



# POINT SAN PEDRO ROAD COALITION

*"Fostering Quality of Life in our Community"*

## Coalition Directors

November 18, 2018

### Co-Presidents

*Denise Lucy  
Bonnie Marmor*

Mr. Raymond Santiago, Principal Planner  
Golden Gate Bridge District Highway and Transportation District  
1011 Andersen Drive  
San Rafael CA 94901

### Secretary

*Kati Miller*

### Treasurer

*Dave Crutcher*

Re: Bettini Transit Center Relocation

### Directors

*Kevin Hagerty  
Alan Schaevitz*

Dear Mr. Santiago:

The Point San Pedro Road Coalition welcomes the opportunity to comment on the EIR scoping and to again provide the Golden Gate Bridge and Transportation District ("District") with input on the Preliminary Concepts Under Consideration for the Bettini Transit Center Relocation. This includes later updates as presented to the public at the October 30, 2018 Notice of Preparation of Draft Environmental Impact Report and Scoping Meeting.

## Standing Committee Chairs

### Disaster Preparedness

*Henry Warren*

Residents along the Pt. San Pedro Road peninsula remain very interested in this project and recognize the importance of convenient bus and SMART train access as well as improved pedestrian and bicycle safety. However, there are serious concerns in our community about the potential to be adversely impacted by traffic delays arising from the relocation of the Transit Center and extension of SMART to Larkspur.

### Loch Lomond Marina

*Alan Schaevitz*

## Scoping Additions

### Pt. San Pedro Roadway

*Kevin Hagerty*

Please add the following items to the list of issues that are to be addressed in the Draft EIR in order to ensure we have a full and complete report:

### S.R. Rock Quarry

*Dave Crutcher*

- Impact on traffic congestion: Each concept will have a different impact on local traffic patterns and congestion.
- Impact on parking for transit users: Some of the concepts remove critical existing parking with no provisions for replacement. The EIR needs to address the impact of parking reduction.
  - Emergency services: What are the ramifications on provision of service during emergencies, either at the proposed transit center or for surrounding neighborhoods, specifically the San Pedro Road corridor? Different concepts will enhance or impede delivery of emergency services in these areas due to traffic patterns, congestion, or damage due to natural catastrophes.
  - Transit Center user data: (a) How many people are estimated to be accessing the Transit Center and SMART train? (b) From which directions will the people approach the Transit Center? (c) How will users arrive/depart (on foot, in cars, on bikes, etc.)? (d) What is the impact on pedestrian/vehicle interfaces at nearby intersections? These needs to be assessed at different times of day and include all users (commuters, students, San Rafael business employees, etc.) of the transit center. The study should also identify impact on existing or proposed crosswalks for each option.

### Wetlands

*Rodney Ruskin*

- Visual impact: What will be the visual impact of each option as it relates to the look and feel as an entry point to the City. This should encompass how the area is viewed by drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, as well as users of the Transit Center and SMART train.

### **Preliminary Concepts Review**

We have reviewed the Concepts developed by the District, although we have had little time to fully review the new “North of 4<sup>th</sup> Street Concept”. As we previously expressed, it is difficult to assess the options without ridership data to indicate projected use including: (a) how many people are estimated to be accessing the Transit Center and SMART train, (b) from which directions will the people approach and (c) how users will get there (on foot, in cars, on bikes, etc.). With the information provided, the Whistlestop Block Concept option appears most promising, although the North of 4<sup>th</sup> Street Concept is an interesting option but with several concerns.

We think the Whistlestop Block Concept can be enhanced by making some additional modifications such as:

1. Move the three bus bays currently shown on Third Street and four bus bays on Tamalpais Avenue to the area now used as for Whistlestop parking lot at Tamalpais and Lincoln. This has many benefits:
  - Removes buses from congested streets while patrons get on and off the buses.
  - Makes it easier for bus riders to transfer between different bus routes.
  - Makes it easier for SMART riders to transfer to buses (and vice versa).
  - Costs to acquire the space on the block west of Tamalpais to enhance the Whistlestop Block Concept may be low since much of the block is currently not developed.
  - Places this location near to development sites;
  - Provides potential to utilize more of the block between Tamalpais and Lincoln and could greatly enhance the Whistlestop Block Concept project to provide both an improved Gateway to San Rafael and integration with Downtown, possibly making room for a central plaza.
2. Use Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd and 4th Street as a designated passenger drop off and pick up area, an area for taxis and Ubers, as well as a bike lane. This, too would have many benefits:
  - Eliminates the need for buses to turn onto Tamalpais Avenue making it easier for pedestrians to cross Tamalpais, improves safety, and makes the entrance to the Whistlestop building more accessible
  - Enhances passenger, bicycle, and pedestrian safety by prohibiting buses on the block of Tamalpais Avenue between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets.
  - Eliminates the need for pedestrians to cross 4<sup>th</sup> Street from the drop off/pick up area as shown in the Concept proposal.
  - Provides easy access to the Whistlestop building which can be used as the heart of the Transit Center and train station.
  - Keeps buses off of this block allowing for a view corridor and making it possible for the Whistlestop building to be seen and appreciated.

If preservation of the entire Whistlestop Building in its current configuration results in significantly greater financial costs, a reduction in pedestrian and bicycle safety, and/or adverse traffic impacts, then this constraint should be reconsidered. For example, the Jackson Café portion of the building could be reconfigured allow for that portion of the site to be utilized for a greater use.

## **North of 4<sup>th</sup> Street Concept**

This is a recent addition to the original four concepts, and we have had little time to study it thoroughly. It could be very attractive to our residents because it moves the transit center and related traffic away from the critical 3<sup>rd</sup> Street access to Highway 101 and downtown San Rafael for residents on the Pt. San Pedro Road corridor. However, even with a brief review, several issues become apparent, among them being:

- No defined location for pickup/dropoff. A convenient, safe area for this is essential.
- CalTrans' potential objections for construction under the highway
- Environmental concerns and objections for covering the creek
- Safety issues for pedestrians crossing Hetherton to/from the train station and downtown San Rafael
- Ambiance for bus passengers waiting under the highway
- Impact of highway noise on the transit center
- Removal of critical parking with no replacement in the Concept. Additional parking must be provided.
- Impact on general traffic caused by slower bus traffic on Irwin and on Hetherton

All of these issues, and others to be identified, would need to be addresses before we could render a further opinion on this concept.

The Point San Pedro Road Coalition will continue to monitor the progress of this important project. We will appreciate being informed when data about ridership and traffic becomes available as it will profoundly affect consideration of the various concepts. We would like to reiterate that it is critical for our community to receive information well in advance of deadlines for input so that we can provide meaningful comments in the future. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your project team.

Sincerely,

Denise M. Lucy  
Co-President

Bonnie Marmor  
Co-President

cc: Mayor Gary Phillips  
San Rafael City Council  
Supervisor Damon Connolly  
Steve Kinsey, Alta Planning

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