Design Guidelines

3

The core purpose of the DDF is to provide design guidelines that can be used by VTA, development partners, and others to inform and evaluate efforts to advance development of the VTA Block to create successful world-class TOD. For each of the guidelines, precedent studies, references to the City of San José's Downtown Design Guidelines, and /or site specific analysis are provided where relevant to explain how the DDF design guidelines can best be applied to efforts to advance development of the VTA Block.

The DDF design guidelines provide concrete guidance for realizing the DDF vision. The DDF is built from five guiding principles, each of which explained in more detail in this chapter:

- Public Realm Activation
- Improve Access and Connectivity
- Urban Character and Public Interfaces
- Historical Sensitivity
- Social Equity and Environmental Responsibility

3 Design Guidelines

3.1 Public Realm Activation

One of the guiding principles of the DDF is the notion that the future development will provide active public spaces that are designed and programmed in ways that are inviting to the community.

VTA's majority ownership of the block, and collaboration with other owners on the block, provides unique opportunities to redesign the block in a coordinated and complementary manner. Rather than each property owner developing their property independently, the DDF advocates for a unified approach that also promotes flexibility, variety, and distinct architectural forms for each building. Such an approach ensures the creation of higher-quality TOD, and it allows each property owner to developer more square footage on its property than would be possible with each owner acting independently.

As Downtown's growth in the early twentieth century was focused around transit and pedestrians, Downtown's future is also very connected to restoring a vibrant mix of pedestrians, transit, and commercial, cultural, and social activities. The Downtown BART station will generate tens of thousands of new pedestrians daily. The DDF design guidelines seeks to leverage this transformational uptick in activity to create a dynamic and thriving urban environment on and around the VTA Block. Placing a plaza at the center of the VTA Block helps achieve this goal by:

- Providing direct entry to/from the BART station from/to the plaza
- Creating multiple connections and links between Downtown destinations through the VTA Block
- Simplifying links to public transit, including to BART, and VTA light-rail on First and Second streets and public bus services all around the block and throughout Downtown
- Providing pleasant and dynamic outdoor space and amenities for the public and occupants and users of adjacent development
- Housing other elements and functions, such as public art, performance spaces, and retail uses that will help keep the site and area active, safe, and inviting 24/7

San José, the greater Bay Area, and beyond have many precedents for public plazas, and some aspects are more successful than others. A few plaza precedents are shown in figures 3-08 through 3-15.

Fig. 3-01 Site Context - 3D Google Map

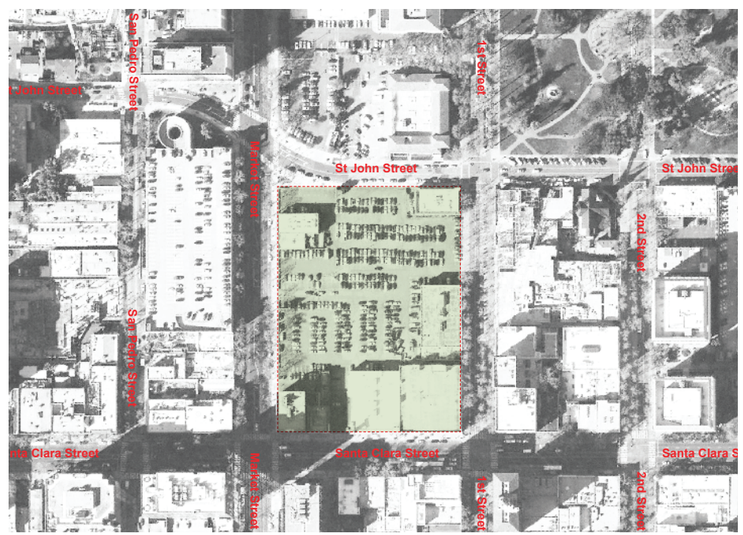


Fig. 3-02 Site Context - Surrounding Streets

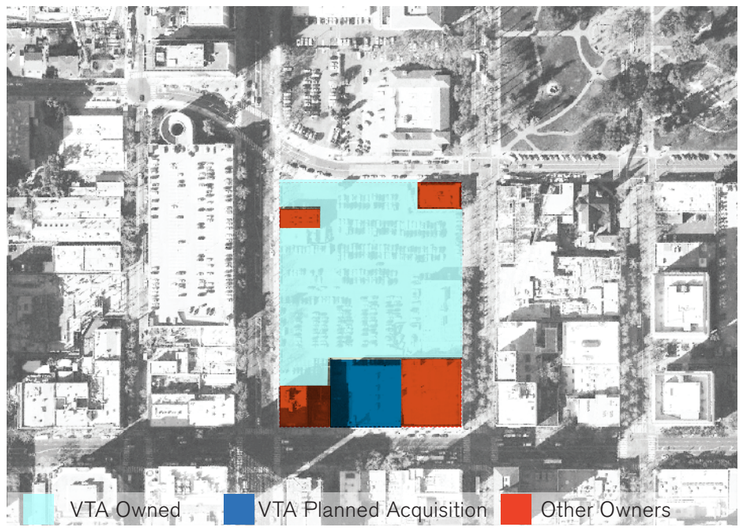


Fig. 3-03 Site Context - Parcels

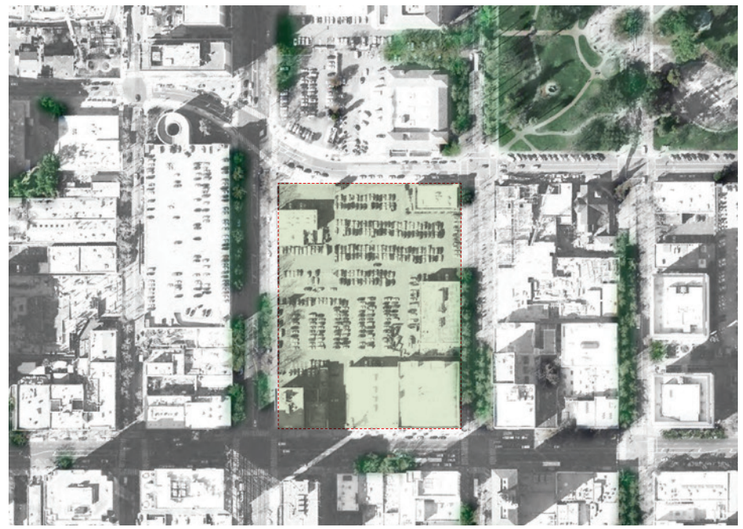


Fig. 3-04 Site Context - Existing Green Space

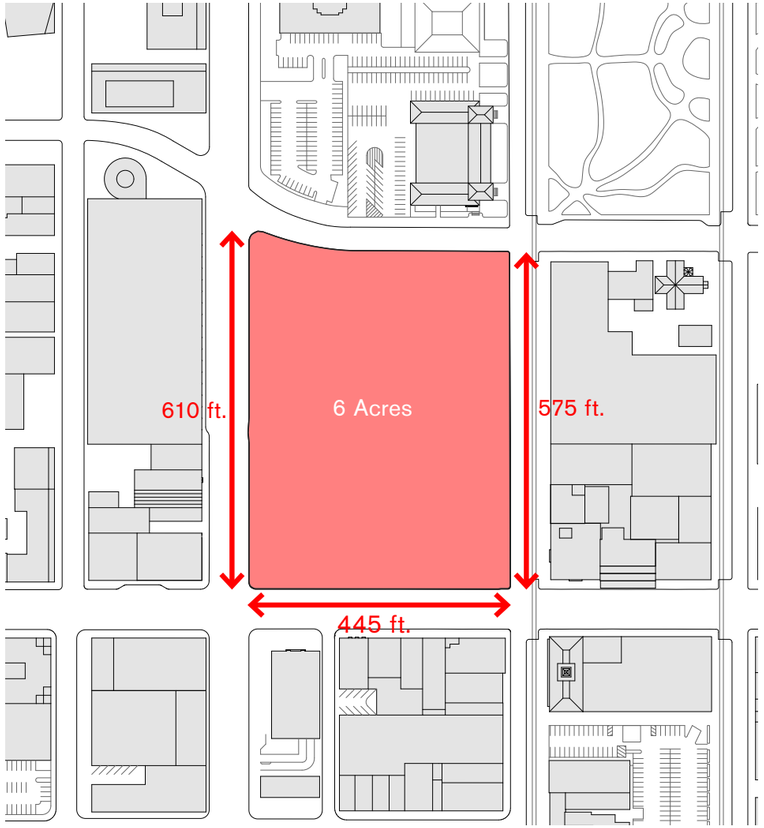


Fig. 3-05 Existing Site Conditions and Dimensions

- Reduce block size to promote better architecture, increase views, increase wind flow for natural ventilation, and create multiple transportation routes for people who walk and bike and emergency and service vehicles.

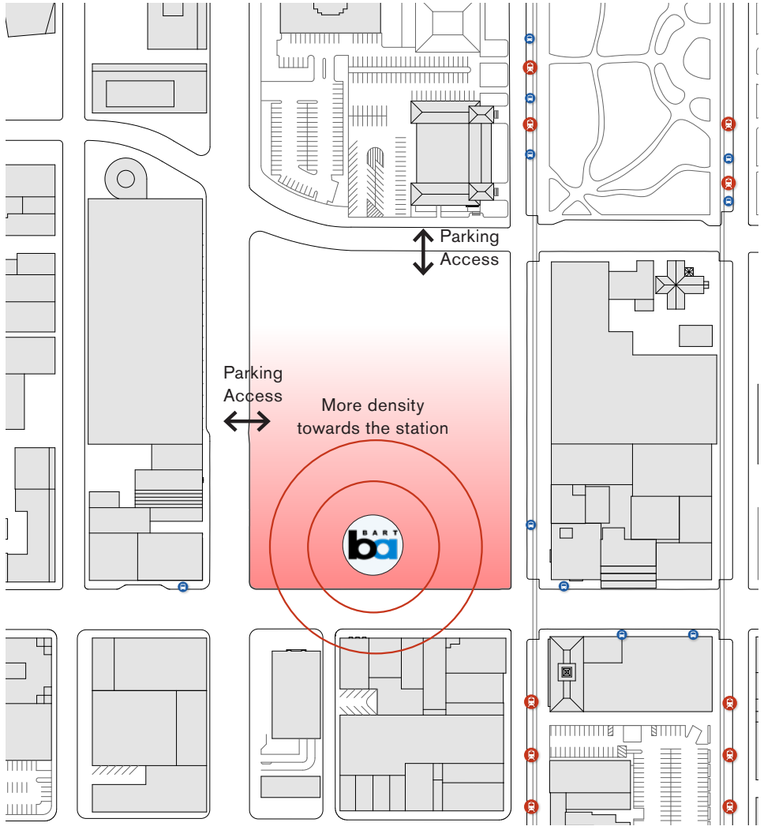


Fig. 3-06 Guidelines for Relationship to Transit

- Place high density development near transit, particularly rail transit stations, to facilitate transit use.
- Locate commercial building lobbies near transit stops and stations.
- Do not create parking or vehicular access on streets with light rail or bus rapid transit.
- Locate vehicular curb cuts away from bus stops, rail stations, and light rail corridors.
- Place a building's active frontages and amenities near rail transit stations and bus stops.

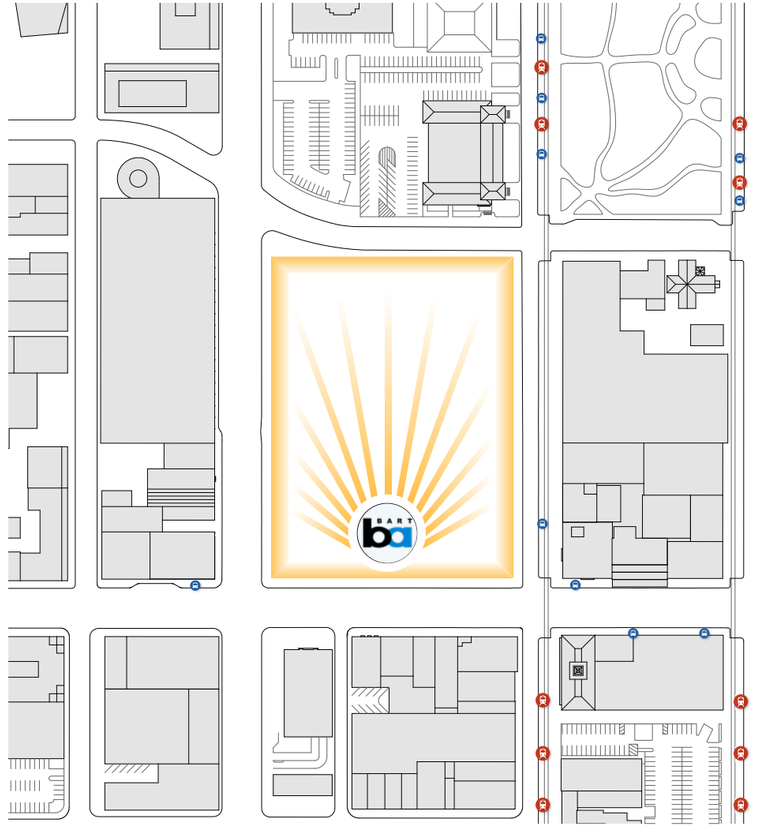


Fig. 3-07 Guidelines for Activation Around Transit

- Emphasize transit by orienting activities and amenities to stations.
- Place high density of development near transit.
- Keep transit stops and station areas active to promote safety and integrate transit into the activity of nearby development.
- Add benches and landscaping to benefit transit patrons.

Fig. 3-08 Plaza de César Chávez

The Plaza de César Chávez is one of the oldest public spaces in the city, has a rich landscape, and is relatively well used. It is also surrounded by busy roads that separate it from its surrounding urban context, thereby limiting its potential for greater activation.

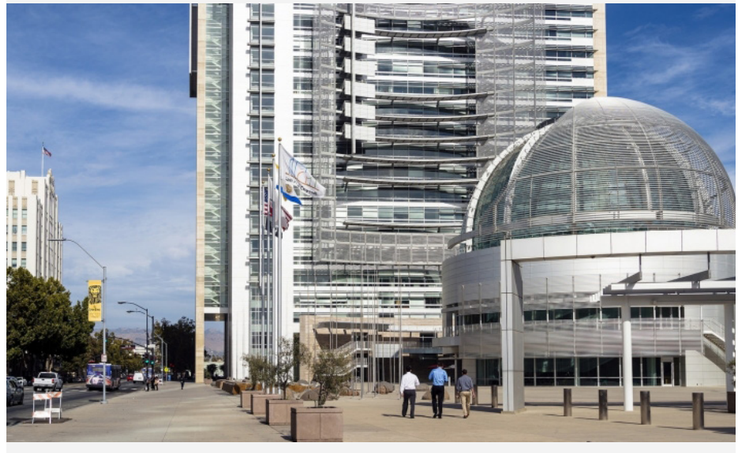


Fig. 3-09 City Hall Plaza

The City Hall plaza is a partially enclosed functional public space. It suffers from a lack of landscape design and activation features such as shaded/sheltered areas and amenities such as cafe or retail spaces that would enhance experiences for visitors to the space. This plaza does successfully host many large-scale events and is reasonably well-suited for large events.

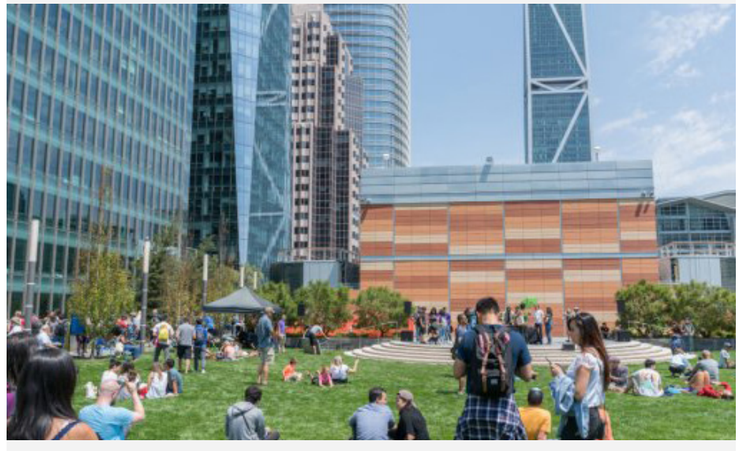


Fig. 3-10 Transbay Transit Center, San Francisco

The Salesforce Transit Center Park sits atop the roof of the transit facility, and this configuration has both pros and cons. An advantage of being on the rooftop is that the park becomes a quiet oasis removed from the busy, vehicular-oriented street. A disadvantage of being on the rooftop is that the park is less accessible to the public, and it does not directly connect with pedestrian-oriented activities.

Fig. 3-11 Canary Wharf Station
London, England

Perhaps most critical to the successful activation of the plaza space is the fact that the new BART station will bring tens of thousand of passengers to and from the station every day.

Fig. 3-12 Spitalfield Market
London, England

Fig. 3-13 Outdoor Performance Space
Marseille, France

Plaza activation will be further enhanced by creating the right mix of programming to the space. This could include both food and beverage (above) as well as event spaces for performances and informal gatherings (below).

Fig. 3-14 Public Art: The Bean
Chicago, Illinois

Public art is another key feature to activate the plaza and allow for community involvement.

Fig. 3-15 City Center DC
DC, Washington

Providing mid-block pedestrian links into the plaza will enhance connectivity and allow for additional active storefront spaces in the design.

Precedent Project: City Center, Washington, DC

City Center in Washington, DC has a scale, density, and mix of uses that is similar to the VTA Block envisioned in the DDF. City Center is located one block from the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metro Station, and it sits at a crossroads between multiple cultural, institutional, and retail destinations. City Center utilizes its prime location and proximity to transit to leverage pedestrian activity and attract high-end retail tenants at ground level and integrate a range of commercial and residential spaces into the buildings above.

Previously enclosed by a single, vast structure, the new City Center breaks the site down into smaller, more pedestrian friendly blocks that bridge new connections between diverse downtown communities. Drawing inspiration from European street patterns that have more connectivity in the pedestrian grid, the scheme reinstates and expands upon the original alleyways system.

The tree-lined avenues, complete with classic Washington 'globe' streetlights, are re-planted with local species that integrate seamlessly with the historic context.

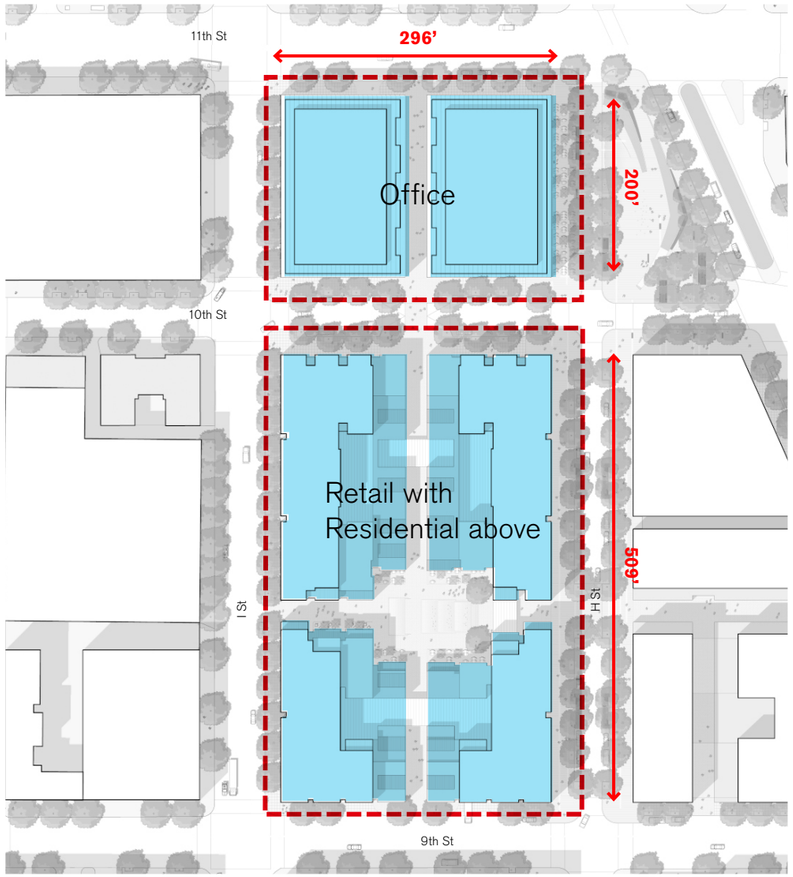
The following strategies from the City Center precedent are also fundamental to the design guidelines for the VTA Block included in the DDF:

- Dense mixed-use urban development
- Street-facing retail and residential units on upper levels
- Public art and water features set within a central plaza/courtyard
- Retail area and outdoor seating occupy the ground level for activation, connected by a series of pedestrian streets.

Fig. 3-16 Public Realm, Plaza and Water Features

Fig. 3-17 Retail Area and Outdoor Seating

Guideline: The DDF places great emphasis on activating the ground plane around the station by creating a dynamic public space at the heart of the VTA Block. The creation of a plaza is therefore essential. The plaza should be surrounded by buildings, provide clear and direct access to the BART station, be active day and night, have good access to sun and daylight, protection from wind, be fully accessible with no steps or grade separations, and create easy connections to adjacent destinations.



Site Area: 266,187 sq.ft.
Ground Floor Area: 168,636 sq.ft.
Site Coverage: 63.4%

Total Building Area: 1,482,971 sq.ft.
FAR: 5.6

Fig. 3-18 City Center Urban Design Precedent

Fig. 3-19 City Center Urban Design Precedent

3.2 Improve Access and Connectivity

Understanding foreseeable pedestrian activity within and around the site is critical to understanding how the VTA Block can be designed to fit within, complement, and enhance a heart of Downtown's urban fabric. Many popular destinations are within a short five minutes or less walk of the VTA Block. Figure 3-20 shows the 'Four Cornerstones,' the cultural, civic, recreational, and academic/institutional destinations that surround the site. One of the core goals of VTA Block development is to simplify pedestrian movements to create more easy pedestrian connections to and from public transit. The figures that follow all demonstrate how vital connectivity is to the success of the VTA Block.

Compared to other urban grids, Downtown San José has large blocks that create longer walking distances. New mid-block pedestrian connections, or paseos, are critical to creating a more walkable Downtown and to bring it closer to other more walkable urban centers, like New York, Washington DC, or San Francisco (see fig. 3-24 through 3-26). There is already a partial network of paseos in Downtown, although the existing paseos tend to be isolated fragments, rather than a coordinated and connected paseo network (see fig. 3-27). Paseo connections like those envisioned in the DDF could provide inviting alternative routes for people who walk through Downtown, including by providing new options to access transit, like that which will be available at the future Downtown BART station.

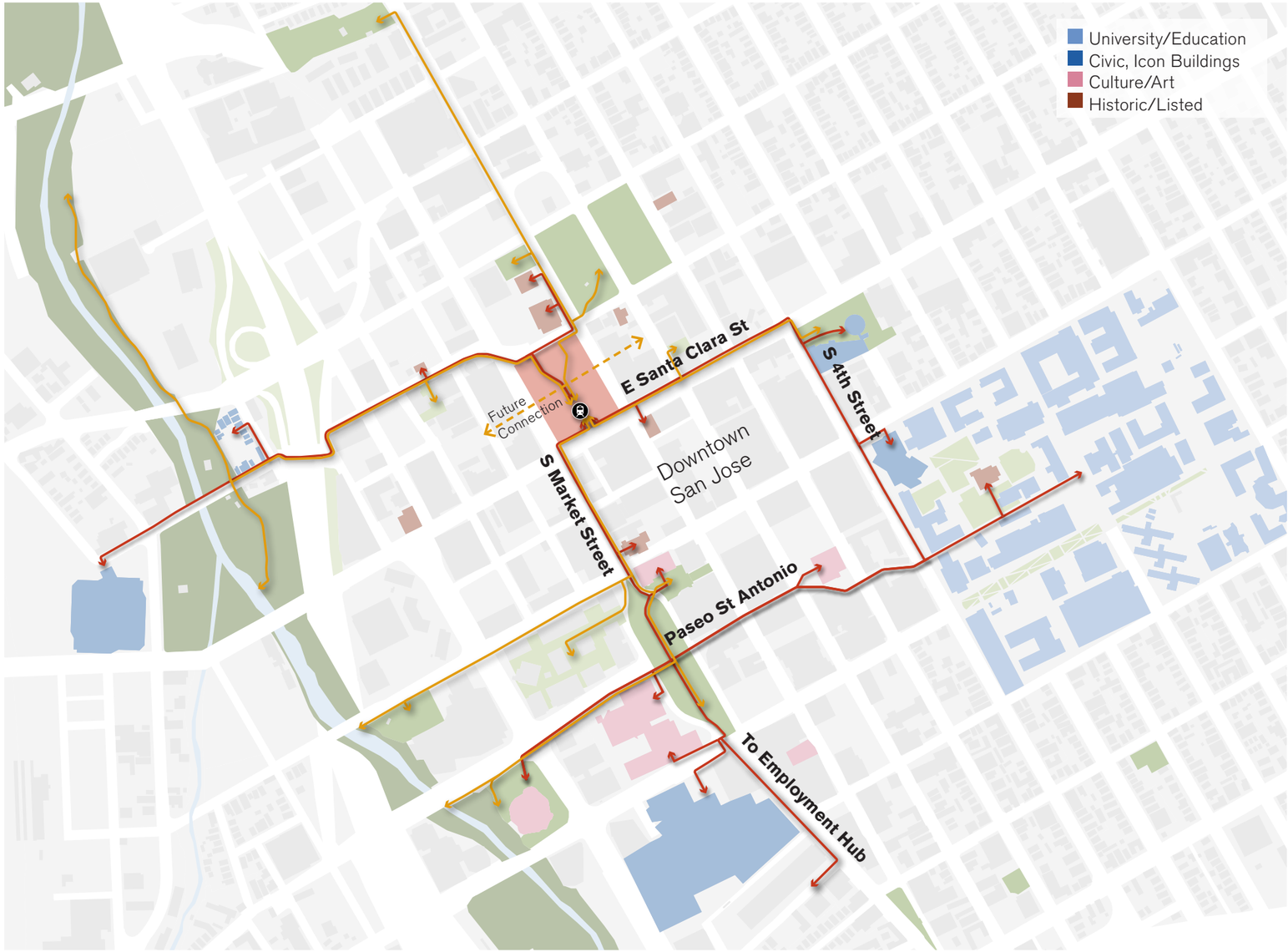


Fig. 3-20 Downtown Four Cornerstones

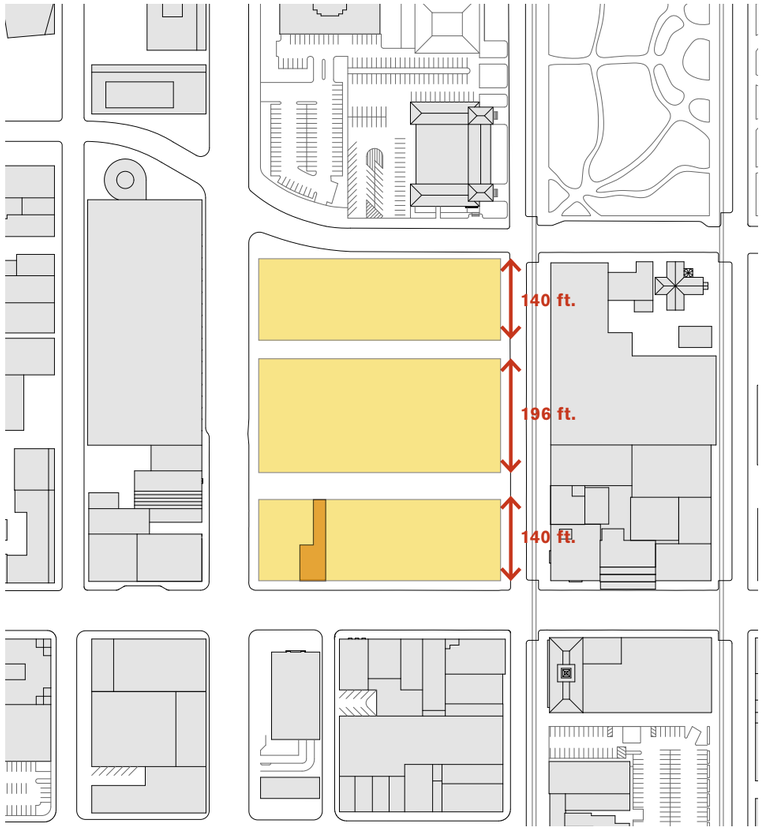


Fig. 3-21 Guidelines for Block Sizes

- When developing parcels that make up more than 75% of the area of a block that exceeds the maximum size of 250 feet, divide the block so that all resulting blocks are less than 200 feet in length
- When feasible, connect the ends of new streets or paseos with existing streets and paseos in adjacent blocks.
- Do not vacate (sell or give away) or construct buildings upon an existing public street right-of-way that lies along a view corridor

Existing S&L Building

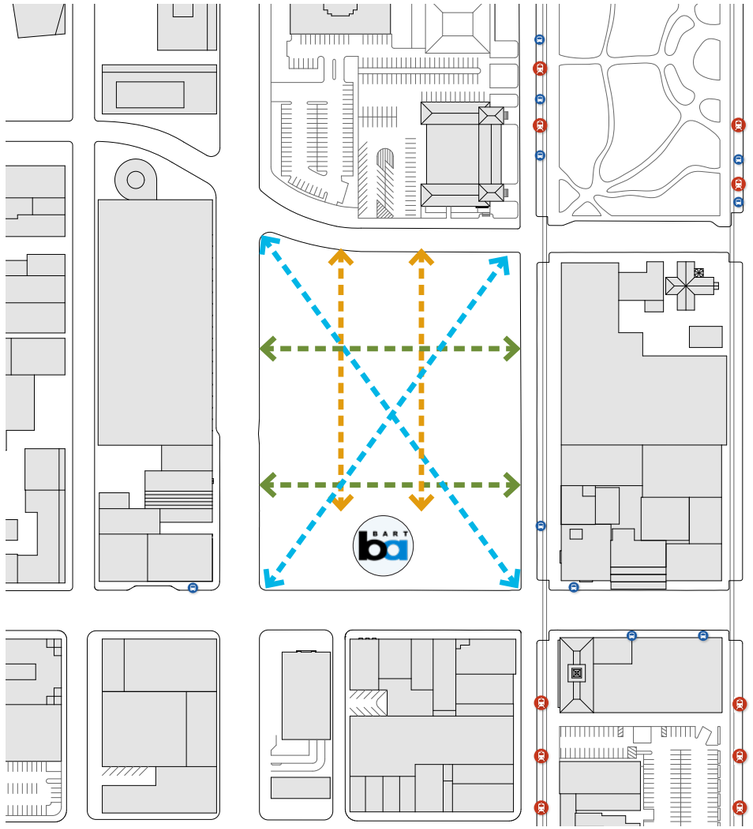


Fig. 3-22 Guidelines for Mid-Block Connections

- Use paseos to create routes to transit stations
- A paseo may have built space above or below the pedestrian surface as long as the paseo appears public and safe
- Design paseos with end-to-end visibility from connecting Public Space. Align and connect the ends of paseos with streets, other paseos, or open spaces
- A new paseo may be created only on a block that is over 3 acres in size with over 400 feet between streets on the longest side

Potential Paseo connecting to BART
Potential Paseo Connecting to Bus Stations
Potential Paseo Introduced to Reduce Block Length

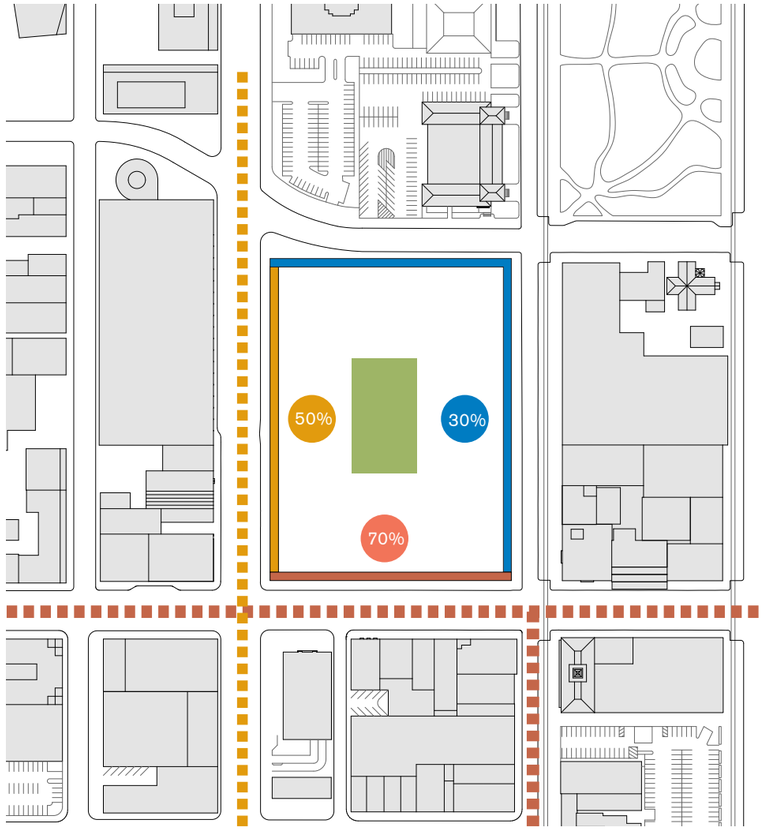


Fig 3-23 Guidelines for Building Placement

- Create a streetwall* along at least 70% of the property or setback line when facing a Primary Addressing Street, at least 50% when facing a Secondary Addressing Street and at least 30% when facing any other street
- Use buildings to create edges for streets and public parks
- Place buildings to preserve view corridors crossing the site, especially designated view corridors
- Bring buildings to the sidewalk to frame the street

*: Streetwalls are the front walls of buildings along the street edge.

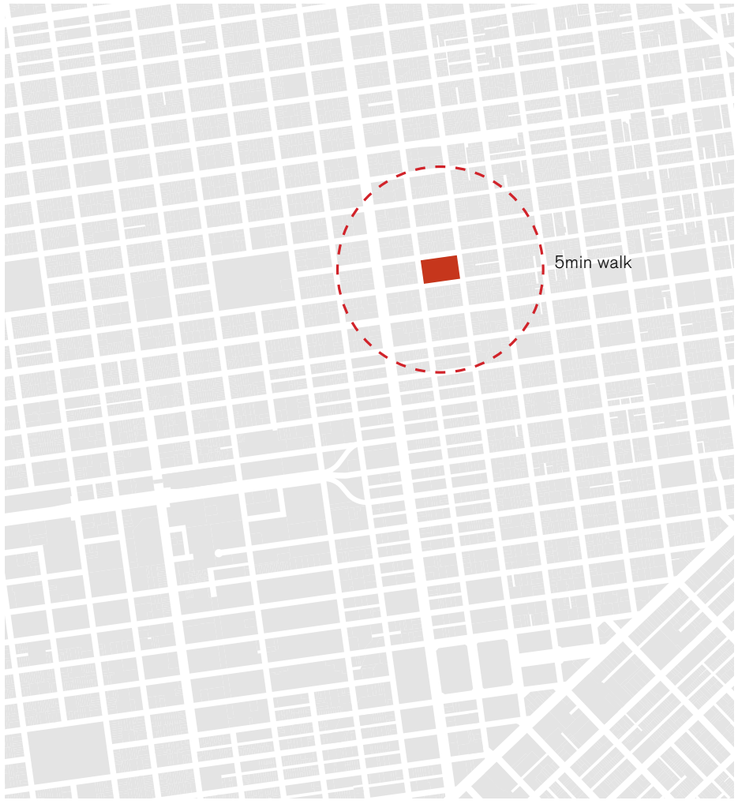
Primary Addressing Street
Secondary Addressing Street

Downtown San José

- San José City scores 33th in walkability (50.5/100) compared to all USA cities
- Downtown San José has walk score of: 77/100, transit score of:62/100 and a bike score of: 89/100

Fig. 3-24 (5) min. Walk Radius in Downtown San Jose.

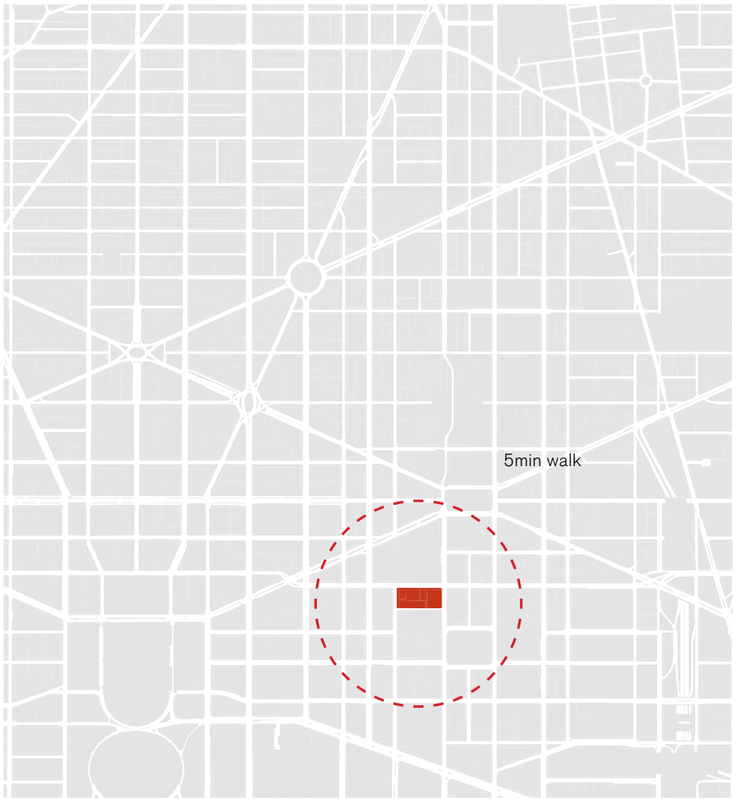
Downtown San Francisco



- San Francisco has the 3rd highest walk score (86.0/100) of all USA cities
- Downtown-Union Square has walk score of: 99/100, transit score of: 100/100 and a bike score of: 84/100

Fig. 3-25 (5) min. Walk Radius in Downtown San Francisco

Washington DC



- Washington DC scores 9th in walkability (77.3/100) compared to all USA cities
- Downtown Washington has walk score of: 97/100, transit score of: 100/100 and a bike score of: 90/100

Fig. 3-26 (5) min. Walk Radius in Washington DC.

Paseo Network Today - Existing and Proposed

Fig. 3-27 Existing Passages

Vision for New Slow Movement Network

Fig. 3-28 Proposed Passages

Precedent Project: Laneway Revitalization, Melbourne, Australia

“Laneways” are narrow streets and pedestrian paths established in Melbourne in the Victorian era. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the laneways were privatized, closed off, and neglected. Today, the newly revitalized laneways are popular attractions with high-quality paving materials and lighting, cafes, bars, street art, and cultural events. The revitalization of Melbourne’s laneways began in the early 1990s when the City of Melbourne and state government worked to protect and upgrade the remaining laneways. This was part of a larger laneway regeneration program intended to bring people back to the city after work hours by making the city an exciting, safe, and hospitable environment.

Before: During the 19th and 20th centuries the laneways were privatized, closed off, built in, and neglected.

After: Pedestrian-priority spaces with no vehicular traffic, quality paving materials and custom designed lighting; obstacles, bollards, curbs, and redundant street elements removed; and activation programming like cultural and arts events instituted.

Methods used:

- Incentivize university population to live in the city: The city worked with universities to encourage the large international student population to live in the city and bring along cultural diversity and energy to public areas.
- Invitation to local retailers to take up laneway spaces: The streets were cleaned up, and active street frontages and mixed-use development were encouraged. Small local retailers, particularly cafés, were encouraged to move into the CBD and take up laneway spaces facing the street.
- Public art program: An ongoing, temporary public art program was developed, bringing a sense of excitement and discovery to the laneways.
- Nighttime activities: Nighttime activity was encouraged with incentives for retailers to stay open for longer hours.

Before

After

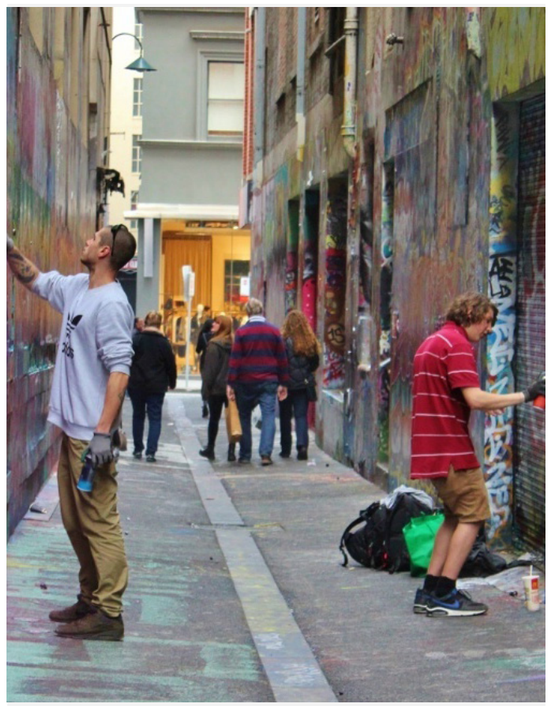
Fig. 3-29 Melbourne, Australia Laneway Paseo Precedent

Incentivize university population to live in the city and bring along a cultural vibe

The city worked with universities to encourage the large international studen t population to live in the city and bring along cultural diversity and energy to public areas.

Invitation to local retailers to take up laneway spaces

The streets were cleaned up, and active street frontages and mixed-use development were encouraged. Small local retailers, particularly cafés, were encouraged to move into the CBD and take up laneway spaces facing the street.



Public Art program

An ongoing, temporary public art program was developed, bringing a sense of excitement and discovery to the laneways.

Nighttime activities

Nighttime activity was encouraged with incentives for retailers to stay open for longer hours.

Fig. 3-30 Melbourne, Australia Laneways Retail Precedents

3 Design Guidelines

The Downtown BART station has entrances and exits on both the north and south sides of the station, with visual connectivity through the station to and from the plaza. The BART station has direct access to and from the plaza. The paseos envisioned in the DDF for the VTA block make the central plaza, BART station, and general area more accessible, walkable, and desirable from multiple directions.

Based on our site analysis and precedent studies, the paseos have been sized to be greater than 25 feet wide with a wider paseo to the north of the station, as it will also provide periodic emergency and service access of the north entrance to the station, but be closed to all other vehicular traffic.

The DDF envisions that people will be able to easily access the site and its central plaza. The blue arrows in Fig. 3-32 represent pedestrian access routes which allow a convenient path of travel to and from all directions and potential destinations.

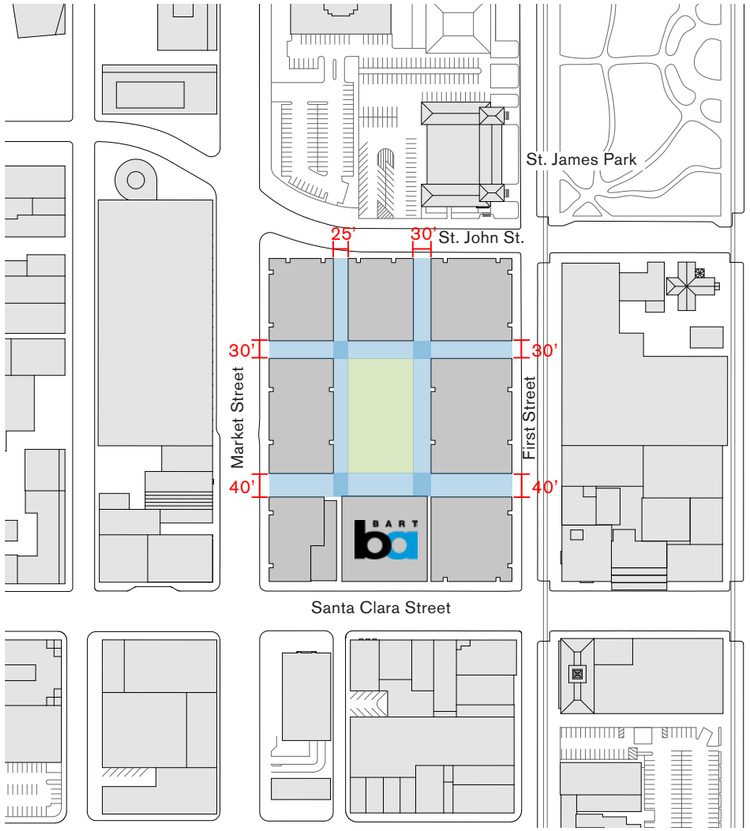


Fig. 3-31 Paseo Dimensions

Public Paseo
Public Plaza

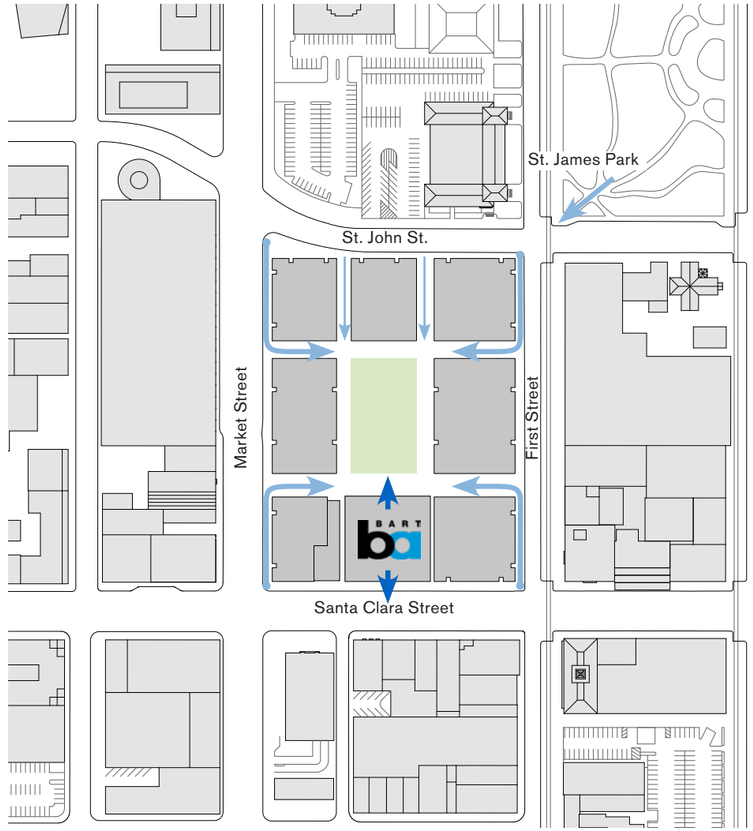


Fig. 3-32 Site Circulation

Public Access
BART Patron
Public Plaza

Paseo de San Antonio (1:3 to 1:4 ratio)

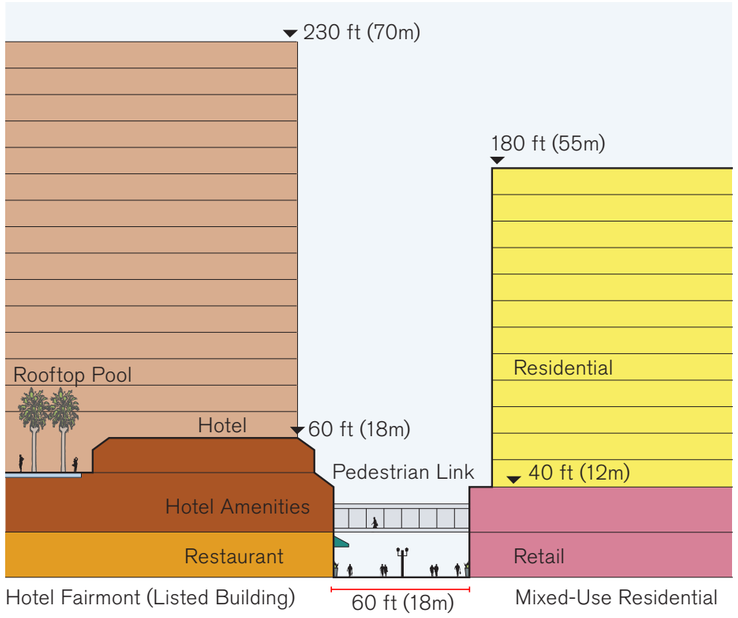


Fig. 3-33 Paseo de San Antonio Analysis

Paseo between 2nd and 3rd Street (1:3 to 1:4 ratio)

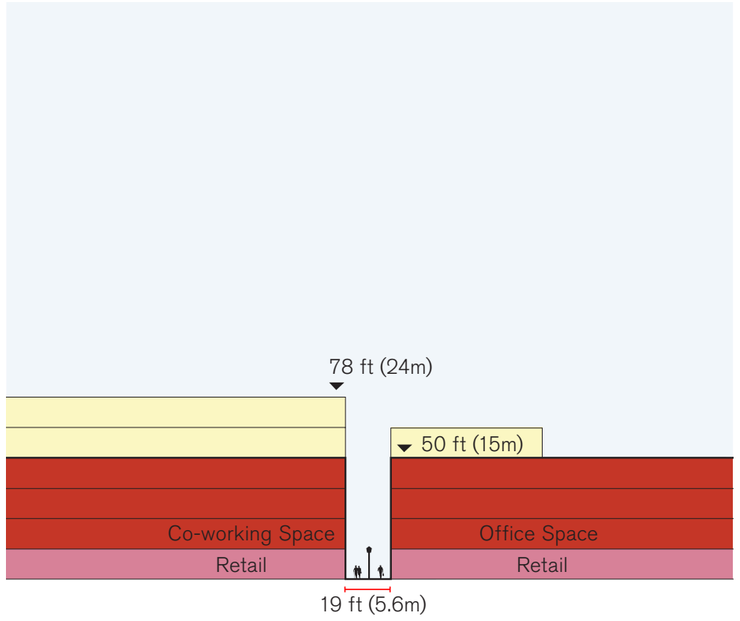
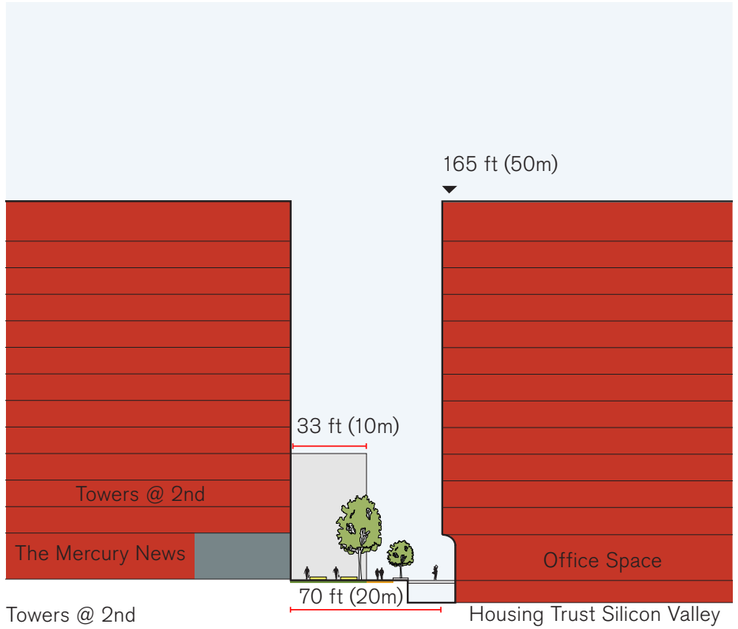


Fig. 3-34 Paseo Between 2nd and 3rd Street Analysis

Towers @ 2nd Paseo (1: 2.5 to 1:5 ratio)



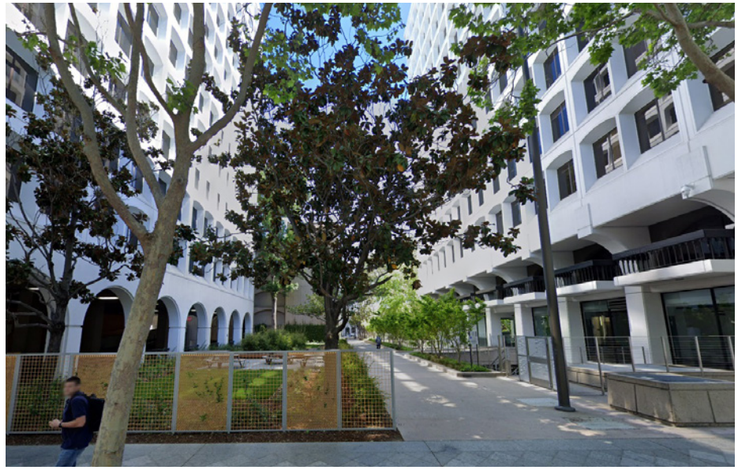


Fig. 3-35 The Mercury News Paseo Analysis

Precedent Project: Santana Row

A more local example is Santana Row, a high-end shopping center that recreates a European urban shopping experience with sidewalk cafés and a “park once” strategy that is enabled by structured parking at access points. Recognizing that this is not a precedent from a historic downtown , Santana Row’s commercial success is partially based on the fact that it replicates the small-scale pedestrian-friendly experience of a nineteenth century tree-lined European city street with human-scale and active shopfronts. Santana Row’s building heights and street and sidewalk widths are scaled to complement each other nicely. Wider sidewalks provide space for outdoor seating and dining, and trees on the edge of the sidewalk provide shade and beauty.

Another important aspect of pedestrian connectivity and access is intuitive circulation and easy navigation through public spaces. VTA has been engaged with the City of San José on wayfinding efforts that will help people navigate Downtown by making it easier to identify and find key destinations, including transit stops. This program should be consulted as part of continuing efforts to make Downtown more accessible, understandable, and enjoyable for all.

Guideline: The DDF recommends that the existing paseo network in Downtown be expanded and enhanced, including by dividing the VTA Block into a discrete set of developable parcels that help create an environment for better connectivity. The paseos should be pedestrian friendly and sufficiently wide to allow for landscaping, outdoor seating, and other amenities.

Fig. 3-36 Santana Row Buildings and Walkways

Fig. 3-37 Santana Row Precedent Section

Fig. 3-38 Santana Row Precedent Plan View

3.3 Urban Character and Public Interfaces

As described in Chapter 2 - Historical Context, development in Downtown is commonly not set back from the sidewalk, and there is a historic building height datum of 40 to 60 feet (or three to four stories), particularly along the historic Santa Clara Street corridor. The City of San José's Downtown Design Guidelines reference this historic precedent, and recommend a 40 to 60 foot datum for a 'podium' of front-facing construction, and towers should be set back above this point. To align with city guidelines and create a unified approach for VTA Block development, the DDF embraces the 'podium' concept included in the City of San José's Downtown Design Guidelines.

The DDF envisions more solid building bases up to the podium level and that the towers above are set back and articulated with geometry and materials that are different than the podium base. The point of transition between the podium base and the setback towers above also creates opportunities for occupiable amenity spaces at the podium level, such as landscaped terraces, recreation space, and outdoor seating areas with retail uses like food and beverage.

Fig. 3-39 Artistic Impression of BART Station

3 Design Guidelines

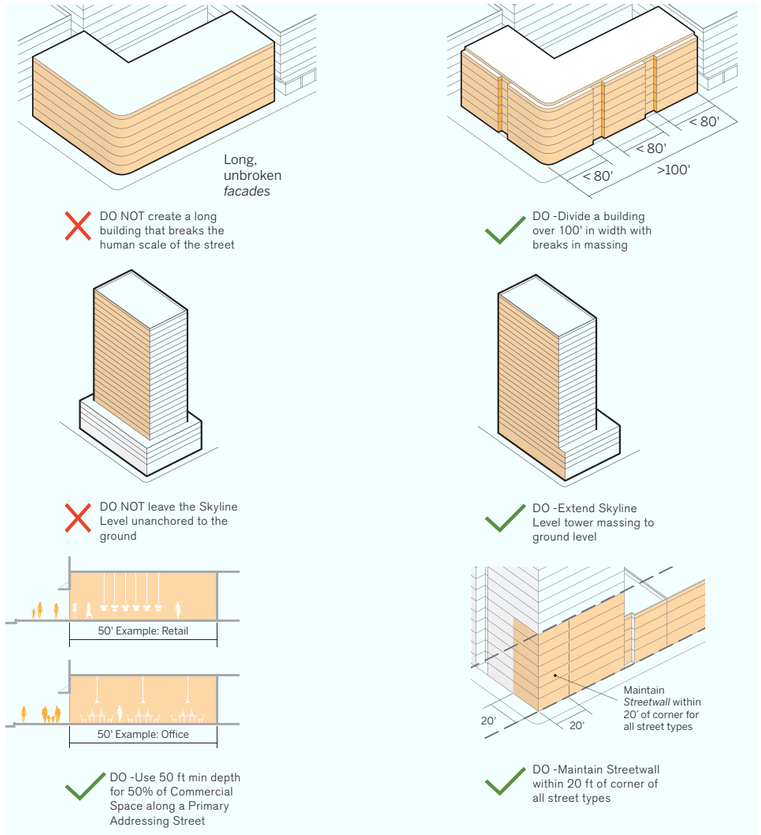


Fig. 3-40 Guidelines for Podium Level Massing

STANDARDS

- Divide *Podium Level* building massing facing *Public Space* that creates a *facade* wider than 100 feet into visibly articulated smaller masses no wider than 80 feet using projections and recesses, materials, shadow relief, or other architectural elements (refer to diagram).

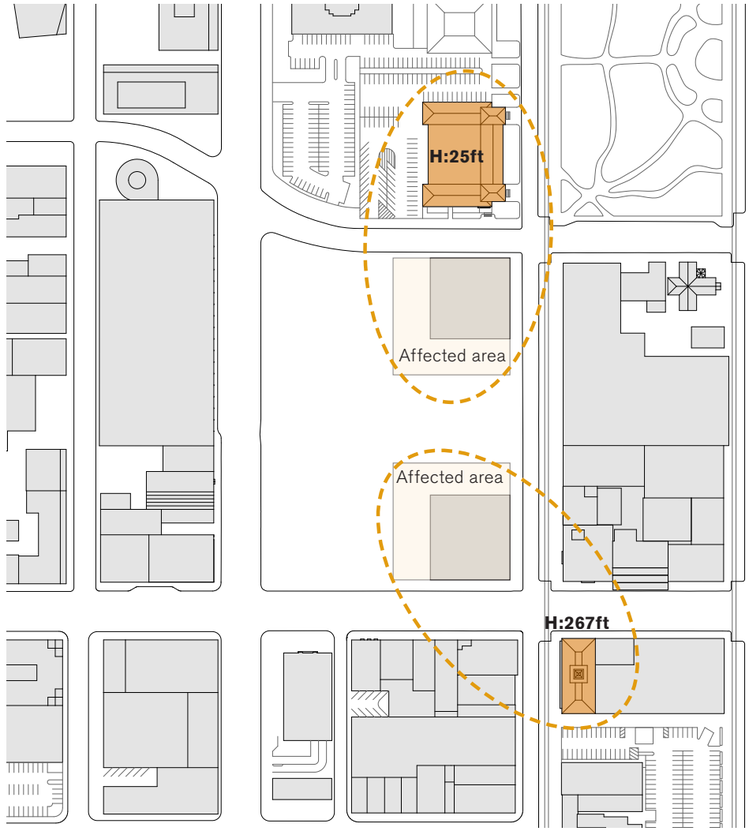


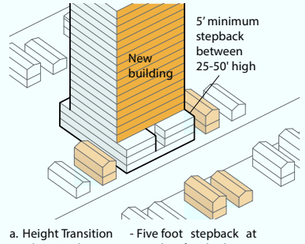
Fig. 3-41 Guidelines for Creating Massing Transitions

STANDARDS

a. Height Transition (see Illustration a): If a new building 100 feet tall or more is across the street from or adjacent to either:

1. A historic building 45 feet tall or less
2. A site for residential use that is limited to a building 45 feet tall or less

The new building must step back its street-facing facade 5 feet minimum from the front parcel or setback line at an elevation between 25 and 50 feet.



a. Height Transition - Five foot stepback at an elevation between 25 and 50 feet high

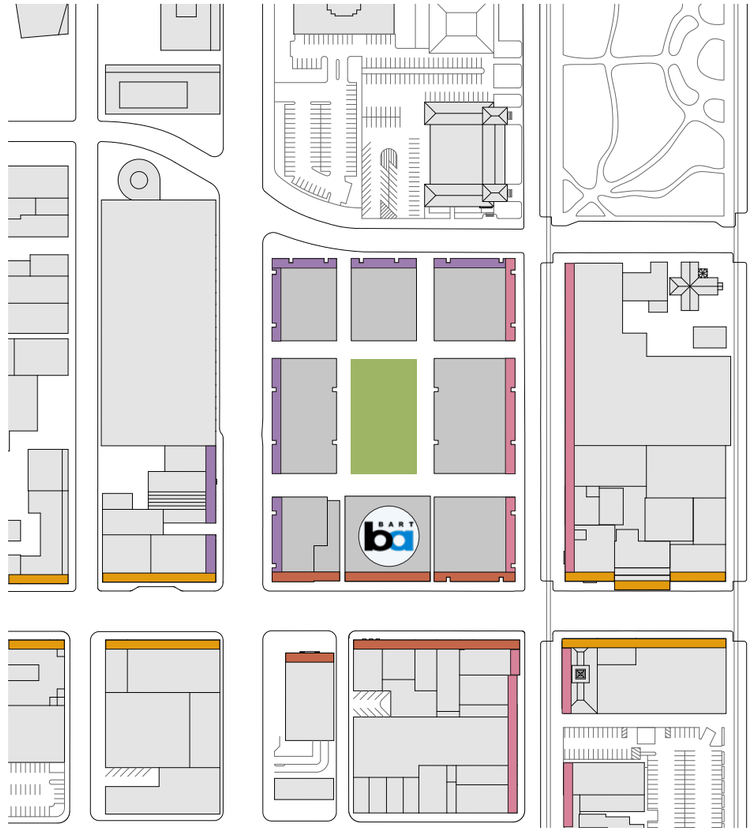


Fig. 3-42 Guidelines for Arrangement of Activities

STANDARDS

- Place a ground level building *facade* along 70% of each parcel's *Public-Space*-facing property lines (within 10 feet) or *setback* lines (within 3 feet). Streets for this standard do not include Highways 87 or 280, highway ramps, or railroad alignments. For a project located within a historic district or context, refer to adopted historic district guidelines and to Guideline (f) in Section 4.2.4.

Station Related Activities
First Street Historic Commercial Corridor
Santa Clara Commercial Corridor
Local Retail and Food & Beverages

Blue background denotes direct extract from the San Jose Downtown Design Guidelines

b. Width Transition (see Illustration b): If a new building is across the street from or adjacent to a historic building that is both:

1. 45 feet tall or less
2. More than 30 feet narrower than the new building

The new building must create gaps in the Podium Level above the ground floor to divide its street-facing massing into segments no more than 30 feet wider than the widest of the applicable historic buildings. Gaps must be 5 feet minimum width and depth.

Note: There is no need to limit the massing width of a building adjacent to historic buildings that occupy their full lot width, such as historic storefronts. Thus, if a historic building's street-facing facade continues to within 5 feet of its parcel edges, it does not trigger the Width Transition requirement.

c. Rear Transition (see Illustration c): If a new building 100 feet tall or more is across a parcel line interior to a block from either:

1. A historic building 45 feet tall or less
2. A site for residential use that is limited to a building 45 feet tall or less

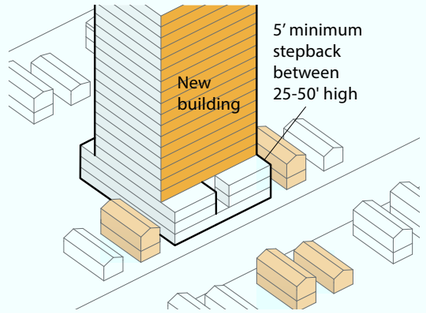
The rear portion of new building must maintain a transitional height of 70 feet or less within the first 20 feet from the property line.

RELATED GUIDELINES

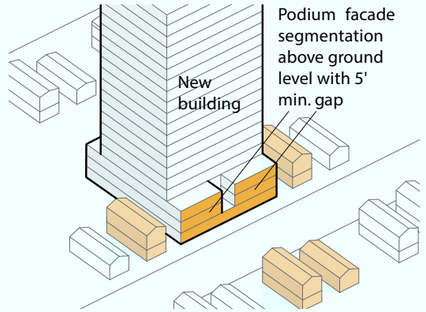
4.2.3 - Civic Icon Adjacency
4.2.4 - Historic Adjacency

GENERAL PLAN REFERENCE

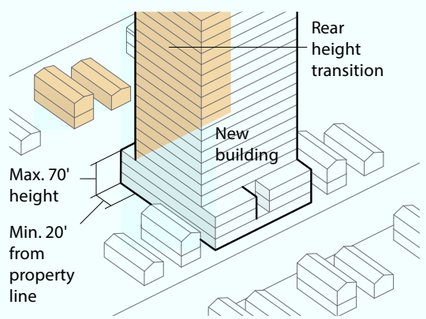
- CD-5.3, LU-9.6, LU-14.9, CD-1.14, CD-2.3, CD-4.5, CD-4.8, CD-1.12



a. Height Transition - Five foot stepback at an elevation between 25 and 50 feet high



b. Width Transition - Facade segments no more than 30' wider than historic buildings



c. Rear Transition - Height maximum 70' within 20' of property line

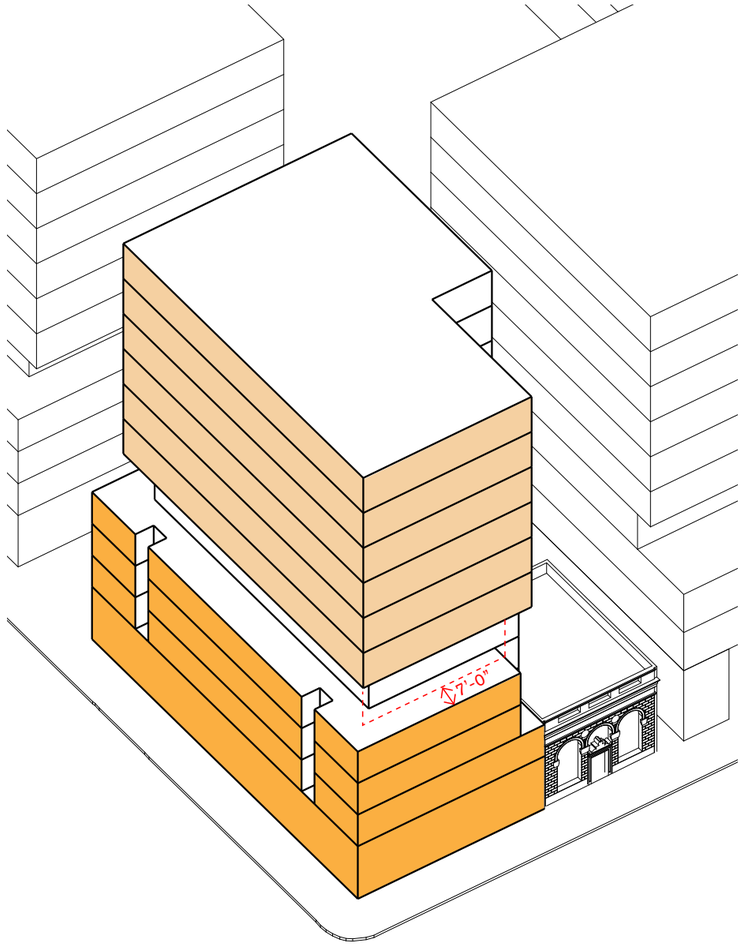


Fig. 3-43 Revised TOD Massing

Blue background denotes direct extract from the San Jose Downtown Design Guidelines

A historical datum of 40 to 60 feet exists along Santa Clara Street as a podium, and the DDF is aligned with the City of San Jose guidelines in recommending that this feature of the urban frontage be respected.

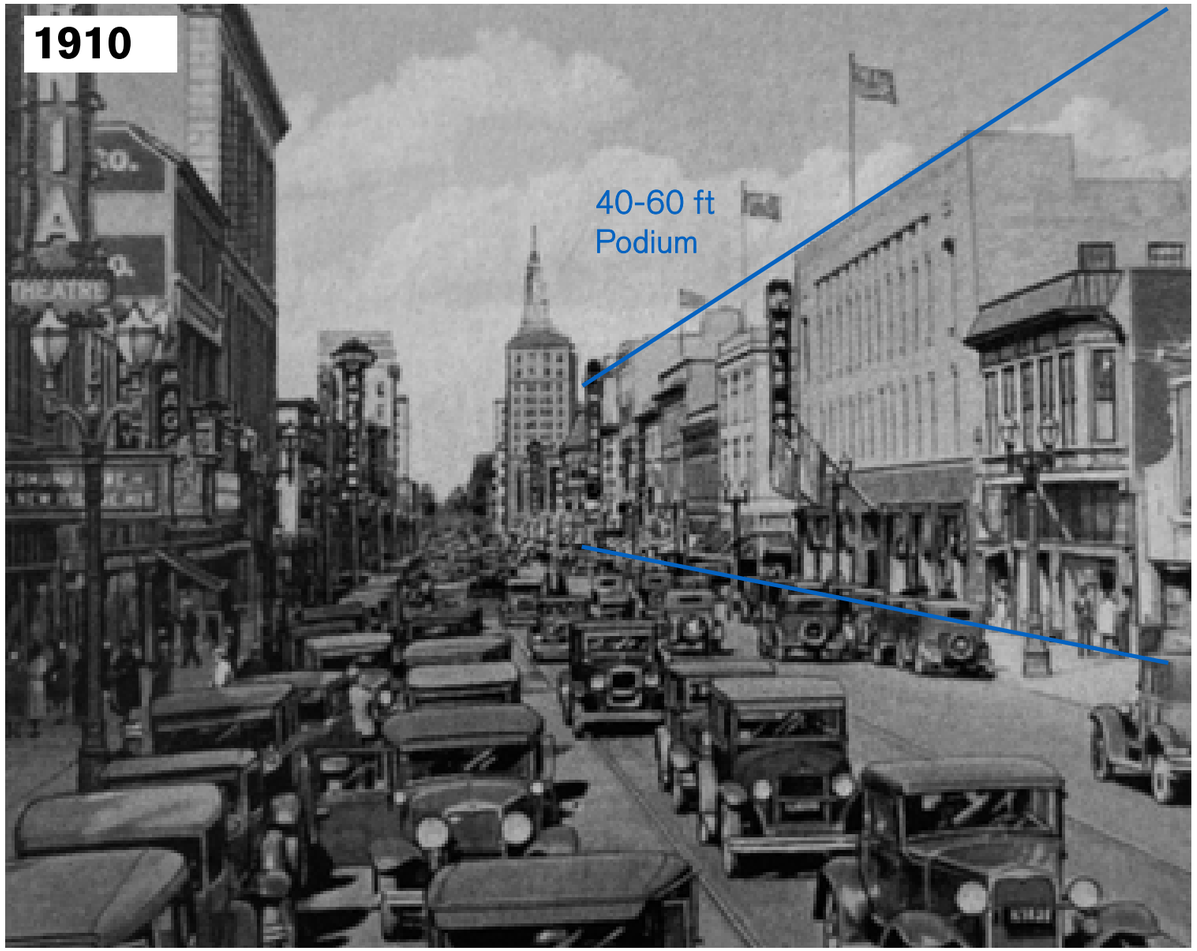


Fig. 3-44 (1910) View of First St.

Fig. 3-45 (1950) View of First St.

Precedent Project: Hearst Tower, New York, NY

In this project, a new tower was constructed on top of an existing historic building. The tower above has a distinctly modern glass façade with a different geometry and material expression that clearly distinguishes it from the more solid masonry materials expressed in the historic building below. The way the building meets the ground and the pedestrian experience at street level remains at a human scale, and is not impacted by the new development above.

It is likely that all buildings on the block will not be developed at the same time, and VTA would prefer that world-class TOD on the block be realized in a manner that promotes a variety of creative expressions (e.g., by different architects, with distinct characteristics from one building to another, etc.). However, VTA also recognizes that the most successful TOD is integrated with the community around it while adhering to certain common principles that provide unity and coordination within and between developments. Creating a framework to establish coherence while maintaining flexibility is at the core of the DDF.

Fig. 3-46 Hearst Tower, NYC

Fig. 3-47 View down 8th St.

Guideline: To maintain cohesive urban character and public interfaces, the DDF recommends the following:

- All new buildings should adhere to an approximately 60 foot podium height from ground level
- Lower podium buildings should be clad with high-quality solid materials like stone or concrete that are appropriate for the historic context
- Towers above the podium should be architecturally distinguished from the podium building through setbacks, changes of material, or other methods. Material selected for the towers should be high-quality, convey permanence, and be environmentally appropriate (both in their sourcing and their embodied carbon)
- Rooftop space created from stepping-back towers at the top of podium levels should be utilized as outdoor amenity spaces, such as landscaped terraces or recreation space for commercial or residential uses, or food and beverage outdoor seating areas for retail use, as feasible.
- Rooftop spaces on top of towers should also be occupiable wherever feasible and appropriate in order to provide outdoor amenity spaces that have views of the surrounding city and landscape
- The massing of the towers should be stepped in ways that maximize daylight to the plaza, provide views for occupants, and avoid casting shadows on St. James Park

Fig. 3-48 Artistic Impression of BART TOD

3.4 Historic Sensitivity

Given the site's prominent location in Downtown and the varied character of the architecture along the four adjacent streets that bound the site, it is important that new development on the VTA Block remains of a scale and character that complements neighboring developments. To some extent, the use of the aforementioned guidelines in this chapter regarding podium height, materials, and setbacks will all contribute to the creation of new buildings which feel appropriate within their context.

A few other key historic factors are highlighted by the DDF for future consideration:

First, the historic Building and Loan structure located at 81 West Santa Clara has been listed as a potential historic resource and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) through a formal process involving federal agencies. The building sits at the middle of the block, adjacent to the future BART station. This property is also privately owned and not under VTA's control. The building is of a scale and quality that it could fit very well within the podium concept already articulated in the DDF. Any future development that interacts with this site requires sensitivity regarding the historic building so that its historic character is not diminished.

Fig. 3-49 Historic San Jose Building and Loan Association Building 2019 (Top) and 1930 (Bottom)

4.2.9 81 West Santa Clara Street (Map Reference E-23)

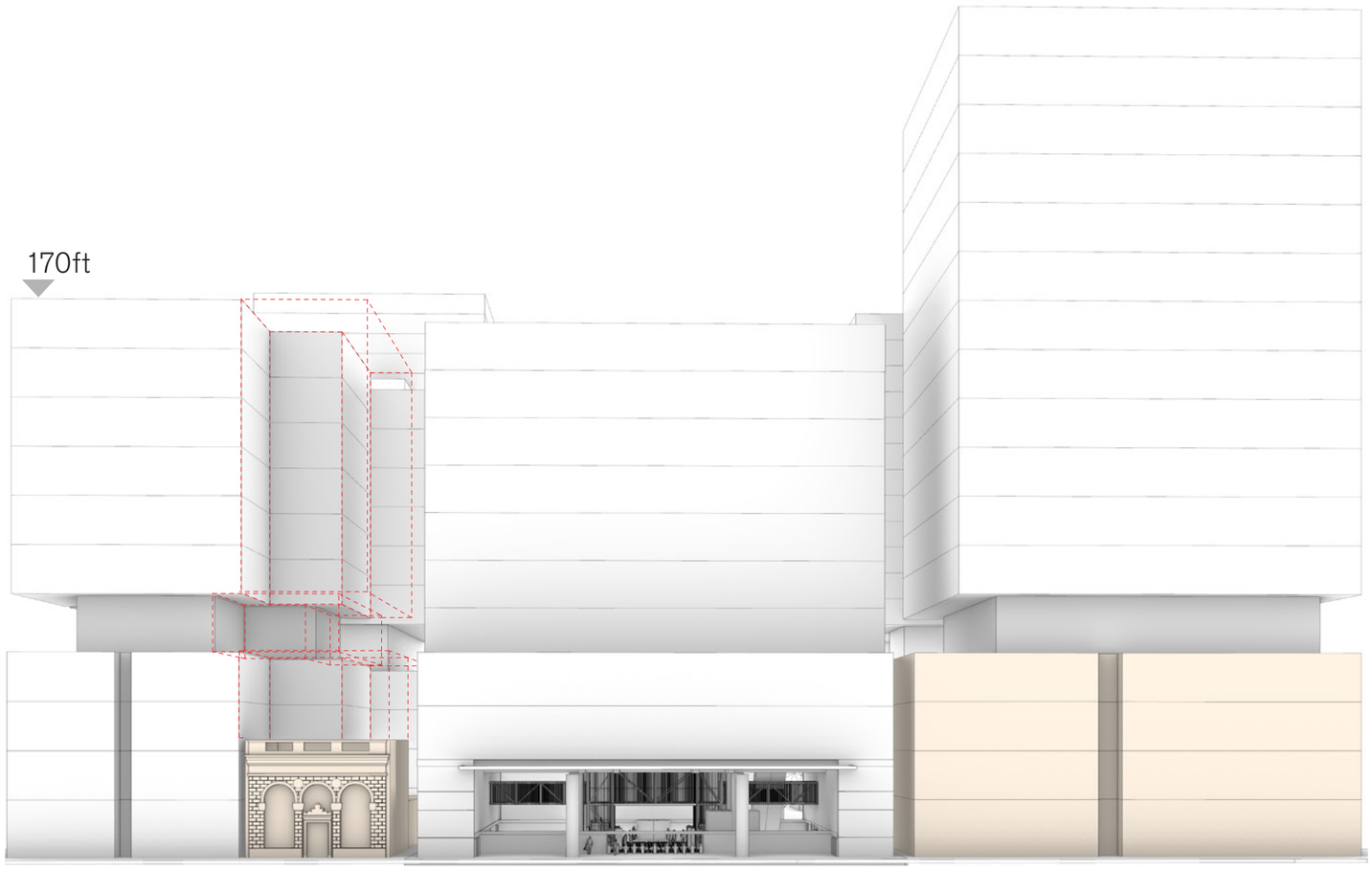
The San Jose Building and Loan building at 81 West Santa Clara Street was determined individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in 2003. Its period of significance is 1926, its construction date, and the historic property boundary

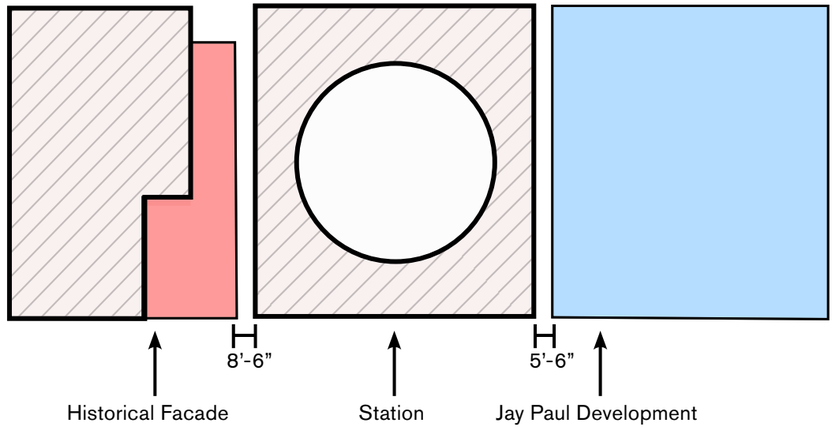
Fox Building [a] 40 North Fourth Street, San Jose	467-20-016	1919	2S	JRP 2002
San Jose Building and Loan 81 West Santa Clara Street, San Jose	259-34-018	1926	2S	Franklin Magi 2002/JRP 2002
James Clayton Building 34 West Santa Clara Street, San Jose	259-40-038	1880s / 1910s / 1920s	2S	Glory Anne Laffey 1991 / JRP 2002

[a] APN: Assessor's Parcel Number
[b] Status Codes for the National Register of Historic Places:
- 1 Listed in the NRHP
- 2 Determined eligible for listing in the NRHP through a formal process involving federal agencies.
- 3 Appears eligible for listing in the NRHP as judged by the qualified person completing or reviewing the DPR 523 form for the property.
- S Considered a separate or individual property
- D Considered a contributor or potential contributor to a historic district or potential historic district
- B Considered both an "S" and "D" property
- 2S2 Determined eligible for separate listing through a consensus determined by a federal agency and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP)
- * These properties are listed in the NRHP or were previously determined eligible. Information regarding the evaluators is not required in the HRER.

[c] Building(s) has been demolished.
Source: JRP Historical Consulting Services LLC, Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER), 2002, and Addendum Draft Technical Memorandum to the HRER, February, 2008.

"Determined eligible for listing in the NRHP through a formal process involving federal agencies"
- Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Corridor Final EIS





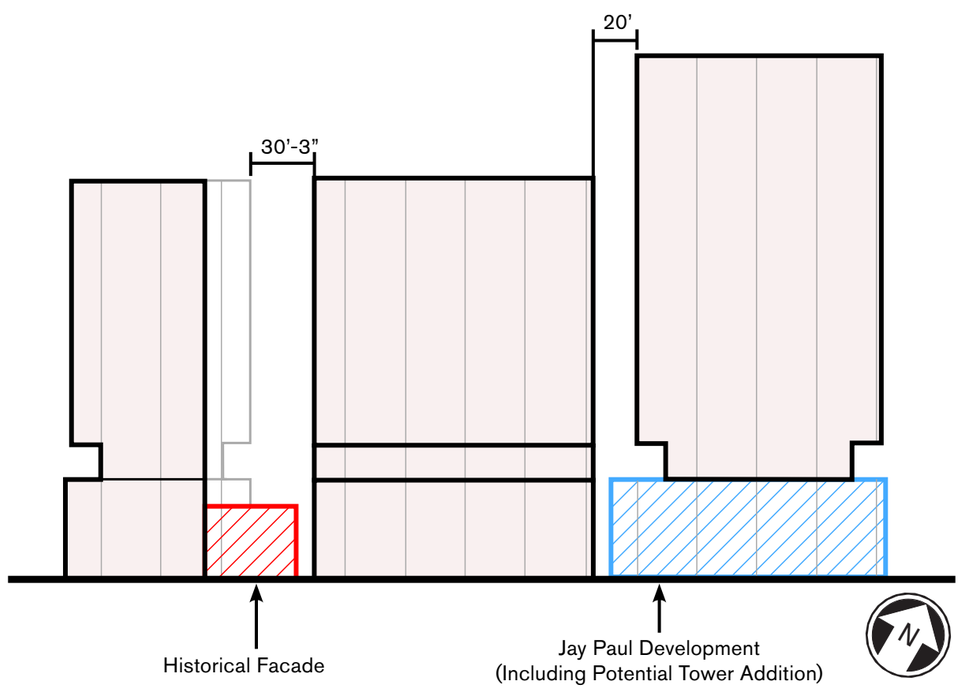


Fig. 3-50 Historic San Jose Building and Loan Association Building Parcel Analysis

3 Design Guidelines

Another key historic consideration is that the northwest corner of the site, which is diagonally opposite St James Park, falls within the boundaries of the St James Park Historic District. While the existing building on this site does not appear to be historic, the St James Park Historic District guidelines would limit the building height for any new development on this site to only one story taller than any adjacent buildings, or, in any case, no greater than 70 feet. The future buildings that would be adjacent to a future building at the corner of St John and First Street would likely be taller than 70 feet.

The St James Park Revitalization Strategy has been developing plans to renovate and activate St James Park including plans for event spaces, playgrounds and a Park Paseo and Monument Walk. Last updated in 2019, the 25% Plans show a children's playground facing the corner of St. Johns and First streets. The Levitt Pavilion is also planned for the park; it would be a venue for future performances and events. Revitalization of St James Park would create valuable amenities for the community that would complement the VTA Block.

With St James Park's proximity in mind, another key consideration for future development of the VTA Block is to minimize shadows cast over the park, which could happen in the afternoons during winter months when the angle of the sun is lower.

All of these factors should be considered as part of future activities to advance development of the VTA Block.

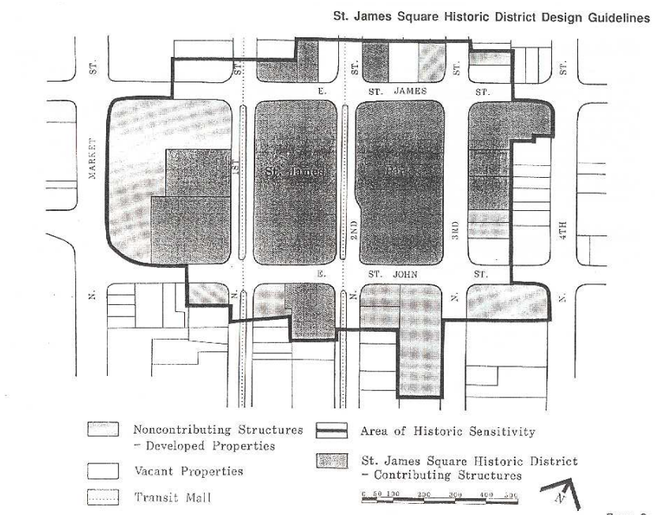


Fig. 3-51 St. James Square Historic District Map

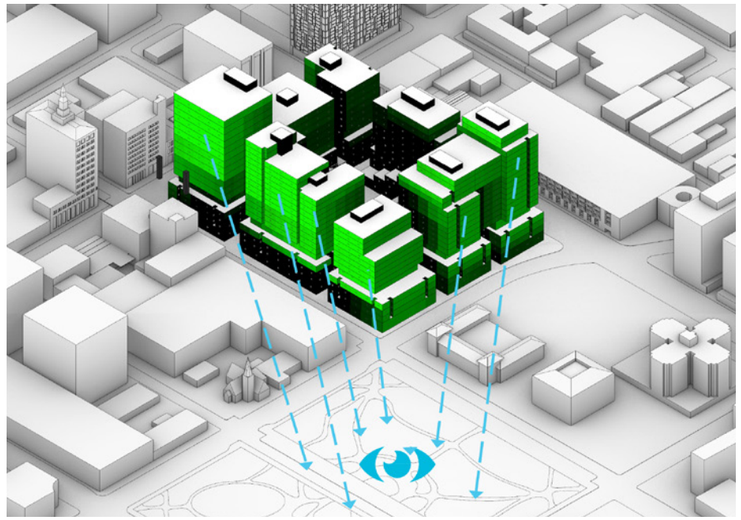


Fig. 3-52 View from North-East

Fig. 3-53 St. James Park

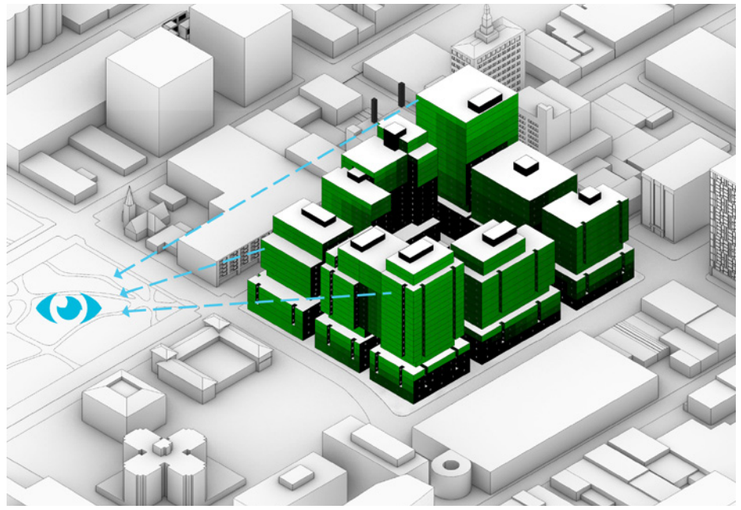


Fig. 3-54 View from North-West

Guideline: While neither of the two properties with constraints created by historic buildings or districts are owned by VTA, sensitivities associated with these sites must be taken into account as part of activities to advance development of the VTA Block. Further consultation with the City of San José will also be needed to ensure that VTA Block massing adheres to local regulations, including the following recommendations of the DDF:

- The corner parcel at St. John and First Street, diagonally opposite St. James Park, must be designed in a manner that considers its impact on the park and the St James Park Historic District. A shadow study should be undertaken to determine any potential impact on the public park.
- The treatment of the buildings adjacent to the Building and Loan building, located at 81 West Santa Clara Street, should be explored further and reviewed with the City of San José to avoid diminishing any contributing features of the historic building.
- Site access to 81 West Santa Clara Street should be retained in its current configuration.
- Strategies to be considered for adjacencies to the historic building may include setbacks and adjustment to podium height(s) to align with the roofline of historic building.

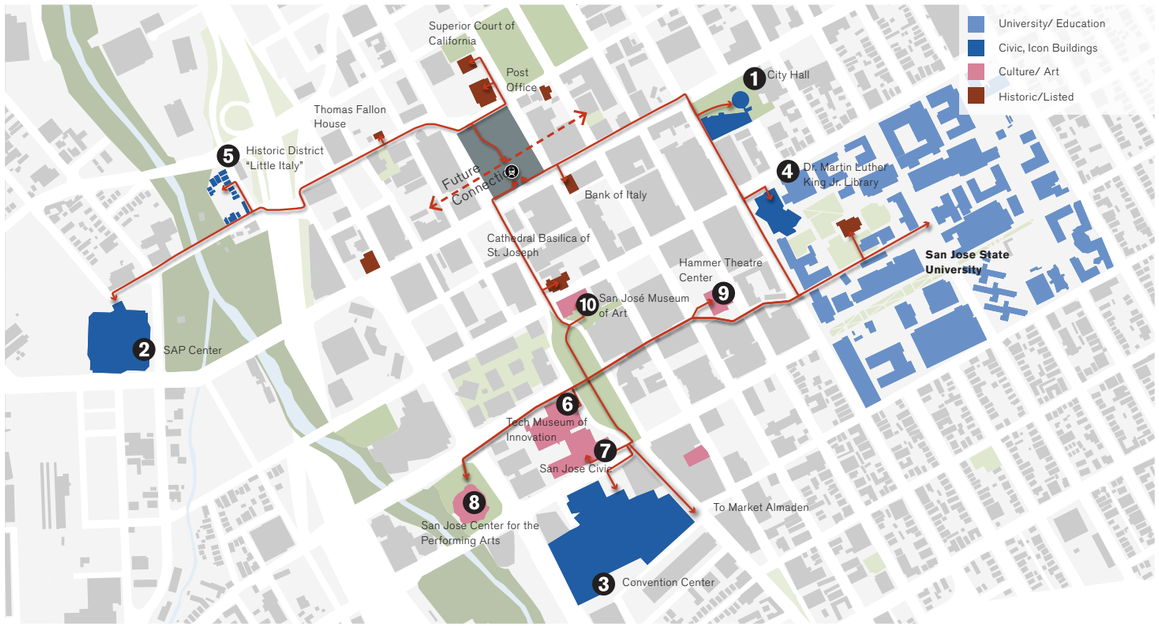


Fig. 3-55 Downtown San Jose Landmark Destinations Map

These figures show other key destinations within a 15 min walking distance of the VTA Block. These destinations make up the '4 cornerstones' of critical adjacencies: University/Education ([4] San Jose State University), Civic and Iconic Buildings ([1] City Hall and [2] SAP Center), Cultural and Arts ([8] Center for Performing Arts and [6] Museum of Innovation) and Historical/Cultural landmarks (Post Office building, San Pedro Square, Bank of Italy)

Fig. 3-56 Landmark Destinations

3.5 Social Equity and Environmental Responsibility

The VTA Block represents one of the greatest opportunities for VTA to ensure that TOD addresses issues of social equity and ensures that new development is undertaken in an environmentally sustainable manner. The DDF is shaped by VTA's Transit-Oriented Communities work that occurred concurrently with the BSV Phase II Project and VTA's TOD Policy, particularly its commitments to the creation of affordable housing.

Adopted in 2016, VTA's TOD Housing policy sets a minimum of 20% affordable housing units within any TOD development. Within this requirement, of the 20% affordable units, at least half should be targeted to extremely-low or very low income households. The policy does not allow for payment of in-lieu fees, off-site development, or other actions that sidestep the objective to create mixed-income residential development.

Updated in November 2019, VTA's TOD Policy reinforces VTA's commitment to the following goals that are most relevant to the DDF:

- Provide housing at a range of density and affordability levels and guarantee affordable and workforce housing units across targeted income levels
- Support commercial and retail spaces that support local businesses and living wage jobs
- Enhance mobility choices
- Community services and other amenities should be integrated into safe and walkable neighborhoods
- Generate revenue to sustain transit capital investments and operations
- Incorporate a comprehensive approach to sustainable design, construction, operations, and maintenance to advance net-zero development policies.

The list above is not comprehensive, but it serves as a sample of VTA's sustainability and equity goals that TOD can help to achieve.

To further VTA's achievement of its equity goals, the DDF also proposes that the ground-floor retail spaces be sized to support small-scale local businesses, that some portion of the ground-floor spaces be allocated to a community center, and/or that space be reserved for community events, performances, exhibits, and/or meetings.

For more information about VTA's goals for sustainable development and corresponding content in the DDF, please refer to Chapter 5 – Sustainable Approach to Development which addresses this topic in more detail. For sustainability-focused design guidelines, the following is a sampling of potential strategies that the DDF recommends be explored and prioritized in future RFP/RFQs:

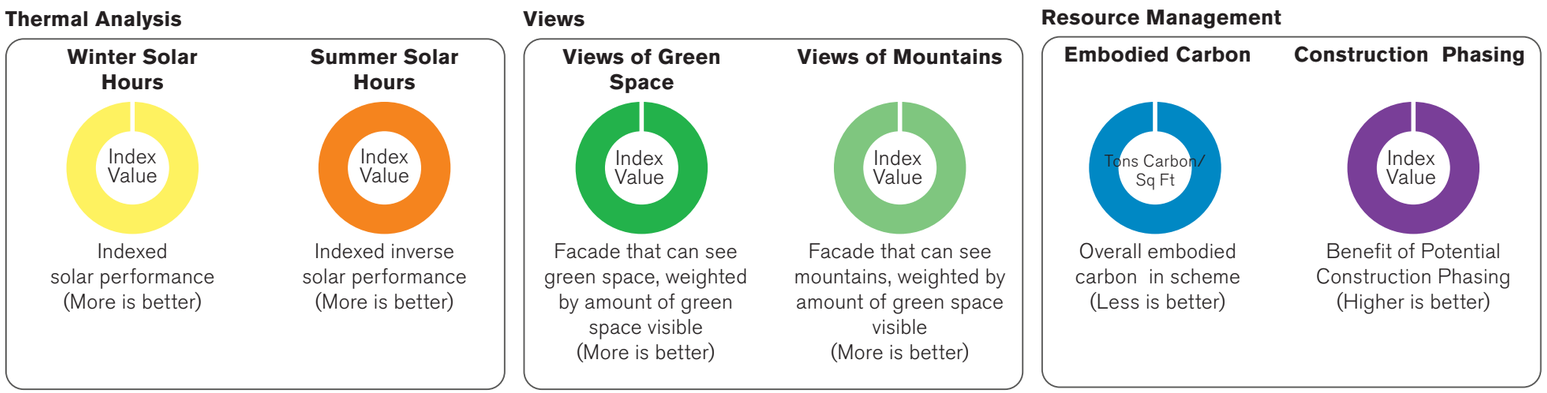
- Target net zero energy as a goal for future development on the block.
- Explore structural solutions for the building that will reduce embodied carbon, such as mass timber, light-weight concrete admixtures, and recycled material content.
- Explore opportunities for efficiencies by centralizing utility services and exploring energy distribution strategies like micro-grids to further reduce energy consumption.
- Implement strategies that promote transit use and minimize single-occupant vehicle trips to reduce congestion and pollution.

Guideline: Social equity and environmental responsibility are vitally important, and VTA's policies document VTA's consistent commitment to sustainable and equitable approaches and outcomes. VTA will seek public-private partnerships that advance achievement of VTA's sustainability and equity goals when reviewing and approving proposals to advance development of the Downtown VTA Block.

Measuring Success

As a tool to evaluate and balance the various priorities of the DDF guidelines, a system of visual 'Dials' has been developed. Some of the key measurable criteria for successful TOD have been translated into the graphics as shown in figure 3-57, and this tool has been utilized to evaluate different test fits and massing options which are shown in Chapter 4 – Applying the Guidelines. These guidelines will also be used in the future by VTA, as the project develops, to evaluate different proposals and determine how successfully they adhere to the DDF principles.

Matrix Evaluation Criteria



Solar performance calculated based on average sunlight hours to the rooftops, facades, and ground plane for each of the schemes. The inverse of this performance is used for summer-based evaluations, as fewer sunlight hours is more desirable during the summer.

All dials are indexed to provide easy comparisons between options. As new options are added, previous options dial values may change. Indexed values serve to compare between options, and single options results should not be looked at in isolation.

Fig. 3-57 Evaluation Dials