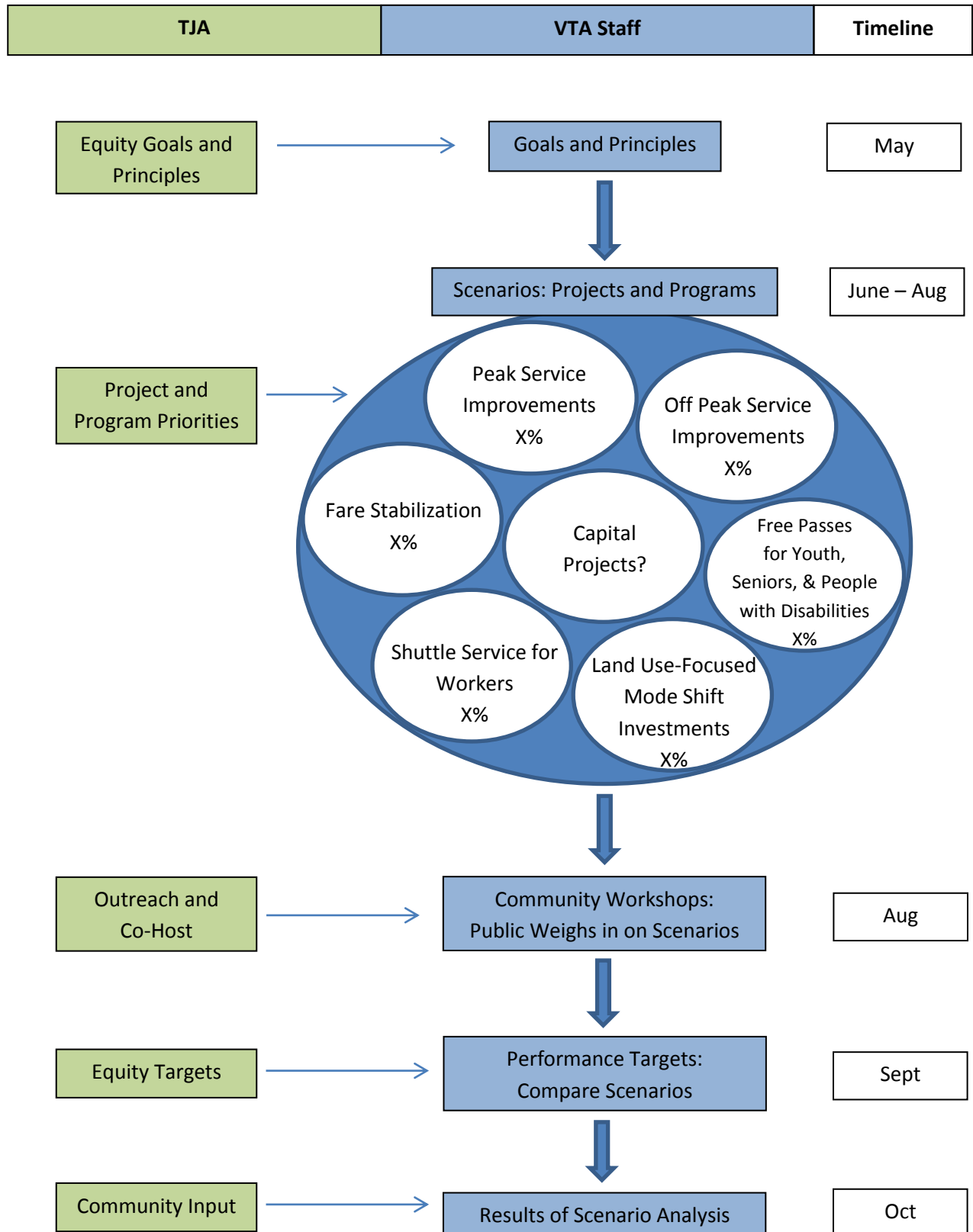
- Increase transit service frequency and speed up the transit network in areas of greatest need.
- Prioritize programs and projects that increase access and affordability to car-competitive transit options for transit-dependent riders, low-income residents, seniors, youth, individuals with disabilities, and populations for which transit remains inaccessible.
- Deliver cost-effective bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs with high usage potential.

Goal: Develop an Integrated, Efficient & Sustainable System

- Foster partnerships and opportunities that leverage new revenues with funding from institutions, the private sector, and local jurisdictions to expand and improve transportation choices, first/last mile connectivity, and boost transit use, walking, biking, and carpooling rates.
- Pursue investments that support and promote higher density land use and transit integration, including facilitating and building affordable housing along transit corridors, to increase ridership.
- Develop a zero-emission transit fleet to reduce greenhouse gases, especially in communities with significant air pollution-related health burdens.

- Further integrate local and regional transit services and fares, and eliminate barriers when transferring between systems.
- Capital investments should be focused on increasing transit use while reducing operations and maintenance costs per dollar spent on service whenever possible.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing safe, efficient, and reliable transportation choices that reduce solo-driving and vehicle miles traveled.

VTA Sales Tax Expenditures
Scenario Development Diagram
May 12, 2015



Description of Scenario Development for VTA Sales Tax Expenditures

Transit Justice Alliance

What is the Scenario Development?

The Transit Justice Alliance (TJA), a coalition of environmentalists, working families, transit, land use and housing advocates, legal experts, and neighborhood associations, proposes that VTA analyze an investment package consisting of equity-based project and program priorities (e.g., expanded service for low-income riders, free transit pass programs, a fare stabilization fund, shuttle service for workers) against other proposed alternative investment packages as a part of the Envision Silicon Valley process.

Attached is a diagram providing a visual representation of how VTA staff may conduct the proposed equity-based project and program scenarios.

The Envision Silicon Valley timeline includes convenient access points for development and integration of an investment scenario into the existing process:

- (1) the VTA Ad Hoc Committee will formalize goals in May and the greater VTA Board in June,
- (2) VTA will develop a draft financing plan (i.e., a scenario) in October,
- (3) VTA will host community meetings in August and on an ongoing basis, and
- (4) the Board will approve evaluation criteria (i.e., performance measures) in September.

Why developing a Scenario is important

The TJA proposes these process and content enhancements because they will give low-income residents, workers, and organizational leaders the opportunity to shape and choose among clear alternatives, and because we believe an enhanced process will lead to a better outcome for all stakeholders and achieve greater buy-in from voters. The analysis of alternative scenarios in the process leading to the adoption of Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Plan Bay Area showed that the development of a scenario that starts with the needs of low-income communities produces the greatest benefits – including environmental and economic benefits – for the broader community.