

2024 TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM



In 2024, VTA launched the Transit-Oriented Communities Grant Program to further the development of transit-oriented communities within Santa Clara County.

The goals of the program are to grow innovative and robust partnerships between VTA and local public agencies, nonprofit, community organizations, and other diverse stakeholders to strengthen communities, increase transit ridership, reduce car trips, and support intensive mixed-use, mixed-income development around light rail stations and transit hubs. The following projects are collaborative efforts across community and local government partners to remove barriers and create safe, walkable, healthy, resilient, and thriving neighborhoods next to transit.

Program Area A: Plan and Policy Implementation

Total funding: \$295,000



Funding for projects/efforts that will lead to the adoption of plans, policies, and regulations that implement sustainable and equitable communities at VTA station and transit corridors.

City of San Jose – “Consolidated Light Rail Urban Village and Station Area Corridor Planning”

The City of San José is located in Santa Clara County, CA, and is the largest jurisdiction in the County with over 900,000 residents.

The City of San José will conduct station area planning around the VTA Light Rail corridor to create transit-oriented communities that benefit all community members by addressing transit access barriers, affordable housing and business stabilization strategies. This project will streamline with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Transit-Oriented Community requirements at the regional level.

City of Santa Clara – “Santa Clara Station Area Form-Based Code”

The City of Santa Clara is located in Santa Clara County, CA, and has a population of approximately 130,000 residents.

The City of Santa Clara will develop form-based zoning standards for the Santa Clara Station Area Plan, an Equity Priority Community, by codifying the vision of a well-connected, walkable transit-oriented community into the City’s General Plan. This project will streamline with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Transit-Oriented Community requirements at the regional level.

Program Area B: Community Resilience

Total funding: \$297,450



Funding to strengthen emerging community development corporations to support small business resiliency, or to increase their ability to advance housing preservation or affordable housing production.

Carry the Vision - “Community Rising Coalition”

Carry the Vision supports Gilroy's most under-served community members by co-creating compassionate communities one person at a time.

Located in Gilroy, this project engages historically underrepresented households to advocate livable transit-oriented communities for all of South County by launching the Community Rising Coalition (CRC). CRC advocacy efforts will increase Carry the Vision’s ability to advance community development by focusing on affordable housing, workforce development, transportation equity, and services to advance community healing.

Prosperity Lab – “Business 360°”

The Prosperity Lab is a catalyst for positive economic development and empowerment of underserved communities and micro businesses in the Silicon Valley and the greater San Francisco Bay Area by developing and delivering impactful programs and innovating solutions.

Business 360° offers technical training in marketing, digitization, operational efficiency, and capital strategies to small local businesses in historically underserved areas of Gilroy and San Jose. The program will help businesses around existing and future transit stations in San Jose and Gilroy be more resilient and responsive to the economic and cultural growth brought on by transit investments.

School of Arts and Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza – “La Avenida/La Placita Development Planning”

The School of Arts and Culture (SOAC) at the Mexican Heritage Plaza serves as a catalyst for creativity and empowerment of the community through creative place keeping, equitable engagement, and economic and community development initiatives.

“La Avenida Cultural District” is SOAC’s vision for transforming property in East San Jose into an equitable transit-oriented community with a cultural district overlay zone, thriving business improvement district, affordable housing, and community service providers. SOAC will hold community engagements, convene the Cultural District Advisory Council, and establish the Mayfair Neighborhood Trust to advance the La Avenida development/cultural district, while supporting the long-term economic well-being of the low-income, Latino, and Asian communities in East San José.

Program Area C: Education and Engagement

Total funding: \$67,550



Funding to strengthen community support and advocacy for Transit Oriented Communities policies, investments and implementation, and remove barriers to implementing inclusive and culturally relevant engagement activities/practice.

Palo Alto Forward – “TOC Education, Engagement, and Advocacy”

Palo Alto Forward focuses on expanding housing and transportation choices for Palo Alto by working with residents and city government.

Through the “TOC Education, Engagement, and Advocacy” effort, Palo Alto Forward will host a series of advocacy events about policy and zoning initiatives to support the creation of transit-oriented communities around the University Avenue and California Avenue Caltrain stations and along El Camino Real.

Palo Alto TMA – “Mode shift for low wage essential workers”

The Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (Palo Alto TMA) is working to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, traffic congestion, demand for parking, and greenhouse gas emissions by delivering targeted transportation solutions.

With funding from VTA’s Transit-Oriented Communities Grant, the Palo Alto TMA will support low-wage service workers along the El Camino Real corridor in switching from driving to transit by providing free transit passes to ride VTA buses, refurbished bikes, and micro-mobility options. These free resources will help provide sustainable transportation solutions to a vulnerable population in need of reliable and safe transportation alternatives to driving.

Transform – “Sustainable Transportation Education and Engagement”

Transform works to ensure that people of all incomes thrive in a world safe from climate chaos.

Through public engagement and community workshops, Transform will offer resources and knowledge to help communities overcome barriers to sustainable transportation, empower leaders, and provide greater options for communities to advocate for policies that will advance equitable Transit-Oriented Communities.

Program Area D: Placemaking, Arts, and Activation

Total funding: \$90,000



Funding to enhance the vitality of community culture, history, and local identity through engaging placemaking/placekeeping activities and community events. These events and art installations will create accessible and welcoming public spaces that reflect the vibrancy of the community.

Arts Mountain View – “Mountain View Transit Project”

Arts Mountain View aims to bring outdoor murals to Mountain View to beautify the city.

The Mountain View Transit Project will engage a local artist to create a large mural facing the Mountain View Transit Center that will feature bright colors and Mountain View iconography. The mural will act as a landmark indicating the arrival to Mountain View for light rail riders.

Cinequest Inc. – “Cinequest Film & Creativity Festival”

Cinequest empowers artistic creations to engage audiences, youth, artists, and innovators to forge community. Cinequest hosts the Cinequest Film & Creativity Festival, Maverick Studio, and Picture the Possibilities youth creativity services.

The Cinequest Film & Creativity Festival is a 30-year tradition in San Jose and now also in Mountain View, which ranks among the world's best film festivals. The locations vary around the city next to VTA light rail and bus, including at the California Theatre, the Hammer Theatre Center, and the ShowPlace Icon Theatre. Cinequest will engage local artists to create art for marketing campaigns displayed near transit, and curate local program content for the local community.

Friends of Levitt Pavilion San Jose – “Levitt Pavilion Concert Series”

Friends of Levitt Pavilion San Jose supports the community and revitalizes the historic St. James Park by hosting performances and creating an inclusive destination for all people.

The Levitt Pavilion Concert Series will feature local music and performing arts, providing accessible entertainment for all with food, drinks, nonprofit tabling, and children's activities. The Concert Series offers a chance to enjoy diverse talent and foster a sense of community in the heart of the city.

Gilroy Arts Alliance – “Our Community Pillars Art Project”

Gilroy Arts Alliance is building a collaborative arts community and promoting and supporting multi-cultural arts in and around South County. They also promote unity and inclusiveness by creating multi-cultural exhibits that inspire and engage a strong community.

The "Our Community Pillars Art Project" aims to inspire artistic expression in the youth of the community by beautifying outdoor concrete pillars near the Gilroy Transit Center. The project focuses on middle school artists, encouraging them to work together and become leaders during transformative times in their lives.

Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana (MACLA) – “¡WEPA! FEST”

MACLA (Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana) is a contemporary Latinx arts space that uplifts Latinx artists and culture in order to engage people in civic dialogue and community transformation.

¡WEPA! FEST is a celebration of Puerto Rican and Caribbean music and culture at Parque de los Pobladores. By activating the park and encouraging access by transit and walking, the event increases awareness of transit, while elevating the visibility and representation of Latinx art and culture.

San Martin Neighborhood Association – “Spruce Up San Martin”

San Martin Neighborhood Association is dedicated to preserving and promoting the rural identity of San Martin.

The Spruce Up San Martin project will enhance the San Martin Caltrain station area by implementing placemaking measures, including improving the landscaping of two medians near the station to create an identifying feature for the station and a more appealing experience for transit users and residents alike.