

## Community Working Group Workshops - Workshop Summary November 13-15 2018

### TOD Corridor Strategy and Access Planning Study

With VTA's BART Phase II TOD Corridor Strategies and Access Planning Study (the Study), VTA seeks to build upon existing transportation and land use plans and policies, and provide advanced analysis and recommendations to inform future TOD policy adoption and implementation, including land use, development and transportation mobility.

The Study is comprised of three major tasks: Background Conditions; Corridor Opportunities and Constraints; and Implementation Strategies and Tools. The resulting information and proposed strategies will be compiled into a Final Report, available in the spring of 2019.

Working with the cities of San José and Santa Clara, as well as BART, the approximately 15-month study that began in February 2018 is focusing on feasible and implementable land use strategies and financing tools to maximize transit ridership and TOD at the three future BART Stations (Alum Rock/28th Street Station, Downtown San José Station, and Santa Clara Station) and the corridor between them. The Study will also provide specific recommendations to enhance access to the stations and TODs in and around the station corridor.

### Workshop Introduction

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, November 13th, 14th and 15th 2018, VTA hosted workshops following the ongoing established Community Working Groups (CWGs) to discuss various elements of transit-oriented development (TOD) and gather input from workshop participants. The workshops focused on the three station areas included in VTA's BART Phase II Corridor TOD/Access Study: San José 28th Street/Alum Rock, San José Downtown and Santa Clara. The workshop sessions were led by members of the consultant team; Perkins+Will (architects and urban designers), Strategic Economics (economists and market analysts), Nelson Nygaard (transportation consultants) with VTA staff overseeing the consultant team. Apex Strategies facilitated the three workshops.

### Workshop Purpose

The purpose of the workshops was to provide an opportunity for participants to review progress of the study to date, reflect on how the consultant team has captured feedback from previous CWG workshops and discuss the constraints and impediments the consultant team has identified within City policies, plans and existing conditions which could prevent the realization of successful TOD in each of the station areas.

### Workshop Format

The three TOD/Access Study workshops immediately followed VTA's formal BART Phase II CWG meetings which concluded at 5.30pm. The workshops lasted approximately one-hour each, commencing with a 20-25 minute

slide presentation. The constraints and impediments to achieving successful TOD are different for each of the station areas, such that the presentation material developed by the consultant team and VTA was unique for each Station Area. In conclusion, participants were asked a series of questions to facilitate a group discussion and elicit reactions, support or differences of opinion regarding the conclusions reached by VTA and the consultant team.

Summary notes from each of the three workshops are included below, in the order the workshops occurred.

## Workshop Attendance and Participation

### November 13<sup>th</sup>- Downtown San José Station

- Approximately 23 people (including VTA staff and consultants) participated in the workshop.
- Workshop participants included Downtown CWG members, community members, and technical staff from the City of San José.

### November 14<sup>th</sup>- Alum Rock/28<sup>th</sup> Street Station

- Approximately 29 people (including VTA staff and consultants) participated in the workshop.
- Workshop participants included Alum Rock/28<sup>th</sup> Street CWG members, community members, and technical staff from the City of San José.

### September 13<sup>th</sup>- Santa Clara Station

- Approximately 20 people (including VTA staff and consultants) participated in the workshop.
- Workshop participants included Santa Clara CWG members, community members and technical staff from the City of Santa Clara.

## Summary of Breakout Discussions

### Downtown Station – November 13, 2018

Participants were generally supportive of the VTA/consultant team approach to identifying constraints and impediments to good TOD in the Station Area, subject to the following observations and discussion points;

#### General observations

- People living Downtown and riding BART regularly are likely to be the 'middle' section of society; not the high earners and not the residents of affordable housing. It is important to keep this in mind when planning for success.
- Need to include a robust public art program to generate community support and reinforce local identity.

- Ensure that employees of new businesses are encouraged to patronize local businesses at lunchtime, not provided with in-house catering options.
- What potential is there for BART Phase II to make fair share contributions to the local economy, similar to Phase I?

Question 1: is the input you have provided to us adequately reflected?

- We should look at other types of mediating interfaces between adjacent communities and neighborhoods, not just height step-downs and step backs; good neighbor policies, resolution of traffic/trash/noise/driveway issues can be used to mitigate higher density developments.
- We should get SJSU students involved in planning mid-block cut-through routes. These pathways are more interesting to them than the regular grid of City streets and with sufficient support they can be safer routes with more surveillance.

Question 2: do you agree these challenges are the top concerns?

- We need to address the full spectrum of housing needs. We encourage projects that serve extremely/very low income residents, but want to make sure we are also providing low/moderate income affordable housing in Downtown.
- The cost of providing on-site parking spaces is compromising the viability of some housing types, especially affordable housing. It is important to challenge current assumptions and policies.
- VTA should collaborate closely with other Agencies and City staff to explore the opportunity for development 'zones', especially on City-owned land. Specifically, opportunities for affordable housing on publicly-owned land should be explored.
- The question was raised as to whether we could explore the Opportunity Zones federal tax designation as a way to encourage more affordable housing.
- Historic and community character preservation is a concern.
- It is important to get the mix of uses right for successful TOD. A business focus is more appropriate for the Downtown Station Area but we also need more affordable housing supply to support the businesses. We need to develop policies to support the existing small businesses.
- Housing may be necessary to create a greater market for commercial development, but there needs to be a strategy in place to reserve certain sites for employment.

Question 3: are you open to the evolution of previous plans/visions that may be necessary to address the challenges proposed?

- Allow for reductions in the minimum amount of off-street parking required.

- It is unusual to see so many single-family homes so close to a Downtown area. It is reasonable to assume that this will change over time with densification and redevelopment?
- Height restrictions associated with airport limitations are likely to become less onerous. A City-sponsored study which may be complete by Early 2019 is currently suggesting height limits may be raised in the Downtown area by about 35 feet.

Question 4: how can you help us make this a success?

- Get SJSU students involved.
- CWG members can offer support at elected official hearings and events.
- Consider more blogs and other forums for making presentations.
- We need to garner support from a wider range of age-groups and geographical parts of the City.

**Alum Rock/28<sup>th</sup> Street Station – November 14, 2018**

Participants were generally supportive of the VTA/consultant team approach to identifying constraints and impediments to good TOD in the Station Area, subject to the following observations and discussion points;

Question 1: is the input you have provided to us adequately reflected?

- Participants were skeptical of the conclusions regarding utilization of on-street parking. Additional parking counts should be conducted in the evening after residents return home from work; utilization is much higher and some residents have to sometimes park several blocks away from their destination. The San Jose Steel plant site has been dormant for many years, awaiting the advent of BART, and this may have further skewed the on-street parking supply and utilization.
- Additional community priority; the desire to generate 24/7 activity at this Station Area

Question 2: do you agree these challenges are the top concerns?

- Displacement is a big issue, especially when some residences house up to four families.
- Local small businesses employ local people; we need to protect this.
- This study should recommend policies for protecting light industrial uses. There is a risk of blight as a knock-on effect of losing these uses. Light industrial businesses don't have good options for elsewhere to locate in San Jose
- Lack of parking is perceived to be a problem, especially in the evenings, not just mid-day. BRT took many on street parking spaces out.

- City staff are looking to develop a more flexible policy to allow parking structures to be built in such a manner that they could be converted into commercial uses in the future as parking demand reduces over time.
- Safety remains a big priority for students in the area; many walk to school

Question 3: are you open to the evolution of previous plans/visions that may be necessary to address the challenges proposed?

- Plans should allow for the accumulation and consolidation of properties to allow for larger commercial developments for single large tenants.
- Previous plans didn't envision significant office development, but there has been recent interest by major office users for properties on Alum Rock/Santa Clara.
- Developers of the Lumber site at 26<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> Streets will be submitting a planning application with over 400 residential units.
- Plans should preserve and identify additional locations for light industrial use. A zoning category similar to San Francisco's Production Distribution and Repair (PDR) may be appropriate here.
- Promote mixed use development; the arrival of BART should be an opportunity to create a 'Santana Row on steroids'. There is a desire for more retail and gathering places. Station should feel activated during "in between" hours.
- How can we make the market more attractive for large commercial buildings with single tenants? Access improvements, public realm interventions and more residential units creating a critical mass for investment opportunities will all help.
- Participants were open to the possibility of greater density and taller buildings to the north of the Five Wounds Portuguese National Church, closer to Julian Street, provided that the massing was sensitive to the church context.
- There are 700 to 800 new residential units in the planning and entitlement pipeline. We need to ensure these new developments do not displace small businesses as is happening now with other new developments. There are very few appropriately sized/priced spaces for small businesses to move into when displaced.

Question 4: how can you help us make this a success?

- Use the proposed renaming of the Station (Little Portugal/28<sup>th</sup> Street) as an opportunity to distribute more information and build support.
- Build a compelling anti-displacement policy to get buy-in from residential and business communities and use this as a strong message to promote the Station Area.

**Santa Clara Station – November 15, 2018**

Participants were generally supportive of the VTA/consultant team approach to identifying constraints and impediments to good TOD in the Station Area, subject to the following observations and discussion points;

General observations

- The new City-wide requirement for inclusionary affordable housing is 15%. Will this discourage developers from pursuing entitlements? There are a lot of other impact fees which also affect the viability of development. Could the City reduce some of the other impacts if affordable housing is a priority?
- VTA confirmed that any station/commuter parking within the Station Area will charge a daily fee. VTA also confirmed they are collaborating with Caltrain to explore shared station parking opportunities.
- Participants encouraged the team to think carefully about the location of station/commuter parking in order to take advantage of any shared station/TOD parking opportunities.

Question 1: is the input you have provided to us adequately reflected?

- It is important to emphasize the desire to encourage use of transit and discourage driving and parking. Make driving more expensive; provide fewer parking spaces and charge more for them.
- The zoning designation of Light Industrial on the San José portion of the Station Area is incompatible with the need for additional workforce housing which could be located on that land.
- Artists should be embedded in Design Team to develop and reinforce a strong sense of identity. Public art is critical to place-making. Franklin Street through the University could be an Art District.
- The plan should try to build a bridge over the railroad tracks to the existing community, connecting the station with the University, Downtown and Franklin Street.
- Promote the new spaces/places, identity and history of the area to attract and engage visitors.

Question 2: do you agree these challenges are the top concerns?

- The 'Reclaim Downtown' community group would like to work with VTA to build a comprehensive Regional Plan. City staff announced the imminent procurement process for a consultant team to develop a Specific Plan for the eight-block Downtown core.

- Access to the Avaya Stadium is a challenge, especially with congestion at the Coleman Avenue/Santa Clara Street intersection. The plan should address improvements to this situation (e.g., a pedestrian promenade from the station to the stadium).
- Better bike and pedestrian routes from the station to Avaya stadium are desirable.
- The area needs more public transportation services and options in general.
- Is it possible to connect Benton and Brokaw streets across the rail tracks with an overpass? This could accommodate vehicle as well as the previously noted people mover/trolley system.
- El Camino Real changes from 6 lanes to 4 lanes where it transitions to The Alameda. VTA should look at system-wide congestion when evaluating congestion at the Coleman Avenue intersection.

Question 3: are you open to the evolution of previous plans/visions that may be necessary to address the challenges proposed?

- Previously stated community desires which are non-negotiable:
  - A direct connection from the station to Santa Clara University campus and Downtown Santa Clara.
  - Development of workforce housing.
  - Station/commuter parking should be on the north-east side of the rail tracks.
- City Council's rescinded support for BRT along El Camino Real appears to be incompatible with the desire to encourage successful TOD.

Question 4: how can you help us make this a success?

- Use the Downtown Specific Plan Community Working Group (when established) as a vehicle to spread the message more widely.