

SAN RAFAEL TRANSIT CENTER COMMUNITY MEETING

Summary of Virtual Community Meeting

Thursday November 19, 2020

The Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) hosted a virtual community meeting on Thursday November 19th, 2020 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to present an update regarding the San Rafael Transit Center Relocation Project. The meeting was held on Zoom with 61 participants in attendance.

District General Manager Denis Mulligan welcomed the attendees. In addition, District executives Ron Downing and Ray Santiago were in attendance and answered questions. The PowerPoint presentation was given by the consultant team Project Manager Adam Dankberg of Kimley-Horn and Kate Howe of Via-Architecture. The meeting was facilitated by Eileen Goodwin, Apex Strategies. Consultant Team members Jake Hermle, Kimley Horn; Maggie Townsley and Shilpa Trisal, ICF; and Lisbet Sunshine, Marianne Glaser and Abraham Vallin, Civic Edge Consulting also participated and were also available to answer questions and take input regarding the project.

The following goals were outlined for the presentation and the meeting:

- Show examples of what a new San Rafael Transit Center could look like
- Describe the three transit center alternatives under consideration
- Show where the public can find more information and how to provide feedback; and
- Answer questions about the alternatives, design approach, and the project process

While it was announced that this virtual event was the first update meeting held in English during 2020 regarding this planning effort, the project team had recently conducted additional outreach in support of this meeting and the project. The community was made aware of the specific activities.

The Project Team:

- Updated the project web page to include all of the latest project information, meeting schedules, and presentation materials.
- Hosted a Facebook Live event in Spanish in partnership with the Canal Alliance on November 9th and recorded the meeting. The meeting video was posted on-line and had received more than 3,100 views in the prior ten days;
- Conducted 32 hours of Outreach activities at the Transit Center;

- Conducted outreach to businesses through San Rafael Chamber of Commerce and San Rafael Business Improvement District;
- Presented at a San Rafael High School SELAC (School English Learner Advisory Committee) meeting to 110+ families; and
- Emailed over 100 notifications to community, neighborhood, and business organizations.

Additionally, those attending the virtual community meeting were made aware of the active on-line survey regarding the project and were encouraged to provide their feedback through that mechanism. Attendees learned that, to date, more than 760 surveys were already taken (630+ in English, 130+ in Spanish) and that the survey would be on-line and active through December 11th.

Consistent with the information presented at the virtual community meeting, the on-line survey asks participants to:

- Rate the alternatives under different categories
- Provide feedback on what they like or would like to change about any of the three alternatives, and
- Indicate a preference on the design inspirations

The presentation concluded with schedule and process information relating to when the community would be asked to provide additional feedback and suggestions. It was outlined in the presentation and reiterated that there would be robust public outreach in Spring 2021 when the draft environmental document would be available for review.

There was a question and answer period that followed the presentation. Due to the volume of participants and the on-line nature of the meeting, as well as the availability of an on-line survey and feedback mechanism, the attendees were asked to type their questions through the Q and A function of the meeting platform. The meeting facilitator, with assistance from the Project Team, then grouped the questions by topic and asked the District staff and the consultant team members to answer the various questions as they were read. A commitment was made to answer each question and post those questions on-line (see table at the end of this document).

The question topics covered a variety of issues including, but not limited to the following:

- Process for decision-making and choosing one of the alternatives
- Clarity of role of the City
- Whether Autonomous Vehicle technology was considered
- Traffic impacts and details

- Potential for impacts to or relocation of the Whistlestop building
- Potential for impacts to or relocation of Victorian homes
- How the bus passenger experience was taken into account
- Need for parking
- SMART connectivity
- What would happen to the existing Transit Center property
- Specific design details and clarifications including bicycle and pedestrian movements on the alternatives
- Process and timing for designing the aesthetic treatments
- Funding availability
- Schedule

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting Summary by Apex Strategies.

Audience Question and Answers

Questions	Answers
General	
What would be the plans for the existing block containing the current Transit Center?	The future use of the existing transit center site is not yet known. That property is planned to be eventually be sold after construction of the new transit center and the proceeds used toward the cost of the new transit center
Thank you for doing this!!	Comment noted
I believe in public transportation. I lived most of my life in Chicago and extensively used pub transport. Moving here the Smart Train usually looks empty. There is no parking for people to leave their cars near the transit stations (which seems like a major flaw to me). The end of the line to go San Francisco is at the Ferry. That seems like a bottle neck. I can't imagine in its current configuration you will ever get a lot of people using it. This type of transport 10 years down the road is highly likely to take a serious hit from Autonomous vehicle transport. Is this worth the investment?	The current transit center is very well utilized with over 9,000 boardings and alightings every weekday (pre-COVID). In its current configuration, operations at the transit center are constrained by the SMART tracks running through the center of the site. This has created the need for a long-term solution that is functional for transit. While autonomous vehicles are coming in the future, when they'll actually be widespread is very much unknown. In addition, roadways are currently very congested. Autonomous vehicles won't change that. There will always be the need for transit to avoid overwhelming congestion.
Golden Gate Bridge District / Broader Scope	
How many riders connect with SMART?	Ridership data from 2018 (before the Larkspur extension was opened) indicated approximately 180 daily SMART-to-bus or bus-to-SMART transfers occurred at the Downtown San Rafael Station. As the SMART system matures, the number of daily transfers is also expected to increase.
GGBHTD is the lead agency for the project, correct? Will it still be named the C. Paul Bettini	Yes, GGBHTD is the lead agency for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) evaluation. No decision has been made on the

San Rafael Transit Center? Maybe we need to find the text of the Bridge District resolution that named the facility and how specific it is about the name given.	name of the new transit center.
What is the geographic scope of responsibility of the GGTD in and surrounding the Transit Center?	GGBHTD is the owner of the majority of the current transit center (the portion along Hetherton Street is owned by Caltrans). GGBHTD only owns the off-street portion of the transit center (behind the sidewalks). In the new transit center, a similar arrangement is envisioned.
At what other venues will the project be discussed, including the City of San Rafael and the GGBHTD Board?	The project team is currently completing an environmental analysis for the project. When the Draft Environmental Impact Report is ready for public review, a public meeting will be held. Additionally, presentations will be made to the San Rafael City Council and GGBHTD Board at appropriate milestones.
Design	
Please define "placemaking."	Placemaking is a concept in urban planning and urban design which focuses on creating public spaces that people value, find welcoming and are visually attractive.
How is the maintenance for using wood underneath the awnings? Thanks!	The wood would be treated to reduce the need for maintenance. There is an overhead canopy made with similar wood at the Redwood & Grant transit center in Novato
Re the design of the canopy structures over the passenger waiting areas, the options are uninspiring. Will there be a design charrette to gather better ideas about how best to have shelter and a beautiful entryway?	The architectural styles and features shown in the presentation are primarily intended to provide examples of how urban design can be used to make the transit center a welcoming place; these are not final designs. There will be further opportunities in the future to provide input on design.
What about graffiti on the wood canopy approach?	The wood canopy can be designed to include appropriate coatings and graffiti protection. Wood would be treated to allow for long mean times between maintenance. There are many similar implementations we can draw on to guide this.
Whistlestop Alternative	
Does the "Whistlestop block" concept impact the two	It does not.

victorians on 5th avenue, between Tamalpais and Heathrton?	
It seems entirely arbitrary that the Whistlestop Building is considered outside the boundary of the Gateway Alternative. What's the support for that decision?	In the 4th Street Gateway alternative, the Whistlestop Building site would not be part of the transit center; it is not needed for the functions of the transit center, meaning that the building could be used entirely for other purposes.
Does the Whistlestop Block alternative require taking property to the west of the existing street?	Yes, both variations of the Whistlestop Block alternative would require the acquisition of portions of the block on the west side of W Tamalpais Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets.
With the Whistlestop models, are there required/recommended parallel projects to address student pedestrian and bike traffic on 3rd and 4th and crossing Hetherton?	The City of San Rafael has recently adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/documents/sa-n-rafael-bicycle-pedestrian-master-plan-2018-update/) that includes a number of active transportation improvements to the area around the transit center.
In the second Whistlestop Block Alternative, what is the use of the new street westerly of the relocated Whistlestop Building?	This new driveway has two purposes: one, it replaces a driveway to the Clocktower (Lincoln & 4th) building garage that was previously on W Tamalpais Avenue and reroutes it to access 4th Street, and two, it provides parking spaces for transit center maintenance vehicles.
How much property needs to be purchased in the block bounded by 2nd, 3rd, Tamalpais, Lincoln in the Whistlestop Block Alternatives?	No property would need to be purchased in this block.
How feasible is it to move/relocate the Whistlestop Building to the west side of Tamalpais Avenue?	A preliminary assessment has determined that it would be feasible to relocate the building. However, more detailed analysis would be required in subsequent project stages to confirm cost and feasibility.
On the Whistlestop Block Alternative: Seems the most preferable at this point. Can the existing Whistlestop building remain and be reused for offices (GGT Customer service, Marin Transit, and TAM, for example)? Isn't it also an historic building with constraints about use,	Based on the previous evaluations and records provided by the City, the Whistlestop building does not currently qualify as a historical resource under CEQA due to the substantial changes/renovations it has undergone; therefore, there are no constraints on its use or modification. We are aware that there is a request from some members of the community for it to be recognized as a local

<p>reuse, relocation, CEQA, etc.? Don't get me started about the SHPO (State Historic Preservation Officer).</p>	<p>landmark. In the variation of the Whistlestop Block alternative which keeps the building at its current location, portions of the existing building are proposed to be used for purposes serving the transit center, such as GGT customer service, ticketing, or other transit-adjacent uses. Further investigation is needed to confirm that the building meet current codes and needs for those uses.</p>
<p>I didn't initially understand the Whistlestop Relocation Variant, so I guess there are four build alternatives plus the no project alternative at this point, right?</p>	<p>Yes, that is correct.</p>
<p>Under the Freeway Alternative</p>	
<p>Can the Under-Freeway alternative be discarded now, prior to expending effort evaluating a truly awful idea?</p>	<p>The alternative is currently being considered with a similar level of environmental analysis as the other alternatives.</p>
<p>How can the team possibly value placemaking and user experience, and still put forward the Under-Freeway alternative? It is a total rejection of those values.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>It looks like the Under-Freeway alternative's drawbacks would have caused it to fail any legitimate screening process, if not for the City's insistence that it be studied.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>Can the "under the freeway" option be eliminated now, since it is obviously very unfriendly to bus passengers? Additional drawbacks not listed in the presentation include the fact that it is surrounded by very busy streets on all sides, creating a dangerous pedestrian nightmare, and it will be more noisy and polluted due to the overhead concrete. In fact this option would most likely lead to a reduction in transit users, especially potential new users.</p>	<p>The alternative is currently being considered with a similar level of environmental analysis as the other alternatives.</p>

On the Under the Freeway Alternative: I agree that it's the least desirable. Can it include a covered walkway to SMART?	The pathway to connect to SMART would require crossing Hetherton Street (and 4th Street as well for most users), East Tamalpais Avenue, as well as other driveways. It is not possible to provide a covered walkway for the street crossings.
4th Street Gateway Alternative	
Please explain relationship of taxi/shuttle to greenway on West Tamalpais between 5th and 4th.	Further investigation and coordination would be needed between the placement of the taxi/shuttle loading area and the City's plan for the greenway on this segment should this concept advance.
On the 4th Street Gateway Alternative, can the Victorian homes actually be relocated or removed? Are they deemed historic under CEQA and does that create a fatal flaw?	A preliminary assessment has indicated that the two Victorian homes can feasibly be relocated; receiving sites have not been determined. The residences qualify as historical resources under CEQA, and potential impacts of their relocation would need to be disclosed in the environmental document.
Can Hetherton from 5th to 4th be designed with the bus stops at the north end and remove the driveway entry/exit at that location so that right turns from Hetherton to 4th are still allowed and can be made safely?	The project team has previously considered a number of variations of the northern site of this alternative; the driveway is needed as an important access/egress point for the northern block of the transit center. Additionally, the removal of the driveway would not provide adequate space to allow both right-turns onto 4th and bus bays to berth on Hetherton in a safe manner.
All Alternatives	
Do any of the sites provide access for the Airporter buses? If not, where would the downtown stop be?	We have provided space for the Airporter buses and Greyhound in all proposed alternatives.
Which alternative is most convenient and efficient for transit users and transit vehicle circulation? Which provides the best user experience?	Please refer to the "Alternatives Description and Trade-Offs Summary" document posted on the project website for further detail on the passenger experience and local circulation effects of each alternative.
Which alternative works best for Public transit operations? Does this alternative also work well for transit customers?	Please refer to the "Alternatives Description and Trade-Offs Summary" document posted on the project website for further detail on the passenger experience and local circulation effects of each alternative.
Are there cost estimates for each alternative?	Please refer to the "Alternatives Description and Trade-Offs Summary" document posted

	on the project website for estimated costs of each alternative.
What percentage of passengers have either an origin or destination Downtown (West of Hetherton)?	Roughly half of all transit center users are going to or from Downtown San Rafael. The exact origin/destination locations within Downtown have not been quantified.
When will the costs of the 3 alternatives be estimated? How much weight will the cost be in selecting one?	Please refer to the "Alternatives Description and Trade-Offs Summary" document posted on the project website for estimated costs of each alternative.
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Environmental Review Process	
Why did planning start so much later than the planning and construction of SMART? I.E., why is this work not significantly further along?	Planning has been underway for several years through joint efforts such as the San Rafael Station Area Plan and the Transit Center Relocation Study, both led by the City of San Rafael, and which GGBHTD, Marin Transit, TAM and SMART all participated in.
What is the time limit for choosing a location? This should not go on forever. I own the House of Bagel of Bagels building. For 8 years I have been following this. Very frustrating for our 3 business tenants and us as land owners for potential development etc.	While there is no time limit for choosing a location, a preferred alternative will be identified in the draft environmental document, anticipated to be released in Spring 2021. Following additional public engagement and review, the GGBHTD Board will then subsequently select an alternative for advancement.
Thanks for taking these questions from us. It's well done for responses! Could you please talk about Title VI, what it is intended to do, and when that analysis will be available?	Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Golden Gate Transit has a Title VI Policy Statement available here: https://www.goldengate.org/title-vi-policy-statement/ . If the project receives federal funds, additionally an Environmental Justice analysis may be required as part of the NEPA review.
The title VI response was incomprehensible. Please share this: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/local-assistance/guidance-and-	Comment noted

oversight/title-vi	
Do you still need to do an environmental document following the passage of SB288, which exempts bike/ped/transit projects on existing public right-of-way?	The project team still intends to produce an environmental impact report as this project is not entirely on existing public right-of-way.
All alternatives will require land acquisition. Is the City and are the effected property owners willing to make the necessary lands available? Are any of the alternatives more desirable from the perspective of existing property owners and the City.	As noted all alternatives require land acquisition from private property owners. At the time a preferred alternative is selected and environmentally cleared and funding is available, the GGBHTD will begin the process of approaching the property owners to acquire the property.
Will the Env Review analyze the safety of each alternative, esp for pedestrians and bicyclists? How will each alternative contribute to a Vision Zero (no pedestrian deaths) in San Rafael?	The project team is considering bicycle and pedestrian safety in its evaluation of alternatives - please refer to the "Alternatives Description and Trade-Offs Summary" document posted on the project website for further information on some of the safety-related trade-offs for each alternative.
Will the detailed study include a "no build" option, meaning keeping the existing SRTC as-is?	Yes, that alternative will be included in the environmental analysis
San Rafael Heritage has submitted an application to the City to designate the NWP Depot as a landmark. A considerable amount of research has gone into this application. Could this work be incorporated into the EIR for the project?	We are aware of this application and will consider it as it relates to the EIR preparation per CEQA.
I didn't hear discussion of the "no project" alternative as required under CEQA.	The environmental impact report will include a no-build alternative; however, it is noted that the existing SRTC (after recent modifications to allow for the SMART extension) is not considered adequately functional for transit operations.
Traffic	
Most notable is the lack of mentioning horrible impact on drivers. There is no reason to have to prohibit turns for drivers.	Comment noted

Especially when there are no busses leaving or arriving. Have you tried to get to San Rafael via 3rd street?	
You didn't address potential traffic impacts for residents in each of these designs.	Please refer to the "Alternatives Description and Trade-Offs Summary" document posted on the project website for further detail on the effects of each alternative on traffic.
Please comment on traffic impacts of each alternative.	Please refer to the "Alternatives Description and Trade-Offs Summary" document posted on the project website for further detail on the effects of each alternative on traffic.
Two right turns into a crosswalk is contrary to Cal Trans safety regulations.	Comment noted
Public Engagement	
Will the survey results and questions generated be available online?	A summary of the feedback received will be posted online.
Are we only doing typed questions and not phone calls?	Only text questions were accepted during the meeting given the very large volume of questions. Community members may participate in the online survey and fill out the comment form on the project website to provide further feedback or questions.
Is the survey the only way for the public to weigh in on the critical 'preferred alternative' decision? Will the City Council be involved in that decision? When?	A draft environmental document will be released in Spring 2021 that will indicate an initial preferred alternative preference. Upon release of that draft document, there will be another round of public outreach in which the public may provide feedback, including a public hearing. We encourage the community to provide any feedback they have on alternatives through the online survey or comment form. A project e-mail address and phone number is also available on the website.
For those of us who don't have or don't use email, who can we call to get on the postal mailing list for project updates?	There is no postal mailing list for project updates at this time. Please refer to the website for updates.
On outreach, there should be an anonymous phone call-in option, one shouldn't need email to participate, and the recording on the 415 257-4444	Comment noted. The phone number is still being utilized. The phone line message was updated after the meeting.

<p>project hotline still has info about the 3-20-18 public meeting. Staff should update it so it doesn't look like that line is no longer used.</p>	
<p>Misc</p>	
<p>The presentation was good, but it still needs more background, especially about the years 1972-1991.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>Dennis, I urge you to attend one of Economist Jon Haveman's presentation on the impact of autonomous vehicles. He is a local economist and can be reached at jon@needelegation.org</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>
<p>You haven't addressed comments I sent last night:</p> <p>2. Committing full city blocks to single-story use is a very inefficient use of downtown land. We urge the consideration of an alternative that includes the bus terminal as the ground floor of a multistory landmark building. This would provide patrons with much better protection from the weather. The conversion of the fleet to electric drive will mean that the noise and air quality concerns of previous generations of buses are no longer applicable.</p> <p>3. We notice that the presentation doesn't seem to distinguish the travel time consequences of bus service on Tamalpais, which involves using the at-grade RR crossings. A careful read of the slides indicates no time penalty for needing to cross the tracks.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>

4. We find it shocking that Slide 30 failed to mention the appallingly bad user experience of being stuck under the freeway. That needs to be added to the very long list of drawbacks.

