

- a. Receive a presentation on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Transit-Oriented Communities Policy and how the City of San Carlos plans to achieve compliance.



Planning and Transportation Commission STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 21, 2025

ITEM TITLE: Receive a presentation on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Transit-Oriented Communities Policy and how the City of San Carlos plans to achieve compliance.

BACKGROUND:

Transit-Oriented Communities Policy:

In September of 2022, the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) adopted the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy as part of Bay Area Metro's Plan Bay Area 2050 with four goals to advance the ability of residents to live a car-free or car-light lifestyle:

1. Increase the overall housing supply in part by increasing the density for new residential projects. Prioritize affordable housing in transit-rich areas.
2. In areas near regional transit hubs, increase density for businesses and commercial development.
3. Prioritize bus transit, active transportation and shared mobility (such as bike share and car share) within and to/from transit-rich areas, particularly to Equity Priority Communities located more than one-half mile from transit stops or stations.
4. Support and build partnerships to create equitable transit-oriented communities within the San Francisco Bay Area.

Benefits of Compliance:

To help jurisdictions achieve these goals, MTC distributes the One Bay Area Grant every four years, and future funding will now be contingent on compliance with the TOC Policy's requirements beginning in 2026. OBAG is a critical source of funding for San Carlos, and San Carlos must achieve compliance with the TOC Policy in 2026 to be eligible for funding from the OBAG 4 cycle. Compliance will also make San Carlos more competitive for other grant opportunities.

Compliance with TOC Policy:

The TOC Policy applies to the half-mile radius around San Carlos Caltrain, referred to as the TOC Policy Area (Attachment A). Within this area, the City of San Carlos must be compliant with the four TOC Policy categories:

1. Residential and Commercial Office Density

2. Housing/Commercial Policies
3. Parking Management
4. Station Access and Circulation

Each category contains metrics for compliance with the TOC Policy (Attachment B) within the policy area:

1. For Residential and Commercial Office Density:
 - Adopt minimum and maximum densities for residential and office uses at or above the level required by the TOC Policy.
2. For Housing/Commercial Policies:
 - Adopt two policies that support affordable housing from each of three categories (The Three P's): Production, Preservation, and Protection.
 - Adopt a commercial stabilization policy.
3. For Parking Management:
 - Adopt minimum and maximum parking requirements for residential and commercial uses at or below the level required by the TOC Policy.
 - Adopt a policy mandating bicycle parking in residential and office uses.
 - Adopt policies establishing unbundled and shared parking.
4. For Station Access and Circulation:
 - Have a compliant Complete Streets Policy
 - Prioritize or implement active Transportation and/or CBTP Projects
 - Complete a compliant Access Gap Analysis
 - Have a compliant Mobility Hub plan, project, or application.

ANALYSIS:

Achieving Compliance:

San Carlos Staff have engaged with MTC to assess gaps in compliance. Progress towards compliance is described below:

1. For Residential and Commercial Office Density:
 - Staff have submitted minimum and maximum densities to MTC for review. With the recent adoption of San Carlos' 2023-2031 Housing Element, staff are confident that San Carlos is compliant.
2. For Housing/Commercial Policies:
 - Staff have identified policies in each of the "Three P's" that align with the San Carlos' needs and capacity to implement. Staff have also applied for grant funding to achieve compliance with housing policies (detailed below).
3. For Parking Management:
 - The City is undertaking reforms to transportation demand management and parking standards with planned adoption in spring 2026, which will lead to compliance for this category.
4. For Station Access and Circulation:
 - San Carlos complies with the Complete Streets Policy, Access Gap Analysis, and Mobility Hub Project requirements.

- Prioritizing and implementing active transportation projects is ongoing and includes an application for grant funding for design engineering for San Carlos Avenue (detailed below).

2024 Grant Funding for Achieving Compliance:

With the goal of helping cities achieve compliance with the TOC Policy, MTC released grant opportunities in the fall of 2024. The City of San Carlos applied for or was part of an application for three grants:

- The Housing Policies grant is intended to help cities implement policies that comply with the Housing/Commercial Policies requirement of the TOC Policy. The City applied for help in implementing two policies in the Preservation category and 2 policies in the Protection category.
- The Charging Infrastructure Grant funds the construction of EV charging stations. The City submitted proposals for multiple charging station locations as part of an application prepared by San Mateo County.
- The Active Transportation Technical Assistance Grant funds design/engineering and outreach for active transportation projects. The City applied for funding to develop design/engineering drawings for the redesign of San Carlos Avenue between El Camino Real and Walnut Street. The redesign of San Carlos Avenue is part of the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan. The City picked this block for the grant opportunity because of its importance as a transit corridor providing immediate access to Caltrain.

As part of the Active Transportation grant application, the City submitted a Complete Streets Checklist (Attachment C). This is a document which provides information about a project seeking an endorsement or funding from MTC. This grant application requires staff to present the Checklist to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (or “BPAC”); for San Carlos, the Planning and Transportation Commission serves as the local BPAC.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff will provide MTC with notes from this meeting to fulfill and complete the grant application requirements. In March, 2025, MTC will release results from this round of grant funding, and, if awarded, San Carlos will engage with MTC to initiate any projects funded.

Respectfully submitted by:

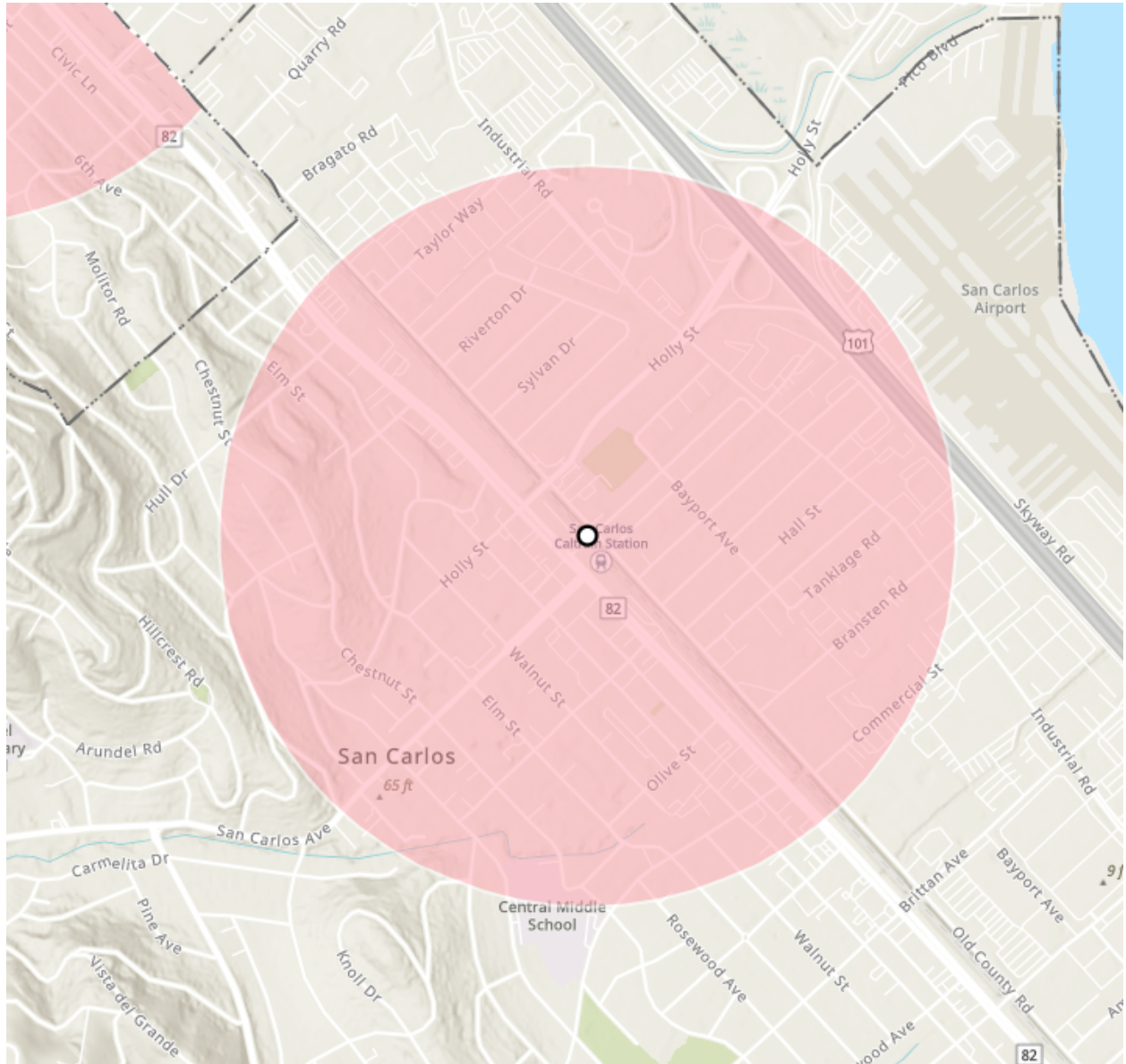
Lisa Porras, Planning Manager

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Map of MTC’s TOC Policy Area: Half-Mile Radius from San Carlos Caltrain

2. Summary of Requirements for MTC's Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy
3. Complete Streets Checklist Submission - Grant Application
4. San Carlos Avenue Design Rendering, Downtown Streetscape Master Plan

Attachment A: Map of MTC's TOC Policy Area: Half-Mile Radius from San Carlos Caltrain



MTC's Transit-Oriented Communities Policy

On September 28, 2022, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) adopted the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy ([MTC Resolution 4530](#)) to support the region's transit investments by creating communities around transit stations and along transit corridors that not only enable transit ridership, but also are places where Bay Area residents of all abilities, income levels, and racial and ethnic backgrounds can live, work, and access services.

Future One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) funding cycles will consider prioritizing investments in transit station areas that are subject to and compliant with the TOC Policy. Jurisdictions should anticipate demonstrating compliance prior to the adoption of OBAG 4, expected in 2026. [MTC's TOC Policy Administrative Guidance](#) provides more information on requirements and the process and required documentation for confirming compliance.

Applicability

The TOC Policy applies to the half-mile area around existing and planned fixed-guideway transit stops and stations (i.e., regional rail, commuter rail, light-rail transit, bus rapid transit, and ferries). Compliance with the TOC Policy is voluntary for jurisdictions that want to advance the goals of [Plan Bay Area 2050](#) or to be eligible and/or competitive for some MTC discretionary funding. Access a [map of TOC areas](#) or a [spreadsheet of jurisdictions and TOC areas](#) subject to the OBAG 4 compliance deadline.

TOC Policy Goals

1. Increase the overall housing supply in part by increasing the density for new residential projects. Prioritize affordable housing in transit-rich areas.
2. In areas near regional transit hubs, increase density for businesses and commercial development.
3. Prioritize bus transit, active transportation, and shared mobility within and to/from transit-rich areas, particularly to Equity Priority Communities.
4. Support and build partnerships to create equitable transit-oriented communities within the San Francisco Bay Area.

Transit Tiers

Areas subject to the TOC Policy are categorized by tier according to level of transit service:

- **Tier 1:** Rail stations serving regional centers (i.e., Downtown San Francisco, Downtown Oakland, and Downtown San José).
- **Tier 2:** Stop/station served by two or more BART lines or BART and Caltrain.
- **Tier 3:** Stop/station served by one BART line, Caltrain, light rail transit, or bus rapid transit.
- **Tier 4:** Commuter rail (SMART, ACE, Capitol Corridor, Valley Link) stations, Caltrain stations south of Tamien, or ferry terminals.

Implementation Process and Timeline

MTC developed an online submission portal to streamline the process for jurisdictions to demonstrate compliance with TOC Policy requirements. Jurisdictions can submit documentation on a rolling basis until an anticipated deadline corresponding with OBAG 4 in early 2026. Jurisdictions can contact MTC for assistance with the compliance process.



TOC Policy Requirements

The TOC Policy focuses on the core elements of **land use density, affordable housing, parking management, and complete streets/multimodal access** to implement Plan Bay Area 2050 strategies.

1. Minimum residential and commercial office densities for new development:

- *On average*, the minimum density for parcels in the ½-mile TOC area must exceed a threshold determined by the TOC area's Transit Tier.
- If a jurisdiction adopts a maximum density for parcels in the ½-mile TOC area, *on average*, the maximum density must exceed a threshold determined by the TOC area's Transit Tier.
- A jurisdiction is not required to zone for a particular land use in the TOC area.
- Only areas where residential uses are allowed are included in residential density calculations, and only zoning districts that allow commercial office land uses as a primary use are included in commercial office density calculations.
- Parcels with existing dwelling units can be excluded from the residential and commercial office density calculations.

2. Policies for affordable housing and commercial stabilization:

- A jurisdiction must adopt at least two policies for each of the "3Ps" of affordable housing (production, preservation, protection) and at least one policy for commercial stabilization.
- A jurisdiction chooses policies that best meet local needs from a menu of options.
- Policies must apply in TOC areas, but a jurisdiction may choose to apply them beyond the TOC area(s), including jurisdiction wide.

3. Parking management:

- No minimum parking requirements allowed in most Transit Tiers for new residential or commercial development.
- Parking maximums for new residential and general/neighborhood commercial uses vary by Transit Tier.
- Requirements for bicycle, shared, and unbundled parking as well as Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/curb management.

4. Transit station access and circulation:

- Adopt policies/guidelines that comply with Complete Streets Policy.
- Prioritize implementation of Active Transportation Plan and/or relevant Community Based Transportation Plans within TOC station area.
- Complete an access gap analysis and accompanying capital and/or service improvement program.
- Identify opportunities for Mobility Hub planning and implementation.

See [MTC's TOC Policy Administrative Guidance](#) for more information on requirements and the process and required documentation for confirming compliance.



Attachment C: Complete Streets Checklist Submission for MTC Active
Transportation Technical Assistance - Grant Application

Project: Pedestrian and Bike Enhancements for San Carlos Avenue

Is your project seeking regional discretionary funds or an endorsement?

Regional discretionary funds

Please include the name of the regional discretionary funding program that this project is seeking.

Active Transportation Technical Assistance

Project Name/Title

Pedestrian and Bike Enhancements for San Carlos Avenue

Project Description

San Carlos Avenue is the primary street that connects San Carlos residents to the downtown and Caltrain Station, where it meets El Camino Real. The first two blocks from El Camino are a 99-foot right of way which currently hosts 4 traffic lanes used primarily by cars and buses, lacking any dedicated bike lanes. In response to these conditions, San Carlos has partnered with the consulting team at WRT to develop a Streetscape Master Plan for the downtown area. This process has included extensive community engagement and outreach. As part of this plan, the first two blocks of San Carlos Avenue from El Camino Real have been re-envisioned as a safe and welcoming space for pedestrians and cyclists. This includes widening sidewalks to 20 feet, adding 5-foot-wide bike lanes in both directions protected by a 3-foot buffer, and removing a travel lane in each direction to be replaced by one center turning lane. Additionally, the plan incorporates in-lane bus stops which will deliver riders safely to the downtown area and seamlessly connect them to Caltrain. The total estimated cost of design engineering for this segment is \$710,908. The City of San Carlos is applying for \$300,000 in grant funding to partially cover that cost.

Please choose the project phase(s).

Planning, PS&E

Do you think your project qualifies for a Statement of Exception?

No

Does the project implement relevant plans, or other locally adopted recommendations?

Yes

Please provide details on plan recommendations affecting the project area, if any, with Plan adoption date. If the project is inconsistent with adopted plans, please provide explanation.

1. San Carlos Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan, Adopted June 9, 2020

- Identifies priority corridors for improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure, including San Carlos Avenue

2. San Mateo County Local Roadway Safety Plan, Adopted June 13, 2024

- Ranks priority corridors for safety improvements in San Carlos, this corridor is ranked second highest
- Includes suggested safety improvements and features applicable to streets overall, design includes or plans to include these where applicable

3. San Carlos Downtown Area Specific Plan, Endorsed by Council, Final Adoption in March 2025.

- Source of redesign for San Carlos Avenue and other downtown streets

Does the project area contain segments of the regional Active Transportation (AT) Network? [See MTC's AT Network map [here](#)]

Yes

If yes, describe the how project adheres to the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO's) "Designing for All Ages & Abilities Contextual Guidance for High-Comfort Bicycle Facilities" and/or the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board's "Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way."

The project's purpose is to improve safety and experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and other micro-mobility users. San Carlos Avenue is on the Countywide Bicyclist High Injury Network. The Countywide Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) ranks the San Carlos Avenue corridor as the second highest priority for improvements in San Carlos, specifically identifying the danger posed to cyclists and pedestrians. The San Carlos Avenue redesign includes elements recommended by the LRSP, such as a road diet and separated bike lanes, which have crash reduction factors of 0.35 and 0.45, respectively. As part of design engineering, the city and consultant team will also implement improvements to safety at intersections, further protecting cyclists and pedestrians.

As a road with a vehicle speed of greater than 26 mph, the design will add protected bicycle lanes and reduce travel lanes to one in each direction, incorporating AAA

contextual guidance. The design follows recommendations from NACTO, such as reducing curbside conflicts by implementing in-lane bus stops, reducing traffic volume by rerouting cars around the downtown area instead of through San Carlos Avenue (outlined in the Streetscape Master Plan), and reducing sources of stress by designating more space for cyclists.

Is the project on a known High Injury Network (HIN) or has a local traffic safety analysis found a high incidence of bicyclist/ pedestrian-involved crashes within the project area?

Yes

Please summarize the traffic safety conditions and describe the project's traffic safety measures. The Bay Area Vision Zero System may be a helpful resource.

The San Mateo County Local Roadway Safety Plan identifies emphasis areas for the City of San Carlos, which include pedestrian and bicyclist safety and motor vehicle speed. The designs address this by reducing the number of motor vehicle travel lanes from 4 to 2, adding protected bike lanes, and expanding sidewalks. Design engineering will implement safety improvements at intersections. The project implements measures for the road segments such as a road diet and protected bicycle lanes.

Does the project seek to improve conditions for people biking, walking and/or rolling? If the project includes a bikeway, was a Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) or similar user experience analysis conducted?

Yes

Describe how project seeks to provide low-stress transportation facilities or reduce a facility's LTS.

- Project reduces stress by adding protected bike lanes where there currently are none.
- Project reduces vehicle speeds by implementing a road diet and reduces the volume of through-traffic by rerouting cars around the downtown area instead of through it (outlined in Streetscape Master Plan).

Are there existing public transit facilities (stop or station) in the project area?

Yes

If yes, list transit facilities (stop, station, or route) and all affected agencies. –

- San Carlos Caltrain
- SamTrans ECR route and local routes 61, 295, and 397

Have all potentially affected transit agencies had the opportunity to review this project? If yes, please save the email from transit operator(s) below.

No

Is there an MTC Mobility Hub (map) within the project area?

Yes

If yes, please describe outreach to mobility providers, and the project's Hub-supportive elements. Please view the Mobility Hubs Playbook Play 1.

City has engaged with Caltrain staff (uploading Letter of Support), and they are familiar with the project. The redesigned street segments are the first two from Caltrain's station and the plan seeks to expand the reach of the station for cyclists and pedestrians by improving ease of use, comfort, and safety. The corridor connects Caltrain to San Carlos' downtown core and is therefore a critical location to improve safety. San Carlos expects that this redesign will encourage residents and visitors to use Caltrain and serve as an improved public space in the mobility hub area.

If applicable, please describe the pedestrian focused improvements and cite the design standards used (links to standards are not needed).

- Widened sidewalk (NACTO: Sidewalk Design, Downtown Conventional Sidewalk)
- More improvements to be implemented at intersections during design engineering

If applicable, please provide the class designation for bikeways included in the project and cite the design standards used.

Class IV

Will the project improve active transportation in an Equity Priority Community (EPC)?

No

Please list census tracts that are designated as EPCs and affected by this project.

The project area has no EPCs, however nearby EPCs are located on the ECR and Caltrain corridors and San Carlos is seeking to improve safe and useful access from transit to jobs and amenities in the City's downtown area.

Attachment D: San Carlos Avenue Design Rendering, Downtown Streetscape Master Plan

