



SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION CENTER



Relocation Analysis, Environmental Clearance, and Preliminary Design

Draft Environmental Impact Report Public Meeting September 14, 2021



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Meeting Format/Agenda

- Presentation by project team
 - Draft Environmental Impact Report and additional background information available on the project website (goldengate.org/SRTC)
- Comment/question and answer period
 - Provide your comments or questions in the Q&A function box
 - Comments from the meeting will be recorded and addressed as part of the Final Environmental Impact Report



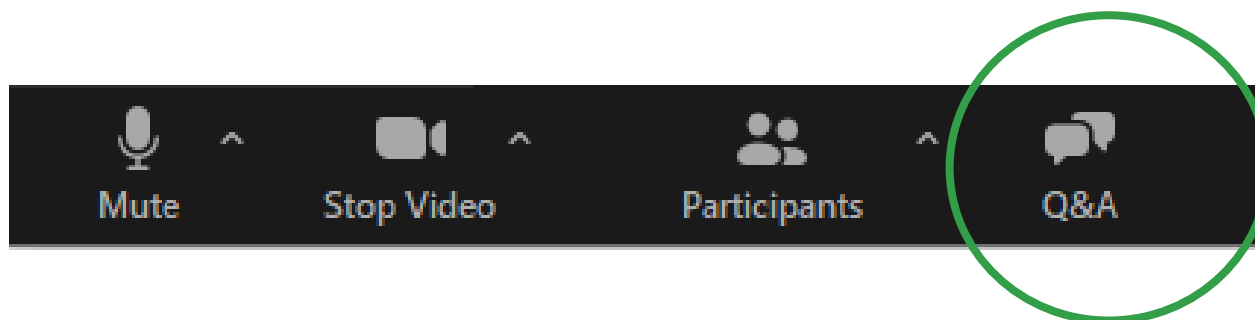
Spanish Language Services

- A Spanish-language version of this same presentation will be held tomorrow, September 15th on the Canal Alliance's Facebook page via Facebook Live
 - Link: <https://www.facebook.com/events/273074834164705/>
- The Spanish language presentation is currently available on the project website
- A translator will be available to translate any Spanish-language questions/comments provided tonight



How to Ask a Question/Provide a Comment

- Use the Q&A feature at the bottom of the screen.



- Comments/Questions are part of the public record and District will consider all comments as part of the Final EIR



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Introductions

Golden Gate Bridge Highway & Transportation District



Denis Mulligan



Ron Downing



Ray Santiago

Consultant Team



Eileen Goodwin



Adam Dankberg



Maggie Townsley



Shilpa Trisal



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Zoom Polling

- We want to get to know who you are and how you use the San Rafael Transit Center.
- Please answer the following multiple choice questions when prompted in the Zoom platform.
 - Have you attended one or more previous San Rafael Transit Center Project meetings?
 - How do you most often interact with the San Rafael Transit Center?
 - How do you most often travel near the San Rafael Transit Center?



How to Provide a Comment on the Draft EIR

- At this meeting
- E-mail to: SRTC@goldengate.org
- Mail letter to:
Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District
Attn: Raymond Santiago, Principal Planner
1011 Andersen Dr
San Rafael, CA 94901-5318
- **All comments must be received by October 12, 2021**



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Role of the Transit Center

- Over 800 daily bus trips
- 9,000 daily boardings and alightings serving equally as an access point to Downtown San Rafael and as a transfer point between services
- Large contingent of transit center users are essential workers who have continued to rely on transit through pandemic and will continue to rely on transit in future



Transit Center User Demographics

| Population Group | Riders on Routes Serving Transit Center | City of San Rafael Population | Marin County Population |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Household Income Less than \$50k | 45% | 31% | 25% |
| Minority (non-white) | 69% | 33% | 29% |

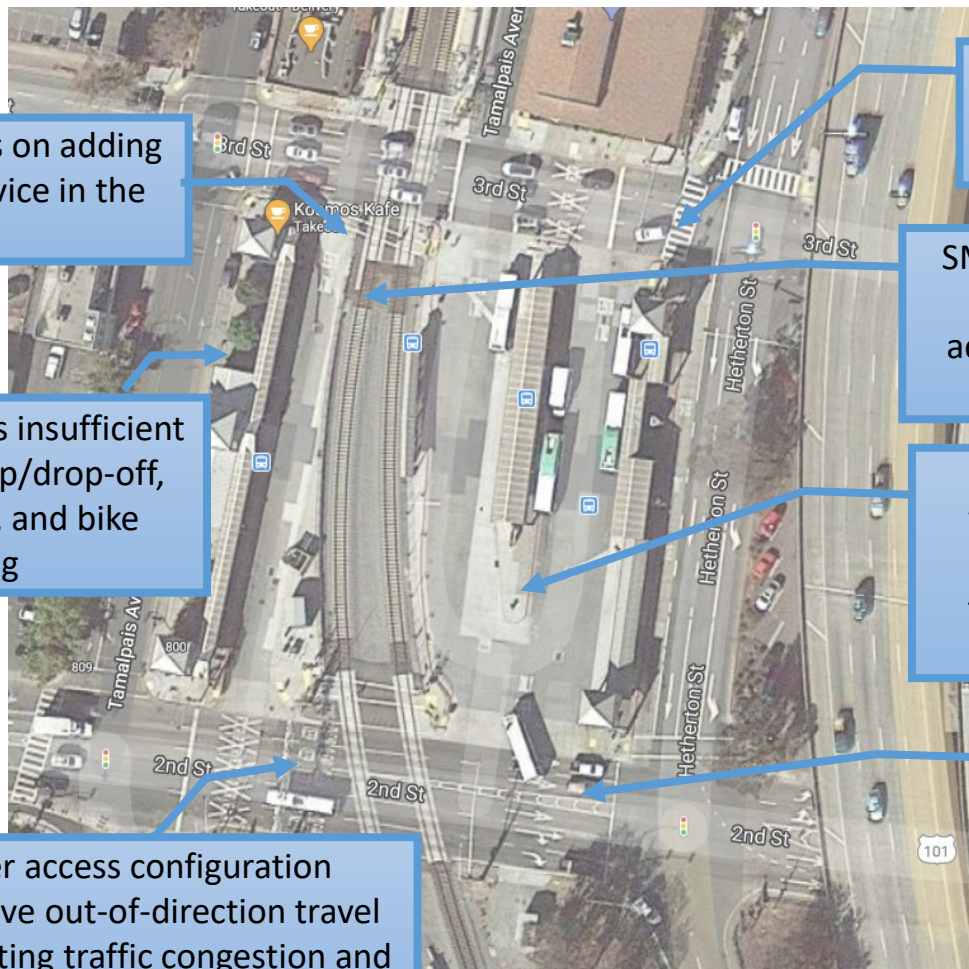


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Why a New Transit Center is Needed



Severe constraints on adding or modifying service in the future

Transit center has insufficient space for pick-up/drop-off, shuttles, taxis, and bike parking

Transit center access configuration requires extensive out-of-direction travel for buses, impacting traffic congestion and increasing operating costs

Third Street serves as a major barrier for pedestrian access and transfers to SMART

SMART tracks bisecting transit center impact pedestrian circulation and access, increasing transfer times and making wayfinding difficult

Current transit center was built 30 years ago, lacks sufficient space for customer service, and needs technology, sustainability, and user comfort improvements

Congestion on 2nd Street makes it challenging for buses to exit transit center, increasing travel times and impacting reliability



COVID-Recovery Considerations

- Transit center site identification and sizing is based on transit **SUPPLY**, not **DEMAND**
 - Bus volumes through the transit center have ***increased*** during pandemic
 - Existing transit center is at (or exceeding) its capacity today, impacting service efficiency and flexibility
- Transit center concepts incorporate flexibility to allow for evolution in service patterns, fleet size, and technology
- Transit center continues to serve essential workers and transit-dependent population
- Transit ridership is projected to grow in both San Rafael and Marin County *(source: Transportation Authority of Marin Countywide Travel Demand Model)*
 - Transit serves as a critical means of providing mobility and meeting climate change goals



Project Objectives

- Provide improved transit connectivity and ease of use in and around Downtown San Rafael
- Enhance local and regional transit use by bringing together multiple modes of the transportation network—including the SMART-bus connection—into a hub that affords transit users the safest, most efficient means of using bus and rail services
- Efficiently accommodate transit users and services, optimize operating costs, and improve transit desirability
- Design a functional, attractive, and cost-effective facility that can meet long-term projected service levels and be implemented in an expeditious manner, so as to minimize the period of use of the interim facility



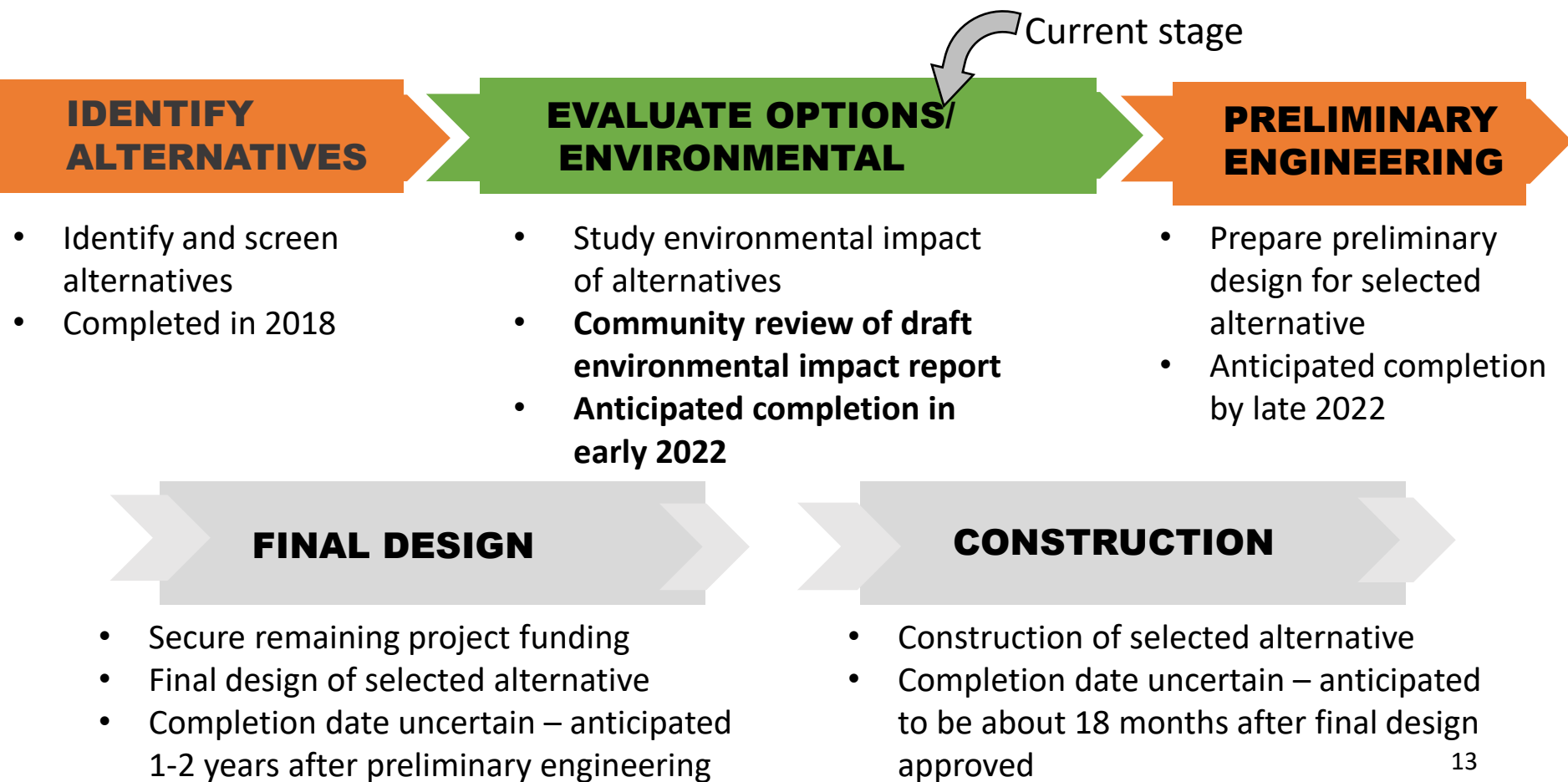
Project Objectives

- Provide a transit facility that is readily accessible to individuals with disabilities, transit users, and transit-dependent populations, including those with low incomes.
- Provide a secure, safe, and inviting space for transit patrons.
- Create a more accessible transit facility for all users by reducing vehicular, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian conflicts and improving safety.
- Provide convenient, pedestrian connections to surrounding land uses.



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Project Opening: estimated approx. 5 years from now, pending funding availability



Community Engagement Activities to Date

- Four well-attended community meetings, including an environmental analysis scoping meeting
- Facebook Live event in Spanish
- Over 45 hours of tabling at the transit center
- Tabling at several food distribution events in the Canal
- Approximately ten presentations to community groups
- Seven presentations at public Council or Board meetings
- Two online/in-person surveys with over 1,200 responses
- Over 7,000 total in-person and virtual interactions



Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR)

- Available at: <https://www.goldengate.org/district/district-projects/san-rafael-transit-center/>
- Hard copies available at:
 - San Rafael Public Library Main Branch (1100 E Street, San Rafael)
 - San Rafael Public Library Pickleweed (50 Canal Street, San Rafael)
- Draft EIR Released on August 11th
- All comments must be received by October 12th
- Comments can be provided at this public meeting, via e-mail (SRTC@goldengate.org), or via mail



Role of Draft EIR

- Analyzes project alternatives, including the preferred alternative and no-project alternative, per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines
- Defines project description, including site boundary, features, and construction methods
- Includes identification of project impacts and mitigation measures
- Solicits public comment on the project and analysis

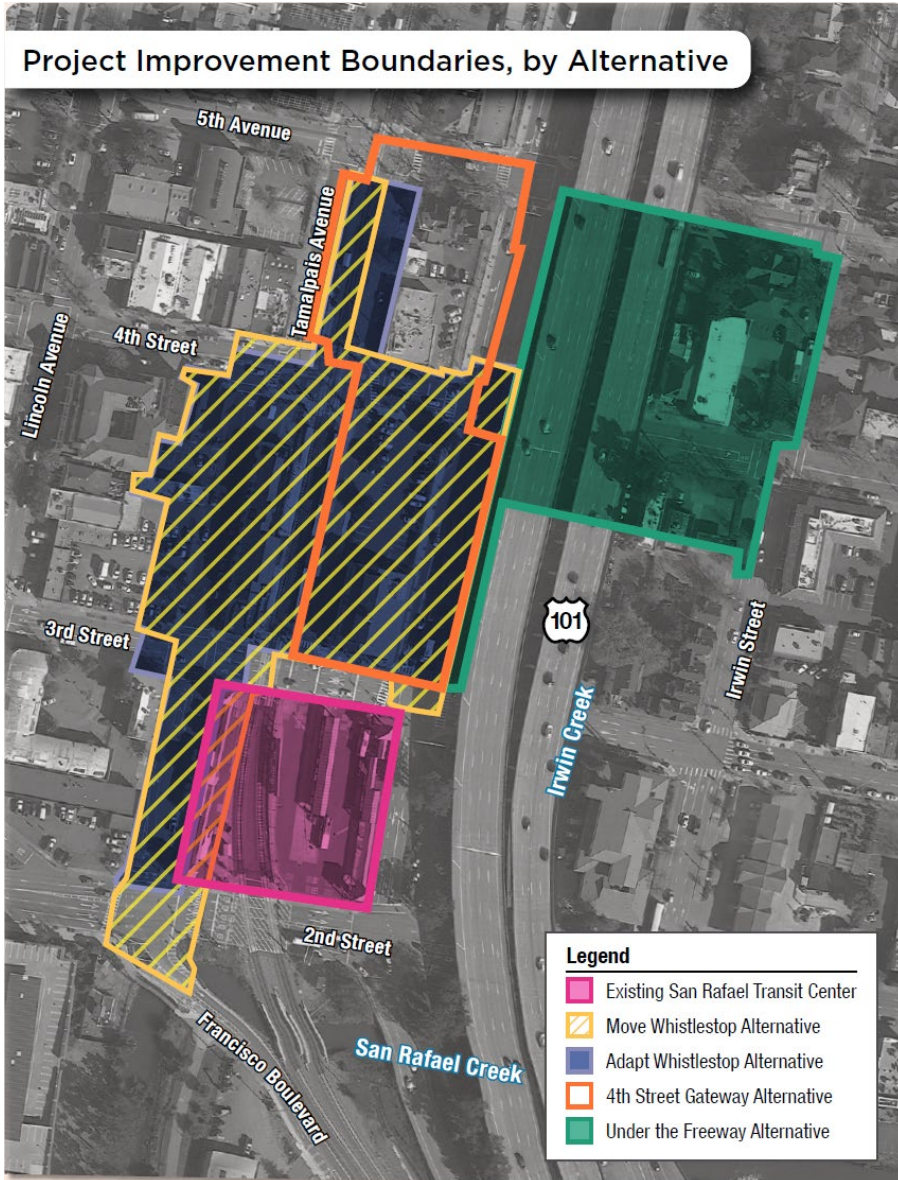


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Project Improvement Boundaries, by Alternative



Alternatives Analyzed in the Draft EIR

- No Project Alternative
- Move Whistlestop Alternative (Preferred Alternative)
- Adapt Whistlestop Alternative
- 4th Street Gateway Alternative
- Under the Freeway Alternative



Resource Areas Analyzed in Draft EIR

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Recreation and Public Services
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Cumulative impacts
- Alternatives analysis
- Significant and unavoidable impacts
- Significant irreversible changes in the environment
- Growth inducement



Identification of a Preferred Alternative in the Draft EIR

- Identifies an initial preference based on the environmental analysis contained in the Draft EIR
- Does not represent approval of the project or adoption of an alternative
- Apprises the community as to what the initial environmental review is pointing towards to inform their responses



Inputs Used to Select Preferred Alternative

- Environmental Analysis
- Technical analysis of transit center usage patterns, pre-COVID, during COVID, and into the future
- Technical analysis of bus operations, traffic circulation, bicycle and pedestrian circulation through downtown San Rafael
- Extensive community engagement and community feedback, particularly from transit riders
- Extensive stakeholder engagement and feedback

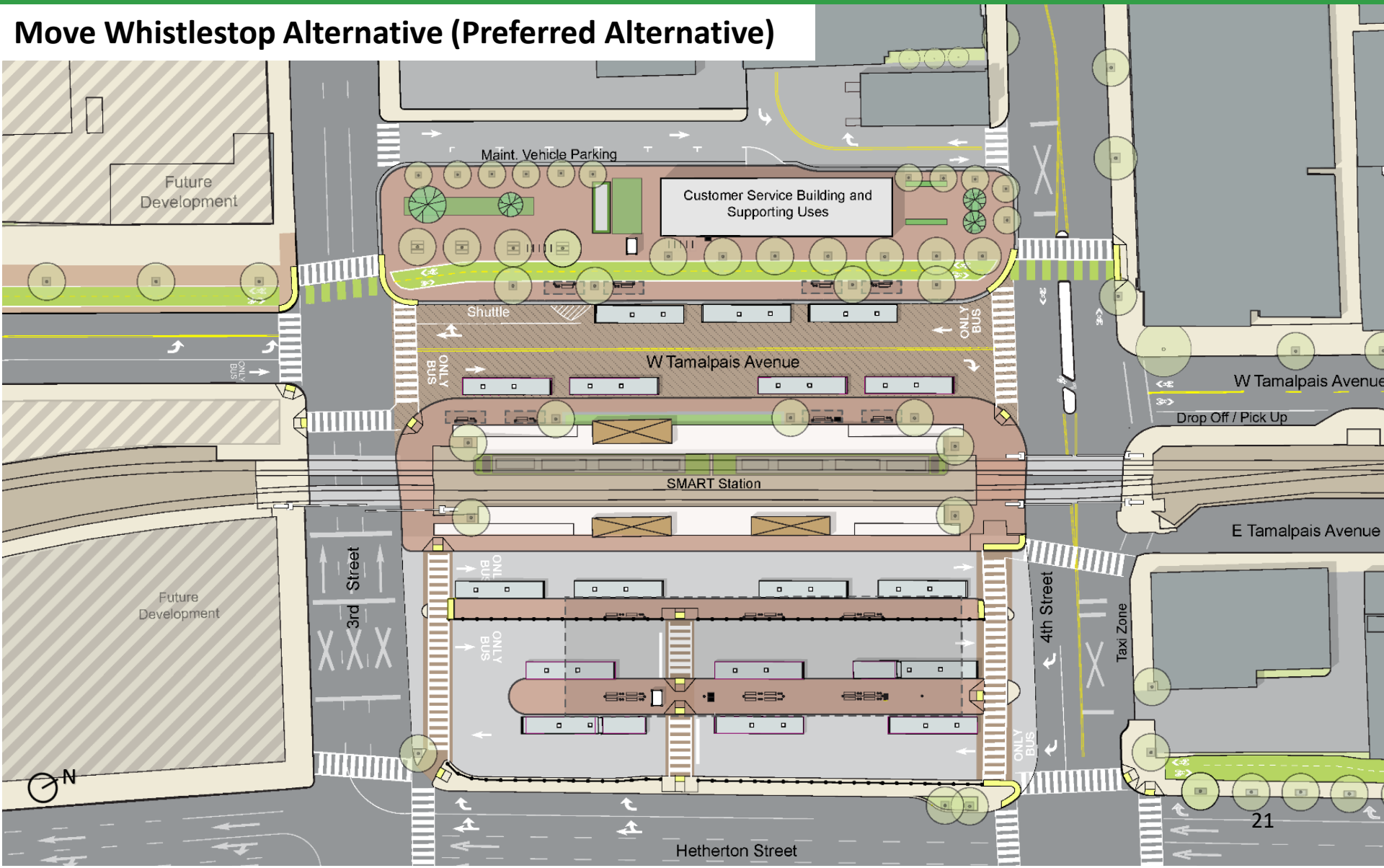


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Move Whistlestop Alternative (Preferred Alternative)





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Rendering





Benefits of Move Whistlestop Alternative Relative to No Project Alternative

- Improves safety and comfort of pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit
- Improves mobility options for accessing transit and downtown San Rafael
- Reduces bus travel time and improves bus reliability
- Reduces amount of bus circulation on local streets
- Provides operational flexibility to allow for future potential expansion of transit service and schedules
- Provides improved customer experience
- Includes new public spaces to create a sense of place



Benefits of Move Whistlestop Alternative Relative to Other Build Alternatives

- Most effective in improving bus travel time and reliability
- Safest and easiest for users to connect between transit services
- Enhances wayfinding and creates a transit identity
- Creates a safe and secure space for patrons
- Implements key tenets of the City's Station Area Plan, including enhancing the public realm
- Implements a key part of the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- Environmentally least damaging
- Impacts the fewest number of active businesses



Summary of Environmental Impacts

- Move Whistlestop Alternative
 - **Would not result in significant and unavoidable impacts**
 - **Less than Significant Impacts with Mitigation** in the areas of Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise and Vibration, Tribal Cultural Resources
- Adapt Whistlestop Alternative
 - Impacts would be similar to Move Whistlestop Alternative



Summary of Environmental Impacts (cont.)

- 4th Street Gateway Alternative
 - **Significant and Unavoidable impacts** would result due to relocation of historic resources and inconsistency with transportation policies under the City of San Rafael General Plan
 - **Less than Significant Impacts with Mitigation** in all of the areas identified above for Move Whistlestop Alternative with additional less than significant impacts with mitigation in the area of Aesthetics
- Under the Freeway Alternative
 - **Significant and Unavoidable impacts** would result due to demolition of historic resources and inconsistency with parking replacement policies under City of San Rafael General Plan
 - **Less than Significant Impacts with Mitigation** in all of the areas identified above for Move Whistlestop Alternative with additional less than significant impacts with mitigation in the areas of Aesthetics, Biological Resources, and Hydrology and Water Quality



Draft EIR Review Process

- August 11 – Draft EIR released, 60-day review period starts
- September 14 – Community Presentation in English (Spanish language support available)
- September 15 – Community Presentation in Spanish
- October 12 – 60-day review period closes
- October-December – Project team reviews and responds to comments, prepares Final EIR
- Early 2022 - GGBHTD Board of Directors certifies Final EIR and adopts project



Items to be Addressed in Future Project Phases

- Architectural features and finishes
- Public space design
- Customer service building layout and aesthetic
- Disposition of existing site



GGBHTD Community Design Advisory Group

- Purpose: Inform the design development process for project elements such as public spaces, architecture, landscaping, transit-supportive retail, and transit amenities
- When: After approval of the Final EIR and formal selection of a site
- Who: Diverse group of volunteer community members, including transit riders, local residents, businesses, and community leaders
- Opportunities for public input through the design process will occur as well
- Volunteers expected to be sought in early 2022



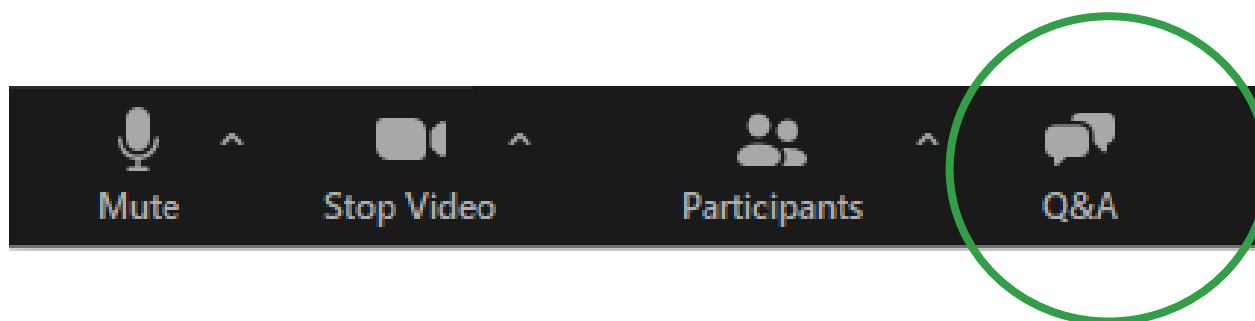
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