

San Rafael Transit Center Relocation Guidance Report

SAN RAFAEL TRANSIT CENTER RELOCATION GUIDANCE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

San Rafael looks forward to a successful collaboration with the Golden Gate Bridge District, its transit partners, transit users, and our community to plan and build an outstanding new transit center that improves regional transit mobility while also contributing to Downtown San Rafael's prosperity, vitality, and civic pride.

For a quarter century, the City has steadfastly embraced the focus of our Downtown Vision, and that remains so. The City values our Downtown being connected regionally with quality transit options.

At the same time, we recognize that the relocated transit center's impacts and influence will extend far beyond its specific site, warranting a clear demonstration of how the solution furthers our Vision, respecting existing neighborhood context while also contributing to the emergence of a more inviting gateway into Downtown.



In fulfillment of the Downtown Vision, numerous City-adopted plans and studies provide substantial direction and detailed guidance. They will form the City's basis of review as the process of identifying a preferred option moves forward.



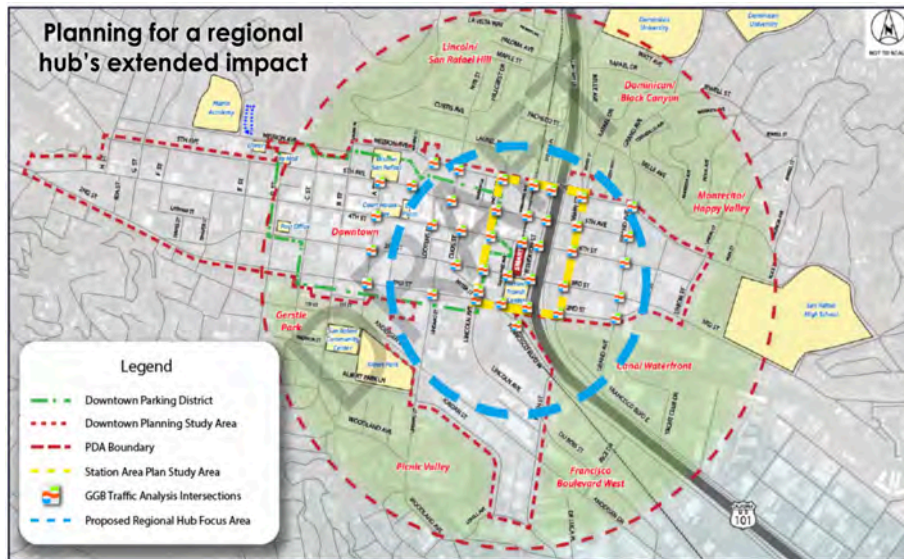
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 4TH OPTION

The 2016 Kimley-Horn Transit Center Relocation Study identified three alternatives to be further evaluated and refined for additional consideration as part of the Bridge District's study. The City is concerned that none of these alternatives will adequately achieve the City's goals for this neighborhood.

To address this, the City asked the Bridge District to identify a 4th Option before initiating Environmental Review, and to actively engage our community in its development. We appreciate their willingness to do so. This Guidance Report identifies the City's primary area of concern associated with relocation of the transit center. It also highlights key improvements the City is seeking in the 4th Option.

DEFINING A TRANSIT HUB FOCUS AREA

To successfully integrate with the existing Downtown and contribute to a neighborhood renaissance, transit center relocation planning and design must extend beyond its specific site.



The City has identified a Transit Hub Focus Area extending ¼ mile circle around the existing SMART station. This area is within easy walking distance for most transit users, and includes the retail core, the area under 101, and private property zoned for mix use development.

All forms of mobility within the Hub Focus Area require careful attention, and intersection analyses will need to extend beyond the boundary.

For the transit center to successfully integrate with the Downtown, public gathering spaces within and adjacent to it, lighting, landscaping, wayfinding, and other distinguishing features will be included in District plans.



VISION FOR THE HUB FOCUS AREA

The Transit Hub Focus Area will be a vibrant, prosperous neighborhood, welcoming both residents and visitors with a memorable sense of arrival. Our diverse cultural heritage and historic neighborhoods will be respected, while encouraging infill development that expresses fresh ideas and urban form.

4TH St. will remain our retail backbone, extending its pedestrian-friendly hometown sense of place beneath the 101 viaducts. SMART riders' approaching or departing the Downtown station will enjoy a "shady lane" feeling between Mission and 2nd St.

Caltrans' right-of-way beneath 101 will be visually transformed using creative lighting, artwork, street vendors, and landscaped pathways alongside a healthy, restored creek. Bus stop or parking improvements will increase the functional use of the land.



The entire Transit Hub Focus Area will be interconnected along broad, inviting, tree-lined sidewalks teeming with vitality both day and night.

People will stay, rather than simply pass through the area. Bicyclists and pedestrians will come and go along safe, well-defined routes and find abundant bike parking and bike share opportunities near the transit stations.

Excellent transit connections, functioning in concert with traffic-calmed streets will keep auto traffic moving efficiently. Curbside "Last mile" pick-up and drop-off will be close by, with both car share opportunities and easily identified short-term and all-day parking available within walking distance.

The transit center will be clean, safe, well-lit and designed to become an enduring neighborhood landmark. It will reflect the City's pursuit of sustainability in its design and operation, and forward-thinking adaptability. Attractive onsite and nearby public gathering opportunities will benefit transit riders and residents living in a variety of new housing types over shops and businesses.

We value:

- Sense of Community**
- Healthy Economy**
- Hometown Feel**
- Complete Urban Community**
- Strong Identity**
- Clean, Safe and Attractive**
- Pleasant to Walk In**
- Active, Outdoor and People Orientation**
- Gathering Place**
- Historic Heritage**
- Good Neighbor to Neighborhoods**
- Easy to Move About**
- Diversity**
- Environmentally Sound Practices**
- Civic Cooperation**

From 1993 Downtown Vision

KEY 4th OPTION ELEMENTS

The Bridge District has agreed to work with City staff and our residents to develop a 4th Option for relocating the bus transit center. To focus the design process, the City has identified five key design goals for the 4th Option alternative.

MAXIMIZE 4TH STREET VITALITY

CLEARLY DEFINE TRANSIT CENTER ACCESS ROUTES

IMPROVE UTILIZATION OF THE CALTRANS RIGHT-OF-WAY

DEMONSTRATE ENDURING DESIGN

PRESERVE THE WHISTLESTOP BUILDING

A brief description of detailed aspects of these elements follows.

MAXIMIZE 4TH STREET VITALITY

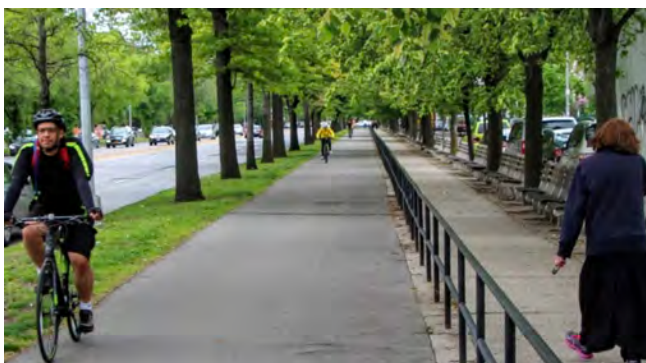
- 1- Foster 4th Street's "main street" feeling between Lincoln and Irwin. Accommodate broader tree-lined sidewalks with fewer vehicle crossings, unique, street-facing storefronts and inviting public space, adequately sized to allow outdoor dining, family fun, community events, and people watching.
- 2- Respect the City's mid-term goal to eliminate vehicle access from 4th St. north onto both West and East Tamalpais, expanding opportunities for public space.
- 3- Continue preventing vehicle access into Caltrans' parking lot on the north side of 4th St, to maximize pedestrian safety.
- 4- Identify the safest, most convenient bikeway crossing location of Fourth St. at W. Tamalpais.
- 5- Prevent permanent 4th St. bus stops under the freeway to allow for safer shared use of the roadway.
- 6- Limit any 4th St. transit center driveways to the minimum width necessary, with excellent sight lines.
- 7- The 4th St. intersection at Hetherton is a priority location for gateway elements, including signature landscaping, artwork, wayfinding signage, electronic message boards and specialty lighting.



CLEARLY DEFINE TRANSIT CENTER ACCESS ROUTES

All east-west downtown access streets between Mission and 2nd St shall be kept open.

- 1- Within the Hub Focus Area, prioritize pedestrian safety. Identify preferred transit center access routes for student and Canal transit riders.
- 2- Minimize rider transfer times for rail and bus services.
- 3- Design adaptive Last Mile pick up and drop off locations for a minimum of 10 vehicles.
- 4- Identify preferred nearby public or private replacement parking space locations for all displaced existing spaces, plus an additional 60 parking spaces serving regional transit users.



5- North-south transit center access for bikes, between Mission and 2nd St., will be from a two-way Class IV bikeway on W. Tamalpais

6- Anticipate a landscaped pathway on the east side of Hetherton between Mission and 3rd St. where feasible.



7- Wayfinding elements should be integrated into the project, and complementary to the building design.

8- Incorporate traffic signalization and other technological methods to increase bus movement efficiency.

9- Safe, inviting mid-block pedestrian routes to the transit center should be provided, where possible.

IMPROVE UTILIZATION OF THE CALTRANS RIGHT-OF-WAY



1- Transformation of the Caltrans property will increase transit center safety and use. Identify modifications that will benefit the project and the overall improvement of the neighborhood.

2- Explore increasing the efficiency of Caltrans' land use under the freeway by either creating a safe, inviting transit center or expanding parking capacity using vertical lift parking systems.

3- The area under the raised freeway structures should be redeveloped to increase the visual appeal and unique sense of Gateway arrival into the Downtown. Include elements such as identity graphics, artwork, creek restoration, landscaped plazas and sitting areas, historic markers, electronic message signs, special effect lighting, and food trucks and kiosk vendors.



4- Include more street trees on both sides of this roadway to add visual relief and calm traffic. Accommodate landscaping within Caltrans' right-of-way on the eastern frontage of the existing Bettini Transit Center if Hetherton bus pads are discontinued.

5- Create an attractive landscaped terminus adjacent to the SB 101 on-ramp south of 2nd St.

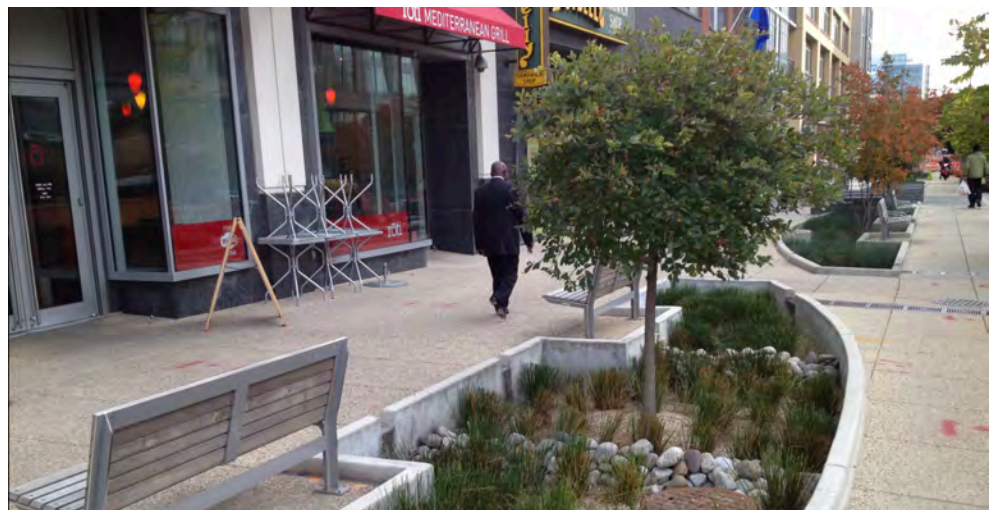
DEMONSTRATE ENDURING DESIGN



1- The relocated transit center will be a central facility in the Downtown, and serve as a welcoming point of arrival for regional travelers and visitors to

San Rafael. In concert with other Gateway features, the building and site should reflect the heritage of the City, contribute to the City's Vision for extension of the 4th St. Retail Core, and afford transit users the safest, most efficient means of using bus and rail services.

- 2- The transit center should reflect San Rafael's pattern, scale, and neighborhood heritage, while also being a unique, innovative architectural statement. Construction materials should produce an enduring high quality with reasonable ongoing maintenance needs.
- 3- The Transit Center should be safe, well-lit, and attractively landscaped, creating a welcoming effect for users and passers-by. Include Gateway features within the site plan and facility design that are compatible with the City Vision. Nighttime lighting should create a safe, artistic sense of arrival, while limiting night sky glare.
- 4- Sustainable elements should be visible in its site planning, building design, and operation. Identify storm water pollution prevention, water and energy conservation, renewable energy integration, air and noise quality, waste management, and green construction technology components.





5- Identify locations for appropriately sized public gathering areas to complement the center's function as a regional and Downtown hub. These settings would include attractive seating, unique paving, landscaping, lighting, directional signage, informational kiosks, historic markers, play areas, public art, trash and recycling containers, and flexible space for micro-enterprise and event opportunities.

6- Advanced communication technology should be integrated into the transit center design, including electronic, real-time messaging, and public Wi-Fi.

7- Transit Center planning should accommodate emerging trends in mobility and mobility technology. Incorporate surrounding site flexibility for change over time.

8- Provide a minimum of 15 ft. wide sidewalks within the block surrounding the new Transit Center

PRESERVE WHISTLESTOP



1- Retain the Whistlestop building on its current site, with street level modifications to improve pedestrian enjoyment. Create wider sidewalks on the south and west side of the building.

2- At the north end of Whistlestop, anticipate more public amenities, including possibly a coffee kiosk, fountain, landscaping, or other gateway features.

3- Anticipate removal of a portion of the south end of the Whistlestop building to create safer transit user movement across 3rd St. and more interesting public space.

4- Integrate last-mile drop-off/pick up spaces and a two-way Class IV bikeway into the W. Tamalpais street section.

