

create
collaborate
lead





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MOUNTAIN VIEW



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INTRODUCTION

THE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (VTA) STRATEGIC PLAN WILL TAKE VTA TO THE NEXT LEVEL—AND BEYOND.

This plan is the result of an analysis of the agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as the input, observations, and ideas from VTA employees, customers, and members of VTA's advisory committees and Board of Directors. It addresses our current situation and provides a framework to build an exciting future. This plan asks everyone involved with VTA—beginning with the Board of Directors and including all employees—to embrace this approach and work to implement its philosophy.

This clear and visionary Plan will guide us along the path of further establishing VTA as an industry leader, innovator, and a transportation organization worthy of serving Silicon Valley. The Plan establishes our Mission, Vision, and Values, and provides a framework to tie your everyday work into the overall direction and priorities of the agency. This tie is strengthened with our Business Plans. The Strategic Plan guides the development and implementation of VTA's Business Plans, which outline the strategies necessary to

reach our goals. This Plan will also serve to guide our budgeting process and allocation of resources.

This high-level Plan will provide direction and actively foster creativity, collaboration, and leadership. Ultimately, it is designed to be transformative; that is, to create a dynamic work environment that carries us boldly and confidently into the future. Our environment will simplify and stabilize decision making, VTA employees will be encouraged to take strategic risks, and proactive action will be encouraged while excuses for inaction are discouraged.



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

ASK ANYONE WHAT VTA IS AND YOU'RE LIKELY TO HEAR A RESPONSE INVOLVING THE PHRASE "BUSES AND TRAINS."



While operating Santa Clara County's bus and light rail system is an important part of what we do, it's certainly not the only aspect of our work—and that's a good thing.

VTA is a unique organization, so our approach to work must be unique as well. We have wide-ranging authority, including transit development and operations, congestion management, funding, highway design and construction, real estate and transit-oriented development, and bicycle and

pedestrian planning. We are truly a multimodal transportation solutions agency, which gives us many great opportunities that other agencies don't have. Our structure is unique in the Bay Area, and to better support our local interests and needs, as well as enhance regional partnerships, we will continue to strive for greater regional independence.

VTA is a collection of more than 2,000 dedicated employees working together to provide transportation throughout

Silicon Valley.

We provide solutions that move people to their jobs, recreational activities, appointments, home, and more, allowing us to meet the varied needs of a diverse population. From highways to bikeways to safer routes to school, the people of VTA work together to make sure Silicon Valley residents and workers have the ability to get where they need to go.



The pyramid graphic illustrates our strategic organization, which emphasizes that Great People are the foundation upon which Great Products are built. Through the framework of creativity, collaboration, and leadership, we can unify the efforts of all the divisions to achieve our goals.

We don't do this alone. Our partnerships with cities and the County, as well as nonprofit organizations, businesses, regional agencies, and community stakeholders, are imperative for our success. For instance, jurisdictions that have land use plans that take into account the way people move help us provide the appropriate transportation options, while making prudent use of our resources. The efforts of VTA employees and our partners in the community ensure that we are all invested in Santa Clara County's transportation network and in providing the solutions that will keep Silicon Valley moving.



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HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

THIS STRATEGIC PLAN WILL HELP EVERYONE INVOLVED IN VTA—FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO ALL OPERATING DIVISIONS—UNDERSTAND VTA’S OVERALL MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES AND HOW YOUR WORK ALIGNS WITH THEM.

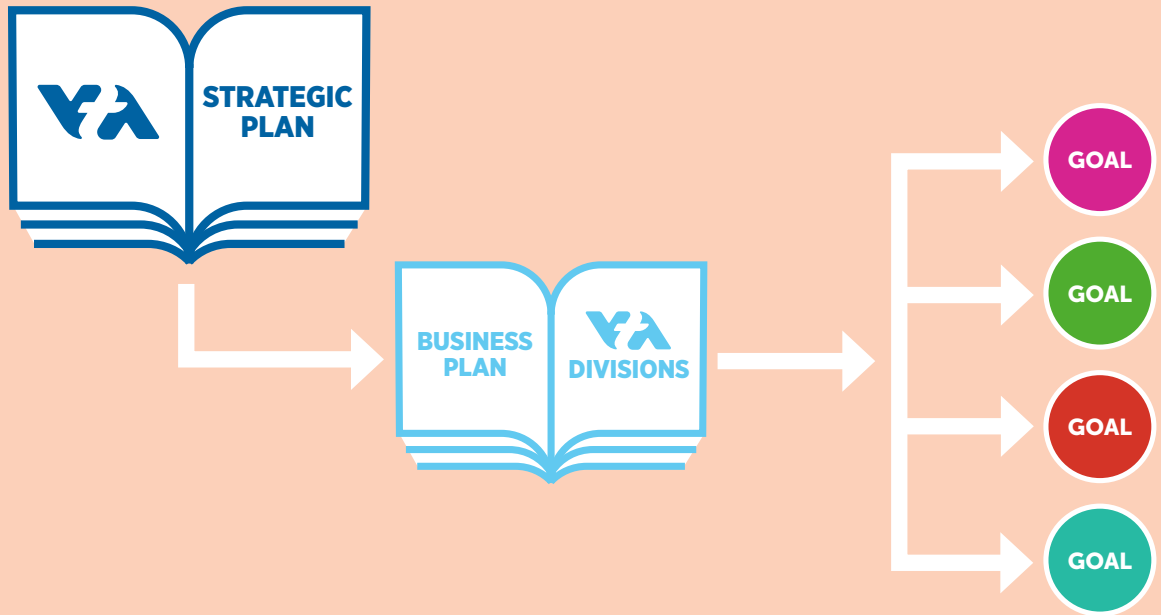
VTA has added a new section to the Strategic Plan: Business Lines. This section will help you better understand how VTA comes together to provide service to people with varying needs across a diverse county. It also helps to avoid silos in the workplace by providing a broad overview of what VTA does and how each decision affects the overall work we do. We’ll get more into Business Lines in Chapter 4.

Practically, this plan is designed to give you a pathway to set goals for yourself and, if you’re a manager, to help your employees set goals for themselves as well. It all starts with the Mission, Vision, and Values, which we’ll cover in detail. In the future, each division will set its goals and determine its initiatives in accordance with the Mission, Vision, and Values in this plan. Those, in turn, will inform employees’

goals and determine key indicators of success for the employee, manager, division and ultimately, VTA itself.

While specific goals and initiatives can change—for instance, with the results of new studies or through revised policies—the Mission, Vision, and Values will guide all that we do. So no matter your position, you should be able to relate what you do to the





The Strategic Plan guides the development and implementation of VTA's Business Plans, and the Business Plans in turn outline the strategies necessary to reach our goals.

This plan is designed to give you a pathway to set goals for *yourself* and, if you're a manager, to help your employees set goals for themselves as well.

Mission, Vision and Values of the organization. For instance, if you're an operator, you are providing the basic service that VTA does. In this position, you are uniquely situated to contribute ideas on improving service for customers and helping VTA meet its transit goals. In the discussion of Mission, Vision, and Values, and later in the Business Lines, keep in mind some questions that will help you to determine how your work fits in and supports VTA's plan for moving the people of Silicon Valley.

Each one of us plays a part in the ultimate success of VTA. Knowing how your role contributes will help VTA function more cohesively and give your work even more meaning. Perhaps more importantly, if you don't know how your role contributes—ask. Ask yourself how can/do I contribute; ask your supervisor to help you think through the question; ask your friends and neighbors how VTA can improve.



Think about the main tasks of your position. How do those tasks relate to the Mission, Vision, and Values?

What Business Lines do you see your position affecting, and how?

How do you incorporate VTA's priorities into your daily work?

How can you demonstrate VTA's Values in your daily work and in your personal employee goals?

A teal-tinted photograph of two women sitting at a table in what appears to be a meeting or classroom setting. The woman on the right is holding a tablet and looking at it, while the woman on the left looks on. The image is partially obscured by white geometric shapes: a large triangle on the left and a smaller one at the bottom center.

MISSION, VISION, CORE VALUES

AN ORGANIZATION'S MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES ARE THE BEACONS THAT SERVE AS OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EVERYDAY.

Through these statements of principles, our customers, employees, and the community know what the organization is all about, what it does and, importantly, what it will not do.

MISSION

The **Mission** offers the reason for being. It answers the questions: “Why does this organization exist; what do we do?” To offer services that will add value to the community, this question must be answered clearly and memorably.

For VTA, the answer is: to provide **“solutions that move you.”** Our role is to get people moving and keep them moving.

This answer is broad enough to encompass all the work that VTA does—transit service, congestion management, highway construction, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities—but narrow enough to leave no doubt or confusion about who we are.

VISION

The **Vision** is where we see ourselves in the future. This answers the question “What are you aiming to achieve?”

To help the community understand what they can expect from the organization, now and down the line, this question also must be answered clearly.

For VTA, the answer is: **“To innovate the way Silicon Valley moves.”** This means we plan to position ourselves now and in the future as leaders in the effort to help move the residents of Silicon Valley, an area known for innovation where people expect the newest, cutting edge options to be readily available. Rather than wait for others to develop those options, we will do the innovating: we will create, collaborate and lead, offering options that meet the evolving needs of people around the county.

CORE VALUES

Core Values reflect what we believe in and how we will behave. They represent our ethics and code of conduct, guide the agency's decision-making, and apply to everything VTA does. VTA's Core Values are:



safety

We plan and deliver services in a way that promotes the health and safety of our employees and the public.



integrity

We conduct our business in an ethical, honest, and transparent manner.



quality

We ensure that the services we deliver, and projects that we build, are well designed and maintained to preserve the investment that has been made.



sustainability

We operate our services and design our projects to minimize the negative impacts on our environment, in a way that can be maintained over time. Additionally, we operate as a sustainable organization by reducing our carbon footprint.



diversity

We value, respect, and serve the unique needs of our community.



accountability

We are stewards of the natural resources and transportation tax revenues of the County, take responsibility for our actions, and honestly report our successes and challenges to stakeholders and the public.

ACTION VALUES

Action Values operationalize our core values and all aspects of this Plan. They are intended to be *transformative*, they encompass the core values, help them transcend their written definition, and help them evolve and improve in application over time. They will help us to continually grow and improve—to never be satisfied with the way things are, and always ask, “How can I make things better?”

VTA’s Action Values are: ***Creativity, Collaboration and Leadership***; and in practice: **Create, Collaborate and Lead**. These three Action Values form the core of VTA’s business.

Creativity ensures that we don’t get stuck in our old ways of doing something just because that’s the way we’ve always done it. Here in Silicon Valley, where creativity is expected and rewarded, a creative approach to services and projects will allow us to make the best use of our

resources, while meeting the needs of our customers. Seeking, and being open to, creative solutions allows us to consider new ways of dealing with old—and new—challenges, and helps us direct the narrative for the future. Through creativity, we can achieve the priorities of **sustainability**, using our imaginations to find new ways to meet the changing needs of our customers now and in the future, and **quality**, delivering original services and projects that take transportation in our Valley to the next level.

Collaboration allows us to make the best use of our resources and ensure that we can achieve our goals. Working internally, collaboration means forgoing formal division and group structures, and more freely sharing ideas and information. It means looking for ways to cross-train staff, share and more efficiently use resources, and find partnerships for projects and programs. In this way, every division at VTA will be intercon-



**How might I use
creativity each day
in my job?**

**How can I make things
better?**

**How do I collaborate
in my work?**

nected and invested together in success; the strategic plan relies on this collaborative work model.

By learning from and working with new and “disruptive” technologies through the lens of mutual benefit, we can take advantage of new opportunities and form new alliances with the private sector. Public/Private partnerships offer tremendous upside potential to provide solutions and options for travel throughout Santa Clara County.



Working together with our partners — cities, counties, nonprofit organizations, businesses, regional agencies, and the community—helps us tailor our services and projects to what the community needs and to deliver not just the sum of what each of our partners contributes, but exponentially more. Because alone we can achieve a certain amount, but when we work together, through support and collaboration, we can reach greater heights. This is key to accomplishing our priorities of **diversity** and **inclusivity**; listening to and considering a range of voices and needs and working cooperatively to address them.

Collaborating on projects, whether they originate with VTA, a local jurisdiction, another agency, or the private sector, allows us to have a voice in the development of Silicon Valley, ensuring that we can serve all of our valley reliably and safely.

Providing reliable service is a product of not just an individual or VTA itself, but rather results from a collaboration of individuals in a whole system working together seamlessly.

Leadership helps us, as the Valley Transportation *Authority*, guide the development of transportation in our County. VTA will lead, not just in projects and services, but also in the creative development of transportation solutions, in collaboration with our partners, and in the exemplary treatment of our employees and customers.

This value of leadership depends upon the values of creativity and collaboration. Think about the qualities of good leaders: they tackle problems creatively, coming up with their own good ideas and recognizing good ideas in others. They also collaborate to bring about viable, sustainable solutions, and ensure that

everyone on the team is invested in bringing those solutions to fruition.

Leadership means having a forward-thinking agency—from the Board of Directors to each division—that is invested in VTA's success and strategic goals and prepared to advocate for our customers. Leadership means consistently implementing VTA's adopted policies and programs, even when it may be difficult or controversial.

For our organization to be successful, we need to embody our Mission and Vision in everything we do, and implementing these Values will help us to do that. Because this is so important to our organization, we invite *you* to **create, collaborate, and lead** every day. Find a way to exhibit these Values in your day-to-day work, and not only will you be contributing to VTA and the customers we serve, you will also be helping yourself.

Remember: **Create, Collaborate, and Lead!**





BUSINESS THEMES

OUR BUSINESS THEMES PROVIDE A HOLISTIC LOOK AT OUR PEOPLE, OUR PRODUCTS, AND OUR SERVICES.

Great people. VTA does a lot of different types of work. From delivering transit service to delivering bicycle projects to congestion management—and everything in between—the work we do is dependent on the people who show up every day and care enough to give their best to their jobs. Great people do great work and great work is required to make great products.

VTA wants to attract, develop, and retain the great employees that will keep this organization vibrant. This is a main driver in our hiring practices

and in our Mission, Vision, and Values. We understand the value that hardworking, dedicated employees bring to the organization and want to recognize and nurture their efforts and contributions. Additionally, by implementing effective channels of communication, we can create a culture of trust between employees and management so both employees and the agency thrive—we need to foster an environment in which people create great products and services.

To foster an agency that leads to greatness, VTA needs a great work

environment, and we must also be properly staffed with the resources and human capital necessary to create great products.

Great products. VTA breaks our work out into three core *Business Lines*. This approach serves several functions: first, it helps employees and the public better understand exactly what work VTA does; second, it allows us to avoid silos, because it shows how each function of the organization affects the others; third, it relates our work back to our Mission, Vision, and Values, which makes it easier for employees and others to understand if our actions are really in line with our guiding principles and goals; and finally, these business lines will help



us determine if we have structured our plans correctly and are spending resources in the right areas, for the right projects and programs.

So what are these **Business Lines**? There are three areas of focus for VTA:

1. **Faster, Frequent, Reliable Transit**
2. **Delivering Projects and Programs**
3. **Transportation System Management**

We'll explore each of these briefly.

BUSINESS LINE 1

FASTER, FREQUENT, RELIABLE TRANSIT

This Business Line involves developing and maintaining a highly integrated transportation network with a focus on transit.

OVERARCHING STRATEGY

Provide a *great transit product* that is *faster, frequent, and reliable*.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- **Faster.** Optimize transit travel times and ensure they preserved and continually improved. This means working constantly with our partner agencies to secure transit preferential roadway treatments such as transit signal priority and dedicated operating lanes/tracks throughout the core/frequent network, and ensure that new development does not slow transit operations.
- **Frequent.** Ensure that transit service, especially in core areas,¹ is frequent (every 15 minutes or better).

- **Reliable.** Provide customer-focused information systems and preserve and enhance reliable operations through transit-preferential treatments. Provide our operations and maintenance divisions with the vehicles and parts needed to deliver and maintain our services.

The VTA Business Plan includes implementation goals for each of our strategic goals.

Through partnerships with the private sector and other transit agencies, we aim to improve the complete customer experience, from just before they board their bus or train, through their trip, and after as well. We will use the Transit Ridership Improvement Program (TRIP) and the Next Network

Through a coherent set of standards and expanded partnerships...we will establish a more integrated countywide transportation system that includes state-of-the-art, cutting edge infrastructure design and organization.

to redefine the transit system and better serve the community. We'll incorporate technology, both in the operation of the network and in the customer experience, deliver innovative and relevant products, and maintain our infrastructure and facilities in a state of good repair.

This Business Line is essential to our Mission of providing solutions that

¹ Core Areas are defined as Cores, Corridors and Station Areas, and areas of sufficient density of jobs, housing and uses to make transit service work.

move people. Through our established policies, such as our fare and transit sustainability policies, we'll look at opportunities to innovate our transit services to improve the way Silicon Valley moves. Each of our core Values plays a role in furthering this Business Line. We encourage employees to take a **creative** approach to delivering faster, frequent and reliable transit—no idea is too big or small to consider. We ask employees to **collaborate** across teams and departments to grow and develop their ideas. We support employees showing **leadership** in vetting ideas and working with our customers and management to put into practice those ideas that offer a bigger payoff than risk. Leadership also includes recognizing when an idea won't work—or isn't working—learning a lesson from that and moving on to the next idea to make VTA a leader in transit service.

BUSINESS LINE 2

DELIVERING PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

This Business Line involves our work to discover, create and develop transportation.

OVERARCHING STRATEGY

Creatively and pragmatically provide a full suite of projects and programs—including land use/transportation integration, bike and pedestrian projects, and project management services—that address the current and evolving multimodal needs of Silicon Valley.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- **Develop.** Create concepts, plans, designs, programs, and policies to optimize current conditions and identify and seize new opportunities.



- **Build/Implement.** Deliver projects and programs on time and within budget, and creatively pursue new construction, operational, and business practices that make us more efficient and successful.
- **Provide.** Provide a comprehensive line of services, technical support, funding programs, and mobility solutions to the public and Member Agencies.

The VTA Business Plan includes implementation goals for each of our strategic goals.

Our infrastructure serves various modes of transportation, including transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and cars. We will capitalize on our highly successful past performances to become the go-to agency for delivering transportation projects. Through a coherent set of standards and expanded partnerships with cities and the County, we will establish a more integrated Countywide transportation system that includes state-of-the-art, cutting edge infrastructure design and organization. This aligns with our Vision of improving the Valley's infrastructure and innovate transportation services throughout Santa Clara County.

Each day, our core Values will help us achieve this goal. Employees' **creativity** in approaching both design and maximizing the use of our resources, will help us be

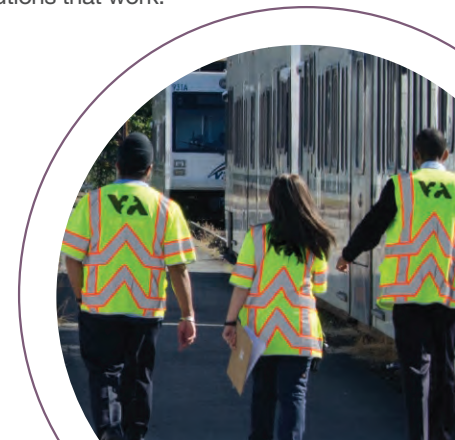
more efficient; this will allow us to develop new ways of designing and building relevant projects that look to the future of the Valley's changing needs. **Collaboration** will ensure we integrate our projects and programs with our local agency partners and is an important method to ensure a cohesive transportation network. By working together we can streamline processes and projects. As with providing faster, frequent, and reliable transit, **leadership** is evidenced in how we **develop** and vet ideas, and the success or lessons learned from implementing them.

BUSINESS LINE 3

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

This Business Line involves our role as the comprehensive unifier and

transportation advocate for Santa Clara County. This is where the other two business lines are blended and enhanced, with a focus on the future and the goals of increased efficiency and value. It centers on our role as the Congestion Management Agency, the funding agency/sales tax authority, and the innovator in transportation systems integration and business practices. It helps us achieve our Mission by helping our partners create the land-use patterns, policies, and infrastructure that allow for transportation solutions that work.



OVERARCHING STRATEGY

Lead the region in transportation systems management, funding, integration, and innovation.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- **Manage.** Address roadway congestion and all modes of transportation system operations by collecting and analyzing data, developing and applying technology, refining current practices, and implementing new planning and management tools.
- **Maximize.** Retain and increase the value of existing infrastructure and services, and optimize the utility of new investments and services.
- **Innovate.** Improve and expand mobility options by innovatively applying technology, planning, design, construction, operations, and business techniques.

The VTA Business Plan includes implementation goals for each of our strategic goals.

The work involved in this Business Line includes the Managed Lane Program; long and short-term planning for transit, highways, bicycles and pedestrians; expanding funding opportunities; continued efforts toward congestion management; and fostering relationships with our regional and local partners. This effort will help us work with cities, the County, and our customers to develop smart land-use patterns, policies, and infrastructure that will let us innovate the way Silicon Valley moves.

Our core Values figure prominently in this business line, because it is through **creativity** that we'll continue to manage the existing transportation system while preparing for the future.

Data and research will be combined with creative ideas to develop a transportation system capable of addressing the future needs of the Valley. **Collaboration** will be key, since we can't do this on our own. We need our customers and local jurisdictions on board to help us develop a cohesive, sensible transportation network. This will take strong **leadership**, because change doesn't come easily, and new ideas are not always popular. For that reason, data and research need to be comprehensive, accurate and thoroughly completed, while we develop and nurture relationships with our partners.



ASK YOURSELF

How do you exhibit the quality of leadership every day?

How can VTA lead Silicon Valley and the region into a new era?



THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERS

VTA CAN'T DO THIS ALONE. WE NEED TO WORK WITH OTHER LOCAL, REGIONAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCIES TO SEE THESE IDEAS COME TO FRUITION.

Local jurisdictions hold land use authority, our transportation partner agencies help us make the connection between diverse transit systems, and state and federal agencies set regulations and standards that we must meet, while also providing funding.

We also need to work with community stakeholders and

customers to understand the best solutions for a given community. And we need to work with our employees to understand and implement the exciting new ideas that will help further establish VTA as an authority in the transportation industry.



A green-tinted photograph of a bus. The digital display on the front of the bus shows the text "WELCOME ABOARD" in a pixelated font. The bus is parked, and the background shows a building and some trees. A large white diagonal shape is overlaid on the left side of the image.

WELCOME ABOARD

THE FACE OF SUCCESS

HOW WILL WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED ALL THAT WE'RE SEEKING TO DO WITH THIS STRATEGIC PLAN?

Our success will come in terms of our desire to seek constant improvement and by relentlessly holding ourselves to the Mission, Vision, and Values stated in this plan. We will know we're successful by measuring the effects of our actions, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, applied both to the strategic goals stated in this Plan and to the goals and metrics outlined in the companion Business Plan. Ultimately, VTA will succeed

by providing more solutions, more choices, and more support to meet the transport needs of the residents and businesses of Santa Clara County.





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