



# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER



Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design

## Golden Gate Bridge, Highway & Transportation District Transportation Committee March 25, 2021



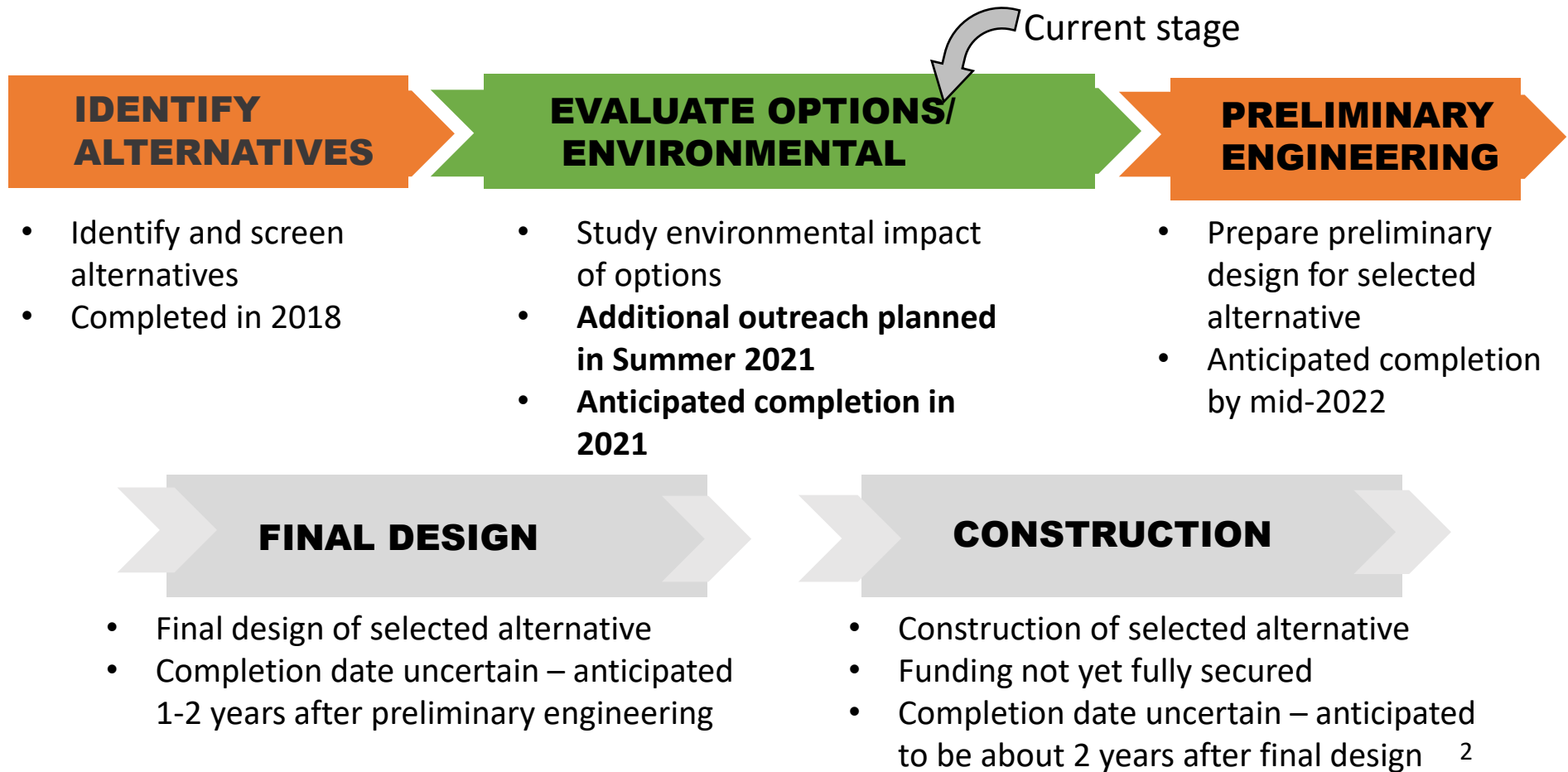
SAN RAFAEL  
THE CITY WITH A MISSION





# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



Timeline to Project Opening: anticipated 4-7 years from now

2



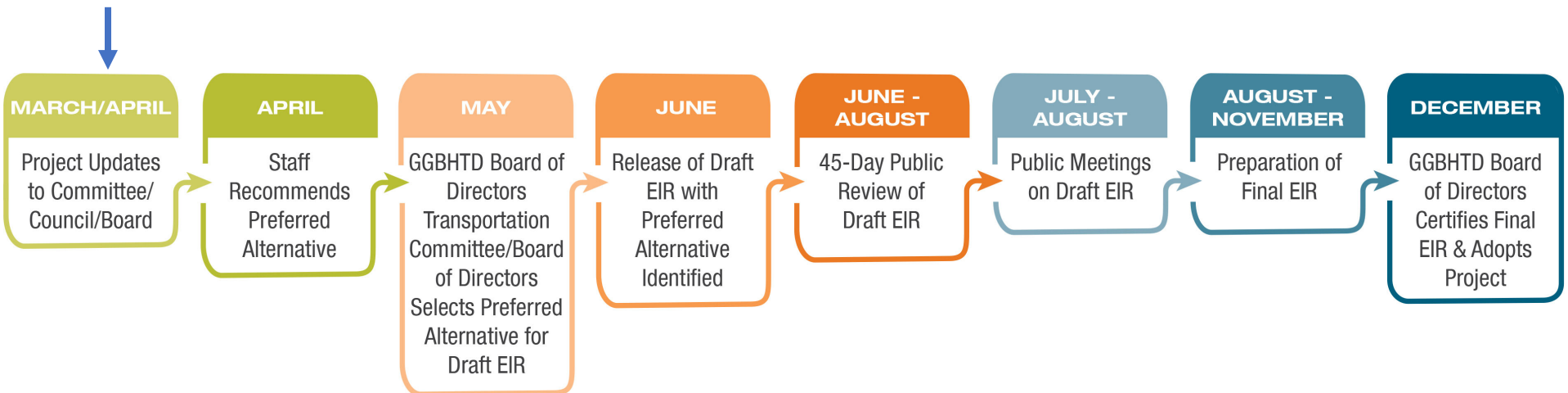
## Path Forward

- GGBHTD Board of Directors Transportation Committee – March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- San Rafael City Council – April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- GGBHTD Board of Directors Transportation Committee – May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021
  - Recommend Preferred Alternative for Draft EIR to Board of Directors
- GGBHTD Board of Directors – May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021
  - Selection of Preferred Alternative for Draft EIR
- Prepare and Release Draft EIR – June 2021
- Community Outreach during 45-day Draft EIR Circulation – July-August 2021
- GGBHTD Board of Directors – December 2021
  - Final EIR Certification/Project Adoption



# Process for Selection of a Preferred Alternative

We are here







## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Desired Elements of the Proposed Transit Center

- 17 bus bays
  - Same capacity as current transit center, fully utilized at peak times (even during pandemic)
- Existing SMART Station
- Security
- Clipper machines
- Covered waiting areas and passenger seating
- Bike parking
- Green (LEED) treatments
- Wayfinding
- Customer service and transit information
- Lighting
- Landscaping and public spaces
- Ancillary retail space
- Maintenance parking
- Pick-up/Drop-off space
- Taxi/TNC and shuttle space
- Driver relief facilities
- Public restrooms
- Consideration for Consideration for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



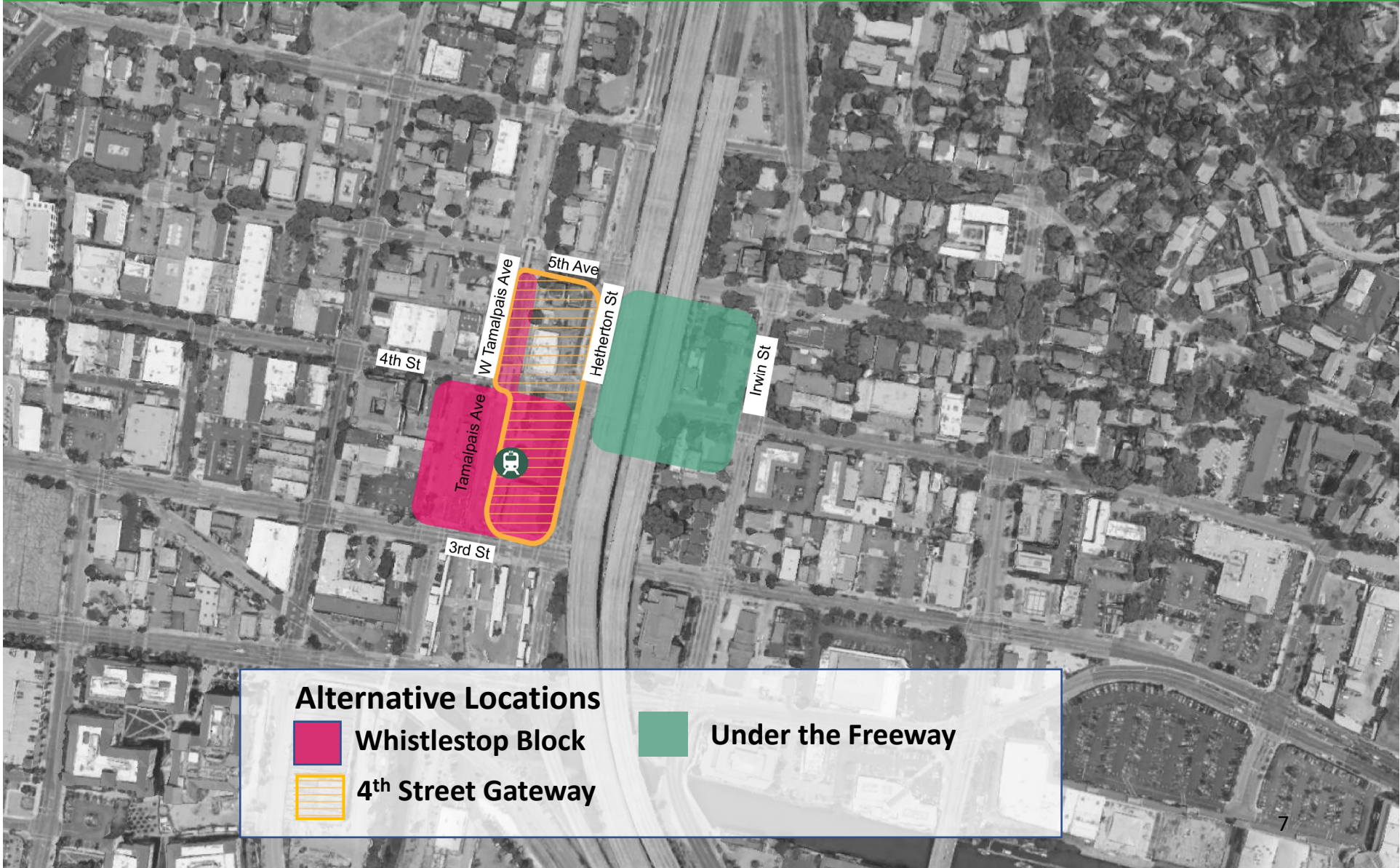
# All Build Alternatives Provide ...

- Improved accessibility for bus routes, reducing the amount of circulation on local streets necessary for buses to access their bays, benefiting traffic and making transit more efficient and reliable
- Operational flexibility to allow for future potential expansion of transit service and schedules
- Shift of buses from busy 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Streets, improving traffic flow
- New transit center facilities, including enlarged customer service, new shelters, integration of technology, green treatments (LEED), improved waiting areas
- Flexible curb for microtransit, shuttles, TNCs, taxis, pick-up/drop-off



# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design







## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



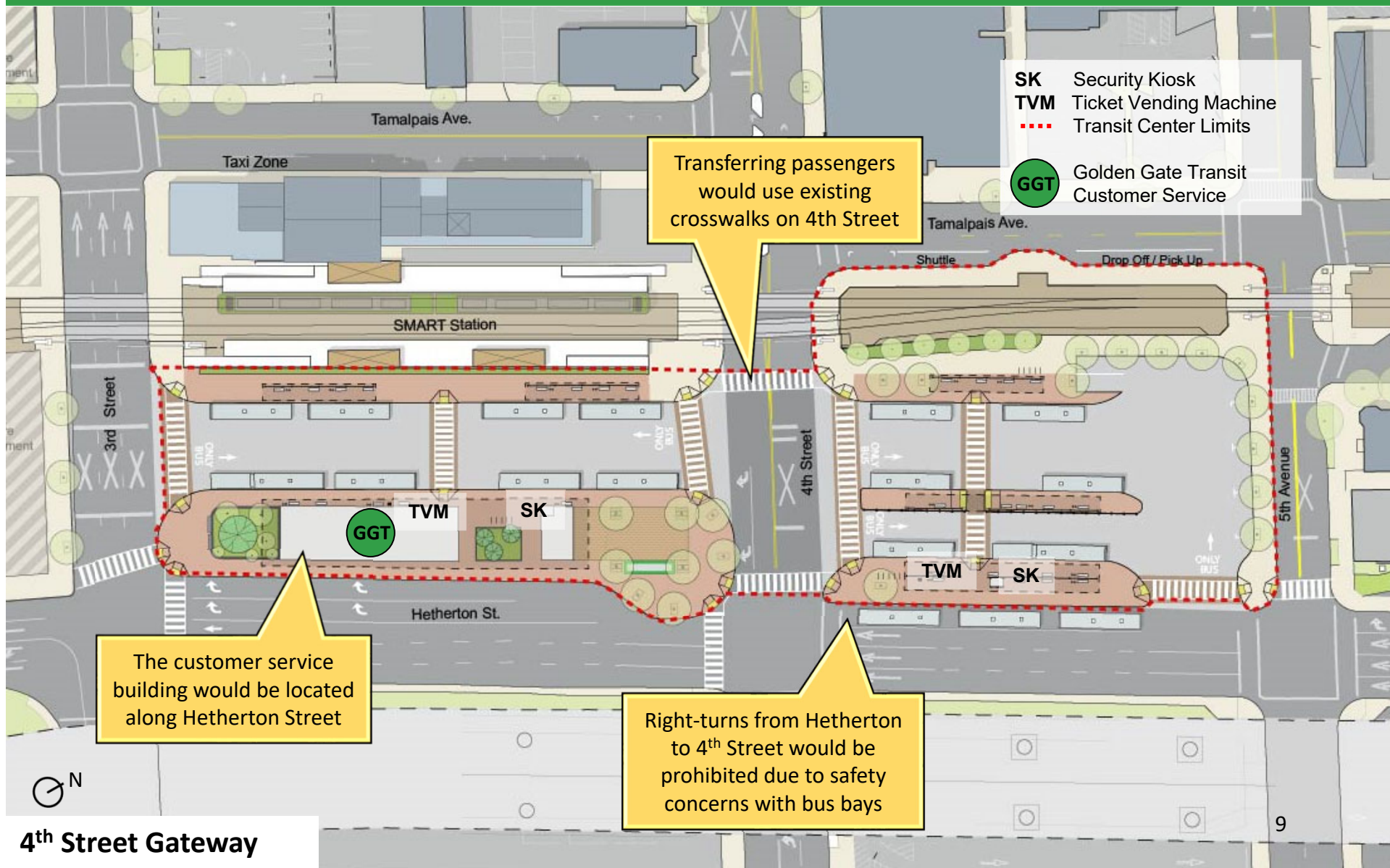
# 4<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway Alternative





# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design





## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Passenger Experience

- Provides convenient access to downtown San Rafael for transit users
- Some people transferring between buses would have to cross 4th Street
- Convenient connection to SMART
- Creates a better sense of place with public plaza, aesthetic treatments, and clear lines of sight



4<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway



## Effects on Operations

- Traffic
  - Removes the southbound right-turn to 4<sup>th</sup> Street, replaced with a dual southbound right-turn to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
  - Small to moderate increase in delay per vehicle
- Transit
  - Moderate to significant benefits to bus travel time and reliability in the PM peak period
  - Due to background traffic growth by 2040 on transit center access streets, bus travel time in the AM peak period would increase relative to No-Build



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Other Considerations

- Introduces new driveways for buses along both sides of 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Hetherton Street and the SMART tracks. 4<sup>th</sup> Street is the main pedestrian corridor into downtown
- The sites proposed for this alternative are zoned as “Hetherton Office” (Opportunity Site D) in the City’s Station Area Plan
- By locating the transit center on each side of 4<sup>th</sup> Street, this alternative creates an opportunity to provide architectural or design elements that serve as a gateway to the City. This includes plazas and other sense of place opportunities along 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- Two Victorian-style buildings, located on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the northern site of this alternative would be affected. These are potentially historic resources
- Estimated total cost of construction, property acquisition, and relocation (2023 dollars): **\$40M-\$55M**





## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



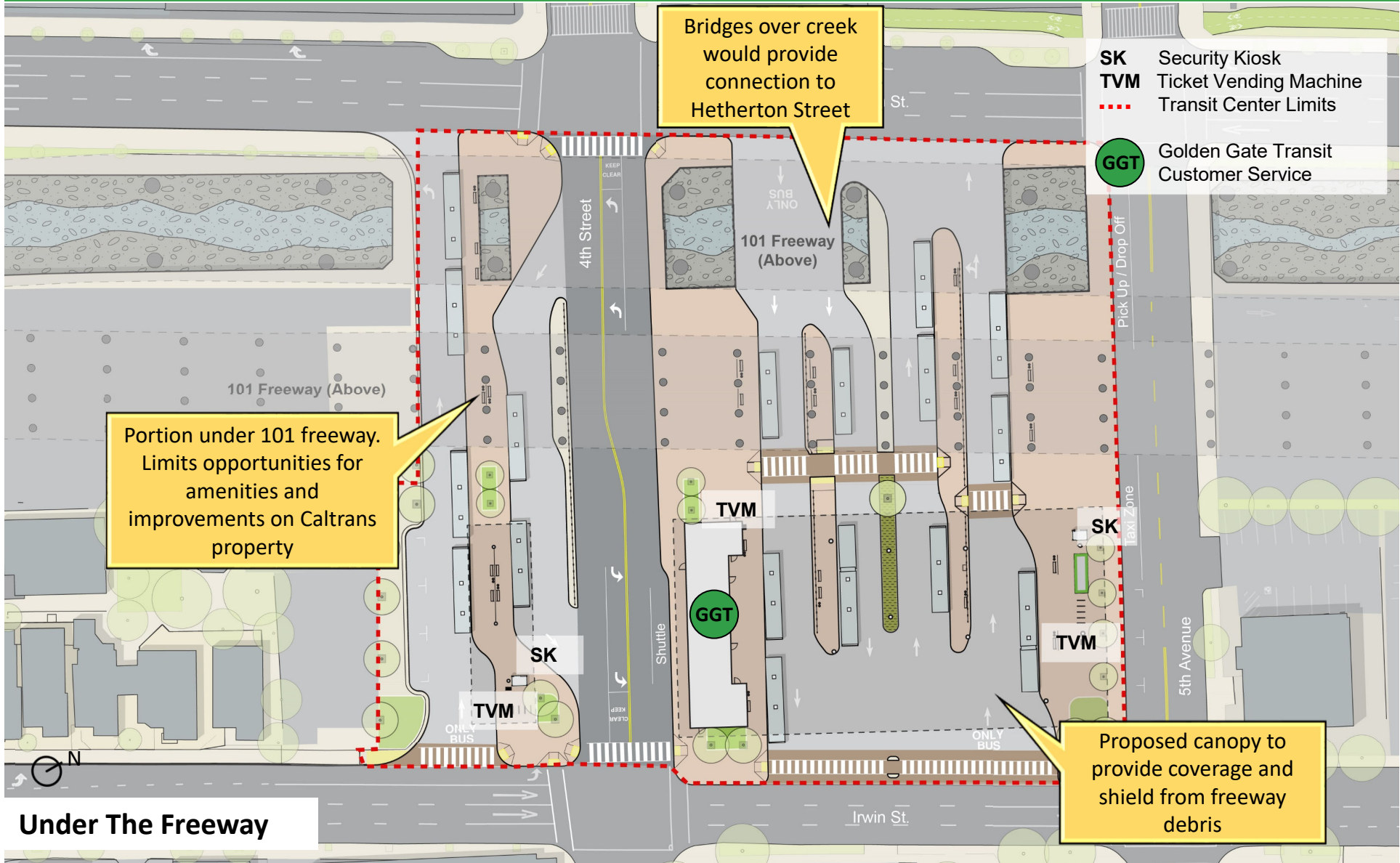
# Under the Freeway Alternative





# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



**Under The Freeway**



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Passenger Experience

- Visibility and sight lines would be partially blocked by freeway support columns; visibility is key for creating a safe and welcoming environment for passengers.
- The portions of the transit center under the freeway will not be allowed to have any permanent structures, such as bus shelters, due to Caltrans policy



Under The Freeway



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Passenger Experience (cont.)

- Passengers traveling to downtown San Rafael and the BioMarin employment area would have to cross Hetherton Street
- Some people transferring between buses would have to cross 4<sup>th</sup> Street (fewer than with 4<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway)
- All passengers going to or from SMART would have to cross Hetherton Street and many would also have to cross 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- Provides closer access to San Rafael High School



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Effects on Operations

- Traffic
  - New driveways on Hetherton Street, Irwin Street, and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, but otherwise would not change the traffic circulation network
  - Small to moderate decrease in delay per vehicle
- Transit
  - Moderate to significant benefits to bus travel time and reliability in both peak periods



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Other Considerations

- The sites proposed for this alternative are zoned as “Commercial/Office” or “Residential/Office Districts” (Opportunity Site E) in the City’s Station Area Plan
- The space underneath the freeway is currently used as a Caltrans Park-and-Ride lot; at least 72 spaces would be impacted and would be required to be replaced 1-for-1 by Caltrans
- GGT limited to a ground lease of the property and will not be able to acquire ownership of the Caltrans portion. Caltrans will retain the right to evict Golden Gate Transit without compensation if repairs are necessary to US 101



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



## Other Considerations (cont.)

- Would require parts of Irwin Creek to be covered, triggering both temporary and permanent environmental impacts, requiring mitigation in other locations. Modifications to the creek will require permits from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Army Corp, USFWS and NOAA.
- Potentially historic home on Irwin Street would be affected by project footprint
- Estimated cost of construction, property acquisition, mitigation, and relocation (2023 dollars): **\$60M-\$85M**





## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



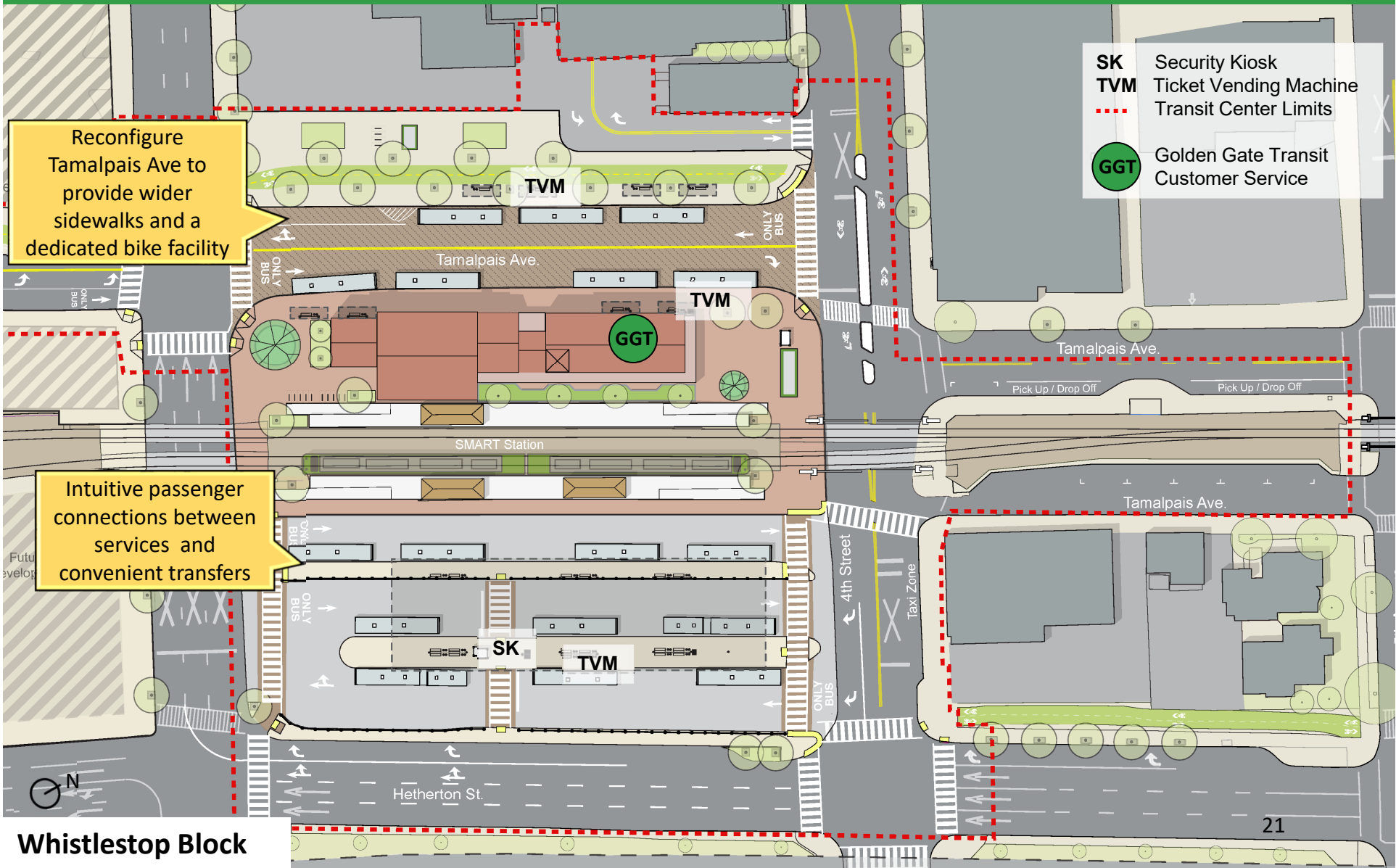
# Whistlestop Block Alternative (and Relocate Whistlestop Variant)





# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design





## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Passenger Experience

- Does not require passengers to cross any auto streets for either transfers between buses or transfers between buses and SMART
- Creates a cohesive transit identity and simplifies wayfinding for transit users
- Creates a better sense of place with public plaza, aesthetic treatments, and clear lines of sight
- Effects on visibility across the site depend on the location of the portion Whistlestop Building that would be retained



Whistlestop Block



## Effects on Operations

- Traffic
  - Places bus bays along both sides of Tamalpais Avenue between 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street and converts that block to bus-only
  - Allows for a second right-turn lane from Hetherton Street to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
  - Small decrease in delay per vehicle
- Transit
  - Significant benefits to bus travel time and reliability in both peak periods



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Other Considerations

- Would construct a key link in the City's planned bicycle network by building a two-way raised cycle track on Tamalpais Avenue between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street, effectively connecting the Puerto Suello and the Mahon Creek paths.
- The sites proposed for this alternative are zoned as "Hetherton Office" (small portion of Opportunity Site A) in the City's Station Area Plan
- Impacts the fewest number of active businesses of the Build alternatives
- New driveways for buses along the south side of 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Hetherton Street and the SMART tracks



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Other Considerations (cont.)

- Creates an opportunity to reuse the existing Whistlestop building for transit functions (such as customer service and restrooms)
  - Building would require upgrades and only a portion of existing space would be required
- Implements a key component of the Station Area Plan – public plaza north of the Whistlestop Building along 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- Estimated cost of construction, property acquisition, and relocation (2023 dollars): **\$40M-\$55M**





## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Relocate Whistlestop Variant

- Sub-alternative to the Whistlestop Block Alternative has the same configuration east of the SMART tracks, but flips the location of the Whistlestop building and Tamalpais Avenue west of the tracks

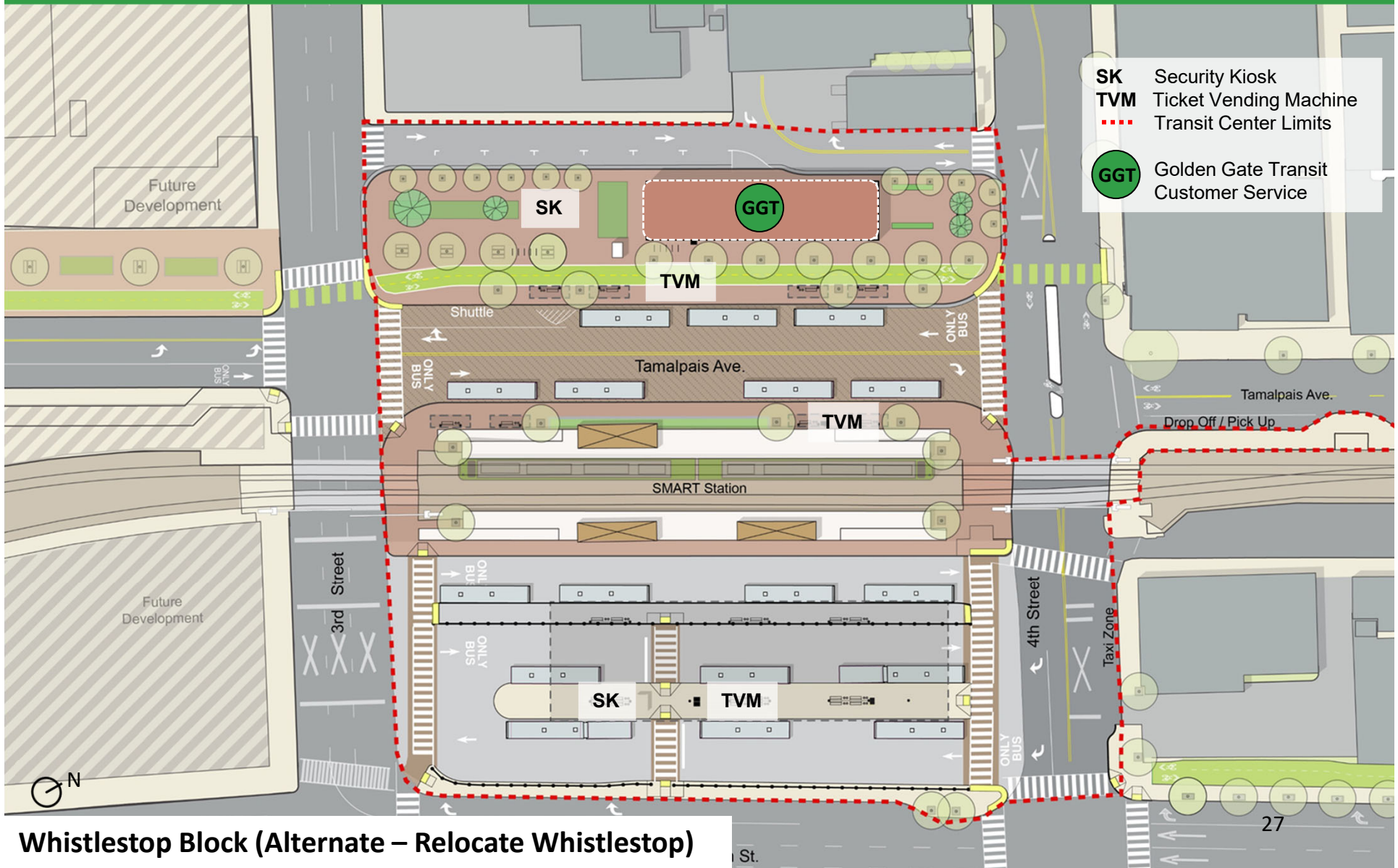


**Whistlestop Block (Alternate – Relocate Whistlestop)**



# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



**Whistlestop Block (Alternate – Relocate Whistlestop)**



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Relocate Whistlestop Variant Benefits

- Emphasizes the more distinctive (and less modified) east side of the Whistlestop Building that is currently obscured by the raised SMART platforms.
- Better aligns Tamalpais Avenue between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets with segments to the north and south, creating a more direct north-south bicycle and pedestrian route and improving the view corridor
- Creates space on the west side of Tamalpais Avenue for additional sense of place and urban design treatments with clear lines of sight





## Relocate Whistlestop Variant Benefits (cont.)

- Emphasizes the more distinctive (and less modified) east side of the Whistlestop Building that is currently obscured by the raised SMART platforms.
- Better aligns Tamalpais Avenue between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets with segments to the north and south, creating a more direct north-south bicycle and pedestrian route and improving the view corridor
- Creates space on the west side of Tamalpais Avenue for additional sense of place and urban design treatments with clear lines of sight



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Relocate Whistlestop Variant Considerations

- Same project footprint
- Does not significantly affect traffic or transit operations
- Estimated cost of construction, property acquisition, and relocation (2023 dollars): **\$40M-\$60M**



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Summary of Key Considerations

- Capital Cost
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway: **\$40M - \$55M**
  - Under the Freeway: **\$60M - \$85M**
  - Whistlestop Block: **\$40M - \$55M**
  - Relocate Whistlestop: **\$40M - \$60M**
- Relationship to Existing Uses
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway: approx. 8 existing businesses
  - Under the Freeway: approx. 4 existing businesses plus Caltrans park-and-ride impacts, requiring replacement
  - Whistlestop Block: approx. 2 existing businesses (excluding Whistlestop)
- Environmental Considerations
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway: Impact to potential historical resources
  - Under the Freeway: Irwin Creek Impacts, waterway & habitat, potential historical resource on Irwin Street



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Recent Outreach Activities





## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Community Outreach Process

- Five phases of public engagement
  1. Listening (March 2018 Open House & Survey)
  2. Input on Specific Concepts (June 2018 Open House, Canal Outreach, Survey)
  3. Scoping for Environmental Analysis (October 2018 Meeting)
  4. **Project Update/Review of Alternatives (November 2020)**
  5. Review Findings of Environmental Analysis (anticipated Summer 2021)



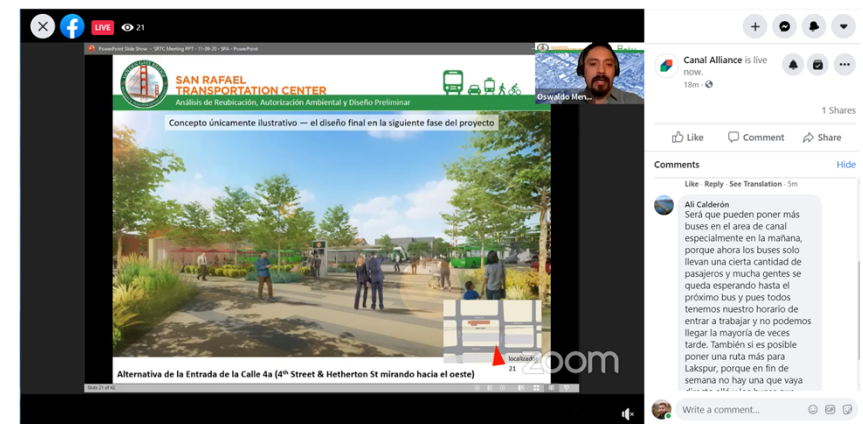
## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Recent Public Outreach Activities

- Partnership with the Canal Alliance
  - Hosted a Facebook Live event in Spanish on Nov 9 (4,800 views)
  - Conducted 32 hours of bi-lingual outreach activities at the Transit Center and Food Pantry
- Community Meeting via Zoom
  - 50 attendees plus over 120 additional online views





## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Recent Public Outreach Activities (cont.)

- Outreach to businesses through San Rafael Chamber of Commerce and San Rafael Business Improvement District
- Over 100 email notifications to community, neighborhood and business organizations
- Presentations to:
  - San Rafael High School SELAC (School English Learner Advisory Committee) to 110+ families
  - San Rafael Heritage
  - San Rafael Chamber of Commerce
  - League of Women Voters
  - GGT Bus Passenger Advisory Committee
- Over 1,000 online surveys received in English and Spanish

**DO YOU USE THE SAN RAFAEL TRANSIT CENTER?** **¿USA USTED EL CENTRO DE TRANSPORTE DE SAN RAFAEL?**

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!** **¡QUEREMOS SU OPINIÓN!**

We have been working with the community to develop a new San Rafael Transit Center in downtown San Rafael that is safer, more accessible and provides better transit connections for riders.

Estuvimos trabajando con la comunidad para desarrollar un nuevo Centro de Transporte de San Rafael en el centro de San Rafael que sea más seguro, más accesible y que ofrezca mejores conexiones de transporte para los pasajeros.

Learn more about the project at [goldengate.org/SRTC](http://goldengate.org/SRTC)

1 Obtenga más información sobre el proyecto en [goldengate.org/SRTC](http://goldengate.org/SRTC)

Take our survey and enter to win a \$25 Clipper card!

2 ¡Contesta todas las preguntas y participa para ganar una tarjeta Clipper de \$25!

Attend our community meeting on **Thursday, Nov 19 at 5:30 PM.** Details on our website

3 Ven a nuestra reunión comunitaria el **jueves 19 de noviembre 5:30 PM.** Detalles en nuestro sitio web

[http://goldengate.org/SRTC\\_Survey](http://goldengate.org/SRTC_Survey) [http://goldengate.org/SRTC\\_Encuesta](http://goldengate.org/SRTC_Encuesta)



## SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



# Outreach – Survey Responses

- Survey responses
  - English-language survey: 873
  - Spanish-language survey: 132
- Characteristics of respondents varied by survey language
  - Transit users comprised 89% of Spanish-language survey respondents, but only 14% of English-language survey respondents
  - Drivers (non-transit riders) made up 68% of English-language survey respondents, but only 8% of Spanish-language survey respondents





## Outreach – Survey Conclusions

- There was widespread support for all alternatives and no notable difference between impressions of the three alternatives among Spanish-speaking transit riders
  - Interpreted to mean that all alternatives provide much needed improvement relative to existing conditions
- Non-transit riders more likely to support Under the Freeway alternative than transit riders
- Transit riders most strongly support the Whistlestop alternative
- Both English-speaking transit riders and non-transit riders had the least favorable opinion of 4th Street Gateway



## Path Forward

- GGBHTD Board of Directors Transportation Committee – March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- San Rafael City Council – April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021
- GGBHTD Board of Directors Transportation Committee – May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021
  - Recommend Preferred Alternative for Draft EIR to Board of Directors
- GGBHTD Board of Directors – May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021
  - Selection of Preferred Alternative for Draft EIR
- Prepare and Release Draft EIR – June 2021
- Community Outreach during 45-day Draft EIR Circulation – July-August 2021
- GGBHTD Board of Directors – December 2021
  - Final EIR Certification/Project Adoption



# SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER



Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design



**SAN RAFAEL**  
THE CITY WITH A MISSION



**THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK**