

4.16

VISUAL QUALITY AND AESTHETICS



4.16.1 INTRODUCTION

The Preliminary Engineering design phase focused on defining the functional aspects of the Project. As such, the architecture assumed in the station design visual simulations are conceptual only. The purpose of the visual simulations is to depict the general mass of key station elements as they relate to the surrounding areas. Architecture for the stations will be developed with the city partners and be defined in the next phase of Project design.

4.16.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The existing conditions specific to visual quality and aesthetics are discussed in detail in Section 4.17.2 of the FEIR, and have not changed substantially.

4.16.3 REGULATORY SETTING

The methodology used to assess visual impacts at specific viewpoints generally follows the Federal Highway Administration *Environmental Impact Statement Visual Impact Discussion* guidance. Refer to Section 4.17 of the FEIR for this discussion.

4.16.4 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

There are 23 design changes that may result in impacts to visual quality and aesthetics.

Design Change 1. Mission Boulevard/East Warren Avenue Alignment. There are three options for the Project at this location. One option is the at-grade configuration previously analyzed in the FEIR. The two other options are aerial, where the Project would transition into an aerial configuration from Mission Boulevard to south of East Warren Avenue (one option is slightly east of the other option). Under the aerial options, no improvements to East Warren Avenue would be required. The aerial configurations would be visible to motorists, office and industrial workers, and pedestrians. The area is already developed with roadways and industrial uses, and the addition of an at-grade or aerial configuration would be similar to existing uses and would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings.

Design Change 6. Electrical and Communication Facilities Near Scott Creek. The impacts of the proposed traction power substation at this lo-

cation were discussed in the FEIR. This design change includes the addition of a Train Control Building. The addition of a Train Control Building to this location in a predominantly industrial area would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings.

Design Change 11. Electrical and Communication Facilities Near Railroad Court. This design change includes a new 60-foot high tapered tubular steel tower and a 2nd smaller tower, which are to be constructed adjacent to the proposed high voltage substation, traction power substation, switching station, and train control building discussed in the FEIR, and will provide 115-kV service from PG&E to the high voltage substation with adequate clearance between BART and the existing overhead high voltage power lines. The addition of the towers to this location in a predominantly industrial area would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings.

Design Change 14. Curtis Avenue to Trade Zone Boulevard. There are four options for the Project at this location, the Retained Cut Long Option, the Retained Cut Short Option, the Aerial Long Option and Aerial Short Option.

- ❑ **Retained Cut Long Option.** This option was previously analyzed in the FEIR.
- ❑ **Retained Cut Short Option.** Montague Expressway, Capitol Avenue, and Trade Zone Boulevard would be supported above BART on new roadway structures (the retained cut would not be as long as in the option studied in the FEIR). As with the Retained Cut Long Option, the Retained Cut Short Option would not obstruct the view of a scenic vista from either the east or the west side of the rail ROW and would not degrade the visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings.
- ❑ **Aerial Long Option.** Between Curtis Avenue and Montague Expressway, this option would relocate the existing train tracks closer to Great Mall Drive and construct the BART tracks

in an aerial structure rather than in a retained cut as discussed in the FEIR. During Preliminary Engineering, The 1,800 foot-long, 20-foot wide strip of land proposed for acquisition in the FEIR was extended to 2,200 feet. This 2,200-foot long strip of land is currently occupied primarily by landscaping. The eastern perimeter of the Great Mall property consists of Great Mall Drive, an existing 2-lane ring access road, an at-grade rail corridor, and adjacent industrial and commercial uses. The existing landscaping along Great Mall Drive provides some partial visual screening of freight trains using the existing rail corridor. The aerial structure to be constructed parallel to Great Mall Drive would be more visually prominent than the retained cut structure discussed in the FEIR. Also, the area of lost landscaping would be 400 feet longer than the Retained Cut Long Option discussed in the FEIR. However, the freight trains and aerial structure would be visible only by customers walking to and from their vehicles and drivers of vehicles traveling along Great Mall Drive to and from the parking spaces, but not by customers within the Great Mall building since there are very few windows facing eastward. The increased visibility of the UPRR train operations and the aerial structure due to the removal of landscaping and relocation of the tracks is not considered a significant impact to visual quality/aesthetic resources because the customers in the parking lot are not considered to be a sensitive viewer group and would not be adversely affected by the construction of an aerial structure along the rail ROW. The existing viewshed from the east and west sides of the rail ROW from Curtis Avenue to south of Trade Zone Boulevard is in a heavily urbanized area which does not qualify as a scenic vista or resource. Therefore, the addition of a long aerial option would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings, and would not obstruct the view of a scenic vista from either the east or the west side of the rail ROW.

- ❑ **Aerial Short Option.** Under this option, the aerial structure would not begin until the southern part of the Great Mall at STA 353+00. Because of its length, the Aerial Short Option would be visually less intrusive than the Aerial Long Option. However, this option would require the acquisition of a 5-foot-

wide and approximately 700-foot-long strip of land starting just south of the existing parking structure in addition to the 1,800-foot long strip of land discussed in the FEIR. This 2,500-foot long strip of land is currently occupied primarily by landscaping which provides some partial visual screening of freight trains using the existing rail corridor. The aerial structure would be more visually prominent and the area of lost landscaping would be 700 feet longer than the Retained Cut Long Option discussed in the FEIR. However, as discussed under the Aerial Long Option above, the freight trains and aerial structure would not be visible to a sensitive viewer group that would be adversely affected by the construction of an aerial structure along the rail ROW. The existing viewshed from the east and west sides of the rail ROW from Curtis Avenue to south of Trade Zone Boulevard is in a heavily urbanized area which does not qualify as a scenic vista or resource. Therefore, the selection of a short aerial option would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings, and would not obstruct the view of a scenic vista from either the east or the west side of the rail ROW.

Design Change 16. Electrical Facilities North of Montague Expressway. The substation would remain at the previously analyzed location under the Retained Cut Long and Aerial Long options of Design Change 14. However, under the Retained Cut Short and Aerial Short options, this substation would be located immediately north of the Piper Drive cul-de-sac and east of the railroad ROW. Electric facilities located north of the Piper Drive cul-de-sac and east of the railroad ROW would be visible to motorists (from the Great Mall parking lot and from local roads), and office and industrial workers. The area is already developed with commercial and industrial uses. The addition of a traction power substation would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings.

Design Change 17. Montague/Capitol Station. There are two options for parking in the station area. Under the Parking Structure with Surface Parking Option, a four-to-eight-level parking structure, as compared to the three-to-five-level parking structure in the FEIR, would be located at the north end of the station area (which would be visible when looking northeast from East Capitol Avenue). The radio tower would be located west of the railroad ROW and south of South Milpitas Boulevard (not visible in figure). If either the Retained Cut Long or Short options were selected, the station would include two side platforms as described in the FEIR. If either the Aerial Long or Short options were selected, the station would include a center platform in an aerial configuration. Therefore, the Parking Structure with Surface Parking Option would result in a taller parking structure and changes in station site configuration. As shown in Figures 4.16-1 and 4.16-2, the BART station and aerial walkway would partly block views of the Diablo Range from the Montague/Capitol LRT station. However, as concluded in the FEIR, this would be consistent with the density and scale of development in the surrounding areas. As shown in Figures 4.16-3 and 4.16-4, the BART station, aerial walkway, and parking garage would be visible from an apartment complex to the southeast. However, the proposed station facilities are not immediately adjacent to sensitive viewers, and they replace a number of existing industrial buildings of inconsistent design. Therefore, the station options would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings. Impacts related to light and glare would be minimized by distance and design measures to reduce spillover of light.



Figure 4.16-1:
Current view of the Montague/Capitol Station location



Figure 4.16-2:
View simulation of the Montague/Capitol Station
(View to the northeast from VTA Montague Light Rail Station on



Figure 4.16-3:
Current view of the Montague/Capitol Station location
(View to the northwest from "The Crossings at Montague" apartments)



Figure 4.16-4:
View simulation of the Montague/Capitol Station
(View to the northwest from "The Crossings at Montague" apartments)

Design Change 21. Communication Facilities South of Hostetter Road. This design change proposes to locate a train control building immediately south of Hostetter Road on the east side of the railroad ROW. The surrounding area is urbanized, and land uses are predominantly residential with a few commercial uses. The size and mass of the train control building would be designed to fit in with the surrounding urban environment so that it does not visibly conflict with the urban setting. VTA will continue to work with the city, community, and business groups in developing Project facilities compatible with the urban setting and streetscape. The visual

changes caused by the train control building would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.

Design Change 22. Electrical and Communication Facilities Near Berryessa Road. The traction power substation would be relocated from an area north of Berryessa Road with residential uses to the north and east to a location south of Berryessa Road under the BART aerial structure. The new site is in an area surrounded by BART facilities to the east and south and the San Jose Flea Market to the west.

Berryessa Road is to the north. Adding a traction power substation at this location would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings.



Figure 4.16-5:
Current view of the Berryessa Station Location
 (View to the west from the industrial area east of the former UPRR railroad tracks)



Figure 4.16-6:
View simulation of the Berryessa Station and Parking Garage
 (View to the west from the industrial area east of the former UPRR railroad tracks)

Design Change 23. Berryessa Station. The Parking Structure Northeast Option is deleted and there are two new options for parking. With the Parking Structure with Surface Parking Option, a four- to six-level parking structure on 3.4 acres would be constructed in the same general location as the Parking Structure Southwest Option in the FEIR. Areas east of the rail ROW and north of Mabury Road would be acquired for surface parking. As shown in Figures 4.16-5 and 4.16-6, this option would result in the construction of a parking structure and surface

parking. However, as concluded in the FEIR, the area is already developed with industrial buildings, a flea market, roads, and parking lots; thus, the addition of a parking structure would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of this area or its surroundings. With the Surface Parking Option, the area designated for parking (structure and surface parking) in the Parking Structure with Surface Parking Option would be surface parking only. No visual impacts would result from this option.

Design Change 25. Electrical and Communication Facilities Near Mabury Road. During the Preliminary Engineering design phase, the high voltage substation, switching station, gap breaker station, and train control building were relocated to south of Mabury Road on the west side of the ROW, and the overhead high voltage line along the north side of Mabury Road was eliminated, as San Jose no longer permits overhead lines at this location. An alternate site to the south at the San Jose Mabury Yard is also under consideration for the high voltage substation and switching station. The addition of these facilities in a predominantly heavy industrial area would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings.

There are two options for a high voltage line connection from the high voltage substation to the PG&E Mabury Substation located south of the King Road/Las Plumas Avenue intersection are as follows:

- **Mabury Underground Option.** Under this option, the new high voltage line would run underground within the ROW of Mabury Road, beginning at the high voltage substation and extending to King Road. An existing PG&E overhead high voltage line on King Road would be upgraded, extending for approximately 2,500 feet from Mabury Road to the PG&E Mabury Substation. The upgrade would consist of either of an additional circuit (overhead wires) on existing towers or a new pole line. This option would not result in any change to visual character because all electrical and/or communication equipment would be underground.

□ **Las Plumas Overhead Option.** Under this option, the new high voltage line would begin at the high voltage substation, run south parallel to the BART alignment, continue along Marburg Way, then run along Las Plumas Avenue to King Road. The existing PG&E high voltage line on King Road would be upgraded, extending for approximately 550 feet to the PG&E Mabury Substation. If the high voltage substation and switching station were located at the San Jose Mabury Yard site, the Las Plumas Overhead Option would be the only feasible high voltage line configuration. The Las Plumas Overhead Option would result in the installation of electrical lines overhead along Marburg Way and Las Plumas Avenue. This line would be located overhead on a pole that would replace the existing poles and support the existing electrical and communications lines already in place along Las Plumas Avenue. The addition of overhead lines in a predominantly heavy industrial area would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the area or its surroundings.

Design Change 31. Gap Breaker Station Near Marburg Way. This design change proposes a gap breaker station located just north of Marburg Way and east of US 101. The surrounding area is urbanized, and land uses are industrial and residential. The size and mass of the gap breaker station would be designed to fit in with the surrounding urban environment so that it does not visibly conflict with the urban setting. VTA will continue to work with the city, community, and business groups in developing Project facilities compatible with the urban setting and streetscape. The visual changes caused by the gap breaker station would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.

Design Change 33. Alum Rock Station. With this design change, a smaller five-level parking structure on 3.9 acres would be constructed in the same general location as the previously approved five-level parking structure on 4.2 acres. A traction power substation (originally planned to be underground)

would be located aboveground at the north end of the station. In addition, an auxiliary power substation would be located near the traction power substation. The station would include five vent shafts located at the ends of the station.

As discussed in the FEIR, the historic Five Wounds National Portuguese Church is located at the northeast corner of East Santa Clara and 28th streets, just south of the proposed Alum Rock Station. This design change would result in changes in station site configuration, including additional buildings at the north end of the station near US 101. As shown in Figures 4.16-7 and 4.16-8, the Alum Rock Station and parking lot would be partially visible from East Santa Clara Street. However, as concluded in the FEIR, the multi-level parking structure would be similar in height and mass to the existing Monarch Trucking Company warehouses. Because the station is underground, the parking structure would be the only building of substantial height and mass, and the auxiliary power substation and traction power substation would be located on the north side of the station, away from the church. Station entrances would be no more than one story high, and vent structures would be approximately 15 by 20 feet in size, and 10 to 15 feet high. As a result, Alum Rock Station would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not block views to or from the church. Changes in the views of the site for motorists on East Santa Clara and Julian streets would be improved as a result of streetscape improvements (planting of trees and installation of street amenities such as benches), which would increase the aesthetic unity and intact nature of the area when compared to the existing condition. The multi-level parking structure would not be vivid at night, and would be similar in height and mass to the Monarch Trucking Company warehouses. Furthermore, impacts related to light and glare would be minimized by distance and design measures to reduce spillover of light.



Figure 4.16-7:
**Current view of the Alum Rock Station and
 Parking Garage Location**
 (View to the north from East Santa Clara Street)



Figure 4.16-8:
**View simulation of the Alum Rock Station
 and Parking Garage**
 (View to the north from East Santa Clara Street)

Design Change 34. Gap Breaker Station Near 22nd Street. This design change proposes a gap breaker station located on the north side of Santa Clara Street at 22nd Street. The surrounding area is urbanized, and land uses are predominantly commercial with residential uses beyond. The size and mass of the gap breaker station would be designed to fit in with the surrounding urban environment so that it does not visibly conflict with the urban setting. VTA will continue to work with the city, community, and business groups in developing Project facilities compatible with the urban setting and streetscape. The visual changes caused by the gap breaker station would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.

Design Change 36. Ventilation Structure and Auxiliary Power Substation West of Coyote Creek. The location approved in the FEIR is now one of four alternate locations. The additional locations are between 15th and 16th streets on the south side of East Santa Clara Street and between 13th and 14th streets on the north side of East Santa Clara Street. The vent structure would be approximately 90 by 140 feet in size, and 25 feet in height. The commercial and residential land uses between and in the vicinity of 15th and 16th streets and 13th and 14th streets are similar in nature to those previously analyzed in the FEIR. As discussed in the FEIR, vent structures would be visible to merchants, workers, pedestrians/bicyclists, and motorists. The mid-tunnel vent structure would be sited in a vacant, commercial, or residential area or parking lot. The surrounding area is urbanized, and the size and mass of the vent structure would be designed to fit in with the surrounding urban environment so that it does not visibly conflict with the urban setting. VTA will continue to work with the city, community, and business groups in developing Project facilities compatible with the urban setting and streetscape. The visual changes caused by the vent structure would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.

Design Change 37. Gap Breaker Station Near 9th Street. This design change proposes a gap breaker station located just north of Santa Clara Street and west of 9th Street. The surrounding area is urbanized, and land uses are industrial and residential. The size and mass of the gap breaker station would be designed to fit in with the surrounding urban environment so that it does not visibly conflict with the urban setting. VTA will continue to work with the city, community, and business groups in developing Project facilities compatible with the urban setting and streetscape. The visual changes caused by the gap breaker station would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area. Refer to 4.6.4.2 *Historic Architecture* for a discussion of the impacts of this gap breaker station on historic architectural resources at St. Patrick’s School.

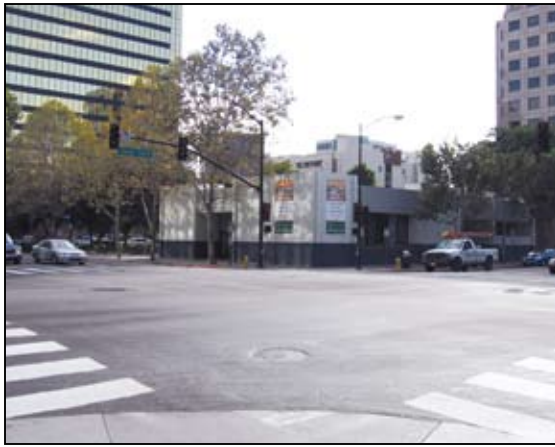


Figure 4.16-9:
Current view of the Downtown San Jose Station Location
 (View looking southwest from northeast corner of Market Street
 and Santa Clara Street)



Figure 4.16-10:
View simulation of the Downtown San Jose Station
 (View looking southwest from northeast corner of Market Street
 and Santa Clara Street)

Design Change 40. Downtown San Jose Station. The Downtown San Jose Station would be located underground between 4th and San Pedro streets. Station entrances would be located between 2nd and San Pedro streets, and the station would include two vent shafts. One shaft would be located north of East Santa Clara Street between 2nd and 3rd streets. The other vent shaft would be located at the southwest corner of West Santa Clara and Market streets. As shown in Figure 4.16-9 and 4.16-10, although the BART station would be underground, station entrances would be visible aboveground. However, as concluded in the FEIR for the Civic Plaza/SJSU and Market Street stations, the station entrances would not be dominant features in comparison to the existing buildings in the area. The design of the

station entrances would be simple; they would not distract from the surrounding architecture, disrupt the intact nature or unity of the area, or block any significant views. Vent structures would be located in vacant areas, commercial parking lots, sidewalks, and landscaping. At night, light and glare from the station entrances would be minimal, and would be designed to reduce spillover of light. The design of the Downtown Station would be consistent with the San Jose Downtown Streetscape Master Plan. The Downtown San Jose Station would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area. Refer to 4.6.4.2 *Historic Architecture* for a discussion of the impacts of this design change on historic architectural resources in the San Jose Downtown Commercial Historic District.

Design Change 42. Diridon/Arena Station and Alignment. The underground station would now be constructed entirely to the east of the Caltrain railroad tracks. This would result in a tunnel alignment slightly south of what was originally planned. The station would include four vent shafts, two at each end of the station. As shown in Figures 4.16-11 through 4.16-14, with the Parking Structure Option, a four-level structure on 4.5 acres would be in the same general location as described in the FEIR and no surface parking would be provided. The FEIR had approved a higher parking garage (four to six levels), but on a smaller site (2.8 acres). The second parking structure identified in the FEIR and located east of the San Jose Diridon Caltrain Station and south of West San Fernando Street would no longer be part of the Project. With the No Parking Option, no parking structure would be constructed, and additional parking would be provided at the Santa Clara Station. The design of the Diridon/Arena Station would be consistent with the San Jose Downtown Streetscape Master Plan. Both options are located in an urbanized area characterized by a train depot and large event arena. The visual impacts caused by this station and parking structure design change would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or

quality of the surrounding area. Impacts related to light and glare would be minimized by distance and design measures to reduce spillover of light. Refer to 4.6.4.2 *Historic Architecture* for a discussion of the impacts of this design change on historic architectural resources at and near the Diridon Station.

The North Bus Transit Center Option includes expanding an existing facility south of West Santa Clara Street between the Caltrain railroad tracks and

Cahill Street. With the South Bus Transit Center Option, the facility would be located north of San Fernando Street between Cahill and Montgomery streets. This urban area is developed with roadways, parking lots, and transportation-related infrastructure; the addition of a bus transit center would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.



Figure 4.16-11:
Current view of the Diridon/Arena Station Parking Structure Option Location
 (View looking north from Cahill Street south of West Santa Clara Street)



Figure 4.16-12:
View simulation of the Diridon/Arena Station Parking Structure Option
 (View looking north from Cahill Street south of West Santa Clara Street)



Figure 4.16-13:
Current view of the Diridon/Arena Station Parking Structure Option Location
 (View looking east from The Alameda/Bush Street intersection)



Figure 4.16-14:
View simulation of the Diridon/Arena Station Parking Structure Option
 (View looking east from The Alameda/Bush Street intersection)

Design Change 43. Traction Power Substation Near Diridon/Arena Station. This facility would be relocated to the west of the Caltrain tracks at the southwest corner of White and West Santa Clara streets. The relocation of the traction power substation and an auxiliary power substation would be to an area surrounded by transportation-related infrastructure, including a train depot, railroad tracks, light rail facilities, and a bus transit center. Other surrounding land uses include residential developments to the west. The size and mass of the traction power substation would be designed to fit in with the surrounding urban environment so that it does not visibly conflict with the urban setting. VTA will continue to work with the city, community, and business groups in developing Project facilities compatible with the urban setting and streetscape. The addition of electrical facilities would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area. Refer to 4.6.4.2 *Historic Architecture* for a discussion of the impacts of this design change on historic architectural resources at the Diridon Station.

Design Change 44. Gap Breaker Station Near Morrison Avenue. This design change proposes a gap breaker station located north of The Alameda on the west side of Morrison Avenue. The surrounding area is urbanized, and land uses are commercial and residential. The size and mass of the gap breaker station would be designed to fit in with the surrounding urban environment so that it does not visibly conflict with the urban setting. VTA will continue to work with the city, community, and business groups in developing Project facilities compatible with the urban setting and streetscape. The visual changes caused by the gap breaker station would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.

Design Change 45. Ventilation Structure Near Stockton Avenue. Both ventilation structures located near Stockton Avenue proposed in the FEIR have been replaced by five alternate locations. One location is in a residential and industrial area on the northwest corner of Stockton and Schiele avenues. The other four alternate locations are in the vicinity of Schiele and Villa avenues, but east of Stockton Avenue. All four of these alternate vent structure locations are in an industrial area. The vent structure would be approximately 90 by 140 feet in size, and 25 feet in height. The surrounding area is urbanized, and the size and mass of the ventilation structure would be designed to fit in with the surrounding urban environment so it would not visibly conflict with the urban setting. VTA will continue to work with the city, community, and business groups in developing Project facilities that would become part of the streetscape. The visual changes caused by the ventilation structure would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area. Refer to 4.6.4.2 *Historic Architecture* for a discussion of the impacts of this design change on a historic architectural resource in the area.

Design Change 46. Gap Breaker Station Near Emory Street. This design change proposes a gap breaker station located at the southwest corner of Stockton Avenue and Emory Street. The surrounding area is urbanized, and land uses are industrial and commercial. The addition of the gap breaker station to this location in a predominantly industrial area would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.

Design Change 51. Yard and Shops Facility. With this design change, the size of the yard and shops area would be smaller than described in the FEIR, and the tail tracks would terminate north of De La Cruz Boulevard (approximately 900 feet shorter than in the FEIR). The size and location of the facilities within the yard would change (including buildings, retention pond addition, and parking spaces). The radio tower previously located between Brokaw Road

and Newhall Street would be moved to the tailtrack area in Santa Clara. Although uses within the yard change with regard to building sites, all structures and facilities would be located within the smaller yard and shops area that is bounded by I-880 to the south, railroad tracks to the west, and approximately De La Cruz Boulevard to the north. As discussed in the FEIR, the yard area is industrial in nature, and the uses described would be compatible with the existing railroad yard uses and industrial character and quality. The Yard and Shops Facility would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area. Lighting at this facility would be downward facing, and would be consistent with the industrial location.



Figure 4.16-15:
Current view of the Santa Clara Station and
Parking Structure Location
(View to the east from El Camino Real)



Figure 4.16-16:
View simulation of the Santa Clara Station –
4 Level Parking Structure and Aerial Walkway
(View to the east from El Camino Real)



Figure 4.16-17:
View simulation of the Santa Clara Station –
6 Level Parking Structure and Aerial Walkway
(View to the east from El Camino Real)

Design Change 52. Santa Clara Station. The at-grade station would be constructed primarily between the Caltrain tracks to the west, Coleman Avenue to the east, and Brokaw Road to the south. This would result in the displacement of the Federal Express site. The station would include a 700-foot-long, 28-foot-wide center platform with a mezzanine one level above. An approximately 400-foot-long pedestrian connection would extend from the mezzanine level to the Santa Clara Caltrain Station to the west and a five-bay bus transit center and kiss-and-ride area to the east.

The pedestrian connection to the west would require the relocation of the historic Santa Clara Tower and Utility Sheds (components of the Santa Clara Caltrain Station, which are shown in Figure 4.16-15) north of Benton Street to approximately 30 feet south of the Santa Clara Station Depot, to maintain the historic relationship between the Tower, Sheds, and Depot. Refer to Section 4.6.4.2 *Historic Architecture* for a discussion of the historic architectural impacts resulting from this design change.

As shown in Figure 4.16-16, with the Four-Level Parking Structure and Aerial Walkway Option, a three- or four-level parking structure would be located on 3.3 acres on the north end of the station area, in the same general location as described in the FEIR. Additional surface parking and/or future transit facilities would be located to the east within the station area, as needed. If the No Parking Option were chosen for the Diridon/

Arena Station, (see Design Change 42), the number of spaces required to meet 2030 service levels would increase to approximately 2,600. To accommodate the increase in the number of parking spaces, the parking structure would be five to six levels under the Six-Level Parking Structure and Aerial Walkway Option, shown in Figure 4.16-17. Again, additional surface parking, as needed, and/or future transit facilities would be located to the east within the station area.

Access to the Santa Clara Station area would be from Brokaw Road off Coleman Avenue. Brokaw Road would be widened to four lanes, and traffic signals would be installed at the Brokaw Road/Coleman Avenue intersection.

The visual impacts caused by this station, pedestrian overcrossing, and parking structure would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area. Impacts related to light and glare would be minimized because light sensitive land uses (i.e., residences) are located the same distance from the new facilities and design

measures would be utilized to reduce spillover of light. Furthermore, the area already has existing lighting associated with the Santa Clara Police Station and street lights along roadways and sidewalks.

The Four-Level Parking Structure and Aerial Walkway Option includes construction of a three- or four-story parking structure, which would be an increase in overall massing in the area compared to what currently exists. The Six-Level Parking Structure and Aerial Walkway Option would be very similar in appearance to this option, with increased massing due to the extra two parking structure levels. However, neither of these options would block a scenic vista or view corridor. The surrounding area is developed with existing institutional and industrial uses, roadways, rail ROW, and other transportation-related infrastructure. The addition of the station, (four- or six-level) parking structure, bus transit center, and kiss-and-ride area would be visually compatible with the surrounding land uses, and would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of the surrounding area.

CONCLUSION

The changes made during the Preliminary Engineering design phase result in no new significant impacts related to visual quality and aesthetics. Therefore, no new mitigation measures are necessary.