Open House Summary

On December 6, 2023, the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD) hosted an Open House to hear community input on design opportunities for the San Rafael Transit Center Relocation project. It was held at the San Rafael Community Center from 5:30-7:30 pm. An estimated 60 people attended throughout the evening and provided feedback on printed boards using colored dot stickers and post-it notes. All material was provided in both English and Spanish, with interpretation services available. Parallel outreach activities included a Canal Alliance Facebook Live event held November 30, 2023; this is described at the end of this document.

Project boards were set up around the Open House for people to review. Information presented included:

- Project schedule and community engagement process
- Community Design Advisory Group
- Recap of August 2023 public outreach activities
- “Move Whistlestop Alternative” Environmental Impact Report site plan and project elements
- Customer Service Building concept
- Incorporating elements from the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Depot Building
- Plaza design and bike lane configuration
- Proposed canopy concept
- Northwestern Pacific Railroad Depot Building history
- Whistlestop Building today

Project boards are available for download at the Public Meetings and Open Houses page at: https://goldengate.org/SRTC

Project Information
Información del Proyecto

San Rafael Transit Center
Public Open House
December 6, 2023

Project information board as presented. All boards are available for download at https://goldengate.org/SRTC
**Demographics**

Participants were asked “where they lived, worked and spend their time regularly?” that helped the GGBHTD understand who attended the Open House.

**Where do you live, work, and spend time regularly?**

On a printed aerial map of San Rafael, participants placed different colors of dots that show where they live (red), work (blue), go to school (orange), and other places they go on a daily or weekly basis (green).

Out of the total number of dots (56), 41% (23 dots) represented places visited on a daily or weekly basis, and 36% (20 dots) represented residences. While the remaining 23% (13 dots) depicts the places where participants work.

The “Where Do You Live/Work” board asked participants to place a red dot where they live; place a blue dot where they work; place an orange dot where they go to school; and place a green dot for other places they go daily or weekly.
What transportation services do you use?

Participants were asked which transportation services they used and how frequently. The most common response was Golden Gate or Marin Transit Buses, while the least common was car share programs (Uber or Lyft) and taxis. Of the participants who contributed answers, bus and the SMART train are the most frequently used, while Airport shuttles and Greyhound are less frequent.

Responses to the question, “What transportation services do you use at or near the transit center?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>SERVICES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Gate or Main Transit Bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several Times A Week</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once or Twice A Week</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes, but Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
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Responses to the question, “What transportation services do you use at or near the transit center?”
August 2023 Public Outreach Activities: Open Houses, Facebook Live, & Survey

Participants were asked if they attended any of the past public outreach programs. Participants used colored dots to answer the two questions.

Out of 9 respondents for the August Open House, 6 attended, while 3 did not. Of the 6 respondents for the August Facebook Live event, 2 attended, while 4 did not.
Proposed Site Design

Participants completed a dot-placing exercise to indicate their preferred option for Bike Lane Configuration. The three (3) options include the following:

- Option 1: Sidewalk-Level Bike Path
- Option 2: Bike Lane at Street Level
- Option 3: Shared Use Trail

Of the respondents, 50% preferred the Option 1 Sidewalk-Level Bike Path. 40% participants selected Option 3 Shared Use Trail, while 10% preferred Option 2.

The following list represents comments provided in English via post-it notes or in Spanish via a translator. Asterisks represent additional people who agreed with the comments. Comments made in Spanish are marked with a ‘+’ symbol.

- Distributing Passenger Drop-off and pick up to a number of locations around the transit center may improve traffic vs one location. This should be modeled.
- Put the passenger drop off/pick up elsewhere and give us enough room for a restored Depot
- We don’t need another intersection on 4th street between Lincoln and the smart tracks traffic is a mess as it is!
- We would rather have a great public square between the Depot And 4th Street than a new alley.
- Is it possible to move the bike path to the south side of 3rd street? Protected bike path along Hetherton? [Sketch indicates potential route]
- This would require potentially taking the right turn lane from Hetherton
- Can we route through bikes around the T.C.
- Protected bike lane between Hetherton and bus lanes with physical barriers
- Large scale bike parking as in Holland. Maybe access/payment car be done through clipper card
- 24/7 Security!
- This plan foils the primary requirement. Show bus pads!
- Connect missing two blocks to N/S greenway. Cycling network
- Reduce intersections to limit traffic. Do not add only lights/intersections
- At peak times heading west on 3rd st can take as long as 20 min to get thru all the intersections and smartrain delays.
- Missing cycle connection on fourth
- Without a dedicated bike path 33’ wide isn’t needed and the additional 6’ for the Depot isn’t an issue
- Definitely have a multiuse path for peds and bikes - that slows bikes down for walker easily
- The bike “highway” should not run through the shared public plaza between 3rd and 4th streets wheeled active transportation (bikes scooters etc) must yield to pedestrians and have 5mph speed
• No bike highway through plaza means the section between 3rd and 4th street does not have to conform to MUTCD standards and dimension constraints
• Make the bikepath same elevation as the street - put bollards/plants/etc along the bike path on both sides and have raised crosswalks to get pedestrians across the bike path. The crosswalks would be at the same elevation as the sidewalk. Cyclists would slow down when they go across the crosswalks.
• I think people on bikes and foot will mix better on multiuse. Its a narrow area, and pedestrians stepping to bus pads will do better
• Please consider the few thousand homes (=commuters) living in East SR and have ONLY 3rd Str as an exit to San Rafael amenities, work, freeway entrance. Traffic congestion (lites) causes very long delays to exit East San Rafael
• This includes all of Peacock Gap and Glenwood residents.
• +Bike trail - not needed as much would like to see it integrated within a bike trail network
• +Cal Trans should integrated bike paths
• +Bus route signage - is a priority
• +Pedestrian connections are a priority within the transit center and to the adjacent urban areas
• +Like the design as it is designed from the perspective of passengers

The following comments were positioned below the three (3) options for the Bike Lane Configuration:

Option 1 Sidewalk-Level Bike Path
• Opt 1 and 3 aren’t very diff and that’s ok
• I don’t feel any of the 4 options works, you need to look further for a better solution

Option 2 Bike Lane at Street Level
• The drop curb is a bad trip hazard
• The drop isn’t safe for people with walkers, wheelchairs. This shouldn’t be approved.

Option 3 Shared Use Trail
• Multiuse path might be better at safe mixing than separated paths
• Shared space please
• These 4 drawings don’t show bus pads. Fail!!

Bike Lane Configuration

Responses to the preferred option for bike lane configuration
Customer Service Building Concept

Open House attendees provided comments on a preliminary concept for the Customer Service Building. The following list summarizes common themes represented across multiple comments:

- Public Bathrooms
- Security personnel and cameras
- Restore/recreate part(s) of the depot

The following list represents all comments provided via post-it notes. Asterisks represent additional people who agreed with the comments. Comments made in Spanish are marked with a ‘+’ symbol.

- Restore the 1929 depot - this is a memorable civic monument that will provide a great place and front door.
- Do not separate the building with an internal courtyard - cute idea but ruins the building footprint.
- Where are the solar panels?
- +Bilingual people is important
- The public bathrooms are tiny and totally inadequate. Provide larger public rooms that don’t require a closed door. Many people commented at last open house. Please don’t ignore us!
- Love the courtyard with trees next to retail. Make a great place for coffee/lunch and people will come.
- 24/7 Security!
- I don’t think there’s enough public space. Too much back office.
- Make sure the Customer Relations staff work stations are large enough to comfortably accommodate all the workers.
- +Put in more than one bathroom for both women and men.
- +Cameras to keep us safe
- +Chargers for electric bicycles
- Ensure security kiosk is closer to the public access.

- More bathrooms. One is not enough. Segregated Male/Female.
- Consider the impacts of sea level rise in the design.
- Will the bathrooms be open evenings and weekends? It’s hard to go all the way from SF to Santa Rosa or West Marin without restroom break.
- For the San Rafael train history - keep the full ‘scale’ of the historical depot, enclose the space shown as courtyard. Keep it as original arcade.
- How do you make sure it will not attract the homeless tents.
- You better believe that the homeless will set up and they have more rights.
- +Washrooms should not be gender-neutral, rather female/male. The more washrooms the better. Need warm water in the washrooms. Needs 3 stalls minimum
Incorporating the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Depot Building

The project is an opportunity to return portions of the current Whistlestop building to its original transportation function. The concept of incorporating the historic elements for the Depot to the new Customer Service Building was presented to the public during the Open House.

The following list represents all comments provided via post-it notes. Asterisks represent additional people who agreed with the comments. Comments made in Spanish are marked with a ‘+’ symbol.

- Maintain historic character on all facades - North end modern piece totally destroys the effect.
- Keep it open. Keep it simple. This (flying ends) mockup looks like a gothic horror show building
- Agreed. Open + Simple.*
- North end - recreate original north facade (SRH)
- South end, under pitched roof add arches for windows to match historic arches in the arcade.
- Restoring the Depot is great placemaking and creates a civic monument for San Rafael.
- Original South facade - glass window arched (SRH)
- Don’t expect food service to be a focal point or destination. Minimize expectations.
- Homeless will set up tents.
- 24/7 Security!
Proposed Plaza Design

The Plaza design concept was presented at the Open House, with key themes coming out of the previous community and CDAG feedback - to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive space that serves diverse needs.

The following list represents all comments provided via post-it notes. Asterisks represent additional people who agreed with the comments. Comments made in Spanish are marked with a ‘+’ symbol.

• 24/7 Security!
• In + Out from 4th will not work with traffic already gridlocked. Access/ Egress only from 3rd. Provide drop-off elsewhere
• Taking away Extreme Pizza and 2 affordable apartments for a park that will be occupied by homeless
• +Phone chargers for families to communicate with each other.
• Need to separate public drop-off from taxi and uber/lyft drop-off
• +Drinking fountains
• Drinking water fountains
• The proposed 4th street ingress/ egress for the passenger drop off alley is absurd and will not work. It will block traffic on the street and stack cars in the alley.
• You’re taking the Extreme Pizza building for a plaza that will be nothing but a big headache. Forget moms with their babies. It will be homeless with their tents!
• This board has no useful info on the # of bike parking possibilities - useless
• Please ensure that our students and everyone is protected from the rain, the wind and the sun
• Thank you for safe bike storage. How many storage areas will be offered?
• Ensure benches and materials discourage homeless activity
• More trees and planting areas
• Shared public plaza/ gathering area. Larger!
• Loose the courtyard! Restore our Depot and provide more usable tenant space. The Courtyard is a waste of leasable space and maintenance nightmare
• Accommodation for future bike share @ smart station
• +Sycamore trees
• Is this really going to work?
• Wtf? Can you cram any more in here?
• Redwood trees would be great
• +Yes, London Plane trees
• Homeless needles, feces, trash
• Homeless tents
• Water fountains are needed for drinking (there are many workers ending the day here and have no access to drinking water)
• Clocks integrated in waiting areas.
• Phone chargers
• Chargers for electric bikes
• Seating area should be plentiful and accessible for plus-size folks, and seniors.
• Trees - Sycamore (London Plane) - known to be good in urban areas
• Public locker would be useful
• Public art/murals would be good. The Canal Art are a good group.
• Pavements can incorporate art and commemorate the history through the design.
• Security - need security personnel (should be bilingual) and security cameras.
Proposed Canopy Concept - Board #1

Two boards showed concepts for the canopy design east of the SMART tracks. The first board showed building materials and other design concepts considered by the CDAG and other design inspirations.

The following list represents all comments provided via post-it notes. Asterisks represent additional people who agreed with the comments. Comments made in Spanish are marked with a ‘+’ symbol.

- **Street trees needed along 4th.**
- **Add curvature to the shelter on Tam. Avenue at the Depot/Service Bldg.**
- **These wood organic structures are great. (Not the top one though). Curves reflect Civic Center.**
- **Shelter best to cover all the buss pads, esp. the large area (bank site).**
- **Put big trees on north side of 4th and south side of 3rd - to complete strong frame for transit center.**
- **FLW Civic Center arches as reference.**
- **24/7 Security!**
Proposed Canopy Concept - Board #2

The second proposed canopy concept board showed a design concept based on CDAG comments, with a flowing wood roof over tree-like columns. The roof plan and a shade evaluation study describe approaches to protection from the elements, which is challenging given the street orientation. The concept will continue to evolve through the Preliminary Design phase.

The following list represents all comments provided via post-it notes. Asterisks represent additional people who agreed with the comments. Comments made in Spanish are marked with a ‘+’ symbol.

- **Great improvement over previous**
- **Yes - landmark canopy**
- **Assure large trees along Hetherton**
- **+Safety/ Security at all times**
- **+Assistance for disabled persons**
- **The roofing is a great idea for waiting in the rain, like a good bus shelter. Openings should only be for light, (the skylights?)**
- **+Cameras to feel safe**
- **24/7 Security!**
- **+Terminal is used by students who need weather protection (rains, sun, wind). Also seniors**
Northwestern Pacific Railroad Depot History

The Northwestern Pacific Railroad Depot Building, often known today as the Whistlestop Building, has a evolving history, having undergone various additions and renovations over the past nine decades. It was first built in 1929 by Northern Pacific Railroad with a waiting room, baggage area, and open air arcade along the tracks. The Railroad added to the building over time, making it a much larger two-story building. The building was sold to new owners in the 1980s, who continued to renovate and expand, resulting in the building that is seen today.

The following list represents all comments provided via post-it notes. Asterisks represent additional people who agreed with the comments. Comments made in Spanish are marked with a ‘+’ symbol.

What do you like about the building, either today or form another time in history? What part(s) would you like to see kept and moved to the new site?

• **Restore This!**
• **This isn’t 1929. Get real**
• **24/7 security**
• **The faux historic roofline is scary with the blank windows. Make it simple and open sightlines please.**
• **As an Historian, I love all the NWP Railroad history of the building. Keep the Arches and Tile Roof; Include a NWP Railroad Museum and gift shop to sell NWP/SMART merchandise.**
• **Echo’s of the Spanish heritage**
Whistlestop Building Today

Similarly, participants were asked to consider the Whistlestop Building as it exists today.

The following list represents all comments provided via post-it notes. Asterisks represent additional people who agreed with the comments. Comments made in Spanish are marked with a ‘+’ symbol.

What do you like about the building, either today or form another time in history? What part(s) would you like to see kept and moved to the new site?

- Just build new
- Historic character
- We need more a historic sense of the building by keeping more of it, not just pieces
- Tear it all down

- Please keep the entire building
- 24/7 security!
- Get rid of this eyesore
- Get contractor to look at building for antenna mounting. RF communication will be essential
- +Security - need security personnel (should be bilingual) and security cameras
Next Steps

Preliminary Design will continue over the next few months. Final design is anticipated to begin in 2024, pending regulatory processes. Check [https://goldengate.org/SRTC](https://goldengate.org/SRTC) for future updates.

The Move Whistlestop Alternative as described in the Final Environmental Impact Report
Participants used colored dots to answer questions and post-it notes with written comments.
Canal Alliance Facebook Live Event

In parallel with the Open House, the GGBHTD collaborated with the Canal Alliance to host a Spanish language Facebook Live event on November 30, 2023. Participants were able to both join the event live and also view the recording afterwards from the Canal Alliance's Facebook feed. The recording is available to be viewed at https://www.facebook.com/CanalAlliance.SanRafael by scrolling down to the November 30, 2023 posting.

The following comments were provided in the Facebook Live chat. Original comments, questions and answers were provided in Spanish; these are translated for clarity.

Question:
Will the improvement of the transit station lead to more use of our public transit network? Will it lead to an increase in transit services and more shops around the transit center?

Response:
A public restroom area is foreseen in the new building as well as stores such as a cafe.

Question:
The riders are concerned about the safety of the station. What is going to be done about it? Would there be security cameras?

Response:
Safety is one our the biggest priorities for the transit center. Yes, there will be security cameras. There will definitely be lighting at night – at the larger bus canopies east of SMART, at the smaller shelters on Tamalpais, and at the Customer Service Building. In addition, the project will include two small security kiosks, about 5’ by 7’ – one in the Tamalpais Ave. plaza and one under the large bus canopies east of SMART.

The design will also include strategies known as “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design”, in which we include design strategies that make crime uncomfortable or impractical for potential offenders. For example, we will maintain visibility across the transit station to the extent possible through measures such as limiting the use of walls at bus shelters and keeping vegetation low to the ground.

Of course, nothing is fool-proof and we still encourage people to be attentive to their surroundings.

Question:
It would be good to have more frequent or direct buses as it is very difficult to get to work.

Response:
A more specific request would be helpful. These can be referred to Marin Transit if appropriate.

Question:
Good afternoon, this is not about the new bus terminal, but because they have cut so many routes while other routes have long wait times (like Smith Ranch Road has buses only going by every hour and this is not good. Only bus 245 enters this street). We should only have to wait 30 minutes [to catch the bus].

Response:
We can refer requests for Canal to Smith Ranch Rd to Marin Transit.

Question:
It would be a good idea to give the drivers some classes on human relations, there are some who greet them out of respect and do not even answer, I do not know if it is racism or bad manners on their part, thank you. Any route one climbs but that happens more with brown people and a few Americans.

Response:
We are focused on design and not driver behavior. This comment will be passed on to new staff responsible for drivers. We hope that a new transit center will help to make for happier bus drivers. We have a new staff person who oversees drivers. This comment will be shared with him.

Question:
How is the bus station moving or phasing from one site to the other?

Response:
We will continue to use the current site, and construction will take place across 3rd St. When the new transit center is completed we will shift everything over to the new one.

Question:
Is this remodeling/upgrade funded by the city, or will the users have to pay for it?
Response:
We are still putting together a funding package. We have gotten some money from what is called Regional Measure 3 Bridge Tolls. We are looking for federal grants. We will sell the land of the current transit center to use towards the cost of the new center. It’s all very much in development. The project is being funded in part by the bridge tolls.

Question:
What is going to happen with the Smart, it is causing a lot of congestion, and with this new terminal, I imagine it will be chaos, they should raise these train tracks.
Response:
One of the motivations for the project was to improve bus operations. With the relocation, some of the congestion and inefficiencies that exist now will be partially reduced and somewhat fixed. That said, traffic congestion arises when the population grows. Improving public transportation and its infrastructure, such as the Transit Center, will encourage its use and reduce congestion and inefficiencies. Also, the team is working to improve the pedestrian and bike access to the Transit Center to minimize the congestion problems.

Question:
Will the bus hours stay the same?
Response:
Yes

Question:
Where is the transit center located?
Response:
On the blocks where the existing Whistlestop Building and Citibank are located, across Third Street from where the current transit center is.

Question:
And what will happen to Whistlestop, will he throw it away?
Response:
The Whistlestop services (now known as Vivalon) are moving to a new site in San Rafael. The historic parts of the building will be moved to the new customer service building.

Question:
Will the bus schedules remain as they are? What will happen with the station during the construction?
Response:
The design team doesn’t have jurisdiction over bus schedules, however it is expected that with the new Transit Center the schedules will improve as bus routes become more efficient. Regarding the question about operation during construction, the transit will continue working at the current location before moving to the new location once the construction is complete.
Additional comments:

- The central space is a good opportunity to have activities open to the public!
- It is a bit challenging with this cold!!!!
- Thank you for the information
- Security cameras
- Preservation of original aesthetics on designated historical landmark buildings (such as archways) makes sense sometimes. However, including similar features in new buildings does not make sense from a historical rationale; placing a bronze placard at that site makes sense. The new structures should be designed and built following principles which maximize function and economy. This is achieved by avoiding any inclusion of custom-crafted elements, such as archways. This same conclusion was reached during the replacement of structures on the College of Marin campus in Kentfield. Vanity projects have no place in projects which are paid for using public funds. All materials used to construct the transportation center should be readily-available, mass-produced construction supplies. The sensibility of doing so becomes evident when repairs, maintenance, and replacement items (especially glass) are needed.
Bienvenida y Presentaciones

comentario que acaba de hacer Cris,

Diagrama conceptual

Estructura de sombra sobre el patio
Recogida y entrega de pasajeros
Parapeto histórico en forma de Misión en las entradas al vestíbulo público y a las zonas de venta al público/comercio

que son espacios muy eficientes para

Temas clave de la participación comunitaria en el diseño de la plaza

- La plaza debe ser activa, con una cafetería y otros usos comerciales
- Espacios para pasar tiempo con amigos y familiares
- Bancas y otro tipo de asientos
- Árboles de sombra y diversidad de plantas
- Acceso para bicicletas con estacionamientos de corta y larga duración
- Inclusivo y accesible
- Materiales cálidos, como la madera y el ladrillo

bien utilizada sino por este