

KEY ISSUES STUDY GUIDE



DOWNTOWN EAST VALLEY

2000 Measure A Project

PART I

Introduction

Background

Project Goals

Public Outreach & Decision
Making Process

The Corridor

Area Plans & Projects

Mode Options

Street Design Alignment
Options

DOWNTOWN EAST VALLEY TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SANTA CLARA/ ALUM ROCK CORRIDOR

December 2002

Moving Toward a Preferred Mode and Alignment for the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor

Major transit improvements are proposed in the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor between Capitol Avenue and the Diridon Station in Downtown San Jose as part of the Downtown East Valley Transit Improvement Plan.

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is planning a series of workshops and meetings in January and February 2003 that will lead to the selection of the preferred mode of transit (light rail, street car or bus) and the preferred alignment (or route) through the corridor. These decisions will form the basis of the “project description” for the environmental document for this corridor.

This study guide is the first in a series of information packets that will assist in the decision making process.

VTA previously studied the Downtown East Valley area in San Jose, identified transportation needs, and developed a strategy for investing in VTA’s transit system to address those needs. VTA’s approved improvement plan for the area includes light rail on Capitol Expressway, bus rapid transit along Monterey Highway, and light rail in the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor.

Based on information from the planning process, VTA is now exploring options in the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor. These options are the focus of this study guide. This guide highlights key issues to assist policy makers and the community in reaching a decision on a preferred mode and alignment for the environmental document.

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN UPCOMING STUDY GUIDES

- Description of Rail Alignment Options
- Ridership Information (origin and destination analysis, projected future riders, new riders, travel times)
- Construction Planning (techniques, mitigation, coordination with BART)
- Cost and Schedule
- Other Project Information

Study Guide Part I: Summary of Key Considerations

CONSIDERATION # 1

Which alternative will best meet the project goals?

CONSIDERATION # 2

Which alternative will best complement area plans and projects?

CONSIDERATION # 3

Mode Options:

- 1) Light Rail
- 2) Streetcar
- 3) Enhanced Bus Service

CONSIDERATION # 4

Street Design Alignment Options (see page 11 for a graphic of each):

- 1) Rail and Autos Share Center Traffic Lanes
- 2) Rail and Autos Share Outside Traffic Lanes
- 3) Rail Exclusively in Center Median (this design could only be accommodated east of King Road)

Project History

In 2000, the VTA Board of Directors approved a Preferred Investment Strategy for the Downtown East Valley study area that included:

- light rail in the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Avenue corridor
- light rail along the entire length of the Capitol Expressway, and
- bus rapid transit on Monterey Highway.

As the planning process for the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor moved forward, it became evident that further study would be needed before detailed environmental analysis should be initiated. VTA is now exploring options in the corridor.



Downtown San Jose



Mexican Heritage Plaza

The Downtown East Valley Policy Advisory Board (PAB) recently approved a process that will result in a decision on the preferred mode and alignment in the Santa Clara /Alum Rock corridor in March 2003. Once that decision is made, preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report can proceed.

DOWNTOWN EAST VALLEY TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PLAN KEY MILESTONES

- **August 2000** ✓
Approved Preferred Investment Strategy and Completed Major Investment Study (MIS)
- **Summer 2001** ✓
Began Conceptual Engineering and Environmental Review Process with a separate EIS/EIR for Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor and Capitol Expressway Light Rail Projects
- **June 2002** ✓
Approved Project Description for the Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project
- **GOAL: March 2003** □
Approve Preferred Mode and Alignment for Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor

PROJECT GOALS

CONSIDERATION #1:

Which alternative will best meet the project goals?

Project goals provide a framework for the development of the preferred mode and alignment for the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor. Consider the following goals when reviewing this guide.

Mobility and Connectivity

- Improve corridor transit service for existing riders by enhancing service quality (comfort, safety and reliability)
- Enhance corridor transit service quantity to attract new riders (service frequencies, travel times and capacity)
- Integrate corridor transit service with the existing and planned bus and light rail transportation network and provide convenient connections to existing and future transit services such as Caltrain and BART
- Provide benefits from transportation improvements in relation to the costs (capital costs per rider served and operating cost)

Community Compatibility and Acceptance

- Provide a transportation system that reflects the needs of the residents and businesses in the corridor and generates support in the community



San Jose State University



VTA Bus

- Create opportunities for transit supportive land use that is compatible with San Jose land use plans and polices to create additional vitality within the corridor and ensure that transit ridership is maximized
- Recommend corridor transit improvements that are compatible with and supportive of adjacent neighborhood and community revitalization priorities and initiatives (for example, Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Plans).
- Allow opportunities for partnering and joint planning
- Provide an equitable level of transit service and mobility benefits to transit dependent residents
- Preserve critical traffic movements and driveway access to private property to the extent possible (for example, high volume left turns)
- Maintain on-street parking to the extent possible and develop solutions for replacing on-street parking loss
- Provide transit improvements that preserve and enhance the current streetscape environment

Design and Construction

- Ensure compatibility of the transportation improvements with the needs and scale of the local neighborhoods including maintaining existing building facades, sidewalk widths and on-street parking to the maximum extent feasible
- Design stations that provide convenient and safe access for all transit riders
- Station platform design should reflect the character of the street and community
- Minimize the extent and duration of construction impacts on businesses and residents along the corridor and the surrounding community
- Design transit service and stations to accommodate the mobility impaired

PUBLIC OUTREACH & DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Partnering for Success: Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

Public involvement and agency coordination are important components of the project development, environmental review, and design and construction processes. VTA will continue to provide opportunities to ensure that public dialogue occurs. Some of these opportunities include public meetings and workshops, updates on VTA's website, newsletters and distribution of study documents for public review.

An intense public outreach effort in the upcoming months, led by the Downtown

East Valley Policy Advisory Board, will lead to the selection of a preferred mode and alignment to be studied in the environmental document for the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor. This decision will be a major milestone for the project, and the public is encouraged to provide input.

Information

For more information on the Downtown East Valley Transit Improvement Plan call VTA Planning and Programming at (408) 321-5744, TDD only (408) 321-2330 or visit us on the web at www.dtev-vta.org.

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

Five elected officials serve on the Downtown East Valley Policy Advisory Board (PAB). The PAB meets regularly to review the project and forward recommendations to the VTA Board of Directors. The VTA Board will make the ultimate decision regarding the preferred alignment and mode for the Downtown East Valley Project.

Downtown East Valley PAB

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* VTA Board Member

Targeted Schedule For Upcoming Meetings

December 2002: Community Open Houses to Provide Project Status

▶ December 11, 2002

7:30 – 10:00 a.m.
The Bankers Club Event Center
8 South First Street
San Jose, CA

▶ December 11, 2002

3:00 – 6:30 p.m.
Mexican Heritage Plaza
1700 Alum Rock Avenue
San Jose, CA

January 2003: PAB Hosts Community Workshops to Provide an Update on Project Alternatives and the Evaluation Process, and Receive Input

▶ January 22, 2003

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Eastside Neighborhood Community Center
2150 Alum Rock Avenue
San Jose, CA

▶ January 23, 2003

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
24 N. Fifth Street
San Jose, CA

February 2003: PAB Hosts Community Workshops to Receive Evaluation Report and Staff Recommendation

▶ February 26, 2003

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Eastside Neighborhood Community Center
2150 Alum Rock Avenue
San Jose, CA

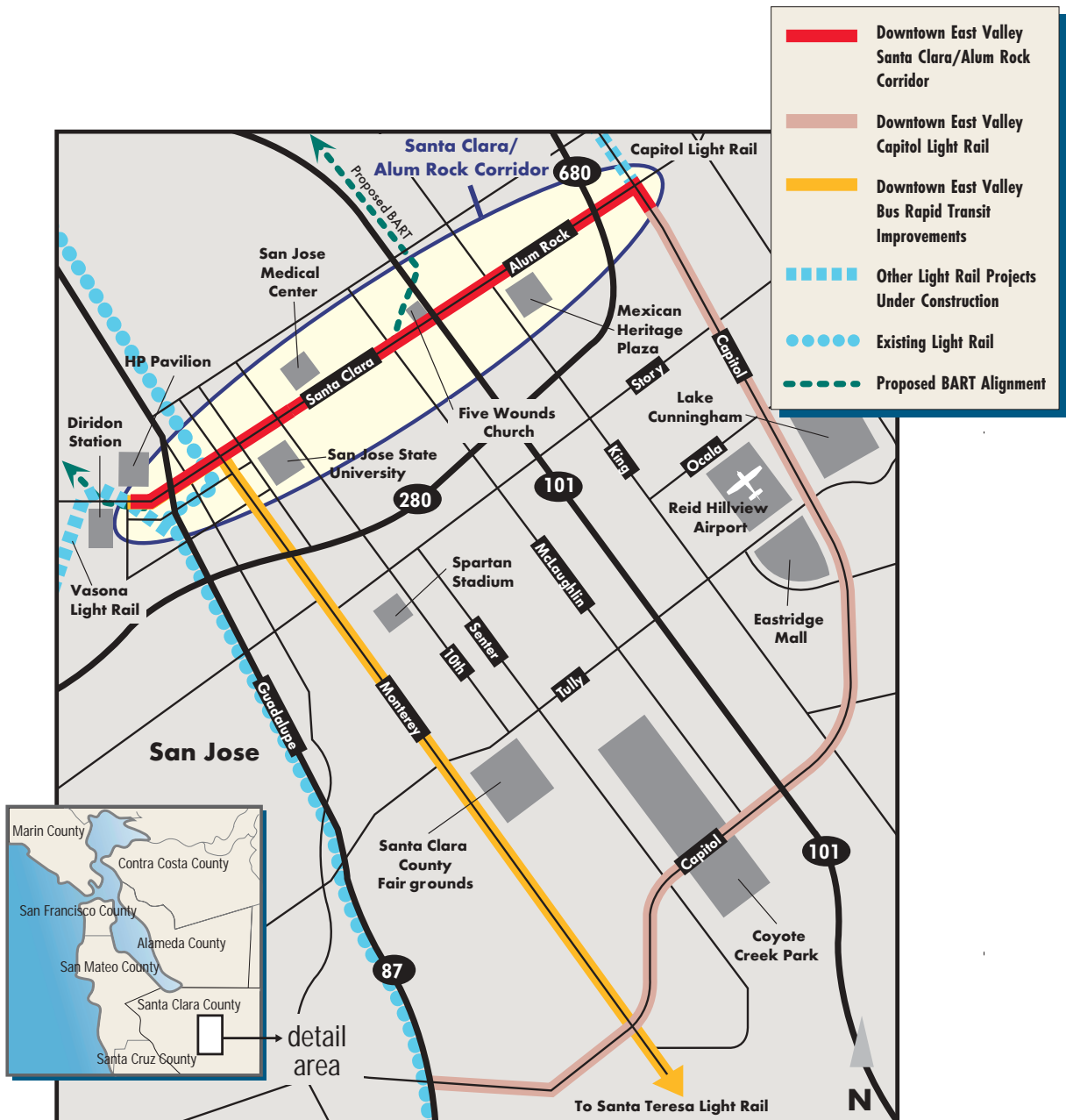
▶ February 27, 2003

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
24 N. Fifth Street
San Jose, CA

March 2003: PAB Adopts Preferred Alignment and Mode to be Analyzed in the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report

The Downtown East Valley Santa Clara/Alum Rock Project Corridor

The Santa Clara /Alum Rock corridor is located in the heart of San Jose, stretching along Santa Clara Street from San Jose Diridon Station to the Alum Rock Station on the Capitol Light Rail Transit Line, which is now under construction. The corridor passes through a vibrant central business district, characterized by small businesses and high pedestrian activity.



Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor

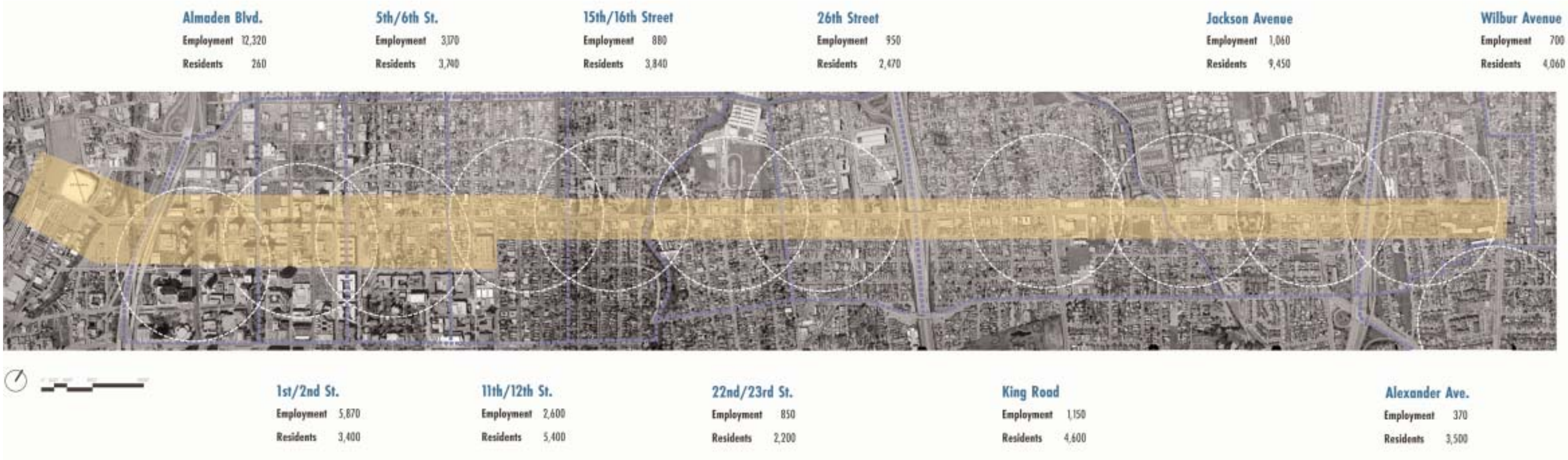
The vision for the Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor is to connect the Capitol Avenue light rail line in the East Valley with Diridon Station in Downtown San Jose.



Map prepared for VTA by Korve Engineering and ROMA Design Group

Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor

Population and Employment Characteristics



Map prepared for VTA by Korve Engineering and ROMA Design Group

LEGEND

- Downtown East Valley Santa Clara/Alum Rock Corridor
- Quarter mile walking radii
- Neighborhood District

AREA PLANS & PROJECTS

Downtown East Valley Transit Improvement Plan Complements Area Plans and Projects

The Downtown East Valley Transit Improvement Plan will provide access to many existing transit systems and will be designed to complement existing and future plans and projects in the area. A brief overview of some of the major plans and projects are listed here.

City of San Jose

- **Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI)**

The Strong Neighborhoods Initiative is a partnership of the City of San Jose, San Jose Redevelopment Agency and the community to build clean, safe and attractive neighborhoods with independent and capable neighborhood organizations. SNIs throughout San Jose play an important role in development decisions.

Community plans are either in process or completed for the Thirteenth Street, University, Five Wounds/Brookwood Terrace, and Mayfair SNIs.

Web site: www.strongneighborhoods.org

Phone: (408) 277-4000

- **Strategy 2000 The Greater Downtown San Jose Strategy For Development (February 2001)**

Strategy 2000 serves as the action guide for development activities in Downtown San Jose for 2000-2010. It includes prioritized recommendations for growth and articulates a vision for Downtown San Jose without identifying specific land uses or zoning.

Web site: www.sjredevelopment.org

Phone: (408) 277-4000

- **City Hall/Civic Plaza**

Construction of a new Civic Center in Downtown San Jose has begun following nearly a decade of research and planning that involved residents, businesses, elected officials and City staff. The new Civic Center site is located between Fourth and Sixth Street on East Santa Clara Street. The building layout includes an 18-story tower on the east side of the

site; a three story Council Chamber on the west side of the site; a centrally located domed rotunda; and a large plaza opening onto Santa Clara Street. The new Civic Center will be built with state of the art technology and sustainable design principles.

Web site: www.ci.san-jose.ca.us

Phone: (408) 277-4000

- **Diridon/Arena Strategic Development Plan (Draft Plan Due in 2002)**

The City of San Jose and VTA are near completion of a process to prepare a Strategic Development Plan for the Diridon/Arena Area. This area, anchored by the Diridon Station (Cahill and Santa Clara Streets), is intended to become a regional ground transportation hub for the South Bay with the culmination of major transit improvements such as the Vasona Light Rail line, BART and Caltrain. The Plan will also call for intensified housing, commercial and retail development around the intermodal center.

Web site: www.sjredevelopment.org

Phone: (408) 277-4000

- **Heart of the City Development Strategy and CIM Mixed-Use Development (Construction targeted for Spring 2003)**

The City of San Jose is working with CIM Group to redevelop several key sites and create a retail strategy that will help revitalize Downtown San Jose. The project will add about 20-mid sized stores for retail, restaurants and entertainment uses in Downtown San Jose. It will also include housing with approximately 500 residential units and public parking.

Web site: www.sjredevelopment.org

Phone: (408) 277-4000

- **Alum Rock Development Strategy King Road to Jackson Avenue (1999)**

The Alum Rock Development Strategy is designed to remove blight on Alum Rock Avenue through comprehensive development and improvement. Goals include re-

CONSIDERATION #2:

Which alternative will best complement area plans and projects?

AREA PLANS & PROJECTS

vitalizing the area by stimulating economically feasible private development and creating a balance of subsidized and market-rate housing. Approximately 130 new housing units are currently under construction. The Strategy also seeks to improve landscaping and create new open spaces.

Web site: www.sjredevelopment.org

Phone: (408) 277-4000

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)

- **BART Extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara (Draft Environmental Document Targeted for Summer 2003)**

VTA is developing plans to extend BART to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara and is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) that will evaluate the environmental impacts of constructing and operating the extension. The proposed BART alignment in Downtown San Jose would be located in a tunnel under Santa Clara Street, from approximately 28th Street in the Alum Rock area to the San Jose Arena. Downtown San Jose stations would be located at Alum Rock (28th and Santa Clara Streets), San Jose Civic Center/San Jose State University (7th to 4th Streets), Market Street (1st Street to Almaden Avenue) and Diridon Station (Autumn to White Street).

Web site: www.vtabart-vta.org

Phone: (408) 321-5744

- **VTA Caltrain Plan For Improvements within Santa Clara County**

Caltrain is planning significant enhancements to service along the Peninsula. In particular, more trains will operate with the addition of express service from San Jose to San Francisco. Service to Gilroy will also increase.

Web site: www.vta.org

Phone: (408) 321-5744

- **Line 22 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

VTA is planning significant upgrades to the 27-mile Line 22 Bus Corridor, which extends from Menlo Park in San Mateo County to the Eastridge Shopping Center in San Jose. Line 22 travels on Santa Clara Street through Downtown San Jose and continues along Alum Rock Avenue before turning south onto King Road to connect to Eastridge. VTA recently began running articulated buses in the corridor to accommodate high ridership demand of nearly 30,000 passengers per day. A major feature to be introduced in 2003 is traffic signal priority, allowing buses to operate faster and more reliably. Signal priority will be extended to the entire Line in phases, and improvements to bus stops for greater passenger comfort will also be constructed.

Web site: www.vta.org

Phone: (408) 321-5744

- **Vasona and Tasman East/Capitol Light Rail Transit (LRT) Plans**

VTA is currently expanding its light rail transit network to include service along two new lines. The Vasona line will provide service between Downtown San Jose and Vasona Park in Los Gatos. The Tasman East and Capitol lines will extend along Tasman Drive from North First Street to the Great Mall in Milpitas, and then continue along Capitol Avenue to a point just south of Alum Rock Avenue.

Web site: www.vta.org

Phone: (408) 321-7575

Other

- **California High Speed Rail (Draft Environmental Document Targeted For 2003)**

The California High Speed Rail Authority is preparing a program-level EIS/EIR for a 700-mile high-speed train system serving Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Valley, Los Angeles, the Inland Empire, Orange County and San Diego.

Web site: www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov

Phone: (916) 324-1541

MODE OPTIONS

Light Rail



Currently operating on over 28 miles of track in Santa Clara County, light rail is a flexible rail technology that can be operated in a variety of environments. Light rail vehicles, which carry over 100 passengers, can be operated singly or in multi-car trains. The trackway can be in an exclusive right-of-way for higher speeds, or shared with auto traffic if sufficient space is not available. If light rail were to share a lane with auto traffic in a four-lane roadway such as the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor, the tracks could be placed in either the center lane or the curb lane. In the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor, light rail stations would be about 100 to 200 feet in length, depending on the size of the train (one-car or two-car).

Streetcar



Before the development of light rail, streetcars were operated in many urban areas. A modern streetcar can have many features similar to light rail (for example, low floor boarding and new technology), but is typically a shorter, narrower and lighter vehicle. Streetcars usually operate in traffic lanes shared with autos, but can also operate in exclusive right-of-way, if space is available. Most often, streetcars operate in individual units, not in multi-car trains, and have less passenger capacity than light rail. A recent example of a modern streetcar operating in Portland, Oregon, is shown in the picture.

Enhanced Bus Service



VTA operates regular bus service throughout Santa Clara County on ADA-accessible buses that are approximately 40 feet in length. Bus stops are typically spaced approximately every 1/4 mile. Enhanced Bus Service could include a number of different features. In the Santa Clara/Alum Rock corridor, an enhanced bus service would likely be a special service provided with articulated buses that are approximately 60 feet in length to handle the high transit demand. Bus stops, which would include upgraded passenger facilities, would likely be spaced at somewhat longer intervals (1/2 mile or more). Traffic signal priority for buses, which results in faster and more reliable transit service, would be a key feature of enhanced bus service.

CONSIDERATION #3: MODE OPTIONS

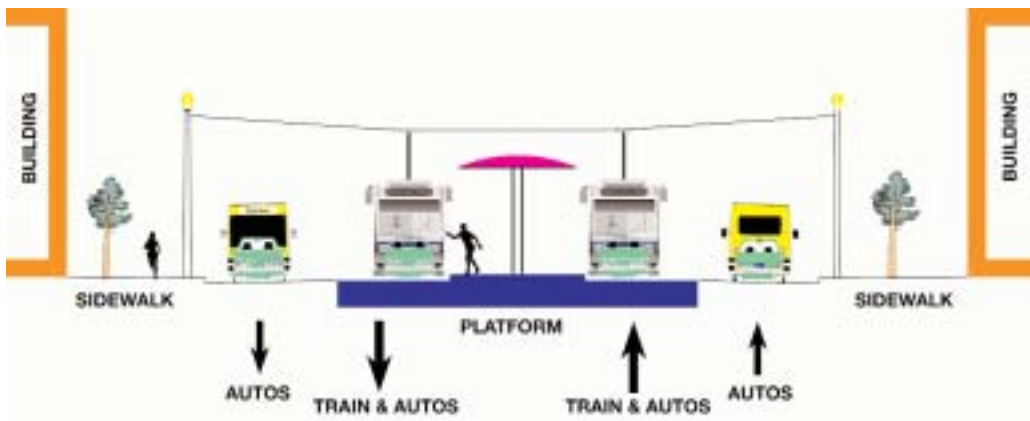
- Light Rail
- Streetcar
- Enhanced Bus Service

STREET DESIGN ALIGNMENT OPTIONS

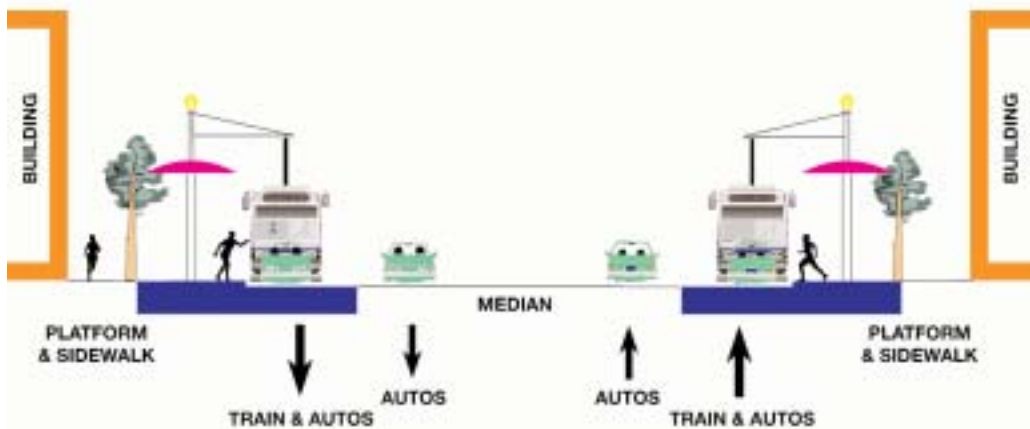
CONSIDERATION # 4: STREET DESIGN ALIGNMENT OPTIONS

- Rail and Autos Share Center Traffic Lanes
- Rail and Autos Share Outside Traffic Lanes
- Rail Exclusively in Center Median (This design could only be accommodated east of King Road.)

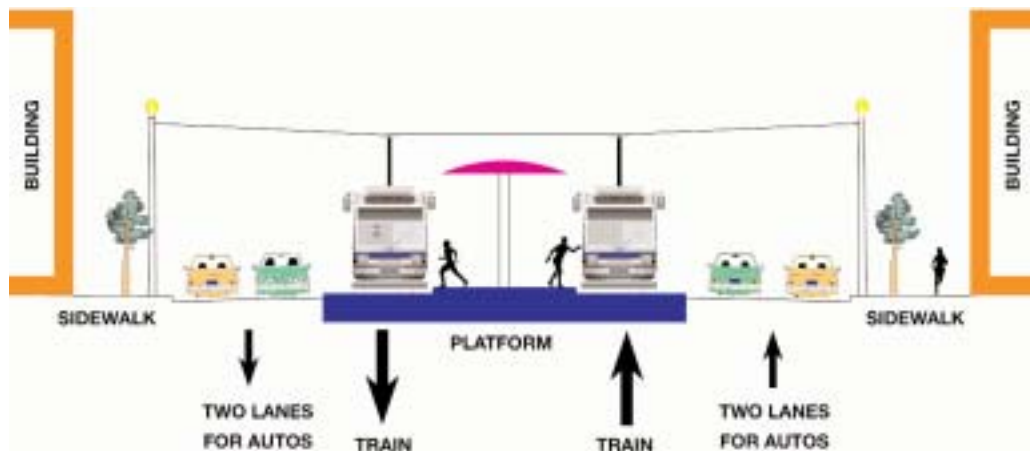
Options under consideration for street design with the proposed rail line are shown below:



Rail and Autos Share Center Traffic Lanes



Rail and Autos Share Outside Traffic Lanes



**Rail Exclusively in Center Median
(this design could only be accommodated east of King Road)**